

**METHODOLOGICAL ANARCHISM OR PLURALISM? AN
AFRO-CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL
FEYERABEND'S CRITIQUE OF SCIENCE**

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ft.v6i2.3>

First Submission: November 18, 2016 Acceptance: December 5, 2017

J. Chidozie CHUKWUOKOLO
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
E-mail: jerrychidozie@yahoo.com

Abstract

In this article, I argue that methodological pluralism is not identical with methodological anarchism. While the former connotes the existence of different methods that could be legitimately employed in different disciplines or contexts, the latter tends to suggest the non-existence of any legitimate method at all. Consequently, I contend that Afro-constructivism, a recent development in African philosophy supports methodological pluralism but repudiates methodological anarchism. The corollary of this is a critical re-evaluation of Paul Feyerabend's critique of method. My basic argument is that the epistemological framework of Afro-constructivism accepts Feyerabend's repudiation of the hegemonic imposition of the method of modern science as valid. However, I argue that an Afro-constructivist interpretation of Feyerabend's critique gives credence to methodological pluralism as against methodological anarchism. I buttress this position using the methods of logical analysis and argumentation. I begin with an analysis of the question of method, Feyerabend's critique of method and Afro-constructivism, and then proceed to examine the merit of Feyerabend's critique from the perspective of Afro-constructivism. At the end, I submit that the logical product of Feyerabend's critique of method is methodological pluralism.

Keywords: Afro-constructivism, Anarchism, Paul Feyerabend, methodology, epistemological dadaism, Pluralism, Reason, Science

Introduction

In the history of human civilizations, modern science and technology stand out as the most institutionalized paradigm for development. The groundbreaking discoveries of modern scientists, and the technological innovations that emanated from them are often perceived as the wheels of what we have come to know as the industrial revolution. These discoveries and innovations were so extraordinary that the scientific community, the community of knowledge producers, had to proclaim that the method of modern science is the epitome of rationality (cf. NEWTON-SMITH 1981). Any knowledge seeker or producer that wishes to know, explain or produce knowledge can only do so by

adopting the procedural method of modern science. Every knowledge claim that does not follow or adhere to the method of modern science is therefore dismissed as dubious and unreliable. Amidst this veneration of science, every discipline was compelled to either scienticize or go out of business (cf. AGBO 2003; OZUMBA 2001). Even philosophy, the hitherto acknowledged queen of the sciences, was not spared (cf. ASOUZU 2016).

The success of modern science was so marvelous that it influenced the emergence of a vibrant philosophical school, logical positivism, which advocated for scientific philosophy. Following the enormous achievements of science, these philosophers of science were convinced that science is capable of meeting up theoretically, and methodologically, with the most pressing challenges of humans. Hence, they called for the adoption of the method of science (the so-called scientific method) as the solution for all philosophical problems and otherwise. On this note, the scientific method which is unique to the scientific community becomes the only method of discovery in attaining all truths required for the development of human society.

Newton-Smith (1981) explains that the scientific method entails a 'logic of discovery', that provides devices to assist the scientist in the discovery of new theories, and in the noble pursuit of some worthy aim (variously characterized as truth, knowledge, explanation, etc). For him, the members of the community dispassionately and disinterestedly apply the scientific method, by which application science takes humans a step on the road to the much-esteemed goal of further discovery of truth and knowledge (1981, 1). This larger than life image of science influenced philosophers in the twentieth century such that they started aligning the methods of philosophy science with that of science to see whether the interminable and seemingly intractable problems of philosophy will be resolved by the philosophic community. Philosophers of the epoch thus started eulogizing science as an impeccable method of discovery (Cf. POPPER 1963, 216-217). One of the most severe critic of this veneration of the scientific method in contemporary philosophy is the Austrian-born philosopher, Paul Feyerabend (1924 -1994).

Accordingly, this article is an evaluation of the implication of Feyerabend's critique of the method of science from the perspective of Afro-constructivism. I divided the article into three major parts. In the first part, I present an analysis of Feyerabend's critique of science. My task here borders on revealing that Feyerabend's critique of the hegemonic projection of the scientific method as ahistorical, eternal and context-neutral is valid. The second is an evaluation of the basic implication of Feyerabend's critique: is it methodological anarchism as Feyerabend suggests or methodological pluralism? My argument here is

that it is methodological pluralism. I provide support for my argument in the third part of the article where I discuss the basic tenets of Afro-constructivist epistemology in relation to methodological pluralism. I begin with the first.

