

METHODOLOGICAL PLURALISM IN THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF PAUL FIREBAND

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Abstract: *This paper seeks to explain the idea of methodological pluralism according to Fireband and its impact on the course of science in its recent developments at the epistemological level and the human and social level as well, considering that the crisis of science is primarily a human crisis. This idea was born according to Fireband from a deep criticism of the idea of unilateralism, which he considers to be a naive idea and which It made him take a completely different view than the scientific statements that preceded him. This study concluded that the idea of methodological pluralism or methodological anarchy within Fireband's epistemological system has its legitimacy in view of the openness of science to new, richer horizons, and this openness is not available to it unless we move beyond the dogma of a single method, and this different view of the method and science together had an impact on aspects The different social and historical aspects of man, and this is why his criticism is considered a radical criticism.*

Keywords: Methodological pluralism, epistemology, the crisis of science, the dogma of method, radical criticism.

1. Introduction

Paul Fireband (1924-1994) is considered one of the most prominent contemporary philosophers of science who presented a critical reading of the philosophy of science that differs from its predecessors, and is characterized by a revolutionary character over all scientific methods that came before him and over all known patterns in the field of science and its philosophy, to the point where some came to call him a philosopher of science. The troublemaker (Hamdan, 2013: 113) and the anarchist, due to the intensity of his revolt against all current epistemological patterns and his opposition to scientific rationality and Western science in general. In this article, we will attempt to examine the foundations from which Paul Fireband set out to build his revolution against science, based on a concept that is considered central to Fireband's epistemology, which is the concept of methodological pluralism, given that this concept was the product of a specific system to which the philosopher adhered, a system that took on an evolutionary character based on His criticism of the prevailing methods of science and proof of the inconsistency of these methods, leading to an alternative that complements these methods and helps them more open to new possibilities that take science out of its dogmatism.

2. Problem of the study

In this article, we try to answer the following problem:

Is it possible to talk about a single approach to science, or are there other methodological alternatives? What is the position of man within this pluralism, given that the crisis of science, from Fireband's perspective, is primarily a human crisis?

This problem is divided into partial questions:

What are the circumstances and factors that led to the emergence of the idea of methodological pluralism?

What is anarchism in Fireband's epistemology?

What is methodological pluralism and what is its role in the development of science according to Fireband?

3. The importance of the study

This research paper aims to try to answer a problem whose echo is still hesitant in epistemological philosophical thought to this day, evolving as a result of discussions between the dialectics of a single approach and multiple approaches. Considering that what Fireband achieved is considered an advanced link from what preceded it, and thus the idea of research into the necessity of methodological pluralism grew.

4. Purpose of the study

The aim of the research is not limited to simply presenting the foundations and conditions of methodological pluralism in Paul Fireband's epistemology. Rather, we aim to explain the importance and nature of this cognitive theory and its implications for science and the advancement of human knowledge, through a cognitive study.

5. Method of the study

In this study, we have relied on the historical method to clarify the characteristics of critical philosophy since ancient times, in addition to the descriptive analytical and epistemological method, which is based on collecting information, analyzing it, reading it in an epistemological critical manner, and then drawing conclusions.

6. The circumstances and factors that led to the emergence of Fireband's idea of methodological pluralism:

6.1. Intellectual factors and conditions:

The one who studies the life of this remarkable personality will find that he grew up in an epistemological environment that had a direct influence in building his pluralistic intellectual project, as he was born in the city of Vienna, grew up in it, and studied in its universities, which at that time and beyond were a center of radiation and activity, scientific, philosophical, and epistemological. It suffices to mention that it was the headquarters of the poles of our circle (logical positivism), including Schlick, Carnap, Weizmann, Wittgenstein, Karl Popper, and other figures of contemporary thought, art, and science (Al-Sayyed, 1997: 61).

6.2. The epistemological aspect (critical tendency):

Another motive that shaped the perception and anarchist position of science was the contact with philosophers of science, especially at the University of Vienna, and in particular the critical rationalism of Karl Popper, which reduced the problem of science to the method. We demonstrate that famous position of Popper in his book *The Logic of Scientific Revelation*, in which he dealt with the scientific method from the negative side in order to form that Popper's critical tendency, as well as the scientific revolution that physics witnessed, especially with Einstein, which represented a major rift in the stages of physical scientific knowledge,

