

CRITICAL STUDY

Dr. Henk E. S. Woldring. **Karl Mannheim: the Development of his Thought Philosophy, Sociology and Social Ethics.** Assen: Van Gorcum, 1986.

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Introduction

Henk Woldring's extensive analysis of the life and thought of Karl Mannheim raises many questions. It is a complex work, difficult to review within a short compass. Woldring has adopted (at least) three roles on the writing of this important work. He is the intellectual biographer, the critical theorist and also the critical commentator. As biographer he reserves the first 60 pages for an outline of the colourful life and career of his subject. As critical theorist he seeks to construct an account of Mannheim's intellectual development in order to let him 'speak for himself', leading the reader to a deeper appreciation of the inner tensions within his (i.e. Mannheim's) perspective. As a critical commentator Woldring reviews Mannheim's theoretical contribution as a 20th century attempt to relate science and culture, social planning and democracy, religious belief and the future of civilization. By these three routes Woldring places Mannheim within the thought climate of the 20th century.

The content of the Book

Simply put, Woldring analyzes the intellectual development of Karl Mannheim by critically perusing his entire corpus (or almost all of it) in the order in which it was written. It is an intellectual portrait collating impressions and making connections.

Mannheim, as Woldring re-presents him, was a thinker who moved through various phases. The style of the re-presentation is somewhat baroque – when Woldring comes across an important thinker who influenced him in some way (Dilthey, Durkheim, Simmel, Lukacs, Kant, Hegel, Max Weber, Troeltsch, Marx), he explores the affinities and parallels and then moves back to his main theme again. Nevertheless, Woldring avoids imputing an eclectic style to Mannheim and succeeds in drawing him as a singular and individual thinker who tried to bring all the intellectual currents of the day into one coherent theoretical focus. His 'organon' was constantly in the process of refinement and (if possible) further development.

Woldring succeeds in showing that Mannheim's early philosophical period had a coherence of its own. Later when he formulated a 'sociology of culture', after coming to terms with historicism (see especially the important chapter, 7), the process had begun which would eventually develop into a sociology of knowledge. This development, says Woldring, is also the background to his mid-century formulations concerned with planning for democracy, and education towards the re-construction of civilization.

The book is divided into five sections. Part One examines Mannheim's career. Parts Two, Three and Four seek to genetically interpret the unfolding of Mannheim's theoretical perspective. The method of presentation is chronological and by giving special attention to the content of his earliest lectures and his Dissertation (*Strukturanalyse der Erkenntnistheorie* which was a 1922 German translation of the original Hungarian version), Woldring is able to build a strong case. His argument is that Mannheim's later approach to post-war re-construction is inconceivable apart from the earlier philosophical construction of his outlook.

Part Two, 'Motifs and Contours of the Philosophy' examines how Mannheim wrestled with the thought of his time, firstly, by immediate contact with the intellectual milieu of Budapest and the Society for Social Sciences. Mannheim was a 'visible member' of the group which gathered around the Marxist Georgy Lukacs. As an Hungarian Liberal he had to flee the Von Horthy regime because of his alliance with intellectuals close to the Communist Party but also because of his Jewish background. As well as being close to Lukacs, he had also been greatly influenced by Georg Simmel. He eventually became a resident in Weimar Germany and it was in this context that he learned from, and developed his own appraisal of, neo-Kantianism. He developed his critique of Kant and gave concerted attention to the investigation of world-views (following Dilthey), unfolded his own response to historicism and appraised himself of Heidelberg sociological scholarship. Woldring captures the development of Mannheim in these terms:

from idealism to realism... his neo-Hegelian mode of thought was colored by the life philosophy of Dilthey and Simmel and by the artistic idealism of the younger Lukacs. This neo-Hegelian thought developed into transcendental realism via the struggle about methods between neo-Kantians, positivists, and phenomenologists. This transcendental realism, thanks to his orientation to the philosophy of Dilthey, Troeltsch, and others, resulted in a sociologically worked out historicism, strongly influenced by the Marxist Lukacs (p. 117).

One wonders why conclusions like this, for all their interpretative power, do *not* seem to have been used by Woldring to structure his narrative *in its entirety*. I mention below that there is a somewhat 'empiricist' style about this book, but Woldring is aware that Mannheim's thought, like a well-crafted diamond, looks somewhat different when viewed and compared with itself from its various angles. He is aware that various interpretations of his theory can be generated by focussing upon a single phase as the most important. His response is to try and place all the different phases of development in chronological sequence saving his critical comments for when all the data is "in".

Immediately after making the above (provisional) conclusion, Woldring adds, almost as an aside: 'One can scrutinize the development of Mannheim's

thought even more sharply'. But the reader who is unacquainted with the full scope of Mannheim's output has not really obtained a sharp focus on the 'provisional conclusion'. Hence the 'even sharper' focus (pp. 117-119) appears somewhat blunt.

Part Three introduces us to Mannheim's own theoretical framework, whilst Part Four gives us some idea of the complex scope of Mannheim's 'applied sociology'. Section Five is the author's own summary and attempt to bring the work to a conclusion.

