

## INTRODUCTION

No government has the right to decide on the truth of scientific principles, nor to prescribe in any way the character of the questions investigated. **Richard P. Feynman** (1918–88)

We own the science [on climate change], and we think that the world should know it. **Melissa Fleming**,  
UN Under-secretary General for Global Communications

I want to defend society and its inhabitants from all ideologies, science included. There is nothing inherent in science... that makes it essentially liberating.... Science has now become as oppressive as the ideologies it had once to fight.  
**Paul K. Feyerabend** (1924–94)

The key word in the title of this collection of interview-conversations is *'humanising'*. By deploying the term 'humanising science', I am deliberately pointing to what I see as the fundamental error of 'objectivist' positivistic science, and which I read about so much back in the 1970s – viz. the very idea that science in theory and practice, and what it generates, can legitimately be separated from, and be immune from, irreducibly *human* processes, experiences and psychologies to which we are all inevitably subject. On this view, science as an activity, and its associated contents, simply cannot be understood and adequately accounted for without explicitly including arguments and insights from the *sociology* and the *philosophy* of science – or else we risk our science grossly misrepresenting the deep, complex nature of the reality it is striving accurately to characterise.

First, something about the notion of 'paradigm' and paradigm

change, which are core concerns in the present volume. In recent times the term ‘paradigm’ has tended to be promiscuously invoked by pretty much anyone speaking about change in the modern world, with one unfortunate consequence being that the deep meaning of the term ‘paradigm’ has been denuded and devalued through loose and inappropriate over-usage. It is, after all, a rather grand-sounding term, and it is understandable, perhaps, that everyone therefore wants their ideas to be associated with it!

In its original meaning, deriving from the seminal book by philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn (1922–96), *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, published over 60 years ago, the term ‘paradigm’ refers to an all-encompassing world-view, a scientific cosmology, with all its attendant (often unconscious metaphysical) assumptions about reality, knowledge and truth. Kuhn’s work has been criticised in various ways by some commentators; but the very fact that the notion of ‘paradigm’ has such wide appeal in modern culture strongly suggests that Kuhn was really on to something very important indeed.

With the advent of postmodern thinking (broadly defined) in the 1980s, and the ascendancy of ‘the New Science’ as championed by people like Rupert Sheldrake, Fritjof Capra and the Scientific and Medical Network, perhaps the grandest paradigmatic struggle of all is currently around so-called ‘modernity’ and ‘New Paradigm’ thinking. The latter fundamentally questions, or even rejects, the core metaphysical assumptions that underpin a modernist, materialistic world-view.

Kuhn referred to what he termed ‘normal science’, which pre-occupies the dominant way of explaining the world, with research being ‘firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements... that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice.’<sup>1</sup> He wrote further that ‘this issue of paradigm choice can never be unequivocally settled by logic and experiment alone’. Referring to ‘scientific revolutions’, Kuhn wrote:

The usual prelude to changes of this sort is... the awareness of anomaly, of an occurrence or set of occurrences that does not fit existing ways of ordering phenomena. The changes that result therefore require ‘putting on a different kind of thinking-cap’, one that renders the anomalous lawlike but that, in the process, also

*transforms the order exhibited by some other phenomena, previously [viewed as] unproblematic. (my italics)*

For Kuhn, then, what he calls the ‘mopping up operations’ of ‘normal science’ constitutes

...an attempt to force nature into the preformed and relatively inflexible box that the paradigm supplies. No part of the aim of normal science is to call forth new sorts of phenomena; indeed *those that will not fit the box are often not seen at all*. Nor do scientists normally aim to invent new theories, and *they are often intolerant of those invented by others. (my italics)*

Kuhn also provides us with an interesting perspective on critical thinking, for ‘critical discourse recurs only at moments of crisis when the bases of the field are again in jeopardy. Only when they must choose between competing theories do scientists behave like philosophers.’

In his chapter on the Copernican scientific revolution in the 2010 book *A New Renaissance* (edited by David Lorimer and Oliver Robinson), philosopher Richard Tarnas views our current situation as ‘an age between world views’, demanding ‘a critical reappraisal of the epistemological limits of the conventional scientific approach to knowledge’, and ‘an acknowledgement of the inadequacy of reductionist, mechanistic, and objectivized concepts of nature’ – a view which is strongly supported by nearly all the contributors to the book you are reading.

