II. IDEOLOGY AND UTOPIA

1. Definition of Concepts

In order to understand the present situation of thought, it is necessary to start with the problems of " ideology ". For most people, the term " ideology " is closely bound up with Marxism, and their reactions to the term are largely determined by the association. It is therefore first necessary to state that although Marxism contributed a great deal to the original statement of the problem, both the word and its meaning go farther back in history than Marxism, and ever since its time new meanings of the word have emerged, which have taken shape independently of it.

There is no better introduction to the problem than the analysis of the meaning of the term " ideology " : firstly we have to disentangle all the different shades of meaning which are blended here into a pseudo-unity, and a more precise statement of the variations in the meanings of the concept, as it is used to-day, will prepare the way for its sociological and historical analysis. Such an analysis will show that in general there are two distinct and separable meanings of the term " ideology "—the particular and the total.

The particular conception of ideology is implied when the term denotes that we are sceptical of the ideas and representations advanced by our opponent. They are regarded as more or less conscious disguises of the real nature of a situation, the true recognition of which would not be in accord with his interests. These distortions range all the way from conscious lies to half-conscious and unwitting disguises ; from calculated attempts to dupe others to self-deception. This conception of ideology, which has only gradually become differentiated from the common-sense notion of the lie is particular in several senses. Its particularity becomes evident when it is contrasted with the more inclusive total conception of ideology. Here we refer to the ideology of an age or of a concrete historico-social group, e.g. of a class, when we are concerned with the characteristics

and composition of the total structure of the mind of this epoch or of this group.

The common as well as the distinctive elements of the two concepts are readily evident. The common element in these two conceptions seems to consist in the fact that neither relies solely on what is actually said by the opponent in order to reach an understanding of his real meaning and intention.[1] Both fall back on the subject, whether individual or group, proceeding to an understanding of what is said by the indirect method of analysing the social conditions of the individual or his group. The ideas expressed by the subject are thus regarded as functions of his existence. This means that opinions, statements, propositions, and systems of ideas are not taken at their face value but are interpreted in the light of the life-situation of the one who expresses them. It signifies further that the specific character and life-situation of the subject influence his opinions, perceptions, and interpretations.

Both these conceptions of ideology, accordingly, make these so-called " ideas " a function of him who holds them, and of his position in his social milieu. Although they have something in common, there are also significant differences between them. Of the latter we mention merely the most important :—

(*a*) Whereas the particular conception of ideology designates only a part of the opponent's assertions as ideologies—and this only with reference to their content, the total conception calls into question the opponent's total *Weltanschauung* (including his conceptual apparatus), and attempts to understand these concepts as an outgrowth of the collective life of which he partakes.

(*b*) The particular conception of " ideology " makes its analysis of ideas on a purely psychological level. If it is claimed for instance that an adversary is lying, or that he is concealing or distorting a given factual situation, it is still nevertheless assumed that both parties share common criteria of validity—it is still assumed that it is possible to refute lies and eradicate sources of error by referring to accepted criteria of objective validity

[1] If the interpretation relies solely upon that which is actually said we shall speak of an " immanent interpretation " : if it transcends these data, implying thereby an analysis of the subject's life-situation, we shall speak of a " transcendental interpretation ". A typology of these various forms of interpretation is to be found in the author's " Ideologische und soziologische Interpretation der geistigen Gebilde ", *Jahrbuch für Soziologie*, vol. ii (Karlsruhe, 1926), p. 424 ff.

common to both parties. The suspicion that one's opponent is the victim of an ideology does not go so far as to exclude him from discussion on the basis of a common theoretical frame of reference. The case is different with the total conception of ideology. When we attribute to one historical epoch one intellectual world and to ourselves another one, or if a certain historically determined social stratum thinks in categories other than our own, we refer not to the isolated cases of thought-content, but to fundamentally divergent thought-systems and to widely differing modes of experience and interpretation. We touch upon the theoretical or noological level whenever we consider not merely the content but also the form, and even the conceptual framework of a mode of thought as a function of the life situation of a thinker. " The economic categories are only the theoretical expressions, the abstractions, of the social relations of production. . . . The same men who establish social relations conformably with their material productivity, produce also the principles, the ideas, the categories, conformably with their social relations." (Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, being a translation of *Misère de la Philosophie*, with a preface by Frederick Engels, translated by H. Quelch, Chicago, 1910, p. 119.) These are the two ways of analysing statements as functions of their social background ; the first operates only on the psychological, the second on the noological level.

(*c*) Corresponding to this difference, the particular conception of ideology operates primarily with a psychology of interests, while the total conception uses a more formal functional analysis, without any reference to motivations, confining itself to an objective description of the structural differences in minds operating in different social settings. The former assumes that this or that interest is the cause of a given lie or deception. The latter presupposes simply that there is a correspondence between a given social situation and a given perspective, point of view, or apperception mass. In this case, while an analysis of constellations of interests may often be necessary it is not to establish causal connections but to characterize the total situation. Thus interest psychology tends to be displaced by an analysis of the correspondence between the situation to be known and the forms of knowledge.

Since the particular conception never actually departs from the psychological level, the point of reference in such analyses is always the individual. This is the case even when we are

dealing with groups, since all psychic phenomena must finally be reduced to the minds of individuals. The term "group ideology" occurs frequently, to be sure, in popular speech. Group existence in this sense can only mean that a group of persons, either in their immediate reactions to the same situation or as a result of direct psychic interaction, react similarly. Accordingly, conditioned by the same social situation, they are subject to the same illusions. If we confine our observations to the mental processes which take place in the individual and regard him as the only possible bearer of ideologies, we shall never grasp in its totality the structure of the intellectual world belonging to a social group in a given historical situation. Although this mental world as a whole could never come into existence without the experiences and productive responses of the different individuals, its inner structure is not to be found in a mere integration of these individual experiences. The individual members of the working-class, for instance, do not experience *all* the elements of an outlook which could be called the proletarian *Weltanschauung*. Every individual participates only in certain fragments of this thought-system, the totality of which is not in the least a mere sum of these fragmentary individual experiences. As a totality the thought-system is integrated systematically, and is no mere casual jumble of fragmentary experiences of discrete members of the group. Thus it follows that the individual can only be considered as the bearer of an ideology as long as we deal with that conception of ideology which, by definition, is directed more to detached contents than to the whole structure of thought, uncovering false ways of thought and exposing lies. As soon as the total conception of ideology is used, we attempt to reconstruct the whole outlook of a social group, and neither the concrete individuals nor the abstract sum of them can legitimately be considered as bearers of this ideological thought-system as a whole. The aim of the analysis on this level is the reconstruction of the systematic theoretical basis underlying the single judgments of the individual. Analyses of ideologies in the particular sense, making the content of individual thought largely dependent on the interests of the subject, can never achieve this basic reconstruction of the whole outlook of a social group. They can at best reveal the collective psychological aspects of ideology, or lead to some development of mass psychology, dealing either with the different behaviour of the individual in the crowd, or

with the results of the mass integration of the psychic experiences of many individuals. And although the collective-psychological aspect may very often approach the problems of the total ideological analysis, it does not answer its questions exactly. It is one thing to know how far my attitudes and judgments are influenced and altered by the co-existence of other human beings, but it is another thing to know what are the theoretical implications of my mode of thought which are identical with those of my fellow members of the group or social stratum.

We content ourselves here merely with stating the issue without attempting a thorough-going analysis of the difficult methodological problems which it raises.

2. The Concept Ideology in Historical Perspective

Just as the particular and total conceptions of ideology can be distinguished from one another on the basis of their differences in meaning, so the historical origins of these two concepts may also be differentiated even though in reality they are always intertwined. We do not as yet possess an adequate historical treatment of the development of the concept of ideology, to say nothing of a sociological history of the many variations [1]

[1] As a partial bibliography of the problem, the author indicates the following of his own works :—

Mannheim, K., " Das Problem einer Soziologie des Wissens," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 1925, vol. 54.

Mannheim, K., " Ideologische und soziologische Interpretation der geistigen Gebilde," *Jahrbuch für Soziologie*, edited by Gottfried Salomon, ii (Karlsruhe, 1926), pp. 424 ff.

Other relevant materials are to be found in :—

Krug, W. T., *Allgemeines Handwörterbuch der philosophischen Wissenschaften nebst ihrer Literatur und Geschichte*, 2nd edit., Leipzig, 1833

Eisler's *Philosophisches Wörterbuch.*

Lalande, *Vocabulaire de la philosophie* (Paris, 1926).

Salomon, G., " Historischer Materialismus und Ideologienlehre ", *Jahrbuch für Soziologie*, ii, pp. 386 ff.

Ziegler, H. O., " Ideologienlehre," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 57, pp. 657 ff.

The majority of the studies of ideology never reach the level of attempting a systematic analysis, confining themselves usually to historical references or to the most general considerations. As examples, we cite the well-known works of Max Weber, Georg Lukács, Carl Schmitt, and more recently—

Kelsen, Hans, " Die philosophischen Grundlagen der Naturrechtslehre und der Rechtspositivismus," No. 31 of the *Vorträge der Kant Gesellschaft*, 1928.

The standard works of W. Sombart, Max Scheler, and Franz Oppenheimer are too widely known to require detailed reference.

In a wider connection the following studies are of especial interest :—

Riezler, K., " Idee und Interesse in der politischen Geschichte," *Die Dioskuren*, vol. iii (Munich, 1924). (*Continued on p. 54*).

in its meaning. Even if we were in a position to do so, it would not be our task, for the purposes we have in mind, to write a history of the changing meanings in the concept of ideology. Our aim is simply to present such facts from the scattered evidence as will most clearly exhibit the distinction between the two terms made in the previous chapter, and to trace the process which gradually led to the refined and specialized meaning which the terms have come to possess. Corresponding to the dual meaning of the term ideology which we have designated here as the particular and total conceptions, respectively, are two distinct currents of historical development.

The distrust and suspicion which men everywhere evidence towards their adversaries, at all stages of historical development, may be regarded as the immediate precursor of the notion of ideology. But it is only when the distrust of man toward man, which is more or less evident at every stage of human history, becomes explicit and is methodically recognized, that we may properly speak of an ideological taint in the utterances of others. We arrive at this level when we no longer make individuals personally responsible for the deceptions which we detect in their utterances, and when we no longer attribute the evil that they do to their malicious cunning. It is only when we more or less consciously seek to discover the source of their untruthfulness in a social factor, that we are properly making an ideological interpretation. We begin to treat our adversary's views as ideologies only when we no longer consider them as calculated lies and when we sense in his total behaviour an unreliability which we regard as a function of the social situation in which he finds himself. The particular conception of ideology therefore signifies a phenomenon intermediate between a simple lie at one pole, and an error, which is the result of a distorted and faulty conceptual apparatus, at the other. It refers to a sphere of errors, psychological in nature, which, unlike deliberate deception, are not intentional, but follow inevitably and unwittingly from certain causal determinants.

(*Note continued from p. 53.*)

Szende, Paul, *Verhüllung und Enthüllung* (Leipzig, 1922).

Adler, Georg, *Die Bedeutung der Illusionen für Politik und soziales Leben* (Jena, 1904).

Jankelevitch, " Du rôle des idées dans l'évolution des sociétés," *Revue philosophique*, vol. 66, 1908, pp. 256 ff.

