

SYNTHESIS, PARTIALITY, AND CONVERGENCE:
RECURRENT THEMES IN SOCIAL THOUGHT.

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Synopsis

An analysis of the epistemological reflections of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Dilthey, Rickert, and Max Weber has provided an historically informed understanding of Historicism. There follows an interpretation of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge as simultaneously an explicit expression of an increasing apprehension of the limitations of man's finite cognitive capacities and a systematic effort to explore the implications of any attempt to maintain a world-view without recourse to absolutist philosophical presuppositions. The more contemporary works of Talcott Parsons and Alvin Gouldner are subsequently analyzed such that their respective orientations are interpreted as implicit and explicit attempts to overcome the relativistic implications arising out of the post-Marxian epistemologies which have significantly influenced the character of modern sociological theory. The theoretical gap concerning the relationship between the sociology of knowledge and certain theoretical orientations normally regarded as radically distinct from it has, thereby, been partially enucleated. Out of the confrontation with the implications of post-historicist conceptualizations of 'knowledge' as necessarily partial and perspectivistic has often emerged a commitment to an assumption according to which knowledge is regarded as resultant from the synthesizing capacities of the human intellect. As such, there has been a convergence around the concept of convergence itself in so far as it is a 'search for synthesis' which is believed to continually precede the creation of progressively broader and more comprehensive syntheses of perspectival viewpoints.

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Introduction:

1. The Age of Skepticism.
2. The Sociology of Knowledge: A Tentative Definition.

Introduction:

1. The Age of Skepticism:

Gunter Remmling has provocatively argued in his book, Road to Suspicion: A Study of Modern Mentality and the Sociology of Knowledge, that the twentieth century has witnessed the nearly universal dominance, at both the theoretical and nontheoretical level of mental activity, of an attitude of skepticism. On the theoretical level at which we become partially aware of the presuppositions of the skepticism which pervades the contemporary intellectual climate, we are forced to confront a strange paradox; psychoanalysis, behaviorism, ideological analysis, linguistic analysis, neopositivism and quantum mechanics are all committed to a belief in the ultimate potential of man's rational capacities, yet, at the same time, each one of these perspectives on the world and man's relationship to the world sets a limit to the knowability of the world. Each "trial presentation of the world"⁽¹⁾ raises serious doubts about the possibility of arriving at valid knowledge of the world. Our continuing search for "knowledge" has, it seems, led to an impasse, a point at which the "knowledge" which we can claim to possess is a knowledge of the inherent inability of man, with his finite capacities, to comprehend, in any absolute sense, the infinite complexity of the reality which surrounds him. We are forced to consider seriously the implications of having arrived at a set of presuppositions regarding our ability to know the world which makes problematic precisely that ability. If there is an absolute truth to which we remain committed, it is that expressed by C. Wright Mills when he wrote:

... there have been and are diverse canons and criteria of validity and truth, and these criteria, upon which the determination of the truthfulness of propositions at any time depend, are themselves, in their persistence and change, legitimately open to social-historical relativization. (2)

Pitrim Sorokin expressed much the same view when he wrote:

Since everything is temporal and subject to incessant change, and since sensory perception differs in the case of different organisms, individuals and groups, nothing absolute exists. (3)

The most challenging question which confronts us today is, then, that raised by Reinhard Bendix in the following terms:

Why continue the work of social science, when our view of human nature becomes incompatible with the belief in the constructive possibilities of knowledge? (4)

2. The Sociology of Knowledge: A Tentative Definition:

The sociology of knowledge as a sub-discipline of sociology exists within a problematic relationship to its parent discipline, a relationship that the following thesis will attempt to clarify, at least, in part. The sociology of knowledge, as an intellectual orientation, represents one of the most significant continuing confrontations with the question posed directly above by Bendix. It is, at one and the same time, an expression of contemporary man's increasing apprehension of the limitations of his finite cognitive capacities and a conscious attempt to confront systematically the implications of the attempt to maintain a world-view released from the security of absolute certainty.

The sociology of knowledge, in all its formulations, presupposes a determinate relationship between knowledge and factors external to such knowledge. As Jacques Maquet states, "the indispensable assumption" of the sociology of knowledge is that "human knowledge is not solely determined either by its object or by its logical

antecedents."⁽⁵⁾ As a sociological discipline, the external factors considered relevant to a sociological analysis are those which may be attributed to society and culture. As such, the sociology of knowledge does not emphasize the biological, genetic, geographical, climactic or racial determinants of thought if, indeed, such factors do exert a determinant influence upon the development of human mental constructs. In other words, the sociology of knowledge expresses a determinate relationship between human cognitive productions and social factors, social factors being regarded as those which are a consequence of the "living together of men."⁽⁶⁾

This definition of the sociology of knowledge is intentionally very broad so as to avoid the exclusion, at this early stage of our analysis, of certain formulations of the relationship between knowledge and social being. Whereas we can accept the general definition of the sociology of knowledge as offered by Gunter Remmling in the following terms as:

...essentially the doctrine of the determination of cognition and knowledge by social reality,⁽⁷⁾

we find the still fairly broad definition of the sub-discipline offered by Peter Hamilton in the following quotation to be too narrow, at least as a tentative definition. Hamilton defines the sociology of knowledge as:

...a distinctive field of study concerned with a determinate relationship between knowledge and social structure. (8)

Unfortunately, Hamilton does not define clearly what he means by the term, social structure, however, if we adopt, for our present purposes, a rather typical definition of the term, we can see that it is a more limiting one than the alternative, "social reality." William Dobriner states:

...a social structure consists of predictable and "bearing" relationships...which are empirically manifest in the behavior of individuals functioning within the system. (9)

As such, the term, social structure, connotes an empirical reference to recurrent, stabilized and orderly observable relationships.

Consequently, if the sociology of knowledge were confined to an analysis of the relationship between knowledge and social structure, it would be confined to an analysis of the influence of observable 'material' factors upon mental constructs. Certainly, these factors are within the province of the sociology of knowledge and indeed the tendency within the discipline which has historically tended to predominate the subsequent discussions within it have dealt almost exclusively with such factors. However, it is important to bear in mind the existence of another set of factors external to particular mental constructions which may exist in a determinate relationship to those constructions; these factors may be called cultural factors and they are, in themselves, mental productions. As such, they are not material factors like those which compose social structure but they are social factors analyzable only in terms of the mutual interaction of persons.⁽¹⁰⁾ This distinction between social structural factors and cultural factors is an analytical distinction only. In reality, the two are not distinguishable since cultural factors and social structural factors are intimately connected and each set of factors is partially constitutive of the other. The heuristic value of the distinction is that it prevents a premature closure of the debate between materialism and idealism in which one set of factors is regarded as reducible as epiphenomena to the other set. As we shall see, this debate plays a central role in the development of the issues analyzed throughout the body of this thesis.

The present study has developed out of an initial interest in the historical and theoretical foundations of the sociology of knowledge. Sociologists, within the English-speaking world, have become acquainted with the sociology of knowledge, whose origins are peculiarly European, primarily through the writings of Karl Mannheim. Only recently have translations and secondary criticisms of other influential contributors become available in English. For this reason, it has often been the case that the North American appreciation of this particular sub-discipline has been limited by an inability to place the sociology of knowledge within an historical context. Therefore, this thesis will attempt to contribute to the now increasing awareness of the historical foundations of the sociology of knowledge.

It is customary to justify either at the outset or at the conclusion of one's study of classical sociological thinkers the amount of time and effort which is to be or has been expended upon a critical analysis of thinkers whom to many are of historical interest only. Thus, Giddens concludes his recent study of Marx, Durkheim and Weber in the following way:

To argue that it must be one of the main tasks of modern sociology to revert to some of the concerns which occupied its founders is not to propose a step which is wholly regressive: paradoxically, in taking up again the problems with which they were primarily concerned, we may hope ultimately to liberate ourselves from our present heavy dependence on the ideas which they formulated. (11)

Such an intention is indeed laudable and in the case of Giddens and many others is not merely gratuitous, however, in many cases, it is left to the reader to infer the nature of our dependence upon the classical formulations. That is, the ways in which the classical formulations of sociological concerns have influenced and continue to influence contemporary sociological theorizing are often left implicit

and are rarely analyzed systematically. Of course, there are significant exceptions to this tendency such as Habermas' Knowledge and Human Interests, Nisbet's The Sociological Tradition, Gouldner's Enter Plato and Lichtheim's From Marx to Hegel to mention only a few, however, it remains the case that very often the significant linkages which exist between the classical formulations of sociological issues and the contemporary concerns of sociology are merely implied in critical analyses which represent little more than scholarly textual exegesis. Certainly, such analyses are not without merit (in the pages that follow, I will attempt to acknowledge my indebtedness to them), however, in this thesis, it will be my intention to exercise some restraint in face of the temptation to present a secondary interpretation of the contributions of particular sociologists of knowledge and particularly Karl Mannheim. What must be sacrificed in terms of detailed textual criticism may be found elsewhere and we hope that our sacrifice in this regard will be compensated for by our demonstration of the significant correspondences and parallels which we will show to exist between the issues dealt with by Mannheim and the sociology of knowledge generally and those currently being pursued within the discipline of sociology.

Footnotes to the Introduction:

1. Reinhard Bendix, Embattled Reason: Essays on Social Knowledge, New York, 1970, p. 115.
2. C. Wright Mills, "Methodological Consequences of the Sociology of Knowledge," A.J.S., 1940, p. 318.
3. Pitrim A. Sorokin, The Crisis of Our Age, New York, 1957, p. 97.
4. Reinhard Bendix, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
5. Jacques Maquet, The Sociology of Knowledge: Its Structure and its Relation to the Philosophy of Knowledge; A Critical Analysis of the Systems of Karl Mannheim and Pitrim A. Sorokin, Boston, 1951, p. 5.
6. Karl Mannheim, Systematic Sociology, London, 1967, p. 1.
7. Gunter Remmling, Road to Suspicion: A Study of Modern Mentality and the Sociology of Knowledge, New York, 1967, p. 15.
8. Peter Hamilton, Knowledge and Social Structure: An Introduction to the Classical Argument in the Sociology of Knowledge, London, 1974, p. vii.
9. William Dobriner, Social Structure and Systems: A Sociological Overview, Pacific Palisades, Calif., 1969, p. 107.
10. I am indebted to Jacques Maquet for this distinction. The reader is directed to his discussion of Sorokin's Wissenssoziologie in The Sociology of Knowledge (*op. cit.*), esp. pp. 187-188.
11. Anthony Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of Marx, Durkheim, and Max Weber, Cambridge, 1972, p. 247.

Part I: The Pre-History of the Modern Epistemological Debate.

1. Immanuel Kant
2. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
3. Karl Marx.

1. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

Undoubtedly, the key figure with which any analysis of modern German thought must begin is Immanuel Kant. As H. Stuart Hughes has remarked:

Throughout the nineteenth century virtually every educated German had cut his philosophical teeth on Kant. (1)

Faced with the competing claims of philosophical rationalism as expressed particularly in the mathematical rationalism of René Descartes and the Leibnizians which presupposed that knowledge was derived from reasoning from self-evident premises and not from man's sense experience of the world and of philosophical empiricism represented most especially by David Hume and presupposing that knowledge is derivative solely from sense experience, Kant sought to synthesize what he considered to be the valid aspects of each of these seemingly incompatible positions. Rather than producing an equally dogmatic alternative to Descartes' insistence upon the a priori cognition of objects and Hume's empiricism which implied the most radical epistemological skepticism, Kant produced a philosophy of "critical idealism," critical in the sense that it did not attempt to solve the controversy between empiricists and rationalists without first critically examining the degree to which human intellectual faculties were capable of comprehending the essential nature of reality.

For Kant, human knowledge was a product of both pure reason and sensory experience. Kant posited a distinction between two orders of reality, a distinction which, as we shall see, has influenced the development of sociological theory to the present day. The phenomenal world was the world of experience and the phenomena, the objects composing the phenomenal realm,

can only be comprehended as they appear to us with the aid of our sensory organs. Knowledge of this realm is not equivalent to knowledge of the noumena or the things-in-themselves (Ding-an-sich). Kant agreed with Hume to the extent that sense impressions themselves can never supply us with the necessities and laws which are fundamental to the exercise of science. However, rather than adopting the skepticism of Hume's position which implied the impossibility of scientific knowledge, Kant argued that it is the rational faculties of the human intellect which in the form of necessary a priori "categories" of cognition impose a conceptually mediated understanding of the data of raw sense experience. To Kant, it is not a question of whether or not the seeming artificiality of this type of knowledge (as opposed to, say, knowledge of the essential nature of reality) is adequate or valid; rather, according to Kant, human knowledge is knowledge which is necessarily mediated by a priori categories of thought such as cause, space, time and number, etc. Such categories are not themselves sufficient to produce knowledge; they are merely the instruments required to order the experiences of our senses. Thus, for Kant as Remmling has suggested, "...everything is derived from experience, except the faculty to make experiences."⁽²⁾ The epistemology established by Kant on the basis of his distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal realms maintains that:

...to know is to synthesize, by the forms native to the mind, the content conveyed by the senses.⁽³⁾

The radical implication of this epistemological synthesis which Kant regarded as comparable in significance to the revolution in astronomy effected by Copernicus is that it forces us to

regard human knowledge as the product of a subjective encounter with reality. Rather than assuming along with both the rationalists and the empiricists that knowledge was dependent primarily upon the object of cognition and that the human mind would reflect the essential nature of that object either through reason or through direct sensory appreciation, Kant argued that the object of our knowledge reflected the essential nature of man's rational faculties. The mind, in this sense, creates the objects of its knowledge. Remmling states:

The mind imposes its conditions on the object,
and thus gets out of nature what it has already
put into it. (4)

The subject of knowledge, the knower, constructs and creates the objects of his knowledge. The only reality open to man's comprehension, the phenomenal reality, is regarded as chaotic except for the ability of the subject of knowledge to project order into the chaos by means of his rational faculties, the categories of thought. Consequently, human knowledge of the world cannot be regarded as an exact reflection of that world.

As Remmling again states:

We are, therefore, forever barred from knowing absolute reality, the world of 'things-in-themselves,' which Kant fathomed beyond the forms of time and space. Ideas such as God, immortality, and freedom, the main objects of traditional metaphysics, can never be proven or disproven by way of scientific inquiry. They must be left to the other great sphere of human existence: belief. (5)

The net effect of this Kantian epistemology is, then, that the reality which it is the task of science and rational thought in general to comprehend is a very different reality from that posited by the rationalists and the empiricists alike. It is a reality constituted by the subjects of that comprehension. To jump ahead somewhat, the sociology of knowledge which, as we have

seen, posits a determinate relationship between knowledge and social reality presupposes the adoption of such a conception of reality because if knowledge is to be regarded as relative to social factors rather than to the essential nature of the object as the naive realists would have it, it is necessary to regard the knowing subject, influenced by those social factors, as a creative subject in the constitution of the objects of his knowledge.

As we have seen, human knowledge, according to Kant, is knowledge of the phenomenal world and such knowledge cannot be considered equivalent to knowledge of the absolute reality of the objects surrounding man. Because knowledge of this absolute realm is not attainable, the traditional questions of metaphysics cannot be solved rationally. Consequently, the status of moral judgments which pertained to the noumenal world was made problematic. For Kant, the limitations of human reason necessarily precluded the attainment of "knowledge" concerning moral statements. The natural world, the world of appearances, is alone analyzable in terms of the fundamental categories of thought by which the scientist (or knowing subject) imposes an artificially created conceptual framework on the chaos of the content of our knowledge as conveyed by the senses. Nature is formally (not ontologically) a creation of the knowing subject; as such, it is a product of an encounter between a knowing subject and an absolute reality the nature of which is beyond the limitations of man's finite rational capacities. Nature, then, is subject to causality while the realm of the absolute in which the absolute questionings of the moral life have their meaning is regarded as free or self-determined; this freedom is transphenomenal. Thus, Kant effected a rupture between theory and practice. As George

Lichtheim states:

There is a theory of nature: there is no theory of morals. What we should do, how we ought to behave, what sort of polity we may find, cannot be established by theoretical insight into the reality of things, for the "reality of things" is beyond our (theoretical) grasp. (6)

Simply stated, man's knowledge (theory) is knowledge of phenomena, appearances, and, as such, maintains no necessary connection with the transphenomenal realm of moral absolutes.

This, the Kantian dualism which is implied in the original distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal realms, has had a continuing influence upon the subsequent development of thought and especially upon the original foundations of European sociology. On the one hand, Kant's epistemological dualism led to Comte's philosophical justification for his "positivism" which attempted to confine the human sciences to the analysis of external phenomena. Since all of man's knowledge was derived from sense experience (except for the faculty to make experiences), all knowledge, including that of human reality, must be derived from that which is observable via the senses. On the other hand, the development of German philosophy subsequent to Kant led to the constitution of a philosophical framework for social theory which was, in major respects, diametrically opposed to the "positivist" elucidation of the Kantian implications; that philosophical framework was historicism and it is this particular post-Kantian development with which we are here primarily concerned.

The following aphorism attributed to Liebmann accurately demonstrates the magnitude of Kant's influence on the subsequent development of German philosophy:

You can philosophize with Kant, or you can philosophize against Kant, but you cannot philosophize without Kant. (7)

Many of Kant's successors in Germany, where philosophical activity was perhaps more intense than anywhere else in Europe, could not rest easily with the radical implications of his critical idealism.

The "subjective idealism" of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) expressed a mystical and theological metaphysics of being in which both the knowing subject and the objects of knowledge are wholly the result of the activity of an absolute ego. This absolute ego which is absolute because it is not determined by any finite conditions "posits" its own opposite (negation), the finite egos of human individuals thereby creating the moral realm of action in which man participates. Consequently, the moral will of the human being is both absolute and conditioned, finite and infinite. This paradox or contradiction supplies the dynamic of Fichte's system which moves toward a synthesis in which man's knowledge of himself and the world of sense experience approximates closer to knowledge of the essential nature of man and his world as a manifestation of the Absolute ego. However, Fichte posits a limitation to the dynamism of his system such that the finite ego can never restore within itself the absolute ego which created it. Therefore, for Fichte, no ultimate solution to the contradiction can be attained. As with Kant, although upon a speculative rather than a rational basis, Fichte places a limit upon the ability of man's cognitive faculties to ever arrive at knowledge of absolute reality.

Whereas Fichte's idealism subordinated nature to the absolute ego, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775-1854) broke away from his original transcendental idealism which bore close resemblances to both Kant and Fichte and constructed a philosophy of nature which emphasized the self-existence of the

objective world. According to Schelling, the essential nature of this objective world was approachable through intuition. Consequently, for Schelling as well, knowledge of the essential reality of the object world could not be achieved solely by recourse to man's rational faculties.

2. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)

The "objective idealism" of G. W. F. Hegel differed significantly from Fichte's "subjective idealism" and Schelling's philosophy of nature even though he had for a time some sympathy with the latter's critique of Fichte. Hegel represents the culmination of the classical German Idealist philosophical framework. The term, culmination, is singularly appropriate with reference to Hegel's philosophical impact; to culminate means to "...reach its highest point" or to be "...on the meridian."⁽⁸⁾ Hegel's "absolute idealism" simultaneously develops out of and completes the tradition of thought begun by Kant and followed by Fichte and Schelling among others. It represents the summit of Idealist thought from which Hegel himself and subsequent thinkers could view yet another summit. His systematic analysis of the presuppositions and implications of the Idealist framework eventually undermined its own starting-point.

Hegel's epistemological position developed out of an original respect for the Kantian position, however, like Fichte and Schelling, he was unable to accept the ethical skepticism implied by

the distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal realms. Like Kant, Hegel begins by assuming that knowledge is a product of an active knowing subject. Therefore, the knowing subject does not arrive at knowledge of the world by allowing the facts to speak for themselves; he is not a passive recipient whose knowledge merely reflects the essential nature of the object-world. Like Kant, Hegel acknowledges that the knowing subject brings to his observations of the world outside him his own rational categories of explanation. Also, like Kant, the categories do not represent any form of knowledge in and of themselves; rather, knowledge is the application of such categories to our experience of the world. However, unlike Kant, Hegel does not accept a distinction between the phenomenal world, the world of appearances, and the noumenal world, the world of the Ding-an-sich. According to Hegel, the two worlds are one and the same; the world of appearance is reality. Hegel assumes that the rational categories of the mind and that the way in which this rationality develops (thereby encompassing a change in the nature of man and mind) corresponds accurately to the nature of reality and the way that reality develops. Hegel's conviction is, in the words of Clement Webb:

...that in thinking logically, that is, in following the law of its own nature, it (mind) is tracing out the actual structure of reality. (9)

Or, as Bruce Mazlish states, in Hegel's philosophy:

...the logic of the mind...corresponds to the logic of the world. And he (Hegel) suggests, we deduce this latter, the logic of the world, from the very way in which we come to know it. (10)

In this way, Hegel has linked the two Kantian realms and maintains that there is not^a fundamental distinction to be made between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds. According to Hegel, Kant's

dualism between the object known by man and the object-in-itself led necessarily to an epistemological position in which man's knowledge was illusory or fictional, to employ a term that will enter our discussion later. For Hegel, what is real is rational and what is rational is real. Among other things, this dictum points to the identity of the knowing mind and of the reality which it comes to know. As Webb states:

...in the mind's knowledge of the world,
the world knows itself, just as in knowing
the world the mind knows itself. (11)

It will be remembered that the original Kantian distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds had led Kant to a position which maintained that man could have no valid knowledge of moral absolutes. Man's knowledge of the empirical reality around him (i.e., the world of appearances) was not to be dogmatically considered as knowledge of the essential nature of those appearances. Man's moral actions, then, were not justifiable by recourse to any absolute standards of right or wrong which could be arrived at rationally. For Kant, there was an irreconcilable tension between man's knowledge of the world and the way in which man acted in and upon the world.

As Louis Dupré states:

Kant's philosophy of right and his ethical system suffered from the same dualism as his epistemology; an unsurmountable separation between consciousness and reality. (12)

The epistemological dualism posited by Kant forced him to maintain that the level of consciousness wherein man's moral intentions have their proper place and at which man is able to exhibit his freedom in resolving questions pertaining to moral absolutes, has no necessary connection with the world of appearances in which he acts and which is subject to the determinisms

not characteristic of the transphenomenal realm. Because this Kantian position prevented the identification of the ideal realm of consciousness and reality, Kant's notion of freedom was "...restricted to the interior universe of the moral intention."⁽¹³⁾ By so doing, freedom becomes, for Kant, "...an inner value to be realized within the soul alone."⁽¹⁴⁾ It was this radical disjuncture between consciousness and reality which Hegel refused to accept and to which he countered with his assumption regarding the identity of mind and reality. Hegel's rejection of the Kantian dualism, therefore, implied the possibility of deriving implications vis a vis the moral actions of man from man's theoretical knowledge. In Kantian language, the noumenal realm of essence was accessible to reason. Although looking ahead somewhat to the rest of our analysis, the following quotation by Lichtheim demonstrates one of the profound implications of Hegel's position. Lichtheim states:

...he had taken the decisive step by restoring that union of theory and practice which Kant had torn apart. It was only necessary for the radicals among his followers, the Left Hegelians, to abandon his conservatism and his philosophy could be turned into what Alexander Herzen called the 'algebra of revolution.' (15)

Hegel's epistemological position, then, does not imply the ethical skepticism of Kant's dualistic position. Hegel accomplished the resolution of the Kantian opposition between consciousness and natural reality by adopting a mystical and metaphysical set of beliefs derived partially from Fichte and Schelling, beliefs which regarded the ultimate meaning of the world to be the self-realization of an Absolute Spirit. Employing the Aristotelian conception of God as pure thought thinking itself, Hegel believed that the concrete reality which surrounds man and man himself is but a manifestation of Geist, Absolute Spirit or Absolute Mind. The

essence of Spirit, according to Hegel, was its freedom to develop its potential rationality. In order for Spirit to become fully rational (i.e., in order for it to actualize its potential essence), it must become conscious of itself as the universal principle underlying all reality. However, this self-consciousness is achieved only by a process (dialectical) in which Spirit manifests itself in the form of finite spirit (man) and finite reality (concrete reality within time and space) in order that it may realize and overcome the limitations of finitude inherent in particular existence. According to Hegel, only spirit can comprehend spirit and Absolute Spirit can achieve self-consciousness (i.e., realize its freedom) only by confronting that which it is not. Thus Absolute Mind or Reason or Spirit must, if it is to fulfill its purpose, objectify itself in particular existence; accordingly, man (finite spirit) becomes an integral part of the dialectical process whereby Absolute Spirit (God) comes to self-consciousness of itself as the inherent rational principle behind all existence. Thus, Hegel writes: "Without the world God is not God."⁽¹⁶⁾

Hegel's exceedingly difficult philosophy undertakes to map this dialectical process. Since the self-consciousness of Absolute Mind is dependent upon the ability of Absolute Mind to objectify itself in man and concrete reality, the process takes place within time, thus, the dialectical development of Mind (or Spirit) constitutes History. Man, as the particular manifestation of Absolute Spirit, is, in part, spirit and it is man's ability to comprehend or to reason, an ability which devolves from his nature as spirit, which provides him

with the capacity to comprehend partially the nature of Absolute Reality and concomitantly the ultimate purpose of the universe. Because man is a manifestation of Absolute Spirit and it is through man that "...finite life rises to infinite life,"⁽¹⁷⁾ Absolute Spirit remains the author of the entire process. Consequently, according to Hegel, the process whereby Absolute Mind thinks itself or becomes self-conscious must be identical with the process whereby reality develops since that reality is but a manifestation of Spirit.

The process of the development of Absolute Spirit's self-consciousness passes through three principal stages, stages which correspond to the three principal subdivisions of Hegel's philosophy: the Logic, the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit. In the Science of Logic, Hegel deals with pure essentialities which represent pure forms of thought or the categories employed by Absolute Spirit prior to its manifestation in concrete reality and finite spirit, man. This results in a contradiction in that the thinking of pure Being implies the thinking of pure Nothingness. While the notion of pure Being and that of pure Nothingness are opposites, they imply one another. Consequently, Hegel affirms both notions simultaneously by asserting the notion of "becoming." What becomes both is and is not at the same time. As such, Hegel rejects the customary formal logic based upon a priori, static, and mutually exclusive categories of thought and establishes the foundation for a developmental logic.

In the Philosophy of Nature, Hegel describes Nature as the opposite of Spirit. Nature is characterized by external relations; i.e., the categories used to understand aspects of Nature are mutually exclusive whereas the categories of pure

thought examined within the Logic were all internally related, they implied one another. In Nature, parts of space and time exclude one another and are thus characterized by finite determinisms. Nature is viewed as externality, yet, at the same time, Nature is a manifestation or creation of Absolute Spirit and consequently the essential reality of Nature is its rationality since it is created by Absolute Reason. It is the task of the philosophy of Nature to uncover this essential character of Nature. In ~~so~~doing, Absolute Spirit becomes fully conscious of itself as Absolute or universal. This task is carried out by man who, as finite spirit, progresses through various forms of mental activity until man finally comes to know himself as a manifestation of Spirit, until, that is, he realizes his identity with God. Man's consciousness or reason develops through human history which is the objectification of the Absolute Spirit in various forms until in the realm of philosophy, man is able to think his own essence (i.e., think of himself as a manifestation of Absolute Spirit.) At this point, in time, Absolute Spirit, by having made explicit what was implicit in it by overcoming the illusion of the externality of Nature has attained its goal which is equivalent to the ultimate purpose of the world, the self-realization of Absolute Spirit as pure essence.

In terms of his subsequent impact on the development of social thought, it is Hegel's conception of the development of the categories of thought which is most important. According to Hegel, such categories are themselves relative to the particular point in the dialectical process which has been achieved; i.e., the categories of thought are relative to particular historical

situations since the process by which Absolute Spirit develops from consciousness of the externality of Nature to consciousness of the identity of Absolute Spirit and Nature (i.e., the identity of consciousness and reality) proceeds only via the mediation of finite man, historical spirit.

So, in the Philosophy of Mind, Hegel sets out to analyze the development of finite spirit. In his analysis, he traces the development of Absolute Spirit as it manifests itself in particular historical stages. Hegel first demonstrates that man's consciousness develops to fulfill its own potentiality through men's relationships with other men. Through the media of language, labour and property, man, as a social being, negates his own particularity and in relations with others recognizes that he, through his labour, objectifies himself in the objects of his environment. This realization that the world exists for man as a product of his own subjective will allows him to overcome the alienated mode of consciousness in which man regards the objects of the world as external to his own subjectivity. As Dupré states:

The original opposition between a pure consciousness of freedom, on the one hand, and a determinate, unfree world, on the other has completely vanished: through man's work, the world has become part of consciousness. Hegel calls this identity of nature and freedom the real fact (die Sache selbst), as opposed to the thing (das Ding) of perception. Henceforth the world is seen as a system of man's making. (18)

The process which determines the development of man's consciousness is dialectical and is based fundamentally, as is the entire process of the self-realization of Absolute Spirit, upon the ability of man to overcome the contradictions inherent in his particular existence. The contradiction is overcome when one realizes

that his particular existence partakes of universal existence, that particular existence is a manifestation of universal existence; it is a realization which implies that the needs of individuals can be fulfilled only through association with other individuals. As Marcuse states:

The individual can become what he is only through another individual: his very existence consists in his 'being-for-another.' (19)

There is not time nor space to go into the details of this process. What is important is that the development of man's consciousness and his reasoning faculties is dependent upon man's nature as a social being. The development of man's consciousness is a historical process which Hegel analyzes in his Philosophy of History.

The process of the realization of the self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit, of which the dialectical progression of man's finite consciousness of itself as absolute is the final stage, is History. When Hegel speaks of the finite consciousness of man rising to infinite consciousness, he does not have in mind a single individual achieving this goal. Rather, it is man in general which is the universal subject of history; it is the historical project of mankind to rise to an awareness of the identity of itself as Absolute Spirit objectified.

Absolute Spirit manifests itself in different nations, world-historical nations, and different individuals, world-historical individuals, throughout History. These nations and individuals unwittingly act as the agents of the World Spirit. Behind their backs lies the "cunning of reason" and although the ultimate consequences of their actions may be unknown to the actual historical agents, their actions function to raise

Absolute Spirit to the level of self-consciousness. Hegel traces the development of the World Spirit as it manifested itself in the Oriental despotic states and the Greek state until it ultimately arrived at the level of self-consciousness in Hegel's own Prussia. According to Hegel, the state and its development in different historical forms represents the proper subject-matter of the Philosophy of History, because in the State there occurs the unity of particular wills such that law is the objectification of the universal elements common to all particular individuals. Each of these particular states represents, at its time, the highest level of Absolute Spirit's consciousness of itself. When a particular state or individual is no longer adequate as a means by which Absolute Spirit comes to know itself via the mediation of the increasing consciousness of mankind of its identity with the Absolute, he or it is abandoned as the agent of World Spirit. Each particular individual or state represents but one moment of the dialectical process and consequently is incapable of rising to Absolute Knowledge by itself. Rather, each state must act as the thesis which in being forced to confront what it is not, the antithesis, is transcended by the synthesis which represents the next higher level of Absolute Spirit's self-consciousness and which becomes the subsequent agent of the World Spirit.

Thus, according to Hegel, each historical individual, in attempting to comprehend the reality around him and his place within that reality, brings to that comprehension categories of thought derived from a particular historical moment. In this way, Hegel added to the Kantian epistemology's notion of an active and creative knowing subject an historical and social dimension.

The categories of thought which Kant had believed to be a priori are, according to Hegel, in a process of continual historical transformation. Hegel's contribution, then, to the subsequent development of social thought is his conviction that man is an historical being who, through his interaction with the external world (both social and physical), shapes that world and himself. Furthermore, according to Hegel, man's ability to comprehend the nature of reality is relative to the particular historical situation in which he finds himself. Man cannot transcend in thought or in consciousness the limitations imposed upon him by that historical situation. Hegel writes:

When philosophy paints its grey in grey, then has a shape of life grown old. By philosophy's grey in grey it cannot be rejuvenated but only understood. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk. (20)

3. Karl Marx (1818-1883)

It is generally acknowledged that one of Karl Marx's great intellectual achievements was to unify the diverse themes of German Hegelian philosophy, French socialist doctrine and English political and economic theory. Debate has, of course, arisen as to the relative influence that each of these intellectual traditions had upon the development of Marx's social theory. Furthermore, since Marx's death, various critics have argued that the philosophical implications of Marx's system are similar to those of Spencer (Enrico Ferri), Darwin (Karl Kautsky), Kant (Eduard Bernstein and Max Adler), Hegel (Hyppolite, Marcuse, Avineri, Dupré), Feuerbach (Plekhanov), etc. Others have suggested affinities

with the positivism of Mach and Avenarius, the pragmatism of William James (esp. George Sorel and Sidney Hook) and with Italian neo-idealism (Antonio Gramsci). Clearly, this is not the place to attempt an evaluation of all these various arguments. Rather, following our earlier discussions of the development of German Idealism in the works of Kant and Hegel, we shall focus on the Marxian debt to this particular intellectual tradition. Therefore, it will be our intention to regard Marx as indebted to Hegel in many respects. However, we will not, at this time, attempt to determine the relative influences upon Marx of the other significant contributions to his thought noted above. This decision to select for consideration his debt to German idealism is justified by the terms of reference of this thesis; that is, we are interested in Marx's work to the extent that it may be interpreted as a fundamentally significant influence upon the subsequent development of German social theory in general and upon historicism in particular.

After Hegel's death in 1831, his philosophy had a profound influence within Germany; it had acquired the status of an orthodoxy despite the continuing influence of Kantianism in Prussia centred at the University of Konigsberg where Kant had held the chair of philosophy. Consequently, when Marx entered the University of Berlin in 1836, the university where Hegel had lectured, he was immediately subjected to the influence of Hegel's disciples, especially to that of Gans in whose classroom Marx first became acquainted with the revolutionary implications of the Hegelian dialectic stressing as it did the impermanence of any particular historical state of affairs. By this time, there had already begun a controversy over the political implications of the Hegelian

system.

It will be remembered from our previous discussion that Hegel had presupposed that what is rational is real and what is real is rational. In viewing the world metaphysically as the purposeful creation of an Absolute Rationality, Hegel had maintained that at any particular historical moment, the concrete reality was structured according to the rational and necessary pattern of Absolute Spirit. However, the ability of finite spirit, man, to comprehend the inherent rationality or pattern of this rationality was confined within the limits to human consciousness established by the particular historical situation in which he found himself. Individual man or men collectively were not capable of discovering the ultimate purpose of the universe although they were significant agents in the realization of that purpose. As such, the consciousness of men regarding the historical process in its totality and their place within that totality was confined to a search for a contemplative and retroactive understanding of the rationality and necessity inherent in the concrete reality surrounding them. Philosophy was, according to Hegel, not predictive in the sense that it could posit the next stage in the dialectical development of the self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit. For Hegel, philosophy was only a reflection of its own time apprehended in thought; it cannot overleap its age. "The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk."⁽²¹⁾ We see, therefore, that although Hegel's philosophy had overcome, in principle, the ethical skepticism implied in Kant's distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal realms, the knowledge of the essential reality which was, according to Hegel, accessible to man (such knowledge not being accessible to man according to Kant) was a knowledge that:

...the hidden essence of reality was seen to be in harmony both with itself and with the divinity. In less exalted language, the world was held to be precisely what it ought to be, namely reasonable.(22)

This philosophical conclusion, if translated into terms of political practice, could lead only to conformism. What Hegel's system could not provide were the criteria by which one evaluated a given concrete state of affairs (this despite the fact that Hegel himself seldom refrained from making evaluative judgments vis a vis particular political proposals and the ideas of his contemporaries.) For Hegel himself and for some of his disciples, the quietistic implications of his philosophical system functioned as legitimations for the Prussian monarchy and the Lutheran Church. After the publication of David Strauss' A Critical Study of the Life of Jesus in 1835, the disciples of Hegel split into factions over the above issue and the debate was carried on within the medium of a discussion about Hegel's views on religion. Hegel had identified philosophy and religion by arguing that while:

...philosophy proposes the truth in the pure form of reason, religion expresses it in sensible representation. (23)

Strauss, on the other hand, argued that religious doctrines must be considered as myths expressing the aspirations of religious followers rather than as a symbolic representation of rational thought. The "Old-Hegelians" or "Right-Hegelians" rejected this view as it implied the basis for a critique of the Lutheran Church which they regarded as expressive of the same absolute truth, although in different terms, as that discovered by Hegel's philosophy.

The supporters of Strauss formed themselves into the "Young-Hegelian" movement which later divided into an extreme "Left-Hegelianism" and a "Center-Hegelianism", both groups, however, denying that religious doctrines, in general, and the Christian

gospels, in particular, possessed any intrinsic relation to philosophical truth. They proposed a "critical" understanding of religious phenomena which would seek the meaning of such phenomena from a detailed historical study of the role of religious beliefs in different communities. Such studies were, in the case of the Left-Hegelians, motivated by an overt atheism.

It is important to remember that this controversy over the implications of Hegel's philosophy of religion was implicitly a political controversy over the relationship of man's theoretical knowledge of the world and his participation in that world. As Peter Hamilton has observed:

In a theocratic state, as Prussia was at that time, religious divisions automatically became political divisions, or were generalized into them. In the intellectual climate of those times virtually the only 'free' discussion in public was about religion; censorship prevented until 1840 any discussion of substantive political issues. (24)

In other words, underlying the rupture between the Young and the Old Hegelians which was explicitly a division over Hegel's philosophy of religion was a more fundamental division concerning the possibility of a philosophically sound and historically grounded set of criteria which could serve as the basis for a critique of existing historical conditions and, following from that, the justification for action directed toward the transformation of those conditions.

Lichtheim states:

If the intellectual comprehension of the world led to the discovery that the actual empirical state of affairs was irrational-i.e., contrary to Reason in the sense which the Enlightenment had given to this term-the system (the Hegelian system) broke down. This notion was adopted with reluctance, and only after many initial hesitations. These took the form of differentiating the method from the particular affirmations made by Hegel in relation to Church and State: affirmations (it was

explained) which were factually erroneous. Prussia was not, after all, a rational State, nor Lutheranism a rational faith. (25)

It was within this intellectual climate that Marx began to develop his own peculiar relationship to Hegelian philosophy. While the Young Hegelians perceived themselves as being faithful to Hegel, they did, in fact, draw a sharp distinction between the method of Hegelian philosophy, the dialectic, and the Hegelian system of philosophy itself. According to their reading of Hegel, the dialectic must be regarded as necessarily infinite whereas Hegel himself had undermined his own most important insight by positing what was in essence the end of the dialectical progression of history; namely, the point at which the self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit is achieved via the self-consciousness of man as a manifestation of Absolute Spirit, such self-consciousness having been achieved with the articulation of Hegel's own philosophy within the context of the Prussian State, the end of history. As Engels was to write:

..., in accordance with traditional requirements, a system of philosophy must conclude with some sort of absolute truth. Therefore, however much Hegel, especially in his Logic, emphasized that this eternal truth is nothing but logical, or the historical process itself, he nevertheless finds himself compelled to supply this process with an end, just because he has to bring his system to a termination (at) some point of other. (26)

It was the intention of the Young Hegelians and, at this time, Marx was among them, to revitalize the radical insights uncovered by Hegel's dialectical method and to discard from the Hegelian legacy the self-contained and complete system which Hegel had constructed upon that method, a system which implied a conformist political stance. As Dupré states:

They insisted that no dialectical synthesis can ever be final, and that negation is the dynamic force of the dialectical movement. Philosophy, therefore, must be critical rather than conservative. (27)

The accession to the Prussian throne of Frederick William IV in 1840 was followed by a liberalization of the censorship laws and the Young Hegelians, led essentially by Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Feuerbach, were able to generalize their religious debate with the Old Hegelians into one with overt political overtones. These debates were carried on at the intellectual level of political critiques published in a journal, the Rheinische Zeitung. In 1842, Marx took over the editorship of the journal and remained in that position for only one year at which time the Prussian government suppressed its publication.

Already in 1842, Marx had moved a long way from his original Young Hegelian position and he had begun to distinguish his own thought from that of his earlier colleagues.. Influenced by Arnold Ruge who had openly criticized the conservatism which characterized the Prussian State and in so doing had given a political status to the Young Hegelian movement, Marx came to understand the speculative philosophical critiques of the religious and political order offered by the Young Hegelians as incapable of transforming those orders. As early as 1841, Marx in his doctoral dissertation, On the Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature, had already implied that a purely theoretical critique of Hegel's political conservatism was itself inherently speculative and incapable of concretizing itself in action. As Dupré states, it was Ruge who "...would convince him that the true critique of the established order lies in action." (28)

At this time, although Marx's views on Communism were not clearly

formulated, the publication of Proudhon's What is Property in 1840 had stimulated much discussion and Moses Hess, Marx's co-editor of the Rheinische Zeitung, was openly sympathetic to Proudhon's analysis of private property. Another formative influence, at this time, was Lorenz von Stein who argued in his Socialism and Communism in Contemporary France that the political structure of modern states depended upon an underlying economic structure; i.e., the modern state is the political framework of a society based on private property. The conclusion to be drawn from such an analysis was that the action directed toward the transformation of given social conditions must be directed toward the alteration of social and economic conditions rather than toward the alteration of any given political structure.

Despite the importance of the above influences on the development of Marx's thought, the major influence, at this time, proved to be Ludwig Feuerbach whose "transformative method", to be described shortly, was to provide Marx with the tool to justify philosophically his developing social theories.

Following the state suppression of the Rheinische Zeitung, Marx moved to Paris to work with Ruge on his Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher which is indicative of his break with the still speculative Young Hegelians. It was at this time that he became interested in questions of economics as posed by Smith and Ricardo. While in Paris, he began his famous collaboration with Frederick Engels.

In 1842, Marx was committed to writing a critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right as he had promised to write an article on the subject for Ruge, however, it was not until late in 1843, after Marx had come to regard Feuerbach's "Provisional Theses for the Reform of Philosophy" as the fundamental basis for the critique of Hegelian

philosophy, that he was able to articulate the nature of his own relationship to Hegel.

According to Feuerbach, Hegel's philosophy was a form of mystical theology. He argued that speculative philosophy had always been an attempt to overcome the alienation which he regarded as inherent in religion. Religion, according to Feuerbach, was merely the projection of human wants and aspirations onto the imagined figure of a trans-individual God; the attributes of God were merely unrealized human attributes. "God is alienated man." (29)

As Dupré states:

His (Hegel's) dialectic, going from the infinite to the finite and back to the infinite, only appropriates philosophy for the religious alienation of man. The concrete living man is sacrificed to an idea: man is reduced to a mere moment in the evolution of a superhuman Spirit. (30)

Whereas Hegel regarded nature and man as two distinct entities (although both being manifestations of Absolute Spirit), Feuerbach regarded man as part of nature. Although Hegel affirmed the identity of finite spirit and infinite spirit by arguing that infinite spirit must objectify itself in concrete reality, it remains the case that the process of objectification is dependent upon the prior existence of infinite spirit independent of finite spirit. Feuerbach states:

...if the infinite exists and has truth and reality only when it is posited as determinate, that is, not as infinite but as finite, then in fact the infinite is the finite. (31)

Consequently, Hegel's philosophy rested ultimately upon a distinction between essence and existence despite the fact that it was his intention to demonstrate their fundamental identity. Avineri states:

This separation of essence from existence seemed to Feuerbach to be the mainstay of Hegel's inversion of the epistemological process. Hegel, he asserted, supposed thought to be the subject and existence to be a mere predicate. (32)

In contrast to this speculative procedure employed by Hegel, Feuerbach's anthropology starts from an unspeculative principle-sense experience. Opposing his own materialism to the idealism of Hegel, he argued that rather than nature being an attribute of Spirit and in consequence a mere predicate, nature must assume the status of the traditional idealist subject, thought: for Feuerbach, nature became the subject and thought the predicate. He generalized this idea into the principle of his "transformative method" which suggested an inversion of idealist philosophy such that the subject of history was regarded as concrete man and concrete reality. In his own words:

The true relation between thinking and being is where being is the subject and thinking the predicate. Thinking results from being but being does not result from thinking. (33)

For Feuerbach, then, it is concrete man rather than Absolute Spirit which is regarded as the starting-point for philosophy and the historical process and it is only by this method, according to Feuerbach, that concrete man will liberate himself from the alienation inherent in the attribution of his own qualities to God which is merely a mental creation functioning to negate the humiliation concomitant with the realization of his own limitations.

In Marx's Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the State published in 1843, he employed Feuerbach's transformative method in an analysis of Hegel's political philosophy. He adopted both Hegel's concepts and his system but inverted the relationship which Hegel had posited between the concepts of civil society and property, on the one hand, and the state, on the other. As such, Marx's critique of Hegel was

an immanent critique, a critique from the inside as it were by a thinker who was himself a Hegelian.

Hegel, in subordinating being as a mere predicate of thought, argued that the State, representing a more universal and rational structure than that of the particularistic relationships characteristic of the family and civil society, was the ultimate reality from which these particularistic forms of social relationship derived. Marx rejected Hegel's interpretation of the State as the "cause" of these lower forms of social relationship. Such an interpretation was, according to Marx, mystical in that the concrete relationships of family and civil society were seen to be mere moments in the process wherein an abstract Idea is realized and, as mere moments in that process, they possess no independent reality. At the same time, in contrast to the abstract Idea, they are empirically observable. Marx's employment of the transformative method leads him to the following inversion of the Hegelian interpretation; he states:

The political State cannot exist without the natural basis of the family and the artificial basis of the civil society: they are its conditio sine qua non. Here, however, the condition is as the conditioned; the determining as the determined, the generating as generated by what it has itself generated. (34)

Marx mounts a similar criticism of Hegel's comments on the role of the monarch as representative of the universal consciousness of Absolute Spirit. It is important to remember that Hegel's political philosophy functioned as a legitimation for the Prussian State because it presented that State as the concrete realization of the Idea or Absolute Spirit's Reason. Consequently, Marx's critique of Hegel is intertwined with social criticism of the State which the former's philosophy served to justify.