Tarnas goes in to identify three key aspects to the new intellectual vision that our planet urgently needs – namely, recognising *the role of the imagination* in mediating all human knowledge and experience; increased awareness of *the place of the unconscious*; and a greater understanding of ‘the nature of symbolic, metaphoric, and archetypal meaning in human life’. For Tarnas, then, a radical shift is required at what he terms the ‘cosmological level’, as a necessary condition for a successful revisioning of psychology, science or religion to take place.

The distinguished philosopher of science Sir Karl R. Popper (1902–94) in many ways sums up the grave dangers of uncritically taking for granted precisely that which we should always be open to challenging. Popper wrote:

'Normal' science, in Kuhn's sense, exists. It is the activity of the non-revolutionary, or more precisely, the not-too-critical professional: of the science student who accepts *the ruling dogma of the day...* in my view the 'normal' scientist, as Kuhn describes him, is a person one ought to be sorry for... *He has been taught in a dogmatic spirit: he is a victim of indoctrination...* I can only say that I see a very great danger in it and in the possibility of its becoming normal... a danger to science and, indeed, to our civilization. (my italics)

The themes and concerns touched upon by Popper, Kuhn and others will recur repeatedly in the conversations in this book.

Moving now to the *style* in which this book has been written: For some three decades now, I have been conducting interviews in writing – many of them lengthy and going to deep, sometimes unexpected places. I far prefer interviews constructed through writing, rather than live verbal interviews. With the latter, I find that being in 'the anxiety of the moment', and possibly having many more than one lines of thinking in response to a given verbal question, much that one would want to have said can get lost amidst the constraint of not being able to express more than one thought (or line of thinking) at once. And in the moment, moreover, we may not choose the line which, given the opportunity to reflect, we might deem to be by far the most important to address and develop.

In the process of writing, by contrast, it can be a carefully reflective process – perhaps akin to the great poet making many drafts of a given poem before the final version emerges. We first receive a written question from our interviewer, and even before we begin to formulate our answer to it, we can fully digest the question in our own time and as we wish, allowing it to touch our unconscious in whatever way it resonates, and then allow the answer to emerge in whatever way happens best for us.

The revision process also gives us the time to ensure that we've said everything we wish to say in relation to the question, and in the order and with the emphasis that faithfully reflect our soul response to what we've been asked. And asking the interview questions sequentially, waiting for the answer to the preceding question before fashioning

the next one, ensures that the interview, even though in written form, has an *alive, organically emerging* quality, which will hopefully render the final product more readable, and emotionally and intellectually engaging, for the reader.

But what you will find below are more than ‘interviews’ – hence the word ‘conversations’ in the book’s subtitle. As the initiating interlocutor in these twelve conversations, I inevitably had a lot to say about the subject-matter of the interviews, as I chose the interviewees very carefully as authorities with whom I was very keen to have a deep conversation, given my pre-existing admiration for their work. So you will hear a lot of my own voice in these conversations – and you’ll often find me apologising to the interviewee for saying too much in my ‘questions’! I hope the reader will find the arguably overly indulgent appearance of my own voice in what follows to have been worthwhile in helping to elucidate the subject matter under discussion, and in the process drawing out deeper, more richly articulated contributions from my interviewees.

Most of the interviews included in this book have been previously published in either *New View* magazine or in *Self & Society: International Journal for Humanistic Psychology*, which I edited for over a decade until 2024. However, none of the interviews is easily accessible online; and in addition, some of the conversations reproduced here have more content from my own pen than those in the (abridged) published versions. In addition, the interviews with Professors Barry Condon, Brian Martin and David P. Morris have been specially written for this volume and are previously unpublished.