Against Method: Feyerabend's Critique of Science

The central argument in support of the hegemonic imposition of the scientific method is its perception as the only rational compass that has and can help humans to understand and transform the world. As a rational compass, the scientific method is understood to be a logically coherent set of rules that have been cumulatively developed and consistently employed across history to acquire knowledge. The perception that the procedural rules of the scientific method as cumulative suggests that they are immutable and sacrosanct. Therefore, any method of inquiry that violates any of the rational rules of the scientific method is null and void. Such a method cannot produce knowledge. It is against this backdrop that one will probably come to appreciate the revolutionary nature of the title of what is perhaps the most popular book by Paul Feyerabend, namely, [Against Method: Outline of an Anarchist Theory of Knowledge], (1975). The intellectual community may not have understood why Feyerabend chooses to see his detailed critique (in 339 pages) as 'outline' until when he released the two sequels, [Science in a Free Society], (1982) and [Farewell to Reason], (1987). These works have been described as the most lively and frontal critiques of the very foundations of modern science (NEWTON-SMITH 1981; AGBO 2014).

True to its title, Feyerabend in [Against Method], presents an explicit rejection of the larger than life image of the scientific method. He argues that a critical reading of the historical development of science shows that "there is no single rule, however plausible, and however firmly grounded in epistemology, that is not violated at some time or other", and these violations are not accidental events but results of insufficient knowledge or inattention, which might have been avoided. (23). Thus, he continues, "the idea of a fixed method or of a fixed theory of rationality, rests on too naive a view of man and his social surrounding" (27). He substantiated this claim through a critical analysis of the history of science. In this regard, Feyerabend agrees with the main thesis that Thomas Kuhn buttressed in his classic work on the history of science, [The Structure of Scientific Revolutions].

One of the major points that Kuhn buttressed in his book is the idea of paradigm shifts in the history of science. In simple terms, the idea of paradigm shifts suggests that the historical development of science is a tale of multifarious shifting of allegiance from theory to

theory. This view is contrary to the rational image of science touted by logical empiricist and their sympathizers such as Popper and Lakatos. Feyerabend embraces this view. For him, there is no faultless theory. This is because a successful rule today could lead us in some particular way to churn out an inferior theory. However, that this theory led us astray does not invalidate its acceptability. Hence, he jettisons the notion of rationality of method in science and then goes ahead to espouse the deficiencies of the methods of Popper, Lakatos and the logical positivists. From this, he states that the idea of a privileged method of scientific acquisition of knowledge does not exist. This follows from the fact that scientific methodologies have not lived up to their goals. He draws his argument from the history of physics. For instance, Newtonian physics has enjoyed universal allegiance for too long until quantum physics overtook this allegiance. He also argues that modern empiricism is different from the ancient one. For instance, modern empiricism insists that three conditions are required for genuine knowledge, namely: theory of explanation, condition of meaning invariance and consistency. But these were not found strictly in ancient empiricism. He aptly interpreted the lack of universal, firm and timeless allegiance to imply that no theory, method or rule of science has lived up to the heuristic image projected by the scientific community.

Accordingly, Feyerabend insists that strict adherence to consistency and invariance in meaning would have impeded the advancement in physics from the Copernican or Newtonian physics towards that of Einstein. This could be seen in the geocentric theory of planetary motion before Copernicus. Even the Copernican theory did not have these conditions of the scientific method (independent observational support) for almost two centuries, yet it was said to be empirical. The implication of this is that the assumption of the rationality of science held by the logical empiricists, Lakatos and Popper lacks historical support. If the scientific method is rational, then the history of science shows that science itself does not employ the scientific method. This results from the fact that science is not always rational. It is based on some assumptions that are not justifiable. More so, science cannot explain justifiably the origin and basis of its vaunted rationality. It can hardly stand in isolation of other methods of acquiring knowledge. In line with this point, Feyerabend maintains that the methods of voodoo, astrology and even traditional medicine, in so far as they give results, should not be rejected on the basis of its non-rational adherence to the scientific method. Though scientists argue against the alternatives methods, as a preliminary stage of knowledge acquisition, Feyerabend agrees with Kuhn that there is no “neutral algorithm for theory choice” (200) and that “one cannot proffer “good reason” to

justify the preference of one theory over another” (AGBO 2014, 21). Despite their agreement on many points, Feyerabend’s critique of science differs from Kuhn’s.