Relativity became the basic characteristic of science instead of the idea of the absolute and the constant, as well as the law of uncertainty of the physicist Hansenberg, who argued that it was not possible to determine the electron and control its speed and location, thus collapsing with it one of the scientific principles, the regularity of deterministic phenomena, which classical science has always praised. (Al-Jabri, 1986: 10)

6.3. Cultural and psychological aspect:

What distinguishes Western society is the cultural and social pluralism that lives under democracy, and Fairband's influence on this idea appears when we were shocked by his strange position in dealing with scientific knowledge, as he believes that the best way to deal with this scientific knowledge is the method of free voting in fair elections, and in this way it gives to the people the opportunity to express their opinion. According to him, we accept laws and scientific facts without submitting them to a vote and making it a basis for making important decisions. (Al-Sayed, 1997: 147) The anthropological aspect and democracy were a positive aspect, not a negative one, revealing to us the role of difference and customs in building his scientific project. On the other hand, this man was distinguished by his extensive travel, which had a reflection on his thinking and the formation of his pluralistic awareness. All of these formulations were the beginning of the formation of Fireband's idea of methodological pluralism, which eventually made him recognize all human methods and knowledge alike and establish the idea of anarchism.

7. Anarchism in Fireband's Epistemology:

The relativity of scientific knowledge according to Fireband and his critical tendency towards ancient philosophies led to the establishment of a contemporary view of the scientific method, which was linked to the idea of anarchism. So what do we mean by the idea of anarchism? Referring to dictionaries, we find that anarchism is a Greek term derived from the Greek word *avapxia*, which means without a ruler, king, or president. (Greek, 1990: 276)

This term is translated as the word anarhia (anarchy), which is made up of two parts: the first is an, which means opposite or negation, and the second is arhia, which means authority. The literal translation of the word is no authority or no system. (Frank, 2004: 25) In the philosophical dictionary of Jamil Saliba, anarhia is the defect that arises from the loss of directing authority, or from its failure to carry out its functions, or from a conflict of tendencies and desires, or a lack of order and arrangement. (Saliba, 1982: 168)

Anarchism is a social and political ideology that glorifies individualism and volition. The human will plays a decisive role in moving the wheel of history because it unleashes imagination and freedom of choice. The will is not governed by a fixed law and is not surrounded by logic. Anarchism inspired its concepts from the ideas of great philosophers such as Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, who prevailed over the will over the mind and made Among them is the true inner essence of the personality, as it is what drives psychological life and behavior Existence is no longer a development of the absolute idea or logos (Badawi, 1977: 05). Thus, anarchism is a doctrine that calls for the abolition of political control, stating that the state is the greatest enemy of the individual and that its abolition eliminates pests and evils. In general, it means the destruction of authority and state institutions on the grounds that they are against humanity and therefore it is We go rejects every political or social restriction that eliminates the individual, but rather makes the latter a fundamental focus within these different systems. (Wahba, 1997: 166)

Fireband argued that there is a difference between philosophical relativism and epistemological anarchism. The former considers all traditional heritage or theories to be true or false in equal proportions, while epistemological anarchism emphasizes absurd and banal matters in the hope that this will lead to new forms of life. (Fairband, 2018: 25) But what distinguishes anarchism in Feyerabend's epistemology?

Contemporary epistemology according to Feyerabend has been characterized by a critical tendency toward the scientific method, by undermining confidence in it, removing centralization from it, and replacing it with the idea of anarchism or methodological pluralism. In his criticism of the rules of the scientific method, he ends up rejecting the idea of a unity of scientific method, which is the only rule that Feyerabend claims to accept in His controversial slogan, "Everything passes," is the only principle he accepts that does not advance the progress of science The only principle that Fairband claims to accept in his controversial slogan "Everything passes" is the only principle that he accepts that does not advance the progress of science, since the conviction that one perspective provides the truth is blind to the truths provided by other perspectives, and belief in a truth often What results is some repression. (Fairband, 2017: 20) Thus, his intellectual project is based on rejecting that classical perception that is based on that methodological authoritarianism. Therefore, according to Fireband, anarchism contributes to building knowledge and science and eliminates the idea of the distinction that exists between scientific knowledge and non-scientific knowledge, and this is what makes it different from political anarchism, which seeks to destroy all the rules that relate to aspects of life. Thus, Fireband presented a new approach in the philosophy of contemporary science that was not known by the ancient epistemology of By stripping science of the constraints of science And his call for methodological liberation, especially when he emphasized the idea of methodological and epistemological anarchism, this concept that he moved from a political nature to an epistemological one. The idea of the existence of a scientific method that includes fixed, precise, strict, and absolute principles that help to carry out the process of scientific research is an incoherent idea according to Fireband. Indeed, this idea faces logical, historical, and practical difficulties. Infinite when compared with the facts of the history of science When we read the history of science carefully and precisely, we find one rule, no matter how acceptable and based on strong epistemological foundations, that is, at one time or another, violated and violated. (Al-Sayed, 1997: 146)