It will soon become clear when reading the book that most of the conversations were conducted during the Covid event (i.e. over the period 2020–23); and so at least some of the conversations about science explicitly engage with what many see as the flagrant abuse of ‘the science’ during Covid – and what this might illustrate about the nature of science in the contemporary world. In this sense, Covid has perhaps been something of a godsend for those wishing to shine a searching light on the nature of modern institutional science (including medical science) in today’s world; for it has arguably exposed the scientific tendencies and sheer chicanery of much of modern science

in a way that events falling short of the extremes of Covid would never have succeeded in revealing. Put differently, a space has been created by the Covid event which critics have been able to move into, and gain no little purchase upon; so in this sense it is highly appropriate that the Covid experience features significantly in this book, even though it is being published well over a year after the event itself.

But the book is by no means of interest to ‘Covid-sceptics’ alone and those questioning establishment narratives! It would certainly be impossible – or greatly remiss – to publish a book on science and medicine in 2025 without at least mentioning, if not seriously interrogating, the Covid-19 ‘pandemic’ in relation to the deployed ‘science’, and the medical interventions that were showcased in mainstream narratives and medias in the course of the Covid event. By no means all of the conversations do this, however; but several do – and predominantly in the sense that both Covid, and also the so-called ‘climate-change emergency’, can be taken as exemplars of the current state of science and medical science in a world in which science is at least as much being driven by policy, as it is the other way around – the dangers of which philosopher of science Paul K. Feyerabend (1924–94) warned half a century ago (see Chapter 5’s interview with Feyerabend scholar Ian James Kidd, and elsewhere in this introduction).

*Humanising Science and Medicine* will therefore be of great interest to anyone who refuses to take for granted the assumptions about reality (specifically, scientific and medical realities) that are handed down from ‘authority’ alone. We know that throughout the history of science, many pontificating scientific experts of their time were subsequently proven to have been completely wrong in the light of subsequent scientific findings. That it is even remotely possible for the latter to be the case demands that current-day advocates of ‘the science’, in whatever field, exhibit at least a modicum of modesty and provisionality about their views. But alas, such human qualities are woefully absent in the hectoring, hubristic derision that has commonly been aimed by mainstream spokespersons at anyone daring to disagree with mainstream ‘scientific’ narratives in recent years. This is emphatically *not* how good science works – as any philosopher or sociologist of science will tell you.

The great contributions of philosopher of science Paul K. Feyerabend (PKF) lie at the heart of the conversations in this book; and the aforementioned conversation with Feyerabend scholar Ian James Kidd in Chapter 5 dives deeply into PKF's often revolutionary, counter-narrative thinking about the nature of the scientific enterprise. Half a century ago in 1974, Feyerabend gave an historically prophetic talk at Sussex University titled 'How to defend society against science' – warning of the authoritarian nature of mainstream science long before such tendencies became recognisable in mainstream culture. Were he alive today, Professor Feyerabend would surely be queuing up to critique the way 'the science' was and is being deployed in the service of recent establishment narratives.

I first came across Feyerabend when studying the philosophy of science at university in 1976–7, shortly after his iconic 1975 book, *Against Method: Towards an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, was published. That book blew me (and many others) away at the time; but only later did I discover Feyerabend's ultra-radical counter-cultural writings about the tyrannical inclinations of modern science. In *Against Method*, Feyerabend was already writing that '[science] is not infallible and it has become too powerful, too pushy and too dangerous to be left on its own.'

In his iconic Sussex University lecture, Feyerabend said the following:

I want to defend society and its inhabitants from all ideologies, science included. There is nothing inherent in science that makes it essentially liberating. Science has now become as oppressive as the ideologies it had once to fight. [repeated from the epigraph at the start of this chapter]

Heretics in science are still made to suffer from the most severe sanctions this relatively tolerant civilization has to offer. Science has become rigid, [and] it has ceased to be an instrument of change and liberation. Modern science inhibits freedom of thought, [and] is just one of the many ideologies that propel society and it should be treated as such. Most scientists today are intent on producing some paltry result so that they can add to the flood of inane papers that now constitutes 'scientific progress' in many areas.

Feyerabend further referred to the ‘narcissistic chauvinism’ of science, saying that ‘scientists have now the power to impose their ideology on almost everyone... – with a large part of the general public [being] hypnotized by science... . [They] are parasites of the mind and they will continue in their path until democracy puts them in their place....’

It is surely an appalling state of affairs when in a supposedly free, democratic society (as we will see below), many ‘dissident’ scientists commonly stay silent about real-world evidence that contradicts the ‘official’ establishment narrative because if they don’t, they know that the ‘Thought Police’ of establishment science can, and often will, effectively destroy their careers.

