that the puzzles appear because of the profundity and clarity of his reading of philosophy’s traditions. It is because he saw so clearly and simply what mattered in reference that he ended that decade with the puzzle about belief. The overarching virtue of that paper is Kripke’s pursuit, without side or favour, of the ramifications for our practices of belief-ascription of adhering to his opening insight about reference. Holding fast to that insight leaves us with puzzles. And he is still doing it in papers like “Frege’s Theory of Sense and Reference: Some Exegetical Notes,” published only in 2008 and reprinted here as Chapter 9 and in “The First Person,” published for the first time as Chapter 10.

This collection is indispensable to serious students of Kripke. And that should include all of us. Students will benefit from having so many of his classic papers in a single place. But we all benefit from repeated exposure to the telling examples and forensic argumentation with which Kripke holds fast to insights that set and continue to dominate core agendas in philosophy. This is a monumental collection.

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The fact that Wittgenstein was an important influence upon the philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend has been long suspected, but understanding the precise nature and extent of that influence has proven difficult. The two most sustained efforts to explore that influence offered by two philosophers of science with an interest in Feyerabend, for Wittgenstein scholars have been less active in efforts to explore that influence from the other side, as it
were. Certainly, one can sympathise with Eric Oberheim’s lament that exploring Wittgenstein’s influence upon Feyerabend is a “complicated and contentious” business, not least because of the ambiguities and complexities of their respective works (not to mention characters!). These two books by Feyerabend offer a useful opportunity to consider his relationship to Wittgenstein anew by taking seriously the latter’s advice to “look and see” what one might find.

The two books under review are both fruits of Feyerabend’s later career. This fourth edition of Against Method is, in fact, substantially identical to the third edition (published in 1993), but that was different from the second edition (1987) and the first edition (1975). Feyerabend edited and expanded the work throughout its editions, adding some sections, deleting others and shifting his focus to reflect his own varying interests. But if Against Method had a long and complex genesis, The Tyranny of Science was more straightforward, for it consists of a series of lectures that Feyerabend gave at the University of Trent in 1992. Those lectures were titled Ambiguità e armonia, or Conflict and Harmony, but Polity Press opted to give them their current title perhaps in tribute to Feyerabend’s reputation as the “worst enemy of science,” as two writers for Nature once dubbed him.

Before considering Feyerabend’s mature views as expressed in these later works, it is worth emphasising that Wittgenstein’s influence upon him began at the very earliest stages of his career. They first met in Vienna in the late 1940s, the early stage of Feyerabend’s career and the later stage of Wittgenstein’s. Feyerabend invited Elisabeth Anscombe to speak to the Kraft Circle, a small group of positivist students he was involved with, whose main occupation was philosophy-bashing. Anscombe was, he later recalled, “a powerful and, to some people, forbidding British philosopher,” through whose influence he persuaded Wittgenstein to speak to the Kraft Circle. The other members of that circle seemed unimpressed with Wittgenstein, but Feyerabend instantly found his emphasis on concrete examples powerful and arresting. The two soon began to have regular discussions, which Feyerabend reported as having a “profound influence” upon him, although, frustratingly, he found it “not at all easy to specify particulars.” Clearly, Wittgenstein also enjoyed those discussions, for he agreed to supervise Feyerabend’s doctoral studies at Cambridge. Unfortunately, Wittgenstein’s death put paid to that, leaving Feyerabend to study with Karl Popper at the London School of Economics.

Considering these two books, four main themes seem to be hold in common between Wittgenstein and Feyerabend. The first is an emphasis on the priority of practical concrete experience over abstract theorising,

evident, for instance, in Feyerabend’s insistence that the philosophy of science should be guided by sensitivity to the history and practice of science and not by logical models devised in isolation from them. The four big “turns” in the philosophy of science – the historical, sociological, experimental and practice-based – all owe to the broadly Wittgensteinian imperative to “look and see,” which was, in part, inspired by Feyerabend’s own work, especially Against Method.