Millioud, M., " La formation de l'idéal," ibid., pp. 138 ff.

Dietrich, A., " Kritik der politischen Ideologien," *Archiv für Geschichte und Politik*, 1923.

According to this interpretation, Bacon's theory of the *idola* may be regarded to a certain extent as a forerunner of the modern conception of ideology. The " idols " were " phantoms " or " preconceptions ", and there were, as we know, the idols of the tribe, of the cave, of the market, and of the theatre. All of these are sources of error derived sometimes from human nature itself, sometimes from particular individuals. They may also be attributed to society or to tradition. In any case, they are obstacles in the path to true knowledge.[1] There is certainly some connection between the modern term " ideology " and the term as used by Bacon, signifying a source of error. Furthermore, the realization that society and tradition may become sources of error is a direct anticipation of the sociological point of view.[2] Nevertheless, it cannot be claimed that there is an actual relationship, directly traceable through the history of thought, between this and the modern conception of ideology.

It is extremely probable that everyday experience with political affairs first made man aware of and critical toward the ideological element in his thinking. During the Renaissance, among the fellow citizens of Machiavelli, there arose a new

[1] A characteristic passage from Bacon's *Novum Organum*, § 38. " The idols and false notions which have already preoccupied the human understanding and are deeply rooted in it, not only so beset men's minds that they become difficult of access, but even when access is obtained will again meet, and trouble us in the instauration of the sciences, unless mankind when forewarned guard themselves with all possible care against them," *The Physical and Metaphysical Works of Lord Bacon* (including the *Advancement of Learning* and *Novum Organum*). Edited by Joseph Devey, p. 389. G. Bell and Sons (London, 1891).

[2] " There are also idols formed by the reciprocal intercourse and society of man with man, which we call idols of the market from the commerce and association of men with each other ; for men converse by means of language, but words are formed at the will of the generality, and there arises from a bad and unapt formation of words a wonderful obstruction to the mind." Bacon, op. cit., p. 390, § 43. Cf. also § 59.

On " the idol of tradition " Bacon says :—

" The human understanding, when any proposition has once been laid down (either from general admission and belief, or from the pleasure it affords), forces everything else to add fresh support and confirmation : and although most cogent and abundant instances exist to the contrary, yet either does not observe or despises them or gets rid of and rejects them by some distinction, with violent and injurious prejudice, rather than sacrifice the authority of its first conclusion." Op. cit., § 46, p. 392.

That we are confronted here with a source of error is evinced by the following passage :—

" The human understanding resembles not a dry light, but admits a tincture of the will and passions, which generate their own system accordingly, for man always believes more readily that which he prefers." Op cit., § 49, pp. 393–4. Cf. also § 52.

adage calling attention to a common observation of the time—namely that the thought of the palace is one thing, and that of the public square is another.[1] This was an expression of the increasing degree to which the public was gaining access to the secrets of politics. Here we may observe the beginning of the process in the course of which what had formerly been merely an occasional outburst of suspicion and scepticism toward public utterances developed into a methodical search for the ideological element in all of them. The diversity of the ways of thought among men is even at this stage attributed to a factor which might, without unduly stretching the term, be denominated as sociological. Machiavelli, with his relentless rationality, made it his special task to relate the variations in the opinions of men to the corresponding variations in their interests. Accordingly when he prescribes a *medicina forte* for every bias of the interested parties in a controversy,[2] he seems to be making explicit and setting up as a general rule of thought what was implicit in the common-sense adage of his time.

There seems to be a straight line leading from this point in the intellectual orientation of the Western world to the rational and calculating mode of thought characteristic of the period of the Enlightenment. The psychology of interests seems to flow from the same source. One of the chief characteristics of the method of rational analysis of human behaviour, exemplified by Hume's *History of England*, was the presupposition that men were given to " feigning " [3] and to deceiving their fellows. The same characteristic is found in contemporary historians who operate with the particular conception of ideology. This mode of thought will always strive in accordance with the psychology of interests to cast doubt upon the integrity of the adversary and to deprecate his motives. This procedure, nevertheless, has positive value as long as in a given case we are interested in discovering the genuine meaning of a statement that lies concealed behind a camouflage of words. This " debunking " tendency in the thought of our time has become very marked.[4]

[1] Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, vol. ii, p. 47. Cited by Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson* (Munich and Berlin, 1925), p. 40.

[2] Cf. Meinecke, ibid.

[3] Meusel, Fr., *Edmund Burke und die französische Revolution* (Berlin 1913), p. 102, note 3.

[4] Carl Schmitt analysed this characteristic contemporary manner of thought very well when he said that we are in continual fear of being

And even though in wide circles this trait is considered undignified and disrespectful (and indeed in so far as " debunking " is an end in itself, the criticism is justified), this intellectual position is forced upon us in an era of transition like our own, which finds it necessary to break with many antiquated traditions and forms.

3. From the Particular to the Total Conception of Ideology

It must be remembered that the unmasking which takes place on the psychological level is not to be confused with the more radical scepticism and the more thoroughgoing and devastating critical analysis which proceeds on the ontological and noological levels. But the two cannot be completely separated. The same historical forces that bring about continuous transformations in one are also operative in the other. In the former, psychological illusions are constantly being undermined, in the latter, ontological and logical formulations arising out of given world-views and modes of thought are dissolved in a conflict between the interested parties. Only in a world in upheaval, in which fundamental new values are being created and old ones destroyed, can intellectual conflict go so far that antagonists will seek to annihilate not merely the specific beliefs and attitudes of one another, but also the intellectual foundations upon which these beliefs and attitudes rest.

As long as the conflicting parties lived in and tried to represent the same world, even though they were at opposite poles in that world, or as long as one feudal clique fought against its equal, such a thoroughgoing mutual destruction was inconceivable. This profound disintegration of intellectual unity is possible only when the basic values of the contending groups are worlds apart. At first, in the course of this ever-deepening disintegration, naïve distrust becomes transformed into a systematic particular notion of ideology, which, however, remains on the psychological plane. But, as the process continues, it extends to the noological-epistemological sphere. The rising bourgeoisie which brought with it a new set of values was not content with merely being assigned a circumscribed place within

misled. Consequently we are perpetually on guard against disguises, sublimations, and refractions. He points out that the word *simulacra*, which appeared in the political literature of the seventeenth century, may be regarded as a forerunner of the present attitude (*Politische Romantik*, 2nd edit., (Munich and Leipzig, 1925), p. 19).

the old feudal order. It represented a new " economic system " (in Sombart's sense), accompanied by a new style of thought which ultimately displaced the existing modes of interpreting and explaining the world. The same seems to be true of the proletariat to-day as well. Here too we note a conflict between two divergent economic views, between two social systems, and, correspondingly, between two styles of thought.

What were the steps in the history of ideas that prepared the way for the total conception of ideology? Certainly it did not merely arise out of the attitude of mistrust which gradually gave rise to the particular conception of ideology. More fundamental steps had to be taken before the numerous tendencies of thought moving in the same general direction could be synthesized into the total conception of ideology. Philosophy played a part in the process, but not philosophy in the narrow sense (as it is usually conceived) as a discipline divorced from the actual context of living. Its role was rather that of the ultimate and fundamental interpreter of the flux in the contemporary world. This cosmos in flux is in its turn to be viewed as a series of conflicts arising out of the nature of the mind and its responses to the continually changing structure of the world. We shall indicate here only the principal stages in the emergence of the total conception of ideology on the noological and ontological levels.

The first significant step in this direction consisted in the development of a philosophy of consciousness. The thesis that consciousness is a unity consisting of coherent elements sets a problem of investigation which, especially in Germany, has been the basis of monumental attempts at analysis. The philosophy of consciousness has put in place of an infinitely variegated and confused world an organization of experience the unity of which is guaranteed by the unity of the perceiving subject. This does not imply that the subject merely reflects the structural pattern of the external world, but rather that, in the course of his experience with the world, he spontaneously evolves the principles of organization that enable him to understand it. After the objective ontological unity of the world had been demolished, the attempt was made to substitute for it a unity imposed by the perceiving subject. In the place of the medieval-Christian objective and ontological unity of the world, there emerged the subjective unity of the absolute subject of the Enlightenment— " consciousness in itself."

Henceforth the world as " world " exists only with reference

to the knowing mind, and the mental activity of the subject determines the form in which the world appears. This constitutes in fact the embryonic total conception of ideology, though it is, as yet, devoid of its historical and sociological implications.

At this stage, the world is conceived as a structural unity, and no longer as a plurality of disparate events as it seemed to be in the intermediate period when the breakdown of the objective order seemed to bring chaos. It is related in its entirety to a subject, but in this case the subject is not a concrete individual. It is rather a fictitious "consciousness in itself". In this view, which is particularly pronounced in Kant, the noological level is sharply differentiated from the psychological one. This is the first stage in the dissolution of an ontological dogmatism which regarded the "world" as existing independently of us, in a fixed and definitive form.

The second stage in the development of the total conception of ideology is attained when the total but super-temporal notion of ideology is seen in historical perspective. This is mainly the accomplishment of Hegel and the Historical school. The latter, and Hegel to an even greater degree, start from the assumption that the world is a unity and is conceivable only with reference to a knowing subject. And now at this point, what is for us a decisive new element is added to the conception—namely, that this unity is in a process of continual historical transformation and tends to a constant restoration of its equilibrium on still higher levels. During the Enlightenment the subject, as carrier of the unity of consciousness, was viewed as a wholly abstract, super-temporal, and super-social entity: "consciousness in itself." During this period the *Volksgeist*, "folk spirit," comes to represent the historically differentiated elements of consciousness, which are integrated by Hegel into the "world spirit". It is evident that the increasing concreteness of this type of Philosophy results from the more immediate concern with the ideas arising from social interaction and the incorporation of historical-political currents of thought into the domain of philosophy. Thenceforth, however, the experiences of everyday life are no longer accepted at face value, but are thought through in all their implications and are traced back to their presuppositions. It should be noted, however, that the historically changing nature of mind was discovered not so much by philosophy as by the penetration of political insight into the everyday life of the time.

The reaction following upon the unhistorical thought of the period of the French Revolution revitalized and gave new impetus to the historical perspective. In the last analysis, the transition from the general, abstract, world-unifying subject ("consciousness in itself") to the more concrete subject (the nationally differentiated "folk spirit") was not so much a philosophical achievement as it was the expression of a transformation in the manner of reacting to the world in all realms of experience. This change may be traced to the revolution in popular sentiment during and after the Napoleonic Wars when the feeling of nationality was actually born. The fact that more remote antecedents may be found for both the historical perspective and the *Volksgeist* does not detract from the validity of this observation.[1]

The final and most important step in the creation of the total conception of ideology likewise arose out of the historical-social process. When "class" took the place of "folk" or nation as the bearer of the historically evolving consciousness, the same theoretical tradition, to which we have already referred, absorbed the realization which meanwhile had grown up through the social process, namely—that the structure of society and its corresponding intellectual forms vary with the relations between social classes.