Newton-Smith makes an apt observation when he argues that “Feyerabend... is much more radical in his critique of rationalism than Kuhn. While Kuhn holds that there are rules held in common by all members of the scientific community” (1981,126), Feyerabend maintains that there is none. Agbo(2014) tends to unravel the reason for this fundamental difference by drawing attention to the different approach and focus of the two scholars. He explains that “Kuhn considered the history and actual practice of science as the basis for rejecting the bogus image of science” (AGBO, 25). It is possible that members of a particular scientific community do follow certain rules. Perhaps, this observation is the basis of Kuhn’s generalization on the existence of method. However, his generalization misses the mark when he used the term “the scientific community”. A careful reading of Kuhn seems to suggest the existence of different scientific communities that adopt different paradigms over a period of time. And by adopting different paradigms, the members of the different scientific communities have no specific rule or method in common. Unlike Kuhn, Feyerabend’s critique of science is on the idea of method itself. His argument is that “in terms of method and result, modern science is just one way of cognizing reality, among many others” (AGBO, 25).What this means is that all fields of inquiry employ different methods that are equally legitimate. In this sense, there are many scientific communities, not one. And the different scientific communities employ different methods. They follow different rules.

Feyerabend’s critique of science shows that the vaunted rational image of the scientific method is an ideological projection of the Western world (ALOZIE 2001, 160; KANU 2002; AGBO 2014). He, in [Farewell to Reason], describes such claims as “conceited, ignorant, superficial, incomplete and dishonest” (25). He consistently buttresses that “the idea of a science that proceeds by logically rigorous argumentations is nothing but a dream (43)”. For him, any claim that there is only one method (a rational way) of investigating our world is spurious and pernicious. Those wearing the mask of scientism are the West who try to use science as an ideology of dominance. The canonization of science amounts to an ideology because it lacks sound historical and epistemic support. Like any other form of knowledge, witchcraft, sorcery, magic etc., science is limited and imperfect. The scientific method is at best perspectival and lacks the capacities of generating theories for the rational justification of all methods. The most important aspects of a theory are obtained by contrast and not by

analysis. But this does not negate the intrinsic excellence of the chosen theory. Rather, the standards compete as theories and humans choose the standard most appropriate to the historical context in which the choice is made.

Consequently, Feyerabend submits that the idea of absolute rationality and infallibility attributed to the scientific method is a myth that is similar to what was arrogated to the papacy of the old. It is an inhibition to freedom of thought that must be destroyed so that humans can seek and produce knowledge without inhibition. It is on this note that Feyerabend's critique of science could be said to be a call for the liberation of knowledge from the strangulating hold of the West. This brings us to the issue of whether methodological anarchism is the best approach of achieving this goal.

Is Methodological Anarchism the Logical Product of Feyerabend's Critique of Science?

So far, I have espoused Feyerabend's critique of science. But, what is the implication of his critique of method? Is it anarchism or pluralism? The title of his book, [Against Method], and his use of the term 'anything goes' tend to suggest that Feyerabend calls for methodological anarchism as against methodological pluralism. I agree with him that there is no sole method or means of cognizing reality. To this effect, his rejection of the rational image of science is an insightful and thought-provoking one. It is as well a humanistic orientation geared toward the holistic development of human knowledge. For one, he was able to make us appreciate the need for the apprehension of the fact of the multifariousness of reality and the attendant multifarious methods of cognizing reality. Likewise, this attitude is the real attitude of one who is a scientist in the etymological sense. As an illustration, a man who is sick has no reason not to patronize any of the various options of obtaining healing, namely from acupuncture, African traditional medicine and orthodox medicine, in so far as he will attain the desired result. This is the sense in which the corroborative attitude is the rightful approach to the acquisition of knowledge. Be this as it may, I disagree with the idea that the rejection of the rational image of science logically implies "that there is only one principle that can be defended under all circumstances and in every stage of human development. It is the principle anything goes!" (27-28)

The idea of "anything goes" as stated by Feyerabend is suspect and forms my point of departure. The absence of rules and regulations, strictly speaking, can hardly assist in the advancement of human knowledge. It amounts to a suicidal inclination towards absolute relativism. This is because in the absence of specified rules, anybody

can project any prognostication. Although any useless or unfruitful prognostication will at the end fizzle out on its own, but that will be at the cost of some valuable resources that should have been properly utilized. Kanu puts this view differently thus:

In a society where everyone is free to follow his own inclinations and hold tenaciously even to moribund theories (and ideologies), the principle that will be at work is “everything stays”: in the political arena, this will lead to authoritarianism as those in power will do everything possible to remain in power. It was the realization of this danger that made Feyerabend to call himself a dadaist rather than an anarchist. (2002, 117)

However, Kanu’s allusion to the political arena does not follow because Feyerabend himself discredited political anarchism and endorses epistemological anarchism. Let us also note that Feyerabend’s view that knowledge results from contrast and not by analysis is not completely correct in all instances. This is supported by the fact that some forms of knowledge have been acquired via analysis and this did not make them less valuable. All we can say is that in creating a critique of science, Feyerabend created the atmosphere for objective investigation of other fields of knowledge. Contrary to the claim of the ‘scientist’, reality is not, and cannot, be restricted to the scientific (material) world. This enthrones the need to investigate the effectiveness of other methods of understanding reality. The thesis that science in its superlative achievements has gained prominence over other methods of knowledge acquisition is nothing other than the propaganda of the modernistic approach to human development. This is why the scientific community can do anything to hold tenaciously to the prestige of its method even against all odds of good reasoning.

Understandably, Feyerabend was a consummate liberal, who thinks that the individual should not be constrained from the things they might think and espouse. This stance is similar to Mill’s [On Liberty] where he had argued that truth comes from a plurality of opinions. This could be why Feyerabend holds that the permission of a unilateral view by education and consensus in science turns science to an ideology. He justifies opposition to this view as an act of humanitarianism; hence his view that anarchism or dadaism opposes any kind of restriction on the individual’s freedom to think or act. This appears to be laudable; but does this imply that human inquiries are not guided by certain rules? It does not quite appear that Feyerabend thinks so. He said that alternative epistemic methods should be granted equal epistemic status by the anarchist epistemologist. He justifies this view when he compares

science to church dogma, claiming that when scientific truth is unanimous, it is akin to a church dogma. This appears to be true with the recent revelations on the origin of AIDS and the politics of cancer. Anybody who opposes the consensus of the so called expert opinion, no matter the evidence supplied, is cajoled and scorned.

I shall conclude this section by stating that Feyerabend was partly right and partly wrong. He was right that science is not guided by its methodology and epistemological rules. This is because scientists are wont to fall for anything that will work in order to advance their research, without sustaining their epistemological purity. However, a *descriptive* epistemology of science exists with a fallibilistic view of knowledge, wherein ideas are accepted in instrumentalist and pragmatist ways. The challenge here is the inability to assess ahead of time which rules will arrive at knowledge. This is why I insist that if we do not seek to constrain the activity of science by prescribing absolutist rules that proceeds from exclusivist epistemologies, then there will be no problem. This view proves Feyerabend right, against those he was criticizing, the logical empiricists and Popper. Notably, one of the best points to attack Feyerabend's Dadaism is from his admittance of the existence of different methods in different fields. In [Science in a Free Society], Feyerabend advocates for the teaching of science, astrology, witchcraft, magic, etc., in schools. This goes to show that he rejected methodological monism for methodological pluralism as against methodological anarchism. Anything that lacks discernable basic procedural rules can hardly be taught or learned. Little wonder that Newton-Smith (1981, 25) opines that instead of [Against Method], [Against Received Opinion] could have been a better title.

Having said this, it is pertinent to re-state that Feyerabendism is a good framework for a comprehensive understanding of reality. However, the Afro-constructivist perspective on the question of methodology that I propose, calls for methodological pluralism. I shall therefore proceed to articulate the rules for the assessment of different methods. My argument is that it is possible to have objective but non-hegemonic rules for the production of different types of knowledge.

In Defense of Methods: An Afro-constructivist Argument for Methodological Pluralism

Afro-constructivism is a contemporary school in African philosophy that springs from the hybrid nature of contemporary Africa. The African seems to be a hybrid of a sort: this arises from his historical and existential circumstances of slavery and colonialism. The result is a dislocated character that is in constant search of personal identity. While some of the Africans advocate for eurocentrism (the view that history

should be seen from the perspective of European civilization) as the rightful approach for the seasoned and primed perspective on their development, others settle for Afrocentrism (the view that history should be rewritten bearing in mind the contribution of Africa). The two perspectives above are limited in that they are reactionary ideologies geared towards the subjugation or reclaiming of denigrated postures. This justifies the perspective that accommodates the historical progressions of Africa, namely, Afro-constructivism. What then is Afro-constructivism? Chukwuokolo's view will be helpful here:

The idea of Afro-Constructivism arises from the conception that the African world-view has been deconstructed by the forces of struggle between imperialism (colonialism, slavery and neo-colonialism) and Afro-centrism. This entails that for a society that has not found a veritable developmental ideology due to fierce battle of denial, counter-denial and refutations between imperialism and afro-centrism, there is the need to reconstruct the society from the realities of the history of such society. Afro-constructivism therefore is the perception that in African thought we do not apprehend an independent metaphysico-social reality, but construct a system of principles or norms governing right perception of the social order. Such construction is constrained by rationality and human nature to allow for reasoned perceptions of the Africa social order. This presupposes the idea of a Masonic construction from a set of ideas in the metaphysico-social reality of a people with the aim of expressing reality as it really is constituted. (2014, 31)

Afro-constructivism engenders an orientation where new explanations, theories and facts are established by the fusion and blend of diverse global philosophical/ epistemic materials. This entails the synthesizing of ideas from diverse cultures and in this case diverse epistemic methods and in so doing, transcending or subsuming the epistemic feeder ideas as sciences, revelation, etc. This synthesis of ideas may be dialectical in a way that reason ought to guide the choice or orientations. Thus, its aim is solely the understanding and explanation emanating from this fusion and blend of traditional and other global epistemic resources. It will advocate for a combination of methods in any agreeable sense such that there will be no preferred or dormant method of facilitation of information and knowledge production and dissemination.

Since modern science is a combination of rational and sensory resources, Afro-constructivism would posit that combination of both orthodox and unorthodox methods of accumulation of knowledge will enlarge the knowledge of the world more than any particular method, say science alone. Although Feyerabend's epistemological dadaism anticipates this position, it could not establish rules of objectivisation of methods as we have done earlier. This is the sense in which Afro-constructivism creates an alternative to epistemological dadaism. This fusion of methods of acquiring knowledge is in tandem with the natural methods. Indeed, it is the fusion of the dualism in nature that bring to being almost everything in creation; positive and negative, man and woman; in fact, the contraries that are found in nature are harnessed to bring things into existence. Electricity cannot be produced without positive and negative elements coming together. This fusion therefore can help humankind in understanding, explaining and expanding the frontiers of knowing and understanding reality more accurately. For instance, if we can use the sensory means to perceive phenomenon, we can use other methods like intuition, *afa*, (divination) and other extra-sensory means to perceive noumena. This is exactly what I am advocating with regard to epistemic methods, namely to construct a set of principles and norms governing knowledge production.

Jonathan O. Chimakonam (2015a, 26-26) presents a strong case for the need for the development of African philosophy as an academic discipline to be guided by specific criteria. This also applies to the entire edifice of science or knowledge. Without the existence of specific rules or methods, it is difficult, if not impossible, for one to claim that s/he is seeking for, or in possession of, knowledge. The problem with the vaunted image of the scientific method is the questionable exclusion of the methods of other useful fields of human enterprise across different non-Western cultures and civilizations as illegitimate. It is important to note that the modern science which the Western scientific community projects is not co-extensive with science (cf. CHIMAKONAM 2012). The basic regulator of the norms for knowledge is therefore not the procedural rules of the empirical-biased scientific method of the Western scientific community. It is reason; that acclaimed peculiar quality, that enables humans to explore and exploit reality to meet their needs. What this means is that Afro-constructivism sees reason as the guide and regulator of methods.

Reason as Guide and Regulator of Methods

Civilizations have betrayed the fact that on their own, they have methods of solving their existential problems which have served their needs successfully. Before the advent of human civilization that

eventually led to modern science and technology with its attendant spirit of capitalism, sociologists tell us that the first human societies solved their problems on their own with little help from outsiders. In those days, it is safe to assume that small communities isolated in the jungles of the world, assumed that the expanse of their territories was the limit of the universe. The primitive people's tireless efforts at creating other means of improving themselves showed that they were not contented with their methods of understanding their universe. Nevertheless, due to the fact that there was no substantial diffusion amongst societies, they had no means of comparing their methods and those of their other neighbors.