The essence of Feuerbach's influence upon Marx is that it led to the development of a very different conception of the dialectical progression of history than that posited by Hegel. As Dupré states:

Instead of being the immanent development of an Idea, the dialectic is now the development of man, a being of flesh and blood, determined by external material conditions. (35)

Rather than beginning his analysis with an abstract conception of the State as representative of the universal interests of Absolute Spirit, the idealist starting-point, Marx, in adopting Feuerbach's materialist method, begins his analysis with an examination of the material conditions of life which give rise to the particularistic and egoistic interests characteristic of civil society. He examines by way of historical analysis the changing relationships between State and civil society. As Avineri states:

His account derives its basic conceptual assumptions, as well as its criteria for periodization, from Hegel's Philosophy of History; but Marx shifts the emphasis from conceptual development to the specific field of socio-political organization, thus substituting a study of social development for the Hegelian examination of various forms of consciousness. (36)

Marx's analysis of the Graeco-Roman civilization and that of the European Middle Ages led him to conclude that the Hegelian distinction between State and civil society was not universally applicable but rather was an historical phenomenon occurring only at particular historical moments. His further analyses of the modern state and its bureacratic organization demonstrate that the bureacracy does not, as Hegel had argued, mediate between the various competing particularistic interests characteristic of civil society. Rather, according to Marx, the bureacracy masks its own particularistic interests by appearing as the spokesman of the general interest. The particularistic interests of civil society are manifest in the class divisions of modern society.

Whereas Hegel had argued that private property is subordinate to the State, Marx's theory is that the State becomes merely a legitimation of private property with the power to protect the interests of those possessing property; it is the "...legalization of man's individualism."⁽³⁷⁾ Hegel had proposed that property was an attribute of man's freedom, but, Marx, by uncovering inherent contradictions in Hegel's analysis, inverts the relationship such that freedom is regarded as an attribute of private property within capitalistic societies. The existence of primogeniture as a principle of inheritance means that the individual identity of the property-owner does not determine his political status; rather, his political status derives from the fact that he is a property-owner; i.e., the political status of the class of property-owners derives from their economic position and not vice versa. Marx states:

The members of the political State receive their independence not from the essence of the political State, but from the essence of abstract private right, from abstract private property. (38)

By starting with a critique of Hegel's political philosophy, a critique based upon Feuerbach's materialistic transformative method, Marx arrived at a conception of the political organization of society as dependent upon an underlying and fundamental economic structure. His philosophical study of Hegel had led him to the necessity of a discussion about concrete relations of social class and property relations. As Dupré states:

His reflections on primogeniture and private property led Marx to the conclusion that the modern State, instead of being the sphere in which man lives his universal nature, is entirely determined by an individualistic economic society. (39)

As soon as Marx was able to make the above point, it became evident to him that, in modern society, it is a person's position within this

economic system which is important in terms of defining his relationships with other persons rather than his attributes as an individual. Marx states:

Man is not a subject..., but is being identified with his predicate, class.... (40)

Furthermore, the proletariat which is a class which does not possess property and hence is in need of work, 'the class of concrete labour,' is not merely a marginal phenomenon of capitalist society. Since it is a society dependent upon the protection of individualistic property interests, the interests of the proletariat cannot be identical with those of society in general as abstractly conceived. Even so, as Avineri states:

Its (the proletariat's) existence is the condition for the functioning of civil society itself;.... (41)

Consequently, according to Marx, any understanding of capitalist society presupposes an understanding of the role of the proletariat within that society.

Marx's work, after his critical study of Hegel's philosophy, took on a different tone. After having arrived at the conclusion, via these Hegelian studies, that the economic sphere ultimately determines the nature of political structures, Marx concentrated his efforts on applying this conclusion in detailed economic and historical studies. However, it remains the case that this conclusion was initially the result of an essentially philosophical enterprise indebted to the materialism of Feuerbach. In consequence, it would seem that there is not really the basis for a reading of Marx which suggests an epistemological break between a young 'humanistic' or 'idealistic' Marx and an old 'deterministic' or 'materialistic' Marx. (42)

As Avineri states:

The humanistic vision of the Young Marx (43)
was based on a materialist epistemology.

However, to suggest that Marx's early works are materialistic does not really enlighten us greatly. We are now forced to confront the difficult, yet, for our purposes, vitally important question:

What is the nature of Marx's materialism?

Despite the profound influence that Feuerbach's philosophical method had upon Marx, he did not adopt the former's materialist anthropology which, in regarding man as part of nature, posited a static relationship between consciousness and society. Such a mechanistic interpretation of the relationship between consciousness and society which regards the former as merely derivative of the latter was expounded by Engels in his Dialectics of Nature, but, such an interpretation must not be confused with that of Marx. As Avineri states:

By applying dialectics to nature Engels divorces it from the mediation of consciousness. Strictly speaking such a view cannot be termed dialectical at all. (44)

The reason that a mechanistic interpretation cannot be dialectical is that it reduces one of the moments of the dialectical process, consciousness, to a mere by-product of matter and, as such, consciousness is conceived of as having no independent determining influence within the process. Although Engels did suggest that there is the possibility of a re-action of the idea superstructure upon the socio-economic substructure, ideas within such a formulation still maintain only the status of epiphenomena. Marx's own views about the relationship between consciousness and society, although they were never systematically clarified, seem to be far more complex and subtle than those expressed

in Engels' reductionist interpretation. Support for the view being presented here derives from Marx's criticism of Feuerbachian materialism in his Theses on Feuerbach and in The German Ideology, the latter written jointly by Marx and Engels. According to Marx, any epistemology which regards man's consciousness as merely a reflection of material conditions must remain inherently conservative. Marx states:

The materialistic doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are the products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs education. Hence the doctrine necessarily arrives at dividing society into two parts, of which one is superior to the other. (45)

According to the materialist view, social change becomes the result of the action of one group of people whose ideas are not determined by material and economic conditions and as Avineri states:

...such a division of mankind into those who are materially and economically determined and those free from such a determination makes nonsense of the very foundations of a materialistic view....(46)

Marx's own epistemological position is indebted to the German Idealist tradition which we remember stressed the active and creative role of the subject in the constitution of his objects of knowledge as opposed to the passivist reflectionist theory of consciousness employed by the materialists. Feuerbach's materialism had remained un-historical in that the determinate relationship between society and consciousness which he had posited had rested upon a philosophical and abstract ontology which defined an unchanging essence of man and of nature of which man was a part. What such a materialism fails to take into account is the modification of the objective world by the creative

activity of man as the knowing subject of that world. Such a passive materialism dismissed the Hegelian insight into the dialectical relationship between the objective world and the knowing subject.

Giddens states:

It is this dialectic between the subject (man in society) and object (the material world), in which men progressively subordinate the material world to their purposes, and thereby transform those purposes and generate new needs, which becomes focal to Marx's thought. (47)

Marx actually moved toward a synthesis of the classical philosophical positions of idealism and materialism. As LeFebvre states:

It (Marxism) is neither idealist nor materialist because it is profoundly historical. It makes explicit the historicity of knowledge; it elaborates the socio-economic formation of mankind in all its historicity. (48)

Marx's epistemology begins with the conviction that there exists a "natural substratum" of material reality which exists independently of man's consciousness of it. The logical relationships which thought discovers between the objects constitutive of this material reality exist as real relationships independent of man's awareness of them. However, as we have argued above, Marx rejects the mechanistic view of consciousness as a passive reflection of the objects of this natural substratum. Rather, Marx's position is that what the knowing subject comes to know is the object in its relation to human subjectivity, the human object. These objects are:

...subjective-or rather, socially subjective-as long as they bear the imprint of the organizational power of man, who sees the world in such terms and from such points of view as are necessary for him to adapt to it and transform it usefully. (49)

In short, the way in which men perceive and conceive is a function of their practical needs which are themselves functions of their existence as natural beings. This is not, however, the same as the Kantian distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds. Rather, as

Kolakowski has pointed out, the metaphysical question as to the existence of a world of objects-in-themselves existing independently of man's cognition of those objects is rejected, by Marx, as meaningless because to the human mind it is only things as they exist for us rather than things-in-themselves which can be conceptualized adequately. Although Marx agrees with Kant to the extent that the object of knowledge cannot be conceived of without the subject that constructs it, he does not rely upon a metaphysical postulate concerning the existence of a world of which we can have no essential knowledge. In effect, there is no such thing as a Marxist metaphysics. Kolakowski states:

If by definition one ascribes to metaphysics the property of being a knowledge of the world absolutely independent of all human coefficients, then it is evident that from Marx's point of view it would have to be considered as necessarily internally contradictory, since these coefficients cannot be eliminated from cognition. (50).

Marx's fundamental starting-point is, then, that man's consciousness transforms the material world although it does not create it as does Absolute Spirit within the Hegelian system; for Marx, all thought or consciousness is human. To posit the existence of a trans-human consciousness, as Hegel does, is rejected by Marx as speculative and mystical metaphysics not open to verification by recourse to empirical analysis of concrete reality. According to Marx, man transforms the object world in an attempt to adapt it to his own material needs. Consciousness is a functional tool employed in the confrontation between a material world which, in being real independent of man's consciousness of it, opposes itself to his subjective will and a material being whose existence is contingent upon the satisfaction of material needs. Man appropriates the natural world in order to satisfy his own practical needs and thus humanizes it. The process whereby he acts upon the world in order to make it

satisfy his needs is called work.

This dialogue, called work, is created by both the human species and the external world, which thus becomes accessible to man only in its humanized form. In this sense we can say that in all the universe man cannot find a well so deep that, leaning over it, he does not discover at the bottom his own face. (51)

The concept of need is fundamental to Marx. Man is differentiated from other animals, according to Marx, by his ability to satisfy his needs through the creation and employment of tools. With the creation and use of tools, man acts upon nature and changes it which in reacting upon man in its changed form confronts him with new needs which are the products of man's original endeavours to satisfy his needs. Marx and Engels state:

...the satisfaction of the first need (the action of satisfying, and the instrument of satisfaction which has been acquired) leads to new needs; and this production of new needs is the first historical act. (52)

In this way, the nature of man's needs undergo continual transformation. Man's labour, then, is productive in that it changes the nature of the objective world confronting him and it is productive in that it transforms the nature of the needs which he seeks to satisfy. In this process whereby man changes his basic needs and creates new ones, man's own nature is continually formed and reformed. Man, then, is a creature shaped by history which is itself the product of the dialectical interplay between man's conscious action and the material environment. Man's essential nature is, according to Marx, historical rather than naturalistic as was the case with Feuerbach's materialism. While this Marxian conception of man's auto-genesis was initially formulated in The Paris Manuscripts of 1844 and The German Ideology (1845), Marx reiterated the same views in 1857-58 in the Grundrisse zur Kritik

der Politischen Ökonomie which was the first rough draft of Das Kapital when he wrote:

The act of reproduction itself changes not only the objective conditions-e.g. transforming village into town, the wilderness into agricultural clearings, etc.-but the producers change with it, by the emergence of new qualities, by transforming and developing themselves in production, forming new powers and new conceptions, new modes of intercourse, new needs, new speech. (53)

Epistemologically, the historicity of human nature suggested in this quotation raises the problem as to the criterion for the evaluation of the various possible alterations of the natural environment which are open to men. The question of epistemological relativism which we will see to be central to this thesis is encountered here for the first time. Marx's solution attempts to dissolve the epistemological issue. He writes:

The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth, i.e., the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question. (54)

In other words, according to Marx, men's conception of the universe and their place within it are not to be evaluated according to a set of absolute, ahistorical criteria of truth. Epistemology itself is relativized in that it is the verifactory nature of human action, its power to confirm man's mental conceptualizations, in demonstrating their ability to guide action in the pursuit of the satisfaction of human needs, which determines, for Marx, the truth or falsity of those conceptualizations. Man's Praxis, "...his capacity for constituting a man-made world around him,"⁽⁵⁵⁾ confirms the "truth" or "falsity" of his ideas about the world which he knows only as the humanized world of his own constitution, a world which he continues to transform.

As Lichtheim states:

There is, in the strict sense, no epistemological problem for Marx. The dialectic of perception and natural environment cannot, in his view, be compressed into a formula, for "reason" is itself historical and its interaction with nature is just what appears in history. Man has before him a "historical nature," and his own "natural history" culminates in his conscious attempt to reshape the world of which he forms a part. (56)

We have now arrived at an understanding of Marx's conception of human needs as historical. Man's needs are not the result of a mechanistic or behavioristic relationship between an unchanging material environment and an unchanging physiological organism called man.

Needs will relate to material objects, but the consciousness that will see the need for these particular objects as a human need is itself a product of a concrete historical situation and cannot be determined a priori. (57)

It follows from the historicity of man's consciousness that Marx's conception of consciousness does not start with a conception of an isolated individual; consciousness as historical is necessarily a social creation. Men relate to a material environment which is humanized (i.e., changed by human Praxis). In other words, they are confronted by a material reality which bears the imprint of the actions of previous generations. Marx states:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transformed from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. (58)

Furthermore, they relate to this humanized material environment with conceptions of it which, while continually changing, have their beginnings in previous forms of consciousness. In this regard, language is of fundamental importance. Marx states:

Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well; language, like consciousness only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men. (59)

And:

Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all. (60)

For Marx, then, consciousness is a social product which requires, as its medium, language, itself a product of the need for communication between individuals. As Giddens states:

...it is only in virtue of his membership of society that the individual acquires the linguistic categories which constitute the parameters of his consciousness. (61)

Because consciousness is a social creation and requires as its medium of existence language which defines the "parameters of individual consciousness," Marx is positing a deterministic relationship between consciousness and the encompassing social reality. Thus, he states:

It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness. (62)

It is essential to recognize the distinction between this formulation of the relationship between consciousness and being and that of Feuerbach (quoted on page 35). The distinction rests upon Marx's inclusion of the qualifying adjective social. Whereas Feuerbach's materialism reduced the relationship to one of a mechanistic linear determinism-being determines consciousness- in which both terms of the equation were regarded as static, unchanging elements, Marx's formulation postulates that it is the societal being, i.e., being inclusive of the element of human Praxis, which determines consciousness. And, as Avineri states:

If 'social being' is purposive action, the shaping of external objects, this action implies consciousness in relation to these external objects. (63)

Only in this sense can the relationship between consciousness and society properly be termed dialectical.

It is upon the basis of this social-historical conception of the auto-genesis of mankind that Marx mounts his critique of the classical political economists and the utopian socialists. He criticised Proudhon's conception of communism because it relied upon a metaphysical postulate about a set of unchanging human needs.

Since historical development enriched human wants, they cannot be measured without being related to the modes of production which created them. (64)

Similarly, he criticizes the theories of the classical political economists for their ahistorical character. They argue that the conditions of production and the implications of those conditions which are stated in deductive form as "laws" are universally applicable to all societies. Beginning with an abstract conceptualization about the fixed nature of man, they assume, as premisses for their theories, that private property and exchange economies are universal features of human societies. However, Marx's life-work was directed toward the demonstration of the historical nature of the capitalist system of production. As Giddens states:

In fact, Marx points out, the formation of an exchange economy is the outcome of a historical process, and capitalism is an historically specific system of production. It is only one type of productive system amongst others which have preceded it in history, and it is no more the final form than the others which went before it. (65)

Furthermore, the classical economists have reified their economic model of man. Smith's homo economicus, for example, is an abstraction which conceptualizes the economic relations in terms of 'pure' explanatory

concepts divorced from the social reality they are meant to explain.

Again Gidden's makes this point clear:

Economists speak of 'capital,' 'commodities,' 'prices,' and so on as if these had life independently of the mediation of human beings. This is plainly not so. While for example, a coin is a physical object which in this sense has an existence independent of man, it is only 'money' in so far as it forms an element within a definite set of social relationships. (66)

According to Marx, the classical political economists, in failing to adequately conceptualize man's labour as a necessarily social enterprise, have produced an abstraction, a model of economic man, which presents a distorted picture of the economic relations characteristic of human societies. Their conceptualization of isolated individuals independently pursuing rational economic ends conceals the fact that the production process is a social process. Marx states:

In production, men not only act on nature but also on one another. They produce only by cooperating in a certain way and mutually exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations does their action on nature, does production, take place. (67)

In the above paragraph, we emphasized that Marx regarded the theories of the classical economists as distorted pictures of reality. They represent, according to Marx, ideologies. What then is the nature of an ideology, according to Marx? And, how does one decide as to whether or not a particular body of thought is ideological?

As we have argued above, Marx makes man's consciousness or thought relative to his social being. His social being is a consequence of the dialectical interrelationship between a material environment which exists independently of man's consciousness of it but which is knowable only in its humanized form and the intentional

activity of men to satisfy their needs which are themselves functions of the continuing transformative collective actions of individuals. The ways in which men satisfy their historically conditioned needs, the mode of production, is the fundamental determining factor in the formation of their social relationships, their social being. Marx's historical analysis of the changes that have occurred in the mode of production over time and in different societies indicate a progressive differentiation of the division of labour in which the various tasks which must be accomplished by the productive process are progressively sub-divided into a set of specializations. The progressive extension of the division of labour is correlated, by Marx, with the various stages of property ownership. He states:

The various stages of development in the division of labour are just so many different forms of ownership; i.e., the existing stage in the division of labour determines also the relations of individuals to one another with reference to the material, instrument, and product of labour. (68)

The development of class society characterized by exchange relationships out of an original undifferentiated system of communal property is a consequence of the division of labour. The individual becomes identified with his position within the division of labour, i.e., with his particular specialization. His work is confined to a small element within an encompassing productive process. He no longer produces in order to consume the object of his labour for he alone does not produce a finished article capable of satisfying a human need. He produces, rather, in order to earn wages which are then available to him to purchase, within the exchange market, commodities essential to the satisfaction of his needs: he becomes a wage-labourer. The product upon which he works does not belong to him but to the owners of the instruments of production. The wage-labourer is estranged from his own labour and in this context Marx speaks of the "alienation"

of man from his productive activity; alienation is, then, for Marx, a consequence of the division of labour. He states:

...man's own deed becomes alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him. For as soon as the distribution of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood.(69)

In terms of the question of ideology which is of special interest to us, LeFebvre has argued that the most important element in the progressive division of labour is the division which takes place between the physical and the mental forms of labour,

...between creative action (operations upon things with the aid of tools and machines) and actions on human beings by means of non-material instruments, the primary and most important of which is language. From this point forward, consciousness becomes capable of detachment from reality, may now begin to construct abstractions, to create "pure theory."(70)

The interdependence of individuals characteristic of the division of labour and the restriction of an individual's activity within a particular area of specialization upon which is built a system of social stratification and status differentiation divides the members of society into different classes characterized by different life-styles, life-chances and ways of perceiving the social reality surrounding them. All members of the society are conditioned by the nature of the social relationships which define that society, however, this universal conditioning by the material reality does not imply that each individual is conditioned in exactly the same way as are all the other members of his society. Rather, the social relationships which make up the social reality of an individual occupying a particular position within the division of labour are distinct from those occupying different positions within the over-all productive relations. As Hook states:

...the effects of uncontrolled interdependence produce different social status; produce different manners of living and thinking; in short, produce different men. (71)

Briefly, the end-product of the conditioning of consciousness by social reality is not a homogeneous social reality. As such, class societies are characterized by conflicting interests, such interests being relative to the social statuses of the individuals who constitute the society and those statuses are functions of their positions within the productive process and the division of labour.

Marx argues that the theories of the classical political economists are ideological in that they are abstractions removed from the real social historical reality which they are meant to explain (i.e., they are the products of the division between mental and material labour.) The explanatory power or adequacy of these theories is limited because in their presentation of their theories as general and universally applicable, they fail to recognize the historical character of the economic relationships which they uncover. As Hamilton states:

In treating society as an immobile entity, in which 'history' has in effect come to an end in the continuous present, political economy converts actual social relationships which are dependent on specific historical conditions into universal laws of economics. (72)

When thus presented, such theories have the effect of normatively legitimizing the economic relationships characteristic of capitalistic societies. In so doing, such theories function to protect the interests of those whose interests are served by the capitalistic mode of production and conversely function to inhibit the realization of the interests of those which the capitalist system exploits. According to Marx, there is also a connection between production of 'knowledge,' its content and its diffusion, and the ownership of the material means

of production such ownership being conceptualized, by Marx, as constitutive of power. He states:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. (73)

The subjection of those who lack the means of mental production to the ideas of the ruling class is not merely the result of a coercive exercise of power. Rather, in lacking the critical tools with which to understand the ideological character of those theories which reflect the interests of the ruling class, the subjugated class is led to accept the ideas of the ruling class as valid and universally applicable. Furthermore, Marx even suggests that the interests of an emerging ruling class are "more" universal and do represent, at that particular historical juncture, the common interest of all non-ruling classes.

For each new class which puts itself in the place of the one ruling before it, is compelled merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. (74)

According to Marx, the ideological knowledge presented to us by the classical political economists is a manifestation of the alienation of man within capitalist societies. The concept of alienation, as employed by Marx, is derived from Hegel. Marx states:

The great thing in Hegel's Phenomenology and its final result—the dialectic of negativity as the moving and productive principle—is simply that Hegel grasps the self-development of man as a process, objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and transcendence of this alienation; that

he thus grasps the nature of work and comprehends objective man, authentic because actual, as the result of his own work. (75)

According to Hegel, the concept of alienation amounts to the mechanism of the dialectic which as process is dynamic. It will be remembered that according to Hegel's conception of the self-realization of Absolute Spirit, the self-realization of man as an objective manifestation of Spirit is an integral part of the process; the dynamics of the self-realization of man are identical (at another level) to the dynamics of the self-realization of Absolute Spirit. Alienation, for Hegel, refers to the state of consciousness wherein man confronts the world around him as an objective facticity alien and external to his consciousness. According to Hegel, man transcends this alienation in recognizing that what appears as external is really a projection of his own consciousness, "...that consciousness remains basically 'self-consciousness' in that it perceives only itself." (76) Thus, the 'negation of the negation' confirms the sovereignty of consciousness over the externality of the object-world. As Avineri states:

As a result, there are no cognizable objects outside consciousness itself, and this is of course the quintessence of philosophical idealism. (77)

Marx, of course, criticizes this idealist position by employing the Feuerbachian transformative method. Marx's materialism leads him to reject the identification of objectification and alienation which implies an ontology of the "...internal self-sufficiency" of man "...that is not an outcome of man's self-development and self-creation." (78) Such an ontology contradicts what are to Marx Hegel's two most important insights; the historical self-creation of man and the social nature of consciousness. Marx's materialism, of course, assumes the existence of an objective reality with existence independent of man's consciousness.

And, man himself, as a natural being is part of that objective reality. By acting upon the world, man exteriorizes his subjectivity and humanizes that objective reality. Consequently, the relationship between man and the world is simultaneously passive and active; man shapes the world through praxis but it is a world which confronts man with its own independent reality and, as such, shapes man in/defining the parameters of his praxis.

For Marx, then, alienation does not represent a general ontological category. The main theme of the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and The German Ideology is to demonstrate that alienation is an historical phenomenon understandable only in relation to specific social-historical configurations. Alienation is not a category generally applicable to man's relationship with nature; rather, it is a category which applies only to specific forms of that relationship. There are three dimensions to man's alienation within specific societies. As we have already demonstrated, within capitalist societies wage-labourers are estranged or alienated from the products of their labour, from the act of producing itself, and from the awareness of their own role as the active elements in the collective socio-historical constitution of a humanized objective reality. Under such conditions, the nature of the social relationships take on an inhuman character. As we have seen, the self-constitution of man is a necessarily social enterprise, a project of man as 'species-being,' and the alienation of man within capitalist societies inhibits the consciousness of man's sociality. As Dupré states:

His fellow man becomes a stranger-another individual competing with him for the satisfaction of his own needs. And both are strangers to each other because they are alienated from their universal human activity. (79)

The alienation characteristic of capitalist societies is not confined to the wage-labourer for the capitalist, as we have seen before, becomes

the predicate of his private property. As Dupré points out, this positioned outlined by Marx in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 represents a divergence from his earlier statements regarding private property:

Until now he (Marx) has seen private property as the ultimate cause of alienation. In the Manuscripts he reaches the conclusion that private property is only the result of man's estrangement from his own labour. (80)

Very briefly, Marx's concept of alienation applies to historical societies in which men, unaware of their own authorship of the humanized objective reality, regard that reality as a coercive force confronting their intentions with an unalterable facticity. The objects of the humanized objective reality, the objects of man's own creation, become man's master; the subject-object relationship becomes inverted. Although the major discussion which clarifies Marx's concept of alienation is to be found in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, Avineri has convincingly documented the existence of the same essential conception of alienation in the Grundrisse, the 'mature' rough draft of Das Kapital.

This alienation which stems from the division of labour and which manifests itself in particular types of social relationships within capitalist societies is reflected in the body of theoretical knowledge with which the members of those societies (especially those whose role in the society is the production of theoretical knowledge) attempt to understand the nature of social reality. The theories of classical political economy are a product of this alienation and present an ideologically distorted picture of the relationships between man and his material surroundings. Because the consciousness of men is relative to their social reality, it is an

axiom of Marx's position that the consciousness of men changes when the social reality changes. This axiom is, then, generalized into, in the words of Hamilton:

...a fundamentally political thesis: the forms and production of knowledge and thought cannot be dissolved by any purely mental methods but only by a removal of the social conditions which give rise to them. Not criticism but revolution is the driving force of history. (81)

For Marx, then, ideologies have two dimensions. They are expressed in general, speculative and abstract terms and they legitimize existing social relationships and the special interests served by those relationships. They are not, however, entirely false representations of the reality; since they are themselves a product of man's praxis, they do bear a real relationship to the underlying reality which generates them. Marx and Engels cite the example of German Idealist philosophy which was ideologically distorted in its conceptualization of consciousness as the only reality, yet, the same body of thought did discover the principle of negation as the dynamic mechanism of the dialectical progression of history. According to Marx, the evaluation of any particular body of theoretical knowledge as ideological can only be done post facto when the reality which generates theoretical knowledge has been altered through the mediation of human praxis and the distortions of previous theoretical abstractions become apparent in their demonstrated inability to guide human action toward the satisfaction of the socio-historical relative needs of man as species-being.

What is vitally important to recognize about Marx's concept of ideology as distinct from that of the 'philosophes' of the eighteenth century is that ideological knowledge, for Marx, is not the result of an intentional desire on the part of the ruling groups to conceal the

real nature of social reality from the disadvantaged groups. Rather, Marx's concept of ideology directs us toward an analysis at the noological level which deals with the form of thought as well as the content of any particular historical body of theoretical knowledge; as Karl Mannheim recognized, Marx regarded:

...even the conceptual framework of a mode of thought as a function of the life-situation of a thinker. (82)

As Peter Hamilton states:

...for Marx, both proletariat and bourgeois alike, ruled and ruler, are subject to ideological conceptions and accept them as true because of their mutual existence in a system of social relations. Ideology is not then produced to 'cover up' reality in a conspiratorial fashion, but is systematically generated by the structure of social relationships, by the social division of both mental and material labour. (83)

The net result of Marx's epistemological position is the radical historical relativization of the categories of thought to use Kantian terminology. The process of relativization had been begun, as we saw, with Hegel but Hegel had stopped short, due to his Idealism, of realizing the radical implications of his insight into the historicity of human thought. As Hook states:

Hegel emphasized the relativity of our evaluating categories in order to point to the necessity of an Absolute which swallowed them all; Marx did so in order to win the possibility of new institutional activities in a changing world. (84)

And:

...from the standpoint of Marx's evolutionary naturalism (dialectical materialism) the categories of thinking must develop together with the generic traits of the existence of thought about. (85)

To argue that any particular set of mental categories is invariant and universally applicable is a manifestation of false consciousness, is ideological in that it misrepresents the real relationship between the economically based natural substratum of objective reality and the

activity of man as a creative subject continually transforming the humanized objective reality which, in turn, transforms the categories of thought appropriate to the understanding of that reality. It is a fact that the determinism which Marx posits between consciousness and being is a determinism inclusive of collective human praxis; as such, he can remain consistent in positing such a determinism and simultaneously advocating an active political stance which presupposes a degree of voluntarism within the operation of the historical process. As Parsons has rightly pointed out:

Many Western critics of Marx have thought to detect an insoluble contradiction between the determinism of his historical materialism and the advocacy of an active revolutionary policy. Indeed, if his materialism were of the positivistic variety, this would be the case—but it is not. (86)

However, we are still left with the question: Given the historicity or historical relativity of our evaluating categories, how does one decide upon a course of action, be it revolutionary or not, without an ahistorical category or standard of evaluation against which the possible alternatives may be judged. We have seen earlier (see page 45 above) that one of the criteria Marx employs is the effectiveness of any particular action in allowing man to adjust successfully to the changing demands of an ever-changing humanized reality. Although there are distinct similarities between Marx's position here and that of the pragmatists, it is vital to recognize the difference between the two theories. According to the pragmatists, man adapts himself to a given, unchanging reality whereas, for Marx, man shapes his action vis a vis a reality which is in continual flux due to the creative mediation of man himself. And it is only for this reason that knowledge of the external world is possible:

... the world is open to rational cognition because it is ultimately shaped by man himself and man can reach an adequate understanding of his historical activity. (87)

There remains a difficulty with Marx's criteria regarding the capacity of men to adjust to the requirements of a changing external reality. According to Marx, man is continually adjusting to an objective reality which is itself continually transformed through praxis. Consequently, and Marx is aware of this, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the 'truth' of a particular cognitive production can only be done post facto when the practical effects of the actions directed by such mental productions are manifest. Once again, "The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk." Clearly, such a criterion does not supply one with a basis for the advocacy of a future-oriented political program. Therefore, we may conclude that Marx employs other criteria of evaluation to support his revolutionary political stance.

We saw earlier that Marx regards the historical process as a result of the existence of conflict between classes characterized by particular interests as defined by the position of those classes within the over-all production process. When the contradiction between the interests of the ruling class and the interests of the subjugated classes is transformed into overt class conflict through the mediation of an alteration in consciousness resultant from an alteration in the material conditions of existence, a product of the progressive development of the productive forces within society, a new emerging ruling class takes over the claim to the universality of its particular interests. According to Marx's position, each new emerging class does represent more adequately the general interests of the society than the former ruling class. Marx states:

No class in civil society can play this part unless it can arouse, in itself and in the masses, a moment of enthusiasm in which it associates and

mingles with society at large, identifies itself with it, and is felt and recognized as the general representative of this society. Its aims and interests must genuinely be the aims and interests of society itself, of which it becomes in reality the social head and heart. (88)

It is clear, from this quotation, that within Marx's philosophy of history, consciousness takes on more than an epiphenomenal status. Although each emerging ruling class is 'genuinely' representative of the general societal interest at the time of its emergence, it remains the case that as a class whose interests are defined by its relative position within a differentiated social whole that its interests remain particularistic. As a ruling class, it will continue to protect its particular interests by continuing to present them as general and universal; this presentation is accomplished through the employment of ideologies. It must be remembered that the employment of such ideological cognitive structures to legitimize existing social relationships need not be the result of an intentional act of deception on the part of the ruling class.

With the emergence of the bourgeoisie as the ruling class within capitalist society, there is, according to Marx, a progressive polarization of the society into only two classes, the class of wage-labourers and the class of property-owners (the owners of the means of production). This polarization takes place in a progressive fashion as a result of the internal dynamics of the capitalist process of production as analyzed in Marx's Capital. Therein, Marx analyzes the internal contradictions of the capitalist process which although it depends on the production of profit, exhibits a structural tendency toward a decline in the rate of profit. The mechanisms employed by the owners to offset this decline include the introduction into the production process of cheap raw materials obtained by foreign trade

and colonization, increasing the productivity of labour and the intensification of the exploitation of labour through the lengthening of the working day and the reduction of the 'real wages' of the wage-labourers. Despite these adaptive mechanisms, however, capitalism, because of its internal contradictions is, according to Marx, prone to periodic crises, a crisis being:

...any state of affairs involving a pronounced imbalance between the volume of commodities produced and their saleability at the average rate of profit,.... (89)

Such an imbalance is brought about by capitalism's ability to over-produce (in terms of exchange-values) thereby preventing the realization of an average rate of profit. As Marx states:

The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself. It is that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and the closing point, the motive and the purpose of production; that production is only production for capital and not vice versa,.... (90)

In short, in its search for profit, the capitalist system produces an over-abundance of commodities which the members of the society, as exploited wage-labourers, are not in a position to consume at the exchange rate in the competitive open market. The crisis, then, sets into motion an inflationary spiral characterized by the initial decline in the rate of profit, and the subsequent decline in investment capital resulting in the laying-off of wage-labourers which amounts to a diminution of consumer purchasing power and a concomitant further decline in the rate of profit. This process continues until the wages of the labourers who fear unemployment themselves are brought to a low enough relative level at which there is once again a potential for increased surplus value which in its turn will stimulate the investment of capital into the manufacturing process resulting in an up-turn of the economic system.

The net effect of these periodic crises which are the necessary results of the internal contradictions of the capitalist mode of production is the centralization of capital. Smaller entrepreneurs unable to absorb the momentary inability to realize an average rate of profit are driven out of business. Consequently, despite the functional role of these periodic crises to revitalize the capitalist economic system, one of the results is the progressive proletarianization of society into two classes.

With the existence of only two classes, the characteristic which, according to Marx, defines the stage of mature capitalism, there exist only two sets of differentiated interests, those of the wage-labourers and those of the owners of the means of production. It is for this reason that the proletariat assumes, for Marx, the status of a world-historical agent in man's pursuit for authentic existence. The transcendence of capitalist society by the emergence of the proletariat as the new ruling group marks a change from all previous transcendental changes such as that from feudal to bourgeois society. As Avineri states:

The feudal baron needed a villein in order to be a baron; a bourgeois needs a proletarian in order to be a bourgeois—only the proletariat as a true, 'universal class' does not need its opposite to ensure its own existence. Hence the proletariat can abolish all classes by abolishing itself as a separate class and becoming co-eval with the generality of society. (91)

With the coming to power of the proletariat, the last remaining class division is overcome and with the disappearance of class society, it follows from what we have said before, the reified, alienated forms of consciousness will cease to exist. Marx and Engels state:

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure, and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air. (92)

Therefore, the success of the proletarian struggle resolves the tension between the universal and particular interests which have characterized civil societies since the division of labour originally established a differentiation between the interests of those occupying different roles within the production process. As Giddens states:

According to Marx, the rise to power of the working-class culminates the historical changes wrought by bourgeois society. The development of bourgeois society fosters an extreme dislocation between the accomplishments of human productive powers and the alienation of the mass of the population from the control of the wealth they have thus created. The suppression of capitalism, on the other hand, provides the circumstances in which it will be possible for man to recover his alienated self within a rational order which has freed itself from class domination. (93)

In Capital, then, Marx demonstrates the inherent instability of the capitalist mode of production. The necessary development of capitalism as an economic system tends to undermine that system because in order to resolve temporarily the contradictions which characterize it, capitalism produces changes in the objective social reality such as the proletarianization of the society into two classes. As the objective social reality changes so too do the categories of explanation appropriate to the understanding of that reality. Capitalism,

itself, thus generates the social reality out of which emerges the possibility of a 'scientific' retrospective understanding of the dynamics of the capitalist mode of production. Such an understanding or such 'knowledge' would not have been attainable prior to the necessary development of capitalist society which is defined by its particular mode of human appropriation of the objective material reality and constitutes a moment in the dialectical interchange between consciousness and material reality, that interchange which is history. In this sense, although Marx has claimed to foresee the role of the proletariat in the transcendence of capitalism by socialism, his analysis is not truly predictive in the ordinary sense and he refused to supply his readers with anything more than fragmentary references to the nature of socialist and communist society. The attempt to present a comprehensive view of future socialist society would, according to Marx, fall victim to the same sorts of metaphysical speculation as that of the utopian socialists and philosophical idealism in general. Rather, the few remarks which he does make regarding the characteristics of communist society merely represent extrapolations from the tendencies which exist in capitalist societies toward their own transcendence. As such, Marx's 'predictions' remain overtly grounded in his retrospective understanding of the historical emergence and nature of capitalism, an understanding made possible only by the transformation of the material reality generated by capitalism. In this sense, the Hegelian debt of Marx is once again apparent in that for Marx, as for Hegel, "The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk."⁽⁹⁴⁾

The 'scientific' understanding of the nature of capitalist society which Marx has achieved reflects the nature of the social

reality which has its foundation within advanced capitalist society; i.e., Marx's thought itself is relative to his particular historical position. Therefore, such an understanding is by no means available to Marx alone or to a select group of individuals. Rather, as a reflection of the material reality, Marx's thought is demonstrative of a change in the consciousness of men brought about by the transformation of the material reality and this changed consciousness is of vital importance in the dialectical transcendence of capitalism. Marx writes:

The weapon of criticism obviously cannot replace the criticism of weapons. Material force must be overthrown by material force. But theory also becomes a material force once it has gripped the masses. (95)

Therefore, in the changed circumstances brought about by the continuing crises of capitalism, a new consciousness emerges, the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat. Giddens states:

In these terms, the question of the 'inevitability' of the revolution poses no 'epistemological' (as opposed to 'practical') problems. The process of development of capitalism engenders the objective social changes which, in inter-relationship with the growing class-awareness of the proletariat, creates the active consciousness necessary to transform society through revolutionary Praxis. (96)

We can see that Marx's conception of the history of capitalism and its transcendence by socialism via the mediation of revolutionary Praxis is a view of history as dialectically progressive. Marx's analysis is indebted to Hegel's category of Aufhebung ('overcoming') which suggests a progressive development toward the abolition of human exploitation.

The capacity of man to progressively explain the world does not derive from a notion of the developing ability of man to understand an unchanging objective reality; rather, it stems from a conception of

man as an intentional actor shaping the objective reality around him. This conception does not presuppose a metaphysical conviction regarding the a priori nature of man. What it does presuppose is a conception of man as profoundly historical. As such, his conception of history does not derive from a metaphysical conception of man but rather is grounded in an analysis of man's concrete phenomenal existence. Yet, at the same time, it implies more than a mere description of economic facts; it places such facts within an over-all interpretive framework from which an analysis is derived which ultimately projects the course of future history and thus transcends a description of any particular socio-historical phenomenon. As we shall see, in our further discussions, the problem of whether or not Marx is justified in extrapolating from an examination of a particular concrete socio-historical formation to arrive at tentative suggestions regarding the course of future events is problematic. The question becomes: Does Marx really succeed in escaping from all metaphysical speculation or does he implicitly employ metaphysical presuppositions which underlie his 'philosophy of history?' Does he, in fact, employ criteria of evaluation vis a vis historical statements which do not derive solely from a concrete, historical analysis of empirical reality? In short, has his attempt to replace epistemological analysis with concrete historical analysis really been successful?

Footnotes to Part I:

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19. Marcuse, op. cit., p. 114.
20. G.W.F. Hegel, Hegel's Philosophy of Right, trans, T.M. Knox, Oxford, 1967, p. 13.
21. Ibid., p. 13.
22. Lichtheim, op. cit., p. 8.

23. Dupré, op. cit., p. 69.
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25. Lichtheim, op. cit., p. 10.
26. Frederick Engels, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Collected Works in Two Volumes, Moscow, 1962, vol. 2, p. 363.
27. Dupré, op. cit., p. 71.
28. Ibid., p. 74.
29. Schlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx, Cambridge, 1972, p. 11.
30. Dupré, op. cit., p. 84.
31. Ludwig Feuerbach, Vorläufige Thesen zur Reform der Philosophie, Theses II, quoted by Dupré, op. cit., p. 84.
32. Avineri, op. cit., p. 11.
33. Feuerbach, quoted by Dupré, op. cit., p. 85.
34. Karl Marx, quoted by Dupré, op. cit., p. 89.
Alternate Translation and Source:
"This is to say that the political state cannot exist without the natural basis of the family and the artificial basis of civil society; they are its conditio sine qua non; but the conditions are established as the conditioned, the determinings of the determined, the producing as the product of its product."
Karl Marx, Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, trans., Annette Jolin and Joseph O'Malley, Cambridge, 1970, p. 9.
35. Dupré, op. cit., p. 93.
36. Avineri, op. cit., p. 19.
37. Dupré, op. cit., p. 104.
38. Karl Marx, quoted by Dupré, op. cit., p. 105.
39. Dupré, op. cit., p. 106.
40. Karl Marx, quoted by Avineri, op. cit., p. 27.
41. Avineri, op. cit., p. 26.
42. See Louis Althusser, For Marx, trans., Ben Brewster, London, 1969.
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44. Ibid., p. 65.
45. Karl Marx, "Thesis on Feuerbach," in The German Ideology, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, ed. C.J. Arthur, New York, 1973, p. 121.
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63. Avineri, op. cit., p. 76.
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65. Giddens, op. cit., p. 10.
66. Ibid., p. 10.
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68. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, op. cit., p. 43.
69. Ibid., p. 53.
70. LeFebvre, op. cit., pp. 67-68.
71. Sidney Hook, From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx, Ann Arbor, 1966, p. 45.
72. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 35.
73. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, op. cit., p. 64.
74. Ibid., pp. 65-66.
75. Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, in Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society, ed. and trans. Lloyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat, Garden City, New York, 1967, p. 321.
76. Avineri, op. cit., p. 97.
77. Ibid., p. 97.
78. Ibid., p. 97.
79. Dupré, op. cit., p. 128.
80. Ibid., p. 130.
81. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 27.
82. Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge, trans., Louis Wirth and Edward Shils, New York, 1963, p. 57.
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84. Hook, op. cit., p. 73.
85. Ibid., p. 73.
86. Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers, New York, 1968, p. 493.
87. Avineri, op. cit., p. 75.
88. Karl Marx, Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, in Karl Marx: Early Writings, trans and ed. T. B. Bottomore, London, 1963, pp. 55-56.
Alternate Translation and Source:

"No class of civil society can play this role unless it arouses in itself and in the masses a moment of enthusiasm, a moment in which it associates, fuses, and identifies itself with society in general, and is

felt and recognized to be society's general representative, a moment in which its demands and rights are truly those of society itself, of which it is the social head and heart."
Karl Marx, Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right,'
op. cit., p. 140.

89. Giddens, op. cit., p. 54.

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(i.e., vol 3), New York, 1967, vol. 3, p. 250.

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92. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The Communist Manifesto in Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy,
ed. Louis S. Feuer, Garden City, New York, 1959, p. 18.

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95. Karl Marx, "Toward the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction," in Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society, ed. and trans. Lloyd D. Easton and Kurt Guddat,
Garden City, New York, 1967, p. 257.

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Part II: The Problem of Historicism.

1. Karl Marx
2. Wilhelm Dilthey
3. Heinrich Rickert
4. Max Weber
5. Conclusion.

1. Karl Marx-a Critique:

At the end of Part I, we were left with a question regarding the 'scientific' status of what is called Marx's 'philosophy of history.' First, Marx claimed that his analysis was ultimately grounded in a 'scientific' empirical examination of man's concrete phenomenal existence and, as such, was not the result of a process of metaphysical speculation. At the same time, however, the interpretive framework which he presented allowed for the transcendence of a limited analysis of particular social-historical phenomena and with the aid of extrapolations from such an analysis he attempted to justify a political posture congruent with his analysis of the trends inherent in the capitalist process of production. The theoretical justification for his position is grounded in his conception of human praxis according to which one's theoretical knowledge of reality and the constitution of that reality, through human action, were conceived as inseparable. It will be remembered that this position was put forward in direct response to what we might choose to call the "crisis of German Idealism;" namely, the radical moral skepticism implied by the Kantian distinction between man's knowledge of the phenomenal world and his beliefs pertaining to the noumenal world, a distinction upon the basis of which it was impossible to claim absolute knowledge of the moral status of man's actions in the phenomenal world.

Following Marx's death in 1883 and that of Engels in 1895, the question of the scientific status of Marx's work became a focal point around which much of the intellectual history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century revolved. It is not now possible to do justice to the responses to this problem offered by

such varied thinkers as Durkheim, Pareto, Croce, and Sorel among others.⁽¹⁾ What we do wish to understand, within the present context, is the position vis a vis Marx's work which was ultimately adopted by the social theorists who proved to have the greatest influence upon the subsequent development of sociology and modern social theory.

We noted previously that the significance of Marx's work lay in his attempt to "unify the diverse themes of German Hegelian philosophy, French socialist doctrine and English political and economic theory."⁽²⁾ In the previous pages, we have attempted to partially outline the contribution of Marx to social theory as a result of his attempt to synthesize these diverse themes. We have not previously attempted to critically analyze his contribution in terms of the over-all continuity and consistency of the 'end product' of that synthetic intention. For more than half a century, a debate has continued which focuses on the scientific and philosophic status of Marx's 'historical materialism.' Initially, the expression of the ambiguities which we shall see to be implicit in Marx's own statements was located on the political plane in the context of doctrinal disputes between factions of various European socialist parties. Following the leadership of Eduard Bernstein, the "revisionists" focused their attention upon the discrepancies between the 'predictions' of Marx pointing to the collapse of the capitalist process of production and the amelioration of the class conflicts which, it had been assumed, would generate such a collapse. On the other hand, there grew up a group of "...self-constituted guardians of party orthodoxy"⁽³⁾ behind the leadership of Karl Kautsky and, more significantly, Lenin (1870-1924) whose Materialism and Empiro-Criticism (1909) amounted to a defence of the kind of materialism encountered in the writings of Engels. From this

point on, orthodox Marxism adopted a philosophical and epistemological position which derived more from the writings of Engels than from those of Marx; the value of Marx's attempt to overcome the extremes of both German Idealism as represented by Hegel and a philosophical materialism such as that propounded by Feuerbach (and criticized heavily by Marx) was lost. The amount of literature dealing with this subject is immense and we wish here only to put forward a number of suggestions regarding the possible theoretical reasons for the existence of this continuing debate. I have purposefully emphasized that our interest is in the theoretical reasons for the debate in order to avoid an analysis of the interesting, yet, for our purposes, superfluous, political variable which entered into the constitution of the over-all intellectual climate.

It is true that in the writings of Engels there existed a textual justification for a materialist epistemology, however, as we have previously attempted to point out, Engels' conception of the relationship between consciousness and society in Dialectics of Nature presented a reductionist and mechanistic interpretation of that relationship reducing consciousness to the status of a mere epiphenomenon. As such, the relationship between the two cannot properly be termed dialectical since consciousness being conceived as a mere by-product of the material relations constituting an objective reality independent of man's intervention is denuded of any determining influence within the historical process. Rather than conceptualizing a dialectical interrelationship between consciousness and society, such a reductionist assumption posits a simple linear determinism analysable in the same terms as any other physical determinism. In short, such a conception dissolves the distinction between man and nature and axiomatically

destroys that between human history and natural history, distinctions which, as we have seen, Marx's epistemology (as explicitly stated), in contrast to that of Engels and Feuerbach, presupposed.