Just as at an earlier time, the historically differentiated "folk spirit" took the place of "consciousness as such", so now the concept of *Volksgeist*, which is still too inclusive, is replaced by the concept of class consciousness, or more correctly class ideology. Thus the development of these ideas follows a two-fold trend—on the one hand, there is a synthesizing and integrating process through which the concept of consciousness comes to furnish a unitary centre in an infinitely variable world; and on the other, there is a constant attempt to make more pliable and flexible the unitary conception which has been too rigidly and too schematically formulated in the course of the synthesizing process.

[1] For future reference, we state here that the sociology of knowledge, unlike the orthodox history of ideas, does not aim at tracing ideas back to all their remote historical prototypes. For if one is bent on tracing similar *motifs* in thought to their ultimate origins, it is always possible to find "precursors" for every idea. There is nothing which has been said, which has not been said before (*Nullum est iam dictum, quod non sit dictum prius*). The proper theme of our study is to observe how and in what form intellectual life at a given historical moment is related to the existing social and political forces. Cf. my study, "Das konservative Denken," loc. cit., p. 103, note 57.

The result of this dual tendency is that instead of a fictional unity of a timeless, unchanging "consciousness as such" (which was never actually demonstrable) we get a conception which varies in accordance with historic periods, nations, and social classes. In the course of this transition, we continue to cling to the unity of consciousness, but this unity is now dynamic and in constant process of becoming. This accounts for the fact that despite the surrender of the static conception of consciousness, the growing body of material discovered by historical research does not remain an incoherent and discontinuous mass of discrete events. This latest conception of consciousness provides a more adequate perspective for the comprehension of historical reality.

Two consequences flow from this conception of consciousness: first we clearly perceive that human affairs cannot be understood by an isolation of their elements. Every fact and event in an historical period is only explicable in terms of meaning, and meaning in its turn always refers to another meaning. Thus the conception of the unity and interdependence of meaning in a period always underlies the interpretation of that period. Secondly, this interdependent system of meanings varies both in all its parts and in its totality from one historical period to another. Thus the re-interpretation of that continuous and coherent change in meaning becomes the main concern of our modern historical sciences. Although Hegel has probably done more than anyone else in emphasizing the need for integrating the various elements of meaning in a given historical experience, he proceeded in a speculative manner, while we have arrived at a stage of development where we are able to translate this constructive notion, given us by the philosophers, into empirical research.

What is significant for us is that although we separated them in our analysis, the two currents which led to the particular and total conceptions of ideology, respectively, and which have approximately the same historical origin, now begin to approach one another more closely. The particular conception of ideology merges with the total. This becomes apparent to the observer in the following manner: previously, one's adversary, as the representative of a certain political-social position, was accused of conscious or unconscious falsification. Now, however, the critique is more thoroughgoing in that, having discredited the total structure of his consciousness, we consider him no longer

capable of thinking correctly. This simple observation means, in the light of a structural analysis of thought, that in earlier attempts to discover the sources of error, distortion was uncovered only on the psychological plane by pointing out the personal roots of intellectual bias. The annihilation is now more thoroughgoing since the attack is made on the noological level and the validity of the adversary's theories is undermined by showing that they are merely a function of the generally prevailing social situation. Herewith a new and perhaps the most decisive stage in the history of modes of thought has been reached. It is difficult, however, to deal with this development without first analysing some of its fundamental implications. The total conception of ideology raises a problem which has frequently been adumbrated before, but which now for the first time acquires broader significance, namely the problem of how such a thing as the " false consciousness " (*falsches Bewusstsein*) —the problem of the totally distorted mind which falsifies everything which comes within its range—could ever have arisen. It is the awareness that our total outlook as distinguished from its details may be distorted, which lends to the total conception of ideology a special significance and relevance for the understanding of our social life. Out of this recognition grows the profound disquietude which we feel in our present intellectual situation, but out of it grows also whatever in it is fruitful and stimulating.

4. Objectivity and Bias

The suspicion that there might be such a thing as " false consciousness ", every cognition of which is necessarily wrong, where the lie lay in the soul, dates back to antiquity. It is of religious origin, and has come down to us as part of our ancient intellectual heritage. It appears as a problem whenever the genuineness of a prophet's inspiration or vision is questioned either by his people or by himself.[1]

Here we seem to have an instance where an age-old conception underlies a modern epistemological idea, and one is tempted to assert that the essence of the observation was already present in the older treatment ; what is new is only its form. But

[1] " Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world," 1 John, iv, 1.

here, too, as elsewhere, we must maintain, in opposition to those who attempt to derive everything from the past, that the modern form taken by the idea is much more important than its origin. Whereas formerly, the suspicion that there might be such a thing as " false consciousness " was only a statement of observed fact, to-day, working with clearly defined analytical methods, we have been able to make a more fundamental attack on the problems of consciousness. What was formerly a mere traditional anathema, has in our time been transformed into a methodical procedure resting upon scientific demonstration.

Of even greater importance is the change which we are about to discuss. Since the problem has been torn out of its purely religious context, not only have the methods of proof, of demonstrating the falsity or truth of an insight changed, but even the scale of values by which we measure truth and falsity, reality and unreality have been profoundly transformed. When the prophet doubted the genuineness of his vision it was because he felt himself deserted by God, and his disquietude was based upon a transcendental source of reference. When, on the contrary, we, of to-day, become critical of our own ideas, it is because we fear that they do not measure up to some more secular criterion.

To determine the exact nature of the new criterion of reality which superseded the transcendental one, we must subject the meaning of the word " ideology " also in this respect to a more precise historical analysis. If, in the course of such an analysis, we are led to deal with the language of everyday life, this simply indicates that the history of thought is not confined to books alone, but gets its chief meaning from the experiences of everyday life, and even the main changes in the evaluations of different spheres of reality as they appear in philosophy eventually go back to the shifting values of the everyday world.

The word " ideology " itself had, to begin with, no inherent ontological significance; it did not include any decision as to the value of different spheres of reality, since it originally denoted merely the theory of ideas. The ideologists,[1] were, as we know,

[1] Cf. Picavet, *Les idéologues, essai sur l'histoire des idées et des théories scientifiques, philosophiques, réligieuses en France depuis 1789* (Paris, Alcan, 1891).

Destutt de Tracy, the founder of the above-mentioned school, defines the science of ideas as follows : " The science may be called ideology, if one considers only the subject-matter ; general grammar, if one considers only the methods ; and logic, if one considers only the purpose. Whatever the name, it necessarily contains these three subdivisions, since one cannot be treated adequately without also treating the two others. Ideology

the members of a philosophical group in France who, in the tradition of Condillac, rejected metaphysics and sought to base the cultural sciences on anthropological and psychological foundations.

The modern conception of ideology was born when Napoleon, finding that this group of philosophers was opposing his imperial ambitions, contemptuously labelled them " ideologists ". Thereby the word took on a derogatory meaning which, like the word " doctrinaire ", it has retained to the present day. However, if the theoretical implications of this contempt are examined, it will be found that the depreciative attitude involved is, at bottom, of an epistemological and ontological nature. What is depreciated is the validity of the adversary's thought because it is regarded as unrealistic. But if one asked further, unrealistic with reference to what ?—the answer would be, unrealistic with reference to practice, unrealistic when contrasted with the affairs that transpire in the political arena. Thenceforth, all thought labelled as " ideology " is regarded as futile when it comes to practice, and the only reliable access to reality is to be sought in practical activity. When measured by the standards of practical conduct, mere thinking or reflection on a given situation turns out to be trivial. It is thus clear how the new meaning of the term ideology bears the imprint of the position and the point of view of those who coined it, namely, the political men of action. The new word gives sanction to the specific experience of the politician with reality,[1] and it lends support to that practical irrationality which has so little appreciation for thought as an instrument for grasping reality.

During the nineteenth century, the term ideology, used in this sense, gained wide currency. This signifies that the politician's feeling for reality took precedence over and displaced the scholastic, contemplative modes of thought and of life. Henceforward the problem implicit in the term ideology—what is really real ?—never disappeared from the horizon.

But this transition needs to be correctly understood. The

seems to me to be the generic term because the science of ideas subsumes both that of their expression and that of their derivation." *Les éléments de l'idéologie*, 1st edit. (Paris, 1801), cited from the 3rd edit., the only one available to me (Paris, 1817), p. 4 n.

[1] From the conclusions of Part III it would be possible to define more exactly, according to the social position he occupies, the type of politician whose conception of the world and whose ontology we are here discussing, for not every politician is addicted to this irrational ontology. Cf. pp. 119 ff.).

question as to what constitutes reality is by no means a new one; but that the question should arise in the arena of public discussion (and not just in isolated academic circles) seems to indicate an important change. The new connotation which the word ideology acquired, because it was redefined by the politician in terms of his experiences, seems to show a decisive turn in the formulation of the problem of the nature of reality. If, therefore, we are to rise to the demands put upon us by the need for analysing modern thought, we must see to it that a sociological history of ideas concerns itself with the actual thought of society, and not merely with self-perpetuating and supposedly self-contained systems of ideas elaborated within a rigid academic tradition. If erroneous knowledge was formerly checked by appeal to divine sanction, which unfailingly revealed the true and the real, or by pure contemplation, in which true ideas were supposedly discovered, at present the criterion of reality is found primarily in an ontology derived from political experience. The history of the concept of ideology from Napoleon to Marxism, despite changes in content, has retained the same political criterion of reality. This historical example shows, at the same time, that the pragmatic point of view was already implicit in the accusation which Napoleon hurled at his adversaries. Indeed we may say that for modern man pragmatism has, so to speak, become in some respects, the inevitable and appropriate outlook, and that philosophy in this case has simply appropriated this outlook and from it proceeded to its logical conclusion.

We have called attention to the nuance of meaning which Napoleon gave to the word ideology in order to show clearly that common speech often contains more philosophy and is of greater significance for the further statement of problems than academic disputes which tend to become sterile because they fail to take cognizance of the world outside the academic walls.[1]

We are carried a step farther in our analysis, and are able to bring out another aspect of this problem by referring to the example just cited in another connection. In the struggle which Napoleon carried on against his critics, he was able, as we have

[1] Concerning the structure and peculiarities of scholastic thought, and, for that matter, every type of thought enjoying a monopolistic position, cf. the author's paper delivered in Zürich at the Sixth Congress of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, " Die Bedeutung der Konkurrenz im Gebiete des Geistigen," *Verhandlungen des sechsten deutschen Soziologentages in Zürich* (J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1929).

seen, by reason of his dominant position to discredit them by pointing out the ideological nature of their thinking. In later stages of its development, the word ideology is used as a weapon by the proletariat against the dominant group. In short, such a revealing insight into the basis of thought as that offered by the notion of ideology cannot, in the long run, remain the exclusive privilege of one class. But it is precisely this expansion and diffusion of the ideological approach which leads finally to a juncture at which it is no longer possible for one point of view and interpretation to assail all others as ideological without itself being placed in the position of having to meet that challenge. In this manner we arrive inadvertently at a new methodological stage in the analysis of thought in general.

There were indeed times when it seemed as if it were the prerogative of the militant proletariat to use the ideological analysis to unmask the hidden motives of its adversaries. The public was quick to forget the historical origin of the term which we have just indicated, and not altogether unjustifiably, for although recognized before, this critical approach to thought was first emphasized and methodically developed by Marxism. It was Marxist theory which first achieved a fusion of the particular and total conceptions of ideology. It was this theory which first gave due emphasis to the role of class position and class interests in thought. Due largely to the fact that it originated in Hegelianism, Marxism was able to go beyond the mere psychological level of analysis and to posit the problem in a more comprehensive, philosophical setting. The notion of a " false consciousness " [1] hereby acquired a new meaning.

