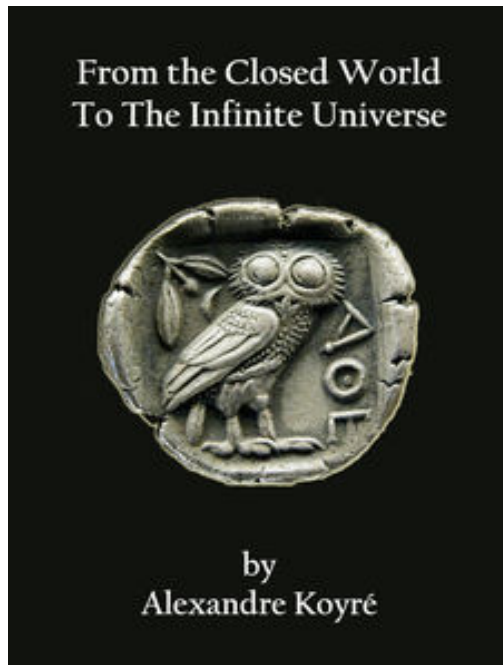


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by Alexandre Koyre

Time and again, when studying the history of scientific and philosophical thought in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries-they are, indeed, so closely interrelated and linked together that, separated, they become ununderstandable-I have been forced to recognize, as many others have before me, that during this period human, or at least European, minds underwent a deep revolution which changed the very framework and patterns of our thinking and of which modern science and modern philosophy are, at the same time, the root and the fruit. This revolution or, as it has been called, this "crisis of European consciousness," has been described and explained in many different ways. Thus, whereas it is

generally admitted that the development of the new cosmology, which replaced the geo- or even anthropocentric world of Greek and medieval astronomy by the heliocentric, and, later, by the centerless universe of modern astronomy, played a paramount role in this process, some historians, interested chiefly in the social implications of spiritual changes, have stressed the alleged conversion of the human mind from *theoria* to *praxis*, from the *scientia contemplativa* to the *scientia activa et operativa*, which transformed man from a spectator into an owner and master of nature; some others have stressed the replacement of the teleological and organismic pattern of thinking and explanation by the mechanical and causal pattern, leading, ultimately, to the "mechanisation of the world-view" so prominent in modern times, especially in the eighteenth century: still others have simply described the despair and confusion brought by the "new philosophy" into a world from which all coherence was gone and in which the skies no longer announced the glory of God.

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