From Karl Mannheim

SECOND EXPANDED EDITION

Kurt H. Wolff
EDITOR

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

Volker Meja
AND

David Kettler
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Cultural Politics in Karl Mannheim’s Sociology

Introduction to the Transaction Edition

Volker Meja and David Kettler

Karl Mannheim’s most influential works turn on two distinct conceptions, the “sociology of knowledge” and “planning for freedom,” and they are generally considered apart. Yet they form part of a common project to reconstitute and reinstitutionalize political knowledge. While Mannheim’s efforts bear on central issues of social and political theory, they defy political classification. To classify Mannheim’s political commitments as conservative, liberal, or socialist would be to close one’s thinking to the principal challenge implicit in all of his essays, the challenge to work patiently amid discontinuity, complexity, and novelty. Since Kurt H. Wolff first published From Karl Mannheim in 1971, there are new reasons for probing Mannheim’s wider design, especially since the theoretical approaches that had so confidently declared his work anachronistic and hopelessly eclectic have themselves fallen on hard times. The self-aware and self-critical rhetorical constituents in his thinking, his sensitivity to cultural contexts, his informed skepticism about Marxist historical ontologies, his experiments with dialectics that eschew more than provisional syntheses, his recognition of multiple modes of knowing, and other features of his unfinished thinking repay critical attention. And that requires a reconstruction of his project as a whole.

Mannheim developed his sociology of knowledge in a series of writings culminating in Ideology and Utopia, a volume of connected essays first published in Germany in 1929 and revised for English publication in 1936. Through his sociology of knowledge, he attempts a social-scientific way of encountering and partly transcending the irrational elements in all thought bearing on social constitution. The hidden integrative force of such elements in structures of thinking, he argues, is demonstrated by the disorientation effected by political strategies that
expose the world-views of opponents as nothing but ideologies or utopias. While this subversive insight was first loosed on the political world by Marxism, it soon became common property among all parties in Weimar Germany, according to Mannheim, generating a crisis of mutual distrust and poisoning political processes dependent on self-confident reflection, inquiry, debate, and settlements that could be defended in public. Sociology of knowledge promises to break through the impasse by fostering among the parties a realistic assessment of the social situation common to all, paradoxically beginning with a sociological neutralization of the insight into ideology and utopia. If sociology can disinterestedly show how contrasting styles of practical social knowledge are without exception grounded in unacknowledged wishes derived from diverse social locations, the common consciousness among politically active strata about this piece of highly interesting theoretical social knowledge itself based on a commitment to synthesis sociologically imputable to the intelligentsia as stratum can gradually expand to grasp the wider social diagnosis that it implies. Universal awareness of ideology and utopia would undergo a decisive change in function, from a paralyzing political poison to organon for a knowledge-oriented but not conflict-free politics.

With the destruction of these hopes in 1933, Mannheim turns to “planning for freedom” as the motif of his writings in exile, beginning with a German-language essay collection published in 1935 and much enlarged in English in 1940 as *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction.* He argues that the National Socialist dictatorship exploits a socially unconscious mass response to a worldwide crisis in the institutions of liberal civilization, involving the obsolescence of its regulative social technologies from markets to parliaments to elitist humanistic education. Mannheim pleads for a preemptive move to a planned social order that strategically utilizes, instead of vainly resisting, the new social technologies that undermine the spontaneous self-ordering of the previous epoch. He maintains that a discriminating, consensual reconstruction could save many human qualities and diversities earlier privileged by liberalism, unlike the violent homogenization imposed by communist or national socialist control through command. Without anachronistic confidence in obsolete forms of liberalism, planning for freedom would rely as far as possible on manipulated field controls (more recently known as steering by induced self-regulation) and other
unbureaucratic means of coordinating activities that proceed best when experienced as spontaneous. Timely action guided by awareness of the impending crisis taken by leading strata whose positions are still sheltered from the full force of the devastating structural changes underway, notably the English elite of gentlemanly professionals, can tame the processes that would otherwise simply destroy the old liberal civilization and prepare mass-populations for ruthless dictatorial direction. Planning for freedom presupposes a reorientation among traditionally legitimated elites, their acceptance of a sociological diagnosis of the times and their willingness to learn prophylactic and therapeutic techniques. But Mannheim’s planning scheme also counts on deep continuities at prerational levels of commitments among his elite audience, commonly religious, as well as their extension to future generations. Mannheim was never simply a rationalist.

Mannheim’s forced exile following the fatal outcome of the Weimar crisis he still addressed with muted optimism in 1929 led him to abandon his earlier claims about the catalytic political mission of a relatively unattached intelligentsia wielding a disinterested sociology of knowledge. Weimar intellectuals were hardened by decades of crisis-consciousness, articulate, and potentially open to intervening in the parties struggling for power. Although increasingly deaf-mute to reason, the parties other than the National Socialist shared the humanistically bred hope that movement towards a new humane order may underlie the chaos of historical events. However powerless in the ordinary sense, intellectuals might be made to matter in their own right, as illuminators and mediators. In England, as he first saw it, he found a world of self-absorbed scholar-hobbyists comfortably chatting with secure elites who saw little reason to reconsider conventional wisdoms and smoothly co-opted their occasional naysayers. In Weimar Germany, he wrote to counter a crisis where primary political actors were equally demoralized by discrediting exposures of partisan irrationalities at the sources of their reasonings. Reviewing his analysis of ideology in the England of 1936, he found himself stifled by bland self-assurance about the sufficiency of vested prejudices among all whose judgments bore decisively on politics. The sociology of knowledge now had to unsettle this self-confidence, to foster a sense of crisis that could lead this comparatively intact elite to look to the sociological teachings of an outsider like himself for
diagnostic and therapeutic help. This shift, amounting almost to a reversal in emphasis, leaves confusing tracks in the English version of *Ideology and Utopia*.

The prime victims of this confusion were American sociologists, because they were the most responsive English-speaking audience for Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge. Since they resonated to neither the German nor the English rhetorical sonorities discordantly compounded in *Ideology and Utopia*, they typically abstracted isolated elements from the work and molded them to fit their own intellectual strategies, dismissing the remainder as historically conditioned excess. Mannheim’s *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, in turn, was received during the first decades after its publication by a subgroup among American social scientists who treated his sociology of knowledge as largely irrelevant, except for its most commonplace cautions against the dangers of deceptive ideologies, and sifted out accessible generalizations about social technologies for problem-oriented planners and educators. *Ideology and Utopia* and *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* thus soon dwindled to the status of minor classics, superceded scientifically, but useful for pedagogical exercises within academic curricula. The writings collected in the present anthology offer a context for reading the more familiar texts anew, without the stereotyping achieved by several generations of textbook writing on Mannheim.

There has been a renewed curiosity about Mannheim’s project since the mid-1970s, precipitating several attempts at comprehensive retrieval. Historical research has uncovered the contexts that gave Mannheim’s more puzzling intellectual moves added measures of plausibility. Mannheim’s epistemological experimentation was backed by philosophical investigations, beginning in his native Hungary, that attempted to encompass neoromantic and historicist challenges to rational social knowledge without seeking premature refuge in some finished system. The original political vision of *Ideology and Utopia* corresponds to concrete strategies promoted by distinguished intellectuals loyal to Weimar, including innovative economists of industrial renewal, jurists dedicated to the democratic reconstitution of civil society, and unorthodox Christian socialists; and these groups recognized their aspirations in Mannheim’s intelligentsia. The seemingly abrupt shift to instrumental rationality in his English work fits into two unrelated
contexts: Mannheim’s didactic relationship with conservative but socially-minded Christian thinkers, and his hope that the more developed forms of American Pragmatism would guide the reception of his work in the United States.\textsuperscript{6} The details of Mannheim’s biography more nearly make him a contemporary.

The years since Kurt H. Wolff’s still seminal “Introduction” to Mannheim’s works have seen the posthumous publication of several important Mannheim texts unavailable to Wolff. In the spirit of the less philosophically stringent and more political reading sketched above, we will briefly characterize their contents and indicate their bearing on the essays in this volume. The two primary sources of new materials are fugitive pieces written in Hungarian now made accessible to international scholarship through German or English translations\textsuperscript{7} and the Brandeis University archives of Paul Kecskemeti, Mannheim’s literary executor. While the former primarily illuminate Mannheim’s intellectual point of departure as a philosopher of culture in Georg Lukács’ Budapest “Sunday Circle,” (see selections I-II) the latter clarify the considerations and steps that brought Mannheim to sociology (see selections III-V).

\textit{Hungarian Works}

\textit{“Georg Simmel as Philosopher”}\textsuperscript{8}

Marking Georg Simmel’s death (1918), Mannheim announces themes that he develops during the succeeding decade. He writes:

He was a philosopher, because the great Socratic legacy—wonder at things—was more alive in him than in any of his contemporaries. But he did not transcend his time, because he shared the fundamental skepticism of his generation and could not bestow his belief on what was already given to him to see.

The short article then lauds Simmel’s revelatory attention to detail and the brilliance of his essayistic style, while lamenting his inability to give himself fully to a vision of truth, and the consequent abandonment of the readers whose eyes he opened to the ossification of established modes of encountering the world. Mannheim never ceased to prize curiosity and detailed investigation, although that appears more from the work he admired (and the tasks he set his students) than from the
research he published; and he gave up grudgingly on the expectation that a foundational philosophical insight would overtake more particularized studies, if that work is done in the faith that such integration is coming. This ambiguous intellectual structure is still evident in his later combination of fascination with American empirical sociology and the conviction that the sociology of knowledge presupposes an ontological philosophy of history whose contours would emerge as the enterprise progressed. Notable too is the importance Mannheim assigns to the generational divide between Simmel and himself, introducing a puzzle that occupies one of his pathbreaking studies “The Problem of Generations” (selection VI). Mannheim’s Simmel tribute, finally, alerts sociologists that Mannheim cared profoundly about style and attached great significance to the gloss that form puts on contents.

“Ernst Bloch: The Spirit of Utopia”

Mannheim’s 1919 review of Ernst Bloch’s first book pivots its criticism around the author’s style. Mannheim opens with an extensive appreciation of Bloch’s achievement in rediscovering the chasm separating the technical investigations of philosophy from the ultimately underlying “unconstruable question” that can only be stated in the naive language of wonderment at human existence and finitude in the world. Only the tradition of the mystics embodies a direct confrontation with that question. Yet Bloch’s resourceful attempt to revive the tradition is betrayed by his manner of writing. Occasional flickerings of the old tradition repeatedly give way to “the language of German journalism.” His is a decadent mysticism, symptomatic of a time that cannot yet recover the authentic gift. Yet the hour is near, Mannheim implies. Such books preserve and pass on the tradition whose rapt inward-turning alone can generate the metaphysics of the philosophy of the future. Bloch’s book is not yet a coming, but it marks a negotiable route, a weed-grown path that will eventually lead to the goal.

Although the determined realism that marks Mannheim’s later work and makes him interesting to sociologists might seem to relegate such metaphysical yearnings to the category of juvenile exercises, the Bloch review also highlights constant features of Mannheim’s thought. He always believed that the world susceptible to realistic knowledge and response bordered
on a domain that is the ultimate source of energies. This belief attracted him to undogmatic Christian believers, if not to their beliefs. He denied that there could be a systematic integration between irrational ultimates and rationalizable society, but he thought that the latter had to recognize and somehow encompass the former. Less abstractly, this means that Mannheim never lost interest in utopian visions and the ecstatic experiences epitomized by Western mysticism. The unresolvable, the unpredictable, the unprecedented remained in his sociological field of vision, if only as limiting horizon. In philosophical matters, moreover, Mannheim was comparatively untroubled by certain aporia and irresolutions in his own thought precisely because the “new philosophy” to come would have to comprehend many such elements and because its ultimate rules and principles could not be anticipated. His eventual recourse to antimetaphysical pragmatism may be understood as provisional. The multiform philosophical experimentation exhibited in the selections reproduced in this volume was suspended rather than superceded by the intellectual strategy Mannheim selected. Kurt H. Wolff’s “Introduction: A Reading of Karl Mannheim” builds on this multidimensionality of Mannheim's thought.

“Heidelberg Letters” and “Letters from Exile”

Mannheim twice published two-part epistolary articles in small Hungarian journals during his first years in Germany. Although only one of these series is available in a language other than Hungarian, they combine to reveal an easily neglected side of Mannheim, yet one that is essential for understanding the tensions between the professional context in which he sought to make a scientific contribution and career, on the one hand, and the literary life that charmed him and helped define his sense of vocation, on the other. In these letters, the “intellectual” is not a sociological construct but a member of a culturally scattered cosmopolitan community, whose members know, address, read, recognize, and judge one another, even when they cannot meet to talk, and whose centering on matters of the spirit makes them barely comprehensible to the rest of the world. He speaks of such humanistically educated intellectuals as a “caste,” and hyperbolically traces a prominent contemporaneous confusion in thought to the fact that the caste-lines are not marked by external signs, as in China and India.
I respect the exertions (which may in time acquire some meaning) but simultaneously despise the lies of those who try to fulfill the Romantic dream—under nationalist or racist slogans or under the banner of the class struggle—that they are at one with the race or class for which they articulate representative programs.

Intellectuals have their own distinctive goal, he maintains. Their struggles and yearnings are properly directed to finding a "home," a world in which the spirit can be secure.

Mannheim's 1921 literary letters depict the spiritual condition of the "thin layer" of "progressive German intellectuals," as seen from the distance provided by an intellectual in exile. He writes with irony about the pervasiveness of idiosyncratic programs among a disoriented but prolific and enthusiastic intelligentsia. In language that strikes familiar chords in the 1990s, Mannheim observes:

"One discovers rhythm, the other dance, the third education, and still others faith, God, Blacks, style, unity, or the theater. And whatever someone accidentally seizes upon becomes the center of the universe, the foundation stone of rebirth, the promised land of all life to come, for which he alone is the apostle... This is why the present-day German intellectual lacks distance. He does not recognize the difference between great and small because he imagines that he is always in the midst of great things."

Nevertheless, Mannheim avows that these are the people he loves and among whom he belongs. Moreover, he believes they are preparing something that will become of paramount importance.

Writing as a Budapest intellectual, Mannheim is struck by the historical decentralization of German cultural life. There are unique local movements, but these are now mingling, he reports, and Heidelberg serves as microcosm. There is value in the immediacy of contact among intellectuals within such manageable boundaries, although there is also some "provincialism" in the bad sense, first because individuals are not stimulated to experiment beyond the limits of comfortable bourgeois ways of living, however audacious their thinking, and second because the rare individual possessing political or prophetic gifts, like Max Weber, cannot lose his energies upon a large stage. Mannheim portrays Heidelberg as polarized between an intellectual grouping centered on the legacy of Weber and another constituted by the charismatic force of the poet Stefan George—
one, Protestant, progressive, scientific, and the other, Catholic in sensibility, reactionary, aesthetic. The latter poses the problem of spiritual homelessness but “their solution is a closing of the eyes. To comfort themselves with the feeling of rootedness, they isolate themselves, wrap themselves in cultural stuff, and— neglecting to include the world among their own objects—alienate themselves.” An ordinary thunderstorm, he concludes, would suffice to dispel the illusion of effectiveness created by the sheltering hills, and to expose this antiprogressive circle as symbolic remnants of a bygone era.

The “Heidelberg Letters” show Mannheim reluctantly taking leave from the aesthetic and metaphysical investigations of the earlier Hungarian articles, but they also evidence his continued feeling for the thoughts and cultural experiences that first shaped him. He never abandons his first questions, although he finds that “the world” must be more clearly recognized in the search for answers (see selection II). The surprising admiration for a socially demarcated intellectual “caste” cannot be taken as a grab for power. Mannheim’s thesis is sometimes obscured by surface analogies between proletarian class-consciousness in Marxism and the self-awareness and mission to which Mannheim calls intellectuals in his later writings. Mannheim’s 1932 lecture, “The Sociology of Intellectuals” (see pp. xxxii-xxxvi, below) resolves uncertainties on this score created by some passages in Ideology and Utopia. There is a relation between intellectuals and politics but it is not direct, and depends on intellectuals being true to their distinctive spiritual metier (see selection VII). Like his mentor Georg Lukács five years earlier, Mannheim takes sides with Max Weber against Stefan George.

Mannheim’s “Letters from Exile” (1924) illustrate his conception of politics. In sum, it is a matter of bearing witness. As one of the Hungarians who left home after the establishment of the “White” regime in 1919, Mannheim distinguishes between the emigration and the exile. The emigration, he maintains, includes many afraid to stay because of their unthinking participation in the brief Soviet regime. Others have better reasons to fear. But the “exile,” he contends, comprises the self-exiled like himself, someone who could remain in Hungary without harassment but “thinks that bridging the gap between his own viewpoint and that of the regime is impossible.” This genuine exile “has an important ‘national goal.’ It saves and keeps alive the free spirit of the Hungarian mind and awakens the conscience
of the Hungarian people. . . . The soul of the Hungarian people is for freedom, moral rebirth and is opposed to corruption. . . . We love our people more than these criminals.” Admittedly, such inspirational writing is far from Mannheim’s substantial work, but there is an intriguing parallel between this notion of “exile” and the recurrent future motif of “homeless” intellectuals comprising distinct political-cultural formations of persons with responsibility to serve their people by faithfully serving the spirit.

**Structures of Thinking**

The posthumous volume, *Structures of Thinking*, brings together two typescript German-language treatises left unpublished at Mannheim’s death, one dated 1922 and the other datable by internal evidence as written in 1924. The earlier, “The distinctive character of cultural sociological knowledge,” cites “On the Interpretation of Weltanschauung,” (selection II) and includes a brief section largely identical with “The Ideological and Sociological Interpretation of Intellectual Phenomena,” (selection IV) which correspondingly refers to a “more comprehensive study” of which it forms a part. “A sociological theory of culture and its knowability (Conjunctive and communicative thinking)” picks up the theme of philosophy of history emphasized in Mannheim’s “Review of Georg Lukács’ *Theory of the Novel*” (selection I) and prefigures Mannheim’s “Historicism” as well as “The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge” (selection III), albeit in a broader theoretical context. Apart from their intrinsic interest, the works document Mannheim’s interrogations of sociology as he was reexamining his self-definition as philosopher.

The two treatises also illustrate what Mannheim called, writing in 1936 about *Ideology and Utopia*, his “essayistic-experimental attitude” and they exemplify his “conviction that a given theoretical sketch may often have latent in it varied possibilities which must be permitted to come to expression in order that the scope of the exposition may be truly appreciated.” Like the diverse essays comprising *Ideology and Utopia*, the two parts of *Structures of Thinking* hold in suspension the choice among “relativistic possibilities,” “activistic-utopianism,” and a “harmonious-synthetic solution” to the basic problems about culture and society posed by Mannheim. Mannheim pleaded against
those who held *Ideology and Utopia* to the standard of a unified system, “As long . . . as a connection between ideas is still in the process of growth and becoming, one should not hide the possibilities which are still latent in it but should submit it in all its variations to the judgment of the reader.” 12 Many later readers of the English version of *Ideology and Utopia* dismiss Mannheim’s essayistic professions, if they even notice them, as admissions of philosophical failure or vain efforts to disarm criticism. But the contrasting strategies so clearly laid out in the constituent parts of *Structures of Thinking* make it clear that the “essayistic-experimental attitude” is integral to Mannheim’s general project. His works must be read in full awareness of these inner tensions.

For the antipositivism and metaphysical yearnings that Mannheim brought to Heidelberg from Budapest, the idea of a cultural sociology involves a puzzle, if not a paradox. How can a sociology comprehend culture, when sociology appears as the organon of mental methods hostile to culture? A cultural sociology, to fit Mannheim’s requirements, must be a way of relating to culture consonant with the forces renewing culture. The old idealism can offer no help, since it is as dead as the materialism that was its counterpart. But the cultural crisis is nevertheless an opportunity for beginning anew. Mannheim and his Budapest fellows disavowed “impressionist” delight in the sheer manifold of possibilities. Yet there is no alternative to working on the problems raised in one’s time and utilizing the cultural resources most prominently available. That deepened the dilemma. The problems at the heart of the crisis—the relativism fostered by the recognition that “truths” change in time, and the reductionism implied by attempts to comprehend such changes by uncovering underlying biological, social or economic causes—seem to be exacerbated by the sociological treatment everywhere in the air. Mannheim states and accepts that challenge in the two draft treatises combined in *Structures of Thinking*, and the systematic character of these writings brings out the experimentation with ontological and historicist alternatives artfully disguised in his earlier essays (selections I and II). The questions he brings to cultural sociology are not only whether culture can be discussed without obscuring its dependence on the world (as the George Circle does) or undermining its character as culture (as positivist sociology does), but also whether such inquiry can uncover a logic of cultural objects and
establish the inner relationship between that logic and ultimate spiritual reality.

Mannheim rejects the claims of epistemology or methodology generalized from modern physical science, but he also insists that intuition indifferent to structure or methodical verification cannot secure controllable or effective knowledge. Phenomena, he maintains, are understood when they are referred to a "logic" or "systematization" appropriate to one of a plurality of autonomous domains that ultimately rest upon an underlying reality, possibly approachable by a direct perception of essences and possibly to be revealed through an understanding of their place within the unfolding of a meaningful historical development. Both possibilities appear in Mannheim's earlier work, and each predominates in one of the treatises in Structures of Thinking.

"The distinctive character of cultural sociological knowledge" opens with the contrast between philosophical and sociological considerations of culture and so directly with relativism. "Immanent" interpretations address the claim of the object to be "valid" as a binding law, a just action, a beautiful object, a true proposition—while nonimmanent interpretations locate the object in some different context. Sociological interpretation, a nonimmanent approach to culture, can neither confirm nor deny the validity of cultural productions whose social meanings it expounds. Anticipating critics of his own later writings, who will speak of "Mannheim's paradox," Mannheim insists that "it will never be possible to construct a sociological critique of human reason" (82), and he charges Marx with undermining his own theory by failing to distinguish his claims about the social nature of ideas from the immanent level of interpretation which alone can validate any claims. Validity is accessible by phenomenological methods to uncover the ontologically grounded principles we require. Understood as a nonimmanent interpretation, cultural sociology neither implies nor fosters relativism.

Sociological interpretation is grounded in a theoretically fecund human capacity to grasp the functional aspect of human doings, to discern their place in the world of social actions and relationships. The cry, Mannheim avers, will also be heard as a call. Cultural sociology assumes a central place in structures of knowing after philosophy, having dissolved the supremacy claims of established value schemes, discovers "culture" as the
process of creating value, after sociological concepts encompass the lived world, and after the interplay of society and culture appears as disturbance to participants centered in either domain. Among the types of cultural sociology Mannheim considers, two receive special attention. "Pure" cultural sociology follows after and interrogates the cultural work of the socialized person, yearning to uncover a residue purely human and spiritual, something transcending social determination. Yet, according to Mannheim, this metaphysical longing cannot attain its ostensible objective. In the present age, the human spirit cannot find its home in any cultural production, except, paradoxically, in the heroic acceptance of homelessness, and so in the cultural-sociological work which is the characteristic form of this acceptance. Despite Mannheim’s earlier criticism of Simmel, he nevertheless preferred Simmel’s exploration of the “relativist possibilities” to arbitrary and unearned leaps of faith.

“Dynamic” sociology of culture, in contrast, promises to bridge the distance between culture and society, without reducing either to the other. Dynamic cultural sociologists find a congruence between the “style” articulated in a given cultural production and the “worldview” appropriate to some social condition or location. Spirit is related to spirit, and the interpretation of worldviews mediates between the two poles of cultural sociological interpretation. While the cultural sociologist offers neither a systematic metaphysical explanation for the “logic” or “structure” he finds in the intermeshed growth of culture and society nor a concept of progress towards some end of history, he nevertheless proposes elucidations like those essayed by the older philosophers of history, whose inheritance he claims. Worldviews are interlinked and changing, and in their historical development they constitute a “higher” reality to which the cultural sociologist refers what he interprets. On this view of the matter, there appears to be ever less occasion for an immanent encounter with cultural objects as such. The knowing participant in a culturally charged and socially articulated history transcends both cultural insider and sociologist.

“A sociological theory of culture and its knowability (Conjunctive and communicative thinking)” departs from the earlier acceptance of incommensurable realities and the diverse modes of knowing appropriate to them. It opens by denying that there can be a purely philosophical or immanent doctrine of method. Methodological doctrine arises from reflection on methodical
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inquiry. Such reflection yields sociological self-orientation for
inquirers, situating them within a structure ultimately com-pre-
prehensible to philosophy of history. This may offend against the
modes of critical reflection decreed by conventional philosophy,
but these methods and criteria derive from an incomplete,
unhistorical understanding of physical science. They can now
also be understood as expressions of bourgeois designs on the
world. When philosophers condemn doctrines that recognize
historically conditioned, nonuniversalistic knowledge, they are
unwarrantedly enforcing rationalistic prejudices against knowl-
edge of cultural reality. Disavowing the line of reasoning he
adduced against Marx in “The distinctive character of cultural
sociological knowledge,” Mannheim offers two reasons for de-
nying that admission of historical relativity necessarily under-
mines a knowledge claim. First, he maintains, some matters can
be grasped only by knowledge bound to a time and a place, and
the designation “relativistic” is consequently irrelevant, since its
meaning is constituted by an inapplicable contrast model of
universality. Second, he inconsistently looks forward to a philos-
ophy of history that will situate particularistic complexes of
knowledge within an ontologically grounded developmental
sequence, transcending their relativism. But such a reversal
cannot be forced; it can only be sensed as an integrative under-
current in the work actually under way. Mannheim’s experiment
in this treatise risks identification with this tendency.

The historical understanding of culture is the achievement of
the “whole man,” not of the narrow capacities sufficient for
bourgeois calculation and its theoretical counterpart. Its possi-
bility is given, according to Mannheim, by the interplay between
the old anticapitalist spirit, carried by conservative social strata,
and the new anticapitalism of the proletariat, attuned to bour-
geois rationalism while anticipating a utopian disruption of that
order. The cognitive capacities of these strata are not reducible
to class interests. Cultural sociology does not deal in causal
analyses. When thinking is inauthentic, interest undoubtedly
produces bias, but essential perspectivism is rather to be im-
puted to a shared mode of experiencing the world, engaging
oneself with it, willing a world fit for one’s socialized existence.
This dimension is constitutive for the structures of thinking.

Mannheim describes all knowing as an appropriation of
something encountered, letting us orient ourselves to it and
respond. We come upon what we encounter in the course of
our own movements, and the will we bring to our inner and outer world imparts a direction, a perspective to what we know. Mannheim goes beyond the visual metaphor. Touching and being touched are central to the experience that grounds knowledge, and he uses the term “conjunctive knowledge” to designate acts of knowing close to this source, shaping and interpreting the world within which we are at home. Such knowledge is qualitative, judgmental, situational—and it belongs neither to the isolated individual nor to universal human faculties. Conjunctive knowledge concerns communities, constitutes communities, is borne by communities. The structure of knowing has three levels. The deepest is the primordial contagious encounter with some reality met as we act on the will we share with a community; the second is the structuring of an orienting response to that encounter, commonly through language and always with communal resources; and the third, conceptual and even theoretical in character, reflects on the implicit practical knowledge of the second level—the knowledge-in-action that constitutes cultural formations and the stylistic systems they comprise. According to Mannheim, theoretical knowledge prepares the “next step” in the inner development of a stylistic system, arising out of what has been done.

Mannheim uses this approach to account for the prevalence of philosophical theories of history in his time, none adequate in itself, but all portending a new development. Although all cultural systems change, as their accomplishments generate new requirements, many do not require a theoretical understanding of historical development. Crucial symbols and structures change meanings without recognition of the process, and stories of olden times are told as if the past were an adjoining room. Now the dynamic character of things is everywhere evident. Present culture must understand itself as historical, according to Mannheim, because culture has spawned a mode of knowing, a relation to vital realities, that threatens the very possibility of community and the continued creation of values that is culture. Without a historical interpretation linking past, present and future, the concept of a “next step” may itself be lost.

It is “communicative knowledge” that poses this threat to “conjunctive knowledge” and its culture. Participants in various conjunctive communities devise a language restricted to material or utilitarian aspects to achieve the narrow shared understandings they require, especially for practical objectives.
Through its immanent logic, communicative language constitutes the knowledge found in the physical sciences, technology, commerce, and utilitarian calculations in short, the elements of society not community (Tönnies), civilization not culture (A. Weber). Mannheim does not think that historical theorizing can or should expunge communicative knowledge. Philosophy of history will incorporate it within a wider context of developing meanings and thereby contribute the next step which the present generation, according to Mannheim, appears destined to prepare, the reconstitution of cultural community based on a new, differentiated, and inclusive spirit.

Mannheim cannot doubt that such theoretical innovation is possible, notwithstanding the sway of communicative knowledge, because he believes that he has been himself simply going along with what is going on among cultural sociologists, critics of ideology, interpretive psychologists, historians of artistic styles, and others. Underlying this converging theoretical work he finds participation in a common cultural formation he calls Bildungskultur. Joined in activities conditioned by the older humanistic education they share, here are individuals from diverse social groupings, prominently including such “outsiders” as Jews and members of strata little affected yet by the spirit of communicative culture. They ground theoretical reflections on the experiences constituting the life-situations of the groups they variously represent. Broadening the bases of their cultivation is a typically receptive sensibility fostered by their admixture. Because they are dependent on such foundational social experiences, they are not free-floating above society, yet the mutual distance resulting from their cultivation and lack of homogeneity allows for comparisons, combinations, and choices that justify speaking of this group as comparatively socially unattached. The Bildungskultur extrapolates from the possibilities generated by conjunctively grounded cultural experiences and reflects on the interplay of such possibilities. What it cannot do, according to Mannheim, is to generate new cultural possibilities of its own.

The historical and interpretive studies produced by this intermediate stratum, if they want to make a difference, must link with the ways other groups experience their lives, and thus their studies must include the socioeconomic shape of things, since this increasingly dominates experience. The conjunctively apt mode of proceeding within the novel and imperfect sort of
conjunctive community formed by Bildungskultur includes sociology, paradoxically enlisting a discipline generated by communicative knowledge. But cultural sociologists do not use this thought like ordinary sociologists, who have fashioned it on the model of the natural sciences. In seeking qualitative interpretation and aspiring to philosophy of history, these inquirers aim at a cultural rather than a civilizational sociology. Their knowledge can only be properly appraised by connoisseurs inside the conjunctive community. But this applies to all conjunctive knowledge and implies no denigration of the validation achieved. For those who have conjunctive access to it, the validity of interpretations depends on three tests, Mannheim asserts. First, a profound evidentiary feeling arises when an account of something has gotten to the essence of the matter. Second, the authenticity of an interpretation can be scrutinized for signs of bias. Third, a valid interpretation will establish itself among connoisseurs, and it will last. But Mannheim knows that these tests are not decisive. Whether an interpretation provides knowledge depends on its ability to orient those who accept it and to guide their responses to their reality. And this can be judged only by a future interpretation, itself subject to no other sorts of checks.

The systematic efforts set forth in Structures of Thinking, apart from partially documenting the thinking of Mannheim’s Budapest Sunday Circle by one of its two most philosophically gifted participants, generate important hypotheses for interpreting difficult passages in his later work. Their uncertain balance and conclusion also explain why Mannheim himself never decided to publish them, although he recurrently returned to the manuscripts throughout his life and prepared multiple copies shortly before his death, and why the academic work on conservatism that he was composing at the same time is intellectually more cautious, at least on its surface.

Conservatism

Mannheim presented Conservatism to the Heidelberg faculty in 1925 to demonstrate his postdoctoral qualifications. Although unfinished, it is the text evaluated by the three referees who unanimously recommended its acceptance, admitting him to teaching privileges. Considerably more than half the original was omitted when “Das konservative Denken” was published
two years later in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, and this shortened version is deposited in Mannheim's Heidelberg files. Mannheim showed that he continued to value more of it when he sought to incorporate additional parts of the manuscript while preparing the text for English publication late in his life. This project, like so many others, was interrupted by his premature death and completed by his executors (see selection V). The full text, only recently recovered, clarifies the relationship between Mannheim’s study of conservatism and the rest of his achievement. As the essay has appeared in the past, in English as well as in German, it has been taken as nothing more than an empirical study of the social factors underlying the formation and development of conservative political belief. And the model of inquiry abstracted from this example has since been refined, both in delineating the patterns to be explained and in establishing sociological imputations. But as Mannheim wrote the work, it also manifests his preoccupation with the nature of political knowledge, not belief alone, and his continuing hope that appropriate scientific inquiry can acquire such knowledge without sacrificing scientific devotion to evidence or disinterestedness.

The idea behind Mannheim’s study of conservative thought is that the enduring distinction between natural and historical sciences, as well as the most influential approaches contesting the second of these domains, have their historical progenitors in the conservative movement of nineteenth-century Germany. He proceeds in three stages: the first is based on the social history of ideas, the second on a morphological explication, and the third involves a historical interweaving of textual and sociological interpretations.

First, then, Mannheim tries to account for the central place that political ideology assumes in the spiritual ordering of human experience in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and how a worldview centered on the political ideas of conservatives gained prominence after the French Revolution. Ideologies constitute the orienting mode appropriate to the newly rationalized state-centered societies, displacing traditional and religious ways of assigning meanings to the experienced world. Conservatism crystallizes out of the psychological attitude of traditionalism among social actors (and some observers) who experience these new developments as harmful, but cannot ignore them or respond in private, individual ways. Conserva-
tism appears, in Mannheim's first account of it, as a way of thinking about "man and society," which gives weight to spiritual as well as material interests damaged by rationalization but provides a practical orientation with a measure of effectiveness in the newly politicized and rationalized world. It thus clearly belongs to the new time, like its opponents.

Mannheim's second characterization of conservatism explicates an inner structure common to the diverse and changing manifestations of this ideology. Such a morphological "structural analysis," Mannheim stresses, must not confuse what he calls a "style of thought" with either a theoretical system or a political program. Structural analysis uncovers a characteristic formative attitude towards human experience, as it exists before reflective elaboration, a rootedness in concrete experience and locales, as well as a special sense of continuities in time. Above all, the Conservative style rejects constructions of human relations as subject to rationalistic universal norms, disdaining Enlightenment doctrines of natural law.

Mannheim's third and most ambitious level of analysis traces a part of the formative history of conservatism, with the aim of distinguishing decisive stages and variations in its development and showing empirically how the sociological and morphological attributes uncovered in the first two treatments interact to shape a historical style and movement. In a preliminary prospectus, Mannheim projects eight stages for this development, but he writes only about two in any detail. In the more finished of the completed sections, he draws on the writings of Justus Möser (1720-1794) and Adam Müller (1779-1829) to present a form of conservatism in which the political perspective of "estates" hostile to the modern bureaucratic or liberal state interacts with the Romantic thinking originating among the preachers' sons who form the new post-Enlightenment intelligentsia. The second historical analysis treats Savigny (1779-1861), foremost exponent of historical jurisprudence, whose work is explained as embodying the fastidiousness with which an officialdom having aristocratic connections reacted against schemes of universal codes or universal rights. All of Mannheim's subjects are jurists, but legal issues do not interest him. His concern is rather with contrasting conceptions and methods of knowledge, with intellectual strategies offered in place of the abstract logical systematizations identified with natural science, capitalism,
state-formation, and other manifestations of liberal rationalization.

In the first of three conservative ways of thinking Mannheim distinguishes, he identifies the community-bound (seinsverbundene, gemeinschaftsgebundene) thinking exalted by Savigny with the cognitive activity of elucidation (Klären). If the thought is integral to a community to which the thinker is deeply committed "with his total personality," then his elaborated thinking simply clarifies and explicates what is already in the deepest sense inarticulately known by those to whom he addresses his thoughts. This conception, which Mannheim traces back from Savigny to Justus Möser, is similar to the "conjunctive" thinking that Mannheim had made paradigmatic for cultural sociology. In Conservatism, too, Mannheim extrapolates from Savigny to the undertakings typical of cultural sociology in his own day. This fixes one characteristic of his own work.

The conservative paradigm for a second conception of the function of thinking, Mannheim finds in Adam Müller. Mannheim calls this conception "mediation." Its principal attributes are, first, that it considers all things as being in mutual opposition, and second, that it equates thinking with the active judgment of practitioners expounding efficacious solutions to conflicts, derived from retracing the opposition involved in the case at issue. Mannheim considers this way of thinking an important alternative to the "rational-progressive" conception of understanding, that he characterizes as depending exclusively on the systematic subsumption of particulars under general laws, and he stresses its practical character. Its effectiveness depends not only on its insight into the contesting forces and its partial accommodation to both, but also on an aesthetic sense of the fitness of a judgment to the state of the opposition to which it is applied. Such judgment solves the practical problem but it does not thereby eradicate the opposition or subject it to logical systematization, as in the Hegelian dialectic. Müller himself, Mannheim notes, was regrettably schematic, fancifully inclined to forced constructions of all oppositions as embodying male-female polarities; and he first romanticized and thenonce in Austrian employ—reified the locus of mediation. Despite Müller's corruption of the design, Mannheim considers the conception fruitful. It contributes to the subsequent development of what he calls dynamic thinking and proves able to handle irreducible antinomies in a purposive way.
Mannheim uses the term "synthesis" to refer to the judgments constituting this way of thinking, but he stresses that the character of each synthesis depends on the standpoint from which it originates, or, more actively, on the design which it implements. There is movement towards accommodation and incorporation of opposites, but no reintegration into a comprehensive new totality eradicating the old opposition, as is supposed to happen in fully dialectical thinking. In the intellectual field of his own time, Mannheim finds this impulse to mediation present in a curiously introverted form. Lebensphilosophie, he believes, absolutizes the twofold experience of moving through a world of opposites and making vital judgments, and thus has little to propose about the reality itself. It nevertheless displays its breeding, so to speak, by its opposition to liberal rationalism in all its forms.

Mannheim presents the history of conservatism as a succession of points of concentration, each of which represents a synthesis of the partial, partisan type he associates with Müller. The opposition between liberal rationalism and conservative impulses and traditions enter into each characteristic combination, in keeping with the achieved stage of development and other historical circumstances, with the conservative elements predominating. Mannheim indicates a plan for treating later stages, when conservatism increasingly fails to comprehend the movement of events, but his survey stops far short of these. In the interpretations of his own time scattered throughout the text, conservatism appears either as an integral protagonist in a political-intellectual field which also contains liberal and socialist partisans or as an ensemble of elements in "the contemporary state of thinking." In either case, Mannheim depicts a confrontation among seemingly irreconcilable opposites but not, as in Ideology and Utopia a few years later, a crisis. Diverse possible combinations strive for supremacy, but the contestants are constrained within a common field, and matters continue to move along. There is no impasse. The insistence that liberal and conservative elements, although opposed, can never be wholly divorced from one another lies in the very conception of conservatism as a way of rationalizing traditionalist impulses with which the study begins.

Every actual turn of events—in short, the practical movement through time—appears as a product of mediation in Müller's sense, as outcome of judgments which severally gain enough
support to be provisionally effective without denying their partisan starting points or presuming to eliminate or absorb opposition. This view will be recast a few years later in *Ideology and Utopia* as the operation of *Realdialektik* ("empirical dialectics" probably captures it best), but there the process will have to cope with what appears to Mannheim as the emergence of crisis and immobilization, as well as a more urgent theoretical demand for higher unification of opposites through recontextualization of the whole. The contrast with this later work brings the comparative modesty and skeptical moderation of *Conservatism* into clearer focus. In some contexts, perhaps, one might be justified in speaking of a sober optimism.

On its face, *Conservatism* asks its readers to take it as a disinterested study integrating sociological and morphological approaches for the limited purpose of explaining conservatism as a structure of thinking. Mannheim's study of conservatism is unique among his works. Modest in its explicit theoretical claims, it is offered as a monographic product of the sociology of knowledge, then a new academic specialty. None of his other investigations concentrates so exclusively on materials from the past or attends so discriminatingly to the ideas of particular thinkers. Yet while the sources and uses of conservative intellectual strategies help to specify and map them, these sociological dimensions do not exhaust their significance for Mannheim. His study repeatedly comes back to their bearing on the intellectual situation of his own time. Mannheim says enough to reveal his belief that conservative thinking contributes to recent opposition to natural science models in intellectual life and liberal-capitalist rationalizations in social knowledge. In this connection, then, it is remarkable and regrettable that Mannheim abruptly closed the survey after Savigny, since so much of the discussion looks ahead to the undone section on Hegel, whom Mannheim presents as author of a conservative doctrine with particularly telling ramifications, including adaptations to revolutionary socialist thought by Georg Lukács.  