Marxist thought attached such decisive significance to political practice conjointly with the economic interpretation of events, that these two became the ultimate criteria for disentangling what is mere ideology from those elements in thought which are more immediately relevant to reality. Consequently it is no wonder that the conception of ideology is usually regarded as integral to, and even identified with, the Marxist proletarian movement.

But in the course of more recent intellectual and social developments, however, this stage has already been passed. It is no longer the exclusive privilege of socialist thinkers

[1] The expression " false consciousness " (*falsches Bewusstsein*) is itself Marxist in origin. Cf. Mehring, Franz, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, i, 386; cf. also Salomon, op. cit., p. 147.

to trace bourgeois thought to ideological foundations and thereby to discredit it. Nowadays groups of every standpoint use this weapon against all the rest. As a result we are entering upon a new epoch in social and intellectual development.

In Germany, the first beginnings in this direction were made by Max Weber, Sombart, and Troeltsch—to mention only the more outstanding representatives of this development. The truth of Max Weber's words becomes more clear as time goes on: "The materialistic conception of history is not to be compared to a cab that one can enter or alight from at will, for once they enter it, even the revolutionaries themselves are not free to leave it."[1] The analysis of thought and ideas in terms of ideologies is much too wide in its application and much too important a weapon to become the permanent monopoly of any one party. Nothing was to prevent the opponents of Marxism from availing themselves of the weapon and applying it to Marxism itself.

5. The Transition from the Theory of Ideology to the Sociology of Knowledge

The previous chapter traced a process of which numerous examples can be found in social and intellectual history. In the development of a new point of view one party plays the pioneering role, while other parties, in order to cope with the advantage of their adversary in the competitive struggle, must of necessity themselves make use of this point of view. This is the case with the notion of ideology. Marxism merely discovered a clue to understanding and a mode of thought, in the gradual rounding out of which the whole nineteenth century participated. The complete formulation of this idea is not the sole achievement of any single group and is not linked exclusively with any single intellectual and social position. The role that Marxism played in this process was one that deserves a high rank in intellectual history and should not be minimized. The process, however, by which the ideological approach is coming into general use, is going on before our very eyes, and hence is subject to empirical observation.

It is interesting to observe that, as a result of the expansion of the ideological concept, a new mode of understanding has

[1] Cf. Weber, Max, "Politik als Beruf" in *Gesammelte Politische Schriften* (Munich, 1921), p. 446.

gradually come into existence. This new intellectual standpoint constitutes not merely a change of degree in a phenomenon already operating. We have here an example of the real dialectical process which is too often misinterpreted for scholastic purposes —for here we see indeed a matter of difference in degree becoming a matter of difference in kind. For as soon as all parties are able to analyse the ideas of their opponents in ideological terms, all elements of meaning are qualitatively changed and the word ideology acquires a totally new meaning. In the course of this all the factors with which we dealt in our historical analysis of the meaning of the term are also transformed accordingly. The problems of " false consciousness " and of the nature of reality henceforth take on a different significance. This point of view ultimately forces us to recognize that our axioms, our ontology, and our epistemology have been profoundly transformed. We will limit ourselves in what follows to pointing out through what variations in meaning the conception of ideology has passed in the course of this transformation.

We have already traced the development from the particular to the total conception. This tendency is constantly being intensified. Instead of being content with showing that the adversary suffers from illusions or distortions on a psychological or experiential plane, the tendency now is to subject his total structure of consciousness and thought to a thoroughgoing sociological analysis.[1]

As long as one does not call his own position into question but regards it as absolute, while interpreting his opponents' ideas as a mere function of the social positions they occupy, the decisive step forward has not yet been taken. It is true, of course, that in such a case the total conception of ideology is being used, since one is interested in analysing the structure of the mind of one's opponent in its totality, and is not merely singling out a few isolated propositions. But since, in such an instance, one is interested merely in a sociological analysis of the opponent's ideas, one never gets beyond a highly restricted, or what I should like to call a special, formulation of the theory. In contrast to this special formulation, the general[2] form of the

[1] This is not meant to imply that for certain aspects of the struggles of everyday life the particular conception of ideology is inapplicable.

[2] We add here another distinction to our earlier one of " particular and total ", namely that of " special and general ". While the first distinction concerns the question as to whether single isolated ideas or the entire mind is to be seen as ideological, and whether the social situation conditions

total conception of ideology is being used by the analyst when he has the courage to subject not just the adversary's point of view but all points of view, including his own, to the ideological analysis.

At the present stage of our understanding it is hardly possible to avoid this general formulation of the total conception of ideology, according to which the thought of all parties in all epochs is of an ideological character. There is scarcely a single intellectual position, and Marxism furnishes no exception to this rule, which has not changed through history and which even in the present does not appear in many forms. Marxism, too, has taken on many diverse appearances. It should not be too difficult for a Marxist to recognize their social basis.

With the emergence of the general formulation of the total conception of ideology, the simple theory of ideology develops into the sociology of knowledge. What was once the intellectual armament [1] of a party is transformed into a method of research in social and intellectual history generally. To begin with, a given social group discovers the " situational determination " (*Seinsgebundenheit*) of its opponents' ideas. Subsequently the recognition of this fact is elaborated into an all-inclusive principle according to which the thought of every group is seen as arising out of its life conditions.[2] Thus, it becomes the task of the sociological history of thought to analyse without regard for party biases all the factors in the actually existing social situation which may influence thought. This sociologically oriented history of ideas is destined to provide modern men with a revised view of the whole historical process.

It is clear, then, that in this connection the conception of ideology takes on a new meaning. Out of this meaning two alternative approaches to ideological investigation arise. The first is to confine oneself to showing everywhere the interrelationships between the intellectual point of view held and the social position occupied. This involves the renunciation of every

merely the psychological manifestations of concepts, or whether it even penetrates to the noological meanings, in the distinction of special *versus* general, the decisive question is whether the thought of all groups (including our own) or only that of our adversaries is recognized as socially determined.

[1] Cf. the Marxist expression " To forge the intellectual weapons of the proletariat ".

[2] By the term " situational determination of knowledge " I am seeking to differentiate the propagandistic from the scientific sociological content of the ideological concept.

intention to expose or unmask those views with which one is in disagreement.

In attempting to expose the views of another, one is forced to make one's own view appear infallible and absolute, which is a procedure altogether to be avoided if one is making a specifically non-evaluative investigation. The second possible approach is nevertheless to combine such a non-evaluative analysis with a definite epistemology. Viewed from the angle of this second approach there are two separate and distinct solutions to the problem of what constitutes reliable knowledge —the one solution may be termed *relationism*, and the other *relativism*.

Relativism is a product of the modern historical-sociological procedure which is based on the recognition that all historical thinking is bound up with the concrete position in life of the thinker (*Standortsgebundenheit des Denkers*). But relativism combines this historical-sociological insight with an older theory of knowledge which was as yet unaware of the interplay between conditions of existence and modes of thought, and which modelled its knowledge after static prototypes such as might be exemplified by the proposition $2 \times 2 = 4$. This older type of thought, which regarded such examples as the model of all thought, was necessarily led to the rejection of all those forms of knowledge which were dependent upon the subjective standpoint and the social situation of the knower, and which were, hence, merely " relative ". Relativism, then, owes its existence to the discrepancy between this newly-won insight into the actual processes of thought and a theory of knowledge which had not yet taken account of this new insight.

If we wish to emancipate ourselves from this relativism we must seek to understand with the aid of the sociology of knowledge that it is not epistemology in any absolute sense but rather a certain historically transitory type of epistemology which is in conflict with the type of thought oriented to the social situation. Actually, epistemology is as intimately enmeshed in the social process as is the totality of our thinking, and it will make progress to the extent that it can master the complications arising out of the changing structure of thought.

A modern theory of knowledge which takes account of the relational as distinct from the merely relative character of all historical knowledge must start with the assumption that there are spheres of thought in which it is impossible to conceive of

absolute truth existing independently of the values and position of the subject and unrelated to the social context. Even a god could not formulate a proposition on historical subjects like $2 \times 2 = 4$, for what is intelligible in history can be formulated only with reference to problems and conceptual constructions which themselves arise in the flux of historical experience.

Once we recognize that all historical knowledge is relational knowledge, and can only be formulated with reference to the position of the observer, we are faced, once more, with the task of discriminating between what is true and what is false in such knowledge. The question then arises: which social standpoint *vis-à-vis* of history offers the best chance for reaching an optimum of truth? In any case, at this stage the vain hope of discovering truth in a form which is independent of an historically and socially determined set of meanings will have to be given up. The problem is by no means solved when we have arrived at this conclusion, but we are, at least, in a better position to state the actual problems which arise in a more unrestricted manner. In the following we have to distinguish two types of approach to ideological inquiry arising upon the level of the general-total conception of ideology: first, the approach characterized by freedom from value-judgments and, second, the epistemological and metaphysically oriented normative approach. For the time being we shall not raise the question of whether in the latter approach we are dealing with relativism or relationism.

The non-evaluative general total conception of ideology is to be found primarily in those historical investigations, where, provisionally and for the sake of the simplification of the problem, no judgments are pronounced as to the correctness of the ideas to be treated. This approach confines itself to discovering the relations between certain mental structures and the life-situations in which they exist. We must constantly ask ourselves how it comes about that a given type of social situation gives rise to a given interpretation. Thus the ideological element in human thought, viewed at this level, is always bound up with the existing life-situation of the thinker. According to this view human thought arises, and operates, not in a social vacuum but in a definite social milieu.

We need not regard it as a source of error that all thought is so rooted. Just as the individual who participates in a complex of vital social relations with other men thereby enjoys a chance

of obtaining a more precise and penetrating insight into his fellows, so a given point of view and a given set of concepts, because they are bound up with and grow out of a certain social reality, offer, through intimate contact with this reality, a greater chance of revealing its meaning. (The example cited earlier showed that the proletarian-socialistic point of view was in a particularly favourable position to discover the ideological elements in its adversaries' thought.) The circumstance, however, that thought is bound by the social- and life-situation in which it arises creates handicaps as well as opportunities. It is clearly impossible to obtain an inclusive insight into problems if the observer or thinker is confined to a given place in society. For instance, as has already been pointed out, it was not possible for the socialist idea of ideology to have developed of itself into the sociology of knowledge. It seems inherent in the historical process itself that the narrowness and the limitations which restrict one point of view tend to be corrected by clashing with the opposite points of view. The task of a study of ideology, which tries to be free from value-judgments, is to understand the narrowness of each individual point of view and the interplay between these distinctive attitudes in the total social process. We are here confronted with an inexhaustible theme. The problem is to show how, in the whole history of thought, certain intellectual standpoints are connected with certain forms of experience, and to trace the intimate interaction between the two in the course of social and intellectual change. In the domain of morals, for instance, it is necessary to show not only the continuous changes in human conduct but the constantly altering norms by which this conduct is judged. Deeper insight into the problem is reached if we are able to show that morality and ethics themselves are conditioned by certain definite situations, and that such fundamental concepts as duty, transgression, and sin have not always existed but have made their appearance as correlatives of distinct social situations.[1] The prevailing philosophic view which cautiously admits that the content of conduct has been historically determined, but which at the same time insists upon the retention of eternal forms of value and of a formal set of categories, is no longer tenable. The fact that the distinction between the content and the forms

[1] Cf. Weber, Max, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft.* Grundriss der Sozialökonomik, Part iii, p. 794, dealing with the social conditions which are requisite to the genesis of the moral.

of conduct was made and recognized is an important concession to the historical-sociological approach which makes it increasingly difficult to set up contemporary values as absolutes.

