

## T. S. KUHN: FROM REVOLUTIONARY TO SOCIAL DEMOCRAT. KUHN AND THE IMAGE OF SCIENCE\*

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**Abstract.** T.S. Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* begins with the observation that our image of science might well undergo a complete transformation if we took a dispassionate look at the actual history of science. The image he has in mind is the one characterized in Chapter I in which the scientific community is pictured as the very paradigm of institutionalized rationality. On this picture the scientist disinterestedly applies his special tool, the scientific method, and each application takes him further on the road to truth. In making this observation Kuhn is not simply looking forward to his own conclusion that between the ideology of science and the realities of scientific practice there falls a vast shadow. Rather he is suggesting that mere reflection on the source of our image of science is likely to prompt the conjecture that the image is gravely distorted. For the vast majority of us acquire our image either through contemporary scientific textbooks or through popular accounts of science the authors of which in turn derive their image from the standard texts. Such texts are designed to present contemporary scientific beliefs and techniques. In so far as we learn thereby anything about the history of science, it is through cleaned-up versions of past scientific triumphs.

**Keywords:** Thomas Kuhn, scientific revolutions, the image of science, scientific beliefs, ideology of science.

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\* Ch.V from *The Rationality of Science*, Routledge, London, 1981, p. 102-110.

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