What Feyerabend’s work points to, then, is the need for any ‘science’ worth its name to be fully versed in the philosophy and the sociology of science, and their complex cultural dynamics. Indeed, I would argue that scientists of every discipline should undergo at least a term (and preferably a year) of deep, critical study of these disciplines; for otherwise, they will be far more susceptible to groupthink ‘regimes of truth’ and scientific ‘capture’ by vested interests than they should be. And Paul Feyerabend’s great book *Science in a Free Society* would be compulsory reading on any such modules of study.

Certainly, then, Feyerabend’s take on science shows how questions of power, vested interest and ‘capture’ must be explicitly factored into any full explication of the scientific enterprise – committed as he was to showing us what science in a genuinely free society needs to look like. In his 1978 and most controversial book, *Science in a Free Society*, Feyerabend argues that science was far from being a liberator of thought, with scientific rationality now acting as a form of suppression, often inhibiting and silencing any rivals to its narrowly dogmatic worldview, imposing a set of doctrines and procedures administered and institutionalised by ‘experts’ that effectively stifle most if not all criticism.

Feyerabend thus believed that science had become authoritarian, with an out-of-control scientific rationalism threatening democracy itself by the way in which what he calls ‘an unholy alliance of science, rationalism and capitalism’, an ‘intellectual fascism’, crushes

all opposition to its hegemony. Instead, he championed a society of free interchange in which science is just one of many voices, advocating a fundamental reassessment of the role of science in society. For Feyerabend, freedom was the ultimate human value, and he was challenging a core Enlightenment premise – that intellectual and societal progress can only be achieved through the control of reason with the help of science.

Many things Feyerabend wrote five decades ago have an eerie relevance to the recent Covid experience and the way ‘the science’ was deployed and imposed during that time. For example, he insisted that *non*-‘scientific’ alternatives may sometimes work as well as, or even better than, mainstream scientific procedures. Thus, ‘Our ancestors and “primitive” contemporaries had highly developed... medical theories and biological doctrines that are often more adequate and have better results than their Western competitors.... We know what science does, we have not the faintest idea whether other traditions could not do much better.’ And he further wrote that ‘Man once possessed complex knowledge concerning his place in nature, [but this] knowledge has been replaced by abstract theories he does not understand *and must take on trust from experts*’ (my italics).

Even more poignantly, he wrote that [scientific] ‘unanimity is the result of shared prejudices: positions are taken without detailed examination of the matter under review... A unanimity that rests on “internal” considerations alone often turns out to be mistaken.’ Sound familiar?...

Feyerabend was also contemptuous of ‘the incompetence of scientific medicine as a whole’. For him, ‘every patient must be the supervisor of his own treatment... just as every group of people and every tradition must be able to reject [government] projects [they] do not regard as adequate. And he further implored us ‘never to rely on experts entirely’ (cf. Brian Martin’s work, Chapter 3).

Even more prophetically, Feyerabend wrote: ‘Research... often produces monsters... Comprehensive mistakes involving the “basic ideology” of the field *can be often revealed only by outsiders* or by scientists with an unusual personal history’ (my italics). And further, ‘an independent science has long ago been replaced by the business

science which lives off society and strengthens its totalitarian tendencies.' For 'many parts of science [are] now [becoming] businesses when the aim is no longer to find truth... but to keep the money coming in'. And so 'today, science prevails not because of its comparative merits, but because the show has been rigged in its favour.... The superiority of science is not the result of research, or argument, it is the result of political, institutional, and even military pressures.'

Perhaps unsurprisingly, many mainstream scientists at the time, and even some philosophers, hated Feyerabend with a vengeance – just as mainstream psychiatrists hated Ronnie (R.D.) Laing for courageously 'outing' their outrageously inhuman practices. In my view, a greater badge of honour can scarcely be imagined.