Having arrived at this recognition it becomes necessary also to remember that the fact that we speak about social and cultural life in terms of values is itself an attitude peculiar to our time. The notion of " value " arose and was diffused from economics, where the conscious choice between values was the starting-point of theory. This idea of value was later transferred to the ethical, æsthetic, and religious spheres, which brought about a distortion in the description of the real behaviour of the human-being in these spheres. Nothing could be more wrong than to describe the real attitude of the individual when enjoying a work of art quite unreflectively, or when acting according to ethical patterns inculcated in him since childhood, in terms of conscious choice between values.

The view which holds that all cultural life is an orientation toward objective values is just one more illustration of a typically modern rationalistic disregard for the basic irrational mechanisms which govern man's relation to his world. Far from being permanently valid the interpretation of culture in terms of objective values is really a peculiar characteristic of the thought of our own time. But even granting for the moment that this conception had some merit, the existence of certain formal realms of values and their specific structure would be intelligible only with reference to the concrete situations to which they have relevance and in which they are valid.[1] There is, then, no norm which can lay claim to formal validity and which can be abstracted as a constant universal formal element from its historically changing content.

To-day we have arrived at the point where we can see clearly that there are differences in modes of thought, not only in different historical periods but also in different cultures. Slowly it dawns upon us that not only does the content of thought change but also its categorical structure. Only very recently has it become possible to investigate the hypothesis that, in the past as well as in the present, the dominant modes of thought are supplanted by new categories when the social basis of the group, of which

[1] Cf. Lask, E., *Die Logik der Philosophie und die Kategorienlehre* (Tübingen, 1911), uses the term *hingelten* in order to explain that categorical forms are not valid in themselves but only with reference to their always changing content which inevitably reacts upon their nature.

these thought-forms are characteristic, disintegrates or is transformed under the impact of social change.

Research in the sociology of knowledge promises to reach a stage of exactness if only because nowhere else in the realm of culture is the interdependence in the shifts of meaning and emphasis so clearly evident and precisely determinable as in thought itself. For thought is a particularly sensitive index of social and cultural change. The variation in the meaning of words and the multiple connotations of every concept reflect polarities of mutually antagonistic schemes of life implicit in these nuances of meaning.[1]

Nowhere in the realm of social life, however, do we encounter such a clearly traceable interdependence and sensitivity to change and varying emphasis as in the meaning of words. The word and the meaning that attaches to it is truly a collective reality. The slightest nuance in the total system of thought reverberates in the individual word and the shades of meaning it carries. The word binds us to the whole of past history and, at the same time, mirrors the totality of the present. When, in communicating with others, we seek a common level of understanding the word can be used to iron out individual differences of meaning. But, when necessary, the word may become an instrument in emphasizing the differences in meaning and the unique experiences of each individual. It may then serve as a means for detecting the original and novel increments that arise in the course of the history of culture, thereby adding previously imperceptible values to the scale of human experience. In all of these investigations use will be made of the total and general conception of ideology in its non-evaluative sense.

6. The Non-Evaluative Conception of Ideology

The investigator who undertakes the historical studies suggested above need not be concerned with the problem of what is ultimate truth. Interrelationships have now become evident, both in the present and in history, which formerly could never have been analysed so thoroughly. The recognition of this fact in all its

[1] For this reason the sociological analysis of meanings will play a significant role in the following studies. We may suggest here that such an analysis might be developed into a symptomatology based upon the principle that in the social realm, if we can learn to observe carefully, we can see that each element of the situation which we are analysing contains and throws light upon the whole.

ramifications gives to the modern investigator a tremendous advantage. He will no longer be inclined to raise the question as to which of the contending parties has the truth on its side, but rather he will direct his attention to discovering the approximate truth as it emerges in the course of historical development out of the complex social process. The modern investigator can answer, if he is accused of evading the problem of what is truth, that the indirect approach to truth through social history will in the end be more fruitful than a direct logical attack. Even though he does not discover " truth itself ", he will discover the cultural setting and many hitherto unknown " circumstances " which are relevant to the discovery of truth. As a matter of fact, if we believe that we already have the truth, we will lose interest in obtaining those very insights which might lead us to an approximate understanding of the situation. It is precisely our uncertainty which brings us a good deal closer to reality than was possible in former periods which had faith in the absolute.

It is now quite clear that only in a rapidly and profoundly changing intellectual world could ideas and values, formerly regarded as fixed, have been subjected to a thoroughgoing criticism. In no other situation could men have been alert enough to discover the ideological element in all thinking. It is true, of course, that men have fought the ideas of their adversaries, but in the past, for the most part, they have done so only in order to cling to their own absolutes the more stubbornly. To-day, there are too many points of view of equal value and prestige, each showing the relativity of the other, to permit us to take any one position and to regard it as impregnable and absolute. Only this socially disorganized intellectual situation makes possible the insight, hidden until now by a generally stable social structure and the practicability of certain traditional norms, that every point of view is particular to a social situation.[1] It may indeed be true that in order to act we need a certain amount of self-confidence and intellectual self-assurance. It may also be true that the very form of expression, in which we clothe our thoughts, tends to impose upon them an absolute tone. In our epoch, however, it is precisely the function of historical investigation (and, as we shall see, of those social groups from which the scholars

[1] By social stability we do not mean uneventfulness or the personal security of individuals, but rather the relative fixity of the existing total social structure, which guarantees the stability of the dominant values and ideas.

are to be recruited), to analyse the elements that make up our self-assurance, so indispensable for action in immediate, concrete situations, and to counteract the bias which might arise from what we, as individuals, take for granted. This is possible only through incessant care and the determination to reduce to a minimum the tendency to self-apotheosis. Through this effort the one-sidedness of our own point of view is counteracted, and conflicting intellectual positions may actually come to supplement one another.

It is imperative in the present transitional period to make use of the intellectual twilight which dominates our epoch and in which all values and points of view appear in their genuine relativity. We must realize once and for all that the meanings which make up our world are simply an historically determined and continuously developing structure in which man develops, and are in no sense absolute.

At this point in history when all things which concern man and the structure and elements of history itself are suddenly revealed to us in a new light, it behooves us in our scientific thinking to become masters of the situation, for it is not inconceivable that sooner than we suspect, as has often been the case before in history, this vision may disappear, the opportunity may be lost, and the world will once again present a static, uniform, and inflexible countenance.

This first non-evaluative insight into history does not inevitably lead to relativism, but rather to relationism. Knowledge, as seen in the light of the total conception of ideology, is by no means an illusory experience, for ideology in its relational concept is not at all identical with illusion. Knowledge arising out of our experience in actual life situations, though not absolute, is knowledge none the less. The norms arising out of such actual life situations do not exist in a social vacuum, but are effective as real sanctions for conduct. Relationism signifies merely that all of the elements of meaning in a given situation have reference to one another and derive their significance from this reciprocal interrelationship in a given frame of thought. Such a system of meanings is possible and valid only in a given type of historical existence, to which, for a time, it furnishes appropriate expression. When the social situation changes, the system of norms to which it had previously given birth ceases to be in harmony with it. The same estrangement goes on with reference to knowledge and to the historical perspective. All

knowledge is oriented toward some object and is influenced in its approach by the nature of the object with which it is preoccupied. But the mode of approach to the object to be known is dependent upon the nature of the knower. This is true, first of all, with regard to the qualitative depth of our knowledge (particularly when we are attempting to arrive at an " understanding " of something where the degree of insight to be obtained presupposes the mental or intellectual kinship of the understander and of the understood). It is true, in the second place, with regard to the possibility of intellectually formulating our knowledge, especially since in order to be transmuted into knowledge, every perception is and must be ordered and organized into categories. The extent, however, to which we can organize and express our experience in such conceptual forms is, in turn, dependent upon the frames of reference which happen to be available at a given historical moment. The concepts which we have and the universe of discourse in which we move, together with the directions in which they tend to elaborate themselves, are dependent largely upon the historical-social situation of the intellectually active and responsible members of the group. We have, then, as the theme of this non-evaluative study of ideology, the relationship of all partial knowledge and its component elements to the larger body of meaning, and ultimately to the structure of historical reality. If, instead of fully reckoning with this insight and its implications, we were to disregard it, we would be surrendering an advanced position of intellectual achievement which has been painfully won.

Hence it has become extremely questionable whether, in the flux of life, it is a genuinely worthwhile intellectual problem to seek to discover fixed and immutable ideas or absolutes. It is a more worthy intellectual task perhaps to learn to think dynamically and relationally rather than statically. In our contemporary social and intellectual plight, it is nothing less than shocking to discover that those persons who claim to have discovered an absolute are usually the same people who also pretend to be superior to the rest. To find people in our day attempting to pass off to the world and recommending to others some nostrum of the absolute which they claim to have discovered is merely a sign of the loss of and the need for intellectual and moral certainty, felt by broad sections of the population who are unable to look life in the face. It may possibly be true

that, to continue to live on and to act in a world like ours, it is vitally necessary to seek a way out of this uncertainty of multiple alternatives ; and accordingly people may be led to embrace some immediate goal as if it were absolute, by which they hope to make their problems appear concrete and real. But it is not primarily the man of action who seeks the absolute and immutable, but rather it is he who wishes to induce others to hold on to the *status quo* because he feels comfortable and smug under conditions as they are. Those who are satisfied with the existing order of things are only too likely to set up the chance situation of the moment as absolute and eternal in order to have something stable to hold on to and to minimize the hazardousness of life. This cannot be done, however, without resorting to all sorts of romantic notions and myths. Thus we are faced with the curiously appalling trend of modern thought, in which the absolute which was once a means of entering into communion with the divine, has now become an instrument used by those who profit from it, to distort, pervert, and conceal the meaning of the present.

7. The Transition from the Non-evaluative to the Evaluative Conception of Ideology

Thus it appears that beginning with the non-evaluative conception of ideology, which we used primarily to grasp the flux of continuously changing realities, we have been unwittingly led to an evaluative-epistemological, and finally an ontological-metaphysical approach. In our argument thus far the non-evaluative, dynamic point of view inadvertently became a weapon against a certain intellectual position. What was originally simply a methodological technique disclosed itself ultimately as a *Weltanschauung* and an instrument from the use of which the non-evaluative view of the world emerged. Here, as in so many other cases, only at the end of our activity do we at last become aware of those motives which at the beginning drove us to set every established value in motion, considering it as a part of a general historical movement.

