Overview

In this reading we depart slightly from the attempt to provide a demarcation criterion between science and pseudoscience, and instead we look at whether science deserves the special status it has today. Feyerabend wishes to defend society against all ideologies, and he believes that science is one such ideology.

He considers carefully an argument in favor of giving science an exceptional status, an argument that proceeds from science's methods as well as its results. According to this argument, science deserves its elevated status just because it has its strong methodology and also because it has delivered exceptional results. Feyerabend responds briefly to each of these claims. Feyerabend then concludes with a brief note about the importance of properly educating young people against easy acceptance of science.

Reading Questions

The following questions are meant to guide and assist you in reading Feyerabend's article. They will draw your attention to key passages and challenge you to think about what Feyerabend is really trying to say. Although no page numbers are given, the questions come roughly in the order that you will find their answers in the text.

1. How (according to Feyerabend) has science become an ideology deserving of being overthrown? What does Feyerabend mean by this?
2. How would scientists respond to the charge of tyranny Feyerabend levels against science? (p. 56)
3. What is the basic argument in favor of science's exceptional status in society?
4. What is Feyerabend's basic argument against method?
5. What is Feyerabend's basic argument against results?
6. What is the proper aim of education with respect to science? (This is a bit vague -- deliberately so -- but still important.)

Challenge Questions

1. Can you come up with a satisfactory answer to Feyerabend's charges on behalf of the scientist?