The other figure I would like to mention in this introduction is the great humanistic thinker, Ivan Illich (1926–2002). With regards to health and medicine, in his classic 1975 text *Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health*, Illich claimed that modern scientific medicine has not only not reduced overall human suffering, but indeed, ever-more ailments have been caused by medical interventions *themselves* – or 'iatrogenic illness', as it's called. Illich also maintained that modern medicine actively *creates* new illness categories, and through its ideology encourages the illusory hope that all suffering can be avoided – thus undermining our resources for coping with the vicissitudes of living, and turning people into relatively passive consumers of medical services. Thus, in Illich biographer David Cayley's monumental book *Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey*, we read that '*Up to a point, modern medical techniques will enhance health. Beyond this point, medicine will become injurious and begin to eat away at the cultural matrix in which birth and death, illness and suffering, were once embedded.*' (my italics) In the conversations about medicine in this book, these Illichean insights will appropriately recur again and again.

So, what qualifies me to be a central protagonist in the twelve 'paradigmatic conversations' you will find below? I gained a first-class honours degree in Geography at Oxford University in 1976; and when I immediately began my doctoral research that autumn, I discovered the philosophy-of-science literature – and proceeded to immerse myself in this literature in my first year of study. My then doctoral-student

colleague Saville Kushner (later to become a professor of education) and I discovered the work of philosopher Paul Feyerabend over this period, as well as that of radical geographer Gunnar Olsson (1935– ) and Marxist sociologist Vic Allen (1923–2014), among others; and Sav and I spent many many hours through many nights talking about these often revolutionary ideas.

Then, years later when training and then practising as a psychological therapist, I became deeply immersed in reading about health and illness – being greatly influenced by books like ‘Father of Psychosomatic Medicine’ Georg Groddeck’s *The Meaning of Illness*, Thorwald Dethlefsen and Rudiger Dahlkeand’s deliciously titled book, *The Healing Power of Illness* – and, of course, Ivan Illich’s iconic book *Medical Nemesis*. All of my studies in the realm of health and illness were of course informed by both my previous engagements with the philosophy of science and also by some thousands of hours of clinical practice in counselling and psychotherapy – including working as a General Practice counsellor for many years. Added to this was a number of years supervising the research of many Psych.D. students at Roehampton University’s Research Centre for Therapeutic Education, during which time I learnt much about the scientific process, research methodologies and how one can legitimately make claims to scientific knowledge.

But perhaps at least as important as all this is my passionate interest in these questions, and a fierce determination and commitment to the pursuit of truth – including scientific truth (whilst trying to avoid what George Steiner referred to in his 1978 Reith Lectures as treating the search for truth as a kind of modernist ‘hunt’).

Now to the twelve conversations in this book, which I will briefly introduce and contextualise here. In Chapter 1, philosopher Dr **Martin Cohen** talks about the nature of scientific paradigms in a way that makes a great introduction to this volume. Cohen is one of those rare writers who is very adept at popularising often complex philosophical arguments and issues, and his 2015 book *Paradigm Shift* is exemplary in this regard. Indeed, it was his book that inspired me to contact Martin for the interview you will read below.

Next, in Chapter 2, emeritus professor and retired ‘hard’

scientist **Barry Condon** speaks about his extraordinary book *Science for Heretics*. For anyone wedded to the idea that *any* science can be ‘settled’, this is an essential read. Shockingly for some, Condon shows how even some of the most taken-for-granted assumptions in the physical sciences may be just plain wrong. I am reminded of the seminal 2005 paper by John Ioannidis, a professor at the Stanford School of Medicine, titled ‘Why most published research findings are false’ and the literature it has subsequently spawned. No surprise that this is a literature you will never hear referred to by those insisting that we must unquestioningly ‘follow “the” science’!

In Chapter 3, Australian emeritus Professor **Brian Martin** discusses his work on dissent in (medical) science. I first came across Brian’s important work when I read his much-neglected classic 1996 book, *Confronting the Experts*, in which he presents six personal case histories of challenges to establishment experts, outlining why they questioned conventional scientific wisdom and what methods they used, and illustrating how powerful interest groups can get their way by invoking and gaining the support of intellectual authorities. Brian Martin’s research on dissent in medicine, and how it is treated and routinely silenced, is especially relevant in relation to the Covid event.