Woldring's account draws the twists and turns of Mannheim's theoretical development against the backdrop of his life and academic career – as a Jewish-Hungarian-Liberal intellectual, as an emigrant in Weimar Germany, as a refugee fleeing Nazism and as a settler in war-time and post-war-time Britain. In so doing Woldring does us an important service. Mannheim is drawn in terms of the problematic he had drawn for sociology. Mannheim is portrayed as the 'socially free-floating intellectual' (sozial freischwebende Intelligenz).

Whether Mannheim's thought can be characterized simply as a cognitive reflection of these (social) roles, as Mannheim's theory itself might lead us to interpret them (see espec. *Ideology and Utopia* pp. 1-5), is a crucial question and under-developed by Woldring. Woldring does give us enough material to make an informed judgement. He shows us that though Mannheim's thought *is* representative of the age in which he lived and which he sought to explain, his theory is *not* in itself sufficient to explain Mannheim's theoretical development. Woldring's detailed exegesis of Mannheim's thought is somewhat 'unfinished' as I shall argue below.

Recent Re-consideration of Karl Mannheim

Woldring's work also has to be evaluated in terms of the small, but significant, resurgence of interest in Mannheim and the sociology of knowledge which he promoted. The new material that has only come to light in the recent decades, and which is referred to by both Woldring and Loader (Loader C 1985), has enabled *Ideology and Utopia* (1936) – an expanded English edition of a work published in Germany in 1929 – to be read with new understanding. Kettler, Meja and Stehr (1984) appraise Mannheim as a 'Key Sociologist', but by way of contrast Loader and Woldring are much more concerned with the *philosophical* context and character of Mannheim's intellectual development. For them both the nature of sociological theorizing is somewhat more problematic than the Kettler et. al contribution implies.

Woldring's most important contribution to the re-assessment of Mannheim's thought is the strong case he builds for suggesting that Mannheim's move from a Sociology of Culture to a Sociology of Knowledge has to be understood as a *philosophical* transition. Mannheim moved from *meta-physical idealism* to *transcendental realism* (pp. 91-92). With Loader the two major phases of Mannheim's contribution were 1) the sociology of knowledge and 2) the theory of democratic planning and education (Loader C 1985: 183). Both Loader and Woldring agree that Mannheim's intellectual development is expressive of a basic philosophic reflection at the foundation to his theory. Whereas Woldring tries to give this philosophical reflection a name, locating

Mannheim in relation to the philosophical currents of the 20th century, Loader places his own re-presentation of Mannheim's thought in the context of Mannheim's 'unsystematic attitude' (ibid:2) to the writing of sociological treatises.

From my reading of the two works Loader seems to have given a greater measure of critical attention to how Mannheim himself would have responded to a systematic-philosophical analysis of his writings. It is my view that there is an important 'reflexive' dimension missing from Woldrings' analysis. As a result Loader seems to be closer to M's own view of his intellectual development as that unfolded in his 'essayistic-experimental' approach to the construction of theoretical narratives (see Mannheim's comments in *Ideology and Utopia* 1936:47-48 and Loader's comments in Loader C 1985: 'Introduction: Mannheim's Career as a Dynamic Totality' pp. 1-9).

One can detect differences between Loader and Woldring on the differential intellectual influence exercised by such thinkers as Simmel, Lukacs and Alfred and Max Weber upon the resultant outlook of the 'German' Mannheim. One wonders if this aspect of Woldring's analysis could have been strengthened by comparing his own conclusions with those of Loader. Whereas, for example, Loader sees the thought of Simmel (ibid:62) and Lukacs (ibid:28) in terms of the resultant influence that can be detected in M's outlook, Woldring approaches these thinkers in a slightly different manner. Simmel and Mannheim exhibit a 'concurrence of ideas' (Woldring HES 1986:78) whilst 'The agreement between the ideas of young Lukacs and young Mannheim requires no commentary' (ibid:80). Woldring's Biographical Part One and the extensive analysis of Mannheim's early writings ensure that this work will be a most important resource for future Mannheim scholars, but the lack of methodological explanation adds to its "unfinished" appearance.

Publication Haste: Philosophical, Historiographical and Methodological Problems

An account of this work's philosophic potential should not however fail to point out that the poor quality finish of this Van Gorcum volume is nothing less than distracting. There are simply far too many 'typos'. The unfinished impression of the work is further confirmed by the awkwardness of the English prose. Maybe the death of the translator prevented the work from having the final polish it needed. But the sheer volume of spelling errors, grammatical mistakes and awkward English expression leads me to ask whether it has been proof-read from the screen of a word-processor. Adequate proof-reading needs to be done from 'hard copy'. But even the name of one prominent member of the 'Mannheim circle' is misspelled, even whilst his comments applauding the book are printed on the cover!

It is not clear to this reviewer whether Woldring intended his work to be the definitive, or even an authoritative, analysis of the life and work of Karl Mannheim. Woldring does not spell out how he views his contribution in the context of the inter- and intra-disciplinary re-consideration of Mannheim's thought.