Understanding science, for Feyerabend, requires that one suspends automatic appeal to abstract philosophical models and instead looks to the history and practice of science. The core claim of Against Method is, after all, that scientific thought and practice is too complex and diverse to admit of description in terms of a singular “scientific method.” If one looks at actual science in practice, one does not see a single thing, “The Scientific Method”, but rather a whole shifting array of formal and informal methods, ad hoc adjustments, experimental fudges, and so on. Many philosophers of science were initially alarmed by this, worrying that the resulting pluralistic view of science would lead to chaos – a fact that explains Feyerabend’s malicious delight in dubbing his account of science “epistemological anarchism” rather than the “scientific pluralism” preferred by soberer commentators.

The second theme in common to Wittgenstein and Feyerabend is a deep and abiding anti-scientism. In Feyerabend’s case, anti-scientism is confused by careless commentators with hostility to science itself, which is unsurprising, given his fondness for provocative gestures like defending astrology. But once one cuts through the provocation and rhetoric, it becomes clear that Feyerabend is pro-science; he offers a “searing critique” not of science itself but rather of exaggerated estimations of its value and scope. Wittgenstein, too, directs his criticisms at inflated accounts of the place and value of science within modern societies rather than at science itself, which is perhaps why he reports his thoughts as being opposed to the “spirit of the main current of European and American civilization,” one from which, as James Klagge has persuasively argued, he felt alienated. Feyerabend similarly lambasted the tendencies towards abstractness within modern societies, especially as visible in zealous enthusiasm for the sciences, which render our lives “impoverished . . . one-sided and empty” by imposing narrow interpretations of certain of the experiences “needed for a meaningful existence.”

Such remarks are complex and require careful exegesis, but it is clear that Wittgenstein and Feyerabend considered modern societies to be

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5. Feyerabend (2010, 26 and 13).
peculiarly entranced by the sciences – or by certain confused ideas about them – with deleterious intellectual and cultural consequences. Much of Feyerabend’s concern in *The Tyranny of Science* is to challenge and expose those consequences: the tyranny of the title only arises when people uncritically accept the sciences and thereby fail to attend to the task of reflectively accommodating them within their lives, especially alongside other traditions and practices, like philosophy and the arts. The purpose of this task is emancipatory, freeing up from “tyrannous” conceptions of science invested in false rational and methodological credentials that collapse when we “look and see.”

The third theme is that of the “miraculous” or mysterious nature of reality. Wittgenstein’s various mystical remarks are well known from the *Tractarian* talk of wonderment at the fact that the world exists to the idea of looking at the world as a “miracle” in the “Lecture on Ethics.” In fact, this theme intersects with the former because although “the scientific way of looking at a fact is not the way to look at it as a miracle,” it is the only one privileged within modern societies, such that “everything miraculous has disappeared.” Feyerabend likewise urges us to intuit, behind the “abundance” of the world the mysterious “Being” behind it, the ineffable “foundation” of human thought and practice. The world then appears as a “miracle” grounded in something that is both beyond human comprehension yet utterly intimate with our practices and experiences – an appreciation that the tyrannous, scientistic conviction in the absolute explanatory authority of the modern sciences would occlude.

It is the importance of recapturing our sense of the “miraculous” nature of our “abundant” world that leads into the fourth and final theme, namely Feyerabend’s and Wittgenstein’s ambivalence towards the profession of academic philosophy. The abstractions that contribute to the occluding scientism of modern society are partly the fault of philosophers, firstly because they delightedly manufacture and refine them, and secondly because they fail to critically challenge them. Throughout his career, Feyerabend emphasised his disdain for academic philosophy, insisting that its practitioners, himself included, too often fell victim to “intellectualist conceit and folly.” Unlike Wittgenstein, however, Feyerabend remained an academic throughout his career, being simultaneously professor at Berkeley and Zurich, so his sincerity can be doubted in a way that Wittgenstein’s cannot; but even so, Feyerabend shared Wittgenstein’s hostility towards demagogy, insisting that his students found their own way and going to strenuous lengths to avoid becoming a “tyrant” himself, in the

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8. Ibid., p. 280.
sense of someone who imposes their views onto an audience primed for uncritical acceptance.

Judging by the themes and concerns of these two books, Wittgenstein was present in the later stages of Feyerabend’s thought just as he was at the beginning. Much more could be said about their relationship, but Against Method and Tyranny of Science offer intrepid scholars much useful material to go on, as well as being entertaining and vigorous philosophical exercises in themselves.

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References