For me, one of the most paradigmatically interesting chapters in the book is the interview with Professor **David Morris** in Chapter 4, as it helped me to understand that when considering biomedicine, there are far more nuances and complexities entailed than a simple binary *pro-* or *anti-*biomedicine position would suggest. Thus, David and I completely agree on some key points about medicine and illness that those critical of biomedicine would commonly share; yet we clearly disagree about some others. What the conversation with David illustrates is the value and importance of *listening deeply* to one another, even when (and perhaps *particularly* when) we disagree – for that respectful listening in the face of difference creates a space in which new learning, insights and re-evaluations of positions can occur on both sides. This would have been far less likely to happen if we had immediately taken up othering, adversarial positions obsessed with ‘proving’ to each other why we were right and the other wrong. It’s very easy to have respectful conversations when two people broadly agree – but far

harder to do so when they don't. I am deeply grateful to David Morris for enabling this meeting of minds to happen.

In Chapter 5, I am thrilled to be able to reproduce in this book a long interview I did with Feyerabend scholar, Associate Professor **Ian James Kidd**, on the life and work of Paul K. Feyerabend, to whom I have referred at length in this Introduction. Some years ago I got into seriously researching the secondary literature on Paul Feyerabend, and very quickly I came across the excellent writings of the young 'PKF' scholar, Ian Kidd – not least his doctoral thesis, 'Pluralism and the "Problem of Reality" in the Later Philosophy of Paul Feyerabend' (Durham University, 2010), and his thoughtful papers on Feyerabend's writings about scientism, alternative medicine, illness, astrology and so on. This deep conversation, whilst not uncritical of Feyerabend's oeuvre in places, affords ample evidence as to just why Feyerabend's critical insights about science are so relevant today. The chapter also includes an incisive commentary on the interview by my former Roehampton colleague with a doctorate in philosophy, **Dr Onel Brooks**.

In Chapter 6, I converse with the authors of one of the most impressive books I've read in many years – namely, **Dawn Lester** and **David Parker** – co-authors of the extraordinary monumental 2019 book, *What Really Makes You Ill?: Why Everything You Thought You Knew about Disease Is Wrong*. Here, we find two exceptionally intelligent and diligent researchers who systematically dismantle much of the taken-for-granted axioms of mainstream bio-medicine. Not least, this conversation, and the book that inspired it, demonstrate that one doesn't have to be a qualified expert in a given scientific field in order to cast a searching light on its theories and practices, and the often unarticulated metaphysical assumptions underpinning them. Indeed, I submit that it is often intelligent and self-informed 'outsiders' who are able to pose questions and question assumptions that those immersed in a given field are far less able to do – what we might call a kind of 'Emperor's New Clothes' phenomenon.

Next, Chapter 7 then reproduces a conversation with Australian naturopathic medical practitioner, **Vincent Di Stefano**, in 'On the humanisation of medicine'. I first discovered Vincent through his

fascinating writings on Paracelcus (c. 1493–1541) and Ivan Illich, and thence through his enthralling 1998 masters thesis, ‘The Meaning of Natural Medicine: An Interpretive Study’ (Department of Health Sciences, Victoria University of Technology, St Albans, Victoria), and then via his path-breaking book, *Holism and Complementary Medicine: Origins and Principles* (2006; 2025). In this conversation, we go to the heart of the ontological assumptions made by mainstream bio-medicine – and find them to be severely wanting in many respects.

In Chapter 8, ‘The limitations of “medico-scientific” psychology, mental healthism and “cure”’, my therapy colleague **Dr Bruce Scott** takes us into the realms of the psychological therapies, and how we are in danger of losing our very humanity in the drive towards an over-professionalised, technocratic kind of therapy. For Bruce, the human condition and the care of the soul should be at the heart of therapy practice; and this conversation is notable for Bruce Scott’s invoking of sometimes little-known existential scholars and theological thinkers, including from Eastern Europe.

Chapter 9 then showcases the pioneering work and writings of child and adolescent psychiatrist **Dr Sami Timimi**, in ‘Towards a more “humanistic” psychiatry?’. Here you will find devastating critiques of notions like ‘normality’ and so-called ‘ADHD’, and the vicious circularity of diagnostic systems and ways of understanding psychological distress, which claim to be ‘scientific’ but which in reality are nothing of the sort. The treatment implications of holding different ontologies of the human psyche are indeed dramatic, and can make the decisive difference between receiving appropriate, holistic ‘biopsychosocial’ interventions (à la American psychiatrist George L. Engel), and narrow psychopharmaceutical interventions that merely bludgeon symptoms with drugs, and with side-effects (or even *direct* effects) that are often quite unknown and/or little understood – and certainly routinely un-researched.