Mannheim asserts that dialectical thinking successfully managed to rationalize what Romantic and Enlightenment thought had achieved, integrating it into a single comprehensive theory of development under conservative auspices, and that this discovery was subsequently transmuted by Marx into an organon for the thought of a class better placed to counter capitalist-liberal rationalization. This speculative denouement of conser-
vatism is the most audacious current in Mannheim's study, because it proposes a relationship between conservatism and the new historicism which wholly supercedes the other two aspects of conservative thinking and altogether submerges the historical political contents of conservatism. From this point of view, embodied also in Mannheim's other writings during those years, the analysis of conservatism would ultimately pivot around the concept of *Funktionswandel* (change in function). The conservative contributions appear as elements in a given originating historical context whose functions change radically and indeed paradoxically in the course of subsequent development. The point of the study would be to establish the historical obsolescence of conservatism and to ground its socialist successor's claims upon the dialectical reversal of conservatism's crowning intellectual achievement. This analysis is projected and anticipated in a few programmatic passages, if not so boldly, but no such treatment ever materializes. The section on Hegel was never written. Mannheim consistently accepted Lukács' argument that the socialist form of dialectical thinking depends on a commitment to the modern industrial proletariat as the concrete social force destined to take the next step in history, a commitment Mannheim never made. Mannheim's problem, if he was to follow through with the projections arising from his philosophical reflections, was to find an alternative way of earning the right to the dialectical integration which Hegel had grounded on conservative commitments and metaphysical reasonings, and Marx on socialist commitments and economic analysis. He could not accept either. Denied such a way, dialectics remained an uncompleted sketch for him, an aspiration. His real move, proudly accepted, was to the suspended judgment inherent in academic discipline, following the tradition Max Weber established in Heidelberg.

Mannheim brings Weber into *Conservatism* in a curious and striking way, and he differentiates himself from him in a way equally revealing. In analyzing Savigny's reliance on certain irrational forces as ultimate guarantors of social meaning, Mannheim goes back to the writings of an earlier German jurist, Gustav Hugo (1764-1844). Hugo's thought, in turn, he characterizes as representing a hard, hopeless acceptance of a world of facts in which all principles are relative and all developments ultimately fortuitous. Mannheim accounts for such bitter toughmindedness by reference to a situation in which two
competing social strata are evenly balanced and the observer uses the insights of each to discredit the other: "Here value-freedom, the absence of utopia, become, as it were, the test of objectivity and proximity to reality." He calls this state of mind Desillusionsrealismus, and he finds its exact parallel pervading German thinking in Max Weber's time. In its modern form, this realism acknowledges socialist exposures of liberal illusions, but then turns the method of disillusioning against socialist utopianism as well. Max Weber, according to Mannheim, is the most important representative of this style of thinking, and his conceptions of reality and scientific method are deeply marked by this fundamental attitude.

Mannheim does not expressly extend the parallelism to himself, but it is deeply interesting to see how he accounts for Savigny's movement beyond the realism of Hugo:

Between Hugo's and Savigny's ways of reasoning we have the defeat at Jena, foreign rule, and the wars of liberation, which transformed theoretical discussion into real discussion and a national uprising . . . into reality.

The difference rests on "a generational distinction." This side of the case, Mannheim says, also has contemporary application, and on this matter he attaches his deepest concerns and convictions to generational destiny:

In periods like ours, in which self-reflectiveness and a many-sided relativism are reducing themselves to absurdity, as it were, a fear grows up instinctively about where all this will lead. How can relativism be overcome in history? If we can learn from the example of Savigny, the answer would have to be: not by way of immanent theory but by way of collective fate—not by a refusal to think relativistically, but by throwing new light on new, emerging contents. Here the fact of the generational growth of culture is of immense significance. Although considerable individual latitude is possible, it can be phenomenologically ascertained that the newly arising faith has quite a different character in the most recent generation than it has in those who, coming from an earlier generation, do not take part in this upsurge.

Such a vitalist principle of distinction between his own generation and that of Weber, although it echoes a theme already present in Mannheim's earliest major essay, "Soul and Culture" (see pp. 4-6, below), could not be a satisfactory clarification of his relationship to Weber. And it could especially not suffice since its full realization would have required that commitment
to the socialist movement of the proletariat which Mannheim, unlike Weber’s onetime protg Georg Lukács, would not make.

The problem of generations is, then, the subject of Mannheim’s next major investigation (selection VI); and problems of utopia, disillusionment, and the mutual discrediting of social knowledge and ideals occupy the succeeding years. No one familiar with these complex, painstaking, and ultimately unfinished works can doubt that Mannheim’s struggles to overcome the pessimism he found in Weber’s empirical discipline were not lightened by dialectical leaps or generational upsurges. The state, form, and matter of *Conservatism* testify to the seriousness and difficulty of his enterprise. Its academic reserve has this last explanation.

"The Sociology of Intellectuals"

In an address to Dutch students in October 1932, Karl Mannheim specified his debt to Marxist social theory and declared his independence from Marxist ideology. He credits “proletarian thought” with originating the method of sociological self-interpretation, “this method of deriving one’s historical mission from one’s own sociological situation.” But he rejects the contention that social classes are the only entities capable of such consciousness, insisting that the sociological way to self-awareness has become property common to many types of social groups. His professed aim is to free the intelligentsia from the misconception that it must either count as class or be nothing at all, to free intellectual life from the tyranny of partisan ideologies, among which the Marxist is the most seductive. “In times like ours,” he continues, “when intellectuals have abandoned the theocentric self-conceit of divine ancestry, and even tend to regard themselves as a sociologically irrelevant nullity, it is our supreme duty not to annihilate the proletarian sociology but self-confidently to overcome it by uncovering the distinctive place of intellectuals in present society”(89). Mannheim then claims that sociology of knowledge achieves this purpose, expanding on his principal theses in *Ideology and Utopia*; but our present interest centers on a preliminary step in his argument. To prepare the way for his contention that the cognitive and transformative qualities Marxists ascribe to proletarian class consciousness are shared by the reflexive social awareness of other types of social formations, Mannheim ad-
duces the case of women. The emancipation of women provides a model for undermining the intimidating monopoly of class-theory.

“Everywhere we see woman,” Mannheim says, “becoming conscious of her own being. She has begun to reflect on herself.” She had been thought about before, of course. Everyone has always known about women: what she is able and what she is obliged to do. But these were the thoughts of men, expressing the preferences of “her partner, or rather: her opponent.” “Man ruled and spoke his mind, while woman lacked a consciousness of her own and accepted his thoughts as binding on her, both in her spiritual life and in her conduct.” Now this has changed. It has become evident that the central fact revealed by Marxism about thinking in the economic sphere applies to all social relations: all types of social actors interpret all others from their own points of view, generating misleading ideologies. Once woman recognizes that she has not in fact been governed by her own thoughts, that action appropriate to her distinctive social position cannot be adequately guided by the designs of those who benefit from imposing an ideology on her, “she attempts to live as a new, independent person.” (89)

The general insight into ideology is necessary but it is not sufficient. Turning to psychoanalytic language, Mannheim says that there are “inhibitions” that obstruct full consciousness and corresponding action; many women, in fact, “talk a great deal about emancipation, but merely in order to abreact their inhibitions without bringing themselves to act.” These inhibitions, he maintains, are a function of specifiable social situations, and they can be counteracted by a “socioanalysis” that clarifies their sources and operations. Sociology cannot tell whether a society wholly free of such inhibitions is possible, but Mannheim assures his listeners that “there are various signs that point to the possibility of working towards” a condition where there are far fewer than at present. Although the sociology to which he aspires is, in his view, best understood as the explication of intellectuals’ consciousness, so that he devotes the remainder of his lecture to that theme, he offers women a vital interest in the destiny of that other group.

Speaking to fledgling intellectuals when political commitment seems inescapable, he struggles with the problems of striking a balance between partisan politics and the intellectual’s historical mission. Mannheim maintains that political parties are
organs of social classes, and, consequently, that "intellectuals are not in a position to form their own party." He continues:

Anyone who believes that a party of intellectuals is necessary has gotten the diagnosis of intellectuals wrong. It would be a complete accident if anything at all reasonable came of this. And that can hardly be the basis for gaining consciousness. Above all, it has to be recognized that there is no group that is as divided internally (bank director, professor, yellow journalist, bohemian), and that this division is a division according to classes. More than that: the formation of a party of intellectuals would inevitably lead to fascism. That, of course, is hardly something to be desired. Rather the intellectual should recognize that he belongs to a specific class. And to this class he must go, not to submerge himself as a pseudo-member in a class in which he does not feel at home, but honestly and with full conviction. And he must join its party (90).

But this injunction runs afoot of complications, because Mannheim also wants to emphasize the particular qualities common to all intellectuals and the reactions they provoke. Mannheim seems caught in a contradiction and turns to sarcasm.

Julien Benda . . . laments that the uncommitted thinker is becoming extinct: everything is turning into politics. But Benda is wrong to complain. There are important things to be said for politicization. The archaic cult of a self-satisfied and exclusively self-absorbed intelligentsia is on its way out. And let us be straightforward about the fact that we can no longer bear this aesthetic type: we must finish with such socially aimless and useless thinking. It is absolutely essential that the intellect become combative—if not after the fashion of contemporary Germany, where they smash one another's heads before they start thinking. The intellectual must recognize that being an intellectual entails duties: he has to experience his intellectual cultivation as an obligation. The real danger of politicization is the constricting of free thought under pressure from church, state, or class-organization. These want only tethered thinking, a functionary's thought. Well, join a party that is the organic expression of a class, but do not think as a functionary but as a free man. . . . I can give no advice about the choice of party. You must decide for yourself; that is what makes you an intellectual. Join the ranks, but exercise free and living thought and you shall find out for yourself how fast they throw you out.(91)

Mannheim does not quite leave the matter there, arguing that even the dictatorial parties need intellectuals to guide the inescapable reorientation required by the times and to devise arguments to persuade the uncommitted, but he remains pessimistic. While the distinctive vocation of the intellectual in a class-centered society seems clear, its success is more than uncertain. There is no institution to mediate the conflict be-
tween the political organizations the mature responsible intellectual may not disregard, on the one side, and the mental activity that constitutes the intellectual, on the other. Yet Mannheim’s lecture to Dutch students itself indicates his hopes for the university—and especially the study of sociology—as a “platform” where these divergent but overlapping directions can productively interact.

It is a political interest that brings Mannheim to the university, but he does not propose a politicized university. Philosophical concerns bring him to cultural studies and cultural studies bring him to sociology, but he rejects both sociologized philosophy and culture. He ascribes a high mission to intellectuals and he elevates planning above politics, but he shares John Stuart Mill’s aversion to a clerisy granted monopoly or coercive powers. Mannheim confronts many contemporary sociologists with their own hopes and misgivings, and offers them a model for resourceful thinking.
Notes


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14. Mannheim’s essayistic manner extends even to this scholarly submission. Between the text and the notes to the manuscript submitted to the Faculty, Mannheim introduces a page which repeats a familiar theme: ‘The present work is only part of a still incomplete book; many an unevenness in exposition and treatment may be excused by this fact.’ See David Kettler, Volker Meja and Nico Stehr, “Karl Mannheim and Conservatism: The Ancestry of Historical Thinking,” American Sociological Review 49 (February, 1984), pp. 71-85.

15. Conservatism, 175.

16. Conservatism, 179.


Karl Mannheim, the only surviving child of a Hungarian father and a German mother, was born in Budapest in 1893. There he passed his childhood, graduated from the humanistic gymnasium, and began his university studies. But then he followed friends to Freiburg, Heidelberg, and for a briefer period Paris. He married a fellow student in Budapest and Heidelberg, Juliska Láng. She was a psychologist and became his lifelong companion and adviser, surviving him by nine years.

Mannheim’s earliest interest was philosophy, in particular epistemology (he wrote his doctoral dissertation on its ‘structural analysis’). Among his most influential teachers were the Hungarians György Lukács and Béla Zalai and the Germans Emil Łask, Heinrich Rickert, and Edmund Husserl. In the course of his studies he turned more and more to the social sciences, especially to Max Weber, Max Scheler, and Karl Marx. In 1925 he became a Privatdozent (unsalaried lecturer) in Heidelberg, and in 1929 professor of sociology and economics in Frankfurt. Dismissed in 1933, he joined the London School of Economics as a lecturer in sociology. Eight years later he moved to the Institute of Education at the University of London, where he became professor of education in 1946. Shortly before his unexpected death on 9 January 1947, he was nominated director of UNESCO, a position he could no longer accept. During his stay in England he edited the International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction, thereby greatly contributing to the diffusion of sociology in England and its eventual acceptance as an academically respectable discipline.¹

Karl Mannheim moved from Hungary, where he gave lectures toward the end of World War I, to Germany, and eventually to England. He moved from ‘Soul and Culture’ (1918) to problems of interpretation, epistemology, knowledge—knowledge in general and particular kinds of knowledge (e.g., historicist knowledge, conservative knowledge)—and social processes impinging on knowledge (of generations, of intellectual competition, of economic ambition)—all of this between 1921 and 1930. In 1929, with Ideology and Utopia, he published his most searching and most influential work. For a while, then, he took stock, as it were, of the position he had reached (e.g., ‘Problems of Sociology in Germany’ [1929], ‘The Sociology of Knowledge’ [1931], The Tasks of Sociology Called for by the Present [1932]). In 1933, although his professional ground was cut from under his feet, he yet managed to gain a new perspective when he transferred to England, a perspective on a haunting landscape that he felt committed to enter: the planned society. He described what he saw, at first still writing in German (Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction, originally 1935), then only in English (Diagnosis of Our Time [1943], and Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning [1950], which he finished just before his death but which was published only posthumously).

Mannheim died young, but his work is weighty and the course of its development may well concern us. To present this through the selections contained in the present volume and through this introduction, illustrates a problem with which Mannheim himself was occupied deeply and for a long time. The problem is: how can a unique human being, or group, or period, or Weltanschauung—how can what the Historicist School called a ‘historical individual’—be presented or mediated? Fundamentally it is the problem of how to go about interpreting intellectual or spiritual phenomena. It is the more or less exclusive topic of Mannheim’s review of Lukács’s Theory of the Novel (1920) and of his essays ‘On the Interpretation of Weltanschauung’ (1921–22), ‘Structural Analysis of Epistemology’ (1922), and ‘The Ideological and the Sociological Interpretation of Intellectual Phenomena’ (1926). Further, the paper on historicism (1924), like that on conservative thought (1927), not only is an application of what he had meanwhile learned about interpretation and of what he was learning in the course of writing these papers, but it is also an interpretation of his own thought and the thought of his generation. ‘The Problem of Generation’ preoccupied him, not only in the essay by this title (1928), but also much earlier: in his first or second publication (‘Soul and Culture’) he spoke as a
member, if not as the voice, of a generation in a more literal sense.  

The problem of interpretation is also inseparable from his sociology of knowledge, which is clearly shown in his first essay on the sociology of knowledge (1925). Sociological interpretation, he wrote a year later in his more systematic discussion of kinds of interpretation, is new—it was new for himself and, through his communication of it, for the world. It enriches 'immanent' interpretation, that is, the effort to come as close as possible to an intellectual phenomenon in its own terms. For precisely by going beyond immanent, or intrinsic, interpretation, and interpreting extrinsically, above all sociologically, we may be able to identify 'those meaningful existential presuppositions' to which intrinsic interpretation is necessarily blind. This does not mean that sociological interpretation abandons the intellectual sphere. For the 'existential presuppositions' are not 'non-intellectual' but 'meaningful', even though pre-theoretical or a-theoretical. For, as Mannheim says in the last two sentences of 'Competition as a Cultural Phenomenon' (1928)—which might serve as a motto to much of Mannheim's work—sociological interpretation does not imply that mind and thought are nothing but the expression and reflex of various 'locations' in the social fabric, and that there exist only quantitatively determinable functional correlations and no potentiality of 'freedom' grounded in mind; it merely means that even within the sphere of the intellectual, there are processes amenable to rational analysis, and that it would be an ill-advised mysticism which would shroud things in romantic obscurity at a point where rational cognition is still practicable. Anyone who wants to drag in the irrational where the lucidity and acuity of reason still must rule by right merely shows that he is afraid to face the mystery at its legitimate place. [Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge, p. 228–29]

Sociological interpretation, or the sociology of knowledge,

2 Other members of this 'generation', that is, others who, like Mannheim, lectured in the field of Geisteswissenschaften (translated as 'the human studies' by W. A. Hodges in Wilhelm Dilthey: An Introduction, New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), were Frigyes Antal, Béla Balázs, Béla Bartók, Elek Bolgár, Béla Fögarasi, Lajos Fülöp, Arnold Hauser, Zoltán Kodály, György Lukács, Emma Ritók, Ervin Szabó, and Sándor Varjas.

3 Henceforth Soc. Knowl. See Bibliography of Mannheim's writings, which follows this Introduction.

4 Mannheim never analyzed the question whether the two are synonymous. Perhaps he so believed; but it could be shown even from his own writing that the matter is not so simple, if only because the sociology of knowledge is, among other things, a discipline, and sociological interpretation is, among other things, a method, even an attitude. The only hint at a distinction between the two that I know in the literature on the sociology of knowledge (and this not in reference to Mannheim) is found in Arthur Child, 'The Theoretical
is Mannheim’s synthesis of two components which deeply mark his work. Genetically these two components are idealism and Marxism; systematically they are spirit and society. One of Mannheim’s fundamental questions—perhaps the fundamental question—might be formulated thus: how, in the face of the demonstration that the spirit is socially conditioned, can I still do right by its inexhaustibility and unforeseeability? Or perhaps: how can I, nevertheless, save it? But also: how, in the face of the overwhelming spirit, can I ascertain as accurately as possible its intimate connection with society, and how can I proclaim this connection precisely for the sake of both spirit and society? And later, ever more urgently: how can I save society?

Let us try to understand what this means and what it may mean for us today by following Mannheim’s writings in their development.5

1. Soul and Culture (1918)

In this essay—the title of which might almost be read as ‘Spirit and Society’—Mannheim laments a distance that characterizes his time. This is the distance between the individual and ‘objective culture’ (religion, science, art, the state, forms of life) or the ‘objectifications of the spirit’. It can be bridged by ‘subjective culture’, when ‘the soul strives for its fulfillment, not on its own ... but by way of those cultural objectifications—by incorporating them’. Or the distance can be rendered irrelevant through fulfillment ‘beyond cultural appropriation’, such as is practiced by Indian ascetics or Christian saints. This alternative, however, is not available to us, for if we were to take our position ‘outside of what happens’ (in this world), we would lose ourselves, since we are ‘unredeemed’, ‘not elect’, and must find our ‘contact with life, with external reality, and time-given culture’. At most we have ‘moments of such gracelike experiences, but not redemption, because our fall makes any enduring encounter with ourselves impossible’.

This means that we live in a time in which men depend on society if they would be themselves, would be worthy of being men. Did Mannheim mean that in earlier times the spirit was distributed less evenly through society, living in only a few blessed individuals, whereas its modern diffusion also has brought with it...
its socialization, which we cannot escape except in blessed mo­ments? If we look forward to his paper on economic ambition (1930; XIII below), to *Man and Society* (1935; XVIII), above all to 'The Democratization of Culture' (XVII: 3), then we can retrospectively recognize in such an idea a vague anticipation of what he was to say later about democratization. We also have here the earliest instance of his effort to diagnose his time. The connection between this effort and Mannheim's 'fundamental questions' is this: I can identify spirit only in a given historical form, hence only by grasping a historical period (the influence of Hegel but also of Dilthey is evident here)—or I can identify a period only by grasping its spirit. We shall soon be more concerned with this circular statement.

And another theme that will become important in Mannheim's sociology of knowledge can already be found here: that of 'de-actualization'. We live in a time 'in which the presence of new, formlessly flashing contents de-actualizes much that is old'. Here 'de-actualization' does not refer to a process of alienation perceived in a sociological perspective. But beginning with 'The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge' of 1925 (VII) and fully developed in the *Ideology and Utopia* of 1929 (XIV), this concept (though not the term) is transformed into an explicitly sociological tool for the perception of 'total ideology'.

While on the whole, and admittedly, 'Soul and Culture' is in the tradition of idealism, the theme of 'de-actualization' foreshadows a Marxist component. Biographically speaking, its most direct source appears to have been Lukács, a member (see n. 2 above) of the 'generation' that sponsored the series of lectures introduced by Mannheim's 'Soul and Culture'.

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6 Cf. David Kettler, *Marxismus and Kultur* (Neuwied und Berlin: Luchterhand, 1967), the subtitle of which, in English, is 'Mannheim and Lukács in the Hungarian Revolutions, 1918–19' (this essay also contains many important bibliographical references), and David Kettler, 'Sociology of Knowledge and Moral Philosophy: The Place of Traditional Problems in the Formation of Mannheim's Thought', *Political Science Quarterly*, LXXXII (1967): 399–426, esp. 416-20. My indebtedness for both the knowledge and the text of 'Lélek és Kultura' goes to David Kettler, who reports on the manner in which he himself got acquainted with the pamphlet in the article just cited (p. 408 and n. 11) and gives a more detailed exposition of the pamphlet (pp. 408–13) than is given here. In addition, Kettler analyzes in the same paper two as yet unpublished manuscripts by Mannheim, 'Über die Eigenart kultursoziologischer Erkenntnis' (1921; On the Characteristics of Knowledge in Sociology of Culture) and 'Eine soziologische Theorie der Kultur und ihrer Erkennbarkeit' ('probably 1924'; A Sociological Theory of Culture and Its Knowability). Being familiar with these and other unpublished sources, Kettler throws light on several problems with which the present introduction is concerned; and his larger study of Mannheim, of which the paper under discussion is a part, will be even more illuminating and corrective.
Its religious language may surprise readers of *Ideology* and *Utopia* and of his essays in the sociology of knowledge; and it may interest readers of some of his writing during the English phase, notably perhaps of some of the essays contained in *Diagnosis of Our Time* (1943). The religious concern of the twenty-four year old Mannheim found only rare expression during his subsequent years in Germany, but it came out again in England, though 'de-actualized' (if we may apply this term) into attention to a sociologically interesting human dimension. Thus, part of the title footnote to 'Towards a New Social Philosophy' (early 1940's), reads:

In order to preclude any misunderstanding, and as personal feelings are more easily roused in the sphere of religion than perhaps in any other, he [the author] wishes to emphasize that he speaks as a sociologist, and as a sociologist only. The question put to the sociologist can only concern the relationship to, and the function in, society which religion has as one among other spiritual phenomena in the social process. Whatever this approach may yield, it does not judge the intrinsic values of Christianity and Christian Ethics. [*Diagnosis of Our Time*, p. 109, n]

And yet in 1933, Mannheim had written 'that achieving from time to time a certain distance from his own situation and from the world is one of the fundamental traits of man as a truly human being. A man for whom nothing exists beyond his immediate situation is not fully human'. Let us remember this problem of religion in Mannheim's thought when we come to later writings where it is expressed again.

### II. Review of Lukács's *Theory of the Novel* (1920)

Mannheim's comments on the *Theory of the Novel*—the only book by Lukács he ever reviewed—is the earliest appearance, not of the Marxist component in his thought, but of the problem of interpretation. Mannheim here shows the exuberant curiosity of one who has discovered the inexhaustible interpretability of the world of the mind. To catch objects in their immediacy, he urges the most unconditional exposure to them possible. For this, man must overcome the deep-seated traditional way of perceiving them as things external to himself and realize that his perception of them depends on how he sees them, which in turn depends on how he looks at them. In his enthusiasm Mannheim does not stop to deal with the epistemological problem, implicit

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7 Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Ecstasy', a section in 'The Democratization of Culture' (XVII (3) below). ('Translator's [Paul Kecskemeti's] note: This paper was written in 1933'). In *Essays on the Sociology of Culture* (henceforth *Soc. Cult.*), p. 240. See also *Diagnosis of Our Time* (XX (2) below), p. 137, and esp. n. 91.
in his approach, of whether man’s perceptual apparatus derives from the nature of objects or from the nature of mind.

Intellectual phenomena ‘can be explained in more than one frame of reference’. Furthermore, Mannheim distinguishes between ‘dogmatic’ and ‘logical’ objects, or interpretanda, and warns against confusing them (for ‘semantic’ reasons, we might say). For instance, I call ‘work of art’ an object which I can consider in reference to the psychic development of the artist who made it, or in regard to its aesthetic character (lines, colors, motifs, structure, etc.), or in respect to its position in the history of style, as well as in many other respects. Using the same term ‘work of art’ in all such analyses, I may be led to believe—erroneously—that I am speaking about the same ‘object’, whereas it is a different one every time I change my frame of reference. It is the same only ‘dogmatically’, not ‘logically’. Moreover, Mannheim points out, these logical objects which are covered by the same dogmatic object are ordered hierarchically. He stresses the danger of wanting to ‘explain from below upward’, that is, to explain the ‘upper’ on the basis of the ‘lower’, which he says is mistaken, and he argues the inverse direction, ‘from up downward’. For instance, the attempt at exhaustively ‘explaining’ a work of art in terms of its origin is false, because in such a procedure ‘work of art’ is a psychological object which ‘does not yet contain at all that which is hierarchically higher, namely, the spiritual element or, in our case, the art form’. On the contrary, it is correct to ‘interpret’ or, ‘in the narrower sense of the word’, to ‘interpret’, the ‘work of art’, that is, the logical object ‘art form’, by starting from the higher logical object ‘spiritual-metaphysical phenomenon’ or ‘objectification of the spirit’. This is what Lukács does with respect to the form of the novel, which he tries to interpret ‘from a higher point of view, that of the philosophy of history’. But it is ‘extremely difficult to grasp’ the spirit of a time ‘and its ultimate points of orientation, if only because it never explicates itself in its creations but only manifests itself through them’. The result of such an interpretation can therefore never be directly demonstrated by means of quotations, ‘for such a demonstration always presupposes the reader’s capacity in a specific, separate act to read in the example presented what is essential in it’.

Still, only in this fashion, that is, in the direction opposite to that of the reductionist, is it possible to attain a total view. In other words, if we would know what is essential in an object, we must appreciate its nature and understand, in a fashion Mannheim

8 This distinction between ‘explanation’ and ‘interpretation’ will be developed later, as we shall see.
evidently patterns after Wilhelm Dilthey,\(^9\) how in the course of development it has come to be at the place where we find it. To see what is essential, however, is ‘not a matter of construction or induction but a particular ability, which in rudimentary form is possessed by everybody’. This may hint at an elite view of men of knowledge as well as at the germ of a view of education. The first might be connected with Mannheim’s later, well-known preoccupation with the ‘socially unattached intelligentsia’ and with elites in general\(^10\); the second, with his intense interest in education during the last years of his life.\(^11\)

This short review is important not only because of Lukács’s manifest influence on Mannheim’s thinking about aesthetics and interpretation and because of the less manifest influence of phenomenology (compare ‘the specific, separate act’ in the last quotation with the phenomenological ‘bracketing’), but also because it traces the outlines of a scheme of interpretation which Mannheim develops in his next paper, on the interpretation of Weltanschauung, and works out and applies in subsequent essays, especially those of 1925 (VII) and 1926 (VIII).

*III. On the Interpretation of ‘Weltanschauung’ (1921–22)*

In this investigation, Mannheim aims at nothing less than a method for grasping the spirit of a time. Already a result of his having set this aim, there is an insight stated at the beginning of the essay that entails the remaining problems. The insight is that Weltanschauung or spirit is ‘pre-theoretical’. This gives a new accessibility and comparability to all ‘cultural fields’. The problem, however—Mannheim even believes it to be ‘the central problem of philosophy today’ (Soc. Knowl., p. 39)—is how the a-theoretical can be grasped by means of science, which is theoretical, how it can be translated into theory. For Mannheim, it seems, this is a problem, not so much for historical, as for ontological reasons because it touches upon a fundamental property of human life and mind, characterizing man far better than any of the findings of anthropological science can do. This fundamental trait is that man is the citizen of several worlds at the

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same time. We possess ... the primordial stuff of experience, which is wholly indeterminate and of which we cannot even say whether it is homogeneous, in several distinct forms, as aesthetic, religious, ethical experience and also as theoretical awareness. [Ibid., p. 39]

But why are we not contented with this?

Why is it, then, that we crave theoretical knowledge of something we have already possessed integrally in direct experience unmarred by the intrusion of the theoretical interest? Why do we not content ourselves with the aesthetic contemplation of the works before us? Why do we pass from the attitude of form-perception to that of cognitive analysis, an attitude essentially incongruous with the aesthetic datum? Why should 'thought' be the universal medium, burdened with the thankless role of a tool that is constantly needed and used, and yet is constantly despised and reviled? And is it even to provide the language in which it can be denounced? [Ibid., p. 40]

Mannheim's passion for thinking and his praise of it, which this among many other passages reveals, does not, however, lead him to answer the questions he has just raised. Instead he points out the positive and fruitful nature of theory, which 'must achieve something else besides chilling the authentic experience with the cold blast of reflection', for 'otherwise it would be incomprehensible why the ethical, aesthetic, and religious realm (that is, the realm of the a-theoretical) is shot through with elements of theory even in its original, unreflected state' (ibid., p. 40).

Thus not only is the theoretical manner of grasping the world given to man as one among other manners, but it is given to him as that which pervades all others. Mannheim's 'a-theoretical' passion for theory does not lead him, however, to ask why this should be so.

Instead the problem is, as we saw, how something a-theoretical, more precisely how a Weltanschauung, can become the object of scientific investigation. A Weltanschauung is far less an object than are aesthetic, religious, or ethical 'objectifications'. Generally speaking, an object can be given in unmediated or in mediated form. From this Mannheim draws the conclusion that the full understanding of a cultural phenomenon or object requires three kinds of understanding: that of its objective meaning, which is given immediately; that of its expressive meaning; and that of its documentary meaning. The latter two are not immediate, but mediated. In science the objective meaning is 'a theoretical proposition'; in the visual arts, a 'visual content'; in music, 'melody, rhythm, harmony, and the like'. The creator of a work aims at creating objective and expressive meaning; he is unaware of documentary meaning, which 'is not an intentional object for him'. If we would grasp the expressive meaning of a work or an act, we must 'transcend' the work or act in the direction of its
creator or actor, that is to say, psychologically. The grasp of documentary meaning, on the other hand, ‘is a matter, not of a temporal process in which certain experiences become actualized, but of the character, the essential nature, the “ethos” of the subject which manifests itself in artistic creation [for instance]’ (ibid., p. 55). In aiming at documentary meaning, that is, in engaging in documentary interpretation, we may ‘gather the scattered items of documentary meaning together in overarching concepts’ such ‘as the “art motive” [Kunstwollen, artistic intention] (Riegl), “economic ethos” [Wirtschaftsgesinnung] (Sombart), “Weltanschauung” (Dilthey and others), or “spirit” (Max Weber and others), depending on the cultural fields explored’ (ibid., p. 58). Since it is ‘profoundly influenced by the location within the historical stream from which the interpreter attempts to reconstruct the spirit of a past epoch’, one readily understands that documentary interpretation ‘must be performed anew in each period’. In other words, what Mannheim will call ‘transcendent’ interpretation is historically relative.

Expressive and documentary meaning are attained by a theoretical process. The original, pre-theoretical cultural phenomenon does not have these meanings. This is to say that the grasp of expressive and documentary meaning changes the objectively understood object. Interpretation ‘brackets’ (ibid., p. 68) it, as Mannheim puts it in phenomenological terms, thus rendering more precise the distinction between dogmatic and logical object that he made in the preceding essay.

The question now is how to go about ‘detaching certain elements or units of meaning from their concrete setting and fusing them into validly ascertainable objects of higher generality by using ‘appropriate categories and conceptualizations’ (ibid., p. 73). But Mannheim interrupts himself to point to the ‘paradoxical result’, namely, that ‘we understand the whole from the part, and the part from the whole’ (ibid., p. 74), the spirit of an epoch from documents, and documents from the spirit of an epoch. It is the ‘circle’ we encountered already in ‘Soul and Culture’. Mannheim, however, does not pursue the problem further, for despite his passion for theory he yet appears to be less interested in theory than in method. What is needed, he continues, are concepts that are applicable to all fields of culture and do justice to their historicity; but instead of engaging in a search of such concepts, he criticizes ‘certain attempts at constructing a historical synthesis’ (ibid., p. 75), namely, Dilthey’s, Riegl’s, and Spengler’s, all of which tend, more or less, toward a philosophy of history; and those of Max Dvořák and Max Weber, who remained faithful to history itself, but whose ‘meth-
odological problem’ (ibid., p. 80) was ‘whether the unity of various cultural fields should be expressed in terms of “correspondence”, “function”, “causality”, or “reciprocity”’ (ibid., p. 80). The most important distinction Mannheim makes is between interpretation from the totality of a Weltanschauung and causal explanation; if only the latter is considered ‘explanation’, he argues, the former should simply be called ‘interpretation’.

Mannheim concludes his discussion in a spirit of hope, even enthusiasm. He speaks of a process of fermentation in which science and intellectual life as a whole are engaged: ‘we are striving after a synthesis and would like to draw the meaning and form of pre-theoretical data within the orbit of science’ (ibid., p. 82). He thus names what modern efforts in certain areas he has gathered, and he recognizes, for himself and for those to whom he communicates it, something new.

iv. On the Problem of the Classification of the Sciences (1922)

In this review of Erich Becher’s Geisteswissenschaften und Naturwissenschaften (The Human Studies and the Natural Sciences; 1921) Mannheim argues the pre-theoretical givenness of the object as the basis of an adequate classification. This again leads into a circle, however, for despite the pre-theoretical givenness, a givenness, so to speak, irrespective of all points of view, a classification can be undertaken, after all, only on the basis of a point of view: ‘which point of view is the most adequate depends on the nature of the object; but again, the nature of the object can be grasped theoretically only from a point of view; thus the whole problem seems to move in a circle’ (Wissenssoziologie, p. 157). Nor can we escape this dilemma by declaring that every point of view is valid, for the relativism that such a position would proclaim violates the facts so flagrantly as to move us to the other extreme, that is, insistence on the pre-theoretical, ‘ontic’ grasp of objects. Methodologically speaking, ‘the essence [of something] can be grasped in theory only from a point of view’ (a proposition Mannheim advances against intuitionism); still, the various points of view

are arranged in a hierarchy which 'is oriented directly toward' the objects themselves. With these two declarations Mannheim tries to achieve two things: on the one hand, to give 'the significance of the methodological sphere' its proper right, which would be impossible if we posited an intuitive relation to objects and their essences; on the other hand, to acknowledge the realization that theoretical work 'has its ultimate check in something extra-theoretical, something which confronts us ontically'. In other words: once we take a point of view, we miss the essence of the objects seen from it; but which point of view we take depends on the essence of the objects that are seen from it. Mannheim fails to explain what, if anything, he does in the face of this circle; but it is clear that either of the two insights that make it up conceive the implied relation between individual (subject) and object as 'existential'.

Mannheim abandons the problem he has raised. He explains that even 'inadequate' classifications or inadequate knowledge can produce 'new insights' by pointing out 'that knowing is nothing but circling around a pre-theoretical vis-à-vis [Gegenüber] (to avoid here the word “object” [Gegenstand]). Here we have a germ of the concepts of 'perspectivistic' knowledge that Mannheim will develop in his essay on Historicism (1924; VI) but above all in Ideology and Utopia, and for which he was to become known, if not famous or notorious. But the problem of how objective truth is possible despite the 'most various points of view', that is, despite the relativism he has just rejected, does not yet come up; it will plague him—and his interpreters—later. Had he met it already here, he could perhaps have tried to resolve it by analyzing the 'hierarchy' of the points of view that 'is oriented directly toward' the objects themselves.

At any rate, a 'fully adequate classification of the sciences would coincide with the copy-like repetition of the architectonics already present in them', for full adequacy means, in general, 'merely to understand and accept' (ibid., p. 161). But in such acceptance, though we would 'have' the object, we would not know it. Mannheim, however, does not ask either how 'having' is possible or why knowing demands some kind of distance. He seems so convinced of the 'existential' relation between individual and objects that he is also convinced that a classification according to objects presupposes an ontology. Such an ontology would have to show, he writes, that 'the sciences follow the ontic structure of reality' and that it is not '“method” [which] creates the objects' (ibid., p. 162). If we want to prove that the human studies (Geisteswissenschaften) form an ontically grounded unity, we must show that the 'psychic (temporally identifiable acts con-
nected with a certain stream of consciousness)' (ibid., p. 163) and that which these acts intend or mean, the meaning of these acts, belong in the same ontic sequence. Mannheim mentions Husserl, Rickert, and Spranger as having shown that this is not the case, and he could have recalled or mentioned—if not used for the analysis of the present problem—his own distinctions between the objective, expressive, and documentary meanings of intellectual phenomena, even more generally, the difference between origin and validity. It is useless to speculate why he did not; the reason just possibly is as simple as lack of space in a book review.

v. *Structural Analysis of Epistemology* (1922)

Mannheim distinguishes between the systematization, the system, and the architectonic of a philosophy and of intellectual phenomena generally. Most basic is systematization, 'the first ordering of the "elements of experience"'; it is 'constitutive' of all theoretical objects, which are conceivable only as systematized. By contrast, a 'system' is a 'reflected, methodological form', and the 'architectonic' is 'a mere mode of presentation'. The analysis of the system allows us to correct unsystematic shifts brought about by the architectonic; and if the account of a thinker's thought 'is to be more than a servile copy', it must make such 'an effort at a systematic reconstruction of this kind'.

Systematization, system, and architectonic may be understood as attributes of a thinker's approach to the world (with systematization the most unconditional of the three). But there is also the question of how and to what extent the thinker does reach the world, that is to say, whether and to what extent that which he discovers by means of his approach is valid. An atemporal sphere of validity is an undemonstrable postulate of all theory (which is presupposed in every attempt at demonstrating it). In pure logic—which deals with this sphere of validity—a subject does not yet occur. Epistemology, on the other hand, is unthinkable without a subject. But this means that epistemology presupposes pure logic, that pure logic is independent of epistemology and can say nothing about it, although in empirical thinking the two are inseparable. 'Approach to the world' and 'predication of the world' (these are not Mannheim's terms) are discussed together in the following passage:

Any systematization whatever can in the end permit but a single correct ordering of its elements [that is to say: its ultimate court of appeal is validity]. All concrete acts of thinking are searching for this sequence, and even if it cannot be found in this way, it is still the indispensable presupposition of meaning for any and every act of thinking. [Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology,13 p. 30]

This means: even though the ‘circling around a pre-theoretical vis-à-vis’ (of which we heard in the preceding essay) yields inadequate knowledge, still it ultimately guarantees valid knowledge. One might say that that which confronts us plays with us as if it were a magnet until, at the end of all days, it transforms itself into a valid object on which we are dead and caught. But perhaps such a chiliastic vision is ‘indispensable’, and its image is not the improper trifle we may be tempted to see in it. Moreover, such a vision is also found in Hegel and, in more ‘earthly’ form, in Marx, who, as we have begun to see here, had great influence on Mannheim.

What element is common to all epistemologies? An indirect answer is provided by a typology of epistemologies or, speaking in terms of an analysis of their structures, by a typology of loci where different practicable roads to knowledge are possible. Among the merits of such a typology is the separation of historical (including biographical) from a-historical elements; and this separation is governed by the rule that the more compelling and rational a thought is, the less is it caused empirically. It is understood, of course, that the historical occurrence of even the most rational phenomenon is subject to causal analysis. But such causal analysis, Mannheim insists (not the first time), can demonstrate neither the a-priori possibility nor the absolute truth value of its type. To do the former is instead the task of an ‘immanent’ structural analysis; to do the latter is the task of ‘an immediate investigation of the content as such (in the case of epistemology, for example, only by an epistemological examination, not by a logical analysis of structure)’ (Soc. Soc. Psych., p. 37).

Here, too, Mannheim anticipates elements of his later typology of interpretations (VIII below). At any rate, a ‘comprehensive explanation’ (ibid., p. 39; to be consistent Mannheim should have said ‘interpretation’) of a historical phenomenon must illuminate both its temporal genesis and its atemporal systematic origin ‘in the supratemporal systematization of a sphere’ (cf. ibid., p. 39; Wissenssoziologie, p. 199). Without acknowledging it, Mannheim here parallels Max Weber’s requirement for the adequate grasp of something, namely, its (causal) explanation as an event in time and its ‘understanding’ interpretation as a spiritual (intellectual) phenomenon.\(^\text{14}\) And in our time, Mannheim says, we must, while interpreting, ‘never lose sight of the enormous tension that prevails between the doctrine of a timeless validity and

the simultaneous awareness that every historical phenomenon is fast rooted in its age' (Soc. Soc. Psych., p. 39, modified; Wissenssoziologie, p. 199).

He thus is carrying on a two-pronged venture: sociology of epistemology (later of ‘knowledge’) and diagnosis of his time. The thinking of this time is marked by two fundamental experiences: ‘On the one hand, there is the insight that the very meaning of theory implies that there can only be a single truth; on the other, there is the recognition that anything subject to the process of becoming demands to be comprehended in terms of time’ (Soc. Soc. Psych., p. 40). The latter recognition, however, Mannheim says in a very important footnote on relativism, ‘must not be carried over into the realm of meaning and validity’. True, we do not have to ‘think or to engage in artistic activity; but if we elect to do so, it must be in strict conformity with the structure of the field in question’. And thus it is also true of his own present effort ‘that one solution alone can be the right one’, but that even if it ‘should fail to lay bare the ultimately valid categories, the discovery of its erroneousness would imply the possibility of a correct solution’ (ibid., p. 40n.).