As the Western societies advanced in scientific know-how, the hitherto seclusion of societies was broken. Means of transportation and communication were prominent in the bridging of the chasm separating formerly isolated civilizations. With this symbolic interaction existing amongst societies, people from a particular society started travelling and assessing the methods of conquering the physical universe by societies they came into contact with. Such assessment gave rise to the tussle for superiority amongst societies. Capitalism played a big role in this tussle. It was natural that civilizations that had developed sophisticated weapons for the conquering of peoples and their environments sought to arrogate to themselves superiority of values. This stance is not without basis, as scientific and technological prowess backed it. Aeroplanes, ships, cars, weapons of mass destruction, medicare etc., were on hand to attest to this superiority. Colonialism, which was a capitalist mercantilist adventurism, sought to couch science in an ideological language of "rule the colonies". This led to the tendentious stance of regarding every method of the colonies as inferior. Consequently, the thinking was that no matter how successful these presumed inferior methods have been in the understanding of the multifarious aspects of reality, they should be jettisoned. This is the atmosphere that was created by science and technology through colonialism.

At this point I have to re-state that the advocates of science as the supreme paradigm of rationality are of the view that the scientific method embodies objective and consistent rules for acquiring timeless and absolute knowledge. The history of science shows that this is not the case. It is on this ground that Feyerabend argues for methodological anarchism. My argument is that the problem lies not in the idea of objectivity and consistency but in the issue of timelessness and absolutism. It is also noteworthy to state that a knowledge claim that is consistent and objective is not necessarily absolute and timeless. As a regulator of methods, reason helps humans to discover and follow certain objective and consistent rules that will enable them to discover,

articulate and systematize how to deal with a specific challenge in a given society at a particular time. But first what is reason?

The discussion of what reason means has been dealt with extensively by G.W.F. Hegel. Though his kind of reason is metaphysical but it was blended properly as a system that was in search of absolute knowledge. This is because without absolute knowledge, consciousness cannot attain genuine unity of itself with reality. For Hegel therefore:

Reason... Is substance, as well as infinite power; its own infinite material underlying all the material and spiritual life which originates, as also the infinite form – that which sets this material in motion. On the other hand, reason is the substance of the universe; viz; that by which and in which all reality has its being and subsistence. On the other hand, it is the infinite energy of the universe.... It supplies its own nourishment, and objects of its own activity. (1966, 58)

We can infer from the above that reason is raised to the level of supreme principle from which and through which everything flows. Reason is such because it has these qualities of consistency and objectivity. This is the aspect of Afro-constructivism that is in tandem with Hegelianism—a state where reason is the guide of the fusion of all the ideas of human civilizations in order to engender the kind of synthesis that will help humans to get to the roots of a seemingly inscrutable reality.

So far, we have said that the rule of reason should guide or regulate methods in a way that invalidates epistemological anarchism and upholds epistemological concord and consistency. How can this be assured? The scientific method, as we have noted earlier, has certain rules that when followed, an enterprise could be said to be scientific, namely, abstraction, generality, empirical evidence, ethical neutrality and objectivity. These are purported rules of consistency within the scientific system. But when followed strictly, it will show that these rules were carried out for only materialistic enterprises. Yet reality is not only matter, it is also operative in the realm of idea. Any knowledge of the whole of reality must encompass those multifarious aspects of reality (cf. CHIMAKONAM 2012, 1-12). Even in the investigation of material reality, which is the domain of modern science, the rules of consistency and objectivity derivable from reason should guide its enquiry. The need for this arises because science is based on certain assumptions that are hardly empirically verifiable.

Now reason is the methodical ordering of reality in such a way that results derived will take a holistic approach to the understanding of the profundities of reality. Reason in this instance is akin to what

Jacques Ellul sees as “the totality of methods of rationality arrived at and having absolute efficiency (for a given state of development) in every field of human activity” (1964, xxv). If any system can make itself amenable to the state of consistent and objective derivation with absolute efficiency, such a system should be accepted. So what is consistency and how do we apply it to other systems as voodooism, African traditional medicine or even magic?