In 2022 I co-published a book titled *Beyond Mainstream Medicine* (InterActions, Stroud), and in Chapter 10, the co-author of that book, the German physician and writer **Dr Thomas Hardtmuth**, discusses the journey towards a ‘scientific revolution’ in modern medicine. Written at the height of the Covid ‘pandemic’, the chapter

contains much about the Covid event; but it also dives deeply into the core metaphysical assumptions made by bio-medical science, often informed by a Rudolf Steiner-inspired anthroposophical worldview. Read alongside and in conjunction with Chapters 6 and 7, these three chapters collectively provide the intimations of a revolutionary approach to modern medicine that in the future many believe will trouble, and ultimately displace, the current materialist hegemony of bio-pharmaceutical medicine.

The penultimate conversation in Chapter 11 ventures into the world of ‘climate science’, with **Peter Taylor’s** interview, titled after his recently published book, *Climate, Covid and Conspiracy*. According to Peter, the coordinated global response to the Covid event comprehensively contradicted the best available scientific evidence and known effective responses, and was accompanied by the quasi-authoritarian consolidation of ‘emergency powers’ in the hands of unelected bureaucrats. This is the kind of abuse of science that has also characterised the climate issue for some decades; and the global awakening to the realities of ‘captured science’ that Covid has precipitated is now bringing many to question the origins and reality of the alleged ‘climate emergency’. It is in this sense that Peter Taylor makes a convincing case in our conversation for finding common, science-corrupting processes operating in both the Covid event and around climate ‘science’.

Chapter 12 presents the final conversation of the book, with Dr **Katherine Buchanan** – ‘Science in a different key: the case of Goethean Science’. It’s all very well critiquing and deconstructing prevailing narratives and practices of modern-day science – but what, one might justifiably ask, are the alternatives? As outlined throughout the book, one necessary condition for healthy science to flourish is a free cultural space – one that is free of both state and corporate control and direction (cf. the epigraph from theoretical physicist Richard Feynman that leads off this Introduction). As Katherine Buchanan would strongly aver, Rudolf Steiner was saying something very similar in his designation of the so-called ‘Three-fold Social Order’, in which science and medicine are emphatically located in the ‘free cultural sphere’ of society, thus being free of the diktats of the state and corporate capitalism.

In this conversation, then, we see a brilliant explication of the Steiner-inspired Goethean approach to science, which is *phenomenological* in methodology, and which brings to the table what many would say is a crucial *spiritual* dimension that is missing in mainstream materialist science. Katherine has a commanding grasp of the philosophy of science as well as of scientific practice, and this penetrating conversation is a delight to read at many levels.

Taken together, then, these deep conversations illustrate the many reasons why mainstream science in general, and mainstream medicine in particular, are currently wanting, and deficient in multiple ways; and concomitantly, why there is an urgent need for a fundamental re-foundation for science, in order that it might function in the way it is supposed to in a free society: taking nothing for granted; teasing out and interrogating our most hidden ontological assumptions about reality; fearlessly flushing out the ways in which authentic scientific process has been captured, and even fatally contaminated, by corporate and corrupt institutional processes; and how genuine science is now so often colonised by a soullessly technocratic scientism.

There are many roads to Rome, and many necessary conditions to be met for prevailing paradigms fundamentally to change. This volume of living, breathing conversations attempts to make an arguably novel contribution to the momentous process of evolutionary paradigm change. Yet if the book can make even a small contribution to the desperately needed paradigm shift that is now an urgent evolutionary imperative for humankind's healthy future, then along with the esteemed contributors to this book, I will be delighted.

## Note

- 1 The verbatim quotations in this introduction have been deliberately left un-referenced, in order to retain a discursive (as opposed to an academic) style. However, for readers wishing to have the exact source of the various quotations in the main text, please contact me via the publisher and I will happily send them to you.