Despite the fact that Engels' works supply a textual justification for a 'reductionist' or 'vulgar' interpretation of Marx's historical materialism, it is also true and by far more significant that Marx's own legacy presents us with ambiguities and problems of interpretation. To release Marx entirely from the responsibility for the subsequent development of Marxism as a political program by blaming the philosophically less sophisticated Engels and Lenin or the politically pragmatic Kautsky and Stalin is to dispose of the serious theoretical gaps in Marx's own presentation of the issues cheaply; whereas, in fact, it is precisely those questions which reveal the nature of the obstacles confronting his attempted synthesis of German Idealism and British and French empiricism which are, in the long run, theoretically more valuable. As an aside, it might be prudent to note that, given Marx's identification of theory and practice under the concept of human praxis as the cornerstone of a body of thought which seems to posit a deterministic account of social reality and simultaneously advocates an active political program, any clarification of the ambiguous theoretical issues involved in such a project may possess profound practical implications in terms of evaluating that political program and the uses (or misuses) to which it has been put.

We have indicated directly above and in the previous section of this thesis the centrality of Marx's conception of human praxis to his over-all epistemological orientation. It was through the conception of human praxis as a dialogue through which man as a natural being (characterized by natural needs) appropriates a material

reality or substratum and transforms it through his creation and use of tools that Marx was seemingly able to overcome the "crisis of German Idealism." As conceived within the conception of human praxis, man's labour or work was regarded as transformative of the objective world confronting him. As such, man's labour transformed his own human nature in that in altering the objective reality which ultimately defines the needs of man as a natural being, man was perceived as self-productive. This conception of man was profoundly historical and, as such, it sought to dissolve the contradiction between the previous philosophical idealisms and materialisms. We also pointed out the centrality of Marx's conception of historical human needs to the concept of human praxis. Fundamental to Marx's conception of praxis was that in the dialectical relationship between man as a natural being and the humanized objective reality upon which he acts, was the idea that it was always man's physical needs, historically transformed via praxis to be sure, which continually generated that confrontation with a reality external to man. As Dupré, quoting Marx, points out:

Anything beyond a fulfillment of material needs is dismissed as "phantoms in the human brain," "sublimates of the material life process." Man's growth and development are determined by "the material conditions determining their production."⁽⁴⁾

Consequently, despite Marx's profound effort to avoid the materialist reduction of the dialectical equation to a linear equation through a reduction of one half of the dialectical equation, consciousness, to the status of an epiphenomenon, his restriction of the scope of human praxis to the fulfillment of physical needs prevents him from granting an authentically active role within history to human consciousness. Again, as Dupré states:

Against Feuerbach, Marx repeatedly emphasizes the distinction between man (as conscious being) and nature, but since consciousness has no independent content, he finds himself unable to make the distinction profitable. (5)

By reducing the element of consciousness to man's capacity to satisfy his pragmatic, immediate, material interests, it would seem that Marx unwittingly,

...tied the reflexivity of social science knowledge to the system of instrumental action. (6)

As O'Neill suggests in the above quotation, Marx never provides a foundation upon which he could successfully formulate an answer to the question: Why is human history characterized by the creation and satisfaction of 'artificial' needs? What motivates man subsequent to the satisfaction of his immediate natural or physical needs? But, of course, Marx did attempt to understand human history as a product of cultural values as well as a response to purely biological and physical determinations. Habermas' analysis of this limitation in Marx's writing suggests that the vestiges of a materialist and positivistic epistemological orientation vitiate against the adequate conceptualization of the causal role of human consciousness within history, that these vestiges, in fact, inhibit the realization of Marx's own professed project of establishing a truly dialectical interpretation of social reality. Furthermore, it is Habermas' contention that this reductionist implication of Marx's identification of human praxis with work or labour distorts Marx's perception of the epistemological and political status of his own thought. Habermas states:

Thus in Marx's works a peculiar disproportion arises between the practice of inquiry and the limited philosophical self-understanding of this inquiry. In his empirical analyses Marx comprehends the history of the species under categories of material

activity and the critical abolition of ideologies, of instrumental action and revolutionary practice, of labour and reflection at once. But Marx interprets what he does in the more restricted conception of the species' self-reflection through work alone. The materialist concept of synthesis is not conceived broadly enough in order to explicate the way in which Marx contributes to realizing the intention of a really radicalized critique of knowledge. In fact, it even prevented Marx from understanding his own mode of procedure from this point of view. (7)

The point is that in confining the conception of human praxis to the satisfaction of man's material needs, Marx destroys the significance of the distinction between human history and natural history upon which his attempt to combine a scientific 'prediction' of the trends of human historical development and an active political posture fundamentally rests. As Dupré states:

Of course, man's cultural development takes place within his dialectical relationship to nature; man never becomes a purely spiritual being, and all his cultural achievements are deeply rooted in nature. Even at its peak, human praxis remains a dialectic with nature. Yet, man's dialectic with nature ceases to exist if human praxis is not more than a simple response to physical needs, for such a response implies no dialectical opposition to nature-it becomes part of nature itself. (8)

To accept Dupré's and Habermas' critique of Marx's conceptualization of praxis requires the recognition that "...although man has physical needs he never satisfies them in a purely physical way."⁽⁹⁾ It is not merely that in man's employment of tools he alters the natural substratum which in its altered form confronts man with different physical needs; rather,

In the first satisfaction of physical needs he creates and satisfies artificial needs. (emphasis added)⁽¹⁰⁾

As such, the adequate conceptualization of human praxis requires a recognition that the dialogue between man and humanized nature implies the simultaneous satisfaction of physical and cultural or 'artificial'

needs. As Dupré suggests, man's

...production, then, is never entirely determined by material conditions. This is not to say that it is ever independent of these conditions—man always creates in a dialogue with nature—but his creation always transcends nature. (emphasis added) (11)

Therefore, we are led to the conclusion that despite his own attempts to escape from a limited and limiting materialist epistemology, Marx's explicit "historical materialism" denies, in theory, the viability of his own political theory of action; furthermore, the subsequent history of Marxism as an 'ism' is in some way a legitimate extension of those aspects of his work which "...lapse(s) into shallow economism." (12)

The result of Marx's identification of praxis with the satisfaction of material needs is that the concomitant identification of human history with natural history allows Marx to claim natural scientific status for his predictions of the economic trends characteristic of advanced capitalistic societies. His demonstration of the inherent instability of the capitalist mode of production brought about by periodic economic crises which carry with them 'necessary' implications for the concentration of capital and the proletarianization of the bourgeoisie relies upon a positivistic epistemological orientation which grants no causal status to consciousness but instead ascribes to it a 'determined' role. It is upon this simplified (relative to his explicit epistemological stance) epistemological position that Marx bases his extrapolations from the necessary, determined and determining tendencies within capitalist societies, tendencies which, according to Marx, once in process continue independent of the conscious intervention and reflection of man. Subsequent historical developments have demonstrated the significance of the mediation of human intervention in the economic process and such interventions make problematic

the 'inevitability' of any economic process.

In one sense, then, we are forced to conclude that Marx in resolving the tension in his own philosophy between a conception of man which presupposes freedom, albeit historically relative freedom, and a radical social-economic determinism betrayed, as did Hegel, his own most profound insight into the dialectical interrelationship of man and nature. His philosophy of history which points to the inevitability of the proletarian revolution is predicated upon a naturalistic epistemology which identifies knowledge of the social relations of men with knowledge of natural phenomena.

I have tried to suggest and impress upon the reader that this philosophy of history represents the eventual outcome of Marx's attempt to resolve what in his explicit epistemological arguments appears as a genuine tension. It is a tension which reveals itself in Marx's identification of man's social needs with his economic needs within a general philosophical orientation which requires a consistently maintained conception of the auto-genesis of man via praxis as fundamentally a social enterprise. As Dupré states:

...by restricting the social Marx makes it subordinate to limited interests. The truly social goes much deeper: it is not subordinate to anything, but rather is that which makes the individual into a person. (13)

To make human cooperation truly social, Marx should have described the original praxis in terms of social needs as well as individual ones, and this cannot be done on a purely physical basis. (14)

In conclusion, Marx's philosophy of history, as distinct from his explicit philosophical and epistemological orientation and from his concrete historical analyses of capitalist economic formations, does transcend an empirical analysis of man's concrete phenomenal existence; his extrapolation of the 'trends' inherent in the capitalist

process of production relies upon a metaphysical conviction which assumes, on an a priori basis, a progressive conception of history. His philosophy of history, then, is an interpretive conceptual framework, not derived solely from an empirical examination of social reality which, like Hegel's conceptualization of the historical role of Absolute Spirit, interpretes or 'explains' the nature of any particular concrete occurrence. As with Hegel,

...the concrete living man is sacrificed to an idea: man is reduced to a mere moment in the evolution....(15)

I have intentionally distinguished between Marx's philosophy of history and his over-all philosophical framework (perhaps, in the same way as the Young Hegelians attempted to differentiate the Hegelian dialectical method from Hegel's "...self-contained and complete system"⁽¹⁶⁾ in order that we may not blind ourselves to the enduring significance of Marx's epistemological contributions. We have seen how Hegel's historicization of the Kantian categories of thought laid the basis for the replacement of the traditional formal conception of logic by a 'material' logic which in repudiating the distinction between the form of thought and its content made problematic (failing recourse to metaphysical convictions) any claims to absolute atemporal knowledge. Marx adds to this historical conception of truth and knowledge the conception of the historical transformation of our categories of thought as a profoundly social enterprise analysable only by reference to the concrete social relations characterizing historically peculiar social formations. In the chapters that follow, we will examine some of the subsequent attempts to cope with the methodological, ethical, and political implications of attempting to maintain such a social-historical conception of knowledge without

recourse to a metaphysical guarantee of truth.

We have seen, in the previous pages, that Marx's attempt to overcome the limitations of idealist and materialist epistemologies through the historicization of the Kantian categories of thought, when coupled with his aim to overcome both the ethical skepticism implied by the Kantian dualism between phenomenal and noumenal existence and the conformism resultant from Hegel's attempted resolution of this crisis of German Idealism, relied ultimately upon a specific metaphysically based philosophy of history; the adoption of such a philosophy of history was discontinuous and inconsistent with his explicit epistemological position which sought to repudiate metaphysics in general, which was to be replaced by an empirically grounded analysis of the historical self-constitution of man as species-being.

In so doing, we have indicated some of the theoretical sources of the debates which took place among various socialist factions vis a vis the scientific status of Marx's philosophy of history. We have not, however, spoken of the responses which were brought forward by Marx's explicit epistemological statements and philosophy of history by those theorists who were not themselves committed to the major tenets of his thought.

We have argued that Marx's own attempt to supply the foundation for an historically grounded epistemology as a basis for a science of society reflected the then dominant European trend toward positivism which was generally understood (perhaps, without much rigorous analysis) as "...the whole tendency to discuss human behavior in terms of analogies drawn from natural science."⁽¹⁷⁾ It was partially the

vestiges of this positivistic orientation which had led Marx to, almost unwittingly, adopt, within his philosophy of history, a reductionist and consequently non-dialectical interpretation of the role of human consciousness within history. He, therefore, wound up by equating human history with natural history and denying the viability of his own political theory of action which relied, to some extent, upon an element of voluntarism. In consequence, as Hughes points out:

...Marxism was to figure in the intellectual renovation of the 1890's as an aberrant, and peculiarly insidious, form of the reigning cult of positivism. (18)

Given Marx's attempt to correct the excesses of a thorough-going materialism a la Feuerbach, it is somewhat ironic that the evaluations of his efforts, subsequent to his death, identified him with the vulgar materialists who had constructed a Marx-ism, a positivistic determinism, upon the ambiguities of his thought. Nevertheless, this evaluation is not too inaccurate (if somewhat simplistic) as a history of Marxism as an 'ism,' even if it is inaccurate as a history of Marx's own thought.

It was not long before positivism which had the express aim of discarding all metaphysical considerations from the conduct of the study of man was itself perceived as a metaphysical doctrine. With its roots firmly in the rationalist enterprise generated by the Enlightenment, it had produced a number of "scientifically" argued fatalisms such as Social Darwinism and Marxism which, in a self-contradictory fashion, denied the rational intellectual capacities of men and in so doing discredited their own enterprises as intellectual explanations of the world.

Interestingly, the critique of Marxism as a speculative enterprise, as opposed to a scientific enterprise, was often initiated by theorists who were committed to the original goals of the positivistic tradition.

Thus, Durkheim, in his reflections on socialism in general understood the future orientation of socialist theories as contradictory to the method of science. As Marcel Mauss was to write in the introduction of Durkheim's Le Socialisme: sa définition, ses débuts, la doctrine saint-simonienne:

It was passion that inspired all these systems; what gave birth to them and constitutes their strength is the thirst for a more perfect justice.... Socialism is not a science, a sociology in miniature: it is a cry of pain.... (19)

The confrontation with Marx's legacy led European social theorists to a fundamental reexamination of the possibility and nature of a scientific study of human affairs. As such, Marx may, as Hughes suggests, properly be regarded as "...the midwife of twentieth century social thought."⁽²⁰⁾

Whereas positivism's wish to imitate the natural sciences had been born of the desire to liberate the study of man from the necessity for speculative philosophies of history by recourse to a radically empiricist epistemology and methodology, the critics of the positivistic determinisms justifiably argued that such theories were themselves metaphysically based and speculative. Therefore, the so-called 'irrationalist' response to positivism did not, in fact, contradict the faith in rational inquiry which had issued from the Enlightenment. Rather, as Hughes admirably demonstrates:

Far from being "irrationalists," they were striving to vindicate the rights of rational inquiry. Alarmed by the threat of an iron determinism, they were seeking to restore the freely speculating mind to the dignity it had enjoyed a century earlier. (21)

This re-orientation of European social thought had as its most

predominant characteristic a renewed interest in the problems of human subjectivity. Their reflections were based, for the most part, upon the Kantian understanding that there is a "...disparity between external reality and the internal appreciation of that reality."⁽²²⁾ Knowledge of external reality was regarded as the result of an encounter between an active and creative subjective "knower" and an external reality rather than as the product of a direct and un-mediated (immediate) confrontation with external reality. The questions which were of prime importance to these 'irrationalist' thinkers revolved around the nature of the process of intellectual reflection itself. In other words, they began to reflect upon reflection and to think about thinking. Given our earlier analyses of Kant, Hegel, and Marx, it should be clear that this intellectual self-consciousness had been developing over a long period of time. In a sense, we have seen, in the previous pages, how a number of thinkers had been able to move beyond (sometimes consciously and at other times unconsciously) the limitations of various philosophical and epistemological positions which had stimulated their thought but which their thought had, in fact, outgrown. For example, despite the fact that Marx's philosophy of history was plagued, to some extent, by the vestiges of a commitment to the positivistic tradition, his attempt to synthesize the best insights of the materialistic and idealistic traditions led to the development of an epistemological position which was based on a dynamic conception of man as a historical being and a concomitant conception of man's knowledge as itself an historical product.

2. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911):

Due to the influence of Kantian Idealism, Germany had never been as dominated by the positivistic orientation as had the other European countries. Therefore, it is not surprising that the initial rejection of positivism, building as it did upon Kant's epistemological reflections, came from German scholars. In their rejection of positivism, a number of these thinkers adopted a distinction between the natural sciences and the cultural sciences. By distinguishing, in this way, between two distinct types of science (Wissenschaft, by which is meant in German only the methodical pursuit of knowledge), they rejected the positivistic notion that all science necessarily conforms to the principles of the nomothetic or law-seeking sciences of physical phenomena.

Wilhelm Dilthey conceived of a distinction between the Naturwissenschaften and the Geisteswissenschaften. Geist can only imperfectly be translated into English as 'spirit' or 'mind.' Although Dilthey was influenced by the idealist tradition in German thought in which the concept of Geist had, largely due to Hegel's influence, assumed the status of the fundamental reality from which all else derived its existence and meaning, he rejected the metaphysical connotations which were associated with the term; he, instead, wished to employ it solely as an empirical concept. Basically, the distinction between the Naturwissenschaften and the Geisteswissenschaften parallels that between natural history and human history which we have seen to be fundamental to Marx's explicit epistemological statements.

The distinction between the two types of scientific endeavour rested, for Dilthey, upon his belief that the subject matters of the

two were qualitatively different and consequently required distinct methodologies in order to be known. The objects of investigation within the Geisteswissenschaften are historically unique cultural totalities each characterized by its own specific 'spirit of the time' (der Geist der Zeit). Dilthey considered it necessary to understand (Verstehen) the specificity of the thoughts, valuations, and the purposes which are embedded or objectified in the language, beliefs, and social patterns of particular ages. Although Dilthey granted that the physical sciences are superior in terms of precise explanations and predictions, he argued that it was only the sciences of mind which could understand the motives and meanings of human actions.

According to Dilthey, every lived experience (Erlebnis) gives rise to 'expressions' (Ausdruck) or objectifications in words, deeds, or gestures. Knowledge of others and even of ourselves is based on the understanding of these expressions. Expressions are simply objects or events which possess physical characteristics but which, more importantly, express or refer to a mental content. To understand is to apprehend the meaning (Bedeutung) of expressions. Such understanding is possible:

...due to a curious psychological law, by virtue of which every physical event which expresses an experience in someone's mind has the power, in normal conditions, to evoke a corresponding experience in the mind of an observer. I see a human figure in a downcast attitude, the face marked with tears; these are the expressions of grief, and I cannot normally perceive them without feeling in myself a reverberation of the grief they express. Though native to another mind than mine, it nevertheless comes alive in me, or sets up an image or reproduction of itself (Nachbild) in my consciousness. Upon this foundation my understanding of the other person is built. (23)

Although the example above refers to an understanding of the expressions of another person, the process whereby we understand other types of

expressions is based upon the same 'curious psychological law' so that our understanding of different types of expressions is always based upon our capacity to relive in ourselves that which we study. As Hodges states:

In coming to grips with an outstanding individual or movement in the past, whatever help we may get from general truths and causal inferences, the most proper and (to be paradoxical) the most objective approach is the most subjective, the reliving in ourselves of what we study. (24)

Dilthey distinguished between three types of expressions. First, there are expressions which convey ideas such as mathematical symbols and conventional signs. Second, human actions, when regarded by an observer, express the actor's purpose despite the fact that such an action is performed not to express the actor's purpose but to fulfill it. Finally, there are what Dilthey calls life expressions (Erlebnisdruck) which are spontaneous utterances or gestures which express the internal state of an actor, a state which he himself may not even be consciously aware of.

For Dilthey, historical study is the study of expressions which have become objectified (and, therefore, enduring) in the works of men, in buildings, roads, ploughed fields, works of art, books, system of ideas, habits, customs, and social and cultural institutions. Thus, Dilthey writes:

Mind understands only what it has created. Nature, the object of natural science, embraces that reality which is produced independently of the activity of mind. Everything upon which man by acting has set his stamp forms the object of the human studies. (25)

In so far as the historian's subject-matter is the expressions of historically specific individuals and groups of individuals, he is distinguished from the natural scientist in that he is primarily concerned

with historically unique or individual sequences of events. This fact remains paramount as a basis for the distinction between the two types of science regardless of the fact that the historian,

...to explain the connection between events,... must avail himself of regularities and refer to laws. (26)

Whereas the physical sciences are concerned with causal relationships, the human sciences are concerned with meaningful relationships.

It is important to remember that when Dilthey speaks of meaningful relationships, he is not positing the existence of a supra-historical metaphysically conceived meaning; rather, his notion of the 'objective mind,' as distinct from that of Hegel, points merely to the fact that:

The historical course of events which he is trying to retrace has already been experienced as meaningful by the actors involved in it. They have already selected and interpreted the facts and evaluated their own actions. These interpretations and evaluations are there for the historian not only in the historical accounts of eye witnesses, but in legal codes, business transactions, memoranda, sermons, poems, and paintings. As the historian interprets these documents imaginatively he not only enters into the minds of strange people but also grasps patterns and connections between events as they presented themselves to the human beings involved in them.

Dilthey puts this point by saying that we must understand a period of history as being centred upon itself and not just as a preliminary stage to our own time. (27)

After having identified the subject matter of the Geisteswissenschaften, Dilthey drew out the methodological and epistemological implications of his distinction between the two types of Wissenschaft according to subject matter. In brief, the epistemological implications lead to a position known as historicism which is characterized by the following principles: (1) All human creations reflect the particular unity of experience characteristic of specific historical

periods such that the:

...state, the family, even man himself cannot be adequately defined abstractly because they have different characteristics in different ages. (28)

(2) In consequence, the "understanding" of the meaningful relationships between the expressions of an historical period can be attained only by imaginatively adopting the point of view of the participants in that historical period such that:

...what the age or the individual thought relevant must be taken into account by the historian. (29)

(3) Finally, it is realized that the historian himself is

...bound by the horizons of his own age. How the past presents itself to him in the perspectives of his own concerns becomes a legitimate aspect of the meaning of the past. (30)

It is clear that this historicist position implies the most radical example of historical relativism which we have encountered for according to the third principle above it is necessary that history must be rewritten from time to time and that it will always be relative to the 'perspective' of the historian's own concerns. In short, there can be no History; there can only be various historians and their histories. Hodges summarizes the foundations and implications of the historicist position when he writes:

Every age expresses its attitude to life and the world in certain principles of thought and conduct which are regarded in that age as absolute and unconditionally valid, as constituting a "law of nature" which only frivolity or ill-will can question. The historian discovers these principles in every age which he studies, but he also discovers that they vary from age to age, and that, in spite of the claim to absoluteness which is always made, changed circumstances always result in changed principles which are therefore historically relative. The historian who discovers this has of course principles of his own and these will appear in the manner in which he writes history. History, having

revealed the reality of all ideas and practices, ends by pointing to its own relativity and leaves us in the position known as historicism, or historical relativism. (31)

Dilthey, then, has rejected both positivism and the search for a philosophy of history because both attempt to transcend concrete historical analysis. As we have seen in our analyses of Hegel and Marx, their philosophies of history had attempted to uncover a meaning and/or direction in the historical process. For Dilthey, however, there are not meanings or purposes in the historical process apart from the meanings and purposes of concrete historically situated persons.

Characteristic of every age is the desire to achieve absolute certainty in order to justify the principles of thought and conduct which prevail in that age. This desire leads to the construction of what Dilthey calls Weltanschauung which are composed of three structurally connected elements: a belief about the nature and contents of the world of facts; built on this belief is a system of likes and dislikes expressed in value judgements, and; built on both of these is a set of practical rules and principles to guide human actions. Every Weltanschauung is relative to a particular age, however, according to Dilthey, the relativity of such Weltanschauungen does not imply that the principles and rules are false in an absolute sense. As Hughes states, Dilthey's view is that:

Every Weltanschauung is the result of reflection on experience. Therefore, however much they may differ and however much they may seem to diverge, each one is, though partial and one-sided, genuine as a reflection of experience. (32)

It is, therefore, only their claim to being absolutely true and comprehensive that the philosophy of philosophy seeks to discredit by undertaking a critical and comparative Weltanschauungslehre.

Dilthey does not recoil from the radical skepticism implied by his position of historical relativism. For him, the critical and comparative Weltanschauungslehre, in demonstrating the relativity of all beliefs and principles normally regarded as absolute, liberates mankind from an illusion. Moreover, there is a positive aspect in the debunking of the claims of Weltanschauungen. Since it is the purpose of a Weltanschauungslehre to demonstrate not the falsity of any particular Weltanschauung but the partial and limited nature of their respective claims which reveal, although one-sided, genuine aspects of life as reflected upon by groups of people at particular times in history, such a critical analysis of Weltanschauungen allows us, according to Dilthey, to:

... understand and use them all, and so obtain a fuller and richer and more balanced view of life and the world than could be got by accepting any one of them as it stands. (emphasis added) (33)

Thus, Dilthey writes:

The historical consciousness of the finitude of every historical phenomenon, of every human or social condition and of the relativity of every kind of faith, is the last step towards the liberation of man. With it man achieves the sovereignty to enjoy experience to the full and surrender himself to it unencumbered, as if there were no system of philosophy or faith to tie him down. Life is freed from knowledge through concepts; the mind becomes sovereign over the cobwebs of dogmatic thought. Everything beautiful, everything holy, every sacrifice relived and interpreted, opens perspectives which disclose some part of reality. And equally, we accept the evil, horrible and ugly, as filling a place in the world, as containing some reality which must be justified in the system of things, something which cannot be conjured away. And, in contrast to relativity, the continuity of creative forces asserts itself as the central historical fact. (34)

In the pages that follow, it will be demonstrated that the encounter with the relativistic implications of this historicist position has continued into the present. That is, a large number of

significant social theorists have consciously or unconsciously adopted the problematic established by the emergence of historicism as the most radical outcome of the tradition of thought begun by Kant and developed most fully in the works of Hegel, Marx and Dilthey.

According to the historicist position, metaphysics which had sought to establish timeless absolute truths is reduced to an:

...activity aiming at what seems timeless truth, from the standpoint and within the limits of an historical situation. All metaphysics, that is, is reduced to a sequence of historically relative Weltanschauungen. (35)

As such, metaphysics is superseded by history. Indeed, historicism in its classical sense (as distinct from the inappropriate meaning recently given to the term by Karl Popper),⁽³⁶⁾ asserts that all philosophical questions are ultimately reducible to historical questions and that:

...the fundamental distinction between philosophical and historical questions cannot in the last analysis be maintained. (37)

According to Dilthey, the metaphysician and all of those who adopt a Weltanschauung cannot recognize its relativity for such a recognition precludes acting in the world by reference to its beliefs and principles which must be regarded as absolute. However,

...somebody must recognize the relativity of all Weltanschauungen, and in so doing he passes beyond all metaphysics. This somebody is the historian. The historian's history of Weltanschauungen is, to be sure, forever incomplete in one sense; but it is forever complete in another. It is forever incomplete because, itself written from an historical standpoint, it must be rewritten in every age. But it is forever complete in that it leaves no room, beyond the history of metaphysics, for an independent inquiry into metaphysical truth. (38)

In a previous quotation, we saw that Dilthey had suggested that the critical and comparative study of history as a sequence of historically relative Weltanschauungen could lead to a "...fuller and

richer and more balanced view of life...." This suggestion represents the only point in Dilthey's thought where he seems to have recoiled from the relativistic implications of adopting a thorough-going historicist position for if the possibility of a synthesis of partial and one-sided Weltanschauungen is a real possibility, it denies the historicist principle that history is but a succession of unique and essentially unconnected systems. We will see, however, that this notion of a synthesis of Weltanschauungen is a recurrent theme in the subsequent attempts to overcome the radical skepticism of the historicist position. Variations on this theme have been developed by a number of thinkers who have taken the challenge of historicism seriously enough to attempt to formulate answers to the questions it raises from within the frame of reference of historicism itself. As Emil Fackenheim has said, such answers:

...can be given only in terms of the doctrine of historicity-which understands the grounds of historicism-restated in a form which both recognizes and avoids the inconsistencies of historicism, It is such a response alone which can refute historicism ab intra. Mere refutations ab extra may no doubt be sound enough; but they do not provide an understanding of the full challenge of historicism, a challenge which has far deeper roots than historicism, taken by itself. (39)

There are a number of reasons why an unqualified historicism is unacceptable. On purely logical grounds, it is self-contradictory. Despite the fact that historicism grew out of a desire to eschew all metaphysical convictions and speculative philosophies of history from the study of man, it is itself, like positivism was, a doctrine which is a metaphysical thesis rather than an empirical generalization. Historical analyses may demonstrate that man is subject to historical changes, but such analyses do not, without recourse to a metaphysical conception of man, prove that man is historically self-constitutive. Fackenheim

accurately summarizes the vicious circle encountered in any attempt to maintain a consistently relativistic epistemological stance:

All...acts of human self-making may be historically situated. The one exception must be the act by which self-making recognizes itself as self-making, and as historically situated. But if this exception is impossible, then the whole doctrine collapses in internal contradiction.

Historicism is faced with a dilemma from which there is no escape. Either it renounces all philosophical assumptions (but then it can make no philosophical assertions; it is, in fact, not historicism at all but simply history), or else it insists that philosophical are superseded by historical questions (but then it is committed to philosophical assumptions which are ruled out by the thesis itself.) (40)

Besides the logical objections to a radical relativism just discussed, there is another fundamental reason why historicism was rejected by subsequent social thinkers. In our previous analyses of Hegel and Marx, we have seen that the Kantian dualism between the phenomenal and noumenal realms had implied a radical separation between our 'knowledge' of the world and our action in the world. The result of the Kantian distinction had been an epistemological and ethical skepticism which denied that men could justify their actions in the world by reference to their 'knowledge' of the world. Historicism, by critically analysing the foundations of all Weltanschauungen, denies to the historian (and all others who understand man as historically self-constituting) the capacity to act, with conviction, in the world. Hodges criticizes Dilthey's notion that a "...fuller and richer and more balanced view of life" can emerge out of the synthesis, to be achieved by a Weltanschauungslehre, of the partial yet genuine reflections of lived experience which find expression in the multiplicity of Weltanschauungen. He suggests that a Weltanschauung is a guide to thought, feeling, and action. As Dilthey well knows, a

Weltanschauung is to be lived and not toyed with. Hodges states:

If philosophy, or rather life itself, confronts us with many rival views of things, then we must take one and reject the rest. Dilthey's philosophy is open in its own way to the criticism which Kierkegaard brought against Hegel-viz, that it is full of syntheses where life is full of choices. It is always possible thus to synthesize ideas, or to hold diverse points of view together, so long as we are standing aloof, as spectators, and studying them. When it comes to holding them and acting on them, the oppositions reassert themselves, and we find that we cannot take sides with one without taking sides against another. To live is to act, and to act is to choose, and to choose is also to reject. (41)

3. Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936)

Heinrich Rickert rejected Dilthey's distinction between the Naturwissenschaften and the Geisteswissenschaften because he rejected the notion that there are two different subject matters, each science dealing with one of these ontologically distinct spheres of reality. Rickert, following Wilhelm Windelband's distinction between nomothetic (universal) and ideographic (particular) judgements, located the difference between the Naturwissenschaften and the Kulturwissenschaften (cultural sciences) according to the methodologies which were appropriate to each. That is, for Rickert, the subject matter of all science is the same-empirical reality-however, the ways in which the historian and the physical scientist analyze that reality are different. Thus, Rickert writes:

Empirical reality becomes nature when we view it with respect to its universal characteristics; it becomes history when we view it as particular and individual. (42)

Rickert's starting-point is neo-Kantian accepting as he does the Idealist tenet that the human mind is limited to arriving at knowledge of the phenomenal world so that human knowledge is always knowledge of the human perception of the world rather than knowledge of the world as it is independent of the human encounter with it. Absolute knowledge of the world, if it were attainable, would be composed of two elements: first, if men could possess absolute knowledge, their knowledge would encompass all facts; second, their knowledge would encompass each fact in its total concreteness. For Rickert, then,

The task of scientific knowledge...is to approximate complete knowledge of the infinity of things in their concreteness. (emphasis added) (43)

Because of the dual nature of absolute knowledge, Rickert distinguishes between two types of science. It is the task of the natural sciences to grasp the infinity of empirical reality by describing, with generalizing concepts or laws of nature, that which all phenomena have in common. It is the task of the cultural or historical sciences, on the other hand, to describe, with individualizing concepts, that which constitutes the uniqueness of each phenomenon.

According to Rickert, the task of science is to attempt to establish 'objective' knowledge of empirical reality. However, because he started with the Idealist tenet that knowledge is knowledge of phenomena rather than knowledge of noumena, Rickert rejected the positivistic notion that objective knowledge was knowledge of the essence of things, of 'things-in-themselves.'

Rickert's conception of objectivity needs some clarification since it departs significantly from the more normally encountered conception which regards objective knowledge as an accurate copy, in the mind, of an external reality as it exists independently of the

knowing subject. According to Rickert, the content of the human mind is composed primarily of sensations which are the objects of knowledge. These sensations are merely un-mediated or immediate sense impressions. As such, they are the

...most basic, least differentiated, and unorganized elements given in the consciousness. (44)

To achieve knowledge is to give form to these sensations, these basic contents of consciousness, and, as such, knowledge is the product of volition-to seek knowledge is an intentional activity.

Thomas Burger explains Rickert's distinction between form and content by reference to a simple example:

Thus, according to Rickert, when someone says: "This is a cat," he asserts something of the notion of "cat," namely that it exists. The notion, an idea, of one or more immediate sensations-in this case, "cat"-is called the content of knowledge. "Existence," which is asserted of it, is the "form" in which this case knowledge is had. The combined form-content is what is called a "concrete fact." It is the idea of a segment singled out from the undifferentiated mass of dimly experienced states of consciousness on the level of immediate sensations, which is given the form of "existence," i.e., which is thought to be "real." Thus, when something is stated to exist, to be real, it is not asserted to exist outside the mind. It is only stated that, as a mental content, it is thought of in a certain form, that of existence, rather than in another, for instance, that of "possibility." (45)

According to Rickert, truth is a value and it is because truth is valued by persons that they intentionally constitute concrete facts in order to be able to assert that something is true. Upon this initial epistemological assertion, it would seem, then, that the goal of science is to "...state what the facts are-that is, all facts, everything which is thought as real."⁽⁴⁶⁾ However, Rickert rejects this conception of knowledge as a complete and exhaustive copy of reality because he believes that there is an infinity of possible concrete facts which cannot all be given a form by the

finite mind of man. Criticizing what he terms the "resurgence" of radical empiricist views as represented by the attempts of phenomenology to constitute itself as a 'presuppositionless' science, Rickert writes:

Empirical reality proves to be an immeasurable manifold which seems to become greater and greater the more deeply we delve into it and begin to analyze it and study its particular points. For even the smallest part contains more than any mortal man has the power to describe. Indeed, the part of reality that man can include in his concepts, and thus in his knowledge, is almost infinitesimally small when compared to what he must disregard. (47)

In brief, it is the limitations of human intellectual capacities, the limitations of the human mind itself, which dictates that knowledge is the result of a process of selection according to which particular sensations are given a form and constituted as concrete facts and other possible concrete facts are not constituted but left as mere sensations. The necessary process of selection, therefore, requires that human knowledge is abstract.

By the term, objectivity, we understand that it is possible for different subjects to arrive at the same knowledge of empirical reality. But, if all knowledge is abstract and if it is possible for different subjects to abstract from their experience of empirical reality in different ways, how is such shared knowledge (intersubjectivity) possible? In short, why do the processes of abstraction by which individuals constitute concrete facts not result merely in individually maintained or private subjective pictures of the world? As Thomas Burger states:

...the problem is that of the selection of the same facts by all scientists in their endeavor to present an account of empirical reality. The precondition of the objectivity of science,

therefore, is that all scientists abstract in identical fashion from the concrete reality constituted by the totality of ideas which are given the form of existence. Since the establishment of knowledge is due to an effort of the will, it is reasonable to assume that scientists would apply the same methods of abstraction only if they were all interested in identical knowledge. In Rickert's opinion, this commonality of interest is indeed the case;.... (48)

The conclusion which Rickert drew from this epistemological position is that objectivity results from the application of a commonly agreed upon principle of selection which directs the process of scientific abstraction. As such, his conception of scientific knowledge regards objective knowledge as a selective and partial image of empirical reality. Consequently, all scientific knowledge is conceptual by which is meant the contents of knowledge, sense impressions, are given a form by the subject. The process of concept formation, if it is to lead to objective scientific knowledge, must be guided by the application of a principle of selection which is intersubjectively recognized as valid.

The application of such a standard represents for Rickert a method of overcoming the "irrational" infinity of reality. It is a method of rationalizing it, i.e., treating it such that it can be grasped by human reason. (49)

Rickert's distinction between the Naturwissenschaften and the Kulturwissenschaften rests upon the above epistemological considerations. There are, Rickert argues, two qualitatively distinct types of concepts each being related to a distinct standard of selection. He argues that it is empirically the case that both these standards of selection are regarded as legitimate by two different kinds of scientists. In other words, scientists may choose, according to their point of view, to give an account of empirical reality by employing generalizing concepts or individualizing concepts such

that the standard of selection employed by the natural sciences:

...prescribes the selection of those empirical elements which are common to many concrete phenomena. These elements are considered essential, whereas individual differences are neglected. (50)

whereas the standard of selection employed in the cultural sciences:

...requires the selection of those component elements of one individual phenomenon which in their combined occurrence constitute the unique features of this phenomenon and distinguish it from all others; everything else is neglected as irrelevant. (51)

These individualizing concepts are also referred to as 'historical' concepts.

The natural sciences are nomothetic; i.e., they seek to generate knowledge which is stated in the form of causal laws such laws being statements about identical features of the cause-effect relationships in which phenomena stand.

These laws must be interpreted as descriptions of certain aspects of many known concrete cause-effect relationships, as summaries of such facts past, present, and possibly future. Their cognitive role thus consists in functioning as handy abbreviations for great (and eventually unlimited) numbers of singular statements, each describing a specific spatio-temporal event. (52)

The greater the number of concrete phenomena that may be subsumed under a general concept or causal law, the greater is the scope of the concept and axiomatically, the greater the scope of the concept, the greater is the degree of abstraction away from concrete reality and the particularity of any specific concrete phenomena.

Rickert states:

We call every concept general in which nothing is contained of the particularity or individuality of this or that determinate nonrepeatable segment of the real world. (53)

And, natural or causal laws, according to Rickert, possess a logical character which:

...precludes their containing anything found only in this or that nonrepeatable and individual event. (54)

It is clear that upon the epistemological basis which Rickert established, he conceives of causal laws as empirically grounded generalizations. As such, the claims which natural scientists often make regarding the universality of causal laws cannot, according to Rickert, be justified solely by recourse to empirical evidence. Rather, such claims can only be made upon a meta-empirical assumption, seldom made explicit, that:

...just a part of the world informs us about all of it, i.e., enables us to derive concepts from it which help us to acquire knowledge (Erkenntnis) of the whole. (55)

According to Rickert, the objective knowledge which is acquired through the use of general concepts does not, by itself, satisfy the human valuation of truth; i.e., humans wish to be able to assert that things other than general causal laws are true. This is the case because, as we have seen, general concepts as they become greater in scope or more general necessarily inform us less and less about the specific features of particular events. Thus, Rickert writes:

We may, therefore, straightforwardly say that logical perfection of a concept in the natural sciences depends on the degree to which empirical concreteness has disappeared from its content. The simplification (of empirical reality) through concept formation necessarily goes hand in hand with an annihilation of experienced concreteness. (56)

But, says Rickert, an analysis of historical accounts of empirical phenomena reveals that there is an interest in analysing the concrete individuality of phenomena. We have seen that according to Rickert's epistemology all knowledge is conceptual and consequently does not provide an accurate copy of empirical reality in the mind. Therefore,

in history as well as in natural science, there is the necessity for abstraction and concept formation. This abstraction and concept formation in the historical sciences is, therefore, based upon a standard of selection albeit a different standard than that which leads to the formation of general concepts. The standard of selection which leads to the formation of individual or historical concepts is that certain specific phenomena are valued for their individuality while others are not. For Rickert, the goal of history is the "...representation of what is unique and individual in the course of events in the real world."⁽⁵⁷⁾ He writes;

Whoever lives, i.e., whoever sets himself goals which he wants to achieve, cannot look at the world exclusively with respect to the general. Its unique features are also relevant. For this is the only way a person is able to orient himself and be active in the concrete and everywhere individual reality. Also, some objects are relevant for him only as far as they are instances of classes; others, however, become important just because they are unique and, therefore, are individuals....⁽⁵⁸⁾

Therefore, according to Rickert, the 'irrational infinity' of concrete phenomena can be overcome by recourse to a different principle of selection than that characteristic of the natural sciences; namely, the valuation of certain phenomena. As Burger states:

The extensive infinity of reality is overcome since only a limited number of things, events, and processes is valued. ⁽⁵⁹⁾

The position thus far outlined indicates that individual concepts can be formed according to a standard of selection which places human values at the centre of the historian's project. However, because Rickert's definition of objectivity requires that the standard of selection which guides concept formation be commonly shared by all those who seek knowledge, he has not yet demonstrated the possibility that 'objective' historical knowledge is a real possibility. Historians, like all persons, can, in their practical

lives, maintain widely divergent values.

...in science the infinity of reality must be overcome in a generally acknowledged way. Furthermore, the task of science is to provide an account of the world, to establish knowledge, not to value it. Value judgments do not provide knowledge. Therefore, even if everybody had the same values, by making value judgments one would not give a scientific account of individual constellations of empirical phenomena. (60)
(emphasis added)

Rickert, however, suggests that historians, cultural scientists, can acknowledge that a particular phenomenon 'embodies' a particular value; i.e., rather than actually valuing a particular phenomenon themselves, they can relate a specific phenomenon to a specific value which some individual or group of individuals maintained and which is objectified in that particular phenomenon. Since not all phenomena can be related to a specific value, the relating of a phenomena to a value provides a standard of selection whereby the infinity of reality is overcome. Together, the phenomena which can be related to values constitute "culture" as distinct from the phenomena which constitute "nature" by virtue of the fact that the latter exist independently of the volitional and value-guided actions of men. Rickert states:

Culture,..., comprises whatever is either produced directly by men acting according to valued ends or, if it is already in existence, whatever is at least fostered intentionally for the sake of the values attaching to it. (61)

Rickert argues that despite the fact that historians may be committed to widely divergent and even contradictory values, these values necessarily relate to common concerns. He writes:

Even among politicians of the most divergent persuasions conceivable, always the same individual events are the object of conflict, i.e., the differences in valuation have to be related to a shared conception of reality. Otherwise, those involved in the conflict would not talk about identical things at all, and a conflict over their value would not be

possible at all. But if this is so, then it must be possible to separate the divergent value-judgments from the shared conception of reality through which only certain objects become individuals. That is, the separation of essential and inessential elements occurs in a way which is completely independent from the diversity of direct value-judgments. (62)

Rickert contends that by virtue of being a member of a society and consequently being involved in the cultural concerns of that society, every individual must accept, at least in part, a shared conception of reality and thus must maintain a value orientation of some sort toward what Rickert terms general cultural values.

As such, Rickert can argue that the standard of selection which guides the formation of individual or historical concepts is the principle of value-relevance (Wertbeziehung). Certain phenomena, those which can be identified as embodying general cultural values such as religion, language, law, art, economy, etc., are regarded as value-relevant or culturally significant phenomena. The value-relevance of a phenomena does not imply that everyone values it positively; rather, the notion of value-relevance merely directs our attention to specific aspects of collective life toward which every member of a society must be oriented according to a particular value-orientation. Rickert states:

.., if we call that whereby a conception of reality common to the most divergent value-judgments originates a mere "value-relevance," we can strictly separate this relevance from the direct positive or negative valuation. (63)

The historian is, of course, a member of a society; therefore, he, like any other member, will share a common conception of reality. Consequently, the respective histories written by different historians will reflect their particular orientation to general cultural values. Thus, each history is written "...from the point of view of a particular

value"⁽⁶⁴⁾ and this value-relevant orientation will allow them to select those phenomena in which that particular general cultural value is embodied.

Thus, certain individual constellations of facts become important. When the observers adopt a different value viewpoint, another part of the world becomes essential, or culturally significant. Thus, a political historian would write a different history of the early New England settlers than a cultural historian. But it is the same for everybody who adopts the same point of view, i.e., all political historians will basically treat the same phenomena as important. (65)

And, therefore, for Rickert,

...the writing of scientific history depends on the existence of such general values which can serve as viewpoints. (66)

Finally, it might be objected that Rickert's position leads to a conception of the objectivity of a specific historical account as limited to only those members of a particular cultural group; because the objectivity of scientific historical analyses is based upon the historian's participation in a particular society and his acceptance of that society's shared conception of reality, it would seem that, due to the cross-cultural diversity of cultural values, the possibility of an objective account of the "...cultural development of all mankind which is valid for every human observer,"⁽⁶⁷⁾ is denied. However, Rickert assumes meta-empirically, much as the natural scientists assume that "just a part of the world informs us about all of it,"⁽⁶⁸⁾ that there are universal general cultural values which transcend any specific spatio-temporal location. Rickert writes:

Must we not therefore assume the validity of suprahistorical values and the complexes of meaning constituted by them, which the values actually receiving general acknowledgement in the various cultures investigated by the historical sciences at least more or less approximate? Is this not the sole basis on which the objectivity of history can be made in every way comparable to that of the natural sciences? (69)

Although the historical sciences, through their use of individualizing concepts, give an account of unique historical individuals by abstracting (according to the value-relevance standard of selection) away from the general features which phenomena have in common so as to present an account of the unique characteristics of specific phenomena, Rickert does not wish to suggest that these phenomena can be understood in isolation from one another. Thus, he writes:

In empirical reality nothing exists in isolation, and history as the science of concrete phenomena must not be "individualistic" in the sense that it dissolves reality into isolated individual phenomenon. On the contrary, in our conception such a dissolution would be an unhistorical abstraction.... Rather, the task of the science of concrete phenomena is accomplished only when every object with which it deals is also placed in the context (Zusammenhang) in which it occurs. (70)

Therefore, Rickert is suggesting that each historical individual must, after having been conceptually isolated according to a specific value-relevant point of view, be regarded as a characteristic of yet another broader historical individual conceptually isolated according to a different value-relevant point of view.

This 'contextual' understanding is important because all phenomena are causally related to others and every concrete phenomena is continuously in a process of change due to the causal relationships within which they stand to other phenomena. Consequently, as Rickert concludes:

History never describes finished things,
but always processes in motion. (71)

These 'processes in motion' Rickert calls developments; the term, development, is, for him, non-evaluative-i.e., development is not to be confused with the normatively-laden notion of progress.

Rickert rejects the notion that suggests that since all phenomena are causally related it is the task of history to establish causal laws pertaining to the relationships between historical phenomena. Such causal laws, as we have seen in the previous discussion, involve a particular mode of abstraction based on the standard of selection which isolates only the general characteristics of a class of phenomena. To suggest that historical knowledge must exhibit the same form as natural-scientific knowledge is, according to Rickert, to confuse the principle of causality with causal laws.