We thus observe that at this stage of his thinking Mannheim’s famous ‘relativism’ is characterized by insistence on the historicity of intellectual phenomena, but at the same time, and as emphatically, on the existence of a non-relative, that is, objective or absolute, structure of the world. As we shall see, this does not change in his later writings either.

The first part of the present essay is entitled ‘Of the Logic of Philosophical Systematizations’; the title of the second part is that of the whole: ‘The Structural Analysis of Epistemology’. As epistemology shows, man is capable of knowing not only objects (‘immanent knowledge’) but also the presuppositions of knowing them (‘transcendental knowledge’). The latter results from a ‘free choice of reference’ (freie Blickwendung; ibid., p. 45), which is characterized by an epoché,15 that is, by ‘a type of suspension of the validity of a judgment’ (ibid., p. 46)—the most important types of such suspension ‘are the Cartesian doubt (de omnibus dubitandum) and the Kantian transcendental question (how is [experience] possible?)’ (ibid., p. 45). But epistemology has not only the analytical task to ‘ascertain the ultimate presuppositions of any possible knowledge,’ but also the evaluative task ‘to evaluate the cognitive achievement as such, on the basis of the

15 Here, as he did not in his review of Lukács’s Theory of the Novel, where the idea of epoché, though not the expression, already occurred, Mannheim refers to Husserl’s Ideas. (On the influence of phenomenology on Mannheim, cf. Paul Kecskemeti, ‘Introduction’, Soc. Knowi., pp. 8–9.)
evaluation of these ultimate presuppositions (*ibid.*, p. 47). In trying to solve these tasks, epistemology makes use of the concrete analyses achieved by logic, psychology, or ontology. These three 'primary systematizations' serve as its 'fundamental disciplines' and furnish its three most general types. For we can—directly—inquire into the ultimate presuppositions of knowledge either genetically (how does knowledge come about?) or in regard to its principles of validity; in the first case the answer is psychological or ontological; in the second, logical. An indirect inquiry into those principles, on the other hand, concerns the primary systematization itself and decides 'which of the above systematizations is to serve as fundamental discipline for the ensuing theory of knowledge' (*ibid.*, p. 49). Such an inquiry thus makes us 'aware of the ultimate basic axioms of every possible epistemology in general' and thus of 'the ultimate presuppositions of knowledge itself' (*ibid.*, p. 52). 'There can be no doubt', Mannheim adds in a footnote, 'that this type of epistemology (whose historical realization has, after all, not yet emerged) would employ as its fundamental science just the analysis of structure as the logical doctrine of the systematizations and that it would see its ultimate presuppositions in the primordial systematization laid bare by this analysis' (*ibid.*, p. 52n., modified).

In this discussion of the problem of the fundamental disciplines of epistemology, too, we see Mannheim trying to come as close as possible to experience itself and to shape his formulations while in such close vicinity. In the present instance he 'brackets' a traditional division of cognitive approaches to the world (logic, psychology, ontology) rather than taking it for granted: he identifies the three as 'primordial systematizations' of one approach (though without analyzing them in the direction of their common unitary origin). Or to employ his much-used expression, he 'relativizes' them—not, however, with reference to history or society but with reference to the (a-historical, a-social) individual. Here he is not so much a sociologist as an existentialist.

The analysis of 'specifically epistemological concepts', that is, of the 'subject–object correlation', shows that epistemology takes its concept of the subject from its fundamental discipline. 'This as yet unfulfilled subject–object correlation is what epistemology adds out of itself to the elements borrowed from the fundamental science, and this is what the ultimate specificity of the formation of epistemological concepts consists in' (*Wissenssoziologie*, p. 220; cf. *Soc. Soc. Psych.*, p. 55). Epistemology thus always works with three elements: (1) the known (knowledge or cognition), (2) the knower (subject), and (3) the to-be-known (object), and concentrates on the task of resolving or bridging the correlations
among them—for instance, of ascertaining, in regard to the relation between subject and object, 'the proper share of both the subject and reality in the attainment of objectivity' (Soc. Soc. Psych., p. 61).

In evaluating, that is, in its endeavor to reach certainty that the 'ultimate presuppositions' are the basis of true knowledge, epistemology uses a transcendent ontological criterion of truth (namely, correspondence with reality or meaning), or a formal-logical one (namely, logical necessity), or finally, a psychological one (the feeling of complete evidence): the criterion used in the evaluation derives from the fundamental discipline adopted. But this involves a paradox:

Epistemology sets itself the task of solving on its own the problem of the cognitive efficacy of all factual knowledge and of appraising its value; in the course of its inquiry, it pushes this question of value further and further back, until it appears as the problem of the value of the ultimate presuppositions of all knowledge; and finally, it is compelled—after analysis has laid these ultimate presuppositions bare—simply to proclaim them as value (in the case of a skeptical theory, as negative value). [Ibid., p. 68]

But what this means is that the epistemological critique, 'instead of being a critique of knowledge as it pretends', is 'a new systematization of it' (Wissenssoziologie, p. 239; cf. Soc. Soc. Psych., pp. 68-69). 'Structural analysis discloses that epistemology actually solves a problem which is entirely different from the one it has set itself. Instead of a critique of value, it turns into a theory about how a particular value can be attained and realized' (Soc. Soc. Psych., p. 69). Seen from within psychology, ontology, or even logic, nothing valuable or normative is visible; this appears only from a point of view outside of psychology, ontology, or logic. Epistemology, which, of course, does lie outside of them, is thus not descriptive (how is it?) but 'constructive' (how must it be?).

In this manner, Mannheim here comes across what he will later call the ideological character of intellectual phenomena, including epistemology. But not yet here, for he does not argue, for instance, that the 'structural analysis' should be supplemented by a sociological analysis. He rather argues that it should be supplemented by an 'inquiry into the mode of presentation of its ultimate presuppositions' which 'could suggest a reason why divergent solutions of the epistemological problem are possible' (ibid., p. 73; italicized in the original).

It is clear that of the two major components of Mannheim's thought, 'idealism' and 'Marxism', the former still dominates his analysis of epistemology, no matter how many things he has discovered in the course of it.
vi. **Historicism (1924)**

In ‘Historicism’ Mannheim’s turn toward society and sociology announces itself by way of history; this turn will be completed in the next paper, that on the sociology of knowledge.

In the epoch following the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment, historicism has become ‘the very basis on which we construct our observations of the socio-cultural reality’ (*Soc. Knowl.*, p. 85). Historicism treats cultural and historical phenomena not separately or immanently but as parts of something larger, and this may correspond to the transformation of the social structure from the atomization characteristic of liberalism to a greater emphasis on collective features. Epistemology has been replaced as the ‘fundamental discipline’ by the philosophy of history in the sense of a ‘dynamic metaphysic’ (*ibid.*, p. 97).

In considering matters in relation to history, Mannheim is halfway between considering them relative to the spirit and relative to society. The ‘positional determination’ (*Standortsgebundenheit; ibid.*, p. 103), the ‘perspectivism’ of thinking, is still understood more historically than sociologically. But as it did before and will do later, Mannheim’s position raises the problem of relativism. He claims that relativism—here the relativity of historical knowledge—by no means follows from the ‘positional determination’ of knowledge. For the ‘concrete values which serve as a standard have developed in their fullness of meaning organically out of the same historical process which they have to help interpret. There exists, therefore, a subtle bond between thought and reality—subject and object are here essentially identical’ (*ibid.*, p. 104). This passage occurs in Mannheim’s extended discussion of Ernst Troeltsch’s *Der Historismus und seine Probleme* (1922), which he considers representative of contemporary thinking about the problem. (For his more mature assessment of Troeltsch see his article on him in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XV.) The correct understanding of historicism is indispensable for the proper foundation of the human studies, especially sociology. How, now, does Troeltsch come to terms with the fact that what is said in the quotation just presented guarantees the applicability of standards and points of view only to the student’s own culture, but not an explanation of different pictures of the same historical period that are found in various epochs? Mannheim answers:

The historical subject-matter (such as the historical content of an epoch) remains identical ‘in itself’, but it belongs to the essential conditions of its cognizability that it can be grasped only from differing intellectual-historical standpoints—in other words, that we can view only various ‘aspects’ of it. By analogy with the discovery of Husserl [*Ideas*, par. 41]—that it is a characteristic of the spatial object that we can view it only in different ‘profiles’ (*Ab-
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schattungen), i.e. from definite perspectives—one could, it seems to us, venture the thesis that it is part of the essence of a historico-cultural, but also of a psychic object, that it is penetrable only in 'mental and psychic profiles'. [Ibid., p. 105, modified]

Here, too, then, Mannheim holds on, as we observed before, to the unchangeability of the object of cognition. He relativizes the knowing subject all the more: even its most general characteristics, the categories of reason, change. (Once more: no matter how much this reminds one of his later sociology of knowledge, the locus of changeability is still history rather than society.) And so also change logic and epistemology, which are the bases of the structure of thinking that dominates an epoch. Mannheim passionately affirms this changeability. Generalizing from Troeltsch, and doubtless from himself, he writes:

One might still indeed live a self-contained and unblemished life if one were to use as a foundation certain earlier positions whose residues still survive among us. But the pressures which spring from the contemporary situation, once they have penetrated our consciousness, permit now only a going to the limit. In this process, one must demolish all firm foundations under one's feet, and all one can do is to grasp the eternal as a component of the most immediate temporal problems. This means that the prophet and the leader themselves become guilty, but it may be hoped that the radicality of the commitment will compensate for the temporal limitation of the objectives. [Ibid., p. 99]

Even the prophet, the leader (Fuhrer), can no longer carry the banner of tradition. But the hope to find validity by the act of commitment itself—an act which is both affective and moral—would be less unclear if Mannheim had asked what it is that man can hope to find in or through such commitment and how this commitment can lead to it. But he does not ask this question, any more than he asked in connection with the previously mentioned theme what is common to the various interpretations of the same historical period that would account for their mutual understandability. In both cases a hypothesis concerning elements common to all men, by means of which they identify with one another and make allowance for the relative, appears as a promising next step.

Instead of taking this step, Mannheim turns to the 'forms of historical movement'. Earlier in the present paper, he speaks of the tendency of life 'to become itself, again and again, a system' (Wissenssoziologie, p. 252; cf. ibid., p. 89).16 Now he poses the question of 'how to combine psychic, that is, a-theoretical,

16 This thought is closely akin to Simmel's concept of life as 'more-than-life' (which Mannheim does not mention). Cf. Georg Simmel, Lebensanschauung (1918), and Rudolph H. Weingartner, Experience and Culture: The Philosophy of Georg Simmel (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1960), pp. 69-71.
changes with the rational, that is, theoretical, method of intel­
tlectual development’ (Wissenssoziologie, p. 279; cf. ibid., p. 111). But he does not make use of the results reached in the essay on the interpretation of Weltanschauung—as if he had forgotten the problem of the theoretical graspability of the a-theoretical, which was central to that essay and which does return, though in a subordinate position, in the present one. His answer to the question of this graspability, which here, too, is positive (‘owing to the essential unity of the rational and irrational in human consciousness’; ibid., p. 111), sounds like an aside given on the way to what here is Mannheim’s real aim: the identification of the types of the forms of development that we can read from history. He modifies Alfred Weber’s dichotomy between ‘process of civilization’ (to which alone the idea of progress can apply) and ‘movement of culture’, and adds the ‘dialectic’, which characterizes ‘philosophy and some related disciplines’ (ibid., p. 114). Analyzing the first (e.g., technology or natural sciences) requires no attention to one’s own point of view or to that of the period under study, which, on the contrary, is essential in regard to existential (‘seelengebundenen’) phenomena (e.g., culture). To illustrate, then, dialectical development, Mannheim points to the history of philosophy, which shows that philosophical systems do not annul or supplement earlier ones but reorganize themselves from ever new centers, for they have a super-theoretical or super-philosophical basis, namely, that which is located in their life-situations—in this sense they ‘express the truth of the epoch concerned’ (ibid., p. 117). Every philosophy, thus, has ‘a double criterion. One is that of inner truth: that is, whether a given philosophy can give a consistent account of the scientific and vital insights which emerge at that particular time. The second is that of dialectical truth: that is, whether that philosophy is more comprehensive, broader in scope than the preceding ones’ (ibid., p. 118).

A philosophy of history which proceeds in corresponding diagnostic fashion must recognize, however, a ‘positional de­termination’ in addition to the one mentioned before, namely, the determination by certain social strata and their tendencies: it must be enriched by attention to social differentiation—‘but we cannot pursue this subject here any farther’ (ibid., p. 125). This comment is found in the beginning of a short section on ‘Historicism and Sociology’ in connection with a glowing reference to Lukács’s History and Class Consciousness (1923); it probably marks Mannheim’s earliest explicit turn toward sociology.

In the last section, ‘Dynamic Standards in Thought and Practice’, Mannheim returns to the problem of relativism.
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To say that the absolute itself is unfolding in a genetic process, and that it can be grasped only from definite positions within the same process, in categories which are moulded by the unfolding of the material contact of the genetic flux itself—to say this is not tantamount to professing relativism. What this position denies is only a subject which remains outside of the flux, never changes, and maintains contact with the flux only by a miracle. [Ibid., p. 130]

And in a fashion similar to that in ‘Structural Analysis of Epistemology’, here, too, Mannheim applies what he has said generally to this very essay, which does ‘not claim to have spoken the last word’ on its topic; but ‘truth in a perspectivic sense means that within one historical constellation only one perspectivic conclusion can be correct’ (ibid., p. 130).

Mannheim does not ask, whose ‘historical constellation’—his own, his ‘generation’s’, his ‘time’s’?

*vii. The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge (1925)

Instead, he completes the turn toward sociology that had ‘announced’ itself in ‘Historicism’ a year before. Both ‘the vital and the practical as well as the theoretical and intellectual currents of our time seem to point toward a temporary fading out of epistemological problems, and toward the emergence of the sociology of knowledge as the focal discipline’ (Soc. Knowl., p. 136). Mannheim says this on the basis of his analysis of the contemporary ‘problem constellation’ which is ‘exceptionally favourable’ to the sociology of knowledge. This analysis—it could be inferred already from ‘historicism’—shows that Mannheim’s conviction regarding the state of knowledge in his time is an unanalyzed premise which the explication of his philosophy of history could illuminate. ‘If, then’, Mannheim says, ‘we ask ourselves about the ultimate, fundamental factors entering into the constellation which necessarily gave rise to the problem of a sociology of thought [= sociology of knowledge?] in our time’ (ibid., p. 136), we find

1) the self-relativization of thought and knowledge, (2) the appearance of a new form of relativization introduced by the ‘unmasking’ turn of mind, (3) the emergence of a new system of reference, that of the social sphere, in respect to which thought could be conceived to be relative, and (4) the aspiration to make this relativization total, relating not one thought or idea, but a whole system of ideas, to an underlying social reality. [Ibid., p. 144]

Every part of this ‘constellation’, as well as the constellation as a whole, seems to threaten us with relativism, and Mannheim tries to meet this threat in a footnote on ‘self-relativization’, which clarifies the problem as it appeared at this stage of his thinking:

What we mean by ‘self-relativization’ is by no means epistemological ‘relativism’ but merely the opposite of ‘autonomy’. One may very well assert that
thought is 'relative to being', 'dependent on being', 'non-autonomous', 'part of a whole reaching beyond it', without professing any 'relativism' concerning the truth value of its findings. At this point, it is, so to speak, still open whether the 'existential relativization' of thought is to be combined with epistemological relativism or not. In any case, however, we would like to go on record, at this point, that we cannot share the at present widespread fear of relativism. 'Relativism' has become a catchword which, it is believed, will instantly annihilate any adversary against whom it is used. But as to us, we definitely prefer a 'relativism' which accentuates the difficulty of its task by calling attention to all those moments which tend to make the propositions actually discoverable at any given time, partial and situationally conditioned—we prefer such a 'relativism' to an 'absolutism' which loudly proclaims, as a matter of principle, the absoluteness of its own position or of 'truth in itself', but is in fact no less partial than any of its adversaries—and, still worse, is utterly incapable of tackling with its epistemological apparatus the problem of the temporal and situational determination of any concrete process of thought, completely overlooking the way in which this situational conditioning enters into the structure and the evolution of knowledge. [Ibid., p. 137n.]

We notice that not only the argument of his adversaries, such as it is implied here, but also Mannheim's answer, is as vague as it is passionate. This suggests more a conflict between Weltanschauungen than a rational or analytical discussion. Even to clarify this conflict so that the validity claims of the two parties could be examined would require an analysis of the words both use to indicate and argue their positions, that is, a kind of 'documentary interpretation' such as Mannheim himself has described it in his essay on Weltanschauung. Most of his critics (e.g., those cited in n. 12 above) have instead taken him 'literally', criticizing him with considerable plausibility for being unclear or self-contradictory. To what extent and in what sense Mannheim, on his side, did not take his critics literally (but tried to understand or interpret them sociologically or otherwise) is another question, the answer to which would demand a special effort. The essay on interpretation which he wrote shortly after the present one (see VIII) will, if not clarify, at least drive home, the problem of 'literalness'.

The first factor, the self-relativization of thought, again brings 'the danger of a theoretical circulus vitiosus' (ibid., p. 137): the thought which relativizes thought thereby invalidates itself. We are acquainted with this danger already from Mannheim's 'Structural Analysis of Epistemology' and from 'Historicism', where (briefly recalling) he answered that positions, though relative, are not arbitrary and can be corrected. This time, he mentions 'only one type of solution': 'if one maintains that the sphere of thought ... is merely one of expression rather than of the ultimate cognitive constitution of objects, the contradiction, otherwise insurmountable, becomes devalued' (ibid., p. 138).
In other words, Mannheim continues to hold on to the unchangeability of the objective world that we have observed more than once before.\(^{17}\)

Thought can be relativized from or to various spheres—mystical consciousness, gnosticism, or by an empirically investigated sphere, subsequently hypostatized as ultimate reality, such as the biological or social sphere (\textit{ibid.}, p. 138; this notion, too, will be more systematically and completely presented in the essay on interpretation). Several of these relativizations, Mannheim writes, are not new; what is new is relativization 'with regard to sociological reality' (\textit{ibid.}, p. 139)—the second factor, we saw, of the 'problem constellation' of the sociology of knowledge. This particular kind of relativization is undertaken by the 'unmasking turn of mind', which does not aim at simply rejecting certain ideas so much as at disintegrating them, 'and that in such a way that the whole world outlook of a social stratum becomes disintegrated at the same time' (\textit{ibid.}, p. 140). It is not a matter of \textit{contesting} an idea, which would mean accepting it as a thesis to be countered by an antithesis (cf. again the essay on interpretation); instead, an idea is merely considered 'in terms of the \textit{extra-theoretical function}\(^{18}\) it serves' (\textit{ibid.}, p. 140). To unmask an idea, thus, is not to refute it theoretically, but to destroy its effectiveness; and it differs from the unmasking of lies, because this also destroys the liar. Combined with the third and fourth factors of the problem constellation of the sociology of knowledge (transcendence of thought toward the social sphere and relativization of an outlook in its entirety—HegePs 'subjective beliefs', Marx's 'ideology'), the unmasking of ideas represents a new kind of interpretation.\(^{19}\)


\(^{19}\) In a footnote Mannheim writes: 'Cf. my simultaneously appearing paper, "Ideologische und soziologische Interpretation" (\textit{Internationales Jahrbuch für Soziologie, Band I}). (In \textit{Wissenssoziologie}, p. 35, n. 12, and in \textit{Soz. Knowl.}, p. 145n., this footnote is abridged and partly corrected.) The paper referred to appeared in 1926, not 1925; in Vol. II, not I, of \textit{Jahrbuch für Soziologie}, and with a slightly different title (see next section and bibliography). The footnote (in this version only in the 1925 original) does show, however, that the paper now under discussion was written when that on interpretation, although it appeared a year later, was completed or at least in the process of completion.
Mannheim supplements his diagnosis of the time, undertaken in his analysis of the 'problem constellation' of the sociology of knowledge, by stating that we appear to be at that stage 'where the problem of a sociology of knowledge, which up to now belonged to the context of progressive thought, is recognized as a "stubborn reality" and is being tackled as such from other standpoints as well' (ibid., p. 149, modified). It is a task with which all contemporary thought must come to terms. But there are above all four positions within that thought from which a sociology of knowledge can be undertaken: (1) positivism, (2) formal apriorism, (3) material apriorism (phenomenology), and (4) historicism. The decisive controversy, however, is between phenomenology (that is, Max Scheler) and historicism (that is, Mannheim himself).

Positivism treats problems, including that of a sociology of knowledge, as matters to be handled by the special sciences. It thus operates with a certain concept of empiricism and is convinced that human knowledge can do without metaphysics and ontology. But 'a doctrine which hypostatizes certain paradigmatic methods, and the reality spheres corresponding to them, as "absolutely" valid, thereby becomes a metaphysic itself—albeit a particularly limited one' (ibid., p. 150). Nevertheless, positivism was 'genuine', namely, a genuine expression of the shift in the center of experience from the spiritual and religious to the social and economic, and this shift led to the discovery of the problem of a sociology of knowledge. Phenomenologically false, however, is its blindness to the irreducible difference between meaning and experience. Yet again, 'genuine' was the insistence on 'devotion to empiricism' (Empirifrömmigkeit) 'which will make metaphysics in the form of pure speculation impossible for all time' (ibid., p. 151). 'We assert, then, that substantively positivism has performed the essential turn toward a way of thinking adequate to the contemporary situation; systematically and methodologically, however, it did not rise above a relatively primitive level, since, among other things, it did not realize that its "this-worldly" orientation, too, involves a metaphysic' (ibid., pp. 151-52, modified).

Here, too, an explication of Mannheim's philosophy of history would help clarify the criterion of 'genuine' and the counter-concept it implies ('vicarious'? 'false'? 'apparent'?).

The philosophy of formal validity (formal apriorism) depreciates existence compared with thought, which it tries to comprehend in its own terms, immanently. It is understandable, therefore, that it has produced only the beginnings of a sociology of culture, not of a concrete sociology of knowledge. Unlike positivism, it
does recognize the difference between meaning and being, but it
overemphasizes meaning metaphysically, considering formal
traits of thought, such as the categories, as autonomous and super-
temporal, and it thus misses the ‘most essential problem of a
sociology of knowledge, namely, the transmutation of the cate-
gories and the shift in the hierarchy of spheres [of value]’ (ibid.,
p. 153, modified). Instead, within the framework of this phil-
osophy, a sociology of culture and knowledge can only ‘examine
the contentual realizations of the formal value spheres at a given
time’ (Wissenssoziologie, p. 332; cf. ibid., p. 153).

By far the longest section of the paper is devoted to Scheler
(‘material apriorism’ or ‘modern phenomenology’). In his
analysis Mannheim, of course, also submits his own ideas. Among
them is the conviction—known to us already from the ‘Structural
Analysis of Epistemology’, where, however, it was formulated
differently—that at this time the fundamental experience, at least
in the German tradition, is the tension between, on the one hand,
‘a doctrine of the “timeless” essence of man; on the other . . . [of]
the uniqueness of historic objects’ (ibid., p. 159). He now also says,
after an extended discussion of Scheler, that the ‘historicist
standpoint, which starts with relativism, attains the point of
absoluteness only because in its final form it places the absolute
into history itself’ (ibid., p. 172, modified). And further in his
discussion of relativism:

This passage may well be one of the most flagrant expressions
of Mannheim’s alienation from the world. He appears to be
unable or unwilling either to take literally his own taking literally
of ‘naïve realism’ (without taking naïve realism literally he
might easily miss the train or stumble on the stairs) or to ‘bracket’
this realism and to consider it as only one possible point of view.
He appears to need a kind of ‘we-feeling’ (which possibly pre-
disposed him to his ‘democratization’ that is to take place later
on in England) in order to intensify the ‘stubbornness’ of the
given—it evidently is not stubborn enough for him—for it to
give him a feeling of reality. His circumspection may strike us as
comical, but his aloneness and dependence only on himself—
perhaps related to similar features in ourselves—may move and
stir us.

He continues in epistemological terms, transforms the ‘stubborn-
ness’ of the ‘data’ into that of ‘facts’, asks why we cannot, like
the positivists, rest content with this stubbornness, and answers that this stubbornness consists in the check the facts exert on arbitrary constructions, not in any extra-systematic, isolated meaninglessness, hence ungraspability. But positivism does not see this.

At the end of his analysis of Scheler, Mannheim summarizes the differences between Scheler and himself. In contrast to Scheler, Mannheim considers the duality of being and meaning to be only phenomenological, not ultimate, and holds that their interaction at any given time can be ever more clearly illuminated by a combined approach of philosophy of history and sociology; this approach considers both being and meaning 'as parts of a dynamic genetic totality' (ibid., p. 161). In regard to the specific question of a sociology of culture and of knowledge, Mannheim discusses four major differences between himself and Scheler. In the first place, for himself, in contrast to Scheler, even drives are historicized. Secondly, superstructure and substructure stand in a relation of reciprocity. Third: 'Not a pre-existing world is functionalized in history, but “changes in existence” create unpredictable changes in meaning' (Wissenssoziologie, p. 366; omitted in Soc. Knowl.). And fourth, Mannheim works, not with epochs and 'culture areas' (Kulturkreise), but with social strata: the history of ideas must be supplemented by historical social-structural analysis, since every epoch contains more than one current—indeed, history of ideas becomes sociology of knowledge if it undertakes its investigation with due regard for social strata.

Mannheim acknowledges his conviction of the meaningfulness of the historical process out of which points of view grow, as a metaphysical presupposition of his thinking. 'The entire problem of absolute truth will, then, coincide with that of the nature of this unitary meaning of the process as a whole; the question is how far we are able to grasp the evolutionary goal that can be seen at a given moment' (ibid., p. 177). Related to this: 'the mere change of function of an idea already means a change of meaning—this is one of the most essential proofs that history is a creative locus of meaningful contexts and not only the locus in which meaning contexts that are detachable from it and can be conceived as pre-existent are realized' (Wissenssoziologie, p. 383; cf. ibid., pp. 187-88). Here, too, we witness Mannheim's endeavor to grasp what manifests itself only indirectly. In the present essay we have met this effort before in the idea of thought as only the expression, not the sphere, 'of the ultimate cognitive constitution of objects' (ibid., p. 138), and have identified it, already in the beginning of this introduction, as the effort, of idealist provenience, to come as close to the spirit as possible.
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The ‘change of function’ mentioned in the next to last quotation is a ‘central concept of all sociology of culture and thought’ (ibid., p. 188). Mannheim distinguishes between an ‘immanent’ and a ‘sociological’ change of function, the former referring to the passing of a concept from one system of ideas to another, the latter to its passing from use by one social group to use by another. It is of particular importance for a central problem of the sociology of knowledge, that of imputation.

In fact, Mannheim begins his discussion of the problem of imputation by asking which categories may serve to connect points of view or outlooks with tendencies of social strata. ‘Vulgar’ Marxism, in its aim at ‘unmasking’ ideology, knows only the category of ‘interest’, which, however, applies only to homo economicus, not to the whole person, which is what sociology wishes to understand.

Thus, we cannot assign a style of thought, a work of art, etc., to a group as its own on the basis of an analysis of interests. We can, however, show that a certain style of thought, an intellectual standpoint, is encompassed within a system of attitudes which in turn can be seen to be related to a certain economic and power system; we can then ask which social groups are ‘interested’ in the emergence and maintenance of this economic and social system and at the same time ‘committed’ to the corresponding world outlook. [Ibid., p. 184]

In other words, the sociology of knowledge can proceed ‘only by taking a circuitous route through the concept of the total system of a world outlook (by the circuitous route of a sociology of culture)’ (ibid., p. 184, modified). This is Mannheim’s solution of the problem of imputation, even though he does not explicitly so announce it. He briefly returns to the problem toward the end of the present paper. He will treat it at greater length in Ideology and Utopia without, however, essentially changing his position.

In concluding his essay, he formulates the task of the sociology of knowledge—which, because it must ‘bring out’ the ‘functionality of every social, existentially involved thinking at different levels of being’ (ibid., p. 177, modified), should be called sociology of cognition—as follows:

20 This question and Mannheim’s treatment of it are examined by, among others, Schelting and Merton in the writings cited in n. 12 above.
22 Despite its need for being settled, the nature of the difference between the ‘sociology of knowledge’ (Wissen) and of ‘cognition’ (Erkennen or Erkenntnis) is hardly more than mentioned by Mannheim, and not even that in the literature on the sociology of knowledge generally. This is also true of the difference between ‘sociology of knowledge’ and ‘sociology of thought’ (cf.
The main task consists in specifying, for each temporal cross-section of the historical process, the various systematic intellectual standpoints from which people thought. Once this is done, however, these different trends of thought should not be confronted like positions in a mere theoretical debate, but we should explore their non-theoretical, vital roots. To do this, we first have to uncover the hidden metaphysical premises of the various systematic positions. After we have gained clarity on this, we must ask ourselves (precisely with the help of this metaphysical background) to the 'desires for which worlds' [welchen Weltwollen], that exist within the same epoch, this or that 'style of thought' is imputable. When here, too, the correspondences have been established, we already have identified the intellectual strata combating each other ['intellectual strata' are groups with a common 'Weltwollen'; ibid., p. 186]. The sociological task proper, begins only after this immanent analysis of the Weltanschauung: when we ask which social strata are behind the intellectual strata ['social strata' are, following Marx, defined by their role in the process of production; ibid., p. 186]. [Ibid., p. 189, modified]

We shall see how Mannheim, directly after the paper on interpretation—which only works out and systematizes some of his thoughts already contained in previous writings—applies the program just quoted to a concrete historical topic: conservative thought.

*VIII. The Ideological and the Sociological Interpretation of Intellectual Phenomena (1926)

This is a sketch of a typology of interpretations. It begins with the distinction, which we already encountered in the essay on the interpretation of Weltanschauung, between the 'theoretical' and the 'pre-' or 'a-theoretical'. Mannheim here applies this distinction to that between various theoretical 'points of view', from which, for instance, one considers natural objects on the one hand and on the other a-theoretical attitude and perspectives. A point of view involves selection, an attitude or perspective, experience and penetration:

While the adoption of different natural-scientific points of view increases our knowledge of the object only quantitatively, different ways of looking at intellectual phenomena and different attitudes toward them enlarge the possibilities of experiencing them and the dimensions of our understanding them. [Studies on the Left, p. 56]

The reason for this is that only intellectual phenomena are 'posited' (in the widest, not only theoretical, sense of the word).

early in the commentary on the present paper the question [in brackets] whether the two were synonymous for Mannheim). On the unclarity of 'knowledge' in the expression 'sociology of knowledge', on the other hand, there is repeated discussion, most concisely in Robert K. Merton, 'The Sociology of Knowledge', in Georges Gurvitch and Wilbert E. Moore, eds., Twentieth Century Sociology (New York: Philosophical Library, 1945), esp. pp. 379–80 (repr. in Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, op. cit.).
The intellectual phenomenon is a *Setzung*—one might also say with John Dewey that it is 'taken', or with certain existentialists that it is a 'commitment'. At any rate, this does not apply to natural phenomena, which, by contrast, are 'unmeaning' or 'given'.

Sociological interpretation, being an intellectual phenomenon, is itself a 'positing', is itself 'posited'. For Mannheim, it is based on the metaphysical presuppositions of a hierarchy of being and of two ways of knowing—ideological, on the one hand, sociological or dialectical, on the other—which differ according to their dignity. As we know from earlier papers, the sociological interpretation relativizes what it interprets, that is, its *interpretandum*. But whether it proceeds in positivist or idealist fashion, in other words, whether the sphere of reality in reference to which relativization proceeds is society, race, drives, or else spirit, mind, reason—in neither case is this sphere 'unmeaning' but on the contrary meaningful: it is the existential basis of the *interpretandum*, not its causal condition. Mannheim thus elaborates the distinction between interpretation and (causal) explanation which we encountered in his 'Structural Analysis of Epistemology'; he lists causal explanation in his typology, while insisting that it is not an interpretation because it accounts for meaning by reference to something 'unmeaning'. In other words (as was pointed out quite early in this introduction), sociological interpretation does not 'abandon the intellectual sphere'. On the contrary, by going beyond 'intrinsic' interpretation, it succeeds in seeing 'those meaningful existential presuppositions which, although the theory itself that is to be interpreted was not capable of seeing them, nevertheless were the presuppositions (albeit not immanent) of its validity' (*ibid.*, p. 60).

Aside from the typology it offers, this essay is of interest as a document of Mannheim's—and presumably not only Mannheim's—ambivalence toward 'spirit' and 'society', 'idealism' and 'Marxism'. It is intrinsic, or immanent, interpretation which moves toward the spirit because it aims at the 'idea' of the *interpretandum* rather than at understanding it as 'ideology'. Here Mannheim's ambivalence just referred to shows itself. On the one hand, even in the title of his paper he refers to 'intrinsic interpretation' as ideological, which recalls the 'debunking' of 'vulgar' Marxism. On the other hand, he characterizes the person engaged in intrinsic interpretation as 'absorbed by the intellectual phenomenon' he wishes to interpret; he "lives" in it; his

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interpretation 'involves the whole person'—which is not at all an act of debunking but, on the contrary, one of affirmation: the very enthusiastic affirmation of the possibility of grasping the object unmediated by tradition, which we may recall from his review of Lukács (suggesting the 'bracketing' of received notions).

Yet he does equate 'intrinsic' with 'ideological' interpretation as if he had forgotten that intrinsic interpretation also has the element of immediacy, absorption, involvement. Whether the interpretation he refers to really is both intrinsic and ideological, and if so, how this is possible, or whether Mannheim has here lumped together heterogeneous phenomena that correspond to different 'attitudes', are questions that do not arise for him.

Thus, he writes:

If I take, for instance, a theoretical statement simply as an idea, that is, 'from within', I am making the same assumptions that are prescribed in it; if I take it as ideology, that is, look at it 'from without', I am suspending, for a time, the whole complex of its assumptions, thus doing something other than what is prescribed in it at first glance. [Ibid., p. 56]

And the questions that come up are: How can I look at something 'from within' except by suspending received notions? For otherwise, I look at it, by definition, in terms of these notions, which I have received in the course of my life, rather than 'from within'. But—and this is the second question—can I look at anything if I have to do without my learning? How can I look other than with the help of the apparatus I have acquired? Thus, is 'intrinsic' interpretation possible at all? Mannheim does not ask these questions either—any more than he asked the related questions that arose for us from his analysis of commitment as a source of validity in his paper on historicism or, in that same paper, from his comments on various interpretations of the same historical period. The present questions, too, could be clarified by an explication of Mannheim's underlying conception of human nature.

The present questions are important not only as general epistemological ones but more directly in regard to Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. We saw that for him sociological interpretation has a metaphysical basis. But from this Mannheim does not draw the conclusion that to accept the findings of such an interpretation is contingent on accepting its underlying metaphysics; nor does he consider the consequences of this for the scientific or philosophical status of the sociology of knowledge. We again encounter what on the occasion of a passage from the preceding paper we called his 'circumspection' and his 'alienation from the world'. In the present essay, however, we also find additional and different features of his 'existential situation'. Thus he writes:
Whatever at a given time is the latest theory, is accepted immanently, as an idea, in the same way as those 'ideas' were once accepted that extrinsic interpretation has since relativized as ideology. That is, the most highly developed system in which we ourselves are caught at any one time can be grasped only as idea, and it takes 'existing', social and historical 'existing on', for the higher meaning of our own view of the world some day to reveal itself. [Ibid., p. 61]

This is neither circumspect nor uncertain but at the same time tragic and optimistic: at no time do we know the whole truth, but we shall know ever more of it. Implied is a variant of the chiliastic vision that we met with already in the 'Structural Analysis of Epistemology' and that, once again, calls for explication, which, however, it does not receive either here or in a closely related passage to be found three years later (1929) in *Ideology and Utopia*, a passage which recommends the sociology of knowledge as a supplement, so to speak, of mere 'existing on':

We have altogether too much the tendency to accept as 'objective', elements, categorial structures, and ultimate postulates which we ourselves have unwittingly read into our experience and which subsequently reveal themselves to the sociologist of knowledge as partial axioms that are relative historically and to the point of view of a particular current. After all, nothing is more self-evident than that precisely those forms of thought in which we ourselves think reveal themselves least of all in their particularity and that only the onflowing historical-social stream creates the distance from which the eventual particularity becomes visible. [Ideologie und Utopie, p. 163; cf. Ideology and Utopia, p. 167]24

*IX. Conservative Thought (1927)*

If the essay on the problem of a sociology of knowledge signifies Mannheim's turn toward sociology, that on conservative thought means a perhaps even more important turn: toward the world. No matter what the theme of the investigations was thus far, the stress always lay on the subject—'subject' in the sense all the way from Mannheim himself to the time out of which or for which he spoke. The central questions were: Where are we? How can we interpret? How must we judge or revise interpretations and types of interpretations? What does 'knowledge' mean? How am I to assess historicism, how the sociology of knowledge, as approaches to the world? And again: what different modes of interpretation are there? The accent, thus, was not only on the problem of interpretation—there, more or less, it will remain later on, too—but, within this problem, on the interpreter. That is, the decisive question did not concern that which is to be interpreted, the world, but the intellectual and emotional nature and the historical and, later, sociological origins and conditions of him who seeks to understand the world.

24 The German edition (1929) will henceforth be referred to as *I.U.*; the English edition (1936), as *I.U. Engl.*, or *Engl.*
In ‘Conservative Thought’ Mannheim turns to other people and to another time, just as in subsequent writings he treats less ‘subjective’ sociological problems (e.g., of generations, of cultural competition, of sociology in Germany, of economic ambition; more generally he treats our time and society with their problems and chances), even though he remains predominantly interpretive rather than explanatory.

We can only speculate on the reasons for the shift from—to put it briefly—the subject to the object. Did Mannheim feel that the work he had done had prepared him to apply its attainments so that it was time for him to try such application? In any event, not only his writing from the present essay onward witnesses the shift, but so do also his seminars at the University of Frankfurt in the early thirties—on conservatism, liberalism, etc.—in which he insisted that participants study primary sources, as well as the doctoral theses that he supervised and to a number of which he refers in his later writings.

In contrast to traditionalist thought, which Mannheim understands as a psychological trait, conservative thought is a historical and social phenomenon. Therefore, a traditionalist reaction to the new can be predicted, whereas the question of the conservative response ‘can only be determined approximately if we know a good deal about the conservative movement in the period and in the country under discussion’ (Soc. Soc. Psych., p. 95).

Political conservatism is an ‘objective mental structure’ (ibid., p. 96). Hence it outlasts the individual which temporarily adopts it but which by itself could not create it. It is a mental structure the nature of which neither nominalism nor realism do justice to. For nominalism ‘always tries to dissolve the objective structure into the isolated experiences of individuals’, while realism means by ‘the objective’ something metaphysical, independent of individuals, ‘constant and normative (pre-existing)’ (ibid., p. 96). Thus, what Mannheim means by an ‘objective mental’ or historic-dynamic structure is ‘culture’ in the anthropological sense. It is among Durkheim’s ‘social facts’, to which Durkheim, too, did not apply the term ‘culture’.

Mannheim sees the fundamental reason for the emergence of modern conservatism and for what is common to all its varieties among different nations in ‘the dynamic character of the modern world’ (ibid., p. 101). This dynamism, in turn, derives from social differentiation, which
tends to draw the human intellect along with it and forces it to develop along its own lines; and... the basic aims of the different social groups do not merely crystallize ideas into actual movements of thought, but also create different antagonistic Weltanschauungen and different antagonistic styles of thought. [Ibid., p. 101]
This series of processes is unthinkable without class conflict. Mannheim holds, therefore, that traditionalism can develop into conservatism only in a class society.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, conservative thought in Germany is characterized above all by its emphasis on the concrete and on property. Even the Left, thus Marx, learns from the conservative complaint, which goes back to feudalistic thought, about the ‘abstractness of human relationships under capitalism’ (ibid., p. 105). Whereas progressive or liberal thought considers the actual by reference to the possible in terms of the normative, conservatism, on the contrary, sees ‘the actual as the product of real factors’ and understands ‘the norm in terms of the actual’ (ibid., p. 109). And while progressive thought derives the significance of the particular ultimately from a utopia of the future or from some higher norm, conservatism takes it from the past, from something ‘pre-formed in the germ’ (Wissenssoziologie, p. 437; cf. Soc. Soc. Psych., p. 111). For the conservative the picture of things as a whole is inclusive and detailed; for the progressive it is more like a rough blueprint or groundplan. For the conservative the present is the last stage of the past, for liberalism the beginning of the future. The conservative experience of history is spatial, the successive becomes the next-to and into-one-another—and in his ‘Morphology of conservative thought’ (Soc. Soc. Psych., pp. 102–19), Mannheim formulates comparable contrasts in regard to concepts like freedom and nation. But

the main thing is that this insistence upon ‘concreteness’, along with all the other features we have described, is a symptom of the conservative's experiencing the historical process in terms of relationships and situations which exist only as hangovers from the past, and that the impulses to act which spring from this way of experiencing history also are centred upon past relationships still surviving in the present. [Ibid., p. 114]

In order to constitute itself as opposition to Enlightenment and liberalism, the conservative ‘basic intention’ (ibid., p. 97) had to have been lived, experienced. The sociology of knowledge must both describe this basic intention and trace its development. Thereby the most important task

is to find out how far any new trend of thought that may happen to arise reflects the sociological characteristics of the group or individuals who stand behind it and through whom it finds expression. Phenomenological and logical stylistic analysis and sociological analysis must be used as complementary methods. [Ibid., p. 119]

To illustrate such a sociological analysis, Mannheim chooses the romantic-feudalistic trend, shows how Romanticism became feudalistic, and feudalistic thought became Romantic, and how this movement in opposition to the Enlightenment became linked
with historicism. In the beginning the romantic-feudalistic
trend was represented by strata little involved with modern
capitalism—petty bourgeois, and especially sons of Protestant
parsons; in its full development, however, by ‘socially freely
suspended’ (‘socially unattached’) intellectuals (Mannheim
acknowledges this long-since famous expression as Alfred Weber’s
coinage; ibid., p. 125, n. 1), many of whom were saved from
starvation by entry into officialdom. They, and not those who
according to their social location might be expected to be con­
cerned with the fate of society as a whole, had the best chance of
developing a perspective based on sociology or philosophy of
history. Beginning in the eighteenth century,

the fate of the world of thought is in the care of a socially unattached, or
barely attached, stratum whose class affinities and status in society cannot be
precisely defined; a stratum which does not find the aims it pursues within
itself but in the interests of strata with a more definite place in the social order.