We see then that we have employed metaphysical-ontological value-judgements of which we have not been aware.[1] But only

[1] Of course, the type of value-judgments and the ontology of which we made use, partly unconsciously and partly deliberately, represents a judgment upon an entirely different level, and is a quite different ontology from that of which we spoke when we were criticizing the trend towards absolutism which attempts to reconstruct (in the spirit of the German

those will be alarmed by this recognition who are prey to the positivistic prejudices of a past generation, and who still believe in the possibility of being completely emancipated in their thinking from ontological, metaphysical, and ethical presuppositions.[1] In fact, the more aware one becomes of the presuppositions underlying his thinking, in the interest of truly empirical research, the more it is apparent that this empirical procedure (in the social sciences, at least) can be carried on only on the basis of certain meta-empirical, ontological, and metaphysical judgments and the expectations and hypotheses that follow from them. He who makes no decisions has no questions to raise and is not even able to formulate a tentative hypothesis which enables him to set a problem and to search history for its answer. Fortunately positivism did commit itself to certain metaphysical and ontological judgments, despite its anti-metaphysical prejudices and its pretensions to the contrary. Its faith in progress and its naïve realism in specific cases are examples of such ontological judgments. It was precisely those presuppositions which enabled positivism to make so many significant contributions, some of which will have to be reckoned with for some time to come. The danger in presuppositions does not lie merely in the fact that they exist or that they are prior to empirical knowledge.[2] It lies rather in the fact that an ontology handed down through tradition

romantic school) the debris of history. This unavoidable implicit ontology which is at the basis of our actions, even when we do not want to believe it, is not something which is arrived at by romantic yearning and which we impose upon reality at will. It marks the horizon within which lies our world of reality and which cannot be disposed of by simply labelling it ideology. At this point we see a glimmer of a " solution " to our problem even though nowhere else in this book do we attempt to offer one. The exposure of ideological and utopian elements in thought is effective in destroying only those ideas with which we ourselves are not too intimately identified. Thus it may be asked whether under certain circumstances, while we are destroying the validity of certain ideas by means of the ideological analysis, we are not, at the same time, erecting a new construction—whether in the very way we call old beliefs into question is not unconsciously implied the new decision—as a sage once said, " Frequently when someone comes to me to seek advice, I know as I listen to him how he advises himself."

[1] A somewhat more critical positivism was more modest and wished to admit only a " minimum of indispensable assumptions ". The question might be raised whether this " minimum of indispensable assumptions " will not turn out to be equivalent to the elemental irreducible ontology contained in our conditions of existence.

[2] If empirical knowledge were not preceded by an ontology it would be entirely inconceivable, for we can extract objectified meanings out of a given reality only to the extent that we are able to ask intelligent and revealing questions.

obstructs new developments, especially in the basic modes of thinking, and as long as the particularity of the conventional theoretical framework remains unquestioned we will remain in the toils of a static mode of thought which is inadequate to our present stage of historical and intellectual development. What is needed, therefore, is a continual readiness to recognize that every point of view is particular to a certain definite situation, and to find out through analysis of what this particularity consists. A clear and explicit avowal of the implicit metaphysical presuppositions which underlie and make possible empirical knowledge will do more for the clarification and advancement of research than a verbal denial of the existence of these presuppositions accompanied by their surreptitious admission through the back door.

8. Ontological Judgments Implicit in the Non-evaluative Conception of Ideology

We have taken this excursion into the fields of ontology [1] and positivism because it seemed essential to get a correct understanding of the movements of thought in this most recent phase of intellectual history. What we described as an invisible shift from the non-evaluative approach to the evaluative one not only characterizes our own thought: it is typical of the whole development of contemporary thought. Our conclusion as a result of this analysis is that historical and sociological investigation in this period was originally dominated by the non-evaluative point of view, out of which developed two significant, alternative, metaphysical orientations. The choice between these two alternatives resolves itself in the present situation into the following: on the one hand it is possible to accept as a fact the transitory character of the historical event, when one is of the belief that what really matters does not lie either in the change itself or in the facts which constitute that change. According to this view, all that is temporal, all that is social, all the collective myths, and all the content of meanings and interpretations usually attributed to historical events can be ignored, because it is felt that beyond the abundance and multiplicity of the details, out of which ordered historical

[1] Cf. the author's *Die Strukturanalyse der Erkenntnistheorie*, Ergänzungsband der Kant-Studien, No. 57 (Berlin, 1922), p. 37, n. 1; p. 52, n. 1.

sequence emerge, lie the ultimate and permanent truths which transcend history and to which historical detail is irrelevant. Accordingly there is thought to be an intuitive and inspired source of history which actual history itself only imperfectly reflects. Those who are versed in intellectual history will recognize that this standpoint is derived directly from mysticism. The mystics had already maintained that there are truths and values beyond time and space, and that time and space and all that occurs within them are merely illusory appearances, when compared with the reality of the mystic's ecstatic experience. But in their time the mystics were not able to demonstrate the truth of their statements. The daily order of events was accepted as a stable and concrete matter of fact and the unusual incident was thought of as the arbitrary will of God. Traditionalism was supreme in a world which although alive with events admitted only one way, and that a stable way, of interpreting them. Traditionalism moreover did not accept the revelations of mysticism in their pure form; rather it interpreted them in the light of their relation with the supernatural, since this ecstatic experience was regarded as a communion with God. The general interdependence of all the elements of meaning and their historical relativity has in the meantime become so clearly recognized that it has almost become a common sense truth generally taken for granted. What was once the esoteric knowledge of a few initiates can to-day be methodically demonstrated to everybody. So popular has this approach become that the sociological interpretation, not unlike the historical interpretation, will under certain circumstances be used to deny the reality of everyday experience and of history by those who see reality as lying outside of history, in the realm of ecstatic and mystical experience.

On the other hand, there is an alternative mode of approach which may also lead to sociological and historical research. It arises out of the view that the changes in relationships between events and ideas are not the result of wilful and arbitrary design, but that these relationships, both in their simultaneousness and in their historical sequence, must be regarded as following a certain necessary regularity, which, although not superficially evident, does nevertheless exist and can be understood.

Once we understand the inner meaning of history and realize that no stage of history is permanent and absolute, but rather that the nature of the historical process presents an unsolved

and challenging problem, we will no longer be content with the mystic's self-satisfied disregard for history as " mere history ". One may admit that human life is always something more than it was discovered to be in any one historical period or under any given set of social conditions, and even that after these have been accounted for there still remains an eternal, spiritual realm beyond history, which is never quite subsumed under history itself and which puts meaning into history and into social experience. We should not conclude from this that the function of history is to furnish a record of what man is not, but rather we should regard it as the matrix within which man's essential nature is expressed. The ascent of human beings from mere pawns of history to the stature of men proceeds and becomes intelligible in the course of the variation in the norms, the forms and the works of mankind, in the course of the change in institutions and collective aims, in the course of its changing assumptions and points of view, in terms of which each social-historical subject becomes aware of himself and acquires an appreciation of his past. There is, of course, the disposition more and more to regard all of these phenomena as symptoms and to integrate them into a system whose unity and meaning it becomes our task to understand. And even if it be granted that mystical experience is the only adequate means for revealing man's ultimate nature to himself, still it must be admitted that the ineffable element at which the mystics aim must necessarily bear some relation to social and historical reality. In the final analysis the factors that mould historical and social reality somehow also determine man's own destiny. May it not be possible that the ecstatic element in human experience which in the nature of the case is never directly revealed or expressed, and the meaning of which can never be fully communicated, can be discovered through the traces which it leaves on the path of history, and thus be disclosed to us.

This point of view, which is based without doubt on aparticular attitude towards historical and social reality, reveals both the possibilities and the limits inherent in it for the understanding of history and social life. Because of its contempt for history, a mystical view, which regards history from an other-worldly standpoint, runs the risk of overlooking whatever important lessons history has to offer. A true understanding of history is not to be expected from an outlook which depreciates the significance of historical reality. A more circumspect examination

of the facts will show that even though no final crystallization emerges out of the historical process, something of profound significance does transpire in the realm of the historical. The very fact that every event and every element of meaning in history is bound to a temporal, spatial, and situational position, and that therefore what happens once cannot happen always, the fact that events and meanings in history are not reversible, in short the circumstance that we do not find absolute situations in history indicates that history is mute and meaningless only to him who expects to learn nothing from it, and that, in the case of history more than in that of any other discipline, the standpoint which regards history as " mere history ", as do the mystics, is doomed to sterility.

The study of intellectual history can and must be pursued in a manner which will see in the sequence and co-existence of phenomena more than mere accidental relationships, and will seek to discover in the totality of the historical complex the role, significance, and meaning of each component element. It is with this type of sociological approach to history that we identify ourselves. If this insight is progressively worked out in concrete detail, instead of being allowed to remain on a purely speculative basis, and if each advance is made on the basis of available concrete material we shall finally arrive at a discipline which will put at our disposal a sociological technique for diagnosing the culture of an epoch. We sought to approximate this aim in earlier chapters which attempted to show the value of the conception of ideology for the analysis of the contemporary intellectual situation. In analysing the different types of ideology we did not intend simply to list unrelated cases of meanings of the term, but aimed rather to present in the sequence of its changing meanings a cross-section of the total intellectual and social situation of our time. Such a method of diagnosing an epoch, though it may begin non-evaluatively, will not long remain so. We shall be forced eventually to assume an evaluative position. The transition to an evaluative point of view is necessitated from the very beginning by the fact that history as history is unintelligible unless certain of its aspects are emphasized in contrast to others. This selection and accentuation of certain aspects of historical totality may be regarded as the first step in the direction which ultimately leads to an evaluative procedure and to ontological judgments.

9. The Problem of False Consciousness

Through the dialectical process of history there inevitably proceeds the gradual transition from the non-evaluative, total, and general conception of ideology to the evaluative conception (cf. p. 78). The evaluation to which we now refer, however, is quite different from that previously known and described We are no longer accepting the values of a given period as absolute, and the realization that norms and values are historically and socially determined can henceforth never escape us. The ontological emphasis is now transferred to another set of problems. Its purpose will be to distinguish the true from the untrue, the genuine from the spurious among the norms, modes of thought, and patterns of behaviour that exist alongside of one another in a given historical period. The danger of " false consciousness " nowadays is not that it cannot grasp an absolute unchanging reality, but rather that it obstructs comprehension of a reality which is the outcome of constant reorganization of the mental processes which make up our worlds. Hence it becomes intelligible why, compelled by the dialectical processes of thought, it is necessary to concentrate our attention with greater intensity upon the task of determining which of all the ideas current are really valid in a given situation. In the light of the problems we face in the present crisis of thought, the question of " false consciousness " is encountered in a new setting. The notion of " false consciousness " already appeared in one of its most modern forms when, having given up its concern with transcendental-religious factors, it transferred its search for the criterion of reality to the realm of practice and particularly political practice in a manner reminiscent of pragmatism. But contrasted with its modern formulation, it still lacked a sense of the historical. Thought and existence were still regarded as fixed and separate poles, bearing a static relationship to one another in an unchanging universe. It is only now that the new historical sense is beginning to penetrate and a dynamic concept of ideology and reality can be conceived of.