The former merely asserts that everything which exists must be thought as having a cause and being a cause of something else, whereas the latter asserts that all empirically known events of a certain kind are causally related to events of a certain other kind. (72)

By virtue of the generality of causal laws, it is not possible that the historical individuals which are the constructs of history could be subsumed in all their concrete uniqueness under any general law. As Rickert states:

Indeed, the notion of such a (causal-historical) law contains a logical contradiction, for every law is general and, therefore, cannot contain anything of the special causes of the unique event in which the historian is interested. (73)

According to the above arguments, Rickert has demonstrated, to his satisfaction, that objective historical knowledge is possible and is dependent upon the existence of an intersubjectively agreed upon standard of selection which is qualitatively distinct from that which guides the process of concept formation in the natural sciences. The distinction between the Naturwissenschaften and the Kulturwissenschaften rests, according to Rickert, on methodological grounds. Unlike Dilthey who had argued that the natural sciences and the human sciences

were distinguished because they were concerned with ontologically distinct subject matters, Rickert's conclusion is that:

Any empirical subject matter can be treated in a generalizing or in an historical fashion. The same reality can be presented as either history or natural science, depending on the method used. (74)

By having pursued a logical investigation into the nature of scientific concepts, Rickert arrived at a logical distinction between two types of scientific concepts. He was aware that the actual accounts of empirical phenomena in the historical sciences and the natural sciences do not conform rigidly to the distinction. In actuality, both types of accounts tend to rely upon an application of both types of concept formation. He states:

In other words, I wish to confine myself mainly to the discussion of the two polar extremes at either end of the intermediate region within which, in certain respects, almost all empirical science is to be found. Consequently, in order to clarify the differences between them, I must separate conceptually what in reality is closely connected, giving scant recognition, at least provisionally, to the many threads of inter-connection that run between the two groups of sciences,.... (75)

In conclusion, it is necessary to point out that Rickert's distinction between the natural sciences and the cultural sciences and his claim for the objectivity of the latter rests ultimately upon extra-historical assumptions. According to his conception of history as a process of rational abstraction guided by a standard of selection which revolves around the value-relevance of particular phenomena, his conception of history remained a radically subjective one. Admittedly, his definition of objectivity as the result of an intersubjective agreement upon the standard of selection which guides the process of concept formation was an

explicit attempt to confront the criticisms that such an account of historical knowledge results only in an extreme subjectivism implying an intellectual skepticism and historical relativism. Ultimately, however, his attempt to escape from the relativistic implications of his position rested, as we have seen, upon the metaphysical assumption that there are universal general cultural values. As Hughes states:

By the logic of his own argument he was driven to an assertion of the absolute validity of the historian's value-system, based on the postulate of a "normal consciousness" in humanity. But such a postulate was nothing if not metaphysical. It implied that values had an independent and transcendental existence outside and above the consciousness of the individual historian. (76)

Furthermore, the conviction that there exist universal and trans-historical values contradicts the most basic historicist notion that the subject matter of the cultural sciences is always in a process of self-constitution. Rickert asserted that "History never describes finished things, but always processes in motion,"⁽⁷⁷⁾ yet, his position rests ultimately upon the metaphysical assumption that behind the ongoing flux of historical events is an essential and unchanging layer of universally valid human values which unify the historical process. He writes:

Philosophy can hope to approach the suprahistorical solely by way of the historical. A system of cultural values that lays claim to validity can be found exclusively in meaningful historical experience and can only gradually be elaborated from it by our asking what general and formal values underlie the substantive and continuous diversity of cultural life and its individual complexes of meaning as it manifests itself in history and what therefore the pervasive values of culture are that we all presuppose in our endeavor to uphold and promote them. (78)

4. Max Weber (1864-1920)

The thought of both Dilthey and Rickert had a profound influence upon their contemporaries and subsequent social theorists. The work of Benedetto Croce, Ernst Troeltsch, Friedrich Meinecke, Max Scheler, and Edmund Husserl, among others, all reflected, in their own way, the problematic encountered in the attempt to confront, without recourse to metaphysical convictions, the skeptical and relativistic implications of historicism. As Hughes writes:

...-the relativist implications of the philosopher's (Dilthey's) thought were coming home to roost: if the historical world was not to be recovered in its full richness and diversity, where was one to find a firm foothold, a grounding for truth and value in the flow of all things human? What defence was there against the onslaughts of skepticism and relativism. (79)

Were we to, at this time, pursue an analysis of the attempts of all these various thinkers to overcome the threat of relativism we would find that, in general, all their attempts were unsuccessful either because they concluded by endorsing a radical relativism which, as we have seen, is logically inconsistent and ethically unacceptable, or they capitulated to what they saw as the necessity to ground the objectivity of history by recourse to a metaphysical act of faith in the absolute validity of their own values.

For the purpose at hand, we are essentially interested in the influence that Dilthey and Rickert had on a social theorist who remains a dominant influence on contemporary social thought, Max Weber.

Thomas Burger in his recent study, Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation: History, Laws and Ideal Types, has convincingly argued that although Weber himself never spoke as an epistemologist, he did, in

fact, accept in its essentials, the epistemological position of Rickert which has been outlined in the previous section. I readily acknowledge that in writing the previous section on Rickert I have relied almost exclusively on Burger's presentation. The reason for this is twofold: first, Rickert's most systematic and extensive exposition of his thought, Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung, to which he refers anyone who "...proposes to adopt a critical attitude"⁽⁸⁰⁾ toward his ideas is most unfortunately not now available in English translation; second, there are no major critical studies, in English, of Rickert's work—he is generally dismissed rather abruptly as a mere predecessor of Weber. Maurice Mandelbaum's twenty-seven page section on Rickert is surprisingly one of the lengthier passages, in English, devoted to Rickert. Unfortunately, Mandelbaum's analysis suffers from one serious drawback; his critiques of those he terms relativists and counter-relativists are predicated upon his rejection of the major Kantian tenets of Idealist thought. In adopting a 'correspondence theory of truth' he has marshalled criticisms of Idealist philosophers which, as Fackenheim (quoted earlier) has suggested, may be sound enough, however, such criticisms and refutations do "...not provide an understanding of the full challenge of historicism."⁽⁸¹⁾ Consequently, I would suggest that Burger's work, in demonstrating the intimate relationship which exists between Rickert's and Weber's thought, is long overdo. The following discussion of Weber will again reflect a heavy dependence upon Burger's analysis, however, the relatively full storehouse of works by Weber and critiques of Weber now available in English will diminish our heavy reliance upon his interpretation.

There has long been a debate about the amount of influence Rickert had upon the thought of Weber. Eugen Fleischmann, following

Troeltsch's interpretation, suggests that such influence was minimal whereas Alexander von Schelting, Dieter Henrich, Raymond Aron, and Talcott Parsons recognize a very close correspondence between the thought of the two men. Perhaps, it is best, at the outset, to be guided by Weber himself who, in the following quotation, admits to a heavy reliance upon the neo-Kantians and especially Rickert. He wrote in his well-known essay, "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy:"

Those who know the work of the modern logicians- I cite only Windelband, Simmel, and for our purpose particularly Heinrich Rickert-will immediately notice that everything of importance in this essay is bound up with their work. (82)

And, again, in a note to his monograph, Roscher and Knies, he writes:

In the foregoing, I believe I have conformed fairly closely to the main views of Rickert, at least so far as they are germane to the present study. One of the purposes of this study is to test the value of his ideas for the methodology of economics. (83)

Like Rickert, Weber rejected the positivistic contention that the methodology of the natural sciences constituted the only basis for a science of man; in brief, he argued that the historical sciences could lead to objective knowledge and could properly be regarded as sciences. According to Weber, the scientific status of the historical disciplines does not, as the positivists thought, rest upon their ability or inability to establish causal laws. At the same time, however, Weber, in attempting to resolve the Methodenstreit (methodological controversy) that had grown up between the positivists and their critics, rejected the claims of the 'intuitionists' who, like the positivists, maintained a radically empiricist methodology and sought to produce mental copies of empirical

reality. The 'intuitionists' were distinguished from the positivists in that they believed that such a mental picture of reality could be achieved without the use of conceptualization; instead, they believed that a direct intuitive and not conceptually mediated grasp of concrete reality was possible.

Following Rickert, Weber argued that the historical sciences are interested in establishing objective knowledge about historical individuals which as knowledge of the unique characteristics of particular phenomena cannot be adequately grasped by reference to abstract and general laws. Consequently, for Weber, as for Rickert:

...the scientific investigator chooses the form of knowledge according to its appropriateness for what he wants to know, i.e., the type of his scientific interests. (84)

Therefore, we may conclude that Weber accepted the distinction between generalizing and individualizing concepts which Rickert had outlined. Julien Freund's suggestion that Weber rejected this distinction between two types of concept formation is based on his faulty understanding of Rickert who regarded the distinction as a logical distinction only and not as an accurate description of the actual accounts of historical and natural phenomena.

Weber, following the premises of neo-Kantian epistemologists, rejected the correspondence theory of truth which had characterized the earlier metaphysical naturalisms and positivism in particular. For Weber, knowledge is the product of an encounter between an active and creative human mind and an empirical reality. Knowledge was not, according to Weber, "...the reproduction of 'objective' reality in the analyst's imagination."⁽⁸⁵⁾ Rather, for Weber, like Rickert,

knowledge is the "...analytical ordering of empirical social reality."⁽⁸⁶⁾ As such, social scientific knowledge is relative to the analytical principles according to which the infinite multiplicity of empirical reality is ordered in a way that the finite mind of man can rationally come to terms with it. Thus, Weber writes:

There is no absolutely "objective" scientific analysis of culture-or put perhaps more narrowly but certainly not essentially differently for our purposes-of "social phenomena" independent of special and "one-sided" viewpoints according to which-expressly or tacitly, consciously or unconsciously-they are selected, analyzed and organized for expository purposes. (87)

For Weber, it is the limitations of man's finite intellectual capacities which makes it necessary to regard knowledge of social phenomena as a selective mental image of reality. As such, it is the principle or standard of selection employed which defines the nature of different scientific disciplines. He writes:

It is not the "actual" interconnections of "things" but the conceptual interconnections of problems which define the scope of the various sciences. A new "science" emerges where new problems are pursued by new methods and truths are thereby discovered which open up significant new points of view. (88)

Therefore, the social sciences are distinguished from the natural sciences, according to Weber, in that their "...aim is the understanding of the characteristic uniqueness of the reality in which we move,"⁽⁸⁹⁾ rather than the "...quest for recurrent sequences."⁽⁹⁰⁾ The standard of selection which guides the process of concept formation in the social sciences is, for Weber, the same as it was for Rickert; namely, Wertbeziehung, value-relevance. I will quote Weber, at length, in order to demonstrate the correspondence between he and Rickert vis a vis the foundation of social science concepts. He states:

We have designated as "cultural sciences" those disciplines which analyze the phenomena of life in terms of their cultural significance. The significance of a configuration of cultural phenomena and the basis of this significance cannot however be derived and rendered intelligible by a system of analytical laws (Gesetzbegriffen), however perfect it may be, since the significance of cultural events presupposes a value-orientation toward these events. The concept of culture is a value-concept. Empirical reality becomes "culture" to us because and insofar as we relate it to value ideas. It includes those segments and only those segments of reality which have become significant to us because of their value-relevance. Only a small portion of existing concrete reality is coloured by our value-conditioned interest and it alone is significant to us. It is significant because it reveals relationships which are important to us due to their connection with our values. Only because and to the extent that this is the case is it worthwhile for us to know it in its individual features. We cannot discover, however, what is meaningful to us by means of a "presuppositionless" investigation of empirical data. Rather, perception of its meaningfulness to us is the presupposition of its becoming an object of investigation. Meaningfulness naturally does not coincide with laws as such, and the more general the law the less the coincidence. For the specific meaning which a phenomenon has for us is naturally not to be found in those relationships which it shares with many other phenomena. (91)

We can see, then, that Weber adopted the principle elements of Rickert's epistemology: namely, the neo-Kantian distinction between our knowledge of the world and our sense impressions or raw unmediated experience of the world; the distinction between the cultural sciences and the natural sciences according to a logical distinction between individual and general concepts; and, the conception of value-relevance according to which, in the cultural sciences, the infinite multiplicity of empirical reality is selectively overcome and constituted in a form analyzable by the finite minds of men.

The epistemology common to Rickert and Weber lead them to conclude that science produces partial representations of concrete reality. As such, each scientific account of empirical reality is relative

to the subjective values of the scientific investigator. It is, according to this position, the subjectively maintained value of truth that motivates scientists to constitute concrete facts.

In the natural sciences, as we have seen, the determination of which sense impressions or raw experiences will be constituted as concrete facts is relative to an interest in the general features of a wide range of phenomena. The uniqueness of historical individuals is of interest to us because of their value-relevance; i.e., certain phenomena, and only certain phenomena (i.e., cultural phenomena), express the value-laden cultural concerns of individuals and groups of individuals and certain of these cultural values are relevant to the particular historian's own value-orientation. As Weber states:

A chaos of "existential judgments" about countless individual events would be the only result of a serious attempt to analyze reality "without presuppositions."

Order is brought into this chaos only on the condition that in every case only a part of concrete reality is interesting and significant to us, because only it is related to the cultural values with which we approach reality. (92)

As we can see, these statements make the writing of history relative to the specific cultural values which characterize the social-historical location of any particular historian or cultural scientist. It is, of course, important to recognize that Weber, like Rickert, did distinguish between value-relevant (Wertbeziehung) accounts of social reality and value-judgments (Wertungen) about social phenomena. Weber writes:

In the empirical social sciences, as we have seen, the possibility of meaningful knowledge of what is essential for us in the infinite richness

of events is bound up with the unremitting application of viewpoints of a specifically particularized character, which, in the last analysis, are oriented on the basis of evaluative ideas. These evaluative ideas are for their part empirically discoverable and analyzable as elements of meaningful human conduct but their validity can not be deduced from empirical data as such. The "objectivity" of the social sciences depends rather on the fact that the empirical data are always related to those evaluative ideas which alone make them worth knowing and the significance of the empirical data is derived from these evaluative ideas. But these data can never become the foundation for the empirically impossible proof of the validity of evaluative ideas. (93)

Objectivity, for Weber, as for Rickert, is the result of the application of an intersubjectively agreed upon standard of selection to the infinite diversity of concrete reality. The standard of selection in the cultural sciences is, as we have seen, related to a human interest in the unique characteristics of phenomena. Concept-formation in the cultural sciences is directed by this interest and the delimitation by the historian of what distinguishes phenomena from one another is relative to the values which characterize the historian's own age. History, then, is always written "...from particular points of view."⁽⁹⁴⁾ There is theoretically an infinity of possible value-relevant phenomena since new values continuously emerge from the historical process. Consequently, it is impossible to provide a comprehensive and exhaustive account of social reality; each historical account, then, remains one-sided and partial. Weber writes:

There is one sense in which history is not a "science of concrete reality;" it does not "reflect" the total contents of some aspect of reality. This is impossible in principle. ⁽⁹⁵⁾

Like Dilthey's, Weber's position leads to the realization that history must be rewritten in every age. He states:

..; an exhaustive causal investigation of any concrete phenomena in its full reality is not only practically impossible-it is simply nonsense. (96)

In light of the above statement regarding the impossibility of establishing an exhaustive historical account of empirical reality, it seems justified to infer that Weber's often misunderstood reference to the "...economic interpretation of history" (97) as being a "...preliminary contribution to a more complete historical knowledge of culture," (98) does not mean that Weber envisaged the possibility of arriving at an absolute interpretation of concrete reality. Rather, as Burger demonstrates, it is most likely that Weber's position with regard to "complete" historical knowledge was that:

...at any given time period, certain aspects of concrete phenomena are of historical interest from a great but finite number of value-viewpoints which do not change during this period. "Complete" historical knowledge then would be "complete" knowledge relative to the actually available viewpoints during this period, if world history had been written from all these viewpoints. (emphasis added) (99)

That is to say, Weber's notion of "complete" historical knowledge does not posit the possibility of an absolute and permanently valid historical account; even "complete" knowledge is relative to a specific socio-historical location.

Like Rickert, Weber understood that all phenomena stand in causal relationships to other phenomena. As such, historical knowledge is always a form of causal knowledge, however, because the subject of interest to the historian is the uniqueness of a particular constellation of phenomena (an historical individual) the historian's causal knowledge is not identical with causal laws. Those who suggest that all knowledge of causal relationships must assume the form of causal laws have confused the principle of causality with the abstract

general conceptualizations of the natural sciences. The "hypothetical"⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ causal laws of the natural sciences can, at times, be regarded as a means for the acquisition of historical knowledge, but not as historical knowledge. Weber states:

∴ it obviously does not make sense to suppose that the ultimate purpose of concept formation in the historical sciences could be the deductive arrangement of concepts and laws-discovered by employing correlations-under other concepts and laws of increasingly general validity and abstract content. (101)

Weber, following Rickert's arguments closely, has demonstrated that there can be objective historical accounts of cultural phenomena. To be sure, there is a significant 'subjectivity' associated with the selective principle which guides the processes of abstraction and concept-formation in the cultural sciences. The value-relevance standard of selection which guides the process of individualizing concept-formation makes all historical accounts relative to the value-orientation of the historian which is itself relative to the general cultural concerns of his society. We have seen that Rickert, in his epistemological considerations, adopted a metaphysical assumption that there are universal general cultural values which characterize all societies. By adopting this metaphysical assumption, he suggested that the 'validity' of the objective accounts of cultural phenomena was absolute rather than merely empirical. According to Rickert, the empirical validity of the cultural sciences' accounts can be ascertained by an analysis of actual historical accounts which do employ an agreed upon standard of selection such that these accounts all reflect, in their choice of 'significant' historical phenomena, a shared set of general cultural values or a shared conception of reality. The assumption that the objectivity of these empirically

valid accounts also allows one to claim that the accounts would be recognized as 'objective' by all historians occupying different spatio-temporal locations requires the clearly metaphysical and non-historicist assumption that the particular values of any particular historian are necessarily derivative of a trans-historical set of values which exist in continuity independent of the historical process.

According to nearly all the critical interpretations of Weber, he did not, in fact, make the metaphysical assumption which Rickert made. Of course, if Weber does not make the same assumption, his epistemology must imply that his conception of the objectivity of the cultural sciences is a limited form of objectivity, limited, that is, to being objective only for the members of a particular society. As such, Weber's position would remain significantly relativistic denying the possibility of a general analytical conceptual orientation that would be valid cross-culturally and over time. In other words, the relativism of such a position would theoretically place severe limitations upon the intellectual capacities of men such that they could not, by recourse to their limited (albeit objective) knowledge, justify their actions to anyone who had not, by virtue of membership in the historian's society, come to adopt the same general cultural concerns. Neither could they determine the 'truth' of 'falsity' of assertions (which might be objective according to Rickert's and Weber's definition) made by historians from other periods or cultures.

Regarding the supposed split between Weber and Rickert on this matter of the empirical and/or absolute validity of objective historical accounts, Hughes writes:

Thus far, Weber's argument closely followed that of Rickert, to whom he freely acknowledged his debt. Where Weber diverged from Rickert, however, was in refusing all metaphysical support for his own values and in trying to maintain-despite its ultimate psychological impossibility-the claims of "objectivity" or "ethical neutrality" in scientific pursuits. (102)

And Ernst Topitsch writes that Weber's greatness lay in the fact that he:

...could free himself from traditions which for thousands of years have presented the world to man as a value-rational order of things, and have thereby offered them, not only political ideology, but also personal consolation. He was able to break up these thought patterns without replacing them by other forms of evaluative interpretations of the universe. (103)

Although it is the case that there is not a Weberian 'school' of social thought, there has grown up around Weber's legacy a deep respect for a man who is seen to have rejected all recourse to metaphysical illusions and, of course, this evaluation of him necessarily presupposes a divergence between Rickert and Weber. Thus, Raymond Aron regards Weber as a man capable of facing the 'disenchantment' of the modern age squarely and heroically. According to Aron, if there is an orthodox Weberian position it amounts to no more than the "...rejection of all orthodoxies."⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Aron writes dramatically and movingly about Weber in the following manner:

For himself and perhaps for others, Max Weber placed above all else not so much success and power as a certain nobility, the courage to face the human condition as it appears to someone who denies himself any illusions, those of religion and those of political ideologies. All those who believe themselves to be in possession of an absolute truth, all who want to reconcile the contradictory, Marxist-Hegelian, doctrinaire values of democracy or of natural law, continue-and rightly so-the controversy against a thinker who gives a dogmatic quality to the rejection of dogmatism, who in the last analysis know nothing but partial science and purely arbitrary choice. (105)

According to the interpretations of Weber which depend upon the notion of his rejection of metaphysical illusions and the presumed divergence from Rickert's conception of universal general cultural concerns, Weber can be regarded as foreshadowing the emergence of existentialism as a dominant philosophy in the twentieth century. Such interpretations maintain that:

...-Weber did not believe that men and societies could agree on goals to be attained or values to be realized. Weber had an essentially voluntarist conception of the values men created. He denied the existence of a universally valid hierarchy of values, and furthermore he thought that each of us is obliged to choose because in the last analysis values are incompatible with one another. In the area of action, choices are forced on us and are not made without sacrifice. (106)

We are, then, confronted with a situation similar to that we encountered in our analysis of Dilthey; namely, men must choose to act in the world, however, following the realization that all knowledge is partial and that no Weltanschauung can be absolutely maintained, he cannot with reference to his knowledge alone justify his actions. The pessimism and nihilism of such a view could well account for Weber's "...tragic consciousness"⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ reflected in his often quoted answer to the question about the purpose of his scholarly work; namely, "I want to see how much I can stand."⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

This 'heroic' view of Weber is definitely the predominant view in the secondary literature. So much so is this the case that I must admit to being taken aback by Burger's analysis in which he suggests that the problem is not as easily dismissed as most commentators have thought. I readily admit that my surprise is due to the fact that I am one of those who respect Weber for his seeming capacity to reject the security afforded by metaphysical

assumptions.

Undoubtedly, Weber's statements about the absolute validity as opposed to the empirical validity of objective historical accounts are ambiguous as Burger has documented. Were we to undertake an analysis of Weber's ambiguous statements, as Burger has done, we would arrive at the conclusion that our difficulty in deciding once and for all what Weber's position was vis a vis the absolute validity of necessarily one-sided and partial historical accounts results from his refusal to make explicit epistemological as opposed to methodological conclusions. Burger states:

It seems wisest, therefore, to stick to Weber's statement that the "epistemology of history establishes and analyzes the significance of the relevance to values for historical knowledge, but it is not its task to provide a foundation of the validity of the values," and to assume that Weber did not want to take a position which in any case would have no significant consequences as far as the methodological procedures of empirical science are concerned. (109)

In any event, it is vitally important to understand that if Weber does deny the existence of absolute transcendent values, it does not imply, as some commentators have suggested, that Weber must forsake the notion of history as an objective scientific pursuit; according to his conception of objectivity, the mere empirically discoverable consensus, in any period, around the significance of actual historical accounts ensures the limited objectivity of those accounts. As Burger states:

The problem of absolute objectivity (which concerns the epistemologist) transcends methodological considerations, and Weber speaks only as a methodologist. As a methodologist he is merely concerned with empirical objectivity. That this empirical validity of historical descriptions does indeed exist, however, Weber believes to have shown. (110)

For Burger's purpose which is to supply a textually accurate analysis of the correspondence between Rickert's and Weber's epistemological orientations, the relatively non-committal conclusion that Weber spoke only as a methodologist and did not consider it a necessity to pronounce on the absolute objectivity of historical accounts suffices. For our purposes, however, the ambiguity of Weber's statements in regard to this problem and his refusal to explicitly adopt Rickert's metaphysical solution to the problem of absolute objectivity (when he had explicitly adopted so much of Rickert's epistemology) must be interpreted as a 'significant' omission on Weber's part. I would suggest, in opposition to Burger, that this significant omission does, in fact, lend support to the views of those who have seen Weber's greatest strength to lie in a divergence between he and Rickert over the question of whether or not one can claim metaphysical support to establish the universal validity of historical accounts. Clearly, Weber's thesis about the 'disenchantment' of the modern world suggests that such metaphysical guarantees are illusory even if we all, at times, feel the need for such guarantees. Perhaps, it is as important to regard the 'tone' of Weber's statements as well as the content of them if we are to understand his position. It is my opinion that the following quotation which explains the implications of the continual emergence of new cultural values from out of the human historical process is a sombre and almost reluctant recognition of the existential condition in which Weber, himself representative of contemporary man, found himself:

The belief which we all have in some form or other, in the meta-empirical validity of ultimate and final values, in which the meaning of our

existence is rooted, is not incompatible with the incessant changefulness of concrete viewpoints, from which empirical reality gets its significance. Both these views are, on the contrary, in harmony with each other. Life with its irrational reality and its store of possible meanings is inexhaustible. The concrete form in which value-relevance occurs remains perpetually in flux, ever subject to change in the dimly seen future of human culture. The light which emanates from those highest/evaluative ideas always falls on an ever changing finite segment of the vast chaotic stream of events, which flow away through time. (111)

In terms of this thesis, which is not solely about Weber, it is perhaps unnecessary to answer definitively the question pertaining to his stance vis a vis the absolute validity of historical accounts. It is Weber's legacy which is of central concern to us. As such, it is the evaluation of Weber's ideas by those who came after him as much as it is the statements of Weber himself which are of importance to us. As we have seen, Weber is generally recognized as the theorist who refused to recognize any single partial and one-sided interpretation of history as comprehensive and exhaustive, who refused metaphysical support for his own values. In so doing, Weber is thought to^{be} the theorist who more than any other brought to "scientific maturity"⁽¹¹²⁾ the study of man's sociality such that today sociology upon which Weber's influence has been greatest:

...presents itself in the form of a group of partial investigations and findings, without hope of unification. (113)

I have yet to discuss the way in which Weber's epistemological position, which he did not make explicit in a systematic manner, is manifest in his methodological pronouncements. Before leaving our analysis of Weber, it will be necessary to briefly outline how his conceptualization of historical knowledge as partial and one-sided developed into his conception of social science concepts as 'fictional' and his conception of ideal type constructs.

The subject matter of the cultural sciences is, for Weber, cultural phenomena. Whereas Dilthey had argued that the distinction between the natural sciences and the sciences of spirit was located in an ontological distinction between natural phenomena and social phenomena, Weber, following Rickert, located the distinction on methodological grounds according to which it was the specific point of view of the investigator which distinguished the natural from the cultural sciences. Accordingly, the same concrete empirical reality (for there is only ever one empirical reality) could be conceptually analyzed from the point of view which was guided by an interest in the characteristics common to a class of phenomena or it could be conceptually analyzed from the point of view which was guided by an interest in the unique characteristics of a specific phenomenon. It was this latter characteristic which constituted the defining characteristic of the cultural sciences. Cultural phenomena are those which have been conceptually isolated as embodying the valuations of human actors; i.e., cultural phenomena are expressions or objectifications of subjective meanings. The cultural sciences, according to Weber, seek to 'interpret' the actions of men as expressions of their subjective motives. As he writes:

...in the social sciences we are concerned with the psychological and intellectual (geistig) phenomena the empathic understanding of which is naturally a problem of a specifically different type from those which the schemes of the exact (114) natural sciences in general can seek to solve.

Weber rejects the contention that because of the necessarily subjective character of social action it is impossible to arrive at objective knowledge of such action. On the contrary, according to Weber, in the social sciences it is possible to supplement our observation

of the external course of events with an 'understanding' of the subjective basis upon which the observable elements of cultural phenomena rest. Thus, Weber writes:

As regards the interpretation of human conduct, we can, at least in principle, set ourselves the goal not only of representing it as "possible"- "comprehensible", in the sense of being consistent with our nomological knowledge. We can also attempt to "understand" it:.... (115)

Moreover, because the cultural sciences focus on the uniqueness of subjectively meaningful phenomena, an understanding of the values of individuals is essential for the attainment of historical knowledge.

...the principle of value-relevance leads the researcher to focus on social groups and the actions of their members, whose significance can be shown only through an understanding of the values held by the individuals. (116)

Consequently, Weber suggests that Verstehen, which we have encountered previously in our analysis of Dilthey, is a necessity in the cultural sciences. However, Verstehen is not for Weber, as it was for Dilthey, itself the basis for a distinction between the natural and the cultural sciences; i.e., it does not constitute the basis for a logical distinction between the two types of science. Verstehen is, for Weber, intimately related to the postulate of Wertbeziehung and as such, it is not a special method employed in historical analyses as many of the commentators on Weber have believed. It is, rather, part and parcel of the principle of selection, value-relevance, encountered in empirical accounts of historical phenomena. As Burger states:

Verstehen is necessary because historians are not interested in nonmeaningful events. In this sense, Verstehen may be seen as a directive to look for certain substantive aspects of action. (117)

In short, Verstehen is not, according to Weber, a special method of attaining objective knowledge of social reality. Following Rickert, Weber regarded knowledge as the result of a process whereby an active mind asserts that a sense impression is constituted as a concrete fact by positing the existence of that sense impression. Now, the difficulty arises when we desire to have knowledge of the 'inner experiences' (Erlebnisse) of other human actors since such inner states are clearly not available to us through our sensory apparatus. According to Weber, it is possible to know or empathically understand these inner experiences of the other through the re-experiencing of one's own inner states. It is supposedly the case that the external manifestation or objectifications which express the other's inner states have the capacity to establish in the consciousness of an observer of those objectifications a reproduction (Nachbild) of his own inner states which are remembered to have/^{been}expressed in similar objectifications. As Burger states:

When he understands another individual who, for instance is sad, the observer's psyche also contains sadness. However, it is not the sadness of the individual who is understood, but the sadness which the understanding person feels when he himself is sad, only this time not felt as his own, but imputed to the other person. His own being is not involved. In this sense the understanding person's inner states, dissected from his own existence, function as a substitute for those occurring in the person who is understood. (118)

Just as Dilthey maintained that it is possible to understand the subjectivity embodied in other than individual expressions such as laws, customs, social and cultural institutions, etc., Weber too suggests that the principle of Verstehen as re-experiencing is relevant to our understanding of trans-individual meaningful phenomena. As such, Verstehen is fundamental to sociology and economics which employ,

according to Weber, general concepts as well as to individualizing analyses of historical phenomena. He writes:

In all these cases understanding involves the interpretive grasp of the meaning present in one of the following contexts: (a) as in the historical approach, the actually intended meaning for concrete individual action; or (b) as in cases of sociological mass phenomena the average of, or an approximation to, the actually intended meaning; or (c) the meaning appropriate to a scientifically formulated pure type (an ideal type) of a common phenomenon.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Subsequent to the 'understanding' of a phenomena is the 'interpretation' of that phenomena. Basically, the distinction between the two is that the 'understanding' of a phenomena remains highly subjective based as it is upon the observer's ability to impute to an actor an intended meaning by empathically understanding an other through the re-experiencing of his own subjective states. 'Interpretation,' on the other hand, involves the processes of abstraction and concept-formation characteristic of any scientific account; i.e., after the selection of a value-relevant or meaningful phenomena has been made through the empathic understanding of an agent's motives, it is then necessary to interpret that meaning according to the conventional canons of scientific method. Therefore, an interpretive sociology is not opposed to the causal understanding of meaningful phenomena. On the contrary, the principle of causality is "...the presupposition of all scientific work."⁽¹²⁰⁾ Burger correctly concludes that:

Interpretive understanding in history, for Weber, always is causal understanding, the understanding of meaningful mental events occurring in human individuals as the results of previous (mental or nonmental) events, and as the causes of later ones. It is not the understanding of meaning alone, detached from the things and processes in conjunction with which it occurs, but always of meaning as a spatio-temporal event, as attached to a "substratum,"⁽¹²¹⁾

Weber writes:

Because of the content of the concept of "culture", this invariably means that such an account is complete only when we have knowledge of a nexus into which understandable human action-or, more generally, "behavior" fits, a nexus which is conceived as a determinant of behavior. (122)

Interpretive knowledge is, like all knowledge, abstract and conceptual based upon an intersubjectively recognized standard of selection which reduces the infinite complexity of concrete reality to an 'artificially' constructed, simplified and ordered image of reality which is capable of comprehension by the finite intellectual capacities of men. Interpretive accounts of historical phenomena, therefore, can employ both general and individual concepts. Furthermore, such interpretive accounts must include a consideration of the importance of nonmeaningful events and phenomena which in conjunction with a range of other meaningful events constitute the context within which any meaningful phenomena stands in causal relationships to other phenomena, meaningful and nonmeaningful.

We can see that Weber's notion of Verstehen does not rely upon a claim for the validity of intuition. The subjectivity involved in the postulate of Verstehen only claims that it is an intuitive understanding of the motives of historical actors which allows us to select value-relevant or meaningful phenomena for investigation but the objectivity of historical accounts depends, as always, upon the employment of proper methodological techniques in order to 'interpret' the 'understood' motives.

There are, according to Weber, two distinct types of Verstehen. Parsons describes the direct observational understanding (aktuelles Verstehen) in the following manner:

We understand things aktuell, in so far as, in terms of ordinary everyday experience, they are evident through the mere fact of being observed. (123)

Weber suggests that we understand immediately upon observation the meaning of the proposition $2 + 2 = 4$. Similarly, according to Weber, we understand, through direct observation, the actions of a man with an ax chopping wood. However, we do not understand, through direct observation, why the proposition $2 + 2 = 4$ was employed at a particular time by a particular person or why the man is chopping wood without recourse to 'explanatory understanding' (erklärendes Verstehen) or understanding in terms of motives (motivationsmäßiges Verstehen) Weber writes:

Thus we understand in terms of motive the meaning an actor attaches to the proposition twice two equals four, when he states it or writes it down, in that we understand what makes him do this at precisely this moment and in these circumstances. Understanding in this sense is attained if we know that he is engaged in balancing a ledger or in making a scientific demonstration, or is engaged in some other task of which this particular act would be an appropriate part. This is rational understanding of motivation, which consists in placing the act in an intelligible and more inclusive context of meaning. (124)

The distinction between aktuelles Verstehen and erklärendes verstehen is related to our earlier distinction between understanding and interpretation and is the basis for Weber's distinction between subjective adequacy and causal adequacy. We have seen that the understanding of motivation implies being able to place a particular act "...in an intelligible and more inclusive context of meaning;" i.e., such understanding:

...involves relating the particular conduct concerned to a broader normative standard with reference to which the individual acts. (125)

Therefore, the interpretation of an event can be subjectively adequate or adequate on the level of meaning if it can be regarded that:

...according to our habitual modes of thought and feeling, its component parts taken in their mutual relation are recognized to constitute a "typical" complex of meaning. (126)

But, the interpretation of an event can be regarded as causally adequate only when it can be demonstrated that:

...according to established generalizations from experience, there is a probability that it will always actually occur in the same way. (127)

It is, perhaps, the case that Weber's most lasting contribution to social science is his conception of ideal types. Unfortunately, it has long been assumed that there is a disparity between his conception of ideal types as outlined in his essay "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy" and what are presented as examples of ideal type constructs in his Economy and Society. The normal procedure which has evolved to cope with this supposed disparity is to distinguish between different kinds of ideal types, however, as Burger suggests, it is necessary to understand upon what basis Weber felt justified in referring to these supposedly distinct types of conceptualization by the one term.

According to Weber's epistemology, historical knowledge is knowledge of meaningful and value-relevant phenomena. We have seen that the guiding interest of historical scientists is an interest in the unique characteristics of historical individuals for as Weber says:

...the specific meaning which a phenomenon has for us is naturally not to be found in those relationships which it shares with many other phenomena. (128)

As such, it is individual concepts which are employed in historical accounts. The difficulty in coming to terms with Weber's notion of ideal types is that they are neither general concepts nor individual concepts. As Alexander von Schelting states:

The 'ideal type' is a type since it expresses in thought facts which are significant for the particularity of many cultural phenomena, although to different degrees. (129)

According to Weber, concepts such as 'individualism,' 'feudalism,' and 'mercantilism' are the product of:

...the abstract synthesis of those traits which are common to numerous concrete phenomena(?). (130)

Ideal types are clearly not descriptions of concrete reality nor are they hypotheses about concrete reality nor do they express an average of concrete phenomena nor do they represent a formulation of the concrete traits common to a class of concrete phenomena. Rather, an ideal type is an abstract concept the process of abstraction being directed by the subjectively relative interest of the investigator in particular value-relevant concrete phenomena which have been selected from the infinity of concrete reality through the empathic understanding of the values embodied in it. Weber describes how an ideal type concept is formed:

An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct (Gedankenbild). In its conceptual purity, this mental construct (Gedankenbild) cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. (131)

The abstraction involved in the process of ideal type construction implies that such concepts supply an artificial or 'fictional'

image of concrete reality. They are artificial because they involve the one-sided accentuation (Steigerung) of particular aspects of concrete phenomena common, in varying degrees, to a large number of empirical concrete phenomena. According to the logical distinction between individual and general concepts which Weber adopted from Rickert, all concepts must either describe the unique characteristics of individual phenomena or the characteristics common to a class of phenomena. But, for Weber, there is the necessity to be able to describe, in a general fashion, the unique characteristics of a range of phenomena. As Burger states:

...since he has no appropriate conceptual forms available for what he wants to say, Weber has to change the reality to which the concepts refer. Thus, ideal types are general concepts which do not describe the elements which the instances of a class of phenomena have in common in the empirical world, but the elements which they have in common in an imaginary world, a utopia. (132)

Of course, the exaggeration involved in the construction of an ideal type is relative to the particular value-determined point of view from which the historian writes. Because Weber, in rejecting a metaphysical postulate regarding the universality of values or the existence of a trans-historical set of values, does not deny the possibility of ever new values emerging through the historical process, there is, theoretically, the possibility that there can be an infinite number of ideal types constructed to analytically describe the same concrete phenomenon. Furthermore, each one of these ideal types is a legitimate or valid conceptualization of that particular concrete phenomenon as long as it is objectively possible (i.e., it does not contradict any known laws of nature) and as long as:

...it has really taken certain traits, meaningful in their essential features, from the empirical reality of our culture and brought them together into a unified ideal-construct. (133)

Because of the possibility of the emergence of new values, it is, according to Weber's epistemological position, impossible to construct an exhaustive system of ideal types or, sequentially, a general theory of society. Weber summarizes brilliantly his position in relation to his conception of the character and status of social science knowledge and does not back away from the relativistic (which is not to say subjectivistic) implications of his position. He writes, at length:

For none of those systems of ideas, which are absolutely indispensable in the understanding of those segments of reality which are meaningful at a particular moment, can exhaust its infinite richness. They are all attempts, on the basis of the present state of our knowledge and the available conceptual patterns, to bring order into the chaos of those facts which we have drawn into the field circumscribed by our interest. The intellectual apparatus which the past has developed through the analysis, or more truthfully, the analytical rearrangement of the immediately given reality, and through the latter's integration by concepts which correspond to the state of its knowledge and the focus of its interest, is in constant tension with the new knowledge which we can and desire to wrest from reality. The progress of cultural science occurs through this conflict. Its result is the perpetual reconstruction of those concepts through which we seek to comprehend reality. The history of the social sciences is and remains a continuous process passing from the attempt to order reality analytically through the construction of concepts—the dissolution of the analytical constructs so constructed through the expansion and shift of the scientific horizon—and the reformulation anew of concepts on the foundations thus transformed. It is not the error of the attempt to construct conceptual systems in general which is shown by this process—every science, even simply descriptive history, operates with the conceptual stock-in-trade of its time. Rather, this process shows that in the cultural sciences

concept-construction depends on the setting of the problem, and the latter varies with the content of culture itself. The relationship between concept and reality in the cultural sciences involves the transitoriness of all such syntheses. The great attempts at theory-construction in our science were always useful for revealing the limits of the significance of those points of view which provided their foundation. The greatest advances in the sphere of the social sciences are substantively tied up with the shift in practical cultural problems and take the guise of a critique of concept-construction. (134)

For our purposes, it will not prove necessary to explore the distinctions between 'individual ideal types,' 'generic ideal types,' and those ideal types which describe the 'essence' of systems of ideas. We have been concerned only with the logical status which Weber ascribes to ideal type constructs in general and as Burger states:

...it must be concluded that contrary to a practically universal belief it is not necessary to distinguish between certain kinds of ideal types in order to save the internal consistency of Weber's arguments. As far as the substantive content of ideal types is concerned, and not their logical character in the sense in which Weber understands it, it is of course possible to distinguish different types, as Weber himself did. Within the framework of his argument, however, this has no methodological significance. (135)

For Weber, ideal types are to be regarded only as a means for the attainment of knowledge of unique historical individuals. As we have seen, ideal type concepts are not conceptualizations of unique historical phenomena nor are they general concepts. As such, in and of themselves, they do not constitute either knowledge of the uniqueness of particular phenomena nor knowledge of the general characteristics of a class of phenomena. The historian uses ideal types in order to be able to compare the degree to which any concrete empirical phenomena approximates the partial and one-sided thought picture (Gedankenbild). Weber writes that an ideal type concept:

...facilitate(s) the empirically valid interpretation by providing a possible interpretation-an interpretive schema-with which the given facts are compared. (136)

It is the coincidence of the 'ideal' characteristics of the Gedankenbild with the characteristics of actual empirical phenomena that allows the historian or cultural scientist to regard the ideal type concept as an accurate description of empirical reality. However, it should be obvious by now that the 'accuracy' of such descriptions is not meant to imply a conception of an exhaustive description of empirical reality; rather, it is accurate as a partial description of selected aspects of concrete phenomena. The nature of the relationship between an ideal type concept and empirical reality is always problematic and can only be determined upon the basis of an empirical examination of the extent of the coincidence between type constructs and the historical individuals.

For the most part, we have spoken in the previous pages of Weber's epistemological and methodological position vis a vis historical knowledge. We have seldom spoken of sociology. This has been the case essentially because Weber regarded sociology as an auxilliary or complementary science of history. The construction of descriptive ideal types does not constitute historical knowledge of the uniqueness of concrete historical phenomena. Rather, such knowledge is gained through the comparison of ideal type concepts and empirical reality. It is the latter task which occupies the historian qua historian. It is the task of sociology, which is not itself an historical or cultural science, to construct as many ideal types as are necessary to allow the comparative analysis of ideal types with all of the

selected and value-relevant aspects of empirical reality in which historians, as value-oriented societal members, are, at any specific time, interested. Sociology is, then, for Weber, a natural science of social phenomena which through the construction of ideal types which are general concepts (of a specific sort, to be sure) can guide the construction of individual concepts upon which our knowledge of the uniqueness of concrete phenomena (i.e., our historical knowledge) can be based. The implication of this conception of sociology (and economics is conceptualized similarly) is that sociology is not an independent theoretical science in its own right; furthermore, it is the conception of sociology and the epistemology upon which it is based which led Weber to deny the possibility of establishing a comprehensive systematic theory of society modelled after the nomological deductive systems of the natural sciences and to accept, instead, a conception of the human knowledge of social phenomena as necessarily partial and limited reflecting the perspectives of individual investigators whose scientific interests are relative to the value-orientations characteristic of specific socio-historical constellations. Parsons' analysis of the 'mosaic atomism' of Weber's position leading to a 'mosaic theory of culture' and society is mistaken. According to Parsons' interpretation which assumes unjustifiably that Weber sought to establish a systematic theory of society, it is necessary to assert that Weber assumed that each interpretive schema or ideal type conceptualization:

...must be "translatable" into terms of each other or of a wider schema. This implication is necessary to avoid a completely relativistic consequence that would overthrow the whole position. (137)

It is precisely this assumption which Weber refused to make, and, as we have seen, it is not the case that Weber's whole position is overthrown

by the relativistic consequences of not making such an assumption. On epistemological grounds, Weber denied that it is a legitimate aim of the cultural sciences to seek to produce a general, systematic and universally applicable and valid theory of socio-cultural phenomena. He did not, however, deny the possibility of attaining limited and partial, yet 'objective' knowledge of social reality. Weber's methodological and epistemological considerations were based upon a conception of the world and of man which presupposed that there exist definite limits to man's intellectual capacities. He sought, sometimes with anguish, to operate within an understanding of those limits and he strove to know only that which he understood to be within man's rational grasp.

In the pages that follow, we will analyze a number of various attempts to come to terms with the implications of Weber's position. Therein, we will see that it is not Parsons alone who has assumed that it must be possible to translate the 'knowledge' attained by adopting one partial and limited interpretive schema into the terms of a wider or comprehensive or synthetic schema.