If there were no such stratum... it might easily happen that all
spiritual content would disappear from our increasingly capitalistic society and
leave nothing but naked interests. [Ibid., p. 128]

To Mannheim’s passionate affirmation of thinking, which we
encountered in his essay on the interpretation of Weltanschauung,
he now adds that of its bearers (on which also see several passages
their description is distorted by Mannheim’s involvement must
remain undecided. If it is, the turn from subject to object would
not have been sharp enough to avoid it; that is, Mannheim would
have gone back to the subjective, perhaps even to his own pro­
jection. This would have to be criticized, for he was presumably
seeking the ‘other’ rather than himself. Such a critique, if it does
apply here, does not apply to his characterization of the Romantic
perspective, for this characterization concerns a possible relation
of man, thus ourselves included, to the world. It takes its departure
from a quotation from Novalis:

The world must be romanticized. That is the way to its original meaning.
Romanticizing means nothing but raising to a higher level of quality. Through
that operation the lower self is identified with a higher self, since our soul
consists of a series of qualitatively different levels. This operation is still
completely unknown. In giving a noble meaning to the vulgar, a mysterious appearance
to the commonplace, the dignity of the unknown to the known, the semblance of infinity to the
finite, I romanticize it. [Ibid., pp. 128–29; Mannheim’s, not Novalis’s, italics]

Mannheim comments in a footnote that the Romantic perspective
has not only a concealing character but also ‘is fruitful in fields
where interpretation is appropriate’, because ‘the spiritual
sphere may be penetrated to various “depths”’. A ‘phenomeno-
logical analysis’, however,
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would also have to show that the romantic preoccupation with these 'depths' was not a true one. The predominance of the subjective approach introduced an arbitrary element into its interpretations and prevented the thinker from really getting inside his subject. This also explains the possibility of abuse to which the method of 'romanticizing' lends itself: the tendency to interpret, or understand 'from within', causally interrelated situations which, by their objective nature, are incapable of such interpretation, and to dignify mean and brutal power relationships by 'interpreting' them. Significantly enough, the possibility of a twofold interpretation is already contained in Novalis's definition: one which attempts to sound the 'depths' of the soul, and a second which leads to an ideological dressing-up of things as they are. The romantic movement realized both possibilities. [Ibid., p. 129, n. 2]

This interpretation of the romantic perspective is, at the same time, a critique. Furthermore, as a critique it says something about the world that we had not yet encountered in Mannheim before. We have found repeatedly that his discussions of relativism presuppose his conviction of an unchangeable, identical world. What is new is the division of the world into interpretable and non-interpretable parts, and new is a methodological observation, namely, that it is erroneous to interpret the not-to-be-interpreted—the danger of concealing, 'ideologicizing' romanticization (which, in passing, he refers to as 'abuse' of 'romanticizing'). On the other hand, we have seen more than once that Mannheim warns against the danger of not interpreting what has to be interpreted (e.g., an idea, in contrast to its emergence or disappearance in space and time), but of explaining it. On such occasions, however, the bisection of the world—which presumably is to be understood ontologically—had not been developed even to the point now reached, although even now Mannheim does not think of a more explicit formulation of his ontology and epistemology. Yet he was keenly sensitive to misplaced romanticizing—witness also his insistence that it would be an ill-advised mysticism which would shroud things in romantic obscurity at a point where rational cognition is still practicable. [Indeed:] anyone who wants to drag in the irrational where lucidity and acuity of reason still must rule by right [one variant of which is: 'anyone who wants to interpret where explaining is possible and hence required'] merely shows that he is afraid to face the mystery at its legitimate place [one variant of which is: 'where explanation, by the nature of things, is misplaced']. [Soc. Knowl., p. 229]

It may be recalled that this is part of a passage (from 'Competition as a Cultural Phenomenon', XI below, a paper a year later than the one under discussion) which was quoted at the beginning of this introduction, with the comment that it 'might serve as a motto to much of Mannheim's work'.

Mannheim's comparison between French and German conservatism during the first half of the nineteenth century is a
brilliant example of the synthesis between the sociology of knowledge, as the subject’s approach, and certain historical, political, and cognitive phenomena—objects to which this approach leads. The French and German variants of conservatism militate against the two variants of modern rationalism: in France the examination of the roots of the Revolution focuses on ‘the metaphysical and religious premises of the eighteenth century’ (Soc. Soc. Psych., p. 145), while the thrust of German romanticism is directed against ‘the logical and methodological artifices’ (ibid., p. 146, modified). For in France, Catholicism supplies the metaphysical foundation of the counter-revolution, but in Germany the Catholic-Protestant split destroyed the unity of such a foundation, which resulted in a withdrawal into methodological problems. Furthermore, the Revolution had not taken place in German, where, therefore,

one could afford to thresh out differences of Weltanschauung on this very abstract plane. As soon as the sociological situation became more critical (after 1830) and conservatism, even in Protestant Prussia, had to retire to the stronghold of theism, considerations of dogma and metaphysics came again into the foreground. [Ibid., p. 146]

The various elements of conservatism may be summarized by the idea of ‘life’ fighting against ‘concept’. Mannheim’s analysis of this phenomenon has a brilliance of synthesis similar to that of the difference between French and German conservatism, as will be illustrated by some excerpts:

Revolutionary thought derives its force from the desire to realize a rationally well-defined pattern of perfection of the social and political order. Conservative thought, opposed to the fulfilment of utopia, is forced to consider why the actually existing state of society fails to correspond to such a rational pattern. This impulse which is primarily anchored in self-interest at the same time renders conservatism sensitive to all those factors which revolutionary thought—again in its own vital interest—overlooks, viz., the non-rational factors in actual development. But whereas revolutionary thought conceives such irrationalities—where it sees them at all—as imperfections of reality compared with reason, conservative thought... attributes to them the character of super-rationality. It is, however, not merely a question of inverted values, but rather of different categories and contents of life and experience. This is shown, for instance, by the fact that the irrationality experienced as super-rationality leads to that class of philosophies which might be called in a word ‘philosophies of Life’, the philosophies which put forward, in opposition to mere reason, sometimes ‘history’, sometimes ‘spirit’, sometimes ‘life’. The great polarities of nineteenth-century philosophical thought: ‘being’ and ‘thinking’, ‘concept’ and ‘idea’, ‘speculation’ and ‘praxis’, even if they arose as intrinsic elements of philosophic systems, are nourished and held together as standpoints by the corresponding political polarities of the will for a liberal as against a conservative world. [Ibid., pp. 147-49, modified; cf. Wissenssoziologie, pp. 484–85]

Despite all differences, all philosophies of life reject bourgeois rationalizing thought in its two major variants, Kantianism and
positivism. Their 'great importance' consists in the urgency with which they point out

that whatever passes for 'real' in our rationalized world is merely a reflection of the specific categories of Reason of which modern man has made an idol; in other words, that this world of alleged reality is merely the world of capitalist rationalization, which as such hides a world of 'pure experience' that lies behind it. But even today the philosophy of Life betrays its conservative origin in that it constitutes a latent opposition to the rationalist world which surrounds us. Being, however, depoliticized in the largest sense of the term, it can find no direct way of changing things; it has intrinsically given up the 'becoming' world, which, to be sure, only 'becomes' along rationalized lines. Nevertheless, the philosophy of Life, in all its peculiar character, is, of course, a function of the contemporary becoming of the world—and a very important one at that. It keeps alive a certain germ of experience; and it is the question of later syntheses which combinations it will enter. [In a footnote Mannheim points to connections between Bergson and fascism and between Sorel and syndicalist direct action.]... It always splits up and relativizes what we believe to be 'rational' and 'objective'. [Ibid., p. 162, modified; cf. Wissenssoziologie, pp. 504–5]

However brilliant, this analysis also shows a strange combination of perspicacity and myopia. It is perspicacious in respect to the sphere of the spirit as that of cognitive relation to the world in which the rational and the irrational must find their proper places; this sphere is distinguished from 'life' as political reality and social and mass psychology. But saying this also signals what is myopic about his analysis: Mannheim speaks of a world in process of rationalization; he speaks of the depoliticized nature of the philosophy of life, while at the time of his writing Fascism was five years old—but perhaps it was a local Italian phenomenon, and it might not have seemed possible to Mannheim that a fanatic like Hitler, of whom he knew, of course, could mean anything like Nazism, which took power six years later. Personal and other memories suggest that he had a hard time taking Nazism quite seriously enough even in the early part of 1933. The mixture of perspicacity and myopia could perhaps be described—recalling the comment on his characterization of romanticism—as being too much taken by what was to be interpreted and paying too little attention to the explanation of 'things as they are' (which in the meantime had become much clearer than they had been in Novalis's time).

A Note on '... the State as an Organism'

This may be the likeliest juncture for mentioning 'The History of the Concept of the State as an Organism: A Sociological

25 When Mannheim is supposed to have said that it could last hardly two months: Heinz Maus, 'Bericht über die Soziologie in Deutschland 1933 bis 1945', Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, II (1959): 72.
Analysis', because its content and concern are more closely related to the much longer essay on conservatism just considered than to any other single writing by Mannheim. This may be the reason why in the Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology Paul Kecskemeti has it follow the paper on conservatism; but the dating is uncertain: in his introduction to the volume, Kecskemeti only refers to it as 'an unpublished paper' and indicates that it was written in English (ibid., p. 11; cf. p. 172). The only writing by himself which Mannheim mentions is 'Conservative Thought' (ibid., p. 175); the latest publication referred to in a footnote dates from 1939, which proves little on the date of the essay because Kecskemeti or even Mannheim himself may have added some references that had become available since the original writing (as is true in regard to some other papers where we do know the date of publication but are not informed of the authorship of such references). As in 'Conservative Thought', Mannheim speaks of 'styles of thought' (ibid., p. 165) and argues that his position is not one of relativism (ibid., p. 181). He has something to say on 'distance' (ibid., p. 180), on which there is much more in 'The Democratization of Culture' of 1933 (XVII (3) below), and which reminds one very much of Simmel, whom Mannheim does not mention, however. Other indications of the neighborhood to 'Conservative Thought' and other early writings may be gleaned from the final paragraphs of the paper, which at the same time give an inkling of its content:

Let me sum up in a few statements the main results of the inquiry.

1. In the development of the patterns of thinking there is a continuous interchange between the ways of thinking in the natural sciences and political thought.

2. But the nature of that process cannot adequately be understood if we confine our observation to causal influences and only think in terms of reciprocal causation. Behind the development of the two concepts [of the state], mechanism and organism, there stood the development of two corresponding styles of thought.

3. Thus the origin, unity, dissemination and decay of these styles of thought is a problem in itself and has to be investigated with the same accuracy as the various styles in the history of art or literature. This does not mean that scientific thinking is nothing but a kind of artistic activity, but only that our approach to the various spheres of reality does not emerge out of the vacuum, that it does not proceed in terms of mere accumulation, but that there is a kind of cohesion, an inner unity in the changing patterns of thinking.

4. On the other hand, this is only the subjective aspect of the process. The unifying Weltanschauung, the styles of thought in their turn are not absolute entities. They do not appear out of the blue, they are somewhere connected with social history.

5. Once this has been agreed the next task is to find the connecting link with social history. This cannot be found simply in the social classes themselves, as Marxism asserts. . . . The key to changes in our thought is to be found—as I have tried to show—in the changing practice both of science and politics.
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If the main patterns of action are disclosed, then we can further inquire whether this was brought about by the rise of some new class or group, and its changed attitudes towards society.

6. Through the Sociology of Knowledge a new approach to the problems of political science becomes possible. [This sentence would seem to suggest the neighborhood of the paper to ‘The Prospects of Scientific Politics’ in Ideology and Utopia (XIV below).] A careful analysis of the specific nature of political practice and of its various forms might disclose the main changes in its modes of thought.

This also might throw light upon the deeper unity which underlies scientific and political development. [Ibid., pp. 181-82]

*x.* *The Problem of Generations (1927)*

In the article on the Sociology of Knowledge that Mannheim wrote for the *Handwörterbuch der Soziologie* (1931; XV below) and a translation of which was added to the 1936 edition of Ideology and Utopia (pp. 237-80), he discusses ‘social processes influencing the process of knowledge’ (p. 240), of which competition is ‘a representative case’ (p. 241). For what may seem to be purely theoretical positions are the more or less direct consequences of differences in Weltanschauung, which, ‘in turn, are invisibly guided by the antagonism and competition between concrete, conflicting groups’ (p. 242). He continues:

To mention only one of the many other possible bases of collective existence, out of which different interpretations of the world and different forms of knowledge may arise, we may point to the role played by the relationship between differently situated generations. . . . From the knowledge derived from our studies on competition and generations, we have concluded that what, from the point of view of immanent intellectual history, appears to be the ‘inner dialectic’ in the development of ideas, becomes, from the standpoint of the sociology of knowledge, the rhythmic movement in the history of ideas as affected by competition and the succession of generations (p. 242).

Thus, as Mannheim says three years after publishing his paper on generations, this paper, too, belongs in the problem area of the sociology of knowledge, although we might not expect if from its title—and indeed even the text is much less persuasive on this score than is his paper on competition (XI).

The present essay begins with a history of the treatment of the problem of generation and then turns to its main task, the clarification of concepts needed for the analysis of the problem. A generation, first of all, is not a ‘concrete group’; one belongs to a generation as one belongs to a social class: for reasons, though very different in the two cases, not of one’s choosing; and one may or may not be aware of one’s location in generation or class. Chronological simultaneity is one of two elements that constitute a ‘generation status’ (Generationslagerung; Soc. Knowl., p. 302);

26 The following page references are to this edition.
the other is belonging to 'the same historico-social space—the same historical life community' (Wissenssoziologie, p. 542; cf. Soc. Knowl., p. 303). If a third element is added—'participation in the common destiny of this historical and social unit'—we have a 'generation as an actuality' (Generationszusammenhang; ibid., p. 303). Within the 'generation as an actuality', there are 'generation units', persons united by more concrete bonds than those who generally make up the 'generation as an actuality', namely, by the fact that they 'work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways' (ibid., p. 304). For instance, both the romantic-conservative and the rationalist-liberal youth belonged in the same generation as an actuality, within which each of them, however, represented a 'generation unit'. The frequency with which the potential characteristic of a 'generation status' becomes active has to do with the tempo of social change (cf. ibid., p. 309).

Generational change is one among the factors of history. Mannheim raises the question of an order of these factors,27 which may well be not the same at all times. Generational change has different chances in different intellectual spheres: they are much slighter in the sphere of 'civilization', because of its straight-line development, than in that of 'culture'.28

This 'formal-sociological' (ibid., p. 288) paper separates some matters that are often confused. It is more concerned with the 'world' than with the subject, and argues a cultural, rather than biological, understanding of the problem of generations, although 'culture' and 'cultural' are used as general social-scientific terms as little as they were in 'Conservative Thought'. The concepts and the distinctions among them that Mannheim develops serve the enrichment of interpretation by contributing to the articulation of the interpretandum (object).

As to this interpretandum itself, that is, substantively, the most relevant part of the paper is that which deals with the history of interest in the problem and of the various approaches to it. This relevance is well brought home in the following footnote:

It is a matter for historical and sociological research to discover at what stage in its development, and under what conditions, a class becomes class-conscious, and similarly, when individual members of a generation become conscious of their common situation and make this consciousness the basis of their group solidarity. Why have generations become so conscious of their unity

28 On this distinction by Alfred Weber as discussed in Mannheim’s paper on historicism, cf. the comment in VI above.
to-day? This is the first question we [would] have to answer in this context. [Ibid., p. 290]

'Today' was 1927; the time since, and especially the last few years, has greatly enlarged the material on which to draw for such an inquiry, and it has made it far more pressing.

*XI. Competition as a Cultural Phenomenon (1928)

Mannheim meant this paper to be a contribution not only to the theme but, thereby, 'to a sociological theory of the mind' (Soc. Knowl., p. 191). Once more he advances his distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic interpretation, most explicitly developed in the paper of two years before, by saying more specifically:

I think a consistent application of the method of sociological analysis to mental life will show that many phenomena originally diagnosed as manifestations of immanent laws of the mind may be explained [?] in terms of the prevailing structural pattern of social life. [Ibid., p. 192, modified]

And coming directly to his topic:

the so-called 'dialectical' . . . form of the development and movement of the life of the spirit can be largely traced back to two very simple structural determinants of social life: to the existence of generations and to the existence of the phenomenon of competition. [Ibid., p. 193, modified; Wissenssoziologie, p. 569]

And in a footnote Mannheim refers to his paper on the problem of generations, which 'is closely related to the present one—both are contributions to a sociology of the mind' (ibid., p. 193n.). Notice that these two exclusive 'structural determinants' become three years later (cf. the beginning of the preceding section) only examples of 'social processes'.

It was the task of a generation that had lived through the French Revolution to discover the 'phenomenology of the spirit', the philosophy of history, and thus the bearing of the time in history in which intellectual products originate on these products. Today at least one of our urgent tasks is to explore the bearing of society on intellectual matters. This proposition, evidently, is not only a piece of Mannheim's diagnosis of his time, such as we have found before (and such as here, too, demands the illumination of its presuppositions). It also shows a parallel of Mannheim's own shift, from 'Historicism' and 'The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge', from history to society, indeed from historicism

29 Cf. Mannheim, 'Towards the Sociology of the Mind; an Introduction' (XVII (1) below), Soc. Cult., pp. 15-89, which, according to Ernest Manheim, the editor of the volume, was 'written largely during the last years of Mannheim's stay in Germany' (Introduction, p. 1, first sentence), that is, in the early thirties.
to sociology of knowledge. There is nothing to indicate that Mannheim was aware of this parallel (mirroring, reflection, projection?), which, of course, does not necessarily make it less impressive.

He says that despite the very general title of his paper (literally, ‘The Significance of Competition in the Area of the Spiritual’), he will limit himself, not only to thought but, within thought, to seinsverbundene (‘existence-related’) thought, that is, historical, political, everyday thought and thought in the social sciences and the humanities; in it, ‘to use Dilthey’s phrase’, ‘the whole man’ thinks. Seinsverbundenheit (‘existentiality’) or Seinsrelativität (‘relativity to existence’) means that ‘certain qualitative features of an object encountered in the living process of history are accessible only to certain historico-social structures of consciousness’ (in the original, italics; ibid., p. 194, modified). He had said something very similar in his essay on interpretation, namely, that ‘the capacity to grasp an idea as ideological is unthinkable prior to a certain time in history’ (Studies on the Left, p. 55). But once more, this is not relativism (‘under which everybody and nobody is right’) but ‘a relationism which says that certain (qualitative) truths cannot even be grasped, or formulated, except in the framework of an existential correlation between subject and object [that is, except seinerelativ, relative to existence]’ (Soc. Knowl., p. 194).

He points out that ‘competition’ is an economic category, which he does not hesitate, however, to apply to non-economic matters, since the social ‘became visible at first in the economic sphere’ (ibid., p. 195)—cf. a similar thought in the essay on economic ambition (XIII) and below. That for which competing

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30 Commonly translated (e.g., Soc. Knowl., p. 193) as ‘existentially-determined’, and the noun, Seinsverbundenheit, as ‘existential determination’, which, however, as the literal translation of seinsverbunden (in parentheses in the text above) indicates, is misleading, because it prejudges the relation as one of determination. The noun seems well rendered as ‘existentiality’, which, however, cannot, except misleadingly, be used in adjectival form. For the adjective, the literal ‘existence-related’, though awkward, may do, although in many cases a paraphrase can be used to avoid awkwardness without distorting sense. Elsewhere I wrote: ‘Seinsverbundenheit is an untranslatable term, a key term in Mannheim’s writings on the sociology of knowledge, perhaps coined by him [or so he seems to claim: I.U., p. 32, n. 3 (cf. Engl., p. 69, n. 2)]; its use abounds in [Ernst] Grünwald [Das Problem der Soziologie des Wissens, 1934] and other writers on the area as well. Cf. Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia . . . 1936, p. 239n., where the English translation of the term as “social determination” is qualified as leaving “the meaning of ‘determination’ open” [determination may not be determination?]; “existentiality” seems better (although not usable in adjectival form)’: ‘Ernst Grünwald and the Sociology of Knowledge: A Collective Venture in Interpretation’, Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences, I (1965): 154, n. 5.
partners struggle is the ‘public interpretation of reality’ (ibid., p. 196; Mannheim acknowledges his adoption of this term from Heidegger), which can be attained by means of four different social processes: through consensus by spontaneous cooperation, by virtue of the monopolistic position of one group which does the interpreting, on the basis of the atomistic competition of many groups, and ‘on the basis of a concentration round one point of view of a number of formerly atomistically competing groups, as a result of which competition as a whole is gradually concentrated around a few poles which become more and more dominant’ (ibid., p. 198). In any one period and place, more than one of these processes is usually at play, even though one tends to be dominant.

We find the first process (spontaneous consensus), which is more static than dynamic, ‘in socially homogeneous strata or societies, where the range and basis of experience is uniform and where the fundamental incentives or impulses to thought tend to be the same for all individuals’ (ibid., p. 199). As among children and in everyday wisdom, here, too, the ‘it’ (‘it is so’, ‘it shall be so’) dominates thought.

The second type (monopolistic interpretation) is based on the monopolistic position of a stratum, usually a status group, such as the medieval clergy or the Chinese literati, whose position is secured by intellectual or other means or, usually, by both. While the homogeneity of opinion in the first case is spontaneous, here it is artificial. The basis of thought is given, often laid down in sacred books, and thinking largely consists in the interpretation of texts rather than of reality. The tension and conflict between the cultural elites and the aspirations of the laity in the late Middle Ages—from here on, Mannheim proceeds historically, where he had begun systematically—leads to the breakdown of the clergy’s monopoly and thus to the third of the four processes, ‘atomized competition’, in which court nobles, patricians, members of the ‘grand’ bourgeoisie and high finance, and medium and petty bourgeois participate, engendering a way of thinking for which the Cartesian doubt is paradigmatic.

But just as in the area of economic competition, entrepreneurs join forces in employers’ associations and workers in labor unions, so in the intellectual sphere, too, the third process, atomization, leads to the fourth, concentration around polarities. Intellectual currents spread and in so doing also absorb elements of other currents. It is impossible to achieve an understanding of the modern process of concentration of intellectual points of view as long as one focuses only on the filiations and the interplay of particular motifs that appear on the surface, rather than on the
fundamentally decisive filiations and splits in the collective will, which alone can give meaning to the partial movements of the history of motifs. [Ibid., p. 210, modified; Wissenssoziologie, p. 590]

Although here, too, Mannheim fails to explicate his premises or to give methodological instructions on, for instance, how to distinguish between ‘surface’ and what is ‘fundamentally decisive’, this passage, nevertheless, is as timely as it was when Mannheim wrote it.

At this juncture, he again undertakes a diagnosis of his time. We find ourselves at the stage or phase (into which he has de-systematized and historicized his ‘processes’ in the course of this paper) of concentration, which is without any homogeneous order that could incorporate new facts. Indeed, unless consensus or monopoly are going to prevail, we shall reach a point where every new fact will call in question even this heterogeneous order. Philological and historical research into the elements of our thinking is required if we want to demonstrate that polarization is taking place in it; Mannheim instead discusses, as an ideal-typical example, the problem of ‘value-free knowledge’ (ibid., p. 216).

He finds three positions concerning this problem: liberalism, for which value judgments must be eliminated as irrational; conservatism, for which even the rational is tied to Weltanschauungen and thus is irrational; and socialism, for which the opponent is irrational because bound by interests. As far as the conservative is concerned, the motives derived from interests that are at work in him, do not enter his field of vision:

For if the structure of society is such that its institutions guarantee our interests and chances, interested motives are, so to speak, appropriated by the objective structure. If I simply live according to these institutions, I never need become aware of these motives. They, then, will not be revealed by introspection. [Ibid., p. 217, modified]

Proletarian thought has all the keener an eye for this structure of thought—in others. In respect to his own thought, the proletarian has either followed the liberal mode, absolutizing this thought, in line with the tradition of natural law, as ‘pure theory’, or, under the influence of historicism, has discovered that it, too, is tied to irrational interests. These, however,

31 The last two sentences imply a severe critique of central aspects of Talcott Parsons's sociology (which, of course, had hardly existed at the time—the year, 1928, when the present essay by Mannheim appeared also was the year Parsons published his first paper, which he has not reprinted). Cf. esp. Parsons, ‘The Motivation of Economic Activities’ (1940), in his Essays in Sociological Theory (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1949), 1954, and The Social System, (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press), 1951.
he let coincide with the idea of truth with the help of the notion of pre-established harmony. (The particular class interest of the proletariat is at the same time the interest of the whole; class consciousness is the adequately correct consciousness—the Marx-Lukács line.) [Ibid., p. 218, modified; Wissenssoziologie, p. 600]

The polarization that Mannheim has sketched with regard to the idea of value-free knowledge characterizes most concepts and indeed ‘affects the very categorial apparatus of thinking itself’. ‘I could further show you’, he continues,

how apparently simple, basic problems and facts—which one might think could be interpreted in only one way—such as what ‘praxis’ is, how its relation to ‘theory’ is to be conceived, are seen differently according to the pole in the social and political differentiation at which one finds oneself. [Wissenssoziologie, p. 600; cf. Soc. Knowl., p. 218]

And at this point, he appends a note:


This, presumably, is the earliest reference to his first book.

Mannheim now asks whether there is for us beside polarization also synthesis, which indeed he hopes for from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge:

It seems, by the way [the whole passage quoted here is in parentheses], that the sociology of knowledge itself provides... a viewpoint ‘farther back’ from which purely theoretical philosophical differences, which in terms of their content can no longer be seen at the same time, can be seen through in their partiality and by this alone already be grasped synthetically. In the existence of this continually receding viewpoint... lies, in my judgment, an important problem of the sociology of knowledge that has hitherto not been broached at all. [Soc. Knowl., p. 224, modified, Wissenssoziologie, pp. 607-8]

Even though there are no absolute syntheses, as Hegel still believed, synthesis is yet ‘the best that thinking can produce from the standpoint of the socializability of knowledge’ (Soc. Knowl., p. 224, modified; Wissenssoziologie, p. 608). Still, synthesis covers up certain elements of thought that is relative to existence. In saying so, Mannheim, by implication, raises a problem that is pressing today and may become more pressing in the future: how we, despite enormous cultural differences of which, thanks to technological and attendant developments, we become ever more aware—how we can live in one world and in one that has shrunk so: which synthesis does right by all of us?

Despite divisions, there remains a fund deriving from the synthesis of all parties. For instance, sociology, which in its origins was oppositional, is ‘gradually—almost secretly—adopted,
simply because in the modern situation it is the most adequate orientation to the world’ (Soc. Knowl., pp. 225–26, modified; Wissenssoziologie, p. 609). Mannheim might have recalled here what he had said earlier in the present essay—that intellectual currents, on spreading, absorb elements of other currents, that is, change. This surely applies to sociology, on being officially accepted, institutionalized, professionalized, as is probably more conspicuous in the United States, the country of its widest diffusion.

If actually that is adopted by all which ‘in a given epoch is indispensable, hence the most useful’ (Wissenssoziologie, p. 610; Soc. Knowl., p. 226), then the sociology of knowledge, on raising the obvious question whether the indispensable and useful also is true, engages in an epistemological inquiry. Mannheim does not here go beyond what he had attained in his ‘Structural Analysis of Epistemology’, namely, the insight that epistemology is not a critical but a justificatory discipline.

He concludes his lecture with the passage quoted at the beginning of this introduction as a possible motto for much of his work, and in part repeated in connection with the discussion of certain aspects of his paper on conservative thought.

*xi. Problems of Sociology in Germany (1929)

In this article, the significance that Mannheim attributes to sociology, as we have just seen, appears as a special feature of German sociology. The article is the answer to Ernst Robert Curtius’s attack on Mannheim (‘Sociology—and Its Limits’) but should actually be entitled, ‘In Praise of Sociology in Germany’. The ‘new perspective’ of this sociology ‘broke out in the form of a mighty eruption in the works of three great ones (to name this time only those already dead)—those of Max Weber, Ernst Troeltsch, and Max Scheler’ (Wissenssoziologie, p. 614). And this at a time when East and West, and indeed, other countries are coming ever closer together but also into mutual conflict, so that the old questions, ‘Where do we stand in historical time? How can our spiritual and psychic place in it be found?’ (ibid., p. 615), take on new meaning and urgency.

In Germany, these and similar questions have overshot the limits of the single disciplines toward philosophy or toward a

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32 By now this seems to be a rather widely held view, and not only in the United States, where its first and still powerful postwar expression was probably C. Wright Mills’s The Sociological Imagination (1959).

33 ‘Soziologie—und ihre Grenzen’, Neue Schweizer Rundschau (October 1929); Mannheim’s ‘Zur Problematik der Soziologie in Deutschland’ appeared in the next issue, November. Despite its general title, Curtius’s article is a critique of Mannheim’s recent I.U.
‘politically active world orientation’ (*ibid.*, p. 615), for here sociology had a ‘philosophical tradition that was alive’, and there was Marxism. The philosophy of consciousness and of life flourished, while positivist epistemology had been overcome. Sociology became ‘the organon of the new man’: ‘man is once again shedding his skin, striving after an enlarged form of his existence’ (*ibid.*, p. 616).

Mannheim’s ‘dynamic relationism’ which Curtius attacks is, ‘in the interest of the self-enlargement that today is already possible’, an invitation to ‘*every* position for once to call itself in question and to suspend the self-hypostatization that is a habit of thought self-evident to everybody’ (*ibid.*, p. 620)—as Mannheim wishes to paraphrase pp. 40–41 of *Ideologie und Utopie* (Engl., pp. 75–77). And he throws out this challenge (even though in a footnote) in praise of sociology against its enemies: ‘he who today means to offer the transcendence of his being in ultimate seriousness must have subjected it to the ultimate self-examination, just because the ultimate [fate] of mankind is at stake’ (*Wissenssoziologie*, p. 623, n. 3). He concludes what may be called his *apologia* for sociology: ‘For it is the true thinker’s duty not to resist thought’ (*ibid.*, p. 624).

This was in 1929, the year of *Ideologie und Utopie*, the book that aroused passionate discussion, of which this paper gives us an inkling. By then, there had been seven years of Fascism, twelve of Soviet communism, and Nazism was less than four years off—Mannheim’s innocent passion and straightforwardness, but also his stubbornness, which is what had become of part of the perspicaciousness documented by the passage from ‘Conservative Thought’ that we singled out earlier, are moving. That perspicaciousness has decreased, and the myopia that accompanied it has grown. Mannheim’s existentialist passion to interpret, which ever more urgently demanded complementation if not, at times at least, replacement, by explanation,* will certainly not move

*On this cf. Mannheim himself (about a year earlier): ‘I consider it an immense danger of German thought—and this danger is only the other side of one of the greatest virtues of this thought—that in its tendency to interpret it also wants to interpret that which can only be explained ... it wants ... to “deepen” and make into a problem of interpretation even that which can be adequately grasped only within the scheme of “making” or of “mechanism”... This methodological discrepancy—that one interprets where one ought to explain—is, after all, the expression of an unpolitical attitude repeated on the methodological level and often observed in life itself’: Mannheim’s concluding remarks in the discussion on ‘Die Konkurrenz’ (which concerned more than anything his own lecture on competition—see XI above), *Verhandlungen des Sechsten Deutschen Soziologentages* (1928), (Tübingen: Mohr, 1929), p. 122. Mannheim thus repeats the plea against mystification with which he concluded the paper under discussion and which we recalled at the end of the commentary
all readers—many of us will instead be irritated and turn away, smiling perhaps and shaking our heads. The proper reaction is a serious concern of each of us.

xiii. On the Nature of Economic Ambition and Its Significance for the Social Education of Man (1930) 35

In the same year in which Ideologic und Utopie and the papers on competition and on sociology in Germany appeared, Mannheim gave a lecture on economic ambition, 36 working it out for publication in the following year. He addressed participants in a course given by the ‘German Association for Political Education’. This may remind us of his first lecture (‘Soul and Culture’), which had been directed to students and fellow educators—during the intervening eleven years he had not spoken to a similar audience or discussed a paedagogical topic. His interest in education thus is old but for many years found no expression; it was to be all the more central during his English phase.

In the present essay, he explicitly stresses the educational intent of sociology. Hitherto, he says, the means of paedagogy had been personal contact with teachers, specialized and general cultural knowledge, training, habituation, and ‘life’. The sociologist replaces ‘life in general’ by the ‘concrete form of social existence in a particular situation’ (Soc. Knowl., p. 232), and the sociologically oriented educator wants to know the direction in which the new generation living in the industrial world is to be educated; he strives to develop ‘the existing form of society beyond itself to a further stage’ (ibid., p. 233). Hence his interest in the investigation of the individual’s milieu, in which the economy is one, albeit a most important, factor. Max Weber had pointed out that at the stage of developed capitalism, the structure of the economy goes far in shaping the spirit; furthermore, changes in this structure can be identified with greater precision than is true of changes in intellectual life (this last proposition itself, which echoes a remark in the essay on competition called attention to in XI above, is of methodological and paedagogical relevance). With this Mannheim arrives at the topic of his paper, but at the end he comes back to its educational significance: ‘A theory of economic education will more and more have to

36 See the title footnote in the original publication and in Wissenssoziologie (p. 625n.); it is omitted in the English translation (Soc. Knowl., p. 230).
take into account for what scope of activity we have to educate this or that pupil" (ibid., p. 274). Such a theory is not satisfied with norms that have no relation to the concrete life-space of the individual, and this discontent shows a 'major moral advance' (ibid., p. 274). For it is possible to shape the economy and the society, but this requires 'exact knowledge of the world in which man lives now, at this present day' (ibid., p. 275).

More clearly than in 'Soul and Culture', though perhaps not as clearly as later, we here see Mannheim the teacher. He taught uninterruptedly during roughly the last twenty years of his life, occasionally even before, mainly at the Universities of Heidelberg, Frankfurt, and London. Up to now we have met him as a thinker and have observed the shift in his interpretive point of reference from history to society and, within his interpretation relative to society, a change in focus from interpreter to interpretandum. But we have also observed already that, in one process, he clarified his thought to himself and to those to whom he communicated it—he discovered the new simultaneously for himself and the world. He thus was a teacher even as a thinker, more particularly a Socratic teacher—and if he were to reject this characterization, it might well make it even more probably correct.

As to his own development, as far as this can be read from the present paper, Paragraph 5 in Section V ('The Social Structure and Chances of Success') seems to anticipate the later stages of this development most clearly. In this section Mannheim discusses two elements in 'the rise of the economic sphere to dominance': 'a democratization which is more profound than its political counterpart and which is being brought about by 'the flow of the most highly valued energies into the economic sphere', and, secondly, 'a new form of more or less calculable and controllable conduct' (ibid., pp. 243-44).

The pressure exerted by the economic system, although leaving the individual formally free to act according to his own free will (he is always free to act without regard to his economic interests), nevertheless in the long run does produce a more or less determinable optimum of 'right' conduct for each situation which each individual seeks to ascertain and to achieve. In this way the formal freedom of every individual to follow his own self-interest, becomes a far more powerful means of 'domestication' or social adaptation than force, since force can never penetrate every mesh of the complicated social web, whereas the economic sphere—in the measure that it becomes dominant—tends, in view of the inter-relatedness of all rational lines of conduct, to bring all human activities into its orbit, including even actions and reactions which have nothing directly to do with economic behaviour at all. [Ibid., p. 244]

The social structure can never rest on force alone but must be aided also by ideology. Modern economic society has made
‘domestication’, that is, social control, the self-interest of the individual, which allows this society a considerable laxness in the control of ideologies. However, ‘we can observe at the same time a growing prominence of the ideological factor in politics’, for we have no purely economic society but instead one which must secure the power of the key positions ideologically, these positions not being purely economic but based on the mixed notion and practice of ‘property’.

The relationship between power and tradition (which is simply ideology become habit) characteristic of former societies has given way in our society to a relationship between power and the economic system. Just as formerly the key positions in the traditional-religious framework of society were guaranteed by force, and the ‘domestication’ of man took care of the cultural and spiritual fields, it is sufficient in the modern social framework to guarantee only the key positions in the economic sphere by force; everything else is taken care of by the economic automatism (which acts, so to speak, as the extended arm of the power centres). Thus, in such an economically dominated society the striving for economic success is the motive of action which can most generally be counted upon to be operative. . . . Because in economic action, which is the dominant concern of modern society, it is possible to dispense . . . with ideological factors, it has become a habit of modern man to dismiss all ‘religious’ and ethical factors as ‘purely ideological’. The derogatory and depreciatory nature of this characterization unconsciously reflects the ability of the modern social structure to give free rein to ideological and cultural factors over a fairly wide field, and in fact, it does confer such a freedom in many cases. Someone who experiences this without sociological understanding is inclined to believe that only the interdependent spheres of rational reactions can legitimately claim to be ‘reality’, and he therefore tends to regard everything ‘spiritual’ or ‘intellectual’ as ‘accessory’, as ‘mere ideology’. [Ibid., pp. 246–47, slightly modified]

This diagnosis, which does justice not only to interpretation and that which is to be interpreted but, much more than earlier diagnoses did, also to explanation and that which must be explained, appears, by hindsight, as the anticipation of much that Mannheim wrote subsequently—especially on functional and substantive rationality, on planning, or on the ‘third way’ besides liberalism and totalitarianism. The reason is likely to be that the passages that have been quoted here so extensively also describe Mannheim’s loyalty to himself. For they, too, tell of his commitment to both spirit and society; and the anticipation of what was to come later also concerns a change in this commitment. Whereas in Mannheim’s first phase, as we have seen, it consisted in his effort to grasp the spirit as accurately as possible precisely by insisting on its social conditioning and by tracing this conditioning, here we already have an indication that Mannheim

37 Mannheim does not use this term here but will in Man and Society . . . (1935–40), of which a whole part is dedicated to social control (see XVIII below).
will devote himself ever more singlemindedly to thinking about the salvation of society, lest the spirit itself perish.

**xiv. 'Ideology and Utopia' (1929)**

Those who know about Mannheim, however—yet this does not contradict the last sentence—will agree that Ideology and Utopia, his first book, also is his most important, certainly his most influential, and probably his most lasting work. Ever since its English translation appeared in 1936—enlarged by the 'Preliminary Approach to the Problem', which Mannheim wrote for the purpose, and by 'The Sociology of Knowledge', the previously mentioned dictionary article of 1931 (see XV below)—but particularly since its publication as a paperback (1955), numbers of college and even high-school students have had it assigned to them. It has attained the status of a 'classic' or a 'minor classic', perhaps also an attendant ghost-like aura. But because it is inexpensive and easily available, it will not be expounded here. Still, it probably needs being returned to the status of a work by a human being; here, however, all we can do is push in this direction by, first, making some remarks on the translation of the book and presenting a translation of the detailed table of contents of the original German edition (not preserved either in the translation or in postwar German editions), and second, tracing certain features of the work and commenting on Mannheim's introduction to the English translation.

