

WHOEVER COULD GET RID OF THE CONTEXT OF DISCOVERY/  
CONTEXT OF JUSTIFICATION DICHOTOMY?

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Popper's philosophy of science relies very heavily on the context of discovery/context of justification dichotomy. But, is this dichotomy tenable? Aware of the fact that it would turn their respective philosophies of science into a mere chronicle of science, both Kuhn and Feyerabend strove to get rid of it by arguing that it not only precludes an adequate understanding of the process by means of which science really progresses but, above all, masks the fact that "scientific progress", now in inverted commas, is only an outcome of some peculiar, socially-authorized way of recounting the history of science. Against both, I argue that it is not possible to say anything about scientific progress, not even that we will always need inverted commas to talk about it, without being, irremediably, involved with the context of discovery/context of justification dichotomy. To ask whether, and how, science progresses, implies, above all, to ask whether, and why, some theory represents some gain of knowledge if compared with a previous one, and such a question concerns only the context of justification. This question severs the two contexts in the same way as a centrifuge severs some liquid from the sediments contained in it. It means that the only way to get rid of the dichotomy is to remain silent about the growth of knowledge. I claim that insofar as neither Kuhn nor Feyerabend did so, their respective philosophies of science remained largely tributary of the dichotomy they strove to blur. This is particularly noticeable if we examine Feyerabend's effort to show the cognitive relevance of past corpuses of knowledge to our present-day knowledge. Or if we examine Kuhn's effort to explain the importance of theories not yet entirely articulated for the advancement of science. I argue that these efforts are not intelligible unless we rely on Popper's evolutionary epistemology, which, in its turn, is not intelligible at the margin of the context of discovery/context of justification dichotomy.