5. Conclusion:

In our analyses of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Dilthey, Rickert, and Weber, we have traced the development of an epistemological position which asserts that man's 'knowledge' is an historical product. We have seen that, despite the various efforts of some of these thinkers to overcome the relativistic implications of their epistemologies, these efforts have not proven successful in being able to assert, on empirical grounds alone, that men possess intellectual capacities which can lead them to claim with absolute certainty that their knowledge of the social world, in which they find themselves, is true in the sense of being a permanently valid account of social reality recognizable as such by all people at all times. It has, as an epistemological position, denied that it is possible to establish a general and universally applicable theory of social reality. As such, it is an epistemological position which denies, in principle, the possibility of establishing comprehensive sociological knowledge of the world. Just as it has been said that the history of social thought in the twentieth century has been a confrontation with the ghost of Marx, it is no less true that for those theorists who have learned from Marx but who have not ceased searching for the answers to the questions which his thought raised, it has been a confrontation with the ghost of Weber. It was Weber, above all others, who, in his attempts to resolve the issues around the controversy as to the nature and even the very possibility of a science of society, issues which had come to light in the confrontation with Marx's ghost, was able to articulate the ultimate implications of the historicization of Kant's epistemological contributions. With Weber, we are left to uncomfortably cope with an understanding of our knowledge as partial, perspectival, and

one-sided limited as it is by the imperfections of our own intellectual capabilities. We have, in the previous pages, traced what Michel Foucault has termed the "...epistemological mutation of history"⁽¹³⁸⁾ which he describes in the following manner:

..; it has broken up the long series formed by the progress of consciousness, or the teleology of reason, or the evolution of human thought; it has questioned the themes of convergence and culmination; it has doubted the possibility of creating totalities. It has led to the individualization of different series, which are juxtaposed one to another, follow one another, overlap and intersect, without one being able to reduce them to a linear schema. Thus, in place of the continuous chronology of reason, which was invariably traced back to some inaccessible origin, there have appeared scales that are sometimes very brief, distinct from one another, irreducible to a single law, scales that bear a type of history peculiar to each one, and which cannot be reduced to the general model of a consciousness that acquires, progresses, and remembers. (139)

We are left, then, with the question with which we started our analysis; namely, that posed by Bendix in the following manner:

Why continue the work of social science, when our view of human nature becomes incompatible with the belief in the constructive possibilities of knowledge.? (140)

Men are always made to feel uncomfortable when they are forced to confront their various and many imperfections. The realization of human limitations can induce men to assume a posture of pseudo-innocence, to use Rollo May's term, according to which they rationalize their inability to act in the world for how is one to know, given our imperfections, what is to be done. Such a realization can, on the other hand, generate an heroic encounter between the finite capacities of men and the infinite diversity of reality. It is possible to interpret the achievements of men as the results of the attempt to push toward their limits, to realize their

limited potential. It is, however, the case that men, individually and collectively, often deny the existence of their limitations. Such denials can, at times, contribute to the realization of man's limited potential; i.e., many times and for many people it is our ignore-ance of our limitations which allows us to achieve that which is within our potential. Yet, when we deny our limitations out of an exaggerated pride in our finite capacities not recognized as such we run the risk of acting upon the assumption that we have no limitations and implementing our limited, partial, and one-sided solutions without humility. Modern man has, in many instances, and these are now becoming apparent, denied his limitations assured that his reason will ultimately prevail despite the fact that as E. F. Schumacher has stated:

The greatest danger invariably arises from the ruthless application, on a vast scale, of partial knowledge as we are currently witnessing in the application of nuclear energy, of the new chemistry in agriculture, of transportation technology, and countless other things. (141)

In the essays that follow, I have attempted to analyze the ways in which a number of social theorists (namely, Karl Mannheim, Talcott Parsons, and Alvin Gouldner) have attempted to come to terms with the epistemological implications of the tradition of thought which we have thus far analyzed. It will be seen that each, in his own way, has accepted a belief in the assumption which Weber rejected: i.e., the assumption that it is possible to translate the partial and one-sided insights into the nature of concrete reality which have been gleaned by the interpretation of social reality from a number of interpretive schemas into the terms of a wider and more inclusive interpretive schema for which superior explanatory

powers are claimed. All of these theorists express a belief in the possibility that the convergence of partial and one-sided interpretive schemas or conceptual frameworks is a real possibility. In their analyses, they have all argued that it is theoretically justifiable to regard the 'development' of sociology as a discipline which continuously seeks to 'synthesize' one-sided interpretations of reality; sociology is, then, perceived to be a synthetic discipline.

In so doing, we have also attempted to demonstrate that the assumption about the possibility of theoretical convergence has not been justified by recourse solely to empirical data. Rather, the belief in the possibility of convergence ultimately rests on a meta-empirical or metaphysical conception of man, the world within which he is situated and the status of his knowledge of that world. Each theorist, in his own way, has attempted to deny the Weberian position which posits the existence of definite limits to man's knowledge beyond which man's rational faculties cannot take him. They have each argued that those limits are, in fact, surpassable as a result of the collective capabilities of men to participate in a discipline which they regard as capable of linear development. I cannot, solely by recourse to empirically based arguments, deny their claim nor their faith. Such a claim on my part would have to rest on metaphysical assumptions in exactly the same way as their claims for convergence do.

There are those who, in rejecting in its entirety, the various post-Kantian epistemological positions we have outlined, continue in their commitment to a specific partial and one-sided image of reality regarding it to be capable of supplying them with an accurate and complete reproduction of concrete reality in their minds. It is

not difficult to imagine the kind of intolerance which such a position can generate. There are, on the other hand, those who have sought to reconcile the contradictory claims made from the points of view of a multiplicity of interpretive conceptual frameworks. In regarding those various positions adopted by the latter class of theorists, it is possible to interpret the history of their sociologies as a 'search for synthesis,' a search which, as we have seen, is based upon the assumption that it is possible somehow to uncover the principles which can unify and reconcile the insights and partial 'truths' gained by each of the distinct partial and perspectival viewpoints. They have sought to establish a universal language into the terms of which all other languages can be translated.

The point of view outlined here suggests that there has been a convergence among some of the most influential (and, to my way of looking at things, significant) social theorists around the concept and possibility of convergence itself. Of course, when stated in this way, my own efforts can be seen to be consistent with this general intellectual orientation and I readily admit that I am a child of my time, a time wherein our desire for certainty can, after the debunking of absolutist philosophies, be expressed only in a faith in the ability of contemporary man to create every broader and more comprehensive syntheses of perspectival viewpoints which are interpreted as converging. In essence, I am positing a metatheoretical conception which suggests that regardless of whether or not there has been an actual convergence in terms of the substance or content of sociological

theories, there has been a convergence around the conception of sociological knowledge as synthetic. It might be possible to argue, at a later time, that there has, in fact, been such a substantive convergence resulting from our collective predisposition or motivation to 'interpret', according to our historically relative point of view, the 'development' of sociological knowledge as a product of the process of convergence; such an argument could be presented independently of any considerations as to whether or not that convergence reflects an increasing sophistication of the diverse conceptual frameworks leading to their mutually greater capacities to arrive at more 'adequate' conceptions of reality.

The essays which follow deal with three theorists who are merely representative of the general intellectual orientation which I have described above. I could have chosen to analyze Anthony Giddens' Capitalism and Modern Social Theory or Robert Ornstein's The Psychology of Consciousness or any other number of books whose author's have taken the challenge offered by the development of post-Kantian epistemologies seriously enough to deny the possibility of its naive dismissal. In short, I have been selective in choosing three theorists whose contributions to modern thought have been significant just as I was selective in tracing the epistemological contributions of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Dilthey, Rickert, and Weber. From my point of view, it was the thought of these men, who were indeed representative of a wide range of theorists in terms of the issues which occupied their interest, which can be seen as central in the articulation of the epistemological position which has formed the central problematic of modern social

thought. I have not spoken of Scheler, Troeltsch, Vaihinger, Croce, etc. although analyses of their work would certainly have added depth to my presentation. I should also mention, in particular, that an analysis of the complex treatment given to some of these issues by Edmund Husserl would be far beyond the scope of this thesis. His attempt to establish the foundation for "...the new transcendental rationality"⁽¹⁴²⁾ represents a significant departure from the Kantian epistemological foundations which eventually resulted in the emergence of historicism and the ensuing Weberian conception of knowledge as necessarily 'fictional' and perspectivistic; an analysis of Husserl's attempt which, as we have seen, was explicitly regarded by Rickert and Weber as misdirected, would require an analysis of its foundations, development and contributions in its own right. Although I am unable, in the present context, to undertake such an analysis I wish to recommend Leszek Kolakowski's study, Husserl and the Search for Certitude the conclusion of which I find to be consistent with my own interpretation of Husserl and the analysis presented in this thesis. Kolakowski states:

I think that his (Husserl's) attempt failed to reach its goal as indeed, I suspect, all attempts to get at the epistemological absolute are bound to fail. But I still consider his work to be of tremendous value for our culture, and this for two reasons. He better than anybody, compelled us to realize the painful dilemma of knowledge: either consistent empiricism with its relativistic and skeptical results (a standpoint which many regard discouraging, inadmissible, and in fact ruinous for culture) or transcendentalist dogmatism, which cannot really justify itself and remains in the end an arbitrary decision. I have to admit that although ultimate certitude is a goal that cannot be attained within the rationalist framework, our culture would be poor and miserable without people who keep trying to reach this goal, and it hardly could survive when left entirely in the hands of the skeptics. I do believe that human

culture cannot ever reach a perfect synthesis of its diversified and incompatible components. Its very richness is supported by this very incompatibility of its ingredients. And it is the conflict of values, rather than their harmony, that keeps our culture alive. (143)

Finally, I cannot claim that the following essays represent a systematic attempt to relate the works of Mannheim, Parsons, and Gouldner to one another. In fact, were I to make such a claim, I would have to do so based upon the assumption that I have arrived at a general, systematic, and comprehensive interpretive schema into the terms of which the contributions of these men could be translated. As such, I would certainly have denied my personal limitations and, perhaps, those common to us all. Any thesis which purports to account for aspects of concrete reality (and, as Parsons recognizes, the thoughts of men embodied in books and other cultural artifacts are certainly part of our concrete reality) can only be yet another point from which to start. The essays which follow which have the formal appearance of chapters represent the attempt, albeit limited and provisional, to begin again to interpret our reality and ourselves from ever new points of view and to purposefully acknowledge our limitations, an awareness of which is necessary if we are to act responsibly in the world.

Footnotes to Part II:

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5. Ibid, p. 220.
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8. Dupré, op. cit., p. 221.
9. Ibid., p. 222.
10. Ibid., p. 222.
11. Ibid., p. 222.
12. Ibid., p. 223.
13. Ibid., p. 227.
14. Ibid., p. 227.
15. Ibid., p. 84.
16. See above, p. 31.
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18. Ibid., p. 42.
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- 21 Ibid., p. 39.
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39. Ibid., p. 67n.
40. Ibid., p. 62.
41. Hodges, op. cit., p. 105.
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43. Thomas Burger, Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation: History, Laws, and Ideal Types, Durham, North Carolina, 1976, p. xiv.
44. Ibid., p. 14.
45. Ibid., p. 15.
46. Ibid., p. 16.
47. Rickert, op. cit., p. 32.
48. Burger, op. cit., p. 18.
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51. Ibid., p. 22.
52. Ibid., p. 29.
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54. Ibid., p. 42.
55. Rickert, quoted by Burger, op. cit., p. 32.
56. Rickert, quoted by Burger, op. cit., p. 33.
57. Rickert, Science and History:, op. cit., p. 61.
58. Rickert, quoted by Burger, op. cit., p. 35.
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60. Ibid., p. 36.
61. Rickert, Science and History:, op. cit., p. 19.
62. Rickert, quoted by Burger, op. cit., p. 38.
63. Rickert, quoted by Burger, op. cit., p. 40.
64. Burger, op. cit., p. 41.
65. Ibid., p. 41.
66. Ibid., p. 41.
67. Ibid., p. 41.
68. Rickert, quoted by Burger, op. cit., p. 32.
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70. Rickert, quoted by Burger, op. cit., p. 44.
71. Rickert, quoted by Burger, op. cit., p. 45.
72. Burger, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
73. Rickert, quoted by Burger, op. cit., p. 47.
74. Burger, op. cit., p. 52.
75. Rickert, Science and History:, op. cit., p. 3.
76. Hughes, op. cit., p. 191.
77. Rickert, quoted by Burger, op. cit., p. 45.

78. Rickert, Science and History:, op. cit., pp. 144-145.
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91. Ibid., pp. 76-77.
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95. Weber, Roscher and Knies:, op. cit., p. 173.
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106. Ibid., p. 253.
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109. Burger, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
110. Ibid., p. 93.
111. Weber, "Objectivity in Social Science....", *op. cit.*, p. 111.
112. Aron, *op. cit.*, p. 332.
113. Ibid., p. 332.
114. Weber, "Objectivity in Social Science....", *op. cit.*, p. 74.
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117. Ibid., p. 105.
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128. Weber, "Objectivity in Social Science....", *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.

129. Alexander von Schelting, quoted by Burger, op. cit., p. 121.
130. Weber, "Objectivity in Social Science....", op. cit., p.92.
131. Ibid., p. 90.
132. Burger, op. cit., p. 123.
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134. Ibid., pp. 105-106.
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137. Parsons, op. cit., p. 601.
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141. E. F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered London, 1975, p. 29.
142. Leszek Kolakowski, Husserl and the Search for Certitude, New Haven, Conn., 1975, p. 84.
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Part III: Essays.

1. A Critique of Mannheim's 'Dynamic Intellectual Mediation.'
2. Karl Mannheim's 'Sociology of the Mind.'
3. Talcott Parsons and The Structure of Social Action.
4. On Gouldner's The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology.

1. A Critique of Mannheim's 'Dynamic Intellectual Mediation.'

It is somewhat unfortunate that the majority of critical commentary directed toward the sociology of knowledge, as Mannheim formulated it, has referred almost exclusively to the broad theoretical statement of Ideology and Utopia. It is seldom that one finds explicit reference to the actual applications of that theoretical framework which Mannheim himself performed. I suppose it might be argued that such substantive studies do not possess the same immediacy for many of them were conducted after Mannheim's escape from Germany and in the different intellectual climate of England; in many ways, he tempered his position partially as a response to the rise of Nazism and partially as a result of certain empirical and pragmatic influences exerted by his new colleagues to which he responded favourably. Ideology and Utopia remained Mannheim's most radical statement concerning the goals and implications of the sociology of knowledge and it is perhaps this fact that accounts for the attention paid to that work and a seeming dismissal of much of his other work. Also, the actual applications of his theoretical framework seem to have the character of another type of academic exercise which has long been practised with a degree of intellectual respectability. Here, I am referring to studies in the history of ideas, and such studies have rarely been perceived to be as problematic as Mannheim's proposed sociology of knowledge. Perhaps, this has been the case because such studies have, on the whole, been carried on without an explicit statement of exactly what theoretical presuppositions were being used and with a less explicit claim for their implications.

What I hope to do in this essay is to look at two pieces of

Mannheim's work side by side, as it were. I shall use Ideology and Utopia as the theoretical statement and in light of that work, I will attempt to analyze one of his substantive essays, "Conservative Thought." This particular essay has been chosen because it was written in 1927 and therefore represents a product of the same stage of Mannheim's intellectual career as Ideology and Utopia; therefore, the implications of the essay should be as profound as those of the theoretical statement. The essay has been chosen also because of the importance which Mannheim placed on it himself. References to this essay occur frequently in his later works. (For example, see "The History of the Concept of the State as an Organism: A Sociological Analysis.") Finally, Adolph Lowe has referred to this particular essay as the "...empirical test of the sociology of knowledge...."⁽¹⁾

It will be necessary at the outset to summarize the substantive essay.

One of the central concepts which he employs in the "Conservative Thought" essay is that of 'style of thought' which is derived from an analogy with the study of 'styles of art' through which it becomes possible to "...'place' an unknown work of art."⁽²⁾ That is, in studies of art, and Mannheim believes in studies of thought as well, it is possible to accurately identify the date and if not the artist at least the school of artists which is responsible for the piece of work in question. Such identification is possible, according to Mannheim, because art develops in 'styles' 'objectively' because art, like most other spheres of human endeavour is predicated on and shaped by its existence in a 'real' world which can be known objectively even if only in an approximate or partial and limited sense. For Mannheim, it is not the individual artist or the creative genius which

is of sociological interest, but rather, the 'style' out of which such persons work and find the seeds of their innovation and creativity.

Mannheim states:

...the most important unit must nevertheless be the style of an epoch, against the background of which the special contribution of each individual stands out and acquires its significance. (3)

The changes in such 'styles' are not the products of individual artists but are reflections, modified, of course, by personal idiosyncracies, of the changes in the social backgrounds and the fates of the groups or classes which are the 'carriers' of such 'styles.' The meanings with which Mannheim deals, be they the aesthetic symbols of a painting or the abstract concepts of a philosophical doctrine, are meanings precisely because they have a social referent; if one likes, they represent shared definitions or intersubjectively recognizable patterns of knowledge. According to Mannheim:

...the analysis of meanings will be the ~~the~~ core of our technique. Words never signify the same thing when used by different groups even in the same country, and slight variations of meaning provide the best clues to the different trends of thought in a community. (4)

Mannheim continues the analogy with studies of art by adapting Riegl's concept of 'art motive' (Kunstwollen) to the study of thought. This art motive is the striving for a certain form of art of which every distinct style is an imperfect expression. On the surface, Riegl's concept and Mannheim's derivative 'basic intention' seem strangely Platonic or absolutistic for Mannheim, the historicist. It would seem to imply a fixed definition of the goals and purposes of art or thought, thereby adopting a linear conception of development

underlaid by an evolutionary bias; in short, such a concept seems peculiarly out of place in Mannheim's theoretical framework for it infers precisely those criteria of validity which he assumes to be problematic. However, the concept of 'basic intention' as it is used by Mannheim does not become Platonic, at least explicitly.

Referring to such basic intentions he states:

We must take it as axiomatic that they are themselves 'in the making' so to speak, and that their history and fate is in many ways linked up with the fate of the groups which must be considered as their social carriers. (5)

And, again:

...the contention put forward here is that although the basic art motive can be detected in immanent analysis as the formal principle (Gestaltprinzip) of certain schools, it also can be shown as something ultimately born out of the struggles and conflicts of human groups. (6)

Mannheim, then, does not offer us a Platonic concept nor a doctrine of immanent historical determinism. Whereas Riegl in his study of styles of art was attempting to establish a purely descriptive or ahistorical analysis with his concept of art motive, Mannheim was attempting to establish the foundation for a 'causal' analysis of styles of thought and for him the concept of basic intention did not imply an absolutist, ahistorical or static motive as fundamental and generating all subsequent thought.

However, despite the above quotations and comments, Mannheim does not explicitly tell us what the logical status of this notion of 'basic intention' is to be. With his qualifications of Riegl's concept, he seems to have denuded it of its significant meaning and a 'basic intention' can claim to be little more than a specific socially conditioned orientation to the world, be it aesthetic, religious, mystical

cognitive, etc. The concept remains ambiguous and we have no indication as to whether it is purely a heuristic device or a fundamental concept for the 'scientific' study of 'styles of thought.'

After stating his intentions and defining the basic concepts he will use, Mannheim undertakes an empirical examination of what he considers to be one of these distinct styles of thought. The concrete example he chooses is German conservative thought in the first half of the nineteenth century. He begins his analysis by choosing to regard the French Revolution as the historical point at which modern thought experienced a rather clear-cut separation between styles of thought.

As Marx already pointed out, the key to the understanding of modern development lies in a realization that Germany experienced the French Revolution on the philosophical plane. (7)

To support this claim, Mannheim offers sociological reasons for why Romanticism was experienced in France on the poetic and political levels while in Germany the influence of Romanticism remained confined to the development of philosophy. The military nature of the German state, its geographical location, the strength of the German ruling groups, etc., all gave rise to an elaboration of an intellectual counter-movement and this counter-movement remained primarily an intellectual exercise because of the nature of the German social order. Because of the lack of strong liberal influences and the consequent sparsity of parliamentary debate, this intellectual counter-movement was able to develop philosophical justifications. Mannheim states:

As soon as parliamentary life begins, the definite contours of Weltanschauungen and ideologies rapidly lose their sharpness. That they can still, though faded, penetrate through to the present, is due to the fact that the incubation period, so to speak, was a very long one, so that there was time for the

ideology to develop thoroughly and consistently according to its own logical principles. The magic of the French Revolution provided just the right stimulus to induce people to occupy themselves with these political and philosophical matters, while the hard facts of reality were not yet mature enough to demand action which inevitably leads to compromise and logical inconsistency. (8)

To summarize, Mannheim considered the French Revolution to be a catalysing agent in the development of the subsequent styles of thought with the result being the formation of clear-cut extremes in intellectual persuasions as expressed within Germany.

One such extreme was the conservatism which developed in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century and this particular style or ideology, as he refers to it, was allowed to develop into a coherent and comprehensive Weltanschauung. Mannheim was careful to point out that the central focus of such Weltanschauungen need not be confined to politically significant doctrines and that in different periods some other factor could be the focal point around which the debates concerning fundamental attitudes and world views would revolve. Indeed, he writes:

...it would be wrong to draw too clear-cut a distinction between politics and philosophy and to regard political thought as socially determined but not philosophy or other types of thinking. Such distinctions between philosophy, politics, literature, etc., only exist in textbooks and not in real life, since, given that they belong to the same style of thought, they must all emanate from a common centre. If only one penetrates deeply enough, one will find that certain philosophical assumptions lie at the basis of all political thought, and similarly, in any kind of philosophy a certain pattern of action and a definite approach to the world is implied. (9)

Mannheim summarizes the central assumptions of modern rationalism, the style of thought derived directly from the French Revolution and

the philosophes. It is characterized by a strong rejection of Aristotelian teleologism because of the speculative nature of its discourse. Rationalism is a desire for knowledge that can be socialized or communicated to anyone. That is, truth becomes identified with universal validity and is no longer contingent on idiosyncratic experiences. Such a demand requires abstraction away from the particular case leading to generalized statements. In the following two quotations, Mannheim unveils his sympathy for those who did react against such rationalism. He states:

The characteristic of this conception of knowledge is that it ignores all concrete and particular aspects of the object and all those faculties of human perception which, while enabling the individual to grasp the world intuitively, do not permit him to communicate his knowledge to everybody. (10)

And, a little later:

In the end, even the 'other man' is experienced abstractly. (11)

Like Dilthey and Rickert, Mannheim knows that in paying all our attention to the development of 'rationalism' too much is ignored. In the essay, "Conservative Thought", it is his purpose to discover what became of the attitudes and modes of thought "...which were suppressed by a consistent rationalization."⁽¹²⁾ Mannheim experienced the same ambivalence to the developments he perceived in modern society as did Weber; while committed to the intentions and goals of science (as defined by rationalism), he was still uneasy about the 'disenchantment' concomitant with such rationalization. According to Mannheim, these seemingly obsolete attitudes and modes of thought found expression in the romantic counter-movement which was propagated by those social

groups which were least involved in the "...capitalistic process of rationalization...."(13) the aristocracy, the peasants and the petit-bourgeoisie . Reminiscent again of Weber and preparing the way for Riesman's concept of 'privatism,' Mannheim suggests that even the bourgeoisie held on to certain elements of the pre-rationalistic world view in their private lives and that they accepted and perhaps could only accept the validity of this process of rationalization for the ordering of their 'public' lives.

Therefore, Mannheim is attempting to show that romanticism is the expression of a counter-current to modern rationalism. Romanticism develops as antithesis to rationalism. However, remaining true to the Hegelian logic of the dialectic, he argues that inevitably the antithesis is shaped by the thesis resulting in the following paradox: when the dominant climate of thought is rationalistic, the expression of the 'irrational' or 'non-rational' or non-generalizeable elements in social life must itself be done in rationalistic terms. These elements were themselves brought to the level of conscious reflection and are expressed abstractly giving their support to certain anti-capitalistic trends; i.e., the romantic elements became involved in 'right-wing' opposition to capitalism and its characteristic rationalization. Mannheim then argues that the socialist critics of capitalism adopted, not uncritically, these romantic reactions to capitalism. There exists, then, an affinity between romantic conservatism and socialism for while the proletarian mode of life is predominantly rational in that its very existence is a product of this process of rationalization and it must plan revolutionary activity according to the logic of instrumental reasoning, ultimately it must

rely on an element of irrationality. Mannheim states:

The attempt at revolution, however planned and 'scientific' it may be, inevitably produces an irrational 'chiliastic' element. Here lies its essential affinity with the counter-revolution.⁽¹⁴⁾

The chances of proletarian success are never really predictable for the revolutionary élan always remains an uncertain factor; proletarian thought derives from the "...ecstatic consciousness."⁽¹⁵⁾ He also argues that there is a connection between socialism and conservatism in their mutual acceptance of dialectics, however, I will not go into this here as it will be central to my critical remarks later in this essay.

In the subsection, "The Meaning of Conservatism," Mannheim illustrates that he is not attempting to offer a psychological reductionist analysis of the romantic reaction to the Enlightenment. He does accept Weber's term, 'traditionalism,' as a fairly ubiquitous and universal tendency to cling to the old ways of life. This traditionalism or 'natural conservatism' raises an interesting question. If such an attitude is universal, how does one account for the development or acceptance of 'progressive' attitudes unless there is also a contradictory universal and ubiquitous attitude. That is, does Mannheim rely upon an ontology which posits a fundamental split or conflict in human consciousness? This psychological concept of traditionalism coincides with the ontological assumption which lies behind Sartre's descriptions of 'bad faith.' That ontology says that consciousness is freedom and that consciousness is that which seeks to be what it is not and seeks to be not what it is. I have often thought that the concept of anomie must ultimately rest on the conviction that men do operate with an essentialist definition of

self (as opposed to an existentialist conception) or, to use Mannheim's term, a traditionalist definition of self. Otherwise, why would social situations characterized by anomie be perceived as problematic and why would people react to such situations with characteristic anomic behavior or action. (See Christian Bay's The Structure of Freedom, 1958)

This, however, is a marginal point in this discussion. Mannheim's interest, at this time, is not with the psychological predisposition toward traditionalism but rather with the process whereby traditionalism becomes conscious of itself and develops into a "...dynamic historical structural configuration,"⁽¹⁶⁾ such as conservatism. Political conservatism, and I expect that Mannheim is here using an ideal type construct, is an objective mental structure distinguishable from the subjectivity of the isolated individual. That is, people experience and act in a 'conservative' way only in so far as they incorporate themselves into one of the phases of development of this objective mental structure. This means that to determine if one is acting 'conservatively' as distinct from 'traditionalistically,' one must be able to determine the objective nature of the structural configuration. Traditionalist behavior remains purely reactive whereas conservative behavior is meaningful in Weber's sense. Conservatism is a reflective counter-movement which presupposes a coherent, systematic and comprehensive world-view, a Weltanschauung. It remains, of course, an empirical problem as to whether or not such consistent attitudes exist in reality. Studies of voting behavior often reveal discrepancies between a person's over-all orientation and the position he takes vis a vis specific issues. However, Mannheim is employing the ideal type method and the status of his assertions are suitably

qualified. Therefore, this last comment is not really a criticism of the theoretical statements which have led up to this problem. Still, this essay does supposedly represent an empirical exercise and it is at this point of intersection between theoretical ideal type constructions and empirical investigations that the degree of isomorphism between concept and reality becomes crucial and the door is opened to distortion and reification. Later, we will see that this leads to certain problems concerning whether or not the image Mannheim presents of a 'conservative' style of thought is really consistent or whether it contains certain internal contradictions.

Mannheim outlines the sociological conditions necessary for the rise of conservatism. They are: (1) the status of the social-historical forces must cease to be static; i.e., there must be a dynamic process of oriented change; (2) the dynamics of this process will derive from social differentiation; with the development of classes, a polarization occurs between those which support this dynamic process and others that hinder it; (3) the ideas will become differentiated along these class lines, and; (4) the social differentiation must take on an increasingly political character. Conditions (3) and (4) equal the necessary conditions for the development of antagonistic Weltanschauungen or styles of thought. Mannheim states:

In a word, traditionalism can only become conservatism in a society in which change occurs through the medium of class conflict—in a class society. This is the sociological background of modern conservatism. (17)

Mannheim has now reached the point at which he can undertake a detailed analysis of the works of specific authors (e.g. Møser, Müller, Hegel, etc.) whom he feels are representative of this maturing style of thought, the conservative Weltanschauung. Through such an

analysis, he is able to isolate the core meanings of this style and thereby compare those meanings with the core meanings of modern rationalism which he now calls "...the natural-law mode of thought."⁽¹⁸⁾ Rather than summarize Mannheim's summary, I will just duplicate his point-form conclusions here:

A. The contents of natural-law thought:

- i. The doctrine of the 'state of nature.'
- ii. The doctrine of the social contract.
- iii. The doctrine of popular sovereignty.
- iv. The doctrine of the inalienable Rights of Man (life, liberty, property, the right to resist tyranny, etc.)

B. The methodological characteristics of natural-law thought:

- i. Rationalism as a method of solving problems.
- ii. Deductive procedure from one general principle to the particular case.
- iii. A claim of universal validity for every individual.
- iv. A claim to universal applicability of all laws to all historical and social units.
- v. Atomism and mechanism: collective units (the state, the law, etc.) are constructed out of isolated individuals or factors.
- vi. Static thinking (right reason conceived as a self-sufficient, autonomous sphere unaffected by history.) ⁽¹⁹⁾

The conservatives rejected and criticized this natural-law thought by adopting the six following methodological principles which are presented again as Mannheim presents them, but in an abbreviated form:

- i. The conservatives replaced Reason with concepts such as History, Life, the Nation.
- ii. To the deductive bent of the natural-law school, the conservative opposes the irrationality of reality.
- iii. In answer to the liberal claim of universal validity for all, the conservative poses the problem of individuality in radical fashion.
- iv. The concept of the social organism is developed by the conservatives to counter the liberal-bourgeois belief in the universal applicability of all political and social innovations.
- v. Against the construction of collective units from isolated individuals and factors, the conservative opposes a kind of thought which starts from a concept of a whole which is not the mere sum of its parts.

- vi. One of the most important logical weapons against the natural-law style of thought is the dynamic conception of Reason.... Instead of regarding the world as eternally changing in contrast to a static Reason, he conceived of Reason and of its norms themselves as changing and moving. (20)

These six principles posed by conservative thought supply us with what Mannheim calls "...the only legitimate substitute for a definition of conservative thought."(21)

Mannheim concludes his essay by supplementing this general description of conservative thought with a detailed historical analysis of those authors mentioned above; specific attention is paid to Adam Müller and the influence of Edmund Burke and Justus Möser on his thought.

In the above summary of Mannheim's essay on conservative thought, I have attempted to present not merely a paraphrase of his comments but to isolate the theoretically relevant aspects of the essay so that we may consider it in relation to some of the difficulties encountered in Ideology and Utopia.

To begin with, I would like to concentrate, for a moment, on the six methodological principles of conservative thought that Mannheim believes to be necessary and adequate to the definition of conservatism. Regarding the first principle, it is important to point out that the conservative's use of concepts like History, Life, the Nation, while opposing the rationalistic conception of Reason, is not opposed to Reason in general. That is, the meaning of proposition (i.) presupposes those of propositions (v.) and (vi.). These latter two statements concerning society in its totality and Reason itself as a dynamic process are committed to a conception of and belief in Reason, if only because, as Mannheim points out, conservatism, unlike traditionalism,

is a reflective or conscious reaction to rationalist thought; consequently, it is ordered according to logical principles, principles perhaps derived from a different epistemology than that of the rationalist style. Given a dominant climate of 'positive' philosophy, the conservative conception of Reason is only expressible in what the rationalistic vocabulary can only regard as supra-rational terms. The conservatives did not maintain that knowledge of reality is impossible. What they did argue is that knowledge of the directly observable isolated individuals and factors remains necessarily incomplete and to the extent that it fails to transcend what is directly observable it remains irrational or at least non-rational. It involves a value-judgment to say that natural-law thought is identifiable because of its rationality. Along with the concepts of History, Life, the Nation, etc., one would have to include ones like 'organic solidarity,' 'community,' 'authority,' etc. Indeed, what Nisbet calls the 'unit-ideas' of sociology derive from these same principles (especially (iv.), (v.) and (vi.)) that Mannheim presents as those of conservatism. If what I have said above is correct, the conservative proposition that reality is irrational only has meaning if the rationalistic definition of reality is taken for granted. However, such a limitation is not suggested by Mannheim and proposition (ii) which I believe he has derived from an understanding of the development of Lebensphilosophie contradicts propositions (i), (v) and (vi). What I am suggesting is that Mannheim has confused two (or more) distinct styles of thought with the result being that ^{the} six propositions of conservatism do not, in fact, represent a coherent Weltanschauung. Ultimately, this argument would be forced to suggest that it is perhaps impossible to carry out Mannheim's task of isolating objective styles of thought

because of the difficulties involved in the translation of meanings between small groups of intellectuals or even between individuals. Are the traditions of, say, the left-Hegelians and the 'philosophers of life' really compatible to the extent that they can be subsumed under the general term, 'conservative?' Certainly, Mannheim's perspective is useful and illuminating, however, if problems of over-generalization can be detected, it would appear that violence has been done to the integrity and sophistication of the particular schools of thought which are subsumed by Mannheim's 'scientific' and generalizing analysis.

I shall now follow up this argument from another angle. In his discussion of the affinity between conservative and proletarian thought, Mannheim argues that it is not only that both conservatism and proletarian thought must ultimately rest on an element of irrationality, but, that there is also a connection between their reliance upon dialectics. He states:

There was an inner necessity in Marx's taking over the idea of dialectic from the conservative Hegel. The concept of dialectic—the logical sequence of thesis, antithesis, synthesis—seems, on the surface, extremely rationalist, and indeed it was an attempt to condense the whole process of development into a single logical formula, and to present the whole historical reality as rationally deducible. Yet this type of rationalism is nevertheless completely different from that other type which finds expression in the bourgeois ideal of the natural sciences. The latter seeks to establish universal laws of nature; it is a democratic, non-dialectical type of thought. It is not surprising, therefore, that the latest, democratic and 'scientifically minded' generation of socialists did their best to eliminate the dialectical element from Marxism altogether. (Emphasis added) (22)

Therefore, one is to assume from Mannheim's comments that although Marx accepted Hegel's idea of a dialectic only in a critical fashion, there remains necessarily an affinity with conservatism and proletarian

thought to the extent that the latter remains dialectical. That is to say, Hegel's political conservatism is not accidentally related to his logical method; rather, the logic of dialectics imposes a conservative element on any dialectical philosophy. Both dialectics and conservatism rely upon what Mannheim calls "...a philosophical rationalization of history."⁽²³⁾ In the following quotation, after equating positivism with rationalism, Mannheim illustrates how this speculative element is incompatible with natural-law thought. The dialectical attempt to understand the diversity and uniqueness of the 'historical individual' requires a 'form of rationalization' which must involve the supersession of rationalism itself.⁽²⁴⁾

It (dialectics) therefore involves a form of rationality which it is very difficult to reconcile with the positivism of natural science, to which all ethical evaluations and metaphysics in general are completely alien.⁽²⁵⁾

I would add here that such evaluations and metaphysics are alien to positivist rationality only in an explicit sense. As Habermas has pointed out, the "...real job of early positivism"⁽²⁶⁾ was to justify the sciences' belief in themselves "...by constructing the history of the species as the history of the realization of the positive spirit:"⁽²⁷⁾ Such a desire for justification can be seen in the following statement by Comte:

What is at issue is man's actual influence on the external world, the gradual development of what constitutes without doubt one of the main aspects of social evolution. Indeed, it can even be said that without its development this entire evolution would have been impossible....The political as well as the moral and intellectual development of humanity is absolutely inseparable from its material progress....⁽²⁸⁾

The reliance upon a speculative philosophy of history which is inherent in dialectics is, however, incompatible with what Mannheim calls "One of the most essential characteristics"⁽²⁹⁾ of conservatism; namely, its reliance on the immediate, the actual, the concrete. Therefore, we again meet the problem as to whether the conservative style of thought, as Mannheim depicts it, is really a consistent and coherent Weltanschauung or has he again confused, owing to a drive toward generalization, two incompatible systems of thought? Certainly, dialectics does involve the speculative element but it is debateable as to whether that speculative element is also involved explicitly in conservative thought. Mannheim correctly points out the conservative notion of the concrete. He states:

To experience and to think 'concretely' now comes to mean to desire to restrict the range of one's activities to the immediate surroundings in which one is placed, and to abjure strictly all that may smack of speculation or hypothesis. (30)

Whereas progressive thought looks to the concrete in terms of its potential for change and structural reorganization, conservative thought and its 'reformism' "...consists in the substitution of individual factors (i.e., non-structural factors) by other individual factors ('improvements')"⁽³¹⁾

Looked at in this way, conservative thought seems to take on a much closer affinity with the 'positive' philosophy which supposedly relies only on the concrete, than it does with the speculative dialectics.

At this point, it might be helpful to look at another conception of dialectics which starts from a different theoretical framework. I have chosen Marcuse, not necessarily because I agree with him over and against Mannheim, but, because his analysis of nineteenth century

German social theory in Reason and Revolution is another radical statement regarding the dialectic. The respective interpretations of the political implications of the dialectic are almost diametrically opposed.

Beginning with a distinction between 'positive' and 'negative' philosophy, rather than with Mannheim's distinction between Enlightenment rationality and the romantic counter-movement, Marcuse attempts to show that any mode of thought which is not 'negative' and this negative thought is necessarily speculative in the way that the dialectic is, remains full of conservative bias and implications. He states:

Interpretation of that-which-is in terms of that-which-is-not, confrontation of the given facts with that which they exclude-this has been the concern of philosophy wherever philosophy was more than a matter of ideological justification or mental exercise. The liberating function of negation in philosophical thought depends upon the recognition that the negation is a positive act: that-which-is repels that-which-is-not and, in doing so, repels its own real possibilities. Consequently, to express and define that-which-is on its own terms is to distort and falsify reality. Reality is other and more than that codified in the logic and language of facts. (32)

This is why Sartre, being a dialectician which for Marcuse is a philosopher who recognizes the function of negation, can proclaim that statistics can never be dialectics which is not to say that statistics necessarily falsify reality but it does imply that if statistics are not to falsify reality, they must be subsumed by a perspective or Weltanschauung which analyzes that-which-is in terms of its potential, that-which-is-not. To make it obvious that Marcuse considers dialectics as the only adequate perspective, I will quote him once again:

Reality is the constantly renewed result of the process of existence—the process, conscious or unconscious in which 'that-which-is' becomes 'other than itself';.... Dialectical thought starts with the experience that the world is unfree; that is to say, man and nature exist as 'other than they are.' Any mode of thought which excludes this contradiction from its logic is a faulty logic. (33)

In brief, what Marcuse is arguing is that any Weltanschauung whose logic is not dialectical is one that falsifies reality and further that non-dialectical thought is conservative. In an earlier quotation, Mannheim stated that it was not surprising that the latest generation of socialists had attempted to eliminate the dialectical element from Marxism because of the conservatism of dialectics. According to Marcuse's analysis, this attempt represents a move toward conservatism's reliance upon a non-transcendental or concrete analysis.

Our problem here is not so much to choose between these competing interpretations of dialectics, even if such a choice would be comforting and perhaps put some of us out of our misery. The question that we want to ask is how would Mannheim have reacted to Marcuse's interpretation? On what grounds can he reject it as merely ideological or utopian? Why is it inferior to his own interpretation? To answer this, we must know what status Mannheim claims for his essay and it at this point that we must turn to the theoretical framework of which this essay is 'the test,' Ideology and Utopia.

If one looks to the critical commentary directed toward Ideology and Utopia, he finds that one of the central themes which dominates these discussions is the question of Mannheim's relativism. Indeed, for many philosophical critics, the problem is so great and so inadequately dealt with by Mannheim, in their estimation, that they dismiss Mannheim and the sociology of knowledge on the grounds that it is logically impossible. Such critics want to dismiss at least the claimed epistemological relevance

of the sociology of knowledge. For example, Hans Speier has stated:

The validity of a judgement does not depend upon its genesis. (34)

And, in an early review of Ideology and Utopia by von Schelting published in the American Sociological Review, the author has concluded:

The nonsense first begins when one believes that factual origin and social factors...in any way affect the value of ideas and conceptions thus originated, and especially the theoretic achievements. (35)

One would assume, therefore, that 'relativism' should be a significant problem in the essay on conservative thought.

Certainly, Mannheim was well aware of the difficulties involved in a radical relativism. I will quote him at length since it is most important to be aware of his recognition of the dilemma which faces him:

...the thinker who sets out to relativize thought, that is to subordinate it to supratheoretical factors, himself implicitly posits the autonomous validity of the sphere of thought while he thinks and works out his philosophical system; he thus risks disavowing himself, since a relativization of all thought would equally invalidate his own assertions as well. Thus, this position involves the danger of a theoretical circulus vitiosus. The attempt to relativize any other sphere, such as art, religion, etc., encounters no such obstacle; anyone who is convinced that art, religion, etc., depend on a more comprehensive factor, such as "social life," may say so without having to fear being entangled in logical self-contradiction. In this latter case, no contradiction can arise, because in asserting the dependence relationship in question, one does not have to posit the sphere of art and religion as something valid by virtue of that assertion; but in so far as thought is concerned, it is clear that one cannot relativize it without at the same time being a thinking subject, i.e., without positing the sphere of thought as something valid. (36)

The question of how is objective knowledge possible in the historical and social sciences began to dominate, as we have seen, the

intellectual scene in Germany in the 1920's; undoubtedly, this intellectual debate was partially a reflection of the political situation in Germany after 1918 with its numerous political parties giving voice to a wide range of sectional interests. The works of Marx, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Rickert and the earlier Mannheim had pointed to this interest. The questioning of the possibility of objective knowledge gives evidence to the recognition of a crisis in philosophy, the crisis which Husserl described in the essay "Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man." The development of the debate which ensued after this recognition may be seen, in simplistic terms, as a:

...conflict between the claims of the postulates of the philosophy of history to supra-historical, absolute truth, on the one hand, and to the historicity of knowledge, on the other. (37)

Weber and Dilthey both had addressed themselves to this problem, however, neither of their respective proposed solutions of 'Wertfreiheit' or 'Verstehendes Individuum' provided a foundation sufficient to ground absolute and universally valid knowledge.

Mannheim's sociology of knowledge is grounded in a position of historicism assuming that every historical event belongs to a dynamic totality, a concept derived from the romantic reaction to the Enlightenment and specifically from his understanding of Hegel. Since the individual is influenced by collective group tendencies, the perspective he develops is limited, and to the extent that it is limited, it provides a narrow or inadequate conception of the totality. From this position, Mannheim develops his conception of total and general ideology. Whereas Marx had seen ideology as a product of objective socio-economic processes, Mannheim viewed it in ontological terms characterizing human thought in general as ideological. It is his conception of total

ideology which forces him into the confrontation with his own position in relation to relativism.

When Mannheim speaks of the particular conception of ideology he refers:

...only to specific assertions which may be regarded as concealments, falsifications, or lies without attacking the integrity of the total mental structure of the asserting subject. (38)

On the other hand, when he speaks of the total conception of ideology, he defines partially the problem to which the sociology of knowledge is addressed:

The sociology of knowledge does not criticize thought on the level of the assertions themselves, which may involve deceptions and disguises, but examines them on the structural or noological level, which it views as not necessarily being the same for all men, but rather as allowing the same object to take on different forms and aspects in the course of social development. Since suspicion or falsification is not included in the total conception of ideology, the use of the term "ideology" in the sociology of knowledge has no moral or denunciatory intent. It points rather to a research interest which leads to the raising of the question when and where social structures come to express themselves in the structure of assertions, and in what sense the former concretely determines the latter. (39)

After making this statement, Mannheim tells us that he will avoid using the term 'ideology' as far as possible in his work and will instead speak in terms of the individual's 'perspective' by which he means the:

...subject's whole mode of conceiving things as determined by his historical and social setting. (40)

In Part V of Ideology and Utopia, Mannheim concerns himself directly with the epistemological consequences of his sociology of knowledge. What is at issue is what can the sociology of knowledge

tell us about the validity of an assertion; has one shown anything about the 'truth' or 'falsity' of an assertion by discovering the 'social position' of the individual making the assertion?

Mannheim offers a number of solutions to this problem. First, he has introduced several dynamic criteria of validity of historical judgments. According to these criteria, any theory or perspective is considered invalid if the use of that perspective in a particular situation negates the possibility of the individual adjusting to his particular historical situation. Here, he is again adopting a Hegelian notion in that Hegel had defined evil as the attempt to use old standards of truth to judge the validity of assertions posited in a new and altered set of historical circumstances. However, he has added to this Hegelian notion by asserting in a footnote that:

A perception may be erroneous or inadequate to the situation by being in advance of it, as well as being antiquated. (41)

The difficulty with this solution to the problem is that numerous theories enabling the individual to adjust to the situation may, in fact, arise, hence, to determine whether or not one is adequate or more appropriate than the others would presuppose the existence of the criteria of validity which Mannheim wishes to replace. This section of his work has been heavily criticized by a number of German dialectical thinkers for it would appear that Mannheim's position as outlined above will lead necessarily to a position of political and social neutrality since it would appear to be logically possible for 'fascism' to be 'true' or 'valid' if it provides the individual with a realistic or pragmatic orientation toward life in a

fascist society. These thinkers understand from their reading of Mannheim that he takes the existing reality for granted as a status quo to which people must conform. It is perhaps the obscurities and ambiguities which exist in relation to this dynamic or pragmatic set of criteria which forced Mannheim to offer other criteria of validity. It will be necessary to see if they release him from the position of political and social neutrality.

The distinction which he makes between ideological perspectives and utopian thought is not sufficient since it is impossible to distinguish, at any given time, without independent criteria of validity, between utopian thought and ideological thought. As Merton states:

It not only involves ex post facto criterion of validity but also precludes the possibility of valid judgments on contemporary ideas. (42)

Mannheim's attempt to escape the position of radical relativism which has received the greatest amount of critical attention and which is of most interest to us is his 'relationism.' There are three possible answers to the problem of the relationship of the genesis of an assertion to its validity. The first answer, which Mannheim rejects, is that the validity of an assertion is denied completely when its structural relationship to a given social situation has been demonstrated. This extreme position implies that no assertions can be valid. The second possible answer, and Mannheim rejects this one as well, is that the imputations which the sociology of knowledge establishes between the assertion and the asserting subject have no implications with regard to the 'truth' value of the statement. This position argues that the way in which a proposition originates does not affect its validity. This is the dominant position of North

American sociologists of knowledge and also represents a logical philosophical position characteristic of much European philosophy.

The third position which Mannheim regards as a middle position between these two extremes is the 'relational' position. He argues that knowledge of the social position of the assertor implies a probability that the validity of the assertion in question is at least problematic and that the assertion represents only a partial view.

The analyses characteristic of the sociology of knowledge are, in this sense, by no means irrelevant for the determination of the truth of a statement; but these analyses, on the other hand, do not themselves fully reveal the truth because the mere delimitation of the perspectives is by no means a substitute for the immediate and direct discussion between the points of view or for the direct examination of the facts. The function of the findings of the sociology of knowledge lies somewhere between irrelevance to the establishment of truth on the one hand, and entire adequacy for determining truth on the other. (43)

According to Mannheim, the validity of propositions is not to be found through sociological analysis alone, but rather, through a direct observation of the object. The 'particularizing function' that the sociology of knowledge can perform is to uncover the limits in which generalized propositions are valid. Merton has pointed out that this particularizing function is a new term for an old methodological precept that any assertion which is true under given conditions is not necessarily universally true without limits and conditions. This precept is most commonly known as the 'fallacy of unwarranted extrapolation.'