A word, then, on this translation. It is doubtful whether a more literal version—such as has been attempted in the table of contents below and in those passages from Mannheim's work that have been and will be quoted either in fresh translations or in modification of existing ones—would have led to the success of the book in which Louis Wirth's and Edward Shils's rendition has resulted. Their version, however, replaces relatively idiosyncratic German by relatively standardized English, thus presenting us with a book of a character quite different from the original.38 This is not said in order to criticize but to point to a

38 The language may even have something to do with the striking difference between sales in Germany and the United States. Germany: The Third Reich 'forgot' to confiscate it, the remaining third surviving Nazism to be destroyed by a bombing attack in 1943. Source: Gerhard Schulte-Bulmke, Vorwort, I.Ü., 3rd ed., 1952, p. vii. This edition, of 2,000 copies, was sold out only in 1965; the 4th ed., 1965, sold its 1,000 copies by the end of 1968; the work is now in its 5th ed., 1969. (Letter from Gerhard Schulte-Bulmke, 23 July 1969.) U.S.A.: The Harcourt, Brace hardcover edition (10 December 1936) sold 5,345 copies by June 1969; the Harvest Books paperback edition (4 August 1955), 65,707 copies by the same date. (Letter from Harcourt, Brace and World, 22 August 1969.) German figures are for both hardcover and paperback copies.
problem, which is that of the implications and consequences of choosing faithfulness as against understandability as the first criterion of a translation. One of the bases of the choice is bound to be the translator's expectation of the reader. In regard to the translation to follow (which, it should be remembered, covers what in the English edition appears as Parts II–IV, Part I there being the 'Preliminary Approach'; Part V, the 1931 article on the sociology of knowledge), I have assumed understandability that can be attained by serious attention. Of course, no table of contents is fully transparent without the text to which it refers; and what has been said about the English translation of the book will indeed become far more plausible if the reader were to compare the table of contents with it.

IDEOLOGY AND UTOPIA
(as Introduction)

The inner connection of the two studies. The ideological and utopian elements in our thinking have become transparent. The crisis resulting from this. Characteristics of experiencing and thinking consistently in terms of 'ideas'. The emergence of the fear of 'false consciousness'.

The need for a preliminary clarification of concepts. The many meanings of the concept of ideology. The particular and the total concepts of ideology. Common and distinguishing features of the two concepts.

On the history of change in meaning of the concept of ideology. An attempt at subjecting this change to a sociological structural analysis. The distrust becomes methodical. 'Ideology' as meaning a phenomenon of deception occurring only on the psychological level. History of the rise of the concept of 'particular ideology'. Bacon's 'idols'. The emergence of the suspicion of ideology in the everyday political practice of the Renaissance. The Enlightenment psychology of rational interests.

The concept of total ideology calls the noological sphere of consciousness in question. How is it that just our epoch is capable of calling its spiritual basis so radically in question? Stages in the rise of the concept of total ideology. A. The emergence of the philosophy of consciousness. B. 'Consciousness as such', first conceived as super-temporal, is historicized. The Historical School and Hegel. The national spirit (Volksgeist) as subject. The points of departure of these philosophical theories originally out of the life problems of the time. C. The further differentiation of the [intellectual] bearer: the social class as subject. On the possibility, which results from this, of perceiving historical events.

The problem of 'false consciousness'. The religious origins of this problem. The modern suspicion of a 'false consciousness' becomes methodical. The criterion of 'reality', too, changes in the modern period. The original meaning of the word 'ideology'. The Napoleonic use of the word. The emergence of the concept of ideology in Marxism. The diffusion of the concept among the remaining positions.

The rise of a dialectically new situation through the expansion of the concept of ideology into all camps. The change in meaning of the concept that is connected with this. The special and the general concepts of ideology. Theory of ideology becomes sociology of knowledge. A new form of intellectual history becomes possible. The tasks of a sociological analysis of meaning.

The value-free concept of ideology. Continuous relativization as method of investigation. Relationism: neither relativism nor illusionism. The constitu-
tive impingement of the subject on the cognitive result. The conceptual framework of the knower is historically and socially relative (gebunden). The value of positing something as absolute becomes problematical. Everyday and political practice finds it difficult to do without such positing.

The transition from the value-free to the evaluative concept of ideology. The motivation, based on Weltanschauung, behind the value-free concept of ideology gradually becomes visible. The inevitability of an ex-post ontology. The blindness of positivism toward its own presuppositions.

Characterization of two typical ontic decisions that can lie behind the value-free concept of ideology. A. The relativization of history in favor of an ecstatic center beyond history. B. A medium in which the traces of 'becoming human' can be grasped is seen in history and in the changes in the elements of meaning. This indicates a negative attitude toward history and the social sphere in contrast to the positive one that is maintained here. The sociological diagnosis of the time.

The recurrence of the problem of 'false consciousness'. Thoughts that are 'real' and thoughts that are 'unreal' in a given time. Examples of false consciousness, (a) in the ethical realm, (b) in self-understanding, (c) in the area of orientation toward the world.

The search for reality in the ideas of ideology and utopia. The multiform nature of the ontological decision (sliding back into the value-free concept of ideology). The multiform nature of our thinking, too, is connected with the multiform nature of ontological decisions. In everyday thinking and in the special disciplines, objects are experienced only as particulars. The breakthrough of the crisis of our thinking in positive research. Methods of hiding the situation from oneself. The crisis in our thinking concerns all parties. The task of an analysis of the situation in the field of thinking.

IS POLITICS POSSIBLE AS A SCIENCE?
(The Problem of Theory and Practice)

Why has there been no political science up to now? The concept of politics. Rationalized structure and 'margin ['Spielraum'] of irrationality'. The concept of action. The difficulties a science of action confronts: (a) fluid objects; (b) no static effective factors; (c) the theorist is involved in the play of forces to be identified; (d) knowledge itself is politically and socially differentiated in its basic structure.

Proof of the thesis that knowing itself is politically and socially relative [gebunden] through a sociological analysis of the differences in meaning that the concepts 'theory' and 'practice' show among different parties: The problem of theory and practice in (a) bureaucratic conservatism; (b) historical conservatism; (c) the liberal-democratic bourgeoisie; (d) socialism; (e) fascism.

The problem of synthesis. The particularism of [all] ways of thinking. Political sociology as knowledge of the totality of standpoints. Impossibility of a super-historical absolute synthesis. An additive synthesis is unsatisfactory.

The problem of the bearers of the synthesis. It is not some super-temporal and super-social subject. The static and the dynamic form of 'mediation'. The problem of the 'intelligentsia'. On the sociology of modern culture [Bildung]. The 'center' does not have the character of a class. Two avenues for the modern intelligentsia: (a) a blind joining of classes and parties; (b) decision on the basis of the exact knowledge of one's own situation and mission. The intelligentsia is not a party-forming factor but the expression of a unique social position with its specific chance of insight. The possibility of choice. Partly schools and the need for a higher form of political science.

On the particular nature of political knowledge. We have an overly narrow knowledge. Our conception of knowledge is too intellectualistic and therefore
conceals the structure of knowledge [operative] in practice. On knowledge which is accessible only to particularly structured subjects. The significance of participation [Mitvollzug] for the mediation of knowledge. The connection between perspective and decision.

On the communicability of political knowledge. The problem of the ‘social equation’. The social equation is not always a source of error. The danger of the student’s contemplative attitude distorting the structure of praxis. The contrast between schematic ordering and orientation toward action. The question of recruitment. Correlations between forms of groups and kinds of knowledge. The intellectualistic and the romantic form of intellectual transmission. The structure of the studio and the club. The party school. Discipline of the will and appeal to the free will. Political praxis is not to be identified with revolutionary praxis.

Three avenues for the sociology of knowledge: (1) The truth value of existence-related knowledge is denied. (2) The effort to salvage the value of this knowledge by trying to identify an area free from decisions of the will. The relative justification of this method. There is formalized knowledge of very different degrees which is relatively independent of standpoints. (3) Evaluation and perspective are examined in their connectedness. The ‘consensus ex post’ and the ever renewed attempt at a synopsis. This solution, too, contains a decision. To know more does not render decisions superfluous; it only enlarges one’s field of vision. The tendency to reduce the margin [Spielraum] of irrationality. The three historical types of ethics: the ethics of fate, of principle, of responsibility.

THE UTOPIAN CONSCIOUSNESS

A. Attempt at a Clarification of Basic Phenomena: Utopia, Ideology, and the Problem of Reality

The orientation toward the transcendence of existence, and reality. The ideological and the utopian orientation. What is real? The concepts of the relatively and the absolutely utopian. Proof that already the definition of a basic concept is relative to a standpoint. Projected spaces and projected times (‘Wunschräume und Wunschzeiten’). Changes in the substance and form of utopia. Ultimately, an effective utopia is a collective achievement. Correlations between various forms of utopia and social strata. Counter-utopias. What does ‘utopian consciousness’ mean? The connection between the utopian center of a consciousness and the attendant perspective. Utopia and the experience of historical time.

B. Changes in the Form of the Utopian Consciousness and Their Stages in Modern Development

I. The first form of the utopian consciousness: The orgiastic chiliasm of the Anabaptists. Phenomenology of the chiliastic consciousness. Breaking into the ‘here and now’. The unconscious falsification of the phenomena of chiliasm by the perspective of the history of ideas. Mysticism and chiliasm. Thomas Münzer. Stylistic parallels in the art of the time. The chiliastic can also hide behind the extreme rationalism of a closed system.


III. The third form of the utopian consciousness: The conservative idea. The originally unreflective nature of the conservative consciousness. Rising strata push conservatism into a defensive position. The result: the way in which life is
felt [Lebensgefühl] enters consciousness. The conservative consciousness of conditionality. Meeting the adversary on the level of ideas. The ex-post situation of conservative knowledge. The idea understood as entelechy rooted in reality, not as anticipated ‘Ought’. The contrast between ‘making’ and ‘letting grow’. The tension between Ought and Is becomes minimal. The conservative experience of time. The virtual presence of the past. The quietistic element in the development of conservatism.

IV. The fourth form of the utopian consciousness: The socialist-communist utopia. Positions flanking the socialist utopia. Traits it shares with the liberal idea. The discovery of the existential conditions of ideas. The analysis of ideologies as a method of destroying opposing ideas. The inversion of the ontological hierarchy. The combination of the consciousness of [the] conditionality [of ideas] with utopia. The fight against the chiliastic principle of radical anarchism. The experience of historical time in socialism and communism. The future becomes differentiated. The multidimensionality of time. The future is experimenting in the present. The space of free decision becomes narrower. The problem of the rational determinability of the place of an event in historical time. The diffusion of this ‘realistic attitude’ into culture.

V. The contemporary constellation. The gradual approximation of utopia toward ‘reality’. The various forms of utopia destroy each other mutually. The typical change in the form of thinking as soon as its bearer participates in present reality. Attempt at a symptomatology of some directions within the most recent German sociology. The disappearance of historical time: American sociology, Pareto, Freud. Diffusion of the central mental attitude into art. Tendency toward un-utopian and un-ideological tensionlessness. The release of the ecstatic. The four roads ‘intellectuals’ ['Geistige'] can take: The future is impenetrable to knowledge. Discovery of the indispensability of the utopian. [I.U., ‘Inhalt’, pp. ix–xv]

Among the reasons for the singular position of Ideology and Utopia in Mannheim’s work are its particularly probing, passionate, and moving exploration of the author’s fundamental commitments to spirit and society, and the way in which the problematic character of the relations between these commitments and their objects come to the fore. These concerns inform much of the central problem of the book, one way of formulating which is the advocacy of ideology and utopia versus ideology or utopia. There is longing for ecstasy (which will return later), and there is great sympathy and feeling for chiliasm but at the same time for rationality—politically, for both revolution and reform (especially in Part IV, ‘The Utopian Mentality’), with the latter (to anticipate) becoming ever more strongly emphasized during Mannheim’s English period, presumably under the impact of Nazism, on one hand, and English democracy, on the other. The most concise and impressive manifestation of the difficult and passionate dual

39 Cf. the end of I and n. 7 above. (Contrast the much more sober mood of Mannheim’s article ‘Utopia’, written a few years later for the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences (Vol. XV, 1935), in which commitment and detachment—roughly, utopia as a mentality and as a literary or philosophical genre—do not fuse. We shall find similar inconclusivenesses in later works, thus in Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction (XVIII below).
allegiance probably occurs at the very end of ‘The Utopian Mentality’ (the end of the original work):

While the decline of the ideological represents a crisis only for certain strata and while the objectivity that comes from the unveiling of ideologies brings self-clarification to the whole society, the complete disappearance of the utopian would transform the very shape of the whole process of becoming human. The disappearance of utopia brings about a static objectivity in which man himself becomes a thing. There would arise the greatest paradox imaginable, namely, that the man of the most rational mastery over things would become the man of impulses; that man, who after such a long, sacrificial, and heroic development has reached the highest state of consciousness, in which history is no longer blind fate but is becoming his own creation, in giving up the various forms of utopia loses the will to history and thus his insight into history. [I.U., pp. 249-50; cf. Engl., p. 236]

Here at the end of his book, a decade after World War I, Mannheim is overwhelmed by worry over man’s fate in a manner that invites comparison with the way in which Max Weber ended The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism twenty-five years earlier, a decade before World War I:

No one knows... whether... entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or, if neither, mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: ‘Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved.’

Weber dreads ‘petrification’ without ‘spirit’ and ‘heart’; Mannheim dreads ‘objectivity in which man himself becomes a thing’. Weber longs for ‘new prophets’ or ‘a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals’; Mannheim, for utopia. But ‘utopia’ has a protean form for him: by the end of his book it has become sheer spirit, the force which transcends existence—the same, however, as the ‘scientific thinking’ Mannheim relies on to grasp the nature of a time:

At this historical moment, where suddenly all things become transparent and history almost unveils its formative elements and structures, we must be at the height of the situation with our scientific thinking, for it is not impossible that all too soon—as this has been the case in history more than once already—this transparence disappears and the world congeals into a single picture. [I.U., p. 41; cf. Engl., p. 76]

A picture, that is, all perspectives on which are alike, which thus has no perspective; hence a world without ‘existentiality’ (which would account for perspectives and differences among them), thus nothing to discover, nothing into which the spirit could

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gear, hence no spirit, no transcendence, no utopia, as Mannheim will say at the end of the book. In still different terms: in such a world (if we can imagine it or call it world), there would be nothing to engage thinking; and we have encountered Mannheim’s passion for thinking more than once (notably in the essays on the interpretation of Weltanschauung and on conservative thought) and now find new instances of it, such as this:

It is not impoverishment but infinite enrichment when we see ever more clearly a difficulty of life and thought. It is not bankruptcy of thinking when reason looks ever more deeply into its own structure; not incompetence, when an immense enlargement of vision demands a revision of the bases. Thinking is a process that is carried by real forces, continuously calls itself in question, and pushes toward correcting itself. [I.U., p. 62; cf. Engl., p. 94]

This passion for thinking Mannheim now considers entrusting to the sociology of knowledge: ‘Actually, in the sociology of knowledge nothing occurs but that we also let our position of thinking, which has become critical, meet us in the form of a report on the situation and penetrate relations with an intention directed toward totality’ (I.U., pp. 64–65).41

Still, as we have seen before, the utopian (elsewhere, the ecstatic), as that which transcends ‘reality’, ‘existence’, ‘being’, remains indispensable: could it really be, Mannheim asks desperately, that ‘congruence’ with existence (the opposite of transcendence of existence) can be achieved, that ‘tensionlessness’ and ‘authenticity’ can be reconciled in a ‘fertig gewordenen Welt?’ This last expression, which Wirth and Shils translate as ‘world which is no longer in the making’ (Engl., p. 231), is a pun, as is its English translation, although neither was in all likelihood so intended. ‘Fertig’ (aside from also meaning ‘ready’) means ‘finished’, that is, both ‘completed’ or ‘done with’ and ‘done for’; and ‘no longer in the making’ means not only, as the translators undoubtedly intended, ‘having ceased developing’ or ‘static’ (‘finished’ in the first sense), but also ‘arrested’, ‘truncated’ (‘finished’ in the second sense). The pun makes Mannheim’s question more poignant,42 but the (negative and more optimistic

41 In the English translation (pp. 95–96), this has shrunk to: ‘The sociology of knowledge, however, aims to see even the crisis in our thought as a situation which we then strive to view as part of a larger whole’.

42 An almost certainly equally unintended pun makes Scheler’s ‘solution’ of the problem of relativism a shattering experience instead: we escape relativism ‘by hanging up, as it were, the sphere of absolute ideas and values... quite violently much higher [ganz gewaltig viel höher] above all actual value systems of history that have hitherto existed’ (Max Scheler, op. cit. [n. 27 above], p. 14). Ostensibly, Scheler chose ‘gewaltig’ for emphasis only, but in a less contextual, more literal sense, it also means ‘violent’. (I am indebted to Rainer Koehne for having alerted me to this ‘pun’.)
than pessimistic) answer (I.U., Engl., pp. 231–35) probably less trustworthy.

The pun possibly reflects Mannheim’s unclarity, or his uneasiness about it, regarding spirit as reason (science, liberalism, planning, reform) and spirit as transcendence (utopia, ecstasy, chiliasm, revolution, anarchism), or regarding their relations, differences, similarity, if not identity (cf. the quotation about ‘scientific thinking’ above). We saw an aspect of this unclarity in the ambivalence concerning ‘intrinsic’ and ‘ideological’ interpretation (in VIII above). Now, three or four years later, Mannheim emphasizes the ‘existence-transcending’ nature that ideology shares with utopia; yet, at least according to the concluding lines of his book that have been quoted, he considers ideology a less indispensable transcendence than utopia—the decline of the former, we recall, would be ‘a crisis only for certain strata’, and its unveiling helps the clarification of all, while the end of utopia would change men into things. Ideology presupposes a point of view, whose unveiling or unmasking, which shows its partiality, clarifies matters, broadens the mind, and in the sense of the Enlightenment, can make us more mature. So far, so good. But the mistake comes in the implied identification of unveiling with abolishing: as long as there is no complete ‘congruence with existence’, there are points of view, perspectives, hence ideologies, the unveiled ones necessarily being replaced by others. In fact, utopia, which, compared with ideology so broadly conceived as Mannheim does here, is a much more particular kind of transcendence, can disappear without requiring the disappearance of standpoints. Hence Mannheim’s alternative—the decline of one or the other—is illogical on his own terms. The correct alternatives at first glance appear to be two: first, complete congruence with existence, hence neither ideology nor utopia, as against a transcendable world, which thus has ideologies and the possibility of utopia—but since the first term is unimaginable, this alternative turns out to be a mirage and collapses. There thus remains only the alternative ideology and utopia vs. ideology-and-no-utopia, and this is not only realistic but timely today, when many believe that we have much ideology and many ideologies but no utopias. (The notion ‘the end of ideology’, of course, is misleading and irrelevant here, since it refers to the end of a particular ideology or particular ideologies.) The explanation of Mannheim’s fictitious alternative is that ‘utopia’

43 This does not contradict the determination he made in 1926 of ideological interpretation as intrinsic: it participates in the ‘existence-transcending’ point of view of the interpretandum, rather than, as in sociological interpretation, critically analyzing this point of view.
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figures in it as spirit, and ‘ideology’ as belonging in society, as society: if he has to choose between spirit and society, he sides with the spirit. Yet even in this formulation, the alternative, of course, is a false one—Mannheim’s ‘ecstasy’ may here have got the better of him.

If such observations bring us closer to his book as the work of a human being (rather than an anonymous ‘classic’), we must not let familiarity seduce us into contempt but rather lead us toward greater understanding, even if it should be accompanied by a shock of recognition. The book, however, is, of course, not only a story: it also contains many statements that are relevant today, some forty years later, at a time which in certain respects is quite different from the time in which and for which Mannheim was writing but which in some other respects, such as he identified, has not changed. For instance, the following (the passage occurs in the second section of ‘Is Politics Possible as a Science?’—see (d) in this section in the Table of Contents above):

In the measure in which Marxist-proletarian strata rise, they shed the dialectical element in their theory and think in terms of the generalizing, law-seeking method of liberalism and democracy, whereas others who because of their position remain dependent on the revolution hold on to the dialectical element (Leninism). [I.U., p. 96; cf. Engl., p. 118]

Current illustrations come to mind, such as large segments of labor in the United States.

Or note (in the first section of ‘The Utopian Consciousness’) the first page of a seven-page footnote (in the English edition incorporated into the text—see especially pp. 177–78) where Mannheim applies his claim that even definitions of concepts are perspectivistic, to the concept ‘utopian’ as used by the ideal-typical conservative and the ideal-typical anarchist. The former—not to use Mannheim’s terms—says on principle ‘no’ to any alternative to the existing order for fear that some ‘yes’ might be entertainable and disquiet him; and surely there are many ‘conservatives’ and ‘reactionaries’ today who disparage any alternative as ‘utopian’. Inversely the anarchist (in Mannheim illustrated by Gustav Landauer) says on principle ‘no’ to the existing order (which is perceived in as undifferentiated a fashion as is ‘utopia’ by the conservative), lest an even selective ‘yes’ qualify his passion to negate; and again, we know ‘radicals’ today who fit this description.44

Or read what Mannheim says on teaching (Engl., pp. 159 ff.) as it may bear on some questions concerning education today—

44 But compare with this a ‘smoother’ version Mannheim added in the ‘Preliminary Approach’ (see next note), p. 36.
we saw his interest in paedagogy before and anticipated its growth in his later years. Altogether, there are many continuities in this book—continuations as well as anticipations; to mention only one of each: epistemological analyses (especially in Part II) and a note on rationalization (Engl., p. 101). But how did Mannheim himself present his book to the English-reading world? 

By starting with a bang: 'This book is concerned with the problem of how men actually think' (I.U. Engl., p. 1). Indeed, through most of the 'Preliminary Approach to the Problem' Mannheim refers to 'this book', which is, of course, made up of two essays to which an introductory one has been added. In the original edition (and in later German editions) Mannheim spends the first pages in pointing this out and explaining how the two papers hang together (cf. the beginning of the Table of Contents above); but in the English version these pages have been skipped (although some of their content has been shifted into the 'Preliminary Approach'). Instead, toward the very end of this 'Preliminary Approach', Mannheim introduces a justification for having written his book in essay form:

At the present stage of development we are still far from having unambiguously formulated the problems connected with the theory of the sociology of knowledge. . . . This feeling of standing at the beginning of a movement instead of the end conditions the manner in which the book is presented. There are problems about which neither textbooks nor perfectly consistent systems can be written. . . . For such problems earlier centuries . . . invented the form of the scientific essay. . . . This form of presentation, which since has so frequently proved its worth, served as a prototype to the author when in the present volume, with the exception of the last part [the 1931 dictionary article on the sociology of knowledge], he chose to employ the essay form and not the systematic style of treatment. [I.U., Engl., p. 47]

Compare the corresponding passage from the first pages of the German edition:

The sociology of knowledge is still in that happy initial stage of not existing, even as a science, in the form of a rigid ordering scheme, of a detached result, of a precipitate of a perspective that has come to terms, if only apparently so, with its world. In the sociology of knowledge is still perceptible what in the established disciplines we often lose sight of: that looked at in total context, thinking is never its own purpose but a living organon that forms itself ever anew, shaping itself anew with the changes of the historical process, an ever becoming structure in whose medium man, too, renews himself. The following studies thus must not be lifted out of that living stream where it really is that things become problematical, where thinking is still tied to that immediate impulse which at all gives rise to reflection on experience. [I.U., p. 2]

45 He did in Part I of I.U. Engl., 'Preliminary Approach to the Problem', pp. 1–48, which, as Louis Wirth and Edward A. Shils inform us (p. xii), 'was especially written to introduce the present volume to the Anglo-Saxon reader'.
This surely is more honest and less ‘polished’ than the English comment on the nature of the book.\footnote{46}

If one reads the ‘Preliminary Approach’ directly after *Ideology* and *Utopia*, especially in its original language, the singular position of this work in Mannheim’s opus, its unusually perceptive, passionate, personal, ‘existence-transcending’ nature, becomes even more striking. For after getting over our shock by the initial ‘bang’ of the ‘Preliminary Approach’—which is close almost to a publicity stunt—we soon feel at home with the seriousness and intelligence we have come to know from Mannheim’s papers that precede and that we read before ‘the book’. For instance—but almost all of the ‘Preliminary Approach’ except the very beginning and the very end would do—take this passage, which could just as well occur in an earlier paper, say in the one on competition:

The intellectual is now no longer, as formerly, a member of a caste or rank whose scholastic manner of thought represents for him thought as such. In this relatively simple process is to be sought the explanation for the fact that the fundamental questioning of thought in modern times does not begin until the collapse of the intellectual monopoly of the clergy. The almost unanimously accepted world-view which had been artificially maintained fell apart the moment the socially monopolistic position of its producers was destroyed. [*I.U.,* Engl., p. 111]

But then before we know it he leads us into the mood that makes *Ideology* and *Utopia* so outstanding:

> What we are concerned with here is the elemental perplexity of our time, which can be epitomized in the symptomatic question: ‘How is it possible for man to continue to think and live in a time when the problems of ideology and utopia are being radically raised and thought through in all their implications?’

[*Ibid.,* p. 38, but p. 3 in *I.U.*]

And he also affirms this time—when ‘the unconscious’ has been ‘uncovered’, which in life ‘seems unbearable’ but ‘is the historical prerequisite of scientific critical self-awareness’ (*I.U.,* Engl., p. 42). If the end of his book recalled Max Weber’s pessimistic soberness, a passage such as this recalls Weber’s asceticism, as it is found especially in his conception of science (‘Science as a Vocation’).

As in ‘the book’, here too, an inspection of some passages illuminates the continuity and discontinuity of its time and ours. Thus:

> Today . . . we have reached a stage in which this weapon of the reciprocal unmasking and laying bare of the unconscious sources of intellectual existence . . .

\footnote{46} Our understanding and assessment will benefit from knowledge of the circumstances in which Mannheim wrote the ‘Preliminary Approach’ as described by David Kettler in ‘Political Theory, Ideology, Sociology: The Question of Karl Mannheim’ (forthcoming).
has become the property not of one group among many but of all of them. [This sounds already outdated, but a few sentences later we can no longer feel so.] There is nothing accidental but rather more of the inevitable in the fact that more and more people . . . [take] flight into scepticism or irrationalism. [Ibid., p. 37]

Or take this:

In order to work in the social sciences one must participate in the social process . . . The type of participation which the thinker enjoys determines how he shall formulate his problems. The disregard of qualitative elements and the complete restraint of the will does not constitute objectivity but is instead the negation of the essential quality of the object. [Ibid., p. 42]

This is still the fight against positivism, but it is doubtful whether the affirmative if not enthusiastic tone—Dilthey's tone, and recall it from before, especially from II and VIII above—can, with our clearest consciousness, still be sounded in good conscience, where in so many fields, unless to participate in things means to change them, so many, instead of participating, criticize or turn away.

_Ideology and Utopia_ aroused considerable discussion, some of it both passionate and incisive, when it first appeared in Germany. The analysis of the political, as well as the substantive aspects of this discussion, barely begun before Hitler came to power and hardly taken up since, should be reviewed and revived in the light of some of the pertinent events and processes that have occurred since 1929. Such an analysis may even help us get clearer on which of these events and processes we can answerably call 'pertinent', and what 'pertinent' means.

This, obviously, is not the place for such an effort; instead, we continue chronologically, or rather in the present instance go back a few years, since the 'Preliminary Approach' was presumably written in the early or middle thirties.

_E.g.:_ 'The historical consciousness of the finitude of every historical phenomenon, of every human or social situation, of the relativity of every kind of belief is the last step toward the liberation of man. With it, man attains the sovereignty of extracting its substance from every experience, of surrendering to it wholly, freely, as if there were no system of philosophy or creed that could tie men down. Life becomes free from knowledge through concepts; the spirit becomes sovereign above all cobwebs of dogmatic thought. Every beauty, every sacredness, every sacrifice, re-experienced and interpreted, opens perspectives that disclose a reality. And we then take into ourselves also the bad, the terrible, the ugly as occupying a place in the world, as enclosing a reality that is bound to be justified in the universal context. Something that cannot be cheated away. And over against relativity, the continuity of the creative force asserts itself as the nuclear historical fact'. Wilhelm Dilthey, ‘Plan der Fortsetzung zum Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften’, in _Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften_ (1910), ed. Bernhard Groethuysen (Gesammelte Schriften, Vol. VII [Leipzig und Berlin: Teubner, 1927], pp. 290–91).
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xv. The Sociology of Knowledge (1931)

In the ‘Preliminary Approach’ Mannheim writes that the sociology of knowledge is ‘the systematization of the doubt which is to be found in social life as a vague insecurity and uncertainty’ (I.U. Engl., p. 45). One of the requirements of the sociology of knowledge is to increase its precision and refinement, which in Ideology and Utopia he felt confident were forthcoming if only because nowhere can the pervasive interdependence of changes in meaning be determined with as much precision as in the field of thinking. For, thinking is a peculiarly sensitive membrane. In every meaning of a word and especially in the ambiguity of every concept operative at a given time, there vibrate the polarities of the hostile but simultaneous systems of life that are implicitly presupposed in those nuances of meaning and that fight one another also on this plane. [I.U., p. 38; cf. Engl., p. 74]

He also said:

A modern epistemology which counts with the fact that all historical knowledge is relational will take its departure first of all from the circumstance that there are areas of thinking in which non-relative knowledge free from influence by standpoint is wholly unimaginable. Not even a god could formulate historical insights in terms of the $2 \times 2 = 4$ paradigm, for what is understandable can be formulated only in relation to definitions of problems and systems of concepts which arise in the flux of history. [I.U., p. 34; cf. Engl., pp. 70-71]

In comparison, the 1931 article, perhaps only or largely because it is a dictionary entry, is formalized. Thus some of the precision and refinement just mentioned also appear as if transferred to the organization of the article itself, and a passionate statement on epistemology like the one quoted, while by no means absent, is also found in company of the announcement that ‘the epistemological consequences of the sociology of knowledge’ make up the second of its two parts, the first being the ‘theory of the existentiality [Seinsverbundenheit] of knowledge’. How should we read this article? It is especially important to do it right because, with one brief though significant exception published posthumously, this is not only Mannheim’s last statement on his

48 Letter, 15 April 1946, that is, nine months before his death, to Wolff, responding to a critical exposition (of the ‘systematic’ kind shown below) of Mannheim’s conception of the sociology of knowledge in the 1931 article, undertaken in a seminar on the sociology of knowledge conducted in 1945-46 at The Ohio State University. The letter is reproduced in Kurt H. Wolff, ‘The Sociology of Knowledge and Sociological Theory’, in Llewellyn Gross, ed., Symposium on Sociological Theory (Evanston, Ill., White Plains, N.Y.: Row, Peterson, 1959), pp. 571-72. (If one thinks that a ‘systematic’ reading with attendant critical questions is appropriate, Mannheim’s response is moving, even inspiring, in its modesty and honesty. If, as I now do, one thinks such a reading is a misreading, then Mannheim’s acceptance of it may suggest fatigue or weakness, and his response strikes one as sad. This will become clearer presently.)
conception of the sociology of knowledge (for which, however, there will still be occasional pleas—see especially XVI (1) below), but also his last paper in the area generally—he made no more studies like, for instance, those of conservatism or competition.

One way to read it is systematically, in skeletal fashion:

(1) Nature of the sociology of knowledge, in contrast to the theory of ideology
(2) Two divisions of the sociology of knowledge: (a) theory of the existentiality of knowledge; (b) epistemological consequences of the sociology of knowledge
   (a) a. points at which existentiality influences knowledge: selection of problem, selection of data, solution of problem
   b. social processes influencing the process of knowledge: examples are competition and generations
   c. 'perspective' ['Aspektstruktur, 'aspectual structure'], meaning how 'one views an object, what one perceives in it, and how one construes it in his thinking' [I.U., Eng., p. 244]49
   d. relationization and particularization: respectively relating of an idea to a social situation and recognizing its validity as limited to this situation
   (b) a. changes in epistemology and philosophy of science follow changes in empirical sciences
   b. discovering the activist element in knowledge ('not knowing and wanting, but wanting in knowing': I.U., 1952, p. 254; cf. Eng., p. 265)
   c. objectivity means unanimity of perspective or the common denominator of different perspectives
(3) Problems of research techniques in the sociology of knowledge
   (a) imputation: it proceeds in three steps, the first two, not sociological, preparing for the third, which is
      a. imputation on the level of meaning ['sinngemäßszurechnung'] imputes a thought, etc., to an ideal-typical world view
      b. empirical imputation ['Faktizitätszurechnung'] examines how and to what extent individual thinkers think in terms of this world view
      c. sociological imputation accounts for the nature of, and changes in, world views and the like by reference to the composition of groups or strata expressing them and by reference to the situation of a social-historical space, e.g., a nation, and its changes.

What is wrong with this reading (of which only a sketch has been given and which could be made clearer and more rewarding) is that it has not plunged into 'the flux of history' in which and out of which Mannheim wrote. It did not begin with an 'intrinsic interpretation'; it rather is a preparation for an 'extrinsic' one but

49 'Of the characteristics by which the aspectual structure of a statement can be characterized, of the criteria by which it can be identified in its imputability, we want to list here only a few: analysis of the meaning of the concepts employed, the phenomenon of the counter-concept, absence of certain concepts, structure of the categorical apparatus, dominant models of thought, level of abstraction, and underlying ontology' (I.U., 1952, p. 234; cf. Eng., p. 244). (References to the German text of the 1931 article on the sociology of knowledge are to the reprint in this third ed. of I.U., pp. 227–67.)
shows no sign of realizing this or of realizing why it proceeds as it does or what the outside sphere is with reference to which the interpretation is expected to be made. As soon as we say this, we can answer the questions of the why and of the outside reference; in fact, the latter answers the former: the outside sphere is an attitude—a rage for order or a wish for quick gain (synonyms?)—and it is not so much reference to this attitude as response to it which shapes the reading—a fine example of the existentiality Mannheim emphasizes. He was not himself a systematic thinker (which might justify intrinsically reading him so), though somewhat more in this encyclopedia article than usually—but this is not where his heart is.

Let us read him more patiently:

The sociologist of knowledge has been accused sometimes . . . of not entering into the arguments, the 'subject matter' at issue at the moment but, instead, of going behind them toward the basis of the speaker's thought in its entirety in order to reveal it as one basis of thought among others, as a partial one. In what has just been said lies the legitimation of this non-entering into the arguments of the opponent in certain cases, namely, whenever, along with the common basis, the common 'subject matter' is missing. [J.U., 1952, pp. 240–41; cf. Engl., p. 252]

Now, systematically speaking, this passage deals with the subject-object relation and says that the 'common basis', or shared subjectivity, produces a shared 'subject matter' or object. Taking the passage out of context, as we did, we read that the world is constituted by the subject (by subjects of 'like existentiality'). But in his early paper on epistemology (V above) we saw that Mannheim insisted on the existence of a non-relative world and said then that this would not change in his later writing. His problem here may be more accurately phrased as his (old and continuing) effort to ascertain beyond which point or line in the world's relativity this non-relativity can be found. In this search, he hardly went beyond a point reached a few pages later in the present article:

Every analysis in the sociology of knowledge that follows its own intentions reaches that point at which the sociology of knowledge is more than a sociological narrative of how certain insights arose out of a certain milieu but also is critique because it reconstructs the grasping power and the limits of the grasping power of statements. These analyses of the sociology of knowledge thus are in this sense by no means irrelevant to meaning [sinnirrelevant], but neither do they completely determine meaning [völlig sinnrelevant], for by merely encircling the particularity of the perspective [by merely showing the partiality of a point of view], they do not replace the last direct confrontation of views nor the direct looking at things. The achievement of findings in the sociology of knowledge (this can be stated on the basis of the phenomenological analysis of its inherent intention and on the basis of the analysis of the intensity of its grasp) thus lies between irrelevance to meaning and complete relevance
to [determination of] meaning, at a mid-point hitherto not noticed. The analyses of the sociology of knowledge only prepare direct discussion—in a time which has discovered that its standpoints are split up and the basis of its thinking is inauthentic, and which strives to produce unity on a higher plane. [*I.U.,* 1952, p. 244; cf. Engl., p. 256]

That is to say: we have learned that the ‘object in itself’ is not as close, cannot be attained as quickly as we thought, because much more than we thought intervenes between us and the object—but this does not mean that there are no objects, that there is no world we can observe and discuss; only it is far more difficult than we have believed, than earlier times had believed, and than less ‘relationized’ and ‘particularized’ individuals are likely to believe today. We remember that a few years later Mannheim called the sociology of knowledge ‘the systematization of the doubt which is to be found in social life as a vague insecurity and uncertainty’, and we might do worse than make an attempt at such systematization or clarification—namely (for instance), give into a rage for order lest we cannot move on, that is, escape, to ‘the next point’.

xvi. Sociology (continued from XII)

(1) Its Present Tasks; (2) American Sociology; (3) German Sociology during the Weimar Republic; (4) The Place of Sociology

**(1)** ‘The Tasks of Sociology Called for by the Present: A Teaching Program’ (1932)

Mannheim’s first paper on sociology (1929; XII above) was a defense of sociology in general and of *Ideology and Utopia* in particular. He next addressed himself to the topic three years later, in a lecture on ‘The Tasks of Sociology Called for by the Present: A Teaching Program’ at a meeting of German university teachers of sociology (28 February 1932, less than a year away from Hitler). Sociology means three things: ‘general sociology’, a special discipline; sociology of the special disciplines, or ‘hyphenated sociologies’ (in English, ‘sociologies-of’, e.g., of law, or ‘adjectival sociologies’, e.g., political sociology); and sociology of culture (we shall see a slightly different trichotomy in (4) below). General sociology, which disregards culture, can be practiced and taught in three ways: in ahistorical-axiomatic fashion, which aims at identifying the constants in socialized existence; in comparative, typifying fashion, which aims at obtaining comprehensive typologies of social phenomena (e.g., the family); and in historical-individualizing fashion, which is idiographic and ‘should always crown the preceding’ ways (p. 9). Yet Mannheim grants all three their right, ‘reflections over a considerable period of time
having gradually led me from an over-emphasized historicism to
the reception of the other two approaches' (p. 11)—'natural-
scientific', 'positivistic', and 'generalizing' are not 'curse words'
(p. 13), he writes. 'Sociologies-of' 'connect a certain intellectual
area with the social process' (p. 15), such as law, religion, literature,
the economy, art, language, education, knowledge. Mannheim
takes time out to lecture on this last: his 'plea' is interesting
because it shows how he presented the sociology of knowledge in a
'public-relations' lecture to fellow sociologists (pp. 17–21):

In connection with these special sociologies, one of them must be mentioned
quite in particular, namely, the sociology of knowledge. Without naming it, we
just noticed its significance—when we called attention to the fact that a
science (in our case, jurisprudence), can be so structured that despite all
mastery of relevant materials it actually covers up certain relationships
by its formulation of questions and by its categories. The normative orientation
of jurisprudence covers up the genesis and the real processes that lie behind
existing laws. And by coining such formal concepts and categories as 'legisla-
tor', 'legal community', or 'sense of justice', it misses the concretization of
problems that are possible here and that exist in reality. In this fashion, it
becomes never visible who, for instance, in fact the lawgiver was. But such or
similar coverings-up lie behind most acts of cognition. Only up to now we have
not paid enough attention to them and have not had the courage systematically
to make these coverings-up the topic of special study. The problem of who
in which situation has formulated a state of affairs at a given time is always
overlooked when utterances are taken as absolute theses. The development of a
program of research which in the various sciences pursues those propositions
that despite their absolutized form express particular views from certain
standpoints can lead to a most fruitful revision of our knowledge in the humani-
ties and social sciences. These disciplines will get out of their mythicizing state,
which has often not yet become visible to themselves, only once this new
method of self-control will be adopted. As a special discipline, it [the sociology
of knowledge] has two essential areas of research:

(1) As analysis of ideology [Ideologienlehre] it must bring to the fore all those
conscious and unconscious lies and misinterpretations with which vulgar
everyday sociology and political and non-political groups deceive themselves
and each other. For, the everyday interpretation of the world is full of concepts,
schemes of thought, and myths—which are still so primitive that they can
properly be understood only as rudiments of magical-mythical consciousness
or which must be interpreted as consciously manipulated mendacious fairy
tales serving to suppress an adequate social orientation. In this area, the sociol-
ogist has the task, which is not to be underestimated, of achieving the enlighten-
ment that has seen for the first time that a society which struggles for self-
government and self-determination and no longer simply wants to leave things
to a transcendent power [1932!] can do so fruitfully only with the help of a
critical and rational consciousness and the knowledge of social forces. Sociology
must educate our and subsequent generations to be able to live in truth and to
bear reality. In this connection, the analysis of ideology is not destructive, as its
opponents usually call its work of clarification, but uncovering—uncovering
reality, the real phenomena that surround us and in their reality are binding
on us. It is an error to think that ideologies exist only in the political sphere. The
Marxist unmasking of ideologies has only accidentally, owing to its special
angle of vision, concentrated on this area of the social concealment of reality.
But all of our everyday reality is really blocked up, and as far as society is concerned, even the brightest among us is full of accepted inherited misinterpretations. In this sense, the rectification of the fundamental concepts and misinterpretations of everyday life, the clarification of the forces and interests that socially shape history, is a very essential paedagogic mission of sociology, especially of that branch that we have called analysis of ideology.