Accordingly, from our point of view, an ethical attitude is invalid if it is oriented with reference to norms, with which action in a given historical setting, even with the best of intentions, cannot comply. It is invalid then when the unethical action of the individual can no longer be conceived as due to his own personal transgression, but must be attributed rather to the compulsion

of an erroneously founded set of moral axioms. The moral interpretation of one's own action is invalid, when, through the force of traditional modes of thought and conceptions of life, it does not allow for the accommodation of action and thought to a new and changed situation and in the end actually obscures and prevents this adjustment and transformation of man. A theory then is wrong if in a given practical situation it uses concepts and categories which, if taken seriously, would prevent man from adjusting himself at that historical stage. Antiquated and inapplicable norms, modes of thought, and theories are likely to degenerate into ideologies whose function it is to conceal the actual meaning of conduct rather than to reveal it. In the following paragraphs we cite a few characteristic examples of the most important types of the ideological thinking that has just been described.

The history of the taboo against taking interest on loans [1] may serve as an example of the development of an antiquated ethical norm into an ideology. The rule that lending be carried on without interest could be put into practice only in a society which economically and socially was based upon intimate and neighbourly relations. In such a social world "lending without interest" is a usage that commands observance without difficulty, because it is a form of behaviour corresponding fundamentally to the social structure. Arising in a world of intimate and neighbourly relations this precept was assimilated and formalized by the Church in its ethical system. The more the real structure of society changed, the more this ethical precept took on an ideological character, and became virtually incapable of practical acceptance. Its arbitrariness and its unworldliness became even more evident in the period of rising capitalism when, having changed its function, it could be used as a weapon in the hands of the Church against the emergent economic force of capitalism. In the course of the complete emergence of capitalism, the ideological nature of this norm, which expressed itself in the fact that it could be only circumvented but not obeyed, became so patent that even the Church discarded it.

As examples of "false consciousness" taking the form of an incorrect interpretation of one's own self and one's role, we may cite those cases in which persons try to cover up their "real" relations to themselves and to the world, and falsify to themselves

[1] Cf. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft:* Gurndriss der Sozialökonomik, Part iii, p. 801 ff., for historical documentation of this case.

the elementary facts of human existence by deifying, romanticizing, or idealizing them, in short, by resorting to the device of escape from themselves and the world, and thereby conjuring up false interpretations of experience. We have a case of ideological distortion, therefore, when we try to resolve conflicts and anxieties by having recourse to absolutes, according to which it is no longer possible to live. This is the case when we create "myths", worship "greatness in itself", avow allegiance to "ideals", while in our actual conduct we are following other interests which we try to mask by simulating an unconscious righteousness, which is only too easily transparent.

Finally an example of the third type of ideological distortion may be seen when this ideology as a form of knowledge is no longer adequate for comprehending the actual world. This may be exemplified by a landed proprietor, whose estate has already become a capitalistic undertaking, but who still attempts to explain his relations to his labourers and his own function in the undertaking by means of categories reminiscent of the patriarchal order. If we take a total view of all these individual cases, we see the idea of "false consciousness" taking on a new meaning. Viewed from this standpoint, knowledge is distorted and ideological when it fails to take account of the new realities applying to a situation, and when it attempts to conceal them by thinking of them in categories which are inappropriate.[1]

This conception of ideology (the concept utopia will be treated in Part IV),[2] may be characterized as evaluative and dynamic. It is evaluative because it presupposes certain judgments concerning the reality of ideas and structures of consciousness, and it is dynamic because these judgments are always measured by a reality which is in constant flux.[3]

Complicated as these distinctions may appear to be at first

[1] A perception may be erroneous or inadequate to the situation by being in advance of it, as well as by being antiquated. We will investigate this more precisely in Part IV, where we deal with the utopian mentality. It is sufficient for us at this time merely to note that these forms of perception can be in advance of the situation as well as lagging behind.

[2] We hope to demonstrate in our subsequent treatment of the utopian mentality that the utopian outlook, which transcends the present and is oriented to the future, is not a mere negative case of the ideological outlook which conceals the present by attempting to comprehend it in terms of the past.

[3] This conception of ideology is conceivable only on the level of the general and total type of ideology, and constitutes the second evaluative type of ideology which we have earlier distinguished from the first or non-evaluative concept. Cf. pp. 71 ff. and p. 68, note 2; p. 78, note 1; pp. 83 ff.

glance, we believe that they are not in the least artificial, because they are merely a precise formulation of and an explicit attempt to pursue logically implications already contained in the everyday language of our modern world.

This conception of ideology (and utopia) maintains that beyond the commonly recognized sources of error we must also reckon with the effects of a distorted mental structure. It takes cognizance of the fact that the "reality" which we fail to comprehend may be a dynamic one; and that in the same historical epoch and in the same society there may be several distorted types of inner mental structure, some because they have not yet grown up to the present, and others because they are already beyond the present. In either case, however, the reality to be comprehended is distorted and concealed, for this conception of ideology and utopia deals with a reality that discloses itself only in actual practice. At any rate all the assumptions which are contained in the dynamic, evaluative conception of ideology rest upon experiences which at best might conceivably be understood in a manner different from the one here set forth, but which can under no conditions be left out of account.

10. The Quest for Reality through Ideological and Utopian Analysis

The attempt to escape ideological and utopian distortions is, in the last analysis, a quest for reality. These two conceptions provide us with a basis for a sound scepticism, and they can be put to positive use in avoiding the pitfalls into which our thinking might lead us. Specifically they can be used to combat the tendency in our intellectual life to separate thought from the world of reality, to conceal reality, or to exceed its limits. Thought should contain neither less nor more than the reality in whose medium it operates. Just as the true beauty of a sound literary style consists in expressing precisely that which is intended—in communicating neither too little nor too much—so the valid element in our knowledge is determined by adhering to rather than departing from the actual situation to be comprehended.

In considering the notions of ideology and utopia, the question of the nature of reality thrusts itself once again upon the scene. Both concepts contain the imperative that every idea must be tested by its congruence with reality. Meanwhile, however, our conception of reality itself has been revised and called into

question. All the conflicting groups and classes in society seek this reality in their thoughts and deeds, and it is therefore no wonder that it appears to be different to each of them.[1] If the problem of the nature of reality were a mere speculative product of the imagination, we could easily ignore it. But as we proceed, it becomes more and more evident that it is precisely the multiplicity of the conceptions of reality which produces the multiplicity of our modes of thought, and that every ontological judgment that we make leads inevitably to far-reaching consequences. If we examine the many types of ontological judgments with which different groups confront us, we begin to

[1] Regarding the differentiation of ontologies according to social positions cf. my " Das konservative Denken," loc. cit., part ii. Further, cf. Eppstein, P., " Die Fragestellung nach der Wirklichkeit im historischen Materialismus," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, lx (1928), p. 449 ff.

The careful reader will perhaps note that from this point on the evaluative conception of ideology tends once more to take on the form of the non-evaluative, but this, of course, is due to our intention to discover an evaluative solution. This instability in the definition of the concept is part of the technique of research, which might be said to have arrived at maturity and which therefore refuses to enslave itself to any one particular standpoint which would restrict its view. This dynamic relationism offers the only possible way out of a world-situation in which we are presented with a multiplicity of conflicting viewpoints, each of which, though claiming absolute validity, has been shown to be related to a particular position and to be adequate only to that one. Not until he has assimilated all the crucial motivations and viewpoints, whose internal contradictions account for our present social-political tension, will the investigator be in a position to arrive at a solution adequate to our present life-situation. If the investigator, instead of at once taking a definite position, will incorporate into his vision each contradictory and conflicting current, his thought will be flexible and dialectical, rather than rigid and dogmatic. Such a conceptual elasticity and the frank recognition that there are many as yet unreconciled contradictions need not, as happens so often in practice, becloud the vision of the investigator. Indeed the discovery of hitherto unsolved contradictions should serve as an impetus to the type of thought required by the present situation. As we have indicated before, it is our aim to bring all that is ambiguous and questionable in our contemporary intellectual life within the scope of overt consciousness and control by constantly pointing out the often concealed and carefully disguised elements in our thinking. Such a procedure will result in a dynamic relationism which would rather do without a closed system if it is to be brought about by a systematization of particular and discrete elements, the limitations of which have already become apparent. Furthermore we might ask whether the possibility of and the need for a closed or open system does not vary from epoch to epoch and from one social position to another. Even these few remarks should make it clear to the reader that whatever the types of formulations we use in our thinking, they are not arbitrary creations, but are rather more or less adequate means of comprehending and mastering the constantly changing forms of existence and thought that are expressed in them. For some comments concerning the sociological implication of " systems " of thought cf. " Das konservative Denken ", loc. cit., p. 86 ff.

suspect that each group seems to move in a separate and distinct world of ideas and that these different systems of thought, which are often in conflict with one another, may in the last analysis be reduced to different modes of experiencing the "same" reality.

We could, of course, ignore this crisis in our intellectual life as is generally done in everyday practical life, in the course of which we are content to encounter things and relationships as discrete events in no more than their immediate particular setting.[1] As long as we see the objects in our experience from a particular standpoint only and as long as our conceptual devices suffice for dealing with a highly restricted sphere of life, we might never become aware of the need for inquiring into the total interrelationship of phenomena. At best, under such circumstances, we occasionally encounter some obscurity which, however, we are usually able to overcome in practice. Thus everyday experience has operated for a very long time with magical systems of explanation; and up to a certain stage of historical development, these were adequate for dealing empirically with the primitive life-situations encountered. The problem for earlier epochs as well as for ours may be stated as follows: under what conditions may we say that the realm of experience of a group has changed so fundamentally that a discrepancy becomes apparent between the traditional mode of thought and the novel objects of experience (to be understood by that mode of thought?). It would be too intellectualistic an explanation

[1] Nothing could be more pointless, and incorrect than to argue as follows: Since every form of historical and political thought is based to a certain degree upon metatheoretical assumptions, it follows that we cannot put our trust in any idea or any form of thought, and hence it is a matter of indifference what theoretical arguments are employed in a given case. Hence each one of us ought to rely upon his instinct, upon his personal and private intuitions, or upon his own private interests, whichever of these will suit him best. If we did this each one of us, no matter how partisan his view, could hold it in good conscience and even feel quite smug about it. To defend our analysis against the attempt to use it for such propagandistic purposes, let it be said that there exists a fundamental difference between, on the one hand, a blind partisanship and the irrationalism which arises out of mere mental indolence, which sees in intellectual activity no more than arbitrary personal judgments and propaganda, and on the other the type of inquiry which is seriously concerned with an objective analysis, and which, after eliminating all conscious evaluation, becomes aware of an irreducible residue of evaluation inherent in the structure of all thought. (For a more detailed statement cf. my concluding statements in the discussion of my paper, "Die Bedeutung der Konkurrenz im Gebiete des Geistigen," and my remarks on W. Sombart's paper on methodology at the same meeting. *Verhandlungen des sechsten deutschen Soziologentages*, loc. cit.)

to assume that the older explanations were abandoned for any theoretical reasons. But in these earlier periods it was the actual change in social experiences which brought about the elimination of certain attitudes and schemes of interpretation which were not congruous with certain fundamental new experiences.

The special cultural sciences from the point of view of their particularity are no better than everyday empirical knowledge. These disciplines, too, view the objects of knowledge and formulate their problems abstracted and torn from their concrete settings. Sometimes it happens that the coherent formulation of the problems proceeds according to the actual organic connection in which they are encountered and not merely in the sense that they fall within the scope of one discipline. But often when a certain stage is reached, this organic and coherent order is suddenly lost. Historical questions are always monographic, either because of the limited manner in which the subject is conceived or because of the specialization of treatment. For history this is indeed necessary, since the academic division of labour imposes certain limitations. But when the empirical investigator glories in his refusal to go beyond the specialized observation dictated by the traditions of his discipline, be they ever so inclusive, he is making a virtue out of a defence mechanism which insures him against questioning his presuppositions.