Mannheim expands this solution to the problem of relativism by adopting a position reminiscent of Hegel and Marx. In his theory of a total synthesis of the diverse particularistic interpretations of

the totality, he concludes that the historical process will reveal the nature of man and that the sociology of knowledge, through its particularizing research, is capable of ascertaining a wider and wider comprehension of the totality, "...a dynamic intellectual mediation."⁽⁴⁴⁾ Herein lies one of the greatest inconsistencies in his theory for after having started from an historicist perspective, he arrives, as did Hegel and Marx, at a conception of a static, ahistorical, absolute, socially autonomous nature of man and conception of truth even if such knowledge will only be available in the future. Furthermore, he seems to have gone back, to some degree, on the modest position in relation to the epistemological implications of the sociology of knowledge implied in the above quotation. This illustration points out the difficulty that Mannheim had in defining his own relationship to philosophy. As Warren Rempel states:

When he appropriated to the sociologist the tasks of philosophy and ethics and theology, he consequently eliminated the basic distinction between a descriptive and a normative understanding of man. However, when in his practical pursuit of policy and strategy he constantly confronted the problem of directionality, of "where man ought to go," he could not avoid the problem of the normative science of man. As a consequence, he assumed that the normative was but one aspect of sociological insight, and that the real theoretical issues were hidden behind his sociological analysis. (45)

Mannheim's 'relationism' is fundamental to his conception of a dynamic intellectual mediation and is the basis on which he argues for the validity of the social thought in the 'classless position' of the 'socially unattached intellectual.' Therefore, before going on to a discussion of the conservative thought essay as an example of such a 'wider comprehension of the totality,' we must look

critically at this relationism as an attempt to circumvent relativism.

The relationist position, in stressing the fact that any view is necessarily partial seems to resemble somewhat the Weberian position concerning the artificiality of concepts (i.e., lack of isomorphism between sociological concepts and social reality). We remember that in his criticisms of 'emanationist' philosophies, Weber remained true to Kantian epistemology in that he argued that we can never arrive at knowledge which is an accurate 'copy' of reality. The 'generalizing' method necessarily reduces qualitative differences to differences in quantity; as the concepts we employ gain in general validity, they become less capable of dealing with the singular and unique characteristics of the referants to which those concepts apply. Similarly, the 'individualizing' method cannot do without concepts although its concepts may be richer in unique content than those of the generalizing method. The problem, then, for Weber, lay in the relationship between the concept and the actual. As shown above, both methods depart from the actual to serve the needs of conceptualization on which all science depends. For Weber, the question was not which method was best or more valid, but rather, which one is more appropriate given one's objectives. That is, the difference between the 'natural' and the 'cultural' sciences does not depend upon the objective nature of the reality that the sciences deal with nor on the nature of the methods employed; rather, the distinction rests ultimately, for Weber, on the ground of the subjective interest of the scientist. There is no definitive procedure for science according to him; this equals an explicit rejection of Comte's positivism. Every science has its own premises and there can be as

many sciences as there are perspectival approaches to a particular problem. Since it is impossible for us to know all the facts, the standard of adequacy of all knowledge must remain relative to the scientific purposes at hand; the status of sociology, as an independent science, depends upon the specific problems (and its way of formulating those problems) that it seeks to solve. Since our immediate experience of reality is diffuse and not capable of precise formulation, and it is only through conceptualization that such precision and communicability can be gained, we must rely on some principle in terms of which the selection and systematization can and is made—that principle is, for Weber, 'relevance to value,' Wertbeziehung. Weber's notion of value-relevance combined with that of the plurality of possible value-systems introduces into his methodology an implicit relativism raising again the problem of the meaning of the term objectivity in social science. As we have seen, in the previous section, Weber's famous and influential distinction between value-relevant and value-laden explanations provides a foundation for a conception of objectivity which granted only a fictional and perspectivistic status to the objective knowledge of social reality. Starting from this basic Weberian position which recognizes the plurality of possible conceptual schemes and approaches to social reality, Mannheim formulated his notion of a dynamic intellectual mediation. The subjective interest of the sociologist of knowledge lies in his desire to systematize "...the doubt which is to be found in social life as a vague insecurity and uncertainty,"⁽⁴⁶⁾ an uncertainty which is the psychological product of having to cope with conflicting interpretations of reality. The sociologist of knowledge, therefore, is not committed to any single

perspective but to the 'unmasking' of the various limited and limiting perspectives. Mannheim states:

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 the study of ideology, which tries to free from value-judgements, is to understand the narrowness of each individual point of view and the interplay between these distinctive attitudes in the total social process. (47)

It is this understanding which is the goal sought after by the sociologist of knowledge. Such understanding remains relative to the social situation in which it is achieved but Mannheim is now forced to imply that the knowledge gained through this synthesis of the diverse utopian and ideological interpretations of reality is somehow 'less relative' or 'more adequate' than any one of the competing perspectives considered individually. The following three quotations support this analysis of Mannheim:

Consequently, our knowledge of "reality", as it assimilates more and more of these divergent perspectives, will become more comprehensive. (48)

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. (49)

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. (emphasis added) (50)

Unfortunately, however, the relationist solution to relativism and the subsequent notion of a synthesis is not logically sound. Too many questions remain for Mannheim does not indicate how this total synthesis is to be achieved; for instance, he does not approach the problem of translation of the terms of one perspective, which we

must remember is a reflection of an entire Weltanschauung, into those of another.. Here, consideration of certain problems with which Weber was concerned and more recently Peter Winch would be valuable but time and space does not allow such a discussion. Also, relationism must claim absolute validity for the proposition that all thought is only relatively valid. Relationism asserts the view that everything given can be grasped only in perspectives; but this proposition itself is supposed to be valid absolutely, not just for one perspective. In each proposition it advances, relationism is thus obliged to contradict its own thesis. Even if a proposition claims merely relative validity, it claims that relative validity absolutely; even if the object it claims is limited, the claim itself is absolute. Mannheim is correct when he says that it is possible to limit the status of one's propositions but such limitation remains artificial in the sense that it requires a fresh proposition which again raises a claim to absolute validity and so on ad infinitum. As Ernst Grünwald has stated:

This argument, it must be admitted, is in contradiction to any logic known so far; for such an argument relationism must indeed create a new, "dynamic" concept of truth. (51)

While Grünwald's criticism, in the above quotation, is correct logically, it is somewhat unfair in that it was just such a 'dynamic' concept of truth which Mannheim hoped to lay the foundation for with his sociology of knowledge. It will be remembered that the sixth methodological principle which Mannheim uncovered in relation to the conservative style of thought was precisely such a metaphysically based 'dynamic conception of reason.' And Mannheim knows that the logical position from which Grünwald's criticism is derived is also

metaphysically based. Here, we see that Mannheim has adopted as valid, or at least as partially valid, one of the conservative principles. Such a conception of Reason was rediscovered by Hegel and represents one of the truths which Mannheim says needs to be rediscovered anew by every generation. As Hegel writes:

...because the universal mind at work in the world has had the patience to go through these forms in the long stretch of time's extent, and to take upon itself the prodigious labor of the world's history, where it bodied forth in each form the entire content of itself, as each is capable of presenting it; and because nothing less could that all pervading mind ever manage to become conscious of what itself is-for that reason, the individual mind, in the nature of the case, cannot expect by less toil to grasp what its own substance contains. (52)

The same insight is expressed simply and poetically by Goethe:

What from your fathers you receive as heir
Earn, in order to possess it. (53)

This adoption, on Mannheim's part, of a conservative principle indicates what is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the "Conservative Thought" essay which is revealed by the over-all 'tone' of the essay. If one looks closely at the six conservative methodological principles and the structure of Mannheim's thought (as expressed in both the essay and Ideology and Utopia), it becomes clear that his thought is compatible with the conservative principles if they are only slightly modified. Here, then, is the rationalist, progressive Mannheim consciously adopting conservative premises. Besides his dynamic conception of Reason, his thought is dialectical and anti-positivistic. Considering himself to be a progressive, he is able to state concerning progressive thought that it:

...feeds on its consciousness of the possible.
It transcends the given immediate present, by
seizing on the possibilities for systematic change
which it offers. It fights the concrete, not because

it wants to replace it merely by another form of the concrete but because it wants to produce another systematic starting-point for further development. (54)

Therefore, it now seems that dialectical thought can be progressive as well as conservative. Another example of his acceptance of conservative methodological principles is his continuous reliance on the concept of 'totality.' For instance, in the following quotation from the essay "American Sociology," he criticizes that sociological style for treating social phenomena in isolation.

Society at a given stage of its evolution is no mere agglomeration of exactly observable individual data, of sparse events and relationships all of which, added together, in some way produce the picture of the whole, but a combination of interdependent phenomena, and even more: a structural whole or Gestalt (a term used here in a general, not merely psychological, sense). If we divide this whole into its parts, and focus attention on the individual functioning of each part, then we shall necessarily overlook a very important aspect of the functioning of the parts, namely, their relation to the whole to which they belong. An individual event or a social phenomenon is adequately described only if it be characterized as a manifestation of the life and functioning of society as a whole. (55)

It is possible to find similar statements supporting, at least partially, the other conservative principles.

While this might seem surprising at first, if we remember the goal of the sociology of knowledge as being to arrive at a more and more comprehensive perspective, it becomes obvious that Mannheim's analysis of conservative thought is not solely an exercise in 'unmasking' but rather is an attempt to synthesize the valid elements of that style with those of other styles to which he is already predisposed such as the Marxist and parts of the natural-law style of thought. The essay on conservative thought represents Mannheim's

attempt to achieve the sought-after 'dynamic intellectual mediation.'

I have attempted to show earlier in the paper that the methods that Mannheim explicitly uses to escape the implications of a radical relativism do not, in fact, release him from the Cretan paradox. Especially, the proposed solution of relationism is open to extensive criticisms which have been developed more fully elsewhere and by other critics. The failure, then, of relationism as being a valid answer to the problem of relativism when that solution is considered solely with relation to the criteria that Mannheim explicitly suggests, becomes fundamental for as we have seen it is his relationism which forms the foundation for his notion of an intellectual mediation and his position concerning the thought of the unattached intellectual.

What this entire argument amounts to suggests that according to the criteria of validity which Mannheim states explicitly as being those to which he is committed, he is incapable of persuading us that his particular interpretation of conservative thought is more than just that, a particular interpretation. That is, we have no objective grounds on which to consider his interpretation as 'more valid' than, say, Marcuse's. Certainly, we may choose to prefer his over Marcuse's but the grounds on which such a preference must be made remain our sympathies with certain values held in common by Mannheim and ourselves. According to these explicit criteria, he cannot guarantee that this supposed synthesis is any more than a return to a dogmatism like that of the Church which, according to Mannheim, we surpassed with the 'scientific' development of the epistemological, psychological, and sociological modes of thought. It is interesting that Mannheim, himself, accurately analyzes such dogmatism as being a result of having to present a relatively unified and coherent picture of the world, which

seems to be the 'basic intention' of the sociology of knowledge as proposed by him.

Despite the above criticism, it would be naive to assume that Mannheim's interpretation of conservative thought can be discarded as 'invalid' because it fails to be justified on the grounds of his explicitly-stated criteria of validity. Such a conclusion would do violence to the sophistication and wisdom of one whom I personally admire. If one reads between the lines of Mannheim's work, he finds that Mannheim was not the extreme relativist that he has been characterized as. Rempel's analysis shows that a basic framework of axiological and metaphysical assumptions underlie both his theoretical orientation as presented in Ideology and Utopia and his substantive analysis of conservative thought. Similarly, Kurt Wolff has outlined certain metaphysical, methodological, and volitional premises which illuminate and guide his thought. A complete description of all these premises will not be presented here. The reader is directed to the two studies mentioned.

What is important to recognize is that while much of Mannheim's argument leans heavily on pragmatic theses (cognition processes as part of the evolutionary struggle; the adjustment character of value; thought as an instrument of cognition; probabilism or perspectival validity), there is evidence to support the view that he did attempt to go beyond contextualism and pragmatism. In one of his later works, he himself warns against a radical pragmatism:

...those who think, as the pragmatists do, that they have already found an answer to the questions they raised, will equally remain blind to the real magnitude of the problem of valuations. (57)

And, he also consciously attempted to avoid the dangers of relativistic

historicism. Rempel states:

Under relativism, Mannheim contends, moral obligation cannot exist, whereas in his relational theory of value there is moral obligation....(58)

Mannheim realized that his solutions to the problem of relativism were not satisfactory. He states:

Presentness in the sphere of moral, religious, and cultural experience means continual return to central experiences which transfuse their spirit into new situations. Thus it means continual rebirth, a continual re-valuation and reinterpretation of the same substance. (59)

He came to realize that his notion of a valuational 'fit' (implicit in the notion of the pragmatic dynamic criteria of validity) required a notion of historical purpose and that a criterion of adequacy requires a set of given ends toward which behavior is oriented. In short, he attempted to arrive at a trans-historical standard of value. Mannheim had originally sought for an escape from his relativism from within the historical process. His attempts, as related above, were not successful. In a later work, Diagnosis of Our Time, written after his exodus from Germany in 1933, he attempted to achieve a new understanding of the factual and valuational content of knowledge. He developed the idea of 'paradigmatic experience.'

Rempel states:

With this theme came a more intensive voluntaristic emphasis, for the aberration of fascism could only be defeated by active will organized around an exemplary vision of life. One needed some kind of extra-historical standard of value to resist and counteract the aberrant trends. (60)

Of course, this does not mean that one can ignore the processes of history but it did mean that one cannot operate solely on a pragmatic view, as he seems to have suggested earlier; rather, ultimate value-

claims could not be judged entirely by reference to historical actualities.

In his discussion of paradigmatic experiences, Mannheim made a claim for their normative character because they gave directionality to the rest of life. Normative values provide a future orientation while still maintaining an adaptability to change. Mannheim does not explicitly define what he means by the word, 'norm,' however, he does mention two criteria by which one may judge the validity of changes in morality. The two criteria are "...the range of people's foresight,"⁽⁶¹⁾ and "...the range of their sense of responsibility."⁽⁶²⁾

What he seems to be referring to here is the anticipation of consequences, as well as the accountability of persons for a broad range of moral behaviour. Implicitly, then, valuational norms have reference to the future, and to the question of what ought to be. ⁽⁶³⁾

It seems that Mannheim attempted to respond to those criticisms of the dialecticians who had criticized his earlier statements which seemed to imply only a pragmatic criterion of truth. No longer was he willing to accept the existing reality as the context of validation. Yet, his analysis does not revert to mere speculation for he maintained an historical position in the sense that his theories were grounded in the capabilities of a given society. With the alteration of Mannheim's views in this way, it is no longer impossible for the sociologist of knowledge to articulate a critique of society in the dialectician's meaning of that term.

The metaphysical presuppositions which have been outlined above, specifically, the ones relating to a future-orientation, were not articulated explicitly by Mannheim. As Rempel states:

The results of this analysis of Mannheim's system show that he was not successful in eliminating the metaphysical issues. He only pushed them into the background and eventually introduced them under another guise. (64)

In the last section of this essay, I have purposefully strayed from the initial discussion of Ideology and Utopia and the essay, "Conservative Thought" in order to illustrate that Mannheim did alter his original theoretical position considerably. However, as far as I can tell, he does not, in his later writings, depart radically from his early analysis of conservative thought. This analysis has attempted to show that certain ambiguities which clouded Mannheim's earlier theoretical statements resulted in a somewhat confused conception of the methodological and 'scientific' status of his substantive works. With the benefit of hindsight, Mannheim, himself, was able to confront some of the criticisms which were made of his work. In a sense, he was able to 'unmask' himself and uncover some of the existential determinants of his own thought. Certainly, this essay benefits from its temporal distance from the statements with which it has been concerned. However, it is hoped that such a mode of analysis, although its interpretation of Mannheim's thought must remain perspectival, has not resulted in a serious misinterpretation of his statements.

If I may be allowed to go on just a little longer, I would like to try and draw out what I feel to be one of the significant implications of this paper for the discipline of sociology as a whole.

Mannheim's failure to eliminate and, in many cases, recognize the metaphysical presuppositions of his theoretical framework confirms the notion that sociologists must become self-conscious of the assumptions

which pervade their thought. Recent efforts to develop a sociology of knowledge, in both America and England, have tended to exclude discussion of the metaphysical and epistemological issues involved in such an attempt. In America, the conception of sociology as a positive and empirical science has led to the rejection of the philosophical questions which plagued Mannheim. These efforts have led to a generally over-simplified notion of Mannheim's relativism according to which the problem has been perceived as a pseudo-philosophical one which has no place in a sociological discussion. Gerard De Gré in an article entitled "The Sociology of Knowledge and the Problem of Truth," argues for a distinction between the sociology of knowledge and the sociological theory of knowledge. In his view, the sociology of knowledge is a positive science capable of 'objective' findings whereas the sociological theory of knowledge is:

...an epistemological position which attempts to infer from the findings of gnosiso-sociology certain hypotheses concerning the relationship between propositions and that which the propositions are about. (65)

However, the relationship between the methods of sociological research and their epistemological consequences is far more complex than De Gré implies. De Gré must attempt to uncover the metaphysical presuppositions underlying the use of the methods of 'gnosiso-sociology' and draw out the implications they have for the sociology of knowledge and epistemology.

In the conclusion of his article, "The Sociology of Knowledge and Sociological Theory," Wolff draws out the implications of the North American sociologist's emphasis upon empirical and positivistic social science. The accepted definitions of the term, 'sociological theory,' are more specific about the structures of the theory than about

its content:

This suggests that these conceptions of "theory" do not regard the subject matter of sociology, human beings, of sufficient theoretical dignity to incorporate it into a definition of "sociological theory." (66)

Part of the reason why this has been the case is the failure of sociologists to reflect upon, and in some cases even to recognize the existence of, the metaphysical presuppositions which underlie their own theoretical frameworks. To define sociological theory in terms of its content requires a confrontation with numerous complex philosophical problems related to the nature of man and society. Contemporary sociologists of knowledge have not attempted to meet this responsibility. At this time, it is most urgent, if the sociology of knowledge is to develop into a socially relevant field of endeavour, that its practitioners destroy the false segregation of disciplines (which is not the same as destroying disciplinary distinctions) and engage themselves in a dialogue with philosophy, history, ethics, aesthetics, literature, etc., a dialogue through which a degree of integrity might be achieved.

Footnotes to Part III-section 1.:

1. Adolph Lowe, "Editorial Note," in Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology, auth. Karl Mannheim, London, 1953, p. v.
2. Karl Mannheim, "Conservative Thought," in Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology, London, 1953, p. 75.
3. Ibid., p. 76.
4. Ibid., p. 77.
5. Ibid., p. 78.
6. Ibid., p. 78.
7. Ibid., p. 80.
8. Ibid., pp. 81-82.
9. Ibid., p. 84.
10. Ibid., p. 86.
11. Ibid., p. 86.
12. Ibid., p. 87.
13. Ibid., p. 88.
14. Ibid., p. 92.
15. Ibid., p. 92.
16. Ibid., p. 97.
17. Ibid., p. 101.
18. Ibid., p. 117.
19. Ibid., p. 117.
20. Ibid., pp. 117-118.
21. Ibid., p. 119.
22. Ibid., pp. 92-93.
23. Ibid., p. 93.
24. Ibid., p. 93.

25. Ibid., p. 93.
26. Jürgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, London, 1972, p. 72.
27. Ibid., p. 72.
28. August Comte, quoted by Habermas, op. cit., p. 72.
29. Mannheim, "Conservative Thought," op. cit., p. 102.
30. Ibid., p. 103.
31. Ibid., p. 103.
32. Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution; Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory, Boston, 1960, p. x.
33. Ibid., pp. viii-ix.
34. Hans Speier, quoted by C. W. Mills in "Methodological Consequences of the Sociology of Knowledge," in Power, Politics, and People: the Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills, New York, 1963, p. 453.
35. Alexander von Schelting, quoted by Mills, Ibid., p. 453.
36. Karl Mannheim, Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge, London, 1964, pp. 137-138.
37. Marlis Kruger, "Sociology of Knowledge and Social Theory," in Berkeley Journal of Sociology, 1969, p. 154.
38. Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge, New York, 1936, p. 266.
39. Ibid., p. 266.
40. Ibid., p. 266.
41. Karl Mannheim, quoted by Robert Merton in Social Theory and Social Structure, New York, 1957, p. 503.
42. Robert Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, New York, 1957, p. 504.
43. Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, op. cit., p. 285.
44. Ibid., p. 189.
45. F. Warren Rempel, The Role of Value in Karl Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge, The Hague, 1965, pp. 111-112.
46. Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, op. cit., p. 50.
47. Ibid., p. 81.
48. Ibid., p. 103.

49. Ibid., p. 105.
50. Ibid., p. 105.
51. Ernst Grünwald, "The Sociology of Knowledge and Epistemology," in The Sociology of Knowledge: A Reader, eds. James E. Curtis and John W. Petras, London, 1970, p. 239.
52. G.W.F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. J. B. Baillie, London, 1949, pp. 90-91.
53. Goethe, Faust, Part I, lines 682f.
54. Mannheim, "Conservative Thought," op. cit., p. 103.
55. Karl Mannheim, "American Sociology," in Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology, op. cit., p. 188.
56. Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, op. cit., pp. 10-11.
57. Mannheim, quoted by Rempel, op. cit., p. 98.
58. Rempel, op. cit., p. 98.
59. Mannheim, quoted by Rempel, op. cit., p. 101.
60. Rempel, op. cit., p. 104.
61. Mannheim, quoted by Rempel, op. cit., p. 105.
62. Mannheim, quoted by Rempel, op. cit., p. 105.
63. Rempel, op. cit., p. 105.
64. Ibid., p. 114.
65. Gerard De Gré, "The Sociology of Knowledge and the Problem of Truth," in Curtis and Petras, op. cit., p. 666.
66. Kurt Wolff, "The Sociology of Knowledge and Sociological Theory," in Symposium on Sociological Theory, ed. Llewellyn Gross, New York, 1959, p. 591.

2. Karl Mannheim's 'Sociology of the Mind.'

All sociologies of knowledge share as a common element the presupposition that human thought cannot be fully understood unless it is interpreted in the light of the concrete social situations in which it arises. The sociology of knowledge presupposes a conception of the connectedness of knowledge and social being. Consequently, as Ernst Grünwald pointed out many years ago, it is incumbent on any sociologist of knowledge to make explicit:

...the metaphysics of cognition which would be the necessary precondition for making the expression of 'connectedness of cognition with being' meaningful.... (1)

Unfortunately, this task has received little attention. In 1939, C. Wright Mills reiterated Grünwald's demand that the sociology of knowledge propose a 'theory of mind' articulating the assumptions that must be made concerning the social factors intrinsic to mentality if the proposition of the connectedness of cognition to being is to be employed as a scheme of interpretation. It is not enough, says Mills, to deal with the problems of the sociology of knowledge solely on a historical level. In order to give meaning to the various hypotheses of the sociology of knowledge, it is necessary to make explicit what it means to say that ideas 'reflect,' are 'moulded by,' are 'determined by,' etc. societal factors. As Mills states:

Granted that changes in culture influence trends in intellectual work and belief we must ask how such influences are exerted. That is a question to be answered by a social psychology, a psychology which studies the impact of social structures and objects, of class biases, and technological changes upon the mind of an organism. (2)

In this essay, it will be our purpose to analyze the extent to which Karl Mannheim was able to articulate the dynamics of the relationship between social existence and social consciousness. Although his Ideology and Utopia is the best known work in the sociology of knowledge available in English and, as such, has been most influential in shaping that particular sub-discipline and in shaping the conceptions of it held by sociologists, it is a serious mistake to regard Ideology and Utopia as any kind of final statement considered by Mannheim as sufficient or comprehensive. Mannheim, himself, was aware of many of the inadequacies of this early analysis and his thought developed in new directions after its publication. Even prior to his flight from Germany in the face of the Nazi rise to power, he had altered significantly his approach to the sociology of knowledge. As Ernest Manheim has said, the volume Essays on the Sociology of Culture composed of three essays representing a homogeneous piece of sociological analysis may be regarded as a sequel to Ideology and Utopia. Ideology and Utopia was published in the original German in 1929 and despite the fact that the above essays did not appear until 1956, they were written in the early 1930's.

Whereas Ideology and Utopia may be regarded as an attempt to confront the problem of explanatory adequacy from within the historical process as is evident in his early contextualism and pragmatism, he later attempted to develop a trans-historical set of criteria for the evaluation of historical statements. As noted in the previous chapter, the rise of totalitarianism compelled him to discard much of his Hegelian and Marxian upbringing for it seemed to him that the then dominant historical trend of 'democratization' was being usurped by the aberration of

fascism and that such a development could not rightly be conceptualized as a legitimate component of an intelligibly dynamic and comprehensive historical process in Hegelian terms. As Keskemeti writes, in order to reach such a realization:

...it was no longer sufficient to seek inspiration and guidance within the historical process as such. One needed extra-historical principles to resist and correct the aberrant forces which history brought to the fore. (3)

As we shall see, Mannheim's solution to the above problems was grounded in a shift from the social realism informing Ideology and Utopia toward a voluntarism which demands a social nominalism as its presuppositional basis.

This shift in Mannheim's sociological perspective is reflected in his changing conceptualization of structure. During his German academic career, the concept of structure dominated his thought. Keskemeti has distilled out of Mannheim's early works three characteristics of structure. First, structure is considered, by Mannheim, as the most comprehensive feature of reality. This leads him to adopt a holistic framework of analysis in which the comprehension of any component part of society is achieved only in terms of the comprehensive structure of the whole. Second, the structure of social reality is dynamic in which the polarity of antagonistic forces results in the continuous alteration of social relationships. Third, and most importantly for our purposes, was Mannheim's conception of structure as an intelligible principle. The dynamism of the second characteristic was not the result of blind accidental changes but rather was goal directed. Structure, according to Mannheim, had a discoverable meaning; for past events, such meaning was transparent, however,

the task that Mannheim aspired to was to discover the structural meaning of one's own period. With such knowledge, the individual could attune himself to the creative process which was inherent in the structure. Mannheim writes in Ideology and Utopia:

Every theory which arises out of a class position and is based not on unstable masses but on organized historical groups must of necessity have a long-range view. Consequently, it requires a thoroughly rationalized view of history on the basis of which it will be possible at any moment to ask ourselves where we are now and at what stage of development does our movement find itself. (4)

It is the purpose of Mannheim's analysis and critique of the fascist doctrine to demonstrate that what distinguishes it from the conservative, liberal, and socialist styles of thought is its ahistorical aspect. Characteristically maintained by social classes which have already risen in the social scale, fascism conceives of history in terms of unrelated and isolated events; "The idea of a 'process' and of the structural intelligibility of history becomes a mere myth." (5)

Similarly, Mannheim rejects the historicism of Dilthey since its conceptualization of the historical process as a series of concrete and individual historical acts prevents the formulation of concepts designed to reveal the nature of historical structures.

Instead, Mannheim seeks a 'transcendental' interpretation of ideological frames of reference. Such a transcendental interpretation proceeds by the indirect analysis of the social conditions in which an individual or a group comes to express particular ideas. Unlike the immanent interpretation of ideas relying solely upon what is actually said by the individual, a transcendental interpretation regards the ideas expressed by the subject as functions of his mode of 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. (6)

Both the 'particular' and 'total' conceptions of ideology seek such transcendental interpretations. What distinguishes these two conceptions of ideology is that the former focuses on the actual content of the ideas and representations of an individual or a group as a more or less conscious falsification of reality whereas the latter focuses on the "...characteristics and composition of the total structure of the mind"⁽⁷⁾ as manifestations of the collective situation of the concrete historico-social group.

Mannheim points out that the particular conception of ideology makes its analysis purely on the psychological level calling into question only particular parts of the individual's assertions believing that communication based upon common criteria of objective validity can lead to eventual eradication of error. The total conception of ideology, on the other hand, refers not to isolated cases of thought-content, but, to "...fundamentally divergent thought-systems and to widely differing modes of experience and interpretation."⁽⁸⁾ Consequently, the analysis characteristic of the total conception of ideology is not situated at the level of psychological categories, but rather, concentrating on the form of thought (as opposed to the content of thought) its level of analysis is noological. The particular conception of ideology operates with a psychology of interests whereas the total conception employs 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. (9)

Because the particular conception of ideology never departs from the psychological level, the focus of such analyses is always the individual.

In Ideology and Utopia, Mannheim rejects this individual focus as the possible starting point for the sociology of knowledge. He states:

The sociology of knowledge does not criticize thought on the level of the assertions themselves... but examines them on the structural or noological level,....(10)

The value of the structural approach lies in its ability to conceptualize the various mental structures characterizing different social groups, distinct spatially and temporally, as representative of particular historical stages reflected in the development of differing styles of thought. The particular conception of ideology, on the other hand, is unable to conceptually account for the historicity of thought. Mannheim states:

If we confined 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. (11)

The total conception of ideology allows the study of the history of ideas to discover the structural role, significance, and meaning of each component element; that is, the structural approach is capable of uncovering the meaning that particular thought-systems possess within the "...totality of the historical complex."⁽¹²⁾ All of the particular interpretations of reality as they are expressed within different styles of thought approach reality from a different point of view and for Mannheim:

...the suspicion grows that the historical process is something more inclusive than all the existing individual standpoints....(13)

It is evident, then, that the sociology of knowledge advocated by Mannheim in Ideology and Utopia is based primarily on an ontological realism assigning ultimate reality to groups or collective situations. As Ernest Manheim states:

The realist seeks to construe the behavior of individuals from the group or a complex situation which he assumes as given. (14)

Mannheim's realism is integrally linked with his concept of structure as it is articulated in Ideology and Utopia. It is this realism that accounts for his methodological presupposition that structural analysis moves from an analysis of the totality to an analysis of its parts; i.e., the comprehension of the component parts of society is conceived in terms of the comprehensive structure of the whole. His realism in both its ontological and methodological aspects is revealed in the following quotation:

Just as modern psychology shows that the whole (Gestalt) is prior to the parts and that our first understanding of the parts comes through the whole, so it is with historical understanding. Here, too, we have the sense of historical time as a meaningful totality which orders events "prior" to the parts, and through this totality we first truly understand the total course of events and our place in it. (15)

For Mannheim, in Ideology and Utopia, the sociology of knowledge is to serve the cause of humanity by revealing to the individual that he is "...bound into a system of established social relationships which to a large extent hamper his will."⁽¹⁶⁾ Only after such a realization can mankind be expected to accept full responsibility for its actions since prior to such a realization, choice does not really lie with the individual; it lies in the hidden motives determined by the nature of his relationship with his social environment. Furthermore, it is only upon the basis of such a realization that the

individual can make his choices within the realm of the possible structural alternatives.

All that we have said so far in this book is meant to help the individual to disclose these hidden motives and to reveal the implications of his choice. (17)

As we have already suggested, Mannheim discards much of the 'realistic' framework of analysis that one encounters in reading Ideology and Utopia. Such a shift in Mannheim's orientation has been touched on briefly by various commentators including the editor of Essays on the Sociology of Culture, Ernest Manheim. It is enlightening to see the way in which Manheim attempts to characterize the shift of Mannheim's perspective; he speaks of an "...increasing orientation towards social nominalism...."(18) The early philosophical distinction between social realism and social nominalism represents a conceptual dichotomy and not a continuum. We will not be attempting to argue that Mannheim's development amounts to a complete betrayal of one philosophical camp in favour of another. Rather, Manheim's characterization of Mannheim's development as an "...increasing orientation toward nominalism" reveals the fact that the latter's work cannot be adequately comprehended in the terms of the ancient dichotomy. The so-called 'nominalism' exhibited by Mannheim in the essay, "Towards the Sociology of the Mind: an Introduction," is not clear-cut or radical and in numerous passages, Mannheim reveals the uneasiness he felt trying to work within the dichotomy, realism versus nominalism. For example, to avoid an overly simplistic interpretation of his comments, he directs his readers to Bart Landheer in order that the differences between the latter's radical nominalism and his own perspective will become clear. (19)

Although it would make the analysis of Mannheim's development far more straight-forward if his later works could be characterized as radically nominalist, such an interpretation would reduce Mannheim's later works to a psychological reductionism (which is clearly not the case) and would consequently inhibit the analysis of what is truly sociological in those works. Certainly, the realization that the dichotomy of nominalism versus realism is not adequate to the comprehension of sociological constructs is not new. Discussions of Durkheim's comments on 'collective representations' in Sociology and Philosophy, Mead's discussion of the formation of 'mind' in Mind, Self, and Society and Parsons' attempt to establish the connection between the personality system and the social and cultural systems in The Social System reveal the limitations imposed upon us by an inadequate conceptual dichotomy. Indeed, it might not be going too far to suggest that the classical statements within the sociological tradition have all tended to undermine this philosophical polarity. What, then, is the nature of the shift in Mannheim's perspective?

It will be remembered that one of the defining characteristics of structure in Ideology and Utopia was its inherent intelligibility on the historical-structural level. Such intelligibility was predicated on the goal-directedness of the historical process itself. As we saw, what distinguished the particular from the total conception of ideology was the latter's formalized functional analysis which was to be carried out without any reference to individual motivations, instead confining itself solely to the objective description of the structural differences in particular socio-historical situations. Upon such differences, it was to be presupposed that a correspondence

between the particularity of that socio-historical situation and a "...given perspective, point of view, or apperception mass"⁽²⁰⁾ exists. The analysis to be carried on within the sociology of knowledge was to be the 'generalized' total conception of ideology (as opposed to the 'specific') and as such those analyses were to be carried on at the structural or noological level in contradistinction to the analyses characteristic of the particular conception of ideology which were confined to the psychological level.

Only a few years later, in Essays on the Sociology of Culture Mannheim was to write of:

...a sociology of mind which should eventually provide the wider frame of reference for our earlier inquiries in the sociology of knowledge. It was from these earlier studies, including Ideology and Utopia, that the thesis of the existential involvement of knowledge emerged, that is the proposition that the relationship between particular conceptions of reality and given modes of involvement in it is capable of scientific articulation. The following inquiries are undertaken in the hope that the previous arguments may eventually develop into the wider proposition of the existential involvement of the mind, as the frame of reference for the sociology of the mind. (21)

In this suggestion that the sociology of knowledge requires as a wider frame of reference a sociology of the mind, Mannheim is attempting to propose an integrated view of social action and mental processes. As such, he seems to be moving toward agreement with Grünwald and Mills regarding the necessity of the sociology of knowledge being grounded in a 'theory of mind.' We shall examine the extent to which Mannheim supplies his readers with such a theory.

Mannheim's rejection of the Hegelian thesis of the immanent evolution of ideas represents a change at the level of domain assumptions,

to use Gouldner's phrase. As Mannheim points out, such a thesis:

...is predicated on the assumption of a self-contained 'intellect' which evolved by and from itself through pre-ordained sequences. (22)

Mannheim finds the roots of this 'false' assumption in the scholasticism of intellectual thought and in the interpretation of Luther's religious teachings emphasizing as they did that freedom is the ultimate basis of all consciousness. In interpreting Marxism's insistence on the primacy of the economic 'substructure,' over the ideological 'superstructure' as merely pointing to the primacy of one type of social interaction (the economic) over others, he rejects any interpretation of Marxism which posits the subordination of ideas to matter. Mannheim maintains that it is only upon such an interpretation as his that one may see that the primacy of volition over cognition is a conscious axiom of Marx's system opening the possibility to a voluntaristic theory of political action. The results of these considerations is seen in Mannheim's shift toward a philosophical nominalism. By abandoning the interpretation of the Hegelian concept of history as a "...mirage of self-propelling ideas"⁽²³⁾ and in refusing to speak in terms of the dialectics of history per se (i.e., the dialectics of history conceived as somehow separate from the social situations or the social medium through which the dialectical process is revealed), Mannheim rejects the conceptions of history and society which make of them supra-individual entities "...existing above and apart from the individual."⁽²⁴⁾ To be sure, Mannheim does not go all the way to psychologism, however, in ontological terms, reality is granted only to the individual and the social relationships existing between individuals; such social relationships are based upon the

social situations out of which conflicting interpretations of reality arise and thereby give substance to those relationships. He rejects both psychologism and the reification of the concepts of history and society. Rather, he hopes to be able to articulate a theory of the '...mediate character of roles.' He states:

One cannot separate the social from the mental domain of behavior. It is senseless to pose questions such as whether the mind is socially determined, as if mind and society each possessed a substance of its own. The sociology of the mind is not an inquiry into the social causation of intellectual processes, but a study of the social character of those expressions whose currency does not reveal, or adequately disclose, their action context. The sociology of the mind seeks to uncover and articulate those acts of sociation which are inherent in, but not revealed by, the communication of ideas. The blindness to the action context of ideas remain communicable and seemingly understandable long after the social situation which they helped to define or control ended. Actually, ideas take on new meaning when their social function changes, and it is this relationship of meaning and function which the sociology of mind elaborates. This approach does not seek to relate two discrete sets of objects- the social and the mental- to one another, it merely helps to visualize their often concealed identity.(25)

(emphasis added)

Consequently, Mannheim now regards one's knowledge of historical structures as mediated by one's knowledge of the individual and vice versa. Mannheim does not abandon his original intention of understanding historical structures, however, his conceptualization of structure has changed and the understanding of such structures is no longer to be conceived of as a direct and unpremeditated understanding. What is new in this approach is the inclusion of psychological categories of understanding reflecting his interest in questions of individual motivation. Methodologically, this abandonment of the historical frame of reference as primary and comprehensive in itself is seen in his shift

from the earlier holistic approach moving from knowledge of the whole to subsequent examination of the parts to his later more analytic approach moving from simple to complex phenomena. Prior to the level of historical sociology, Mannheim now articulates the level of General Sociology concerned with elementary and universal forms of sociation isolated from their historical incidence and Comparative Sociology dealing with relations which can be analyzed in terms of categories analytically constructed from those of General Sociology. Finally, historical sociology, constituting the most concrete level of analysis, is construed analytically from the categories of the two other prior levels of articulation.

Mannheim's sociology of knowledge is to be based, therefore, upon an explicit account of the social mechanisms which mediate between the roles individuals play and the ideas they espouse. It is at this level that Mannheim's new preoccupation with social psychology reveals itself. His interest in Freudian psychoanalysis and in a more integrated approach to the social sciences demonstrates his conviction that the sociology of mind, of which the sociology of knowledge is part, requires as a foundation a social psychology to uncover the "...common roots of ideation and role-playing."⁽²⁶⁾ Mannheim's work now exhibits a persistent concern with the motivation of ideas. He does not discard his interest in structural analysis, however, such analysis is now predicated upon a social nominalism which is required if questions of individual motivation are to be meaningful in terms of the analysis of social action. As such, Mannheim attempts to synthesize the historical frame of reference revealing a 'realist' philosophical underpinning and the action frame of reference based upon a 'nominalism.' Ernest Manheim states:

Motives are significant data of sociology in so far as they prompt structurally relevant behavior. To persist a structure must perpetuate motivations of one type and inhibit others. How and whether certain inducements are engendered or repressed is of basic importance for the understanding of action systems. Random motives as such are of little interest to the sociologist; it is only within defined structures that the question of why individuals act as they do becomes fruitful. (27)

Mannheim's shift toward nominalism as exhibited in his preoccupation with the question of individual motivation does not confine him to a psychological reductionism since the vantage point from which the significance of such motivations is considered is still intended to grasp the nature of individual perceptions within the social context. For Mannheim:

The primary aim of social psychology is the understanding of how individual perceptions dovetail with the social circulation of perceptions among those who constitute a social situation. Just as the whole complex of the division of labor can be understood only as an interactive process, rather than as a multiple of individual performances, so also must the social psychologist envisage the social interdependence of individual perceptions. The direct and short-circuited approach to the person is likely to remain abortive. (28)

While it is true that Mannheim now operates on the assumption that the individual is the seat of ultimate reality (ontologically) and as such the reality of the collectivity is derivative, it does not necessarily follow that the relationship between the individual and the collectivity is a straight-forward linear determinism.

To recognize that the individual is the focus of reality is not the same as to construe the self as an isolated entity: to understand his behavior one has to know the constellations in which he acts. (29)

The short-comings of the "...direct and short-circuited approach" to the person (the strictly psychological approach) are manifest in its inability to adequately conceptualize 'meaning' which, following

Weber, is the key to an understanding of action systems. According to Mannheim, meaning is a sociological term and it is inseparable from some phase of sociation. This follows from his interest in what he calls 'objectified meanings.' Meaning is, for him, not inherent in an object and it only comes to light when the individual subjective perception loses its individual singularity in becoming a theme of common focus. Such objectified meanings are the product of sociation and:

No doubt the impetus to objectify meanings is eminently social and no consciousness can evolve in an unsocialized individual (if by consciousness we understand the sum total of directed acts which resolve themselves into intended meanings.) (30)

It is only when individuals together attribute identical significations to objects that we may speak of meaning. Because the attribution of identical significations to objects is dependent upon the compatibility of subjective perceptions, objectified meanings are a product of sociation since, according to Mannheim, it is only such sociation which can account for the existence of a system of socially shared perceptions. Meaning is, for Mannheim, a "...concrete function of common experience."⁽³¹⁾ As Mannheim is aware, to leave the matter at this point would be to fall back into a 'radical' nominalism since, according to the above, meaning is ultimately reducible to the individual subjective perceptions which may or may not become objectified as a common focus or collective representation. In such a framework, meaning is merely a product of the individual even if such meanings are communicable and objectifiable. As such, it becomes impossible to conceptualize history as anything more than a sequence of discrete and historically non-continuous expressions. What is

needed and what Mannheim is working toward is a conceptual framework which can take into account historical continuity by demonstrating that the individual subjective perceptions which ontologically are the source of meaning are themselves functions of the social relationships in which the individual finds himself.

The problems and alternatives which the single individual faces in his actions are presented to him in a given social framework. It is this framework which structures the role of the person, and in which his actions and expressions take on a new sense. It transcends those meanings which the individual 'intends' when he cogitates or conveys an experience. As soon as we speak of structured behavior or thought we are moving on this second level of objectified significations: we seek to grasp the meaning of meanings by attempting to reconstruct the context of individual action and perception. (32)

Whereas Mannheim in Ideology and Utopia employed a concept of structure which attributed meaning to it, meaning for him now is a product of individual perceptions and experiences. To be sure, these perceptions and experiences transcend the particularity of the subjective experience in so far as they are structurally relevant in that they function either to sustain or disrupt a given social structure, however, such structural arrangements possess no inherent meaning apart from that attributed to them by individuals within their social relationships. He states:

What perverts the structural view of change into a doctrine of total determinism and predestination is the misconception of structure as a principle which inexorably unfolds itself. This emanationist view beclouds the role of the milieu-geographical, historical, and social-and obscures the scope of individual variations. What the concept of structure does entail is not a telic process of self-realization, but a given range of successively limited choices. (33)

And again:

We are not looking for the telic meaning of events, but for their structural setting. (34)

Thus far, we have been able to describe the nature of a fundamental shift in Mannheim's approach to the sociology of knowledge. What we have uncovered is his attempt to justify the inclusion of psychological categories of explanation in the sociology of knowledge, and his rejection of a purely historical frame of reference as being adequate by itself.

Although Mannheim, in his outline of the sociology of mind which appears as the conclusion of the essay "Towards the Sociology of the Mind" reiterates his position regarding the analytic primacy of General Sociology over comparative sociology and historical sociology, the two essays which follow are, as far as I can tell, analyses carried on at the level of historical individuation. They are both examples of an application of his principle of structural relevance of motivations. The essay, "The Problem of the Intelligentsia: An Inquiry into its Past and Present Role," is an attempt to discover the conditions which permitted the "...unique development of critical and self-critical inquiry and its culmination in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century,...."(35) As such, the analysis is at the level, described by Mannheim, as the sociology of Individuation; he seeks to understand the "...significance of social groupings for the genesis of standpoints,"(36) and "...the relevance of structured situation to concept formation."(37) Similarly, the essay, "The Democratization of Culture," attempts to "...trace the growth of democratic attitudes in epistemology, the modern emphasis on the public and formal criteria of truth, and the growing concern with the genesis of things rather than their intrinsic nature."(38)

As valuable as these two essays might be, Mannheim has reverted to the mode of analysis characteristic of Ideology and Utopia and the essay "Conservative Thought." That is, the two essays following his proposal for a sociology of mind do not genuinely reflect the change, at the level of domain assumptions, exhibited in that proposal. According to Mannheim's own outline for the sociology of mind, the categories of analysis to be employed at the level of historical individuation are to be analytically construed from the two prior levels of articulation, the axiomatic level of General Sociology and the Comparative level. However, he has not yet supplied his readers with the categories of analysis appropriate to the General level; that is, he has not made the attempt "...at a social ontology of the mind with a view to its historical character."⁽³⁹⁾ Certainly, he does employ psychological categories of explanation in these new essays and his concept of social distanciation is conceived as a general sociological category. Still, an actual theory articulating the mechanisms of consciousness and the dynamics of personality development which Mannheim seems to argue is required as a precondition for the positing of a connection between being and consciousness is lacking.

Throughout the rest of the 1930's and until his death in 1947, Mannheim's position with regard to the necessity of an integrated approach to the social sciences and his special interest in the problem of a 'sociological psychology' did not change. His emphasis, in his later works, written in English, on the need for social planning exemplifies his shift from his earlier historicist framework; his original conception of structure and the historical process as intelligible in themselves excluded the voluntarist emphasis on

conscious planning. Instead, he chooses, in his later writings, to demand a sociological psychology to form the basis of a plan to shape the social environment such that it will foster the 'healthy' growth of individual personalities.

Mannheim relied heavily upon Freudian psychoanalysis to supply him with the needed conceptual framework which, as I have suggested, was lacking in the early 1930's. While it was not to this school of psychology alone that he turned, it was crucial in determining his conceptualization of mental processes. He adopted the Freudian tripartite division of mind into id, ego, and superego. It is upon this Freudian framework that most of Mannheim's contributions to the sociology of culture are based. (40) This division of the mind into three levels represents, in the Freudian conceptual framework, the foundation for the concepts of the various defence mechanisms such as reaction-formation, projection, symbolization, sublimation, etc., and it is these concepts which Mannheim frequently utilizes in his analyses of how certain social variables such as isolation, the division of labor, and the democratic organization of small groups combine to produce societal structures conducive to the development of different personality types.