(2) The sociology of knowledge in the stricter sense of the term approaches this self-revision of thought on an even deeper level. Beyond the conscious and semi-conscious lies of everyday life and partisanship, it aims at identifying that constitutive false start of thought which occurs in the sciences themselves and for which the scientist as a rule can personally not even be held responsible. Its task thus lies in the removal of all those concealments that arise from particular orientations originating in the natural limitedness and restrictedness of special disciplines, social circles, and historical situations. Today we see ever more clearly that the thinking apparatus is always suited to illuminate only certain aspects and contexts of the world, namely those aspects and contexts the penetration of which from its own center of action is the task of a life situation or historico-social condition of existence. But all knowing and illuminating is at the same time a covering up, so that a way of seeing is characterized not only by what it can grasp by means of its concepts, aspects, categories, and modes of asking, but also by what it overlooks and assiduously conceals. In an age when an encounter of particular views that up to then had developed separately is unavoidable, given the expansion of communication and the growing together of life spaces, there arises the task of confronting and connecting these views. In this situation, the sociology of knowledge must serve as a mediator by first helping to remove false views, and then by concretely demonstrating the particularity of each possible one. It tries to show how in the most various points of the encounter, there emerges at the same time the connecting and suspending of previously separated fields of vision into a more comprehensive whole, and how a higher unity of human knowledge thus begins to take shape.

So much in this context for the sociology of knowledge. I wish to add, however, that in future it will have to play a special role among the so-called ‘hyphenated sociologies’. Since in all special areas of the humanities and social sciences theory rightly plays an essential role, there will unavoidably come up again and again, in the revision and typification of the various contradictory theories, the question of the social position from which they can be derived. It is already rather clear that one can analyze the various forms of particular theories of law and the state only if one is capable of analyzing them from the point of view of the sociology of knowledge. This is also true of the various orientations and schools of economics. And it will probably be similar in regard to the confrontation of the theories of the other special disciplines. Not that analysis from the point of view of the sociology of knowledge makes epistemological analysis superfluous, or that it wants to replace the direct confrontation of ideas. But from now on, it will have to be resorted to more and more in clarifying the situation of thought. For this reason, the sociologist, too, will as a matter of course avail himself of it when he wants to find his bearings in his very own realm, the area of sociological theories and views.\(^\text{50}\)

Here, perhaps even more clearly than in his earlier statements on the sociology of knowledge, Mannheim argues for it from a diagnostic-paedagogical point of view. It is from this same point

\(^{50}\) Also cf. ‘German Sociology (1918-1933)’ ((3) below), p. 221.
of view that he continues his general exposition as he comes to the third sense in which sociology is practiced and taught: as sociology of culture, when he explains and recommends the pursuit of problems across special disciplines (‘Verklammerungsproblematik’). For instance:

To enter into the situation of a group, one can begin with the analysis of the form of the economy. From there one will always be pushed on to the analysis of the form of power and domination that is connected with this form of economy, being contained in it or made possible by it. The form of power and domination will influence that of the army as well as of administration. From another side, the form of the economy will at the same time very largely shape also the form of the family. This, however, will quite directly affect education and the social cast of men. The form of the family marks the shape of sexuality and eroticism, hence also a very broad stratum in the formation of feeling. From here it is possible to move into the analysis of lyrical and other poetry, etc. [p. 25]

To be ‘able to see coherently’ leads to ‘problems of the structure as a whole’ as well as of ‘the structure of the unique unfolding of certain social-historical units’ (p. 26). And in arguing against ‘atomizing empiricism, which breaks everything up into abstract pieces that are independent of each other’, he says that this ‘would be more exact than the manner of observing that preserves contexts only, if reality itself were atomized and unstructured and if in reality itself there were no overall connectedness of events’ (p. 27).

In addition to the three major modes of sociology, there also are ‘sociography and statistics’ and Gegenwartskunde (‘contemporary studies’), that is, the study of contemporary ‘social problems’, all of them greatly developed in the United States (and indeed, as Mannheim’s paper on American sociology of the same year will show—(2) below—synonymous, at the time in which he wrote, with the major trend of sociology there).

No single school, let alone an individual, can act on this ‘maximum’ conception of sociology that comprises all of these subdivisions. Selection is necessary, and Mannheim recommends that it be guided by considerations of (1) ‘the contemporary situation of society in general’, (2) ‘the contemporary condition of academic instruction’, and (3) ‘demands originating from the contemporary state of research and the general scientific situation’ (p. 36). The first calls for mass enlightenment and education, without which no democracy ‘of reason’ (Vernunftdemokratie; rather than of ‘mood’ or ‘impulse’—Stimmungs­demokratie—Sche­l­er’s terms) is possible.

The more clearly the need for a political sociology emerges in this connection, the more energetically one must endeavor to present precisely these subjects
to the student in as value-free, as un-agitator-like a fashion as possible. For it would be the death of sociology if it had to become merely the agitator-like instrument of one or several parties. But it would be just as ruinous for it if, perhaps from fear of knocking against somebody or something, it assiduously and over-scrupulously wanted to avoid the political and social themes of life and of our contemporary existence and withdraw, out of sheer cautiousness, into altitudes where nothing bad could happen to it, at least in this respect. The sociologist’s art consists precisely in talking about the themes of the greatest timeliness and urgency in such a way that he communicates all that can be known for the correct judgment of the subject matter, also presenting the possibilities of decision in their actual interdependence, but so that he as a teacher offers his own opinion for discussion too. The very instructive discussion of freedom from value judgments in the social sciences has in this respect shown the way how politics can be taught without suggesting and evaluating judgments. And even if the sociology of knowledge has in this connection called attention to some complications which despite complete abstinence from evaluating and complete ‘freedom from value judgments’ leave in every presentation a certain residue that is relative to the point of view, it has done so precisely in the interest of increased self-control and objectivity, and not in order to open the gates to arbitrariness. [pp. 39–40] 

In Ideology and Utopia he had already written:

Nothing would be more frivolous and incorrect than to argue in something like the following manner: Since every historical-political thinking is demonstrably based to a certain extent on a meta-theoretical option, one cannot trust thinking at all; hence it makes no difference either how one argues theoretically from case to case. Thus everybody might as well rely on his instinct, on his most personal intuition, or on his interest, and opt the way it suits him at the moment. In this fashion, everybody can feel at ease in his partisanship and have a good conscience to boot.

Such a propagandistic interpretation of our analyses must be met by saying that there is a radical difference between thoughtless partisanship and an irrationalism which because it is too lazy to think limits itself to mere willful decision and propaganda, and [on the other hand] research which is radically worried about objectivity and which, after carefully eliminating all conscious valuation—which it can do without trouble by means of sociology-of-knowledge analysis—still discovers a residue of the partisan and the vital in the structure of thinking itself. [I.U., p. 56, n. 1; cf. Engl., p. 89n.]

Indeed, at this time in history, only he who tries as best he can to become conscious of his social location and its perspective and thus to transcend them can be said to have convictions: ‘the intellectuals’ frequently observable “lack of conviction” is only the reverse side of the fact that they alone can really have convictions’ (I.U., p. 128; cf. Engl., pp. 141-42).

‘Sociology is the adequate life orientation of man in industrial society’ (p. 41). The demands placed on it, arising as they do from ‘the contemporary condition of academic instruction’, point to sociological culture as the modern equivalent of classical or humanistic culture. The function of the latter increasingly resembles that of a museum. Hence it should not be insisted on
at all costs, for we must ask whether in contemporary man an
experience of culture such as classical culture could inspire arises
at all—and we must ask this especially in regard to students. Is a
need for it—for 'a fruitful distance from immediacy'—not only
kept alive but aroused and satisfied by the university as an
institution (p. 47)? We must ask

whether one can rightly exclude the possibility that certain situations in life
with a completely un-classical content also can lead to such life-distantiation
and self-enlargement. Is it not possible that for other people [than those
satisfied with classical culture] the ever deepening understanding of life and
society can lead to a novel cultural experience? [P. 48]

Finally, the general situation of science, showing increased
emphasis on the frontiers of knowledge and science, and an inter-
disciplinary problem orientation (not Mannheim's term), seeks
a guide to integration. This, sociology can be (three years later it
will become 'the basic social science'—see (4) below), because the
phenomena studied by the humanities and social sciences 'in the
final analysis are held together by the fateful context of what
happens in society' (p. 53). A source of contact between sociology
and the most recent trends in the scientific situation is philosophy,
above all by virtue of the fact that the sociology of knowledge
can examine its contemporary varieties in regard to their existenti-
ality. This does not mean that sociology or sociology of knowledge
aims at replacing philosophy:

The loose play with the word 'sociologism' by the opponents of sociology
gradually gets to be unbearable, for it always comes up when they can no
longer meet sociology with objective arguments and thereupon treat the most
decisive problems of the modern situation of thought as if they were problems
of foreign policy, problems of border crossings between countries, or problems
of departmental competence in a bureaucracy. They act as if a higher authority
had issued directives concerning these matters, as if the distribution of the
competencies of the individual disciplines were regulated a priori, and as if one
had to guard against transgressions like a border police. [P. 54]

Practically, that is, in the teaching of sociology, Mannheim
solves the question of selection by arguing the individual's and
the individual school's commitment to a generally accepted
minimum. This would avoid 'anarchy' but at the same time
secure all the more freedom in teaching and research that go
beyond it. As this minimum he proposes three semester courses,
general sociology, social history in its significance for the history
of culture,\textsuperscript{51} and 'contemporary studies' (Gegenwartskunde).

\textsuperscript{51} Earlier in this lecture, Mannheim had said: 'Without relation to the
sociology of culture and to history, general sociology dries up. It loses fullness
and the stuff of experience and becomes something like a herbarium. Inversely,
every sociology of culture and every consideration that focuses on the unique
without general sociology tends to absolutize particular situations that accidentally catch the eye, and to overlook the general social forces which also are at work in them' (p. 14).

(2) American Sociology (1932)

Mannheim’s paper on American sociology of the same year is ostensibly a review of the Methods in Social Science that Stuart A. Rice had edited in 1931. In Rice’s work, which he considers representative of American sociology, Mannheim praises the cooperation among scholars and the close connection between method and substantive research. But there also are features that make him unhappy. First, there are ‘the limited scope of the questions’ (p. 188), ‘an excessive fear of theories’ (this was written before Parsons and Merton), and ‘a methodological asceticism’.\(^52\)

To have nothing but theories without verifying them, to discuss theoretical dicta as a kind of mental sport serves no useful end whatsoever. On the other hand, it is a misunderstanding of positivism to try to know reality without having theories. Finally, to have theories but not to apply them to reality may be attributed to an excessive love of security which must lead to sterilization. [P. 189]

Second, there is ‘a mistrust of “philosophy” or “metaphysics”’—a failure to distinguish between the merely speculative mind and the constructive mind, or to ‘aim in the first place at being exact, and only in the second place at conveying a knowledge of things’ (p. 189).

It is clear that some of these observations are not outdated. One of the keenest of them is this:

In one respect, American sociology is nearer to reality than German—namely as regards the solution of everyday problems. The American scholar is no bookish person; he maintains contact with criminal courts and social welfare institutions, lives with gangs, in slums and ghettos. However, as soon as political and social problems impose themselves we notice an immense reserve, a lack of social atmosphere. It looks as if science had no social background; as if groups devoted to social research cultivated no exchange of ideas on matters social and political; as if no conventicles existed in which the practical attitude of science towards such problems were discussed. [P. 191]

This pragmatic, social-work, social-engineering, liberal, ahistorical, un-Marxist approach characteristic of American sociology (and other parts of American culture) has begun to be challenged (except for such individual sociologists as C. Wright Mills) only since the mid-sixties—again, of course, along with other vast aspects of American culture—by a vaguely radical position. In his papers on sociology, and indeed in most of his later writings, Mannheim’s own position, too, was liberal and reformist, since no matter how radical, how passionately pushing for the roots

\(^{52}\) Cf. ‘German Sociology (1918–1933)’, p. 222.
he had been and still was in his investigations of epistemology and interpretation and in his substantive studies in the sociology of knowledge, he was also a professor, a member of the 'establishment' elite, and this was bound to come to the fore if in nothing else than in the choice of the topics of the four papers now under consideration—sociology in this and that country, sociology as an academic discipline, its place today, and, in the article next remarked upon, sociology in the Weimar Republic.

(3) German Sociology (1918–1933) (1934)

This is Mannheim’s first writing published after Hitler came to power. ‘The purpose of this paper ... is to bring a whole spiritual constellation, which has now vanished, nearer to the foreign public’ (p. 209). But this constellation is soberly and calmly described; its gist is presented thus:

If, now, we summarize these trends of social thought, namely, the capacity for constructive thought that dates back to Hegel; the political realism that derives from Marx and Lorenz v. Stein; and the capacity for sympathetic intuition and interpretation that is found in the sociological works of Dilthey and Simmel, we have before us the mental equipment with which the modern sociologist has analysed the experiences that are met with in the present era of disintegration and dissolution. [P. 217]

This background—German idealist philosophy, Marx, and the tradition of the human studies (Geisteswissenschaften)—gave German sociology its ‘highly developed capacity of objective scrutiny’ (p. 211) in the midst ‘of one of the greatest social dislocations and reorganizations’ (p. 210; originally in italics) during the years 1918–33. This was a period of instability, in which ‘the individual is increasingly thrown back upon itself’ (p. 213)—with which is connected the discovery of psycho-analysis and the sociology of knowledge.

Mannheim writes (but it is not clear whether he means to imply that the need should also have been felt and met during the Weimar Republic): ‘Our need is neither for an abstract classificatory system nor for methodological reflections on the nature of sociology, but for a concrete analysis of past and contemporary events’.

‘The man on whose work the younger generation could fall back most safely is Max Weber’, in whom, as well as in Sombart, the problem of ‘the rise and development of capitalism’ was so worked out as to provide a diagnosis of the contemporary situation. What are the roots of Western society; whence do we come, whither are we going, and what is our place in the present crisis? These are the questions that are latent in Weber’s empirical investigations [P. 218]—
and more explicit, indeed far more so, in Mannheim's own, as we have observed on several occasions. As a guide to such a diagnosis, 'the younger generation of German sociologists' has learned from Weber that both materialism and idealism broach their question wrongly and that the 'greater art of the sociologist consists in his attempt always to relate changes in mental attitudes to changes in social situations' (p. 219). This realization is another source of the 'most surprising event in the recent development of sociology', the sociology of knowledge, which has begun to do for 'different groups and periods in Western civilization' what 'the school of Durkheim and Levy-Bruhl in France did in the way of pointing out the system of logic peculiar to primitive tribes' (pp. 220–21).

From some of what we have heard about the sociology of 'knowledge' and what we hear now (not all of it for the first time), it would be easier to distinguish it from the sociology of 'culture' (to which Mannheim turns next in what has by then become a survey) if it were called sociology of thinking, or of thought, or even of outlook. Under the heading of sociology of culture, Mannheim points to analyses

of the genesis of love, of the meaning of the cult of friendship, about the growth and social significance of ideals of civilization, about the origin of the conception of genius, about the social genesis of public opinion, the social genesis of the bourgeois, etc. [P. 223]

(almost all of the works he mentions in this connection have remained virtually unknown and certainly untranslated). He refers to the 'morphological' method, developed above all by Alfred Weber, but argues that in order to

ascertain their morphological characteristics, a culture or cultures must also be explained in the light of their social background. Morphological analysis is a means of rendering the causal analysis more effective and richer, but is not a way of escape from historical empiricism [P. 222]—

that is to say in words we are more familiar with, as sociologists we must not only interpret but also explain—a point which has come up at least twice before, in Mannheim's review of Lukács's Theory of the Novel and in his 'Structural Analysis of Epistemology'.

Mannheim concludes his paper by comparing German, American, and English sociology. This rewards reading, even though

53 Durkheim plays a much slighter role in Mannheim's thought than the considerable substantive affinity of the two thinkers might lead one to expect. The above mention is the second time that Durkheim's name comes up in Mannheim's work to that time; the first time was an incidental reference nine years earlier, in 'The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge' (VII above).

54 On related terminological embarrassments in connection with VII, cf. n. 22 above.

55 Cf. II, esp. n. 8, and V, esp. n. 14, above.
much of the first comparison is contained in the ‘review’ of the Rice compendium (§2 above). Today, almost forty years later, however, one particular passage, on Germany, may have taken on a novel significance if we now read it while asking ourselves to what extent and in what sense it does and does not apply to the United States at the present time:

As I pointed out earlier, we obtain our most important insight into the working of social forces in periods of rapid social disintegration such as that which Germany is now experiencing; for it is at such times that latent elements operative in society are revealed. The class-problem was intelligible not only to the German socialists but to all the groups of the German intelligentsia, because in recent years the latter have become increasingly aware that their fate is closely linked up with that of the groups immediately next to them. It was impossible to remedy individual defects by mere reformist measures in a society where, owing to the narrowness of the field for action, no social element could be conceived of independently of any other element. All social and political groups were therefore struggling for the radical transformation of the whole social fabric; and each group was intent on transforming it exclusively according to its own ideal pattern. Because all social groups were anxious to change the whole face of society, they were forced to concentrate on the whole social organism at once, and not only on particular parts of that organism. [P. 226]

(4) The Place of Sociology (1935)\textsuperscript{56}

This paper was written a year later than the next publication to be discussed but is considered at this point because like the preceding three papers, it concerns sociology. In it Mannheim pleads for sociology ‘as the basic social science’ (p. 203). He argues, first, that there is a need for coordinating the findings of the various social sciences; for instance:

it is not the lack of substantial knowledge which prevents us from building up... a general theory of ‘power and domination’ on scientific lines, but rather the fact that there is so far not enough consistent endeavour to bring together out of the detached results of the social sciences those elementary facts which are fundamental to all of them. [P. 197]

Secondly, while

no foundation for the social sciences can be built up without combining the results of psychology and history, they themselves do not contain those points of view by which the principles of the changes in human life can be found, the latter being mostly based upon interaction and the laws of ‘living together’ [P. 200].

\textsuperscript{56} The title footnote reads: ‘Paper presented at a conference held under the auspices of the Institute of Sociology and World University Service, British Committee, London, 1936’. According to Adolph Lowe (letter to Wolff, 11 January 1964), the conference at which the paper was delivered took place in September 1935, and Mannheim prepared the paper in advance of it.
that co-operation between the social sciences can be established only if the
coordination of the problems of those sciences and the comparison of the
results reached by them is made the specific task of a scientific discipline which
has as its raison d'être the construction of a consistent general theory of society—
and that discipline be Sociology as the basic discipline of the social sciences.
Just as it would be an absurdity to study the different parts of the human or-
ganism without a knowledge of biology, so also it is absurd to expect that there
can be any organic division of labour in the field of the social sciences without
general sociology as the basic social science. [P. 203]

In its capacity of basic social science, sociology 'has three
important functions, and fulfils them on three distinct methodo-
logical planes' (p. 204): (1) Systematic or general sociology—
the 'general sociology' of the 1932 paper on the tasks of sociology
called for by the present ((1) above). 'General sociology' dis-
covers, for instance, what 'a secret society of the so-called primiti-
tives, a "guild" in the late Middle Ages, and a club' have in
common, which is that they are 'closed groups', and all closed
groups are characterized by an esprit de corps, by 'a complete
change in the behaviour pattern of the individual who is admitted
as a member', and by the onset, sooner or later, 'of a deadening,
stultifying tradition within the group' (pp. 204–5). 57 (2) Com-
parative sociology, on which the generalizations of general
sociology must be based; and (3) 'structural sociology', which
seeks to explain 'the specific, separate constellations which'
'the universally possible, ultimate elements of society' 'assume in
different societies in history' (p. 206). Structural sociology con-
sists of statics, which 'deals with the problem of the equilibrium
of all the social factors ... in a given social structure', and
dynamics, which focuses 'on those factors which are antagonistic
in their respective tendencies' (pp. 206, 207).

Mannheim ends his lecture thus:

I venture to assert that as long as in our research work and in our school and
academic curricula we do not introduce sociology as a basic science, so long
we shall not be good specialists—let alone be able to educate a generation of
citizens on whose correct understanding of the functioning of the society in
which they live it must depend whether the social process is in future to be
guided by reason or by unreason. [P. 208]

It is the old idea of the Enlightenment, no doubt buttressed for
Mannheim by his experience in England (and not yet shattered
by two years of Nazism nor by older practices of disbelief in
democracy and reason), which inspires this lecture but also leads

57 Mannheim used the same illustration in his argument against the mono-
polization of sociology by historicism in Die Gegenwartsaufgaben der Soziologie,
pp. 13–14; cf. (1) above.
him to ask (while illustrating questions of static structural sociology):

to what causes is it due that the different social strata which are engaged in economic production are moved just by those respective working-incentives which are needed in a given society? . . . What social mechanism has to answer for the fact that, both in the political and in the cultural sphere, we always get (as long as a system functions at all) as much personality reserve as is required for the reproduction of the leading elites, that there is neither an over- nor an under-supply of people who have the capacity, education, and will for the guidance of a society? How does it come about that partly by spontaneous adjustment and partly by regulation, the amount of aggressive and competitive energy is just sufficiently great and is found precisely in those fields where it fulfills the functions necessary for the preservation of the social mechanism in question? Vice versa, how does it happen that, chiefly by an unobserved self-regulation of the process, there is just as much compromise and solidarity as is required by the constantly varying nature of the co-operation and the division of social functions? [Pp. 206-7]

Obviously, the questions are based on the assumption of a social balance or equilibrium, but from the discussion of neither statics nor dynamics is it clear whether Mannheim considers a society in equilibrium or one in disequilibrium the society to be taken for granted or to be accounted for (whether he holds an 'equilibrium' or a 'conflict' theory of society), or whether both need accounting for (as he might well affirm if asked in these terms)—nor how to identify equilibrium or disequilibrium nor, finally, whether the sense of the questions quoted hides a positive affect ('Behold the wonder!'), a negative affect ('What holds this miserable society together?'), or—least believably—none. But he may actually have thought that he was asking 'affectively neutral' questions in the way Simmel did when he asked, 'How Is Society Possible?', particularly since the quotation occurs a page after the eminently Simmelian, 'formal-sociological' example of the 'closed group', the frame of reference of which Mannheim might unwittingly have continued. If this or a similar interpretation does not apply, the queries quoted have the sound of a pious and question-begging 'functionalism'.

xvii. ‘Essays on the Sociology of Culture’ (early thirties)

In the Editorial Note to this posthumous volume, Adolph Lowe informs us that the three essays it consists of were written in the early thirties, and that Mannheim made some major revisions during his first years in England but then set them aside. Ernest Manheim prepared the first two essays; Paul Kecskemeti, the third. ‘The task to be performed’, Lowe writes,

far exceeded the scope of a routine translation. The German intellectual climate in which this book took form considerably affected not only the style
of the whole, but also the substantive emphasis which the author placed upon
the individual questions raised and answers proposed. In order to make the
meaning and import of the ideas comprehensible in another idiom and to
the readers of a different generation raised in a different national tradition, the
editors had to rethink the original text without distorting the author's intentions.
Fortunately both editors possess quite special qualifications for such a delicate
enterprise. . . . [P. vi]

Prolonged, even stubborn correspondence with the three
scholars responsible for this volume—Adolph Lowe, Ernest
Manheim, and Paul Kecskemeti—has not yielded the German
manuscripts which, prepared in the fashion suggested by Lowe,
make up this volume. It is thus also impossible to know how much
of the volume is Mannheim, how much his translator-editors',
then how to date it with accuracy. The only clues to dating are
footnotes to references published in the fifties which, though
not so marked, obviously cannot be Mannheim's since he died in
1947; but we don't know whether some of the references to
writings of the forties are his or his editors'.

(1) Towards the Sociology of the Mind; an Introduction
(Karl Mannheim, Ernest Manheim)

Hegel's phenomenology must be replaced by the sociology of the
mind, 'the study of mental functions in the context of action'
(p. 20), which 'should eventually provide the wider frame of
reference for our earlier inquiries in the sociology of knowledge'
(p. 24—but on p. 81 n., "sociology of culture" or "of the mind"
are used interchangeably) :

It is senseless to pose questions as to whether the mind is socially determined
[what here is the German original of this expression?], as if mind and society
each possessed a substance of its own. The sociology of the mind is not an
inquiry into the social causation of intellectual processes, but a study of the
social character of those expressions whose currency does not reveal, or
adequately disclose, their action context. . . . Actually ideas take on new
meaning when their social function changes, and it is this relationship of
meaning and function which the sociology of the mind elaborates. This
approach does not seek to relate two discrete sets of objects—the social and
the mental—to one another, it merely helps to visualize their often concealed
identity. [P. 44]

To 'visualize the social dimension of the mind', first,
expressions of thought, sentiment, or taste are scrutinized for their inherent
or intended meaning . . . [second, the] whole gamut of social realtionships in
which these utterances are conceived and made is traced and established . . .
[and third, the] content analysis of the utterances is resumed in the restored
context of the original interaction, and their complete situational meaning is
restored. [P. 54]58

58 There is a footnote reference to the analysis of interpretation in the
paper on the interpretation of Weltanschauung (III above).
While ‘meaning and group relationships . . . occur in a merged state’ (p. 55) and hence sociology and sociology of the mind are one and the same, abstractions are possible and useful, and three such abstractions are ‘general sociology’ (which deals with ‘the acts of sociation conceived in relative isolation from their historical incidence’), comparative sociology, and structural sociology (pp. 56–57).\(^{59}\)

One of Mannheim’s recurring themes—explanation vs. interpretation\(^{60}\)—comes up in this rambling paper too—as the ‘explanatory’ vs. the ‘expository’ approach (pp. 71–74, 75–77). But in the course of the discussion ‘expository’ becomes synonymous with ‘interpretive’ and ‘interpretive’ with ‘functional’—as if there were no other modes of interpretation such as Mannheim himself had worked out in earlier papers. The present essay contains comments on a great many topics in addition to those mentioned, e.g., causation, structure, work vs. action, the genesis of the concept of the mind, and more—but they are hardly more than tantalizing hints.

(2) The Problem of the Intelligentsia: An Enquiry into Its Past and Present Role (Karl Mannheim, Ernest Manheim)

Groups, like individuals, see themselves in the perspective of some ‘other’. In the Middle Ages, this ‘other’ was God, who subsequently was replaced by reason, then by history (historical interpretation), finally by sociology (sociological interpretation), which thus far has not been superseded: ‘sociology has become the inescapable ground of self-validation for radicals, moderates, and conservatives alike’ (p. 94), but it began to be such in the proletariat.

Other groups than the proletariat which have become conscious of themselves in the modern period are women and youth. In general, groups have gained social self-awareness, thanks, first, to the replacement of coercive by a large variety of non-coercive controls—‘Success on the free competitive market demands a continuous awareness of social change’ (p. 99); and, second, because of the considerable extent to which society has taken over controls from primary groups and communities. The ‘rise of the intelligentsia’ is ‘the last phase of the growth of social consciousness’. The intelligentsia is the last group to attain the sociological perspective, ‘for its position in the social division

\(^{59}\) It will be noted that this is far more similar to the trichotomy developed in ‘The Place of Sociology’ of 1935 (XVI (4)) than to that of The Tasks of Sociology . . . of 1932 (XVI (1))—in case this might help in dating the present essay.

\(^{60}\) See notes 8, 14, and 55 above.
of labour does not provide direct access to any vital and functioning segment of society' (p. 101). It is a stratum between but not above classes, equipped 'to face the problems of the day in several perspectives and not only in one' (p. 105). The various types of intellectuals—in rough historical sequence: intellectual (vs. manual) workers; members of the free professions; the educated; certified civil servants—have in common 'their differential exposure to culture' (p. 111).

There are four concerns basic to the sociology of the (post-medieval) intelligentsia, which is 'a central subject of the sociology of the mind' (p. 121): (1) the social background of intellectuals, (b) their associations, (c) their mobility, and (d) their functions in society. The paper contains keen observations, especially on (b), the longest section, and on (c), which, however, is poorly organized. The last part of the essay deals with 'the contemporary situation of the intelligentsia'; the last two paragraphs are here worth quoting from:

What then can the intellectual do? First of all let him take stock of his limitations and potentialities. His stratum is not above parties and special interests, nor can any political programme or economic promise weld it into an action group. [By definition? Surely numbers of them have been so welded!] The only concern which this stratum has in common is the intellectual process: the continuing endeavour to take stock, to diagnose and prognosticate, to discover choices when they arise, and to understand and locate the various points of view rather than to reject or assimilate them. Intellectuals have often attempted to champion special ideologies with the self-abandon of persons who seek to attain an identity they do not possess. They have tried to submerge in the working-class movement or to become musketeers of free enterprise, only to discover that they have thereby lost more than they hoped to win. The apparent lack of social identity is a unique opportunity for the intellectual. . . .

A group such as the intelligentsia abdicates only when it surrenders its self-awareness and its capacity to perform in its own peculiar way. It cannot form a special group ideology of its own. It must remain as critical of itself as of all other groups. . . . [P. 170]

These again are statements that become more significant if consulted on their applicability today. Thus the 'lack of social identity' may for some time have been replaced by a 'search for identity', and not only on the part of intellectuals but, at least in the United States, also (among others) of youth, women, and blacks. Perhaps an even sharper change is that from accepting, as Mannheim did and urged his readers to, the proposition that 'the intelligentsia abdicates only when it surrenders its self-awareness. . . . It must remain as critical of itself as of all other groups',

61 Which, Mannheim now corrects himself, he did not distinguish in his discussion of the 'socially unattached intelligentsia' in *I.U. Engl.* (pp. 106 and 111, n. 1); cf. above, XIV, Table of Contents, 'Is Politics Possible as a Science?', Section 4.
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to holding, as in particular so many ‘radical’ students do, that even the intellectual has the more urgent duty to ‘act’ than to think. Indeed, in this paper there is no feeling, as there seems since to have arisen in some people during their more desperate moments and as many more behave as if they acted on, that we may be living in a society in which thinking other than technical and technological has no place.

*(3) The Democratization of Culture (Karl Mannheim, Paul Kecskemeti)

The translator tells us that this paper was written in 1933. He so comments on its title and some other aspects (p. 171):

The original title of this essay, ‘Demokratisierung des Geistes’, cannot be rendered exactly in English. While ‘culture’ has a wider meaning than ‘Geist’, the term ‘mind’ which might be used instead of ‘culture’ would be too narrow. The essay analyzes the historical process of ‘democratization’ as it manifests itself in characteristic changes in various cultural fields, particularly philosophy, art, and religion. The process itself is conceived as a social process at bottom, rather than as a self-contained process taking place in the realm of thought or mind [a position we have encountered before, most recently in the first of the three essays collected in this volume, (1) above, pp. 25–31]. Hence, the expression ‘democratization of culture’ seems more appropriate to designate it than the alternative expression ‘democratization of mind’.

The German text has been rendered in free translation, clarifying obscurities and omitting redundant passages but closely reproducing the meaning intended by the author. The omission of longer redundant or incompletely developed passages is marked by dots.

Despite recent dictatorships, Mannheim diagnoses the modern period as that of democratization. The very recognition of the difficulties of democracy as a form of social existence lends plausibility to this diagnosis: democracy is no longer a far-away ideal but something we examine. We must guard, for instance, against the danger of a ‘democracy of reason’ degenerating into a ‘democracy of impulse’ and indeed into dictatorship; we have also learned that democracy guarantees neither international harmony nor the flowering of individualism.

‘Democracy’ refers to a pervasive social and cultural structure, something far more inclusive than merely political. Its basic

62 In his conflict with some German radical students, the late Theodor W. Adorno put in a passionate plea for thinking; on this point, at least, he would have applauded Mannheim. See particularly the interview with Adorno, Der Spiegel, 1969, No. 19, pp. 204–9, and his posthumous paper, ‘Resignation’, Frankfurter Rundschau, 16 August 1969, Feuilleton, p. IV.

63 A more compelling reason for the title as phrased in English is that it is more accurate than the German. ‘The Democratization of the Spirit’ is a more literal translation.

64 Cf. XVI (1) above.
principles are (1) ‘the essential equality of all human beings’ or, more precisely, ‘the same ontological principle of human-ness’ embodied in all men (p. 176); (2) ‘the autonomy of the individual’ (p. 177); and (3) a particular ‘way of selecting and controlling its elites’ following from the necessary ‘voluntary abandonment of the individual’s autonomous aspirations’ (p. 179).

1. ‘The principle of the ontological equality of all men’ shows itself, for instance, in the democratic directive that knowledge be accessible and communicable to everybody (epistemologically founded in Descartes’s ‘clear and distinct’ ideas and Kant’s ‘necessity’ and ‘universal validity’ as criteria of true knowledge), and in the replacement of the connoisseur by the expert and of ‘articulation’ of a global intuition (such as the connoisseur’s) by increasingly abstract analysis (explanation).

2. ‘The autonomy of the social units’ (subjects, individuals) is indicated by the conception that the individual can ‘gain knowledge, and criticize traditional beliefs, by a spontaneous use of his own mental energies’, which Kant formulated in ‘the assertion of the original spontaneity and creativity of the epistemological subject and of the act of cognition’ (p. 189), and by ‘faith in the all-healing virtue of free discussion’ (p. 191), in which ‘all participants are equally and jointly responsible for the conclusion reached’ (p. 194). Such discussion, however, must not be confused with ‘neutralized’ discussion, in which the admission of the possibility that there are basically different opinions is only make-believe. ‘Neutralized’ discussion characterizes ‘historical situations in which the ferment of intellectual uncertainty and of a genuine search for an elusive truth still survives from earlier ages and must be silenced in the interests of conformity’ (p. 193). Although this is a generalization from a comment on scholastic writings, there is no indication that it may not be applicable to the time in which the paper was written:

Right now we seem to have reached a turning-point. When the incomplete democracy in which economic and intellectual elite strata occupy the positions of control is suddenly transformed into full democracy, the tendency towards the full autonomy of all social units goes to the limit and at the same time massification results in the self-neutralization of democracy. [P. 195]

Against this danger, which may bring dictatorship or at least regression to what (Mannheim reminds us) Durkheim called ‘mechanical solidarity’, where ‘the individual is nothing but a specimen of his group’, there is the recommendation to create ‘numerous small communities’ (p. 196), for ‘it is futile as well as thoughtless to condemn democracy in the name of the ideal of order’ (p. 197)—decades after this was written, we hear both comments (on ‘communes’ and for ‘law and order’) from a
great many more people. Even more of them would agree with the following (though there would not be so many who would say it and what preceded):

Educating the mass in reality-oriented ways of thinking, that is, a real democratization of the mind, is the paramount task at the stage of fully developed democracy (p. 199). Sociology [though this is in another context] is particularly appropriate to fulfill this task in the modern world. [P. 299]  

3. ‘Democratic elites and their mode of selection’, which is discussed in more detail than the first two principles, deals with elite selection (in modern society by bureaucratic advancement, which favors methodical personalities; by competition on the basis of popular appeal; or by group—party, class—pressure, with the strength of the group represented being the decisive factor); the structure of elites and their relations to other groups and to society at large; the self-evaluation of aristocratic and democratic elites; social distance and democratization; and the cultural ideals of aristocratic and democratic elites. The treatment of the last two aspects receives the greatest attention, and remarks will be limited to them.

‘Social distance’ may be horizontal (‘at arm’s length’, ‘aloof’, ‘forward’) or vertical (between hierarchical unequals, as well as with reference to cultural objects, which may be ‘high’ or ‘low’ and are discussed in ‘high’ or ‘low’ speech). But there also is ‘existential’ distance, ‘between the I and the other purely as a person’, and, a variant, ‘self-distantiation: the experience that I am a stranger to myself, or rather that I can be more or less close to myself’ (p. 209). Democratization means vertical ‘de-distantiation’. Two of many examples are the replacement of Latin by the vernacular and ‘the irruption of “lower” (technological and industrial) concerns into the sacred precincts of “science”’ (p. 211), but vertical de-distantiation can also be traced in the careers of fashionable terms (‘progress’, a key term of the Enlightenment, and the later ‘evolution’ are important instances) or in the shift from conservative ontology, which operates morphologically, with ‘unanalysed and unanalysable given wholes in their unique Gestalt’, to a liberal and progressive one, which ‘decomposes the seemingly monolithic entities of the traditional world view into functional elements’ (p. 214).  

65 As Mannheim had said, it will be recalled, in XVI (1) and, with more elaborate argument, in XVI (4).
66 There obviously is a relation, but there also are confusions, between conservative—morphological—‘expository’—interpretive—functional (?) (‘Towards the Sociology of the Mind’, (1) above)—‘articulating’ (this paper, 1. above), on the one hand, and liberal—analytical—explanatory, on the other. But this is not mentioned, let alone clarified, although it is important not only for a theory of interpretation but also from the point of view of the sociology of culture.
more and more individuals are drawn into the political process, the analytical view of things spreads, because:

For someone far removed from the governmental sphere—say, a provincial farmer—'the government' is a monolithic unit, something like a mythical figure or a person. The insider, however, has a very different picture of the whole thing—he sees intrigues, jockeying for position, competition—anything but monolithic unity. In short, the outsider must see things morphologically; the insider, analytically. [P. 214]

A conspicuous expression of the change from the morphological to the analytical, of de-distantiation, is the sociology of knowledge (p. 216), which, in addition, illustrates a related shift, namely, from 'systematic' to 'genetic' thinking.

Yet we also find as a characteristic of the process of democratization an opposite trend, namely, the distantiation of such "abstract" collective entities as 'state', 'party', 'class'. 'This combination of the analytical approach with distance-creating myth-making introduces a certain ambiguity into democratic thought' (p. 219), which can be accounted for by the fact that there is no such thing as a unilinear movement from pre-democratic to democratic, but that there have also been, and are, distantiating or 're-feudalizing' trends—and 'it is a fundamental postulate of the sociology of knowledge that whatever has come into being in the cultural process cannot simply disappear; it will enter into later cultural configurations in changed form' (p. 224). Aside from this, however, there is an unresolved contradiction within the democratic mode of life, namely, between its first and second principles—equality and 'vital autonomy': 'If the field of experience is "homogeneous", if no object is respected "above" any other, how can man himself, the individual unit of society, claim any particular dignity?' (p. 226). This conflict shows itself in psychology, sociology, the experience of time, art, and philosophy.

It is differences in the selection of elites that give rise, or contribute to giving rise, to differences in 'culture' (rather than vice versa), whereby the mechanisms at work are 'unconscious'. But elites and other groups also have conscious cultural ideals, two of which, the 'humanistic' and the more democratic, are today conspicuous and in conflict. The positive features of the humanistic ideal are distance from everyday life, as well as from oneself, solitude, and communion with oneself; its limitations are that it takes the sphere of the cultivated elite as 'the' world, that it lacks contact with the less refined portions of life, that it neglects the fact that literary and artistic works are created by individuals,

67 Cf. XVI (1) above; but the present discussion is more detailed.
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and in general, that it dislikes the dynamic and unexpected. The democratic ideal is still developing, hence difficult to characterize, but it stresses vocational specialization, even in the conception and practice of politics, and 'cultivation' in the 'deeper sense of becoming able to advance from familiarity with an immediately given concrete situation to the understanding of the structural pattern behind that same situation' (p. 237).

Yet there remains, as Paul Kecskemeti aptly says in a note (p. 239), the 'necessity to transcend the purely pragmatist and positivist approach', and this 'is the argument of the next concluding section', 'The Problem of Ecstasy', a concern of Mannheim's to which we called attention already in connection with his first available paper, 'Soul and Culture'. Is democracy antithetical to ecstasy?

Our answer is that if we consider the potentialities inherent in the democratic approach, it will appear to be eventually conducive to a new type of 'ecstasy' and of true 'cultivation'. It may even be suggested that ecstasy can be a general, universally shared form of experience only in a democratized culture. But this democratization of culture does not attain that stage at one stroke. To begin with, radical democratization means de-distantiation; this has to be overcome before new forms of ecstasy can emerge. Democratized culture must go through a dialectical process before it can realize its full potentialities. [P. 240]

This process is discussed with regard to the relations between 'I' and object, 'I' and 'Thou', and 'I' and self.

Full democratization means de-distantiation of individuals and objects, hence 'a flat, uninspiring, and unhappy world' (p. 241). What has to be recognized is that such de-distantiation is only one approach to the world—a manipulative one; and since 'the tendency towards overcoming partial perspectives is inherent in democratization' (remember Mannheim's comments on free discussion, his faith in sociology and the sociology of knowledge, including the synthesizing function of intellectuals), there is reason to hope 'that the way will be open for new distance-creating experiences' (p. 242).

The abolition of social distance has a leveling and deadening effect, but it may also make it possible for purely 'existential' distance to come into its own: 'At the democratic stage, it becomes possible to "love" or "hate" the other as a person, irrespective of any social mask he may wear' (p. 242).