Consistency is a situation where a system does not yield affirmation and negation in particular instances at different times. For instance, in traditional medicine, a bone setter who has been using a method for a long period of time with absolute efficiency cannot be said to be inconsistent simply because orthodox orthopedic doctors cannot explain the theory being used. There is always this internal consistency and objectivity that allows the purveyor of this method to transmit the method from one generation to another through ceremonial initiations or formal trainings. For the fact that empirical science cannot explain those rules of method does not mean that they should be jettisoned. The rule of objectivity entails also that the traditional bone setter should be able to achieve the same results not minding whosoever that is brought before him. What is of essence here is that the methods being used are extractions from the laws of nature for the solution of humanity’s problem. It is obvious that knowledge acquisition is contextual. So many environments breed the conditions over a period of time that give rise to the sort of knowledge acquisition prevalent in such environment. For instance, the idea of psycho-kinesis could be said to develop in a particular society in order to enable members of the society to grapple with the problems of rough terrains (swamp, rocky hilly environments) that inhibit easy movement. Those living in flat lands may not have the need to use such methods as their terrain is not inhibitive. There is no doubt that nature imbues humans with the innate potentialities and capacities to extricate themselves from the realities they find themselves if they adhere to the regulation of method as prescribed by reason. The results that could be achieved if we adhere to the regulation of methods could be tremendous. They will give corroborative assistance to the understanding of reality holistically. This results from the fact that there are so many hidden aspects of reality that modern science can hardly penetrate. But other systems like magic could be applied to penetrate such areas. After all, before the ideological state of modern science, magic, even alchemy, had a central role in the intellectual history of both science and Europe generally (See THORNDIKE, 1905).

So far, my contention is that reason should regulate methods. I have used few instances to buttress my claim. The result of this new approach will be tremendous because modern science that prides itself as the embodiment of rationality has failed woefully in areas that other so-called non-scientific methods have succeeded. There is no problem with a surgeon who is vast in the para-psychological system of hypnosis applying it in eradicating pain during his surgery. We shall end this section by agreeing with J.C.A. Agbakoba that, “the application of reason (and of course a matching will) to efficiently organize humans and non-humans has resulted in the sort of society we have today in the East and West” (1998, 218). This calls for the adoption of a unique Africa-inspired approach to the study of reality. What is uniquely African in this context is the emphasis on complementarity (cf. ASOUZU 2004; OLUWOLE 2014; CHIMAKONAM 2015b). In this regard, applying the rules set earlier will lead to a more contextsensitive approach to knowledge production through a harmonious complementary application of the various epistemic methods developed and employed by the different scientific communities across cultures and civilizations.

Arguably, fidelity to reason, as explained above, is in line with Feyerabend’s call for the proliferation of methods. However, it (fidelity to reason) rejects Feyerabend’s theory of epistemological anarchism, which portends a serious danger to the future of human civilization. The acceptance of epistemological anarchism will mean that there will be no basis for human societies to measure, analyze and regulate the methods being applied. This would mean that even when charlatans come out for instance to obfuscate societal values, they will be ignored as they could be applying their own method. For instance, before the year 2000, so many charlatans prophesized that the world would come to an end by the millennium year; those “leaders” of religious sects advised their followers to sell their properties in order to wait for the *parousia*; several others committed suicide to avert witnessing the doomsday. We ought to use an established method to assess the propriety or otherwise of the method of arriving at such claims. This is the gap in Feyerabend’s critique that Afro-constructivism wants to fill.

The philosophical pillar for any knowledge claim rests on objectivity. One cannot be said to possess any knowledge without creating the basis of its assessment by others. It is not to be said that relativism is absolutely useless: it is useful at the level where the individual is still trying to establish a given knowledge claim. Afterwards, the knowledge claim could only be accepted as such when others can assess it. In this regard, objectivity is the fulcrum of knowledge acquisitions. This is what was lacking in the philosophy of

Feyerabend. Afro-constructivism tends to bridge this yawning gap by insisting that the rules of consistency and objectivity of reason should be used to assess every knowledge claim.

Conclusion

My submission is that the logical implication of Feyerabend's critique of science is methodological pluralism. The rejection of the hegemonic rational image of the scientific method calls for the proliferation of diverse methods for cognizing reality. This call flows from the acknowledgement of the existence or the possibility of different methods. The rejection of the rationality of the scientific method does not mean the elimination of methods in general. It does not suggest the principle, "anything goes". I therefore contend that methodological anarchism is not a logical deduction from Feyerabend's critique of science. Hence, I present an Afro-constructivist reading of Feyerabend's critique of science that gives credence to methodological pluralism.

