

Introduction

Science as an arena of epistemic activities has grown organically during a long process of cultural evolution. It is a major cultural achievement that was planned by no individual mind but emerged spontaneously as the unintended outcome of interaction between individuals engaging in epistemic activities. Science is a human endeavour, permanently unfinished, a project of humanity of astonishing range and success. Such a complex phenomenon excites our intellectual curiosity inducing us to adopt a *descriptive stance* explaining its emergence and its mode of operation and incites our admiration inducing us to adopt a *normative stance* providing good reasons for supporting its further existence and for securing its accomplishments.

In this book I will develop a specific outlook on science from within the normative stance by virtue of introducing the idea of a Constitution of Science. Scientific activities are special kinds of epistemic problem-solving activities unfolding in an institutional context. The scientific enterprise is a social process unfolding within an intricate institutional framework that structures the daily activities of scientists and shapes their outcomes. Those institutions of science which are of the highest generality make up the Constitution of Science and are of fundamental importance for channelling the scientific process effectively. If science as the incubator of the most successful solutions to problems of representation of reality and as the basis of the most effective interventions in the natural and social world is valued positively, then its constitutional foundations must be protected. How exactly, by whom and at what level are the questions that I would like to address in this book.