The real opportunity that democratization gives us consists in being able to transcend all social categories and experience love as a purely personal and existential matter. [Pp. 243-44]

68 I, n. 7, above; the quotation presented there bears rereading now.
Indeed,

one of the reasons why we seek to subject human reality to radical sociological analysis is that we need to know the effects produced by social factors in order to be able to counteract them when they are inimical to man [p. 244],

or, in a slightly different formulation, to grasp more responsibly and knowledgeably what is universal in man (Kant's or, in a later version, Husserl's 'transcendental subject'); or finally, in terms used before, we want, with Mannheim,

to grasp the spirit as accurately as possible precisely by insisting on its social conditioning and by tracing it.69

Not only in some of the passages cited but also in others, the way in which concerns with our age of democratization are expressed here bears striking resemblance, in argument and illustration, to concerns expressed and, still more, acted on by youth, especially 'hippies' and related groups, a quarter of a century after the disappearance of Nazism—in the face of the beginning institutionalization of which this essay was written. This is a striking and uncanny proof of the feature common to both societies which by an undefined term is here called 'massification'. 'Hippies' would do well to learn from this paper—as its author, were he alive, undoubtedly would from them.

**xviii. 'Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction:
Studies in Modern Social Structure' (1940)

This book is based on Mensch und Gesellschaft im Zeitalter des Umbaus of 1935. The first part of the preface to the earlier work reads as follows:

The studies made into a unit in this book undertake it to render experiences of the last years accessible to a sociological interpretation. They attempt to glean from contemporary events their scientific substance. This will for research to be related to the contemporary scene springs from the feeling that it is probably not exaggerated to speak in the present situation of the moment of truth of science, and therefore it does not do to evade problems with which our life confronts us. Such a position undoubtedly has its dangers. As surely as we must from now on make the social process and politics increasingly the theme of science, as little must we allow this to result in a politicization of science itself. Today more than ever the political man in the true sense longs to escape from the various forms of influence by the politics of the day and to look the social forces directly in the eye.

The character of the studies shows that their origin, too, is tied to [particular] situations.1 . . . (p. vii)

1 The first study ['Rationale und irrationale Elemente in unserer Gesellschaft'—Rational and Irrational Elements in Our Society] was originally given as the Hobhouse Memorial Lecture at Bedford College (University of

69 XIII above, toward the end.
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London) and appears in English at Oxford University Press [1934]. The second study was published under the title, 'The Crisis of Culture in the Era of Mass-Democracies and Autarchies', in *The Sociological Review*, XXVI, 2 (April), 1934. The versions of the two studies contained in the present volume are much enlarged in comparison with the English texts, and the third study ['Das Denken auf der Stufe der Planung'—Thought at the Level of Planning] is published here for the first time.

The materials mentioned in this footnote developed into, respectively, Parts I, II ('Social Causes of the Contemporary Crisis in Culture'), and IV of *Man and Society*. The brief Part III—'Crisis, Dictatorship, War'—goes back to a lecture given at the London School of Economics, published in 1937,\(^70\) the same year in which there also appeared a short section of the much longer Part V ('Planning for Freedom').\(^71\) The Introduction ('The Significance of the Age of Social Reconstruction'), the short Part VI ('Freedom at the Level of Planning'), and the very extensive Bibliography—together 'more than half of the present volume' (p. xxii)—are new.

The first three pages of the Introduction ('The Crisis of Liberalism and Democracy as Seen from the Continental and Anglo-Saxon Points of View'), which are reprinted in this Reader, are revealing as a document of Mannheim's change from Germany in the early thirties to England in the late thirties, from 'his deep-rooted scepticism as to the vitality of democracy' to temptation by 'an optimism which could make him forget that we all are sitting on a volcano' (p. 5).

Mannheim's position, which at the latest had begun to develop in the mid-thirties (but which may well be connected with roots planted much earlier, as David Kettler argues in his forthcoming 'Political Theory, Ideology, Sociology: The Question of Karl Mannheim'), was that of a passionate advocate of planning for whom the realistic alternatives were, not planning and no planning, but bad (totalitarian) and good (democratic) planning. For 'the clash of the principles of laissez-faire and planless regulation' is 'the main cause of the maladjustment in modern society'. Although 'planning will be inevitable' (p. 6), it will be as difficult as 'replacing the wheels of a train while it is in motion', and yet not as completely innovative as 'rebuilding a house on new foundations' (p. 12). Still, it won't be possible except 'by remaking man himself'; hence what is required is 'a psychology which

\(^70\) 'The Psychological Aspects of the Problem of Peaceful Change', in C. W. Manning, ed., *Peaceful Change: An International Problem* (1937), pp. 101-32. This paper also forms the basis of 'Mass Education and Group Analysis', 1939; see XIX (6) below.

would be socially and historically relevant’ (p. 15). According to such a psychology,

relationships, which are neither economic nor political but social, form the real centre of the human drama, in which social changes are directly transformed into psychological changes. Rightly understood, these non-economic yet social factors are the answer to the much-discussed problem of ‘mediation’ (*Vermittlung*), for they represent transmission belts which act as a vehicle by which the basic principles underlying our society (among which the economic are undoubtedly very important) are transformed into psychological relationships. [P. 21]

By this time in Mannheim’s life, the social psychology he seeks has become an important heuristic principle in the service of his perpetual quest to understand social life. Thus there is, as Ernest Manheim rightly observes, an important change in the way in which he pursues this quest: from society or history as that principle, to psychology. But to put it so is to underestimate (as Mannheim himself may well have done at times) the importance of precisely that which the psychology is only to help, namely, the understanding of social life. The ‘social factors’, we just read, ‘mediate’ between ‘the basic principles’ (they remain unspecified, they are simply ‘basic’) and ‘psychological relationships’. This vague and vaguely put but very real quest also inspires Mannheim’s related search for *principia media*,

temporary groups of general factors so closely intertwined that they operate as a single causal factor (p. 182). . . . universal forces in a concrete setting as they become integrated out of the various factors at work in a given place at a given time . . . on the one hand, reducible to the general principles which are contained in them . . . on the other hand . . . to be dealt with in their concrete setting as they confront us at a certain stage of development. . . . [P. 173]

Clearly, *principia media* are not (necessarily) psychological phenomena. They mediate between the unique and the general and are not only ‘midway’ between them (somewhat like ‘theories of the middle range’); they mediate, one might put it, between two ungraspables or ineffables, the unique and the universal, both of which need mediation to be understood—and both tempt reason with the romantic illusion of immediacy.73

The central concern of Part I is the fate of rationality in contemporary society. This society is characterized by ‘fundamental democratization’ and ‘growing interdependence’ (p. 44). It therefore raises the question of how ‘to attain a rational and moral way of life’ (p. 51) in a historically new sense: by looking

73 Cf. Mannheim’s discussion of romanticism in ‘Conservative Thought’, and comments in IX above.
to society in order to discover the roots of irrationality and of the irrational elements in morality. Before we can hope to find such social roots, we must clarify two meanings of ‘rationality’ itself—‘substantial’ and ‘functional’. ‘Substantially rational’ is ‘an act of thought which reveals intelligent insight into the interrelations of events in a given situation’, whereas ‘functionally rational’ is ‘a series of actions’ organized in such a way that it leads to a previously defined goal, every element in this series of actions receiving a functional position and rôle’ (p. 53). Mannheim discovers that ‘functional rationalization by no means increases substantial rationality’ but has, on the contrary, a ‘paralysing effect on the capacity for rational judgment’ (p. 58). Indeed, such judgment is concentrated in a ‘few organizers’, and this in turn helps to account for the ‘appeal to the leader’ (p. 59).

The crux of what Mannheim says on ‘the social causes’ of rationality and irrationality thus is this:

As a large scale industrial society, ... [industrialized mass society] creates a whole series of actions which are rationally calculable to the highest degree and which depend on a whole series of repressions and renunciations of impulsive satisfactions ... it so refines the social mechanism that the slightest irrational disturbance can have the most far-reaching effects, and as a mass society it favours a great number of irrational impulses and suggestions and produces an accumulation of unsublimated psychic energies which, at every moment, threatens to smash the whole subtle machinery of social life. [P. 61]

The ‘social causes of the rational and irrational elements in morality’ (p. 66) are discussed in similar fashion. In a broad way, we can distinguish three stages of morality: that of the horde, to which Durkheim’s mechanical solidarity applies; that of individual competition; and that of solidarity and cooperation, where ‘the highest level of reason and morality awakens in the members of society, even if only dimly, a consciousness of the need for planning’ (p. 70). But:

Up till now we could believe that relatively free competition between different forms of education and propaganda would, by natural selection, allow the rational, educated type of man, best fitted for modern conditions, to rise to the top. But when the instruments of propaganda are concentrated in a few hands, they may be monopolized by the more primitive types, and then the spiritual regression which has already appeared, becomes permanent. [P. 74]

Mannheim does not explain why ‘the more primitive type’, ‘the “hand-cart mind”’, should be able to control ‘the mass mind’ (p. 73), that is, what accounts for the seductive power of atavism. Consequently, even though we have reached the stage of planning, the question, ‘in its religious and quietistic form’, ‘“Who plans the planner?”’, or in its political and realistic
form: "Which of the existing groups shall plan us?" (p. 75), is a haunting one. 'The longer I reflect on this question, the more it haunts me' (p. 74).

The vagueness of Mannheim's concepts of *principia media* and that of 'substantial rationality' are related: he is in search of the referents of both but has not found them yet. The reason for this may be, in regard to the first, the vagueness or implicitness of the conception or philosophy of history with which we have more than once seen him work before; and, for the second, the fact that he not only observes the growth in functional and the decline in substantial rationality but exhibits them: in comparison with the commonsensical and hardly theoretical definition of substantial rationality, that of functional rationality is a clear-cut application of a well-known theoretical model, that of the means-end scheme. The vagueness of formulation may well reflect the unease in front of the phenomena formulated, or in the case of substantial rationality, it may reflect their very decline. In regard to the latter, Mannheim, however, has distinguished predecessors, notably Max Weber and Pareto.\(^74\)

Part II, 'Social Causes of the Contemporary Crisis in Culture', begins by claiming:

So far we have discussed the symptoms of contemporary social disintegration and transformation as reflected in the psychological crises of our time. Now we must analyse the effects of social disintegration upon the development of culture. [P. 79]

The claim is more ostensible than precise, and what has been announced turns out to be likewise. More precisely than ostensibly, it is a discussion, among other things, of elites (the increase in their number, the breakdown of their exclusiveness, changes in the principles of their selection and in their composition), the public, the intelligentsia, and problems connected with regulating culture, especially in dictatorships. Part III deals with 'Crisis, Dictatorship, War', which result from 'the causes of disorganization in their most disastrous forms' (p. 117), by commenting on some widespread beliefs concerning human nature, on forms of insecurity and their impact on behavior, and on the change from unorganized to organized insecurity and the role of the leader and his manipulation of symbols in this transition. The two parts just catalogued should remind us of their (and other parts') sources in earlier papers (see the beginning of this section above) —Mannheim modified them so as to make them into a more unified structure. His pages, however, contain many striking

\(^{74}\) Cf. Mannheim's own reference, which is wholly without any such accent, however, to these and other 'predecessors', p. 52n.
observations that are worth our pondering today. One will have to do:

It is not to be expected that the old bureaucracy of the country or the former commercial and industrial leaders trained in the ways of rational calculation will find the secret of symbol-manipulation. They need an alliance with a new kind of leader, and this leader, and the petty leaders, must come chiefly from those holes and corners of society where even in normal times irrational attitudes prevailed and where the catastrophe of unorganized insecurity was most severe and prolonged. [P. 138]

The reference, obviously, is to Hitler and Nazi Germany.

In Part IV, ‘Thought at the Level of Planning’, this stage is contrasted with two preceding ones, those of ‘chance discovery’ and ‘invention’. Its characteristics are treated in regard to the relations between unplanned and planned activities and between theory and practice, the nature of the individual, the importance and the difficulties of discovering the principia media; differences between planning, establishing, and administrating, the volitional and emotional aspects of planning, and the help of pragmatism, behaviorism, and depth psychology in transforming man. Much of this veers between a substantive and a methodological stance, that is, between speaking about the phenomena and their changes ostensibly at issue and about their study by variably suited social-scientific approaches—roughly, between praxis, involvement, judgment, and, on the other hand, Mannheim’s groping for them.

The bulk of Part V, ‘Planning for Freedom’, by far the longest of the six and an easily separable treatise on social control or ‘social techniques’, is devoted to a classification of social controls (direct and indirect, with the latter in unorganized masses, concrete groups, ‘field structures’, ‘situations’, and ‘social mechanisms’), their ‘transmutations’, and an essay on the history of parliamentary and democratic government as the history of social control. What Mannheim wants of planning—and this is related to his quest for principia media and other quests mentioned before—is that it be ‘the rational mastery of the irrational’ (p. 267), similar to making music: ‘only the man who has fully mastered technique can really express the irrationality of musical experience’ (pp. 267–68). Moving toward this aim, we should also see what we can learn from totalitarianism (pp. 259 ff.)—not, surely, to turn totalitarian but, precisely, to become better at rationally mastering the irrational or, as Mannheim will shortly put it, at realizing ‘the third way’ between laissez-faire and totalitarianism: the democratically planned society.

75 Similarly in ‘The Problem of Youth in Modern Society’ (1941), in Diagnosis of Our Time, pp. 52–54 (XX (2) below).
76 In Diagnosis of Our Time and Freedom, Power, and Democratic Planning.
The coda, Part VI, 'Freedom on the Level of Planning', once more raises Mannheim's unease and fears, as if he had not written so much of the preceding hundreds of pages to show that they can be overcome, and be overcome rationally.

Planning raises the fundamental philosophical question: 'Is not an ideally planned society a prison, a strait-jacket, even compared with the almost intolerable life led by many classes in an unplanned society? ... Does not the continual development of social technique lead to the complete enslavement of the individual?' The question is only too justified, and if a human solution of our present problems is to be possible at all, an answer must be found. [P. 369]

The answer, no more up to the question than before, consists in a discussion of freedom at the 'stages' of 'chance discovery' and 'invention', contrasted with that of planning, where its criterion is the control of cumulative effects from key positions.

At the stage we have just reached, it seems to be greater slavery to be able to do as we like in an unjust or badly organized society, than to accept the claims of planning in a healthy society which we ourselves have chosen. The realization that fair and democratic planning does not involve the surrender of our freedom is the mainspring of those arguments which show that an unplanned capitalist society is not the basis of the highest form of liberty. [P. 377]

Thus do uncertainty and caution check the hope and conviction Mannheim would have characterize his answers to these excruciating questions.

xix. Social Planning on the Eve of World War II

(1) Human Valuation; (2) Mannheim's Answer to a Newspaper Poll; (3) Diagnosis of the Time; (4) Planned Society; (5) Adult Education; (6) Group Analysis.

The reasons for treating more than one piece of writing in a section of this introduction before seemed too obvious to discuss them: in regard to Section XVI it was the topic (sociology) and the temporal contiguity (1932–35); in regard to XVII, it was the (plausible) claim of Mannheim's editors that the three essays, written 'in the early thirties', belonged together.

In the present section and in the next, too, there is temporal contiguity (1936–39 and the war years), but there are additional reasons for bringing a number of essays together under two heads. One is that in comparison with earlier, particularly pre-Hitler writings, these pieces (with some reservations regarding (2)) are slighter; they show a changed Mannheim, a thinker who tries to find his bearings in a new country and in a new period. The period is new, not only because it is no longer that of liberalism, but also because Mannheim is suddenly struck by the impact the liberal period, which is past, had on his thought; now the time
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is closer, more urgent, of more immediate bearing on him. He no longer appears to have the leisure or the detachment which now, by hindsight, seem to characterize the writing he did in Hungary and in Germany before Hitler.

When he went to Germany, he was a young man, and Germany and German were the source of his own highest culture—Hungary had been part of it, part of the Austro-Hungarian empire until 1918. Mannheim’s emigration to England had a quite different meaning; he had lost his position, a very prestigious one, in Germany; he went into a country that belonged to the West (John Stuart Mill, not Hegel or, for that matter, Marx; rationalism, pragmatism, muddling through, democracy, not German ‘depth’, romanticism, metaphysics, mysticism); he was adult and he was widely known; he had just begun to experience the ravages of Nazism; he must have been eager to understand English social and political life and organization; he obviously sought to become much more practically or intimately a part of it than he had ever felt the need for in Germany. Hence the eagerness with which Mannheim contributed to the discussion of urgent problems; thus the volume of his writing and its occasional hastiness and repetitiousness.

Ernest K. Bramsted and Hans Gerth, the editors of Mannheim’s posthumous Freedom, Power, and Democratic Planning (XXI below), suggest an illuminating parallel to Mannheim’s emigration to England and illuminate this emigration itself:

In the eighteenth century, Voltaire had come to early industrial England from an absolutist state where one social stratum in alliance with one Church wielded unlimited power. What then impressed him was the peaceful pluralism of England’s political and religious groups which in no way seemed to threaten the stability of the social order. Two centuries later, Mannheim, too, could not find in an England now fully industrialized any trace of that tendency toward artificial conformity which dominated totalitarian Central Europe. But he was even more surprised by the absence of that chaotic diversity of hostile groups that had destroyed the Weimar Republic. He discovered that spontaneous conformity could coexist with the freedom of many experimenting groups; genuine tolerance toward a wide variety of political attitudes and critical evaluations seemed to draw its very strength from the nationwide acceptance of certain ultimate principles.77

We now turn to Mannheim’s first writings out of his new country.

1 A few Concrete Examples Concerning the Sociological Nature of Human Valuations (1936)

This paper begins with a few such examples, but then pleads for theory—‘There is in this country a tendency to put a premium

on pure description’ (p. 235): this is now said in England to an English audience, while similar remarks appear in the paper on American sociology four years earlier (XVI (2)), but they were written in a comparably detached fashion, from Frankfurt for an American learned journal. He puts forward, ‘quite tentatively’, some hypotheses, ‘which in my opinion suggest themselves when one tries to solve the riddle of changing human valuations’ (p. 236).

1. ‘Valuations of human attitudes and activities . . . are originally set by groups’ (p. 236). 2. The social structure, the organization, and the needs and functions of a group are reflected in the group’s standards (cf. warriors vs. agriculturalists). 3. Most of the time, valuations cannot be adequately explained as subjective motivations. To try to do so ‘is the mistake of the introspective psychologists’ (p. 236). 4. The coordination or superimposition of groups usually makes for conflict in valuations. 5. Valuations also are relative to social strata; they are separate if the strata do not communicate (e.g., castes); they clash or mix if they do. 6. ‘In a static society, which has reached a certain balance, there will always be some classes of leading groups (elites) the standards of which will become representative, and will be silently accepted even by those groups which are subjugated and essentially frustrated’ (p. 237). 7. Such groups will be challenged only when there is sudden social change or mobility. 8. All groups, not just social classes, set their standards, ‘which compete with each other and clash in the consciousness of the individual who participates in their activities’ (p. 238); furthermore, changing valuations are often engendered also by social forces or processes, such as competition.

The subtitle of the paper suggests a second topic, the relation between psychology and sociology. This is the conclusion to which its discussion leads:

The unceasing interplay between our primary impulses which seek for satisfaction and their repudiation or remoulding by the counteraction of the already established relationships ['institutions'] makes the theme of the history of mankind. If in the observation of this interplay one is more interested in the subjective origin of these psychic driving forces and in their concatenation in the life-history of the individual, one becomes a psychologist. If one is more interested in the power of these ‘established relationships’, and primarily wishes to know how they react upon the newborn individual from the very first day of his socialization; and if one follows up the existing configurations of these institutionalized activities viewed from their objective function in a given society, one becomes a sociologist. [Pp. 240–41]

Anything human can be looked at psychologically (focusing on intentions or motivations)—Simmel would say from the terminus a quo; and sociologically, ‘in terms of the social functions
it consciously or unconsciously fulfils' (p. 241)—Simmel’s *terminus ad quem*.

This paper, then, is a plea for theory, advanced in simple terms in the new, ‘untheoretical’ country, and a didactic effort to clarify, which yet in the very process of expounding finds new formulations.

*(2) Mannheim’s Answer to a Newspaper Poll (1937)*

A few months after publishing this paper on valuation, Mannheim answered a poll directed by the *Prager Presse* to a number of intellectuals concerning the books they considered important or that had influenced them. Mannheim’s answer (*Prager Presse*, 28 March 1937) has not been republished but is sufficiently informative and interesting to warrant translation and publication in the present context.

*My contribution to your inquiry is limited in a double sense. In the first place, as a sociologist I want to refer to only those books that have been of great help to me in my orientation in the contemporary world. Secondly, I will do without mentioning those works that are usually referred to as ‘eternal values’. I believe that at its time, each of the real eternal values was of the greatest topicality, became famous because it had something to say to the men in their particular situation then, and will really come to life again only when mankind finds itself in a similar situation. One can understand the contemporary world in its rapid change only if one learns to think sociologically, if one is capable of understanding changes in ways of human behavior by reference to the changing conditions of society. This, however, also requires acquaintance with recent findings in psychology and philosophy.*

*Our idealist philosophy has failed in the contemporary situation. When it emerged, it represented an outstanding achievement. But it had placed too much confidence in the power of ‘ideas’—as if ideas by themselves were capable of transforming man and society. Today it becomes ever clearer to us that man’s thought is part of his coming to terms with his society and its conditions, that the formation of consciousness is the result of his social life, and that as society changes, so does man. In this direction, books like those by J. Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York, 1930), G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago, 1934), J. H. Robinson, *The Mind in the Making: The Relation of Intelligence to Social Reform* (1921), and Max Scheler, *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft*, are of epoch-making significance.*

*The American philosophers mentioned have tried to interpret man above all as an acting being and have thus made available to our time of activism a new access to the understanding of man. There is another guide to the interpretation of the changing nature of man: Nietzsche. In *Will to Power* and *Genealogy of Morals*, he knew how to peek behind the screens of consciousness and values and to clarify for us why in our world there is a collapse of the tables of values. At the same time, he penetrated to the instinctual roots of human spiritual life and thus became the forerunner of Freud and depth psychology, without which we could no longer do today. Whether the psychology of the individual or of the masses be in question, the theory of the unconscious has become indispensable. If there is still a good deal of uncontrolled speculation about in these areas, yet something truly essential has been gained by under-
standing man on the basis not only of his superficial reactions but also of the lower strata of unconscious motivations.

To have applied depth-psychological analysis to the understanding of politics with all its deterioration that meets us at the present time is the merit of H. D. Lasswell. In *Psychopathology and Politics* (Chicago, 1930), and *World Politics and Personal Insecurity* (Chicago, 1935), there are many good things, although the reading is often made difficult by the disjointedness of his thought.

Equipped with a novel knowledge of man's psychology, one can then move on to the study of society itself. There is a large number of sociological books, some of them very valuable; but if one wants to have the greatness of the achievement in this field fused in a single person, then one can only point to Max Weber. As an introduction, one should read his two lectures, 'Politics as a Vocation'... and 'Science as a Vocation'... The technique of analysis and the moral position will impress the reader and effectively assist him in his own search. Then one should turn to Weber's great work, *Economy and Society*... and to the collected essays on the sociology of religion... No easy reading; but he who has worked through it will see the world with new eyes and understand history in a new sense. Marx's great achievement—formulating the social process as a theoretical problem—is here transformed into detailed concrete research, all the while avoiding the suggestion of a political attitude by means of science. Unfortunately, Max Weber's work does not extend into the most recent period. What one can obtain from him is the equipment for understanding society; the application to our problems one must make oneself.

In order to understand the fundamental tension in which contemporary man finds himself placed—the struggle between liberalism and democracy on the one hand, fascism and communism on the other—let me point to some additional books. The venerable pair of scholars, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, have in their old age still given us an exemplary description and analysis of Soviet Russia—*Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?* (London, 1935). In the struggle between the values of a liberal-democratic culture and a planned society, the paedagogical writings of J. Dewey, in particular, are of particular value. Beatrice King, *Changing Man*, informs us, among other books, about Soviet education. The threat to the stratum of our intellectuals and to freedom of thought, further the decay of culture in the rising mass society, are the themes of some widely read books such as those by Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1933), J. Benda, *La trahison des clercs*, and Huizinga, *In the Shadow of Tomorrow*. They touch essential danger points in the development of modern society. In decisive points, however, the lack of a genuine sociological analysis prevents them from going beyond lamentations by scholars.

I have limited myself to few books; none of them is a guide that could replace the others. Neither have I tried by this list to foist a particular political position on anybody. It has been compiled in order to help the individual with his self-orientation; nobody can today be relieved of deciding for himself.

Among the many things this letter tells us, let us only single out Mannheim's acquaintance with some of the major contemporary representatives of English and American liberalism and their attraction for him.

*(3)* On the Diagnosis of Our Time (1937)

'Zur Diagnose unserer Zeit' appeared in the first issue of the shortlived *Mass und Wert*, a journal founded and co-edited by Thomas Mann, then an exile in Switzerland. Perhaps this
origin accounts for its tighter texture and its higher seriousness, compared with the other writings in the present section. As the title indicates, it is a diagnostic article, one of Mannheim’s many efforts to diagnose his time. It is important also because it shows the diagnostician between his German and English phases—between the earlier *Ideology and Utopia* and the German version of *Man and Society* and the later *Man and Society* (English version), *Diagnosis of Our Time* ((4) and XX (2) below), and *Freedom, Power, and Democratic Planning* (XXI): while writing in German and thus for fellow Germans—by now above all fellow German exiles—he yet writes from England, drawing on his English experience, recommending and thus mediating it.

His—our—difficulty of diagnosis is twofold: subjectively, it derives from the end of belief in progress and increasing reasonableness and is the price we pay for our better, more sober understanding of natural science and technology; objectively, it stems from the increasingly chaotic development of our society (population displacements, planless industrialization, dissolution of family and other institutions, the problematic character of leisure). In response to these changes there has arisen ‘modern social technology’ (p. 106; cf. *Man and Society* above and other papers of this period below), that is, ‘the practical management of mass drives’ (p. 110). It originated in the United States and was taken over by the Soviet Union, then by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. This social technique is ‘grandiose’ because in its absence mass society would dissolve; it is ‘inhuman’ (p. 114) because it is a means, its goodness or badness depending on the purpose to which it is put and which in part depends on the psychology associated with the technique.

Mannheim advocates a ‘sociological psychology’, which he finds at work in ‘modern social service’, ‘juvenile courts’, ‘group and individual education’, and adult education (p. 116). He also tries to counteract the suspicion of planning by pointing out that the ‘coordination’ it involves need not be enforced against people’s will but can also—and, of course, should—be understood and practiced as ‘planning for freedom’ (p. 119),78 ‘with which we can strive for differentiation and by which order is attained not only at the cost of restricting freedom’.

It is the freedom of a society which, disposing of the entire coordinated social technology, has itself under control, guarding itself by its own free will against the dictatorial suppression of certain areas of life, and incorporating the guarantees of these free areas into its structure and constitution. [P. 119]

78 This is the title, it may be recalled, of Part V of *Man and Society* of 1940, a sketch of which, however, appeared in 1937, the same year as the present paper; see beginning of XVIII, and esp. n. 71 above.
It is not clear—Mannheim is not clear—how the planned society is to be brought about: on the one hand, it must follow 'the spontaneous movement of the masses'; on the other, it must be guided by groups who proceed on the basis of a decisive political will and of corresponding psychological and sociological knowledge and do not leave the most important steps to desperadoes, military agitators, and radio managers. [P. 120]

Thus, Mannheim does not face the problems of a theory of social change, even though they had emerged already three years before in the form of the 'haunting' question, 'Who plans the planner?' Now the planners, simply, are individuals (intellectuals?) with a political will and with social-scientific knowledge. In the next to last paragraph, we find that Mannheim assimilates thinking to clarifying 'the struggle of contending tendencies' (p. 121) and (some pages back) that he almost substitutes it for hope in 'the countries with liberal-democratic traditions' (p. 118). This well illustrates some of the observations ventured in the introductory remarks to this section.

(4) Planned Society and the Problem of Personality: A Sociological Analysis (1938)

Under this title Mannheim delivered four lectures in 1938: 'The Age of Planning', 'The Structure of Personality in the Light of Modern Psychology', 'The Impact of Social Processes on the Formation of Personality in the Light of Modern Sociology', and 'Limits of the Sociological Approach to Personality and the Emergence of the New Democratic Idea of Planning'. In these lectures, Mannheim makes 'an attempt at a theoretical analysis of the social forces underlying the formation of the new totalitarian states and of the factors reshaping men living under the changed conditions of a new system' (Soc. Soc. Psych., p. 255).

It seems that Mannheim continues to be impressed by his experience of differences among forms of society and by his insight into the pervasive impact that differences among forms of society have on their members. The first impression presumably came from his transfer to England, his acquaintance with England, his comparison of the England in which he now was living with the Weimar Republic, and his deep desire that in his new country democracy not only not suffer the fate of democracy in Germany but, by understanding itself more truly, change so as to be immune to the allures of totalitarianism. Yet the way democracy

79 See beginning of XVIII above, the quotation from Menschen und Gesellschaft, esp. n. 1 of the quotation.
80 Man and Society, p. 74, quoted in XVIII.
has to change is toward a form of society of which totalitarianism is thus far the only existing instance: the planned society. This greater similarity between totalitarianism and planned society than between the latter and the only existing instance of democracy, namely, liberal democracy, may make understandable at least three passages in these lectures where Mannheim writes as if 'planned society' were interchangeable with 'totalitarianism'—passages which without such an interpretation might puzzle or alienate the reader.

The first occurs when, directly after discussing totalitarian states, Mannheim says: 'But besides war and external pressure there is an inner reason which works in favour of planning' (p. 258; italics added). Then there is the first sentence of his second lecture: 'Our main problem in these lectures is to find out whether the recent drift of society towards planning . . . ' (p. 267); finally, there is the first sentence of the third: 'Perhaps one of the main reasons why present-day planned societies rely chiefly upon central regulations . . .' (p. 279; italics added).

There are two other passages in which Mannheim introduces himself—in one explicitly, in the other by inference. They may lend weight to the interpretation of his attitude toward changes in the form of society which he finds are demanded by other social changes that have taken place or are in the process of doing so:

The vantage point from which I shall present the situation is to a certain extent that of a liberal, but of a liberal whose vested interests are not so much to be found in the economic world as in his being a member of a certain type of intelligentsia whose only capital is his learning and whose fundamental demands on life are freedom of thought and free development of personality.

But this wing of the intelligentsia is liberal only so long as the future of culture and development of the personality is in question. As to the general transformations in society it is ready to see what is really happening in the world and it is not blind to the potential good in the movements of our age.

The longer we study present-day society the less can we avoid seeing that all the basic conditions of the age of liberalism are vanishing, or else transforming themselves into new ones, and that we are confronted with completely new configurations. [Pp. 255–56]

That is to say, Mannheim presents himself as a liberal in regard to culture and personality but as non-committed in regard to 'the general transformations in society' and to 'what is really happening in the world'.

The other, presumably unintended, autobiographical statement occurs in his discussion of the 'sociological meaning of personality as contrasted with the liberal interpretation' (p. 262):

5. Another root of the doctrine of the self-contained character of soul and personality is to be found in the fact that the philosophy of the liberal era, as represented by idealism and romanticism, was a philosophy of introverted intellectual strata. Particularly in Germany, these had been excluded from
practical political work, and had therefore never had a chance to combine self-observation with practical action and to follow up the ramifications of the interaction between the mind and its social environment. [P. 264]

Mannheim still belongs to these ‘introverted intellectual strata’ (being, as he himself said, ‘a liberal... whose fundamental demands on life are freedom of thought and free development of personality’). But he is apparently very much more aware of it than he had been, perhaps aware of it almost for the first time, and thus more cognizant of the duty which the fact that he is an intellectual, a thinker, rather than a political activist, imposes on him: the duty is not to think about epistemology or interpretation or the sociology of knowledge but about how to save ‘man and society’.²⁸¹

By planning, obviously. Mannheim’s ideas on this are similar to those developed in the preceding paper, which is briefer and more succinct; in the present lectures, however, as title and subtitles suggest, much attention is given to personality. In the first lecture, he praises ‘the positive elements of pragmatism, behaviourism, Marxism, and the sociology of knowledge’, which have proved ‘that the evolution of mental attitudes and even of knowledge does not occur in a vacuum but is strictly linked up with action’ (p. 265). Before he can discuss the sociological aspects of this linkage (third lecture), he must present the modern conception of personality, including society’s psychological influences on it. This conception is largely psychoanalytical, distinguishing ‘three levels of the mind’: that of the id (drives and impulses, including ‘reflex reactions’, ‘involuntary reactions’, and ‘automatic reactions, which were once learned’ (p. 268); that of the ego; and that of the super-ego and the ego-ideal. The first and part of the second level are unconscious; the rest, conscious; and there are unconscious and conscious social influences. Among the former are ‘spontaneous unconscious adjustments to different situations’, or ‘trial and error’ (p. 272), but also ‘conditioned reflexes and the making of habits’; and there are suggestion and hypnosis. On the other hand, there is ‘the impact of society on the conscious part of the mind, which means the conscious part of the ego’ (p. 273), through intelligent adjustment, learning, education in the broadest sense, and psychoanalysis. (In this discussion, it is obviously not clear whether ‘conscious’ and ‘unconscious’ are predicates of parts of the mind or of influences on it or of both.)

In summing up this lecture, by ‘personality’ Mannheim means that kind of organization of the mind, specific to each individual, by which, through his mutual interaction with the environment, he develops a pattern of inner organization which is unique in itself. [P. 278]

²⁸¹ Cf. the beginning of his introduction, just before I.
The third lecture, then, deals with 'social factors in the formation of personality as they worked in the liberal, unregulated society' (p. 280), particularly with 'the relation between external situations and the growth of human personality' (p. 281), namely, isolation, contact, division of labor, the democratic organization of small groups, the 'most suitable form of organization so far known making for spontaneity in its members' (pp. 282–83), and free competition. In connection with the latter, Mannheim points out:

Whereas it is the danger of competitive society that it tends to dissolve the ultimate social bond of consensus, the danger of planned society is that it extends the necessary minimum of conformity to everything, and people lose the rational and critical power without which an industrial society cannot survive. [P. 286]

And:

What the liberals did not understand and what the Russians in spite of many failures have proved by experiment is that competitiveness, acquisitiveness, and property sense are not in the least identical, but were rather an historical combination of attitudes united into one single complex in our society. [P. 287]

Mannheim then discusses 'the sociological determination of preferences and choice' (p. 288), the formation and implantation of wishes, 'the working of social forces . . . on the level of introspective and self-regarding attitudes' (p. 290) and in regard to the realization of 'the uniqueness of one's life history' (p. 292). At the end of this lecture he announces the task of the next, the last, as the effort

to answer two questions: (1) How far could planned society make use of such sociological insights into the nature of social forces and situations making for individualization, if planning were not to mean to the planners planning for conformity. (2) Secondly, we must at least touch upon the question of where the limitations of both the sociological concept of the self and of planning based upon it become apparent. [P. 293]

In this last lecture he warns against the 'limitless manipulation of the environment', which 'kills the personality centre' (p. 303), and against 'socialists and fascists', that is, advocates or practitioners of planned society, because they 'tend to become subject-blind', while the liberal's mistake was the tendency 'to be environment-blind' (p. 304). (While there is thus a further instance of the synonymous use of 'totalitarian' with 'planned'—and even of 'socialist' with 'Soviet Russian', indeed with 'Stalinist'—because of what these share in Mannheim's perception if contrasted with 'liberal', in an earlier passage that occurs in a discussion of the Soviet Union, he does ask: 'Does prevention of privacy and introversion belong to the very essence of planned society or is it
merely a Russian misinterpretation?': p. 300.) He distinguishes between the use of sociological and psychological knowledge in order to understand historical societies, which is beneficial, and its use as the basis for planning society, which, far from being beneficial, would lead to ‘total regulation’, ‘to a deadening mechanization of man and society’ (p. 307). Planning, thus, must not interfere where not necessary; and wherever possible, it must replace command by spontaneity: the contrast to liberal society is planned society, not dictatorship. To be sure, there is a ‘basic sphere without which consensus, co-operation, is impossible’, where conformity applies, and where ‘some of the fundamentals of a new common life have to be induced without necessarily being always based upon rational argument’.

But once this minimum of conformity concerning fair play, decency, community spirit, sense of justice, incentive for work, and the necessarily greater conformity in the wants of the consumer is guaranteed, the social scope has to be provided for individualization and freedom. [P. 308]82

Here is the characteristic end of these lectures, written in unresolved anguish over the fate of both society and spirit, and seeking its resolution in a religiously tinged, trusting hope:

The new society has to be based upon a new synthesis between the self-assertive forces of liberal society and the over-estimated possibilities of some kind of complete altruism. A synthesis which I have never found more exactly expressed than in a saying of the old Jewish sage Hillel:

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
If I am only for myself—then what am I for?

[pp. 309-10]

A trusting hope which is moving but has not led to conceptual clarification.

(5) Adult Education and the Social Sciences (1938)83

This and the next paper appear to be the last that Mannheim wrote before the outbreak of World War II. The organization of the lecture on adult education suffers, probably, from being an abridgement; the footnote to this effect does not inform us who is responsible for the shortening; thus Mannheim himself is not excluded. The major merit of the essay is that it moves from very broad considerations of current society to concrete questions about adult education. ‘We have to educate people to live, in a

83 A footnote to the title reads: ‘A shortened version of a paper given at the Annual Conference of the Tutors’ Association at Liverpool, April, 1937’.
world which presents, and will in future present, situations which cannot be anticipated' (p. 27); 'our society is in a state of dissolution' and

cannot hope to recover unless the millions realise that by finding new responses to their own particular situation they are not only working for themselves but contributing to a general reorganisation;

and thus we also

have to answer the questions of adults of a new kind, who do not come to us simply because they wish to spend their leisure in a more sensible way than the rest of their comrades, but of adults who are beginning to realise the problems of a new era. [P. 28]

Mannheim talks of rising dictatorships and the interdependent world in which we live (p. 29), argues for 'a new combination between psychology and history', and praises the 'discipline which studies those most elementary processes which are present in any social system' (p. 30)—

competition, co-operation, conflict, accommodation, assimilation, division of labour, the various forms of social organisation, social control, about which we know a great deal on a comparative and experimental basis and without which any accurate study of societies is completely impossible. [Pp. 30–31]

He does not say 'sociology', but urges the synthesis of all social-scientific findings. The need for such a synthesis is also felt 'in institutions like those of adult education' (p. 31). Hence Mannheim's specific recommendation on teaching the social sciences to adults: they must be offered the choice of two curricula:

The one is by widening the scope of the existing special subjects by relating their results to the concrete setting in which they originally occur. The other way is by introducing a three year's [sic] curriculum under the heading for example of the 'Study of Society' which sets out to re-interpret the results of the special subjects as parts of social interaction and deliberately starts with a description and analysis of the social forces and social structures which underly any transformation of society. [P. 32]

To begin with, this must be an experimental undertaking, if only because 'there will be few tutors in this country who will be able to give these courses' (p. 33).

The paper illustrates Mannheim's concern with education, which we have seen before and will see again. It also contributes to the impression, voiced in the beginning of this section, that his writing in England was occasionally hasty and repetitious, in part, perhaps, because he had become widely known and was invited to speak to too many groups.
This is a second paper on education. It begins by urging its reconsideration in the light of the new totalitarian states. For education shapes man not in the abstract 'but in and for a given society' (p. 330); its basic unit is the group, not the individual; its aims must be understood in reference to a given time and place; and 'codes and norms' express the interplay between individual and group-adjustment. The fact that norms themselves are not absolute but change with the changing social order and help to solve the tasks with which society is faced, cannot be seen from the experience of the single individual. To him they seem to be absolute and unalterable decrees, and without this belief in their stability they cannot be made to work. Their true nature and function in society as a form of collective adaptation reveals itself only if we follow their history through many generations, continuously relating them to the changing social background. [P. 331]

Here suddenly, then, in the course of a comparatively casual listing of some 'implications' of 'a sociological approach to education' (p. 330), Mannheim comes to formulate what in the meantime has become of his conception of the sociology of culture or of knowledge (see also p. 344n.): broad, casual, popular, commonsensical, confident; very different from the specific, serious, esoteric, searching, boldly hoping efforts—to characterize them by some contrasting adjectives—that he made in pre-Hitler Germany.