Accordingly, Fireband calls for science not to be captive to a specific method because its reality is reduced to chaos (a chaotic project). Accordingly, science at its core is not systematic knowledge. To say that method is the fixed element of science may be understood to mean that science has fixed methods that do not change, and this is an understanding that does not express About the truth of science because many sciences have changed their methods with the progress of science. (Zakaria, 1984: 25-26)

Thus, epistemological anarchism is a contemporary philosophical vision founded by Fairband, which is based on making science open to all knowledge and methods after destroying that monolithic vision of the method, because understanding the truth of science is conditional on believing in the idea of anarchism, which is one of the contemporary concepts that is associated with Fairband's philosophy, and this appears clearly in many of his author's works. The famous *Against the Method*, *Three Dialogues on Knowledge*, and *Goodbye, Mind*.

8. Methodological pluralism and its role in the development of science according to Fireband

The idea of methodological pluralism according to Fireband, or what he expresses it, is based on the principle of the abundance of methods and theories through the idea of anarchism and non-methodology, which made him mock the question of the appropriate method for science? He considers it a false question that does not express the truth of scientific knowledge or science, which is what classical epistemology fell into, which centered on methodological monism. For him, methodological pluralism represents anarchism or epistemological anarchism. If we want a title for Fireband's philosophy of science, we can call it anarchic rationalism, "which strongly rejects the establishment of cognitive authority with a specific method and also rejects the establishment of authority for science itself" (Al-Khouli, 2002: 422).

The idea of relativity and pluralism, which was clearly demonstrated in Feyerabend's philosophy, made his philosophy critical and carries the meaning of revolutionary over everything that is ancient for the sake of the development of knowledge, especially the idea of method, because the scientific philosophical spirit imposes that position, because what distinguishes the scientist is his ability to test the prevailing opinions at the popular level or Ordinarily or in scientific circles, or both together, with a critical mind that is not led by the authority of spread and fame and only accepts what appears to it. (Zakaria, 1984: 212)

Fireband says, "My purpose is not to replace a set of general rules with another, different set, but rather my purpose is to convince the reader that all research methods in their entirety, even the most obvious ones, have limits" (Fairband, 2018: 21), to confirm through his epistemic position that All scientific methods contain shortcomings, limitations and drawbacks, which make comparison between them impossible and therefore they are all valid for scientific knowledge.

Since the mistake that previous philosophers of science made was establishing new methods through rejection of previous methods, it is said that if we contemplate past history, we will find that in contrast to every rule that we want to defend, there are circumstances in which progress can be achieved by breaking this hall, and this means that research methods At best it is based on approximate rules. (Fairband, 2018: 21)

Accordingly, Fireband wanted to establish, through this methodological pluralism, a systematic democracy that accepts all methodologies, just as political democracy accepts the coexistence of all races and cultures, because scientific progress is not a linear progress toward truth or a process of coming together toward an ideal point of view, but rather an expanding ocean of alternatives, each of which pushes The others lead to greater clarity in the details, and they all contribute, through a process of competition, to the growth of our understanding. Science does not have its own method that distinguishes it from any other intellectual activity.

Or makes it worthy of a greater degree of respect because it provides true, honest knowledge, as the idea of a scientific method that includes strict, unchanging, and absolutely binding principles faces great difficulties when compared to the results of historical research, as there is no single rule, no matter how possible it may seem or based on epistemological foundations. It is well established and has been overtaken at some point. (Fairband, 2018: 11-19)

On this basis, Fireband rejects consistency and absoluteness in his project, especially the methodological one, because the history of scientific research is change and multiplicity, the latter of which is considered the main pillar on which his thought was based, and this is what appears clearly in the famous book *Against the Method*. Pluralism is an essential characteristic of scientific knowledge or science because it makes the circle of scientific knowledge expand to include all human knowledge, whether scientific or non-scientific, according to the old concept, especially the experimental and positivist concept.