Mannheim, clearly, did not believe that our knowledge of psychology, at that time, was entirely adequate to the task of establishing his 'sociological psychology.' Like many followers of Freud, he rejected the biological determinism implicit in Freud's theories and demanded a greater cultural or sociological orientation. He writes:

The reason why the philosophical and historical sciences (Geisteswissenschaften) have little use for the existing general psychology is that, owing to its present methods, it works to a pattern of man

in general without taking sufficient account of the diverse forms in which historical and social factors impinge on the psychic life of the individual. (41)

It is not my intention, at this time, to become involved in the controversies over the biological and instinctual emphases in Freud and the sociological orientation exhibited by some neo-Freudians such as Erich Fromm and Karen Horney. However, I believe it is fair to suggest that a departure from Freud's metapsychology which rests upon the theory of instincts and incorporates the assumption of the fixity of human nature toward an orientation which emphasizes the aspect of cultural determinism as opposed to biological determinism represents a fundamental break with Freud that amounts to no less than a shift in problematic. This was recognized by Alfred Adler and C. G. Jung who although known as neo-Freudians regarded their own theories and techniques as distinct from psychoanalysis (which refers, strictly speaking, only to the theories of Freud and the techniques of therapy based thereon) and who chose alternative titles for their schools of psychology, respectively 'Individual Psychology' and 'Analytical Psychology.' (42)

What all this amounts to is the conclusion that if we are to agree with Mannheim in his desire for a more sociologically informed psychology attuned to the historical and social factors which influence the development of 'mind,' the Freudian theories will not prove adequate to this task. Certainly, Freud did help to destroy the illusion of psychology which fails to take into account the relationship of culture (Civilization) to the individual. But the Freudian theory continues to posit the existence of an isolated individual phylogenetically and ontogenetically pre-formed who, in his contacts with civilization, must cope with the repressive elements inherent in his social relationships.

It is difficult to see how such a theory, conceptualizing as it does the individual as radically distinct from the social, can satisfy Mannheim's earlier demand for an approach which:

...does not seek to relate two discrete sets of objects—the social and the mental—to one another, (but rather) helps to visualize their often concealed identity. (43)

Social psychology has, in fact, tended to develop in the direction Mannheim wished. It has, however, developed in this direction largely without recourse to Freudian theory. As J.A.C. Brown states:

...the main reason why social psychology has moved in other directions than those pioneered by Freud and McDougall is that already given: social psychologists deal with groups as such, Freud deals with individuals inside a group. With certain exceptions, social psychology and psychoanalysis do not contradict each other—they no longer speak the same language. (44)

Therefore, we must conclude that although Mannheim had moved a long way toward recognizing the need for a sociological theory of mind as demanded by Grünwald and Mills, he failed, in the long run, to provide a theoretically viable conceptualization of the nature of mental processes, a conceptualization required for the establishment of the meaningfulness of the proposition positing a relationship between social being and consciousness.

Footnotes to Part III-section 2.:

1. Ernst Grönwald, "Systematic Analyses," trans. Rainer Koehne, in The Sociology of Knowledge: A Reader, eds. James E. Curtis and John W. Petras, London, 1970, p. 188.
2. C.W. Mills, "Language, Logic and Culture," A.S.R., v. 4, 1939, p. 671.
3. Paul Keskemeti, Introduction to Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology, by Karl Mannheim, London, 1953, p. 3.
4. Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge, New York, 1936, p. 131.
5. Ibid., p. 146.
6. Ibid., p. 56.
7. Ibid., p. 56.
8. Ibid., p. 57.
9. Ibid., p. 58.
10. Ibid., p. 266.
11. Ibid., p. 58.
12. Ibid., p. 93.
13. Ibid., p. 252.
14. Ernest Manheim, Introduction to Essays on the Sociology of Culture, by Karl Mannheim, London, 1956, p. 5.
15. Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, op. cit., pp. 209-210.
16. Ibid., p. 261.
17. Ibid., p. 262.
18. Ernest Manheim, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
19. Karl Mannheim, "Towards the Sociology of the Mind: An Introduction," in Essays on the Sociology of Culture, London, 1956, p. 53ff.
20. Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, op. cit., p. 58.
21. Karl Mannheim, "Towards the Sociology of the Mind:," op. cit., p. 24.
22. Ibid., p. 27.
23. Ibid., pp. 26-27.

24. Ibid., p. 43.
25. Ibid., p. 44.
26. Ernest Manheim, op. cit., p. 5.
27. Ibid., p. 10.
28. Karl Mannheim, "Towards the Sociology of the Mind:," op. cit., p. 44.
29. Ibid., p. 53.
30. Ibid., p. 64.
31. Ibid., p. 65.
32. Ibid., p. 68.
33. Ibid., pp. 70-71.
34. Ibid., p. 72.
35. Ernest Manheim, op. cit., p. 11.
36. Karl Mannheim, "Towards the Sociology of the Mind:," op. cit., p. 89.
37. Ibid., p. 89.
38. Ernest Manheim, op. cit., p. 11.
39. Karl Mannheim, "Towards the Sociology of the Mind:," op. cit., p. 88.
40. Karl Mannheim, "The Structure of Personality in the Light of Modern Psychology," in Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology, London, 1953, pp. 268-278.
41. Karl Mannheim, "The Place of Sociology," in Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology, London, 1953, p. 201.
42. J.A.C. Brown, Freud and the Post-Freudians, London, 1967.
43. Karl Mannheim, "Towards the Sociology of the Mind:," op. cit., p. 44.
44. J.A.C. Brown, op. cit., p. 128.

3. Talcott Parsons and The Structure of Social Action:

Without Freud's lucidity and Veblen's bite, the virtually unreadable character of the prose in Parsons' major books will probably prevent them from ever circulating very widely beyond the boundaries of academic social science. In fact, I would hazard the guess that fully half of Parsons' fellow sociologists do not know what he is about. But like Freud and Veblen, Parsons has that distinctive mark of a major social theorist: the capacity to corrupt the innocence with which we view those parts of the world that the theory touches. (1)

It will be my purpose, in this essay, to partially demonstrate the truth of the above proposition, namely, that the magnitude of Talcott Parsons' efforts has not adequately been recognized within the critical discussions of his major works. With few exceptions, this statement applies equally to the past and present responses to his work.

Time and again, Talcott Parsons, the confessed "...incurable theorist,"⁽²⁾ has been criticized for adopting an extremely high level of abstraction in his theorizing. This criticism has been put forward by sympathetic commentators such as Robin Williams who doubts the capacity of Parsons' conceptual scheme to "...generate real predictions"⁽³⁾ and by Robert Merton who argues that the extreme generality of Parsons' conceptualizations, which is a consequence of the level of abstraction which he chooses to employ, confines Parsons' conceptual framework to scientific sterility. Recently, Alvin Gouldner, in a less sympathetic tone, has suggested that the level of abstraction employed by Parsons is a function of a set of ideologically tainted metaphysical convictions or pre-theoretical domain assumptions which stress the priority of general theory in

a scientific discipline. According to Gouldner, Parsons' concepts are empirically empty and, as a result, the theories employing such concepts cannot generate 'scientific' explanations to be evaluated in terms of their predictive or deductive capacity: rather, such theories can only,

...function as a symbolic representation
and constitution of the social world's
oneness,.... (4)

Without wishing to prejudge either the viability of Parsons' level of abstraction or the viability of the criticisms levelled against it, it seems only fair that we attempt to uncover the reasons, implicit and explicit, that Parsons has for adopting his particular theoretical style. What is it that Parsons wishes to accomplish by laying the foundation for a general and highly abstract theoretical orientation for the social sciences?

Parsons has concluded one of his more recent works in the following manner:

Great confusion over issues such as these has arisen from the dogma, often left implicit, that evolutionary theory must be "historical" in the sense of historicism. Whether following Hegel, Marx, or later Germans such as Dilthey, historicism has characteristically denied the possibility or relevance of generalized analytical theory (which systematically treats the interdependence of independently variable factors) in explaining temporally sequential socio-cultural phenomena. Particularly in challenging this idea, Durkheim and Weber introduced a new era in sociological science. Once the problem of causal imputation is formulated analytically, the old chicken and egg problems about the priorities of ideal and material factors simply lose their significance. I hope that the present treatment of the problems of societal evolution, though brief, will help to lay to rest this ghost of our nineteenth-century intellectual past. (5)

This paragraph, written in 1966, displays a continuing concern with the issues central to Parsons' first major work, The Structure of Social Action, which appeared some thirty-seven years prior to the

one cited. Regardless of certain changes (some of them quite fundamental) which characterize the development of his thought, there exists a continuity in Parsons' work, a continuity revealed in his persistent and undogmatic attempts to grapple with the same problems which were of central importance to the classical sociological theorists dealt with earlier in this thesis. An understanding of Parsons' conceptual framework and the intentions behind its formulation presupposes a return to his earliest statement regarding these issues. It is The Structure of Social Action that sets the stage for everything that follows. The complexity and magnitude of the issues with which he deals in this early work reveals the scope of the Parsonian enterprise.

Parsons claims empirical status for this early work on the basis that the theories with which he deals are empirical phenomena like any other; the data of his research are the published works of Marshall, Pareto, Durkheim and Weber. He states:

They belong to a class of facts, linguistic expressions, about which there has been necessarily a good deal of discussion. Observation of this class of phenomena involves interpretation of the meanings of the linguistic symbols employed in these works. It must be granted that this is empirical observation, otherwise not only this study, but all the works of the writers here discussed, and all others which involve the subjective aspect of action, must be denied scientific status. (6)

Thus, when Parsons arrives at the end of his study, the five conclusions which he states are considered to be empirically verified propositions failing the existence of evidence to the effect that his interpretation of the works of the four authors is inaccurate. First, Parsons claims that in the works of the four authors analyzed there exists a convergence in theoretical substance such that "...in all

essentials"⁽⁷⁾ the end-product of their respective endeavours is a:

...system of generalized social theory, the structural aspect of what has been called the voluntaristic theory of action. (8)

Second, this generalized social theory represents a new development in theory and is not merely an extension of previously existing theoretical systems:

The completed structure is at some vital point incompatible with each of these older systems.⁽⁹⁾

Third, the development of this voluntaristic theory of action has resulted from an interplay between the empirical concerns of the writers dealt with and the empirical questions raised by the emerging generalized social theory:

Above all, the important empirical interpretations of none of the three thinkers could be adequately developed or stated in terms of either a positivistic or an idealistic conceptual scheme. (10)

Fourth, the emergence of the voluntaristic theory of action is a result of:

...correct observation of the empirical facts of social life,.... (11)

Finally, the four propositions stated above, when considered together, support the conception of scientific development which posits the mutual interdependence of the structure of the theoretical system with observation and verification.

Although Parsons considered The Structure of Social Action to be an empirical undertaking in the respect explained above, it is nevertheless true that it "...is, and was always meant to be, essentially a theoretical work."⁽¹²⁾ He claims, and justifiably so, to have presented more than a mere secondary interpretation of the works of four eminent social theorists. The Structure of Social Action represents

a contribution to social theory in itself. He states:

It was an independent theoretical contribution, incomplete and vulnerable, to be sure, but not in any simple sense "secondary." (13)

Consequently, it may be inferred from his intention to present an essentially theoretical work that there are conclusions which transcend the five 'empirically verified' ones listed above. These conclusions are not left implicit but are systematically presented in the concluding chapter entitled "Tentative Methodological Implications." The present essay will focus upon the theoretical aspect of The Structure of Social Action; it is these tentative methodological implications which are of interest here. I will not attempt to criticize Parsons' interpretations of Marshall, Pareto, Durkheim and Weber; that is, I shall, for the purposes of this study, consider those interpretations as correct. In short, I will not attempt to argue that the data (the published works of the four authors) do not warrant the empirical conclusions (his interpretation of their works) that Parsons draws following his analysis.

Despite the modesty displayed in the quotation above which admits of the incomplete and vulnerable status of his theoretical contribution and the refusal to claim definitive status for his methodological conclusions, it is important to understand in what sense he considers those conclusions to be 'tentative'. His modesty is closely linked to his belief in a linear and cumulative conception of scientific progress. Parsons does not consider his conclusions tentative in the sense that they may someday be demonstrated to be 'false' or scientifically irrelevant. Indeed, the tentative methodological

implications represent conclusions derived from the 'empirically verified' conclusions already listed . Although the theoretical system he delivers may, in the future, be superseded by a more all inclusive system, Parsons does claim that his system:

...will be found to have left a substantial permanently valid precipitate of knowledge which, with the appropriate restatement, it will be possible to incorporate into the future broader system. (emphasis added) (14)

In this sense, Parsons claims to have arrived at "...valid knowledge of empirical reality..."⁽¹⁵⁾ which, although partially limited, is eternally valid and not relative to a social theory whose explanatory significance is confined to application to a particular socio-historical complex. I shall discuss this claim, at length, later in this chapter.

What is a methodological implication in Parsons' terms? He defines methodology, for the purposes of his study, as:

...the borderline field between science on the one hand, logic and epistemology on the other,.... (16)

For Parsons, rational knowledge is unified, "...a single organic whole,...."⁽¹⁷⁾

Consequently, it is impossible to divorce a system of scientific theory from its philosophical assumptions which involve questions of:

...the grounds of empirical validity of scientific propositions, the kinds of procedures which may on general grounds be expected to yield valid knowledge, etc,.... (18)

Such philosophical assumptions are called 'methodological' and the status of such assumptions necessarily involves the philosophical disciplines of logic and epistemology. We see, then, that Parsons' theoretical enterprise is not confined to a secondary account of certain theoretical writings nor even to the development of his own theoretical system. Parsons' work is theoretical in an even broader

sense: as we shall see, he is involved in an examination of the nature and even the possibility of empirically valid knowledge of social life and the relationship of such knowledge to systems of scientific theory. The methodological implications of his empirically verified thesis of convergence, when considered as a whole, represents a theory about scientific theories, particularly those dealing with social phenomena.

In order to understand the scope of Parsons' theoretical accomplishments in The Structure of Social Action a brief account of the details of his thesis and the way in which he endeavours to justify it is necessary.

According to Parsons, the voluntaristic theory of action, around which the works of Marshall, Pareto, Durkheim and Weber converge, has emerged as a response to the limitations and inadequacies of two antithetical systems of thought, positivism and idealism. Although Parsons chooses to employ in his analysis of this emergent theory the works of the four authors mentioned above, he conceives their respective theoretical accomplishments to be representative of a general movement in thought; that is, the same process of emergence could be analyzed (less adequately, perhaps) by reference to the works of other social theorists. For example, Parsons was to write twelve years after the original publication of The Structure of Social Action that the work of Freud

...looms up as having played a cardinal role in a development which, in spite of the differences of his starting points and empirical concerns, must be regarded as a vital part of the same general movement of thought. (19)

For Parsons, a theory of action is:

...any theory the empirical reference of which is to a concrete system which may be considered to be composed of the units here referred to as "unit acts." (20)

The concept of an 'act', for Parsons, implies an agent (the actor), an end toward which the act is oriented, a situation whose elements do not imply autonomous development toward the end of the act and a mode of relationship between those elements of the situation over which the actor has control (the means of action) and those over which he can exert no control (the conditions of action). This implies that:

...in the choice of alternative means to the end, in so far as the situation allows alternatives, there is a "normative orientation" of action. (21)

The term, 'normative,' is used by Parsons to refer to an aspect of a system of action if it involves a sentiment that something is an end in itself, regardless of its status as a means to any other end.

Finally, an end is:

...a future state of affairs to which action is oriented by virtue of the fact that it is deemed desirable by the actor(s) but which differs in important respects from the state which they would expect to intervene by merely allowing the predictable trends of the situation to take their course without active intervention. (22)

As Parsons points out, the definition of action employed by him necessarily involves recourse to the subjective point of view since it defines action as the result of the way in which the actor perceives the conditions and the alternative means of the situation in relation to the end toward which his action is oriented. As

Parsons states:

It is evident that these categories have meaning only in terms which include the subjective point of view, i.e., that of the actor. (23)

Parsons begins his analysis of positivism and idealism by analyzing utilitarianism as a sub-category of the over-all positivistic framework of analysis. The utilitarian system is

characterized by four features: atomism, rationality, empiricism, and the randomness of ends. The combination of certain individualistic elements within the European cultural tradition and the immaturity of the theoretical system of utilitarianism account for the atomism which is a:

...a tendency to consider mainly the properties of conceptually isolated unit acts and to infer the properties of systems of action only by a process of 'direct' generalization from these. (24)

Since each act possesses, as one of its defining elements, an end, atomistic analysis cannot conceptualize the relationship between the ends of human acts. An atomistic tendency, by confining analysis to the isolated unit act, inhibits the analysis of the more complex relationship between unit acts. Utilitarian social theory, like positivism, regards the actor as oriented toward his environment rationally which means that action becomes defined as rational:

...in so far as it pursues ends possible within the conditions of the situation, and by the means which, among those available to the actor, are intrinsically best adapted to the end for reasons understandable and verifiable by positive empirical science. (25)

For utilitarianism, then, rationality becomes a matter of the appropriateness of particular means for arriving at particular ends; the ends are merely accepted as given and the reasonableness of the ends themselves is not questioned. As long as utilitarian social theory (and positivism, in general) regards the actors as oriented to their environment solely by means of the scientifically valid empirical knowledge of the situation available to them, analysis of the selective standards which they employ to determine the ends of actions is inhibited. The ends of action become random in so much as

the utilitarian theory of action is incapable of positing any significant relations between them. The naive empiricism of the framework is closely related to its atomism; utilitarianism assumes that a:

...concrete system (of action) as a whole is made up only of units of this character (i.e., rational unit acts).... (emphasis added) (26)

In short, action systems are regarded as merely aggregates of rational human acts. As long as rationality is defined in such a way as to confine analysis to the relationship of means to ends and as such prevents the analysis of the relationship of ends to each other, utilitarianism, as a theory of action, cannot account for the complete determination of action. That is, utilitarianism is incapable of conceptualizing all the variables significant to the determination of action. For Parsons, this situation is constitutive of the utilitarian dilemma.

According to Parsons, what is especially valuable in the utilitarian position is the voluntarism implied in the notion of an actor choosing the means of action in order to arrive at goals; such voluntarism is what makes human action meaningful. However, the utilitarian dilemma is paramount and accounts for the inherent instability of the utilitarian system of thought. If the ends of action vary at random, what is it that keeps society together? This is the classic problem of social order which, according to Parsons, was first clearly articulated by Hobbes. It must be noted that the randomness of ends implied in the utilitarian theory of action, raises for Parsons a conceptual difficulty regarding the possibility of supplying a theoretical framework which can account for the determinateness of

social action. The problem of social order is fundamentally a conceptual problem for Parsons and not a political problem. Parsons rejects the various solutions offered by utilitarian theorists to overcome the utilitarian dilemma. He argues that Hobbes' own solution, the social contract, contradicts the latter's own thesis that men pursue only their own immediate ends hence it is inadequate on the grounds of internal consistency. Similarly, the solution offered by Locke is unacceptable since it relies upon the metaphysical postulate of a natural identity of interests. Such a postulate is not scientifically defensible according to Parsons. He concludes, therefore, that the utilitarian dilemma, in its classic Hobbesian statement:

...is so fundamental that a genuine solution of it has never been attained on a strictly utilitarian basis, but has entailed either recourse to a radical positivistic expedient or breakdown of the whole positivistic framework. (27)

We shall give brief consideration to what Parsons calls the 'radical positivistic expedient.'

The dilemma, it will be remembered, was brought about by utilitarianism's inability to conceptualize the relationship between the ends of analytically isolated unit acts. Utilitarianism is positivistic according to Parsons' definition:

A theory of action is positivistic in so far as explicitly or implicitly, it treats scientifically valid empirical knowledge as the actor's sole theoretically significant mode of subjective orientation to his situation. (28)

Consequently, positivistic theories of action, of which utilitarianism is a particular type, are confined theoretically to consideration of the means-end relationship. As stated earlier, action involves an end which refers to a "...future state of affairs, ...deemed desirable by the actor(s)...."(29) As such, analysis of action involves

subjective categories of explanation. The radically positivistic alternatives attempt to do away with subjective categories by subsuming them under non-subjective categories such as heredity and environment. The ends of action and the normative orientation of action become merely the results of the conditions of action. The distinction between means and conditions and ends is erased. The element of ends is eliminated from the generalized theoretical systems and with it the element of voluntarism disappears. In radically positivistic terms, action is determined by external conditions, therefore, explanations of action couched in such terms mechanistically reduce any subjective categories of explanation to non-subjective ones. Action loses its voluntary aspect and since the subjective element of ends has vanished from the explanatory scheme, action (as it has been defined above) becomes meaningless. Positivism assigns only epiphenomenal status to human subjectivity in offering mechanistic determinisms as explanations of human action. Such radical positivisms such as Social Darwinism and psychological hedonism are thus incapable of fulfilling the requirements for a theory of action as defined by Parsons. Even so, Parsons considers the positivistic attempt to formulate a generalized theoretical system tending toward logical closure as a valuable legacy of this particular system of thought.

The other alternative to the utilitarian dilemma involves the breakdown of the entire positivistic framework. It is this alternative which Parsons deals with most extensively. The 'voluntaristic theory of action around which the works of Marshall, Pareto, Durkheim and Weber converge emerges out of the limitations and inherent instability

of positivism and idealism. That instability has been demonstrated with respect to positivism in the above remarks. We will leave our discussion of idealism until a little later in this discussion.

Marshall, Pareto, and Durkheim all wrote from out of the positivistic tradition yet none of them sought to resolve the utilitarian dilemma by recourse to a radical positivistic alternative; rather, all three authors pushed their explanatory schemes beyond the limitations of positivism by developing explanatory categories which are not compatible with those of the positivistic tradition.

Parsons discovers, in the works of Alfred Marshall, the utilitarian economist predisposed toward an individualistic positivism, a discontent with the capacity of the positivistic explanatory categories employed in pure utility theory. According to Parsons, Marshall supplements those categories by recourse to a factor he refers to as 'activities.' These activities are more than the ends of concrete economic actions carried on as means to the acquisition of purchasing power. Rather;

They are carried on for their own sake, they are modes of the immediate expression of ultimate value attitudes in action. (30)

Ends are, for Marshall, not merely random as they are in pure utilitarian economic theory. Instead, when Marshall speaks of 'wants adjusted to activities' he is employing in his analysis a value factor; these activities:

...constitute a well-integrated system, a self-consistent ideal of conduct, not merely random ethical values, but the expression of a single ethic. (31)

This notion of 'wants adjusted to activities' represents a new element in the explanatory scheme from which Marshall had begun his studies.

Although this departure from the positivistic framework is significant, Marshall himself did not realize the full implications of his 'discovery' and the new element was made to fit the older system by confining its role in explanation to that of a metaphysical prop similar to the earlier reliance on the postulate of a natural identity of interests. Thus, Marshall is regarded, by Parsons, as the theorist whose departure from the positivistic framework was the least satisfactory in terms of the emergence of the voluntaristic theory of action.

Vilfredo Pareto distinguished between scientific and unscientific theories. If analysis be confined to the former, the resultant theory of action will involve the utilitarian dilemma. Pareto employs as a criterion of the logicality of action the:

...demonstrable intrinsic 'appropriateness of means to an end' according to the most extensive knowledge of the relations between means and the end that the given scientific observer can command. (32)

In other words, Pareto considers action to be logical if it conforms in certain respects with the logico-experimental standard of scientific methodology. Therefore, in analysis of the logical components of action, attention is confined to the relations of means to ends while the relations of ends to each other is ignored. Also, analysis of the nonlogical aspects of action, if such analysis be confined to the positivistic categories of explanation, can lead only to an analysis in terms of non-subjective categories and the determinants of action will be posited as the conditions of action. However, the attempt to cope with the utilitarian dilemma of the randomness of ends fails to represent a theory of action, in Parsons' sense, since according to the definition of action employed by him:

One principal distinguishing characteristic of an end in the analytical sense is that it is necessarily a subjective category. (33)

This means that action cannot be accounted for solely in terms of a mechanistically reductionist framework which claims causal efficacy on behalf of the nonsubjective determinants of behavior alone. However, Pareto makes a further distinction between two types of unscientific theories: there are those which may be found to be true or false according to the logico-experimental criteria of logical action and there are those which are not verifiable in such terms. The latter are referred to as non-scientific and it is with these that Pareto deals extensively. Such theories constitute justifications of courses of action by recourse to a class of residues, a residue being defined as "...the manifestation, in the form of a proposition which serves as the common major premise of a group of theories, of a sentiment:"⁽³⁴⁾ That is, the justification posited for a particular course of action derives ultimately from the invocation of a proposition (common to more than one theory) which manifests a "...sentiment that such and such is a desirable state of affairs."⁽³⁵⁾ Such statements are residues:

...because they embody ends, or classes of ends of action which cannot be justified in terms of any scientific theory, that is, not because they are appropriate means to other ends, but because they are deemed desirable as ends in themselves. (36)

Parsons refers to these elements of action as normative residues. In so far as analysis of action takes into account such normative residues, the concepts employed in the analysis are descriptive not of any observable state of affairs of overt action, but rather, are descriptive of the norms to which such action is oriented. Such concepts, therefore,

deal with elements which are strictly speaking metaphysical, outside the realm of experience. In this sense, such concepts contain an element of unreality which distinguishes them from those of the physical sciences. Although such norms are 'unreal', in a physical sense, they cannot be ignored by the social scientist because men believe in them and an alteration in those beliefs would have real consequences for the overt action systems. The concepts descriptive of such norms are abstract yet pertain to empirical phenomena, namely, the state of mind of the actor. Parsons states:

They exist in this state of mind but not in the actor's "external world." It is, indeed, this circumstance which necessitates resort, on the part of the theory of action, to the subjective point of view. (37)

Pareto speaks of the end which a society pursues. That is, Pareto considers the society as a collectivity pursuing a common end. Since the concept of end is a subjective category as explained above:

The only way in which such a concept as that of the end of a society can be given meaning in terms of this conceptual scheme is by the theorem that it is an end common to the members of the society. (38)

Parsons suggests, then, that out of Pareto's analysis has emerged what may be called the sociologistic theorem, that society:

...has properties not derivable from those of its constituent units by direct generalization. This takes the form here of the view that one of the central facts underlying the theorem is the existence of a common end (or system of ends) which disappears when individual actions are considered in isolation. (39)

In short, society is a reality sui generis.

Parsons turns next to an analysis of Durkheim's theoretical development. Durkheim explicitly rejected the various utilitarian

solutions to the utilitarian dilemma such as the positing of a natural identity of interests. He was thus tempted to move in the direction of the radical positivistic alternatives. Consequently, he tended, in his early works, to stress the criteria of 'exteriority' and 'constraint' for social facts. Such social facts were to be treated as 'things.' However, it became obvious that these two criteria were too general and did not allow one to distinguish the social from the non-social factors in an action system. At first, social facts were defined negatively, as a residual category accounting for those aspects of action which were not reducible to positivistic explanations which reduced the concept of ends to the non-subjective categories of heredity and environment. In attempting to define this residual category, however, Durkheim conceptualized another kind of environmental factor which was independently significant in the determination of the actor's orientation, the social milieu. The social milieu met the criteria of a social fact for Durkheim in that it was experienced by any individual as part of his external reality and it constrained his actions; i.e., he could not act without regard to the possible reactions of the social milieu. However, although the social environment was beyond the control of any individual, it was not beyond the control of human agency in general. Originally, the social milieu was conceived as impinging upon the actor's possible action alternatives merely through the threat of social sanctions which could be applied to constrain the individual. In other words, it was conceived as a condition of action over which the individual could exert no control. As such, Durkheim continued to view the actor in utilitarian terms rationally calculating the efficiency of alternative

means, within a set of conditions, to arrive at a given end. Durkheim's analysis of anomie, however, in Suicide led him to conclude that since individual wants are unlimited, social stability (and individual stability) can exist only if those wants are regulated in terms of norms.

Parsons states:

But here the norms thought of do not, as do the rules of contract, merely regulate "externally," e.g., as the conditions of entering into relations of contract—they enter directly into the constitution of the actor's ends themselves. (40)

For the individual, the social milieu is no longer merely external and constraining; rather, he feels a sense of moral obligation to achieve the collective end which is, in part at least, constitutive of his own ends. The element of ends contains a social element. Social control conceived in these terms as a product of moral obligation presupposes recourse to subjective categories of explanation. Durkheim, like Marshall and Pareto, had arrived at a conceptualization of social order based on an integrated system of norms, a common system of ultimate value attitudes.

Parsons' interpretation of the works of the above three thinkers allows him to conclude that the voluntaristic theory of action composed of the categories of explanation employed by these writers emerged out of the inherent limitations of the positivistic framework of analysis when such a framework was employed in the attempt to account for the complete determination of human action. The final author with whom Parsons deals, Max Weber, writes from out of an entirely different intellectual tradition, that of German Idealism. It is Parsons' intention to demonstrate that the idealistic framework is also inherently incapable of coming to terms with human action. We saw in the above remarks that the failure of the positivistic theory

of action derived from its inability to include subjective categories of explanation and still maintain itself consistently. Consequently, its analysis of action is reductionist in that it attempts to explain such action solely with reference to the conditional elements of action and fails to take into account the normative elements.

Idealism, on the other hand, is incapable of assigning any explanatory significance to the conditional elements of action. Instead, action:

...becomes a process of 'emanation,' of 'self-expression' of ideal or normative factors. (41)

The emergent voluntaristic theory of action, then, is considered, by Parsons, to lie between the two antithetical types of explanatory scheme and has emerged as a result of the limitations of each. He states:

It will not, ...do merely, to say that both the positivistic and the idealistic positions have certain justifications and there is a sphere in which each should be recognized. It is necessary, rather, to go beyond such eclecticism, to attempt, at least, in outline, an account of the specific modes of interrelation between the two. It is in this connection that the voluntaristic theory of action assumes a place of central importance. It provides a bridge between the apparently irreconcilable differences of the two traditions, making it possible, in a sense, to "make the best of both worlds." (42)

Parsons argues that Weber's main empirical concern was to discredit the monofactorial determinism of Marxian historical materialism which was, according to Parsons, a form of the utilitarian position but in an historical context. Out of this concern, Weber created a 'theory' concerning the role of value elements in historical phenomena. Unlike Sombart, however, Weber did not propose a radically idealistic emanationist theory. According to Weber, the value elements in human

action exert their influence in a complex relationship with the conditional elements of action systems. Weber's refusal to adopt an emanationist position is perhaps most clearly seen in his attitudes toward the methodological implications of an idealist explanatory framework. These issues will be dealt with shortly. He did, however, accept the idealist position regarding the necessity of subjective categories of explanation. However, he combined this emphasis with considerations of such non-subjective factors as heredity and environment and he adopted aspects of the utilitarian tradition stressing the rationality of human action in terms of the relationship between means and ends.

Parsons feels that he has demonstrated conclusively his thesis of convergence such that all four authors dealt with can be regarded as having arrived at essentially the same generalized system of theory although having begun their analyses from different intellectual starting-points and having carried them on with reference to different empirical concerns. Neither positivism nor idealism was capable of providing a satisfactory basis for a theory of human action. Therefore, according to Parsons, the voluntaristic theory of action is really the only possible theory of action. By the end of the book, Parsons feels justified in dropping the adjective, 'voluntaristic' since neither the positivistic theory of action nor the idealistic alternative which is voluntaristic but ^{which} does not amount to a theory because of its stand in relation to the use of general concepts (to be discussed shortly) actually amounts to a theory about action. He states:

It follows that if a theory of action is to have the status of an independent analytical system at all, it must, in the nature of the case, be a

voluntaristic theory. Hence, the qualifying adjective, originally introduced to distinguish the system this study was concerned with from a positivistic theory becomes superfluous and can be dropped from the final classification. (43)

The above brief summary of Parsons' 'empirical' argument may now be used to discuss The Structure of Social Action as primarily a theoretical undertaking.

Both positivism and idealism are empiricist in orientation. For Parsons, the problem of empiricism is explicitly an epistemological problem. Positivistic empiricisms commit what Whitehead calls the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness' otherwise known as reification. Such empiricisms are reificatory in as much as they claim that the concrete phenomena with which a theory deals is understandable in its entirety by reference to the explanatory theory. That is, such theoretical systems claim material status for abstract concepts. Idealistic empiricism takes two forms: first, particularistic empiricism confines the scientific endeavour to the description of concrete phenomena rejecting on a priori grounds the validity of general theoretical concepts in the social sciences sequentially rejecting any attempts to establish causal relationships between events (such relationships being analyzable only by recourse to general concepts); second, intuitionist empiricism, while allowing into social science a conceptual element, argues that such conceptualization must be confined to description of the unique characteristics of phenomena thereby rejecting once again the employment of general theoretical concepts. Just as Parsons demonstrated the convergence around a single set of explanatory categories in the works of the social theorists of his study, he demonstrates that each of them departed, in varying degrees, from the

empiricisms associated with their respective intellectual starting-points. Of the four authors dealt with, it is Pareto alone, according to Parsons, who arrived at a legitimate epistemological position and Parsons' own epistemological stance is explicitly indebted to that of Pareto. The other three theorists were all hampered in this task by the lingering influence of their respective intellectual traditions. By undertaking a methodological critique of all four theorists (and it must be remembered that for Parsons scientific methodology involves the philosophical disciplines of logic and epistemology), Parsons develops his own epistemological position, 'analytical realism.'

Analytical realism is explicitly not empiricist. However, it shares with the positivistic epistemology the claim to the legitimacy of general theoretical concepts. It is only the status of those concepts which is at question. Unlike positivism, which claims that social reality can be grasped in its entirety by reference to one theoretical system, Parsons' epistemological position is that:

...the understanding of human action involves a plurality of such theoretical systems. (44)

Certainly, the physical sciences of chemistry, genetics, biology, etc, which employ a predominantly positivistic orientation are valuable in the attempt to explain human behavior. However, explanations framed solely in terms of the positivistic schema cannot account for all the variables significant to the determination of human action. Parsons draws this conclusion from his analysis of utilitarian and positivistic economic theory which broke down when the emergence of the voluntaristic theory of action demonstrated the necessity of categories appropriate to the understanding of the non-economic elements of such

systems, the non-rational categories which implied recourse to the subjective point of view. At best, such categories were, from the point of view of utilitarian theory, residual; with the emergence of the voluntaristic theory with its emphasis on the normative aspect of human action, such categories became principal categories of explanation in the emergent theory. In short, explanations of human action framed only in terms of the utilitarian economic theory are inadequate, by themselves, to account for such action.

Opposed to the positivistic conception of the relationship between concept and reality is the idealistic intuitionist view which, while allowing for conceptualization in social science, grants only the status of 'useful fictions' to concepts. Parsons rejects this epistemological position encountered in Max Weber's conception of the role of ideal-type constructs in social science.

Weber attacked positivistic and idealistic particularistic empiricism, both radical forms of empiricism. In their place, he offered an epistemological position which had its roots in the Kantian dualism between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds, but which, unlike some neo-Kantian positions, did not reject the use of general concepts altogether.

According to Parsons, the description of 'facts' involves a conceptual scheme. It is not merely a description or reproduction of external reality; rather, a conceptual scheme implies a selective ordering of reality. In other words, Parsons, along with Weber, rejects the positivistic correspondence theory of truth. For Parsons, a scientific discipline is only possible when descriptive frames of reference emerge and a descriptive frame of reference is, by definition, a conceptual schema. Therefore, all scientific knowledge of the world

is mediated by concepts which have their meaning only within a frame of reference. A frame of reference is regarded by Parsons as an indispensable preliminary to explanation.

Since any conceptual scheme is, in a sense, imposed upon reality, no single explanation of the phenomena of that reality can prove adequate to the understanding of that reality in its concrete uniqueness; any conceptual scheme is only capable of explaining events in the terms of the principles underlying its selective ordering of reality. To assume more of an explanation, as the positivists do, leads to reification. Facts cannot be described except within such a scheme. The description of facts, within a conceptual scheme, functions to define those aspects of the phenomena which are of scientific interest. Of the great mass of possible empirical observations, we select only those which are meaningful within a particular conceptual framework.

Parsons distinguishes between mechanistic and organic wholes. A mechanistic whole is analyzed as merely the sum of its parts. Organic wholes, on the other hand, are ones in which the relations between the parts of the whole determine, to some extent, the properties of the whole. Such properties are termed emergent. In any analysis of organic wholes, the conception of analysis (by which Parsons means the breaking down of complex phenomena into their constituent elements) takes on a distinctive meaning. Since the nature of the whole is determined by the relationship of the parts, the notion of the parts of such a whole takes on a fictional character.

But whether the concept refers to a mechanistic "part" which can be observed without essential change of properties in complete concrete separation from the whole in which it occurs, or to an organic part which when concretely separated remains a part only in an "equivocal sense," the logical character

of the concept remains the same. It refers to an, actually or hypothetically existent concrete entity. However much the concept of the "pure type" especially in the "organic case," may differ from anything concretely observable, the test is that thinking about it as concretely existent makes sense, that it does not involve a contradiction in terms. (45)

For Parsons who accepts the sociologicistic theorem he discovered in the works of Pareto and Durkheim, society and systems of action in general are organic phenomena.

Parsons adopts Henderson's definition of a fact as an "...empirically verifiable statement about phenomena in terms of a conceptual scheme." (46)

The notion of empirical verification demands that Parsons postulate the existence of an objective reality which he does in the following manner:

It is a philosophical implication of the position taken here that there is an external world of so-called empirical reality which is not the creation of the individual human mind and is not reducible to terms of an ideal order, in the philosophical sense. (47)

This notion of the possibility of empirical verification allows him to argue that the status of his epistemological position is that of strict philosophical realism. Yet, since the empirical verification of the fact is done in relation to a conceptual scheme which defines those aspects of concrete phenomena which are of scientific interest for the purpose at hand, he modifies the title of his epistemological stance with the adjective, 'analytical.'

For Weber, description implied an element of selection and accentuation (Steigerung) of the facts rather than the positivistic claim of letting the facts speak for themselves. As such, the act of description involves a judgment as to the theoretical importance of certain aspects of concrete phenomena. Regardless of this element

of abstraction involved in the construction of ideal-types, there is always a concrete empirical referent. Capitalism and bureaucracy are concrete phenomena. According to Weber, the definitions of the phenomena which derives from the conceptual scheme is dictated by the values of the scientist. Therefore, there are as many legitimate explanations of such phenomena as there are points of view or value systems which direct scientific interest. This relevance to values and the plurality of possible value positions from which to view any concrete phenomena instills into Weber's explicit methodology a serious relativism as there can be no universally valid system of general theory in social science upon such a basis. As we have seen, this is one of the main reasons that Weber was forced to regard social science concepts as 'fictional.'

Weber's position represents the outcome of the polemical debates in which he was involved. He argued against the positivists that scientific concepts do not exhaust reality but involve selection. In this sense, they are unreal or fictional. While rejecting the grounds for the neo-Kantian distinction between the natural and the cultural sciences that had been offered by Windelband and Dilthey, he did argue, following Rickert, that such a distinction was legitimate on the basis of his value-relevance (Wertbeziehung) doctrine. He criticized idealists for rejecting the use of general concepts entirely yet he accepted their emphasis on the subjective aspects of human reality; i.e., he regarded norms, values and ideas as more than mere epiphenomena. These elements led Weber to posit a fiction theory of the nature of social science concepts in contradistinction to the prevailing empiricisms of his time. Weber's

ideal-types exaggerate certain aspects of concrete reality and do not, therefore, exist in concrete reality. They do not represent hypotheses about reality; they are not propositions about reality which can be verified and, as such, they can be regarded as neither 'true' nor 'false.' They are not averages and they do not represent formulations of the concrete traits common to a class of concrete things.

Parsons rejects Weber's conception of social science concepts as fictional in the above sense. He argues that application of the ideal-type method to situations which do not provide ideal experimental conditions for the theory must conceptually break up the organic unity of the phenomenon if conceptualization is regarded as fictional. It results, according to Parsons, in a 'mosaic' theory of culture and society conceiving them to be composed of disparate atoms defined as ideal-type units. Comparison of ideal-type constructs, then, becomes impossible on such an atomistic basis and analysis can only conceptualize social reality as fundamentally fragmented. Within such a methodology, the possibility of formulating a single general theory of social life is impossible. Parsons suggests that Weber did, in fact, implicitly employ such a generalized theory as the basis for his comparative studies, however, as I have tried to demonstrate earlier, Weber's explicit methodological statements do not provide a basis for such generalized theory. Parsons' argument is that Weber did attempt to supply a systematic classification of ideal types and that this attempt "...involved him by implication in generalized analytical theory."⁽⁴⁸⁾

Parsons summarizes his methodological critique of Weber in the following manner:

First, in trying to defend a line of distinction between the logical character of the natural and social sciences, which has here been held to be indefensible, he was driven to a fictional view of the nature of general concepts in these fields which tended to obscure the role of the essentially nonfictional generalized system of theory. Secondly, this and the circumstance that general concepts were for him a residual category obscured what is for this study the vital distinction between his hypothetically concrete type concepts and their empirical generalization, on the one hand, and the categories of a generalized theoretical system, on the other. Only the former are fictional in the social field, a fact that is due to the important degree of organicism of the subject matter. (49)

Although Parsons rejects Weber's distinction between the natural and the social sciences which was posited as a result of the social scientist's subjective interest in the phenomena he studies, Parsons does not reject the doctrine of Wertbeziehung; rather, according to Parsons, the natural sciences too are initially motivated by a subjective interest in the phenomena and must therefore also cope with the relativism inserted into scientific systems as a result of this subjective starting-point. It will be remembered that it was precisely this conception of value-relevance which led Weber to formulate his fictional theory of social science concepts since it implied that there could be as many legitimate explanations of social phenomena as there are value-relevant standpoints from which to view them. How, then, does Parsons avoid this implication while at the same time adopting the value-relevance doctrine which implies it?

As a system of scientific theory, the voluntaristic theory of action represents only "...the structural outline of the generalized system of action"⁽⁵⁰⁾ and does not represent a systematic treatment of the analytical aspect of the theory of action. Such a task would require the establishment of causal relationships between phenomena.

And, such causal relationships can only be established after the establishment of a system of variables representing the elements of a system of action. The voluntaristic theory of action, then, is solely a descriptive frame of reference. Even so, the articulation of it as a conceptual scheme is a logical prerequisite to the development of the analytical theory of action since the latter is composed of a system of variables defined as the values or properties of the conceptual elements. Such an analytic theory of action would contain causal statements (if only of the functional type which Parsons considers to be second best) in that:

Its elements have causal significance in the sense that variation in the value of any one has consequences for the values of the others. (51)

Although analytical realism is 'realistic' in the sense explained above, Parsons does not suggest that the theory of action is a "...direct and literal representation"⁽⁵²⁾ of external reality. The relationship of the theory to reality is "functional,"⁽⁵³⁾

...such that for certain scientific purposes they are adequate representations of it. (54)

Scientific theory is an "...ideal representation of empirical phenomena or aspects of them."⁽⁵⁵⁾ The representation of concrete entities is relative to the structure of the frame of reference involved. As such, the realism of Parsons' epistemology is relative to the aspect of 'selective description' involved necessarily in the employment of such a frame of reference; that is, scientific theory is relative to the subjective interest in the concrete entities of the scientist. Parsons, then, is confronted, at this point, with the same form of relativism that led Weber to argue that social science concepts are fictional and which, in turn, supposedly led to an atomistic and mosaic theory of society and culture. Such atomism

negates the possibility of a generalized analytical theory since the comparison of various ideal-type conceptualizations is impossible without general concepts under which particular class concepts (including Weber's ideal-types) may be grouped. With an atomistic epistemology, the only possible outcome of scientific endeavours is a group of disconnected particularistic theories or observations about concrete reality which cannot be related one to another and which cannot seriously challenge one another lacking the existence of a common set of criteria around which to establish the validity of competing historical statements. In short, it leads to the same difficulties inherent in the idealist rejection of general concepts from which Weber tried, with only limited success, to escape. As Parsons says:

Without the comparative method there can be no empirical demonstration of the independent variation of the values of analytical elements. (56)

Of course, it is just such a systematic generalized theory of action which Parsons has attempted to demonstrate emerging from the works of four social theorists who are representative of a general movement of thought; if a basis for such a theory can be firmly established, Parsons will then have found a way out of the historical relativism and the skepticism regarding the possibility of attaining objective knowledge of social phenomena which is implied in the idealist position and he will have done this without resorting to a positivistic empiricism which he has already rejected on other grounds. This, then, is Parsons' project: the overcoming of relativism within social science. Parsons' entire life's work is consistent with such an interpretation. It is this intention, running throughout his work, which demonstrates that the broadest problems for which he seeks answers are those of the

classical sociological theorists. For the moment, however, let us return to the present discussion and see how Parsons proposes to circumvent the dilemma brought about by his adoption of Weber's doctrine of value-relevance and, at the same time, rejecting the judgment of social science concepts as fictional.

Because of the element of selective description implied in the use of a conceptual frame of reference, any system of generalized theory can lead to partial explanations of concrete phenomena and only to partial explanations.

...the values of constants can be explained, if at all, only in terms of other analytical systems. (57)

This is the reason that Parsons maintains that the explanation of human action systems implies a theoretical pluralism. He states:

Only when it (concrete phenomena) has been adequately described in terms of all known frames of reference, and all the data subsumed under analytical concepts of some system, and all these different ways of analyzing it systematically related to one another, can it be said to have been as fully explained as is possible in the state of scientific knowledge of the time. (emphasis added) (58)

It will be remembered that in one of our previous essays, "A Critique of Mannheim's 'Dynamic Intellectual Mediation,'" we found that Mannheim had proposed to circumvent the problem of relativism by proposing that all knowledge of social reality is 'relational' and not merely relative. According to this position, the partiality of any particular assertion implies neither that the assertion is invalid nor that such partiality has no epistemological consequences with regard to the 'truth' value of the assertion. Rather, Mannheim maintained that knowledge of the social position of the assertor which included knowledge of the conceptual apparatus customarily employed by persons

occupying a particular social position implies the probability that the validity of the assertion in question is limited (or partial) to the accurate analysis of only aspects of the concrete phenomenon with which the assertion deals. According to Mannheim, the sociology of knowledge functions to uncover the limits within which generalized propositions are valid. Parsons argues in a like manner when he suggests that it is absolutely essential to develop a systematic classification for the empirical sciences because:

A great deal of the confusion into which this study has attempted to introduce some order has been due to the failure of scholars clearly to discriminate between these various conceptual schemes and adequately to investigate their mutual logical relations. Wherever, in any empirical problem, more than one of them becomes involved, it is essential in the interest of clarity that the student of the problem should know what he is doing; to know when he is employing one scheme, when another and what the shift from one to another implies. (59)

Such a classification would prevent the fallacy of unwarranted extrapolation. Such a classificatory scheme, however, does not establish boundaries between intellectual disciplines such that they cannot be compared and related to one another. Knowledge is an 'organic whole' for Parsons and knowledge of concrete human reality involves the synthesis of the various bodies of knowledge which are relative to particular conceptual frames of reference and which remain distinct on a conceptual level only. There is a significant parallel here to Mannheim's theory of a total synthesis of the diverse particularistic interpretations of the totality of concrete reality. As we saw earlier, Mannheim's position led to an inconsistency in his thought for having started from an historicist perspective, he had arrived by way of his conception of a 'dynamic intellectual mediation' at a conception

of knowledge as static, ahistorical and absolute. Earlier, we saw that Parsons considers his theoretical accomplishments in The Structure of Social Action to contain a "...permanently valid precipitate."⁽⁶⁰⁾ Parsons, too, has arrived at a conception of absolute knowledge and has persuaded himself, at least, that the threat of historical relativism has been met and conquered and that the possibility of establishing valid, objective and absolute knowledge of human action is real.