Indeed, he did not even interrupt himself in the listing of 'implications' of 'a sociological approach to education' to announce a view of the sociology of culture; we did. We must realize (he continues) that educational aims are transmitted by educational techniques, which are among the 'social techniques' and must be related to them, 'to the remaining forms of social control' (p. 332), in order to be successful. Adherents of a liberal conception of education reject the sociological conception just sketched because, among other reasons, they 'think that a knowledge of social conditions is equivalent to levelling personality' (p. 334). They thus cling to an elitist view despite the general 'moral chaos' (p. 337), in the midst of which, however,

modern sociology and psychology are making progress not only in reforming moral standards, but in finding new methods of readjusting the masses by group analysis. . . . I venture to say that we have in them a genuine alternative to the Fascist exploitation of group emotion. [Pp. 337-38]

Before coming to his discussion of group analysis, however, Mannheim inserts a section on 'Individual Adjustments and

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84 In J. I. Cohen and R. M. W. Travers, eds., Educating for Democracy, pp. 329-64; page references are to this edition, rather than to the reprint in Diagnosis of Our Time (XX (2) below).
Collective Demands' (pp. 338–50). Among a number of things, it contains a statement on 'three main criteria' of a 'successful' society. One of them is:

Through its institutions it will help the individual to make his adjustment in the best possible way, and will come to the rescue of those who have failed in their readjustments. [P. 343]

Again, as in the quotation concerning 'codes and norms', there is the tone that was called broad, casual, popular, etc.: he speaks, or so it sounds, as a group member to fellow group members, all of whom are engaged in rescuing or at least improving society and praising each other for this laudable work. Still, Mannheim has hardly arrived; he can hardly be a bona fide member; rather, he plunges into the members' midst, hoping, with closed eyes, so to speak, to be accepted, to be transformed into a member and at the same time to convince the other members that his sociological insight is an asset to the group as a whole. He is a refugee from Nazism, an immigrant to England.

Group analysis, unlike psychoanalysis, does not 'tear the individual from his social setting' (p. 351); it 'refers the individual case, not only to the family constellation, but to the whole configuration of social institutions'. In discussing some attempts, which 'are still in an experimental stage' (p. 352), Mannheim also touches on 'that new branch of knowledge which is called the analysis of ideologies', that is, of those interpretations of situations which are not the outcome of concrete experiences but are a kind of distorted knowledge of them, which serves to cover up the real situation and works upon the individual like a compulsion. The existence of ideologies was first noticed in the political sphere. [P. 355]

And there is a footnote reference to Ideology and Utopia, just as if this book were not concerned with a wholly non-psychological conception of ideology—just as if it were not a wholly different (by now we can perhaps say, a pre-Hitler) book.

As before, and especially in (2) above, Mannheim moves toward a view of social change but does not explicitly confront the task.

Unless a large-scale attack is made on the defence mechanisms [= ideologies] by education, propaganda, and social work the poisoned mental atmosphere of the whole nation will always be stronger than the readjusted individual or the smaller group. [And in a footnote a little later he writes that the 'removal of these ideologies or utopias' is] not only a matter of psychological

85 A striking illustration of the point made in the passage in XVIII above to which n. 72 refers.
86 Recall particularly the end of the comment; also Mannheim's 'autobiographical' statements in (4) above.
analysis but a question of changing the social and economic position. [Pp. 356–57 and 358n.]

Thus there is no mention of institutional change, because, clearly, even ‘changing the social and economic position’ refers to the position of the individual (to his therapeutic change of milieu). He so writes despite his insistence on the importance of the social context and despite the fact that World War II, which presumably was directed against a social system, broke out in the same year in which this essay appeared.

This essay ends by condemning ‘contempt for the masses’ (p. 359), emphasizing the distinction between ‘crowd’ and ‘group’ and the need for ‘the creation of “institutional behavior” in the individual’ (p. 362; the term is accredited to Floyd H. Allport), and with this final sentence:

The educationalist and the representatives of the new social services have the special opportunity of standing at the cross-roads where they gain insight into the working of the individual psyche and of society. They, more than others, have the power to link up the regeneration of man with the regeneration of society. [P. 364]

xx. World War II

(1) Psychic Economy; (2) Diagnosis of Our Time; (3) Three Short Papers: Democratic Planning and the New Science of Society, Popularization in Mass Society, The Refugee

(1) On War-Conditioned Changes in our Psychic Economy (1940)

Presumably this is the first paper Mannheim wrote during the war. It is not a treatment of the topic its title suggests, but a proposal for research into this topic in which sociologists and psychologists would cooperate. Mannheim argues the advantages of the cooperation and concludes with concrete suggestions. Among them, ‘the writing of a war diary on which, if possible, a psychologist and a sociologist would be to record the most important collective emotional currents’ and the establishment of ‘a kind of clearing office for acute conflicts and difficulties’ (Soc. Soc. Psych., p. 251) perhaps show most clearly Mannheim’s involvement in his new environment and the kind of specific tasks with which he had come to identify himself and his involvement.

**(2) ‘Diagnosis of Our Time’ (1943)

The writings in this collection directly reflect the war and wartime England. Except for ‘Mass Education and Group Analysis’ (XIX (4) above), of which the ‘bibliography has been brought up to date’ (p. 184, n. 1), they were written in 1940–42, although the date of 1942 is conjectural for the last, by far the longest essay, ‘Towards a New Social Philosophy’.
In the 'Preface to the American Edition', Mannheim stresses the importance of consensus and the necessity of order and progress for planning. The greater consensus in England may make planning less difficult there than in the United States. In any event, he takes it for granted that change calls for reform, not revolution (p. viii).

The first, the title essay (January 1941),

is a brief restatement and further development of... [Man and Society; XVIII above]. Furthermore, the author is working on a book, 'Essentials of Democratic Planning' [presumably the posthumous Freedom, Power, and Democratic Planning; XXI below], which will deal in a more systematic manner with the different aspects of planning. [P. 179, n. 2]

The paper much resembles the four years older ‘On the Diagnosis of Our Time’ (XIX (2) above).

‘The Crisis in Valuation’ (January 1942) is concerned with the simultaneous existence in our society of several ‘philosophies of life’: Christian, liberal, socialist, fascist. There thus is disagreement regarding the nature of freedom, education, work, and leisure, as well as regarding the causes of the crisis, particularly between their Idealist (spiritual) and Marxist (economic) tracing.

Mannheim compares

the two sociological approaches, the Marxist and that which I am to expound. According to the Marxist, you have only to put your economic house in order and the present chaos in valuation will disappear. In my view, no remedy of the chaos is possible without a sound economic order, but this is by no means enough, as there are a great many other social conditions which influence the process of value creation and dissemination, each of which has to be considered on its own merits. [P. 19]

Among these are the ‘uncontrolled and rapid growth of society’, our failure to come to terms with the machine, either in work or in leisure, the growing number of contacts among groups through communication and through social mobility, new forms of authority, an increasingly conscious, as against traditional, ‘value appreciation and acceptance’ (p. 26), all of them calling for ‘a tremendous reform of education’ (pp. 26–27), which also would pay due attention to ‘those values which appeal directly to the emotions and irrational powers in man’ (p. 27). In this respect, we can learn from the Catholic Church, ‘which tried to present the truth to the simple man through images and the dramatic processes of ritual, and invited the educated to face the very same truth on the level of theological argument’ (p. 28). In respect to valuation, ‘the third way’, or ‘the democratic pattern of planning or planning for freedom’, means that democracies must give up their complete lack of interest in the sphere of valuation; they must engage in self-discipline, that is, in the
struggle for common valuations and for justice. Thereby they must avail themselves of the 'remedies for social evils' (p. 32) discovered by sociology (Mannheim praises *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* by the Chicago Commission on Race Relations, 1922). Education, adult education, social work, juvenile courts, and other institutions must be subjected to a more conscious philosophy of their meaning so that we can find William James's 'moral substitute for war' (p. 34).

Youth ('The Problem of Youth in Modern Society', April 1941) is a revitalizing agent in society, provided society makes use of its marginality and outsider status. Despite its title, the subsection, 'The Special Function of Youth in England in the Present Situation', instead deals with the English anti-theoretical bias\(^87\) and its causes: security and wealth, an influential rentier class that stifles imagination and the courage to investigate the meaning of change, the Englishman's living more in his institutions than in reflective thought, the disparagement of a freelance intelligentsia by the rentiers, 'practical' businessmen, and certain civil servants, a system of education that stresses examinations and marks and contains no sociology, and youth's lack of a proper place and share in society. Youth, 'one of the most important latent spiritual resources for the revitalization of our society' (p. 51), must be organized. This sounds like advice imitating the totalitarians, but 'there is a way of learning from events, and even from our opponents, which is the exact opposite of imitation' (p. 52): we must 'rely on our own judgment as to the merits of an institution, and admit that many items in our opponents' methods are simply a response to a changed situation which affects us equally' (p. 53);\(^88\) but we must not, on the other hand, 'tolerate the intolerant' (p. 55).\(^89\) We must satisfy the need for new forms of authority by creating 'blended attitudes', a form of behaviour which is not driven from one extreme to the other, from violent hatred to submissive guilt feelings, from an inferiority feeling through over-compensation to a superiority complex, but which is proud of a balance of the mind which can only be achieved through self-control and intelligence. (P. 56)

And education must be characterized by 'gradualism': 'first for group conformity, and then for the emergence of the many-faceted, balanced personality' (p. 57).\(^90\)

'Education, Sociology and the Problem of Social Awareness' (May 1941) is a passionate plea for sociology as an educational

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\(^88\) Cf. XVIII, pp. 259 ff., and n. 75 above.

\(^89\) Cf. XIX (4), p. 308, and n. 82 above.

\(^90\) This idea, too, is anticipated in XIX (4), p. 308.
force to overcome the liberal compartmental conception and
practice of education, which splits school and world, youth and
the rest of life, school and home, moral and curricular concerns.
In order to accelerate education becoming 'integral', integrating
itself with other institutions as well as 'with respect to the wholeness
of the person' (p. 61), the teacher must acquire what relevant
sociological knowledge has been gathered so as to attain and
impart 'awareness in social affairs', 'a comprehensive sociological
orientation' (p. 67), a 'total awareness', in comparison with which
class consciousness is only 'partial awareness' (p. 70). Such an
awareness becomes necessary in times of rapid social change but is
hampered by overspecialization in education, by misinterpreting
tolerance and objectivity as neutrality, and by the fear of dis­
turbing consensus. Yet it must be made to prevail because with
World War II our choice has become that between freedom and
democracy vs. dictatorship, while before it had been between
capitalism and communism; and we have realized that the social
struggle must be fought by reform, not by revolution. Much of
this paper could indeed stimulate reform—the reform of depart­
ments of sociology that would translate 'social awareness' into the
structure of their curricula.

In June 1941 Mannheim made a brief BBC broadcast on 'Nazi
Group Strategy', very likely the only time he addressed himself to
Nazism exclusively. He describes Hitler's procedures in disorganiz­
ing the society he is attacking, the effect of this on the individual
who is moved to cooperate, indicates the second step in the
strategy, the establishment of the new order, and points to the
training of new leaders who are characterized by 'a strange blend
of infantile emotionalism and blind submission'—while when
'Churchill says: "I have nothing to offer but blood, tears, toil and
sweat", he appeals to a nation of adults' (p. 108).

'Towards a New Social Philosophy' is subtitled 'A Challenge to
Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist'. It

was written for a group of British friends, Christian thinkers. . . . The group,
consisting of theologians, clergymen, academic teachers, Civil Servants, writers,
etc., used to meet four times a year for a week-end with the avowed purpose of
understanding recent changes in society in their relevance for Christianity.
Several years ago, the author was invited to join the group as a sociologist, and
in this capacity he wrote the present statement. [P. 109n] 91

91 For most of the remainder of this note, see I above, toward the end.
Cf. T. S. Eliot, Notes towards the Definition of Culture (New York: Harcourt,
Brace, 1949), Preface: 'Throughout this study, I recognise a particular debt
to the writings of Canon V. A. Demant, Mr. Christopher Dawson, and the
late Professor Karl Mannheim. It is the more necessary to acknowledge this
debt in general, since I have not in my text referred to the first two of these
writers, and since my debt to the third is much greater than appears from the
The ‘need for spiritual integration in a planned society’ (p. 111) has several reasons, among them the facts that without it men will not ‘be capable of accepting the sacrifice which a properly planned democratic order must continually demand from every single group and individual in the interests of the whole’ (p. 112), and that new issues must be emotionalized, which presupposes the redefinition of the crucial problems of life (cf. p. 115). In this process Catholicism and Protestantism, with their main emphasis respectively on institutions and the individual, have different strengths and weaknesses, namely, those of ‘Thomistic’ and ‘Individualized Rationality’.

At present I cannot do more than point to these two types of rationality. It is very likely that the future will have to be devoted to their reconciliation, and only one thing can be forecast: a simple evasion of the calamity of the modern mind will not do [the danger of a Catholic sociology], but neither can bottomless individualism be made the basis of social organization [the danger of Protestantism]. [P. 118]

In as complex a society as we live in, Kant’s categorical imperative, a mere formal Gesinnungsethik, is not enough; we need a much more concrete Verantwortungsethik. Education for social awareness must aim at the best combination of both, of individual conscience and social responsibility: ‘One cannot be a good Christian in a society where the basic rules are against the spirit of Christianity’ (p. 124); theological thought must be blended with sociological knowledge. In discussing how this is possible, Mannheim once more formulates his view of sociology:

one context in which I discuss his theory’. Eliot refers to Chapter II (‘The Class and the Elite’) of his book, where he discusses Mannheim’s treatment of this topic in Man and Society. Cf. Bramsted and Gerth, op. cit. (n. 77 above), pp. xiv–xv: ‘In gradually evolving the outlines of the answer to “who is to plan the planners”, which is laid down in the present book [Freedom, Power, and Democratic Planning], he was deeply influenced by a group of prominent Christian thinkers, among them T. S. Eliot, J. Middleton Murry, and J. H. Oldham. Over many years he met with this group for periodic discussions, he himself playing an outstanding part in reorienting the ideas of its members. Then and there be became convinced that sociology and social philosophy cannot afford to remain “religion blind” any more than a truly religious concern with the world can remain “society blind”’.

92 ‘Individualized rationality’ appears to suffer from the same lack of a theoretical basis as does the ‘substantial rationality’ the historical diminution of which Mannheim diagnosed as a consequence of ‘functional rationalization’ in Man and Society. See XVIII above.

93 Gerth and Mills translate these two terms, which Max Weber developed in his lecture on ‘Politics as a Vocation’ (1918), as respectively ‘ethics of ultimate ends’ and ‘ethics of responsibility’. See H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, trans., ed., and with an introd., From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), esp. p. 120.
If one takes the radical view that Christian values are eternal and pre-established, there is little chance for co-operation. Only if there is at least a limited scope left for experimentalism in the field of valuations is it possible to make use of the sociological approach. It is no good hiding the difficulties arising in this sphere, and therefore, in order to make the challenge complete, I shall represent the sociological approach in its most radical form.

Sociology in its historical origins is a secularized, perhaps the most secularized [cf. as early as VIII above], approach to the problems of human life. It borrows its strength from following up to its final consequences the immanent, i.e. the non-transcendental, approach to human affairs. . . . This becomes particularly apparent when it deals with values. . . . To him [the sociologist] it would seem unwise and methodologically inconsistent to exclude certain phenomena from the range of sociological explanation. He would not agree to a suggestion which considers certain phenomena from the very outset as being holy and therefore not open to the sociological approach, whereas others, being profane, could be more accessible to it. . . . By having carried through the sociological analysis to its final consequences . . . the sociologist himself sees where other approaches need to be called in to supplement his findings. On the other hand, before they have embodied the knowledge available through the sociological analysis, philosophy and theology seem to deal with a picture of life which is deprived of those problems and findings which are most characteristic of our age. [Pp. 126–27]

This says two things, which Mannheim does not explicate or even distinguish. One is the observation that among approaches to the world there are the theological and the sociological. They are available to man, though not actualized in all times and places. So to think is to subscribe to an essentially phenomenological view; Mannheim's failure to say so suggests that he had forgotten his early familiarity with this view.94 The other is a historical observation (of the kind which obviously is much more pervasive in Mannheim's work): that at this time in history, the sociological approach cannot be ignored, and particularly not by those who take the other of the two singled out in his essay, the theological.

In the planned society there must be room for all 'four existential spheres of religious experience' (p. 136): in mysticism, in personal relations, as imbuing the whole social order, through conventions.95 It is a society in which the Christian can adjust to the world and to his particular environment 'in harmony with his basic experience of life' (p. 145), his 'paradigmatic experience'

94 Cf. V above, esp. n. 15.
95 In defending the first, Mannheim once again—cf. in I above the quotation from 'The Problem of Ecstasy' to which n. 7 refers, and XVII (3), esp. the passage to which n. 68 refers—shows the importance he gives to the possibility of transcending the everyday world by temporary withdrawal from it: 'It will become more and more a question whether something corresponding to the monastic seclusion, some form of complete or temporary withdrawal from the affairs of the world, will not be one of the great remedies for the dehumanizing effects of a civilization of busybodies' (p. 137; also see pp. 170–73).
In the planned society ‘the religious focus’ is allowed to be what it ought to be, ‘a way of interpreting life from the centre of some paradigmatic experience’ (p. 146). ‘If these paradigmatic experiences evaporate’, Mannheim writes, it is obvious that the problem of values contains nothing but the adjustment character of human conduct. Right or wrong only means efficiency, and there is no answer to the question: Efficiency for what? [P. 146; cf. p. 167]

In other words: ‘rationality that is functional for what?’ a question that can be answered only by substantial rationality, which continues to be lacking—but which is needed most urgently because we ‘have a new and extremely dangerous antagonist . . . Mechanized Barbarism’ (p. 151; cf. the end of Ideologie und Utopie and the comparison it suggested with Max Weber’s pessimism in The Protestant Ethic).

Mannheim concludes his paper by discussing ‘some concrete issues which are subject to re-valuation’ (p. 164), namely, general ethics, ethics of personal, and ethics of organized, relations. A dilemma under the first heading is: ‘“What is the good of democracy if we do not survive?” or alternatively “What is the good of surviving if we lose our freedom?”’ (p. 166), which Mannheim answers by saying that

we have first to make the primary choice in our hierarchy between the survival value of efficiency and democracy. Once this is settled we can turn to concrete issues and work out the casuistry of individual decisions. [P. 167]

Under ‘Ethics of Personal Relationships’ he deals with the problems of privacy and of mass ecstasy in the modern world, under ‘Ethics of Organized Relationships’ with several aspects of relations within a factory all of which, he claims, need re-evaluation. In regard to organized relations Mannheim diagnoses two tendencies:

There is a tendency to introduce into the sphere of work the military pattern of command and blind obedience. On the other hand, there are often very strong tendencies at work beneath the surface, which are at the same time anti-Fascist, anti-Communist and anti-Capitalist, representing fundamentally new strivings of men and women. They do not yet form a new system, or a coherent outlook, but it is possible to point to these trends which, particularly under the revolutionizing effect of war, are emerging here and there irrespective of the political organization which prevails. [Pp. 176-77]

96 ‘Paradigmatic experiences’ are ‘those decisive, basic experiences which are felt to reveal the meaning of life as a whole. Their pattern is so deeply impressed upon our mind that they provide a mould into which further experiences flow. Thus once formed they lend shape to later experiences’ (p. 187, n. 7).

97 Cf. the quotation from p. 118, along with n. 92, above, and XVIII, p. 75 (‘who plans the planner?’, a question that ‘haunts’ Mannheim).

98 Cf. XIV above.
These are: economic organization moving 'from purely financial calculation' to "'organic welfare'"; working incentives moving 'from purely financial recompense to the motive of Service'; the emergence of an 'integrated attitude' stressing a combination of 'security for everybody' and 'collective venture'; the meaning of freedom turning from free enterprise to creativeness; and 'a move towards a true democracy' which 'allots a creative social task to everybody' (p. 177). Mannheim concludes his essay, again, with qualified hope:

I am aware of the fact that an over-emphasis on the humanization of organized relationships in factory, Civil Service and elsewhere, without reorganizing the economic structure in its fundamentals [cf. the inconclusive section 'The Emerging Social Pattern in its Economic Aspects', pp. 156-59], might be misused by those who only want to alter human relationships on the surface without paying the price of structural reconstruction. But the only remedy for this possible misuse is social awareness. Just as it is impossible in the long run to humanize leisure and factory relationships within a dictatorial system, where the pattern of command and obedience will necessary [sic] break through everywhere, so it is equally impossible to humanize factory relationships as long as the basis of calculation remains efficiency in terms of money returns and profits instead of social welfare. [P. 178]

(3) Three Short Papers (1944, 1945, 1946)

In 1944 J. R. M. Brumwell edited This Changing World ('A Series of Contributions by Some of Our Leading Thinkers, to Cast Light upon the Pattern of the Modern World'), to which Mannheim contributed a chapter on 'Democratic Planning and the New Science of Society' (the subtitle, supplied no doubt by the editor or publisher, reads: 'The century to come will be dedicated to the study of the social and moral sciences and to the problems of democratic planning'). Mannheim shows the merits of sociology by examples which make it plausible that individuals should be understood in terms of groups to which they belong rather than in isolation, from there moves to his arguments for planning and the distinction between fascist and democratic planning, and ends with a mixture of threat and hope: 'so long as we fail to make the democratic processes function within the framework of modern society, we shall be doomed to live either drifting in chaos or imprisoned in a cage' (p. 82).

The title footnote of 'The Meaning of Popularisation in a Mass Society' (February 1945) refers to 'Professor Mannheim's forthcoming book, Essentials of Democratic Planning, which he is writing for the Royal Institute of International Affairs', and in which 'the ideas expressed . . . [here] will be developed more fully'—as did a footnote to 'Diagnosis of Our Time', the first paper in the volume by that title (2), 2nd par., above; but Freedom, Power, and
Democratic Planning contains nothing on popularization). Just as Mannheim had argued against the 'contempt for the masses' in 'Mass Education and Group Analysis' (XIX (3), end, above), so he now argues against the contempt for popularization, in favor of 'creative dissemination':

The future of culture depends not only on our ability to guarantee the conditions of survival for original thinkers at higher levels, but also on our inventiveness in finding new forms for the dissemination of the substance of culture without diluting it. [P. 8]

Those who succeed in the great venture of being genuine on the lower levels of communication contribute at least as much to the preservation of culture as those who keep existing fires burning in small selected circles. [P. 10]

Only those who have the capacity to communicate with any audience realize how much fertilizing power there is in saying the same thing to different people.

... Those who teach and have something to impart need to be trained to assimilate and to interpret correctly the minds of those to whom they speak. In this the new discipline of the sociology of knowledge, which studies systematically different existing frames of mind... and the sociology of education, which studies the concrete conditions in which education takes place, can be of great help. [P. 12]

Mannheim probably thought of this short paper, including the references to the sociology of knowledge, one of his old, pre-English concerns, and to the sociology of education, one of his most recent concerns in England, as a modest instance of 'creative dissemination'.

'The Function of the Refugee' (April 1945) is 'A Rejoinder' to Montgomery Belgion's short article, 'The Germanization of Britain'.

Any student of sociology would have told Captain Belgion that I am one of the most ardent protagonists of the idea that there is a fundamental difference in subject matter between the natural and the social sciences... His attack will have, I hope, at least one merit—that it will draw the attention of thoughtful people to Hodges' book on Wilhelm Dilthey.100 [P. 5]

99 The New English Weekly, 26 (15 February 1945): 137-38. Examples: 'A considerable number of German speculative writers... can be found to have let Reason founder altogether while they were enticed to their perdition as thinkers by those two Lorelei, the Extravagant and the Fanciful. Among this number we may include, I submit, the Brothers Schlegel, Goethe, Karl Marx, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and unquestionably the inventors of psycho-analysis'. As well as Mannheim. And 'Dilthey is as corrupting as Dr. Mannheim'. (Quotations from p. 138.)

100 H. A. Hodges, Wilhelm Dilthey: An Introduction, which appeared in 1944 in the 'International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction', which Mannheim edited—and in the present article also defended against Belgion's critique. (In the same series Hodges published The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey in 1952, when, after Mannheim's death, the series was edited by W. H. Sprott.)
A sociological question 'implicit in Captain Belgion's article' concerns the fashion in which refugees or, 'if I may put it more exactly', 'individuals who have assimilated two or more cultures' can 'best serve the country of their adoption'. Mannheim's answer is that such a person has the 'new constructive task' 'to serve as a living interpreter between different cultures and to create living communication between different worlds which so far have been kept apart' (p. 6). This, the article as a whole, all of these three brief papers, and indeed most of what he wrote in England, shows the difference, among other things, between his pre-Hitler thoughts about the 'socially unattached intelligentsia'\textsuperscript{101} and himself as one of its representatives on the one hand, and on the other, himself as a refugee; 'more exactly' as one of the 'individuals who have assimilated two or more cultures'. Whatever 'assimilated', indeed whatever 'culture' may mean in this context, one aspect of Mannheim's change, intimated before,\textsuperscript{102} is that he now used, or had to use, part of his energy in 'assimilating', while as long as he wrote in German, he had all of it at his disposal for his investigation. Now part went into assimilation, part into 'creative dissemination'; only the rest was left for his own voice, which was that much diminished for it. This also applies to the last work he wrote, the \textit{Essentials of Democratic Planning}, posthumously published as \textit{Freedom, Power, and Democratic Planning}.

\textbf{xxi. 'Freedom, Power, and Democratic Planning' (1950)}

While he was in Germany, Mannheim's central preoccupation had been the sociology of knowledge, that is, the effort to understand intellectual phenomena sociologically, rather than in the belief that an 'intrinsic interpretation' could be exhaustive or that referring them to other 'extrinsic', such as philosophical or religious, points of view would be adequate. Sociological interpretation was and is a stirring proposition, an easily disquieting, certainly a meaningful, experience. Mannheim explored and tried to conceptualize this experience, a shattering but intriguing onslaught of secularization, which turned out to be one of the frustrated promises of the Weimar Republic. The promise might be formulated as that of an answer to the question:

How in the face of the demonstration that the spirit is socially conditioned can I still do right by its inexhaustibility and unforeseeability? Or, perhaps: how can I, nevertheless, save it? But also: How in the face of the overwhelming spirit can I ascertain as accurately as possible its intimate connection with society, and how can I proclaim this connection precisely for the sake of both, spirit and society?

\textsuperscript{101} Cf. XIV, Table of Contents, 'Is Politics Possible as a Science?', Section 4, and XVII (2), above.

\textsuperscript{102} Cf. particularly the beginning of XIX above; also XIX (5).
The ‘but also’ in this question and what follows it is marked already by the imminent collapse of the Weimar Republic in the early thirties, when the promise had faded, then gone, and a question had risen that came to replace the promise. ‘Later, ever more urgently’, this question revealed itself to Mannheim in England as ‘How can I save society?’

Hence, his leap into Planning, Planning for Freedom, the Third Way, his trying to figure out how to put it into practice, as well as how to convince his new audience of its terrible urgency. Beginning, roughly, with Man and Society, and plainly in Diagnosis of Our Time and later writings, including the present book, sociology is primarily understood as our guide to avert our disaster and instead to reconstruct society and ourselves as individuals. Thus if the German Mannheim above all articulated sociology, he now above all promoted and applied it—while at the same time trying, as has been suggested, to assimilate his new setting as well as to disseminate what he had brought with him and was now learning. In part his energy did have to be devoted to new tasks; to put it differently, his passion was more multifaceted than it had been. Bramsted and Gerth frame a similar observation when they say that Mannheim was

a thinker to whom ‘thinking’ more and more meant the unity of diagnosis and therapy. The detached critical observer has grown into the political and social strategist who tries to understand so that others may be able to act.

Freedom, Power, and Democratic Planning, the preface to which is dated January 1947, the month Mannheim died, consists of three parts. The first, ‘Diagnosis of the Situation’, surveys social techniques that enable small minorities to exercise unprecedented power, and describes small-group and cooperative controls that have disintegrated, as well as systems of secular and religious beliefs that have lost their vitality. A review of the totalitarian responses to the crisis—the pessimistic answer of fascism and the utopian answer of communism—leads Mannheim to advocate his own response, democratic planning.

Part II (‘Democratic Planning and Changing Institutions’) develops what this means in regard to society, Part III (‘New Man—New Values’) what it means in regard to the individual. In contrast to the clarity of this overall structure, smaller units are sometimes less plausibly where they are or are less clearly pertinent. We have observed this insufficiently transparent orga-

103 Cf. the beginning of this introduction, just before I above; also XIX (4), the passage to which n. 81 refers.
104 Bramsted and Gerth, op. cit., p. xii.
nization of Mannheim’s work before. It may have to do with the less than transparent nature of his relation to his subject matter. This relation is composed of commitment and analysis, each of which makes Mannheim, moving back and forth between them, attract, like a magnet, bits of heterogeneous intellectual origins, among these themselves conative and cognitive ones, which in the rush of the exploration get placed sometimes more nearly wherever they fall rather than according to a plan, thus making for unsatisfactory organization.

Part II, for instance, opens with a chapter on power that is relevant to the announced purpose of the Part only here and there, especially in the last three sections. The remaining chapters of this Part deal with the ruling class (and many related phenomena) in totalitarian and democratic societies; with the ‘reformation of politics’, where specified controls of the social structure, the economy, the military and civil services, and of communication are advocated; and with the ‘democratic control of government’. Part III discusses ‘the new science of human behavior’ that has begun to replace custom, introduces the concept of ‘integrative behavior’ (cf. the ‘blended attitudes’ we must foster in youth), and, in connection with this, deals with subjective and objective aspects of responsibility. It analyzes the type of personality called for by democratic society and suggests measures for developing it, paying special attention to education in the more customary sense of this word. Other chapters discuss the meaning of work and leisure, and the potential conflict between freedom and discipline in planned society. The book closes with an inquiry—which supplements ‘Towards a New Philosophy’—into the integration of the social order through religion.

This cursory overview suggests the similarity between Man and Society and the present work, which, however, is more clearly written, is addressed to a wider audience, and is better worked out. The overview can also provide the context for discussing two passages from among many that serve to document our claims regarding Mannheim’s way of writing and the changing style of his life work.

The first passage occurs in the chapter, ‘The Reformation of Politics’. Mannheim points out that propaganda is misconceived if it is understood only as ‘the fine art of spreading lies and arousing dangerous emotions’. For it

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105 In XX (2) above.
106 Cf. XX (2) above.
107 There is a slight, probably remediable inconsistency when Mannheim writes: ‘The propagandist skilfully plays on fears and ecstasies which block or sweep away rational thought and judiciousness’ (p. 159).
can be fully appreciated only if one recognizes its most significant function, namely, the determination of the reality level on which people are going to discuss and act.

By 'reality level' we mean that every society develops a mental climate in which certain facts and their interrelations are considered basic and called 'real', whereas other ideas fall below the level of 'reasonably acceptable' statements and are called fantastic, utopian, or unrealistic. In every society there is a generally accepted interpretation of reality. [P. 138]

However 'reality level' may be defined more strictly, its determination does not define propaganda because this also is the function of religion, philosophy, and of other social institutions and customs. Nor can we assume without further argument that propaganda is found in all societies, as the passage appears to imply, rather than being a historical phenomenon. Mannheim cannot mean to identify 'propaganda' with 'a generally accepted interpretation of reality' or to use 'fact', 'idea', and 'statement', etc., synonymously. The passage gives us only a vague notion of its subject matter, and this is true of many passages in Mannheim's writing—whether more or less often and in the same sense in the English as compared with the German period could be decided only by a special investigation. Obviously a far more useful response to such passages than to discard them impatiently, no matter how tempted one might sometimes be, is to use them as an opportunity to clarify what Mannheim has left obscure.

Another aspect of the passage quoted is that it simply is silent about the grave epistemological problem raised by the proposition that propaganda determines the 'reality level'. The problem, of course, is what on such a relativistic view becomes of truth—a problem that used to occupy Mannheim the sociologist of knowledge. Now his devotion is directed, not to conceptual clarity and metaphysical responsibility, but to saving the West—an effort which might be critically delayed, somebody could argue, by the time needed for doing justice to conceptual and philosophical requirements. Indeed, Mannheim himself says: 'In our approach, social theory in many ways represents only a higher elaboration of the dynamic purposes behind an endless series of experiments designed to help man in his practical life toward new patterns of action' (p. 236).

A second passage illustrates a similar shift in regard to a closely related topic. In his discussion of 'integrative behavior'

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108 It is perhaps strange that in connection with this last expression Mannheim does not refer to Scheler's closely related 'relatively natural Weltanschauung': Scheler, op. cit. (notes 27 and 42 above), pp. 59 f. (Scheler is not mentioned in the whole volume—nor in XI above: see next note.)

109 On this, it may be recalled, see on a larger scale and as a central, rather than incidental concern as it is here, XI above.
Mannheim tries to clarify its meaning by contrasting it with 'compromise': 'The essence of democracy is the integration of purposes and not mere compromise', that is, mere 'rational adjustment between two or more opposing views' (p. 203). Here (as elsewhere in his English writings) Mannheim advocates a way of life and a society which would further it, and this advocacy is another variant of his change, another successor to his pre-Hitler concern with the problem of how to guarantee truth, of how to find the common element in conflicting views—a successor especially to one of his answers, the 'socially unattached intelligentsia', which we recently had occasion to recall. To be practicable as a vehicle of mediation, both the old 'intelligentsia' and the new 'integrative behavior' presuppose the presence of the most important element they are designed to produce, that is, the will to mediate, seek what is common, integrate. In Germany as well as in England, Mannheim must have taken this so for granted that he failed to perceive the need for explicating it in his conceptualization of the mediating mechanisms. Perhaps he realized in England that in Germany he had been under an illusion, but now no longer was—now that he was 'surprised by the absence of that chaotic diversity of hostile groups that had destroyed the Weimar Republic'. If so, the referent of the concept would have changed toward greater realism, but the problem of mediation in the absence of the will to it and the problem of how to create this will had remained and remains unsolved; nor had Mannheim even conceptualized these problems, or was conceptualizing them now in England.

The change, then, which he underwent as he moved from pre-Hitler Germany to England during and after Hitler was from analyst to a mixture of engagé and 'political and social strategist'. What presumably did not change was his conception of sociology as 'the most secularized approach to the problems of human life', nor, probably, his fascination with sociology so understood: 'Anyone who wants to drag in the irrational where the lucidity and acuity of reason still must rule by right merely shows that he is afraid to face the mystery at its legitimate place'.

What evidence we have does not suggest that his feeling for religion as 'mystery at its legitimate place' changed during his

110 End of XX (3) and n. 100.
111 Bramsted and Gerth, quoted in XIX, passage to which n. 77 refers.
112 Bramsted and Gerth, quoted in passage to which n. 104 refers.
113 XX (2), p. 127, quoted above and recalling VIII.
114 This passage from 'Competition as a Cultural Phenomenon' (XI) has been referred to more than once before (quoted in the beginning, before I; quoted and interpreted in a certain perspective in IX; cited at the end of XI).
115 Cf. I, last paragraph, above.
adult life; still, Mannheim might have accepted Albert Salomon’s description of the point that Mannheim, Salomon thought, had reached at the time of his death:

There is no sociology of knowledge, but of error; there is no sociology of aesthetics, but of fashions and tastes. ... [A contrary assumption is not] capable of motivating the principles of freedom and human dignity which remain the goal of Mannheim’s sociological theory of planning. Neither sociological nor psychological techniques of planning are of any avail if they do not create a frame of reference in which living and dying have some meaning.\(^{116}\)


*Systematic Sociology* appeared ten years after Mannheim’s death,\(^ {117}\) *Sociology of Education* fifteen;\(^ {118}\) and thus far, at least, they are his last posthumous works. But this is hardly the reason why here, too, they appear last; in fact, chronologically they might have to be placed earlier; instead, there are other, and interrelated, reasons. These two books come last because they are ‘least’: least like the first Mannheim, even less so than we have had occasion to remark in regard to some of his other slighter writings from his English period; least determinably by Mannheim himself, rather than by J. S. Erös and W. A. C. Stewart, the editors of *Systematic Sociology*, and, respectively, W. A. C. Stewart, the self-declared co-author of the *Sociology of Education*;\(^ {119}\) least, finally, but most importantly, in substance. The kind of


\(^{117}\) ‘The first three parts of this book [Man and His Psychic Equipment; The Most Elementary Social Processes; Social Integration] are based on the manuscript of Mannheim’s lectures on systematic sociology, first delivered during the academic session 1934–35 and, in slightly modified form, during the following sessions. Part Four of this book [Social Stability and Social Change] is based on some of the lectures in a course on social structure delivered during the war years.’ Editorial Preface, p. xi.

\(^{118}\) ‘There were few relatively complete manuscripts on which any section of this book could be based. Many, many fragments and notes, a very small number of complete lectures with the usual pause and accent markings, sheets of bibliographies, schemes for lecture courses, diagrams for ideas, characteristically bold and handsome doodlings—these constituted the materials from which the book has been constructed. Because I have had to be arbitrary in selection and to be freer in adapting and composing the material than an editor should be, I have coupled my name with Mannheim’s as co-author. While it is true that I have been more than an editor, it is clear that the basic ideas in the book are Karl Mannheim’s.’ Introduction, pp. xv–xvi.

\(^{119}\) See preceding note. The authorship of these two books appears to be even more difficult to ascertain than in the case of *Soc. Cult.*; cf. XVII above, introductory paragraphs.
literature both approach is that of textbooks, at which Mannheim may well impress one as rather inept. As a textbook *Systematic Sociology* is superior to the *Sociology of Education*, which seems to derive from far more fragmentary materials. *Systematic Sociology*, indeed, might be considered for revision, tightening the argument and bringing references up to date, then trying it out as an introductory text. Among its advantages over many other texts that are in use is its attention to both animal sociology and psychoanalysis; its concern—in the very beginning of an introduction to sociology—with ‘individualisation’ (esp. pp. 65 ff.); and its wide-cast net of references (a net, however, which is not always pulled up and inspected). Among its weaknesses are the absence or the poverty of definitions and many inadequate or inconclusive discussions, such as of ‘group’ and kinds of groups (pp. 82, 107–12), authority (p. 129), ‘values’ (pp. 131 ff.), or Marx and Marxism (pp. 137, 143, 144). Here too, Mannheim is the concerned reformer who opposes revolution:

If one takes it [the class struggle] as a tendency, there will only be struggle if through reform we are unable to remove those institutions which hamper the evolution of the modern economic system, and thus cause continuous crises in it. But on principle revolution can always be avoided if these transformations are carried out gradually and in a peaceful way. If from the very beginning we state that the struggle is, and must be, inevitable, we sap reform. On the other hand, one has of course always to be alive to the possibility that through frustration revolution may become unavoidable. [P. 145]

The last chapter (‘The Future’) of *An Introduction to the Sociology of Education* begins with what could serve as a motto for the book:

No educational activity or research is adequate in the present stage of consciousness unless it is conceived in terms of a sociology of education. [P. 159]

And while Mannheim misses no occasion to persuade the reader of the relevance of sociology, the book also contains many other kinds of material, such as expositions of theories of personality and of learning theories (according to which Freud plus Hull are better than either alone: p. 67; and dynamic psychology is superior to associationist psychology: p. 83). Against much confusion, which still prevails, Mannheim clearly distinguishes (Chapter II, pp. 12–18) between training (having to do with skills), instruction (with information), teaching (with interaction between teacher and student), and education (which goes far beyond school toward life-long ‘socialization’, a term Mannheim does not use in this sense); this ‘broader definition of education’ (p. 19), he believes, has arisen because of the ‘spread of democracy, the greater mastery of the social environment, and the importance
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of the community as well as the home as an educational agency’ (p. 20). His concern with education is genuine, and far more so than his concern with analyzing it—‘it’ referring to both concern and education—in its connectedness with the economy and with questions of economy:

... While everybody admits that perhaps the most pressing international problem is that of poverty in the midst of plenty, we have to add that we can have barbarism in the midst of educational plenty. [P. 6]

And so (for instance) he only writes (in ‘Sociology for the Educator’)

The economics of a society can be pretty clearly seen in the class structure and conflict and the importance attached to the various forms of property control... In a capitalist or mixed economy ownership is in the hands of individuals or groups of individuals and educators have to understand the motivations to which these different points of view give rise, because they will help to establish the attitudes of parents and children and of the teachers themselves, to the institution of school. [P. 151]

... Basing himself on Max Weber, Mannheim distinguishes ‘charismatic education’, ‘education for culture’, and ‘specialist education’ (p. 161; without relating this typology to that developed in Chapter II). ‘Specialist education’, he says—and people today may well be more receptive to his words than when he pronounced them—‘produces the necessary cogs and wheels in the social machine’, but it ‘disintegrates both the personality and the mental powers for understanding the human situation which has to be mastered’ (p. 161).

xxiii. Invitation, Not Conclusion

This was the last thing to write about the last book which has to do with Mannheim’s own writing; and everything ends abruptly: the section just finished, the reading of his life, his life itself. The reading of his life is this life conceived as read, a process of expressing an interaction with Karl Mannheim as he expressed himself from beginning to end. There is no summing up, no summary, no conclusion—all of this, too, instead, is in the reading, for anybody who so wishes to tease out. And in this reading, intensity and thoroughness, just as boredom or hurry, are responses to Mannheim’s own expression, which also was variable, although the fundamental turn occurred in 1933. A second expression of interaction with him is the choice of his writings

120 Part of a lecture, ‘Sociology and Education’, delivered by Mannheim in 1943, on which, the editor informs us (p. 143n.), Chapter XIV, ‘Sociology for the Educator and the Sociology of Education’, is based.
contained in this volume. But both expressions are not only the results of interaction. Obviously they also have a function: that of inviting the reader to engage in his own interaction with their source.

*Newton, Massachusetts*
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