Because no matter how necessary and basic the rules of the method that philosophers of science rant about seem necessary and fundamental to us, there are always circumstances that require not only ignoring these rules, but adopting their opposite. (Al-Sayyid, 1997: 147) For the phrase "everything is valid in science" to express the truth of science, there is no methodological or cognitive preference. The principle that science must recognize is progressive scientific pluralism as opposed to static monism. (Fairband, 2018: 12)

In his book "*Against Method*", Fireband attempts to lay out a preliminary outline for an anarchist theory of knowledge, the first edition of which was published in 1975, which has had numerous reprints and translations into many languages, and which we consider to be the final nail in the coffin of that

ahistorical justificatory view of scientific knowledge and its central question. In doing so, he attempts to use traditional philosophical theories to explain the goals, value, and basic data of science. Among these theories, and most notably the theory of the logical positivists and Popper's positivism, he considers the question about method to be a false question, and that science has never been the interpretation of one specific method, but rather a chaotic project (anarchic enterprise), that is, it does not recognize any authority, and all methods can work in it. Depending on the timing of the scientific event. (Faisal, 2024: 154)

9. From methodological anarchism to humanism:

Fireband's epistemology and his anarchist project carry within it a humanistic tendency. He was an advocate of the humanistic position through which he seeks to achieve the greatest possible freedom for man by eliminating all restrictions and obligations that limit man from realizing his humanity. This is evident from his saying, "Science is essentially anarchic work." "Theoretical anarchism is more humane than science and more likely to promote progress than the methodological alternatives of law and order." (Al-Sayed, 1997: 148) But where does this humanism appear?

This humanistic tendency appears in Fireband's call to return to what is imaginative and metaphysical, that is, the non-scientific cognitive aspect in the term of positivism, because many ideas have become reality after they were seen as false illusions, turning imagination into reality, and scientists, if they want science, must follow their imagination, according to his expression. Rationality, objectivity, and logic have become classic terms that do not express the essence of scientific knowledge. Rather, the latter has become associated with a person freed from the constraints of method and its authority. Fireband's book *Against Method* was a plan for an anarchic theory of knowledge in which he attacks authoritarianism in all its forms and the authority of science in particular, and elevates the importance of imagination. Before reason, here he says, "Let people free themselves from the chains of systematic rules and choose whatever they want without pressure or coercion." (Faisal, 2024: 158) He believes that if it is possible to achieve progress in the field of science, this will only come about if scientists break all the perceived rules of rationality, and the one rule that Feyerabend agrees with is his strange slogan, "Everything passes" (Al-Sayyid, 1997: 148)

Based on his humanistic tendency, Fireband calls for scientific theories to stem from the free choice of man, because in light of anarchism there is equality between different types of knowledge, as he equates the achievements of traditional medicine, such as Chinese acupuncture, witchcraft, and others. Indeed, he goes even greater than that. Fireband advocated on thinking based on myths and considering it an integral part of correct human knowledge that constitutes the social heritage, (Fairband, 2018: 30)

10. The epistemological limits of Fireband's idea of methodological pluralism

The intellectual project that Fireband came up with, represented by methodological pluralism, was able to solve the biggest problem in the philosophy of science, which appeared strongly in the nineteenth century as well as the twentieth century, especially with Karl Popper, which is the issue of method. However, the epistemological conception that Fireband presented was not free from criticism. Many philosophers of science, especially his contemporaries, also opposed him. Firebandian anarchism is the essence of everything good in science. On this basis, it abolished the boundaries separating scientific studies from non-scientific studies, defended metaphysics in exchange for science, equated tribal ideas based on reason and social and cultural inheritance, and believed in equality between different ideologies in a democratic society. Rather, it defended myth and astrology and considered them more advanced than scientific theories. From this, Fireband can be considered one of the most ardent enemies of rationalism and science alike, and therefore he is against humanity. At the time he wanted to address the problem of science, the depth of its crisis, and at the time he called for the principle that theories were abundant and scientists demanded that they be achieved, he cast a shadow of doubt on this principle and even on his entire philosophy. (Faisal, 2024: 158) This is what made Thomas Kuhn consider that metaphysical issues are non-scientific issues, in which we agree with Karl Popper.

11. Conclusion

The idea of methodological pluralism presented by Fireband contributed to deepening the outlook on the idea of method and human knowledge in general, which attempted to eliminate the barriers between science and non-science, so that knowledge could be viewed from a comprehensive perspective that accommodates all different ideologies and alternatives, which contribute to enriching

the human experience and opening it up to the unknown and raising the flames. Everything is permissible and everything passes. Thus, Fireband was able to present a liberal vision for science and mankind that transcended both ancient and modern epistemology.

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