Weber's confrontation with these issues stemmed from his insistence that the subjective interest of the scientist dictated the direction of scientific thought. That is, the concepts employed by the social scientist were relative to the particular value-standpoint from which he viewed concrete reality. The near infinite number of concrete value positions from which to view concrete reality and the reluctance, on Weber's part, to explicitly adopt a generalized classification of these value-relevant positions led him to his doctrine of the fictional status of social science concepts. With the resulting atomism and inability to overcome entirely the grounds for skepticism even on the basis of his distinction between value-relevant and value-free explanations, Weber's position, while not disallowing the possibility of objectivity, did impose severe limitations on the capacity of man to come to permanently valid knowledge of social reality. Parsons, however, dissolves the dilemma by postulating a limit to the possible number of value points of view from which reality may be viewed. He states:

It has been noted that if this element of relativism in science is not to lead to skeptical consequences, it is necessary to postulate that in this sense the possible points of view are of a limited number. With

the accumulation of value-experience the totality of knowledge approaches the asymptote. (61)

Later, in The Social System, Parsons attempts to classify this limited number of points of view under a general classification of possible value-orientations.

We have argued previously that Mannheim's relationism as a proposed solution to the problem of relativism and his related conception of a dynamic intellectual mediation did not successfully allow him to claim validity for his own position on the basis of his own explicitly stated criteria of validity. Mannheim did not tell us how the proposed synthesis was to be achieved. His conception of a dynamic intellectual mediation requires, on logical grounds, a 'dynamic conception of truth' which he did not articulate fully. Furthermore, he did not approach the problem of the translation of the terms of one perspective into those of another. Parsons also fails to discuss this problem of translation in detail. We must remember that, for Parsons, a fact is "...not itself a phenomenon~~at~~ all, but a proposition about one or more phenomena"⁽⁶²⁾ in terms of a conceptual frame of reference. Different conceptual schemes may be concerned with the same concrete phenomena but phenomena themselves are merely a collection of stimuli imposing themselves upon our senses. Observation of such phenomena involves a conceptual scheme which refers to facts and the relationship between facts. Therefore, various conceptual schemes are concerned with different facts and the problem of translation between conceptual schemes becomes significant. What is a fact to one conceptual scheme may not even be recognized as such by another; it is precisely irrelevant to the scientific purposes implied in the use of the other conceptual scheme. To overcome this problem of translation, Parsons argues on a priori grounds

that the action frame of reference, the conceptual scheme articulated by Parsons, is the common denominator, as it were, of all of the analytic theories of action. According to Parsons, it is impossible even to talk about action except in terms of the action frame of reference. It has a "phenomenological status."⁽⁶³⁾

It is the indispensable logical framework in which we describe and think about the phenomena of action. (64)

Therefore, any theory of action must be ultimately reducible to the terms of the action frame of reference. If they are not capable of such reduction, they may still represent valid analytical theories concerning concrete phenomena but the phenomena with which they deal is not social action.

It is important to avoid a serious misunderstanding at this point. It is not Parsons' contention that all human knowledge can be reduced to the categories of the action frame of reference. Parsons is, in this sense, far more modest than some of his sociological predecessors who claimed a special status for sociology as the Queen of the sciences, the discipline under which all human knowledge might be subsumed. Parsons' contention that the explanation of human behavior involves a theoretical pluralism implies that there are frames of reference distinct from his own which lead to the development of analytical sciences and which can legitimately claim to have produced knowledge of human reality. Parsons suggests that these other frames of reference can be classified so as to produce a tripartite division of theoretical systems, the systems of nature, action and culture. Parsons states:

It should be further noted that the distinction is one of theoretical systems, not one of classes of concrete historical individuals. (65)

In other words, each theoretical system may attempt to analyze the same concrete phenomena but the analyses will differ as a function of the different frames of reference presupposed by the different theoretical systems. The three theoretical systems are incompatible only if they imperialistically claim that their respective frame of reference represents the sole legitimate basis upon which knowledge of human reality can be gained. This led to the positivistic reification of its conceptual apparatus and to idealistic emanationism. Knowledge is, therefore, according to Parsons, separable into three theoretical orientations. Still, knowledge is considered by him as an organic unity and the distinction is only analytical. Indeed, there is a close relationship between the three theoretical systems. Each theoretical system serves to distinguish for the other two systems the constant from the variable elements within the frame of reference. To the social scientist wishing to analyze a suicide, it is a constant assumption that if a man jumps off a bridge he will fall; such an assumption is relevant to the social scientist only as a given whereas, for the physical scientist, employing the theoretical system of nature, it is precisely the phenomena of the fall which is of scientific interest to him. Parsons states:

The scientific function of a descriptive frame of reference is to make it possible to describe phenomena in such a way as to distinguish those facts about them which are relevant to and capable of explanation in terms of a given theoretical system from those which are not. The latter enter into the descriptions as one class of "data." To the social scientist it is a relevant but unproblematical fact that if a suicide jumps he falls. What is

problematical is why he jumps. To the physicist, on the other hand, it is a relevant but unproblematical fact that the suicide does jump. What is problematical to him is why, having jumped he falls as he did, with the rate of acceleration, the velocity and momentum on striking the water, etc. (66)

This distinction represents, for Parsons, more than a merely gratuitous bow to the legitimacy of the other frames of reference. The predominantly positivistic orientation of the theoretical systems of nature, the physical sciences, is absolutely necessary to the enterprise of social science which adopts the action frame of reference since it supplies the latter with empirically verified assumptions about the constant elements of the action frame of reference. It is only with reference to these constant elements that the variable elements can be subjected to analysis. In a like manner, the theoretical systems of action and culture are presupposed by the physical sciences. And, according to Parsons, it is only the action frame of reference as developed by him in his theoretical enterprise which can fulfill this scientific function for the other two theoretical systems. Parsons states that the action frame of reference:

...is more adequate than any of the alternative frames of reference which have been considered here, such as the natural science schema of space-time and the idealistic schema. Within that frame of reference it has been possible to work out systematically points of articulation with both these other frames of reference through considering the status of the constant data of the problems of action. (67)

What is it, then, that makes the theoretical system of action distinct from the other two theoretical systems of nature and culture and what types of explanations must be translatable into the categories of the action frame of reference?

First, unlike the theoretical system of culture, the theoretical

system of action is empirical in that it is concerned with processes in time. Cultural systems are theoretical in the sense that they embody objectively verifiable propositions yet they are not empirical because the objects of such systems are eternal and they exist only in the minds of individuals; as such, they are not observable except by recourse to their symbolic manifestations. The theoretical systems of nature and action are analytically distinguishable in so far as the latter employ as a frame of reference the means-ends schema and the former employ the space-time frame of reference. Implied in the action frame of reference is a temporal dimension without which the concept of an end would be meaningless but the action frame of reference is non-spatial.

Physical time is a mode of relationship of events in space, action time a mode of relation of means and ends and other action elements. (68)

The conception of 'end' involves, by necessity, recourse to the subjective element in action hence the employment of a method of Verstehen which is not utilizable within the space-time framework for which there is no subjective element. In short, then, the action frame of reference and the theoretical system built upon it is distinguishable by its object of study-action-defined as a relationship between four elements: an actor, an end of action, the conditions of action and the alternative means of action implying a normative orientation of action. The apparent circularity of Parsons' argument derives from the fact that his definition of action is regarded as a proposition with a priori status. Just as Kant argued that the explanatory categories of mass, velocity, location in space, direction, cause, etc. (i.e., the categories of thought relevant to the theoretical systems of nature) are a priori (not derived from sensible experience), so too

does Parsons argue that the phenomenon of action implies logically the four elements mentioned above. Just as it is nonsense, within the space-time framework, to try and conceive of a unit of matter which has mass but no location in space, the attempt to conceive of an act which does not have an end or any of the other elements which make up the definition of action is also nonsensical, according to Parsons.

On the basis of this a priori judgment, Parsons submits that any explanation of action must be reducible to the categories of explanation of the action frame of reference and any scientific discipline which has as its object of study aspects of human action must employ explanatory concepts which can be directly deduced from this conceptual schema. Consequently, all social sciences must employ this conceptual framework. The action frame of reference, then, is not limited in applicability to Parsons' own discipline of sociology. Sociology and all the other empirical social sciences are distinct in that each special science deals with a limited aspect of human action systems. But, action is, for Parsons, an organic phenomenon. As such, the properties of action systems derive not only from the nature of the parts that make up action systems but from the relationships between such parts. Certain properties, that is, are emergent. One such emergent property with which Parsons has dealt with in this study is that of economic rationality. It is this scientific emergent property of action systems which is of scientific interest to the discipline of economics. It employs a frame of reference peculiar to its scientific interest, however, the categories of explanation implied in that conceptual schema must be translatable into those of

the broader action frame of reference. This is the conclusion Parsons draws from his analysis of the inherent limitations of earlier economic theories employing a positivistic frame of reference. It is the case, however, that consideration of the economic aspects of action systems implies the need for the examination of other aspects of action systems, aspects which are residual to the specific economic frame of reference. For instance, it is recognized that the analysis of economic rationality implies an analysis of the market relations which involves a plurality of individuals pursuing discrete economic interests some of whom may be in a position to exert coercive power in their action which thereby modifies the nature of 'purely' conceived economic phenomena. When this emergent phenomenon becomes of scientific interest, in its own right, there is a distinct subject matter for the discipline of political science. Similarly, the emergent property of the regulation of such power relationships through the existence of common-values systems becomes the special interest of sociology. The level of abstraction of these sciences increases so that sociology deals with phenomena which are analyzable only at a level of abstraction away from the concrete phenomena, a level at which it is possible to treat action systems as organic rather than mechanical wholes.

This abstraction consists in the progressive elimination, as the breaking down into parts is carried farther, of the emergent properties of the more complex systems. Limiting observation of the concrete phenomenon, then, to the properties that have a place in the unit act or other subsystem leads to indeterminacy in the theory when applied to complex systems. This indeterminacy, a form of empirical inadequacy, is the fundamental difficulty of atomistic theories when applied to organic phenomena. They cannot do justice to properties such as economic rationality

which are not properties of "action as such," that is, of isolated unit acts or of atomistic systems, but only of organic systems of action beyond a certain degree of complexity. (69)

Parsons also includes as distinct analytical sciences of action psychology dealing with the emergent properties of action systems understandable in terms of heredity and the 'the technologies' which have special reference to "...the concrete content of immediate ends, norms and knowledge." (70)

These five disciplines, then, represent the analytical attempts to employ the descriptive frame of reference called the action frame of reference. That is, each distinct discipline attempts to define the values of the variables relevant to its own scientific interest and the relationships between such variables. What is common to them all is the utilization of the conceptual elements, conceived at differing levels of abstraction, found within the action frame of reference. Parsons says of the five analytical disciplines:

The facts relevant to them all can be translated into terms of the action schema as a frame of reference. (71)

This is true, even though for most of their purposes, they employ a narrower frame of reference adequate to the level of emergent phenomena with which they deal but nevertheless, it is a frame of reference derived from the broader more inclusive conceptual scheme.

This completes our summary of the way in which Parsons attempts to prove/^{that} the possibility of objective knowledge of the social world is a real one. He has established what he feels to be a firm foundation for a generalizing theory of social action. Because it is general, it can function as the common basis upon which comparative analyses of societies and theories about society can be built. As such, the

categories of the action frame of reference are considered as universally valid and applicable to the analysis of all societies existing anywhere at anytime. The categories are conceived as static, ahistorical and exhaustive. This represents Parsons' argument against the historical relativism implied in the idealist emphasis on the subjective aspect of human knowledge. It is an argument which, like those of Rickert and Mannheim among others, is grounded ultimately in a meta-empirical or trans-historical metaphysical conception of man and the universe. When Parsons argues that 'knowledge' is the product of a theoretical pluralism made necessary by the multiplicity of value-relevant conceptual orientations to the world and when, upon the basis of his a priori conviction that that multiplicity is limited, he adopts what is, in essence, a 'correspondence theory of truth' upon which his claim for the realism of his epistemological position (namely, analytical realism) depends. Furthermore, he is committed to a belief in the real interdependence of 'organic' elements which can be distinguished only analytically. His metaphysical position resembles most closely the views of Alfred North Whitehead whom Parsons explicitly relies upon very often. This essay is not the place to enter into a philosophical critique of Parsons' metaphysical organicism. For the present, it is enough to have demonstrated that, once again, the threat of skepticism and relativism has been met by an appeal to a belief in the synthetic capacities of the human intellect and a commitment to arguments whose validity cannot be measured by recourse to empirically verifiable criteria of 'truth.'

Appendix:

As Parsons has said many times, the articulation of the action frame of reference does not itself represent valid empirically verified knowledge about human reality. It is, rather, only the necessary first step toward such knowledge. Only after distinct analytical theories of action have been developed upon the logically necessary conceptual framework known as the action frame of reference can any claim to have arrived at such knowledge be justified. If Parsons' claims for the action frame of reference are to be justified, it will be necessary for him to be able to articulate an analytical theory about the normative coordination of social action which can be reduced or translated into the terms of the action frame of reference. That is, if Parsons is to be judged to have successfully overcome the skepticism of the relativistic position, even in his own terms, it is necessary to demonstrate that the conceptual frame of reference layed out in The Structure of Social Action is, in fact, the only such framework in terms of which action can be analyzed and that the categories of this framework are truly exhaustive. If categories of explanation other than those employed in the action frame of reference are included in his subsequent attempts to develop the analytical counterpart of the descriptive frame of reference, that frame of reference cannot be regarded as the non-relative point upon which the comparison of various social theories can be based.

The analysis of The Structure of Social Action that has been presented here is similar to although not identical with that offered by Harold J. Bershady in his recent study, Ideology and Social Knowledge.

While it is unfortunate that I did not come upon this book earlier in the preparation of this essay, it has been possible for me to revise various portions of my original draft and I am indebted to Bershadý for a number of key insights. After analyzing the direction and development of Parsons' work after the early work, The Structure of Social Action, Bershadý has concluded his analysis in the following manner:

First, the categories of the means-end framework were proposed as logically necessary for all social thought. Then, each of the functional sub-systems was conceived to be necessary to any social system. To all this was added the conditions of structural and temporal differentiation of the units of any social system held to be necessary for the existence of the system. Following, there was proposed the 'hierarchy of cybernetic control' as an ingredient apparently necessary (though vaguely stated) to organize the sub-systems of any societal system. And presently-although we have no idea whether this will be the end of it all-the modalities of society are not merely logically construed combinations of the elements, but are conceived to occur in a necessary temporal sequence: certain variations of society cannot occur before the others. Almost every one of the conditional necessities Parsons has brought forth has led him to revise his logical framework of action-to add to or emend the categories of that framework in some way. But if Parsons is to combat relativism by his own standards, must he not show that he can ground his framework of action without further alteration, and that once grounded it will be commodious enough to accomodate any further possible general necessities that may be found or conceived? If he cannot do this, his framework will not be a perfectly stationary "non-relative" point into which all other social theories may be translated. (72)

After summarizing his conclusions in this way, Bershadý wisely suggests that in light of the magnitude of Parsons' intention to establish the theoretical foundation upon which one can:

...incorporate and transform every narrow view into a single overarching conception which will allow us to behold, eventually, every variation of society that can exist. (73)

it is best to conclude that:

There remains a huge gap between his intention and his achievements. And whether his intention can ever be fulfilled is a subject best left to soothsayers. (74)

Footnotes to Part III-section 3.:

1. Bennett M. Berger, "On Talcott Parsons," Commentary, vi, Dec, 1962, p. 512.
2. Talcott Parsons, The Social System, New York, 1968, dedication.
3. Robin Williams Jr., "The Sociological Theory of Talcott Parsons," in The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons, ed, Max Black, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1961, p. 95.
4. Alvin Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, London, 1971, p. 209.
5. Talcott Parsons, Societies, Englewood Cliffs, 1966, p. 115.
6. Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers, New York, 1968, p. 697.
7. Ibid., p. 719.
8. Ibid., p. 720.
9. Ibid., p. 720.
10. Ibid., p. 721.
11. Ibid., p. 721.
12. Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, Introduction to the paperback edition, p. vii.
13. Ibid., p. x.
14. Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, p. 757.
15. Ibid., p. 757.
16. Ibid., p. 23.
17. Ibid., p. 21.
18. Ibid., p. 23.
19. Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, Preface to the Second Edition, p. xvi.
20. Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, p. 77.
21. Ibid., p. 44.
22. Ibid., p. 75.

23. Ibid., p. 77.
24. Ibid., p. 52.
25. Ibid., p. 55.
26. Ibid., p. 59.
27. Ibid., p. 93.
28. Ibid., p. 79.
29. Ibid., p. 75.
30. Ibid., p. 167.
31. Ibid., p. 168.
32. Ibid., p. 187.
33. Ibid., p. 207.
34. Ibid., p. 198.
35. Ibid., p. 206.
36. Ibid., p. 206.
37. Ibid., p. 295.
38. Ibid., p. 247.
39. Ibid., p. 248.
40. Ibid., p. 382.
41. Ibid., p. 82.
42. Ibid., p. 486.
43. Ibid., p. 762n.
44. Ibid., p. 730.
45. Ibid., p. 33.
46. Ibid., p. 41.
47. Ibid., p. 753.
48. Ibid., p. 626.
49. Ibid., p. 716.
50. Ibid., p. 751.
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52. Ibid., p. 753.
53. Ibid., p. 753.
54. Ibid., p. 753.
55. Ibid., p. 754.
56. Ibid., p. 743.
57. Ibid., p. 755.
58. Ibid., p. 755.
59. Ibid., pp. 758-759.
60. Ibid., p. 757.
61. Ibid., p. 756.
62. Ibid., p. 41.
63. Ibid., p. 733.
64. Ibid., p. 733.
65. Ibid., p. 762.
66. Ibid., p. 736.
67. Ibid., p. 756.
68. Ibid., p. 763.
69. Ibid., p. 740.
70. Ibid., p. 770.
71. Ibid., p. 770.
72. Harold J. Bershady, Ideology and Social Knowledge, Oxford, 1973, pp. 148-149.
73. Ibid., p. 150.
74. Ibid., p. 150.

4. On Alvin Gouldner's The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology:

In The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, Gouldner brings together his earlier theoretical statements. His early emphasis on the practical applicability of sociology in Patterns of Industrial Bureacracy and Wildcat Strike, his critique of 'structural-functionalism' and his alternative 'stratified system model' in Notes on Technology and the Moral Order and his concern with the archaic philosophical underpinnings of the sociological discipline in Enter Plato are all restated in 1971. That is, Gouldner, over the past twenty years, has been concerned with some of the central issues of the sociological discipline such as the role of value and experience in the formulation of sociological theory. His essay, "Anti-Minotaur: the Myth of a Value-Free Sociology," demonstrates his recognition of the classical origins of his concerns.

Gouldner suggests that an academic discipline is confronting a crisis when the "...technical directives"⁽¹⁾ of a theoretical paradigm (and, he is employing the term, paradigm, in a Kuhnian sense) become dissonant with the prevailing "...structure of sentiments"⁽²⁾, a phrase by which he refers to a set of "...collective feelings"⁽³⁾ signalling an evaluative as opposed to a purely cognitive orientation. What is important to notice in this definition of crisis is that such a crisis is brought about by extra-disciplinary factors. A crisis does not occur, according to Gouldner, because of the internal contradictions of any particular paradigm or even because of the discovery of strategic anomalies as would be the case if he were to follow consistently a Kuhnian conception of the philosophy of science. Rather, the crisis

of sociology of which he speaks is a reflection of extra-theoretical phenomena, a wider cultural crisis based upon a conflict between the values of an already accomplished technicized society and those of a new Romanticism. In the attempt to analyze contemporary sociology in terms of extra-theoretical factors, Gouldner is involved in the relativization of thought and his analysis rests upon some of the fundamental assumptions of the traditional sociology of knowledge. It is surprising, then, that Gouldner gives no explicit consideration to the epistemological issues involved in the earlier attempts to establish the foundation for a sociology of knowledge. We shall return to this point shortly.

For the moment, I would like to look at Gouldner's "...fine-grained, close analysis"⁽⁴⁾ of sociology's dominant theorist, Talcott Parsons. The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology is, in fact, based entirely upon an examination of the nature and development of Parsonian structural-functionalism and the various reactions there has been to it over the past twenty-five years. Gouldner goes so far as to suggest that Parsonian theory is, to all extents and purposes, synonymous with Western Academic Sociology. What lies behind his attempt to characterize all of western sociology as Parsonian is his desire to employ the Kuhnian model of physical science to an understanding of the development and nature of social science. Since the central concept of Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolutions is that of 'paradigm', the application of his model to an analysis of sociology demands that Gouldner argue that structural-functionalism has served as the sociological orthodoxy for the past twenty years. Gouldner has stated in a defence of The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology that his notion of crisis is equivalent to Kuhn's concept of scientific revolution. He states:

As Thomas Kuhn makes plain, a crisis is upon an intellectual discipline when its established

paradigms are challenged and when radically different ones are advanced and found attractive. (5)

According to Kuhn, a paradigm:

...stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community. (6)

In applying this conception of paradigm to sociology, Gouldner suggests that structural-functionalism has represented an orientation around which there has been a high degree of consensus exhibited within the sociological discipline. Gouldner, following Kuhn, does not suggest that there need be a consensus at the level of the substance of the theories, however, he does argue that there has existed a shared universe of discourse. For example, in the case of the so-called 'conflict theorists' Gouldner suggests that although they criticized Parsons' theories, they did so from within a similar problematic such that both sides to that debate were, in fact, in agreement over the fundamental 'domain assumptions' of the discipline. And, according to Gouldner's arguments, it is these domain assumptions which are metaphysical in character and which define, prior to any analytical consideration of the sociologist's object of study, the questions regarded as relevant, which are fundamental. In short, it is Gouldner's position that there existed between the structural-functionalists and the conflict theorists agreement as to the criteria to be employed in the determination of what amounts to an adequate sociological argument. I would suggest that it is at least problematic that one can speak accurately of sociologists as ever having participated in this kind of scientific community. When a science is strictly controlled by an established paradigm, there will exist, according to Kuhn, no debate as to the rules of procedure for that discipline. It is only when a

paradigm begins to break down and lose support that such rules are no longer taken for granted and competing interpretations of the 'proper' scientific procedure arise. Kuhn states:

Normal science can proceed without rules only so long as the relevant scientific community accepts without question the particular problem-solutions already achieved. Rules should therefore become important and the characteristic unconcern about them should vanish whenever paradigms or models are felt to be insecure. (7)

It would be difficult, to say the least, to discern any period within the history of sociology that was characterized by such a "characteristic unconcern" about the procedures of sociological analysis.

By equating Parsonian functionalism with western academic sociology, Gouldner glosses over the significant differences on the level of domain assumptions or problematic between structural-functionalism and symbolic interactionism and between American and European sociologies.

I will not bother to refute the 'evidence' Gouldner marshalls in support of his belief that structural-functionalism represented a paradigm. Those arguments are based on responses to questionnaire studies in which sociologists were asked to respond to the almost meaningless question, "Do you think functional analysis and theory still retain great value for contemporary sociology?"⁽⁸⁾ and suggestions that functionalists have controlled the professional associations of the discipline.

In my opinion, what is far more interesting to consider is that in stressing that it is Parsons above all who had directed the growth and development of western academic sociology, Gouldner has, in fact, adopted an unexplored assumption of fundamental importance and it is just such unexplored assumptions toward which his 'Reflexive' sociology is supposedly oriented. It is implicitly assumed throughout The Coming

Crisis of Western Sociology that it is the theoretical orientation of the discipline rather than the empirical investigations or some combination of the two which have primacy in defining the character of sociology. Gouldner, then, has made another fundamental assumption regarding the philosophy of social science, similar and related to his adoption of Kuhn's notion of a paradigm, without an explicit consideration of its implications and without recourse to the already extensive literature regarding these issues. He has failed because it is not his object and because the consequent ambiguities would necessitate a reevaluation of his own position, to reopen the complex debate concerning the relationship between theory and methods.

It is ironic, then, that it is precisely Parsons' assumption regarding the priority of 'general theory' that Gouldner criticizes at great length as a source of Parsons' conservatism. Gouldner argues that the assumption as to the priority of general theory in Parsons' work reveals a deep metaphysical conviction:

...which clearly devolves from an affirmation of the importance of the whole and its priority to the parts. (9)

Such an assumption, according to Gouldner, limits the empirical content of Parsons' conceptualizations which consequently possess only a "...precarious reality."⁽¹⁰⁾ Parsons' concepts are, according to Gouldner, empirically empty. He then suggests that as a result of this empirical emptiness, Parsons' theory can neither satisfy the criteria of scientific prediction, deduction or explanation nor can it be evaluated in such terms. According to Gouldner, Parsons' theory merely expresses a set of metaphysical convictions such that Parsons' categories of explanation:

...function as a symbolic representation and constitution of the social world's oneness, (11)

a harmonious social unity. If Gouldner's criticism of Parsons' assumption about general theory is valid and, if as I have suggested, he implicitly adopts the same assumption, his own conceptualizations must remain empirically empty satisfying a similar symbolic function and capable only of producing post-facto classifications and interpretations.

In the rest of this essay, I shall focus on the type of argumentation Gouldner employs rather than discussing any factual errors he might make or instead of analysing systematically his critique of Parsons which would be beyond the scope of a single essay.

The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology is an example of an attempt to apply the perspective of the sociology of knowledge to an analysis of sociology itself. Unfortunately, much of the theoretical foundation and many of the methodological directives of Gouldner's study remain implicit. It is these which we wish ultimately to uncover and evaluate.

At times, Gouldner resorts to a form of argumentation which amounts to no more than fallacious arguments of the 'ignoratio elenchi' type. He suggests, for instance, that the conservatism of Parsons' functionalism is evidenced by the type of academic setting in which the theory was developed and in the type of persons with whom Parsons interacted, notably the 'Pareto Circle' at Harvard. Unfortunately, Lipsett and Ladd have taken this section of Gouldner's argument seriously enough to answer Gouldner in his own terms thereby lending credence to his imputations of 'guilt by association' with their equally specious imputations of 'innocence by association.' Such a vulgarization of the sociology of knowledge, a vulgarization which is by no means uncommon, should be immediately dismissed.

According to Gouldner, Platonic social theory and contemporary sociological theory share many of the same domain assumptions. The domain assumptions which together constitute the 'infrastructure' of social theory are beliefs and sentiments. Such beliefs are not part of the theorist's explicit concerns, however, they do shape the character of his social theories and they do so in spite of the fact that they are often held unconsciously. With the related concepts of infrastructure and domain assumptions, Gouldner expands his earlier definition of crisis. He states:

...old background assumptions may come to operate in new conditions, scientifically or socially unsuitable, and thus create an uncomfortable dissonance for the theorist. They then become boundaries which confine and inhibit the theory's further development. When this occurs, it is no small technical rectification that is required; rather, a basic shift impends. Again, a new generation may arise with new background assumptions, ones that are not resonated congenially by theories based on older assumptions which the young generation feels to be wrong or absurd. It is then we can say that a theory, or the discipline based on it, verges on crisis. (12)

As an aside, I would suggest that this quotation lends further support to my comments regarding Gouldner's position with reference to the disciplinary primacy of general theory.

Gouldner argues that it is not only western academic sociology that is approaching crisis. Marxist sociology, the only other distinctive sociological paradigm, is, according to Gouldner, also experiencing a breakdown of its paradigm. Gouldner somewhat surprisingly suggests that these two distinct paradigms are converging in response to the respective crises of the disciplines constructed upon their basis, namely western academic sociology which is equated by Gouldner with Parsonian structural^{1/f} functionalism, and Marxist sociology.

The attempts of functionalists like Moore and Smelser to theoretically account for social change by adopting aspects of the Marxist theory of change is seen as a response to the American 'structure of sentiments' and the attempts of Soviet sociologists to adopt a certain functionalist style of analysis in order to stabilize the existing Soviet state apparatus and social relationships are interpreted by Gouldner as evidence of a trend toward theoretical convergence. He writes:

There are, then, in both Moore and Smelser indications of the potential development of a kind of "left Parsonianism." (13)

Even Parsons himself, in turning toward an evolutionary approach to society, is, according to Gouldner, attempting to meet the demands of the new structure of sentiments by explicitly attempting to account for change from within a structural-functionalist framework. However, the suggestion that there exists the possibility for the development of a "left Parsonianism" actually contradicts the basic thesis of Gouldner's book. He has stated:

The trouble with Functionalism is, in a way, that it is not really committed to social order in general, but only to preserving its own social order. (14)

If this is, in fact, an accurate description of Functionalism's shortcomings, it would follow that it would not be able to change toward a left Parsonianism as a response to a shift in the structure of sentiments. If it were to respond at all to such a shift, it could not be said to be functionalist in the above sense. This contradiction arises from Gouldner's assumption that all functionalists share the same domain assumptions which, in turn, arises from his presentation of sociology

as a paradigmatic discipline. In other words, if a left Parsonianism characterized by one set of assumptions can exist along side a 'right' Parsonianism characterized by another set of domain assumptions, the case for suggesting that functionalism represents a paradigm is weakened. Given the definition of a paradigm as a collection of consensually accepted beliefs, values and techniques, it is not possible for one paradigm to include two sets of contradictory assumptions.

When Gouldner disccusses contemporary Soviet sociology as converging with western academic sociology, he points to the former's recent stress on the need for 'concrete research' and such a reorientation is understood, by Gouldner, as an implicit critique of "...an older style of speculative theorizing."⁽¹⁵⁾ Gouldner makes this point in order to suggest that the academicization of Soviet sociology supports his thesis of convergence. Previously, as we have seen, he had argued that functionalism which is synonymous with western academic sociology is empirically empty and highly speculative. While it is true that much of western sociology has been characterized by a stressing of the need for and priority of concrete research, Gouldner's own analysis of Parsons suggests that such an attitude is characteristic of only distinct trends in sociology and that it should not be confused with the over-all orientation of the discipline which has been predominantly theoretical and consequently empirically empty following as it supposedly does Parsons' level of abstraction. Again, Gouldner has contradicted himself largely as a result of his interpretation and employment of Kuhn's model of scientific development. Finally, in light of his belief that it is not the explicitly stated concepts that shape the nature of sociological thought but rather the hidden assumptions regarding man and society which do so, Gouldner more than anyone should recognize that the eclectic employment of Marxian terms by certain functionalists

does not amount to a convergence with Marxism on the level of theoretical orientation or problematic.

In his critique of Parsons' The Structure of Social Action, Gouldner argued that theories of convergence serve as an ideological rhetoric, "...a way of persuading men to accept certain views,"⁽¹⁶⁾ convergence being one way in which views, in practice, come to be 'tested.' If such is the case, has not Gouldner reduced his own argument concerning the convergence of Academic and Marxist sociologies to the status of ideological rhetoric?

Most basic to Gouldner's philosophy of science is his denial of the view that sociological theories change and develop because of the discovery of new 'facts' or the production of new 'data.' The entire notion of crisis rests, for Gouldner, on the following postulate:

The most basic changes in any science commonly derive not so much from the invention of new research techniques but rather from new ways of looking at data that may have long existed. Indeed, they may neither refer to nor be occasioned by "data," old or new. The most basic changes are in theory and in conceptual schemes, especially those that embody new background assumptions. (17)

These basic changes in theory and conceptual schemes are:

...a consequence of changes in social and cultural structure as these are mediated by the changing sentiments, domain assumptions, and personal reality of the theorist and those around him. (18)

It follows from this postulate that the empirical methodology of sociology and the studies issuing therefrom are secondary to the theoretical orientation of a discipline and its theory-guiding domain assumptions. Gouldner criticizes an alternative epistemological orientation, positivism, as a reflection of a set of domain assumptions expressing a resignation to the pure study of a social world beyond human control;

in so doing, Gouldner concludes that positivistic orientations to social science act as a foundation for the repressive component of sociology resonated in what Gouldner sees as the conservatism inherent in structural-functionalism.

Similarly, Gouldner rejects the hypothetico-deductive model of social scientific explanation. He argues that the productions of sociologists are not laws or empirically verified propositions about relations between things; rather, according to Gouldner, sociologists present merely plausible conceptualizations or mappings of the social world which remain empirically empty. Unfortunately, Gouldner fails to supply his readers with the criteria necessary to determine which mappings are ideologically distorted and which are not.

When he criticizes Parsons' conceptualizations as reflecting a metaphysical drive toward the mapping of the world as fundamentally unified and that, for Parsons, the test of analytic utility is the extent of conceptual applicability, Gouldner is not assuming a positivistic rejection of metaphysical concerns in general. He states;

If I object to Parsons' metaphysics..., it is not because I object to metaphysics in general, but only to those that are befuddled. (19)

The question that remains is how does one distinguish between those metaphysics that are befuddled and those that are not.

Gouldner argues that the empirical emptiness of Parsons' scheme is a product of his desire to examine the interdependence of system components which requires that Parsons constitute, in an abstract theoretical fashion, the whole prior to a direct, empirical examination of the parts that make up a social system. Therefore, Gouldner grants to Parsons' conceptualizations the status of ex cathedra postulations.

When Gouldner, himself, posits an alternative theoretical position without wishing to give up the concept of 'system,' he focuses on the degree of 'functional autonomy' of the various system elements.

He states:

...there is a tendency for each part to maintain its own boundaries and to resist fuller and more complete integration into the larger system. (20)

This might well be the case, however, an analysis of such tendencies is by no means excluded from the structural-functional framework; the emphasis on tension management is directed toward precisely this problem. Still, the major point is this: in stressing the functional autonomy of the system parts, Gouldner has not done away with the need for a prior conceptualization of the whole system. His argument relies upon a conception of relative autonomy from the functioning system. In Gouldner's approach, too, the whole is previously conceptualized, even if only implicitly, since it is still necessary to posit what it is that the particular system elements are relatively autonomous from. In short, one is still examining the system elements in terms of their influence or lack of influence upon each other and the system as a whole.

In an actual application of Gouldner's 'stratified system model' (of which the key concept is that of functional autonomy), the above point becomes clear. In Gouldner and Preston's Notes on Technology and the Moral Order, the authors attempted a cross-cultural statistical analysis of data from 71 pre-industrial societies in order to establish which of four variables, Lineality, Sex Dominance, Technology, or Normative Structure was causally most efficacious in determining the nature of the societies as wholes. They concluded that:

..., of all the various factors influencing sociocultural outcomes, technology is relatively the most important. (21)

In this attempt to transcend the functionalist postulate that 'everything influences everything else,' by determining the relative influence that can be accorded to any one variable, they have continued to rely upon a prior conceptualization of the system as a whole in order to use that as a 'base line' in relation to which the various system elements may be seen to influence one another and the system. They may, then, have attempted to fill the empirical gap that Parsons seldom concerns himself with, however, it remains the case that it is an empirical gap established by a prior theoretical conceptualization of the social world and according to Gouldner's own arguments in The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology it is at the level of such theoretical conceptualizations that ideological and metaphysical assumptions have their effect.

In Part IV of The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, Gouldner outlines his proposal for a sociology of sociology which he chooses to call Reflexive Sociology. Although the reader is unsure as to whether such development is meant to cure the crisis or accelerate it thereby producing a profound change in the nature of the discipline, it is obvious that for Gouldner it is toward the development of a 'reflexive' sociology of sociology that we must work if the discipline is to confront the crisis and endure it fruitfully.

I mentioned earlier that it was Gouldner's purpose to apply a sociological perspective in analysing sociology itself. Gouldner does not hesitate to employ the generally accepted empirical tools of sociology in his analysis. For example, he attempts to support a number of arguments by reference to a questionnaire study conducted by Timothy Sprehe and himself. Also, despite his criticisms of Parsons' structural-functionalism, the majority of his arguments are grounded in

a tacit acceptance of many functionalist principles. For instance, in attempting to utilize the Kuhnian model of science, he emphasizes the importance of disciplinary socialization processes in establishing and maintaining a paradigm's dominant position within a discipline. Furthermore, the general theme of his analysis of Parsons is that structural-functional theory functions as a conservative ideology cementing the status quo and inhibiting systematic strains and tensions. The implicit functionalism of Gouldner's The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology is interesting in the light of his suggestion that there is a possibility of a left-oriented functionalism. At the beginning of his conclusions, he admits that he views his own work over the past twenty years as consistent and not discontinuous. He states:

...it ought now to be perfectly plain (at least to some) that there is a deep convergence between what Gouldner has, in this volume, claimed to see in the world of sociology and what the earlier Gouldner had been doing all along in that same world. (22)

What is significant is that the majority of Gouldner's previous writings employed a functionalist perspective even if that perspective was imbued with a slightly critical impulse. In both Patterns of Industrial Bureacracy and Wildcat Strike, his two most influential major publications, one finds a study of the latent functions of the implementation of various types of organizational rules. This is hardly surprising since Gouldner, in all his earlier works, stressed the important influence that Robert Merton had had upon shaping his own theoretical orientation. In 1954, Gouldner articulated one of his fundamental assumptions which is clearly functionalist:

Wherever bureaucratic patterns are found to be relatively entrenched, it must be assumed that their 'career' has resulted in a net balance of gains

greater than that of the losses, though it would be foolhardy to assume that there had been no losses at all. (23)

Gouldner, then, might be cited as a prime example of support for Merton's argument that functionalism is inherently neither conservative nor radical. Such a conclusion contradicts Gouldner's basic argument in The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology in which his basic intention is to demonstrate that as the dominant paradigm within western sociology, structural-functionalism has, by virtue of its inner logic, guided the development of sociology such that it is now a discipline with an inherently conservative orientation.

By neglecting to evaluate critically the empirical tools of sociology and in failing to discuss explicitly certain problem areas within the philosophy of social science, Gouldner has intentionally confined his analysis to an examination of the ontological assumptions prevalent in contemporary sociology. He does not suggest in what ways these ontological assumptions are reflected in or are influential in shaping the epistemological foundations of sociology. His emphasis on ontological problems and his dismissal of epistemological ones is a position which he accepts consciously. He states:

To explore the character of sociology, to know what a sociology is, therefore, requires us to identify its deepest assumptions about man and society. For these reasons it will not be to its methods of study to which I will look for an understanding of its character, but rather to its assumptions about man and society. The use of particular methods of study implies the existence of particular assumptions about man and society. (24)

Gouldner fails to specify just how the use of particular methods of study are implied by the existence of particular metaphysical assumptions. By failing to discuss the epistemological consequences of his own

sociology, he escapes from having to face the problem of relativism upon which other sociologists of knowledge have exerted so much time and effort. In fact, he dismisses practically all of the central problems encountered in the previous pages regarding the establishment of an historically informed conception of knowledge. Despite numerous criticisms of this failure, Gouldner has remained dogmatic in his refusal to open the epistemological debate. In replying to a criticism by Richard Bernstein, Gouldner has said:

...my argument about the crisis of sociology today did not choose to focus on epistemological but on ontological issues. This, of course, is precisely the whole point of my emphasis on 'domain assumptions.' (25)

This refusal to discuss the relationship between ontological and epistemological assumptions results in Gouldner's subsequent failure to ground his sociology of sociology methodologically. Instead, he continues to employ precisely those methodological assumptions and empirical techniques that his whole thesis, if accepted, makes problematic.

As Paul Hirst has said about Gouldner's analysis:

The sociology of knowledge shares the very conceptual and methodological flaws of sociology itself; sociological "self-consciousness" works through the very forms of consciousness which are at question. (26)

Gouldner is continuously ambiguous about what the usefulness of his Reflexive sociology is. In places, he suggests that his sociology of sociology has no epistemological consequences whatsoever. He states:

Whether or not any work presents us with reality or illusion cannot be determined by knowing the life that the thinker has led. In the end, this can be appraised only by looking at the work alone and not at the life; the work can be judged only in terms or standards appropriate to it, and by seeing how well it bears up under criticism. (27)

Explicitly, the purpose of Gouldner's sociology of sociology is to uncover the assumptions made by sociologists in order to evaluate them. Gouldner, however, takes it for granted that the criteria of evaluation are unproblematic. In defining reflexivity, he states:

Unless he (the sociologist) delivers his domain assumptions from the dim realm of subsidiary awareness into the clearer realm of focal awareness, where they can be held firmly in view, they can never be brought before the bar of reason or submitted to the test of evidence. (28)

However, Gouldner has previously rejected the canons of scientific procedure as outlined by the hypothetico-deductive model of science and he has failed, in neglecting epistemological issues, to offer an alternative set of criteria by which competing sociological arguments can be evaluated. In fact, by suggesting that all theories are implicitly political theories and by stressing that all

...theories are accepted or rejected because (29)
of the background assumptions embedded in them

and by stating that sociology's attempt to discover the character of the social world is necessarily based upon prior assumptions about the nature of that world (assumptions that are historically relative), Gouldner has undermined any position which claims to operate according to a non-historically and non-situationally relative set of criteria. In brief, Gouldner attempts to maintain a distinction between the genesis and validity of an assertion but he does not tell us on what criteria that distinction rests.

Being aware of his own ambiguity in this matter, he suggests that since the sociology of sociology is incapable of establishing the epistemological validity of sociological assertions, its function must be to aid us in the understanding of those assertions. He states

...we do not want only to appraise the truth-value of any work, but we also wish to understand it. (30)

What is important to Gouldner is not the truth-value of a sociological argument; rather, he is interested in the attitude that we, as human beings, take toward that argument. He adopts the classical distinction between 'techne' and 'episteme' which he first discussed, at length in Enter Plato. According to the first conception of 'knowledge,' it is facts alone which are valued because they provide the basis for enhancing man's control over his environment. On the other hand, the conception of 'knowledge' as 'episteme' emphasizes the necessity of man's self-awareness since man as the knowing subject is considered to be inseparable from that which is known. By adopting the second conception of knowledge, self-awareness becomes, for Gouldner, the sought-after goal of the sociology of sociology. However, without a rigorous examination of the epistemological implications of such a conception of knowledge and by falling back into a traditional individualistic theory of mind (which, as we have seen, Mannheim attempted to transcend), the sociology of knowledge has become, in Gouldner's hands, an objectless self-reflection. And, although Gouldner has claimed to document the emergence of a convergence between two dominant orientations to the analysis of social reality which are, in his estimation, both partial and limited, he has failed to take up explicitly the fundamental questions pertaining to ^{the} epistemological and methodological implications implied by the conceptualization of knowledge as the product of 'synthetic convergence.'

Footnotes to Part III-section 4.:

1. Alvin Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, 1971, London, 398.
2. Ibid., p. 7.
3. Ibid., p. 7.
4. Ibid., p. 14.
5. Alvin Gouldner, "For Sociology: 'Varieties of Political Expression' revisited," A.J.S., vol. 78, no. 5, March, 1973, p. 1085.
6. Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago, 1970, p. 175.
7. Ibid., p. 47.
8. Gouldner, The Coming Crisis, op. cit., p. 168.
9. Ibid., p. 204.
10. Ibid., p. 204.
11. Ibid., p. 209.
12. Ibid., p. 34.
13. Ibid., p. 379.
14. Ibid., p. 281.
15. Ibid., p. 461.
16. Ibid., p. 17.
17. Ibid., p. 34.
18. Ibid., p. 397.
19. Ibid., p. 207.
20. Ibid., p. 216.
21. Ibid., p. 57.
22. Ibid., p. 482.
23. Alvin Gouldner, Patterns of Industrial Bureacracy, New York, 1965, p. 158.
24. Gouldner, The Coming Crisis, op. cit., p. 28.

25. Alvin Gouldner, "Reply to Richard J. Bernstein," in Sociological Inquiry, vol. 42, no. 1, 1972, p. 75.
26. Paul Q. Hirst, "Recent Tendencies in Sociological Theory," Economy and Society, vol. 1, no. 2, May, 1972, p. 217.
27. Gouldner, The Coming Crisis, op. cit., p. 482.
28. Ibid., p. 35.
29. Ibid., p. 29.
30. Ibid., p. 482.

Epilogue

In the previous pages, we have analyzed the epistemological orientations of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Dilthey, Rickert and Max Weber in order to provide an historically informed understanding of the development of a 'problematic' out of which emerged their respective contributions to social thought. At the end of Part II (pp. 143-150), we summarized our argument, to that point, emphasizing in so doing that it was Weber, above all, who had articulated the implications of the attempt, common to these theorists, to 'historicize' the epistemological contributions of Kant. Along with Weber, we came to an understanding of human knowledge as partial, perspectivistic and one-sided by virtue of its necessarily conceptual character.

By subsequently pursuing analyses of the theoretical orientations of Karl Mannheim, Talcott Parsons and Alvin Gouldner we were able to isolate and identify an epistemological assumption common to these more contemporary theorists who too often are regarded, by themselves and by others as representative of competing and fundamentally contradictory philosophical and epistemological approaches to the study of social reality. The assumption thus identified pertains to the meta-empirically grounded conviction that the threat of relativism is overcome by virtue of the synthesizing capacity of the human intellect, collectively understood. It is an assumption that maintains that although the specific knowledge of any one investigator may be partial, perspectivistic and limited, the development of human knowledge is ultimately dependent upon mankind's collective capacity to translate the partial and one-sided

insights into the nature of reality which have been gleaned by the interpretation of social reality from a variety of interpretive schemas or conceptual frameworks into the terms of a wider and more inclusive or more comprehensive interpretive schema. Briefly stated, our argument has been that that there has emerged a convergence around the very concept of convergence itself according to which the intellectual search for synthesis is believed to continually precede the creation of progressively broader and more comprehensive syntheses of perspectival viewpoints.

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