Even the sort of investigation which never transcends the limits of its specialization can add to our data and enrich our experience. It is perhaps even true that at one time this point of view was the appropriate one. But just as the natural sciences too must question their hypotheses and their assumptions as soon as a discrepancy appears among their facts, and just as further empirical research becomes possible only when the general canons of explanation have been revised, so to-day in the cultural sciences we have arrived at a point at which our empirical data compel us to raise certain questions about our presuppositions.

Empirical research which limits itself to a particular sphere is for a long time in the same position as common sense: i.e. the problematic nature and incoherence of its theoretical basis remain concealed because the total situation never comes into view. It has been justly maintained that the human mind can make the most lucid observations with the fuzziest of concepts. But a crisis is reached when an attempt is made to reflect upon these observations and to define the fundamental concepts of the disciplines concerned. The correctness of this view is

borne out by the fact that in certain disciplines empirical investigation goes on as smoothly as ever while a veritable war is waged about the fundamental concepts and problems of the science.

But even this view is a limited one because it formulates in the guise of a scientific proposition, intended to have general significance, a situation in science which is characteristic only of a given period. When these ideas began to be formulated about the beginning of the present century, the symptoms of the crisis were visible only on the periphery of research, in discussions concerning principles and definitions. To-day the situation has changed—the crisis has penetrated even into the heart of empirical research. The multiplicity of possible points of departure and of definitions and the competition between the various points of view colour even the perception of what formerly appeared to be a single and uncomplicated relationship.

No one denies the possibility of empirical research nor does any one maintain that facts do not exist. (Nothing seems more incorrect to us than an illusionist theory of knowledge.) We, too, appeal to " facts " for our proof, but the question of the nature of facts is in itself a considerable problem. They exist for the mind always in an intellectual and social context. That they can be understood and formulated implies already the existence of a conceptual apparatus. And if this conceptual apparatus is the same for all the members of a group, the presuppositions (i.e. the possible social and intellectual values), which underlie the individual concepts, never become perceptible. The somnambulistic certainty that has existed with reference to the problem of truth during stable periods of history thus becomes intelligible. However, once the unanimity is broken,[1] the fixed categories which used to give experience its reliable and coherent character undergo an inevitable disintegration. There arise divergent and conflicting modes of thought which (unknown to the thinking subject) order the same facts of experience into different systems of thought, and cause them to be perceived through different logical categories.

This results in the peculiar perspective which our concepts impose upon us, and which causes the same object to appear differently, according to the set of concepts with which we view

[1] For further details as to the sociological cause of this disintegration cf. the author's paper, "Die Bedeutung der Konkurrenz im Gebiete des Geistigen " loc. cit.

it. Consequently, our knowledge of " reality ", as it assimilates more and more of these divergent perspectives, will become more comprehensive. What formerly appeared merely to be an unintelligible margin, which could not be subsumed under a given concept, has to-day given rise to a supplementary and sometimes opposite concept, through which a more inclusive knowledge of the object can be gained.

Even in empirical research we recognize ever more clearly how important a problem is the identity or lack of identity in our fundamental points of view. For those who have thought seriously about it, the problem presented by the multiplicity of points of view is clearly indicated by the particular limitation of every definition. This limitation was recognized by Max Weber, for instance, but he justified a particularistic point of view on the grounds that the particular interest motivating the investigation determines the specific definition to be used.

Our definition of concepts depends upon our position and point of view which, in turn, is influenced by a good many unconscious steps in our thinking. The first reaction of the thinker on being confronted with the limited nature and ambiguity of his notions is to block the way for as long as possible to a systematic and total formulation of the problem. Positivism, for example, took great pains to conceal from itself the abyss which lies behind all particularist thought. This was necessary on the one hand to promote the safe continuation of its search for facts, but on the other hand this refusal to deal with the problem often led to obscurity and ambiguity with reference to questions about the " whole ".

Two typical dogmas were particularly prone to prevent the raising of fundamental issues. The first of these was the theory which simply regarded metaphysical, philosophical, and other borderline questions as irrelevant. According to this theory, only the specialized forms of empirical knowledge had any claim to validity. Even philosophy was regarded as a special discipline whose primary legitimate preoccupation was logic. The second of these dogmas, which blocked the way to a perspective of the whole, attempted to compromise by dividing the field into two mutually exclusive areas to be occupied by empirical science and philosophy respectively,—to particular and immediate questions the former provided unchallengeable and certain answers, while in general questions and problems of the " whole ", " loftier " philosophical speculations were resorted to. This involved for

philosophy the surrender of the claim that its conclusions were based upon generally valid evidence.

Such a solution is strangely like the dictum of the theorists of constitutional monarchy, which states: "The king reigns but does not govern." Philosophy is thus granted all the honours. Speculation and intuition are, under certain circumstances, regarded as higher instruments of knowledge, but only on the condition that they do not meddle with positive, democratically, and universally valid empirical investigation. Thereby the problem of the "whole" is once more avoided. Empirical science has brushed this problem aside, and philosophy cannot be held to account since it is responsible only to God. Its evidence is valid only in the realm of speculation and is confirmed only by pure intuition. The consequence of such a dichotomy is that philosophy, which should have the vital task of providing clarification of the observer's own mind in the total situation, is not in a position to do this, since it has lost contact with the whole, confining itself only to a "higher" realm. At the same time, the specialist, with his traditional (particularistic) point of view, finds it impossible to arrive at this more comprehensive vision which is made so necessary by the present condition of empirical investigation. For mastery of each historical situation, a certain structure of thought is required which will rise to the demands of the actual, real problems encountered, and is capable of integrating what is relevant in the various conflicting points of view. In this case, too, it is necessary to find a more fundamental axiomatic point of departure, a position from which it will be possible to synthesize the total situation. A fearful and uncertain concealment of contradictions and gaps will no more lead us out of the crisis than the methods of the extreme right and left, who exploit it in propaganda for the glorification of the past or future, forgetting for the moment that their own position is subject to the same criticism. Nor will it be of much help to interpret the onesidedness and limited character of the adversary's perspective as merely another proof of the crisis in his camp. This is practicable only if one's method is not challenged by any one else, and as long, consequently, as one is not conscious of the limitations of one's own point of view.

Only when we are thoroughly aware of the limited scope of every point of view are we on the road to the sought-for comprehension of the whole. The crisis in thought is not a crisis affecting merely a single intellectual position, but a crisis of a whole

world which has reached a certain stage in its intellectual development. To see more clearly the confusion into which our social and intellectual life has fallen represents an enrichment rather than a loss. That reason can penetrate more profoundly into its own structure is not a sign of intellectual bankruptcy. Nor is it to be regarded as intellectual incompetence on our part when an extraordinary broadening of perspective necessitates a thoroughgoing revision of our fundamental conceptions. Thought is a process determined by actual social forces, continually questioning its findings and correcting its procedure. (It would be fatal on that account to refuse to recognize, because of sheer timidity, what has already become clear.) The most promising aspect of the present situation, however, is that we can never be satisfied with narrow perspectives, but will constantly seek to understand and interpret particular insights from an ever more inclusive context.

Even Ranke in his *Politische Gespräch* put the following words into the mouth of Frederick: "You will never be able to arrive at truth by merely listening to extreme statements. Truth always lies outside the realm where error is to be found. Even from all the forms of error taken together it would be impossible to extract truth. Truth will have to be sought and found for its own sake, in its own realm. All the heresies in the world will not teach you what Christianity is—it can be learned only from the Gospel." [1] Such simple and unsophisticated ideas as these, in their purity and *naïveté*, are reminiscent of some intellectual Eden that knows nothing of the upheaval of knowledge after the Fall. Only too often is it found that the synthesis, which is presented with the assurance that it embraces the whole, turns out in the end to be the expression of the narrowest provincialism, and that an unquestioning espousal of any point of view that is at hand is one of the most certain ways of preventing the attainment of the ever broadening and more comprehensive understanding which is possible to-day.

Totality in the sense in which we conceive it is not an immediate and eternally valid vision of reality attributable only to a divine eye. It is not a self-contained and stable view. On the contrary, a total view implies both the assimilation and transcendance of the limitations of particular points of view. It represents the continuous process of the expansion of knowledge, and has as its goal not achievement of a super-temporally valid

[1] Ranke, *Das politische Gespräch*, ed. by Rothacker (Halle, 1925), p. 13.

conclusion but the broadest possible extension of our horizon of vision.

To draw a simple illustration from everyday experience of the striving towards a total view, we may take the case of an individual in a given position of life who occupies himself with the concrete individual problems that he faces and then suddenly awakens to discover the fundamental conditions which determine his social and intellectual existence. In such a case, a person, who continually and exclusively occupies himself with his daily tasks, would not take a questioning attitude towards himself and his position, and yet such a person would, despite his self-assurance, be enslaved by a particularistic and partial point of view until he reached the crisis which brought disillusionment. Not until the moment, when he for the first time conceived of himself as being a part of a larger concrete situation, would the impulse awaken in him to see his own activities in the context of the whole. It is true that his perspective may still be as limited as his narrow range of experience allows; perhaps the extent to which he analysed his situation would not transcend the scope of the small town or the limited social circle in which he moves. Nevertheless to treat events and human beings as parts of situations similar to those situations in which he finds himself, is something quite different from merely reacting immediately to a stimulus or to a direct impression. Once the individual has grasped the method of orienting himself in the world, he is inevitably driven beyond the narrow horizon of his own town and learns to understand himself as part of a national, and later of a world, situation. In the same manner he will be able to understand the position of his own generation, his own immediate situation within the epoch in which he lives, and in turn this period as part of the total historical process.

In its structural outlines this sort of orientation to one's situation represents in miniature the phenomenon that we speak of as the ever-widening drive towards a total conception. Although the same material is involved in this reorientation as in the individual observations which constitute empirical investigation, the end here is quite different. The situational analysis is the natural mode of thinking in every form of experience which rises above the commonplace level. The possibilities of this approach are not fully utilized by the special disciplines because ordinarily their objects of study are delimited by highly specialized points of view. 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.

If in as complicated a situation as our own, preceded by as differentiated an intellectual development as ours has been, new problems of thought arise, men must learn to think anew, because man is a kind of creature who must continually readapt himself to his changing history. Until the present, our attitudes towards our intellectual processes (despite all logical pretensions) were not much different from those of any naïve person. That is, men were accustomed to act in situations without clearly understanding them. But just as there was a moment in political history at which the difficulties of action became so great that they could not be directly overcome without reflecting on the situation itself, and just as man was forced to learn more and more to act, first on the basis of external impressions of the situation and afterwards by structurally analysing it, just so we may regard it as the natural development of a tendency, that man is actually grappling with the critical situation that has arisen in his thinking and is striving to envisage more clearly the nature of this crisis.

Crises are not overcome by a few hasty and nervous attempts at suppressing the newly arising and troublesome problems, nor by flight into the security of a dead past. The way out is to be found only through the gradual extension and deepening of newly-won insights and through careful advances in the direction of control.