Notably, Feyerabend was against the enemies of pluralities of method. He sees the supporters of the rational image of science as adherents to a different form of religious orthodoxy: "What has changed", he argues, "is the denomination of the enemies. They were priests, or "school philosophers" a few decades ago. Today, they call themselves "philosophers of science" or logical empiricists" (1963, 5). Unknown to these people, or for self-seeking reasons, they were actually fighting against scientific progress. Feyerabend insists that to be a good empiricist entails embracing theoretical pluralism as it is the basis of all objective knowledge. He sees the advantages of methodological pluralism as the function of such concrete alternatives in providing means of criticizing the accepted theory in a manner which goes beyond the criticism provided by a comparison of that theory 'with facts'. His point is that however closely a theory seems to reflect the facts, however universal its use, and however necessary its evidence seems to be to those speaking the corresponding truth, its factual adequacy can be asserted only after it has been confronted with alternatives whose invention and detailed development must precede any final assertion of practical success and factual adequacy (cf. FEYERABEND 1963, 6-7). The Afro-constructivist perspective that I propose sees this as a justification for methodological pluralism.

Relevant Literature

1. AGBOKOBA, Joseph C.A “Towards a Philosophy of Technology and Development for Africa”, [Africa: Philosophy and Public Affairs, J. Obi Oguejiofor Ed.], pp210-230, 1998. Delta publications: Enugu.
2. AGBO, Joseph N. “The Post-Modern Scientific Thoughts of Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend: Implications for Africa.” [FilosofiaTheoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp09-37, July-December, 2014. Vol 3. No 2. Paperback.
3. _____. “The Mode of Knowledge in Science and Social Science”, [Philosophy and Logic, EZE Nwokereke Ed.], pp164-178, 2003. Jones Publications: Enugu. Paperback.
4. ALOZIE, Princewill I. Ed. [History and Philosophy of Science, 2nd edn.], 2001. Clear Lines Publications: Calabar. Paperback.
5. ASOUZU, Innocent 1. “Fidelity To Western Metaphysics: A Challenge to Authentic African Existence”, [FilosofiaTheoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp02-16, January-June, 2016. Vol 5. No 1. Paperback.
6. _____. [The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and Beyond African Philosophy], 2004. University of Calabar Press: Calabar. Paperback.
7. CHIMAKONAM, Jonathan O. [Introducing African Science: Systematic and Philosophical Approach], 2012. AuthorHouse: Bloomington IN. Paperback.
8. _____. “Conversational Philosophy as a new School of Thought in African Philosophy: A Conversation with Bruce Janz on the concept of “Philosophical Space””. [Confluence: Journal of World Philosophies], Vol 2. No. 3, Pp 9–40, 2015a. Web.
9. _____. “The knowledge Question in African Philosophy: A Case for Cogno-Normative (Complementary) Epistemology.” [Atuolu Omalu: Some Unanswered Questions in Contemporary African Philosophy, JONATHAN O. Chimakonam Ed.], Pp 67-81, 2015a. University Press of America: Lanham. Paperback.
10. CHUKWUOKOLO, J. Chidozie. “Afro-constructivism: Towards a new Way of Understanding African Thought” [Frontiers of Knowledge in Philosophy: Cutting Edge Issues, MARTIN Asiegbu & J CHIDOZIE Chukwuokolo, Eds.], pp21-41, 2014. Jones Communication Publishers: Enugu. Paperback.

11. ELLUL, Jacques.[The Technological Society], 1964. Alfred Aknor: New York. Paperback.
12. FEYERABEND, Paul K. “How to be a Good Empiricist: A Plea for Tolerance in Matters Epistemological”, [Philosophy of Science: The Delaware seminar, Volume 2, B. Baumrin, Ed.], 1963. New York: Interscience Press.
13. _____. [Against Method], 1975. Verso Press: New York. Paperback.
14. _____. [Science in a free Society], 1978. New Left Books: London. Paperback.
15. _____. [Farewell to Reason], 1987. Verso Press: New York. Paperback.
16. HEGEL, Georg W. F.[The Phenomenology of Mind, Second edition, Translated by J.B Baillie], 1966. George Allen and Unwin:London. Paperback.
17. KANU, Macauley N. “Paul Feyerabend’s Philosophy of Science: The Philosophical Blue-Print for the Development of Science and Technology in Africa”, [Ph.D Thesis], 2002. Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar. UP.
18. KUHN, Thomas S. [The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd edn.], 1970. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago. Paperback.
19. NEWTON-SMITH, W. H. [The Rationality of Science], 1981. Routledge and Kegan Paul: London. Paperback.
20. OZUMBA, Godfrey O. [The Philosophy of Logical Positivism and the Growth of Science], 2001. Bacos Publishers: Calabar. Paperback.
21. POPPER, Karl R. [Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge], 1963. Routledge: London. Paperback.
22. THORNDIKE, Lynn.[The Place of Magic in the Intellectual History of Europe], 1905.Columbian University Press: New York. Paperback.