There is, sadly, no critical confrontation with the work of Loader. Woldring

refers to this omission right at the beginning of the book in his two-page introduction, in these terms:

Different from the recently published book by Collin (sic!) Loader, *The Intellectual Development of Karl Mannheim* (1985), written from the perspective of the history of ideas, my study is a philosophical-sociological one (p. 2).

This does not really explain why an examination of Loader's 'history of ideas' approach to Mannheim is not included in Woldring's narrative. The reader is left, as I pointed out above, to *infer* Woldring's method; he does not discuss his approach in explicit terms. The difference between Loader's study (subtitled: Culture, Politics and Planning) and Woldring's (subtitled: Philosophy, Sociology and Social Ethics) is more than a mere difference in name. But the contrast cannot be explained simply by saying that a 'history of ideas' approach is something other than a philosophical-sociological one, especially when the subject is the philosophical unfolding of the theory of the one important thinker. One can surmise that the work was completed before Loader's came off the presses in England, but the impression of haste, and thus of an incomplete analysis, is confirmed by Woldring himself on p. 242 where he explains another perceived shortcoming of his analysis. His analysis of Mannheim's 'Conservative Thought' he says is too restricted, lacking in any thorough appraisal of Mannheim's *Habilitationsschrift* of 1926 (*Altkonservatismus: Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des Wissens*), which had only come to light after 1980 and then published by Suhrkamp in 1984.

To a large extent an extensive work, such as Woldring's, will stand or fall on the adequacy of his examination of all available primary material. But the 'unfinished' character of the work is evident from the first footnote of the first page of his biographical discussion:

While this book was in process I discovered the article of Matyas Sarkosi, 'The Influence of Georg Lukacs on the Young Karl Mannheim in the Light of a Newly Discovered Diary'.... Regretably (sic!) I have not been able to incorporate this material in this chapter (p. 5).

This is indeed regrettable; in fact one wonders whether the biographical Part One might not need some thorough re-drafting after the necessary time for re-appraisal in the light of the new material has elapsed. Will Woldring revise his view that 'the agreement between the ideas of the young Lukacs and the young Mannheim requires no commentary' (ibid:80)?

To Woldring's credit the facts which show this 'unfinished character' of his analysis are not hidden; the absence of a critical methodological examination of Loader, the restricted analysis of 'Conservative Thought', and the absence of discussion of the diary material, together confirm what I had felt throughout my reading of Woldring's work. I doubt whether Woldring himself is convinced that it is finished.

Mannheim's Philosophy and Reflexivity

Problems of haste aside it is still gratifying to see such an extensive philosophic attempt to analyze Mannheim's work. Says Woldring: "(W)e must remember that in his studies he is pre-eminently occupied philosophically... In other literature about this subject the distinction is seldom made" (ibid:145). Par-

ticularly, Woldring is addressing the North American sociological *profession* which has co-opted the insights of Mannheim for its own purposes; Mannheim's sociology of knowledge became a part of the 'American approach... an empirical-scientific investigation of relationships between ideas, thoughts, knowledge and social structures.' Mannheim's search for a philosophic resolution of the problem of the crisis in culture apparently was not seen as integral to his project on the western sea-board of North Atlantic culture. At least that is how Woldring views it.

The fact is that Woldring has been willing to take on Mannheim's *philosophical* development, in a context where the co-option of the sociology of knowledge *within* the sociological discipline has seemingly rendered explicit philosophical critique out-moded and obscurantist. This is enough to confirm the value of Woldring's attempts to empirically and scientifically analyse Mannheim's total output. But, as I have already noted, the fact that Woldring has not really addressed Mannheim's view of himself as a theory-writer, and hence has not seen the personal application of his sociology of knowledge to the manner of Mannheim's presentation of his literary artifact, means that Woldring is not as close to Mannheim's *problematic* as he might have been. Would Mannheim recognize his work in the philosophical terms which Woldring draws for it? Says Mannheim:

Whereas contradictions are a source of discomfiture to the systematizer, the experimental thinker often perceives in them points of departure from which the fundamental discordant character of our present situation becomes for the first time really capable of diagnosis and investigation (*Ideology and Utopia* 1936:48).

Mannheim saw himself as an 'experimental thinker' which is not the same as a philosophical systematizer. In this sense the real strength of Woldring's work is closely connected to its real weakness. By discussing Mannheim's intellectual development as a philosophical process Woldring has somewhat under-emphasized Mannheim's view of himself as an 'essayistic-experimental' thinker (see *ibid*:47 fn. 1 and Loader C 1985: 2ff). The so-called 'reflexive' dimension is underdeveloped in Woldring's analysis, and that is surprising because in Woldring's terms the sociology of knowledge intends to develop a form of critical self-reflection:

the sociology of knowledge is a reflexive and evaluative discipline: it not only studies the social relatedness of knowing an (sic!) thinking in other people, but it also analyzes the manner in which it itself studies and evaluates these problems (Woldring HES 1986:171).

Yet Mannheim did not envisage the sociology of knowledge as a philosophical discipline:

Philosophers have too long concerned themselves with their own thinking. When they wrote of thought, they had in mind primarily their own history, the history of philosophy, or quite special fields of knowledge such as mathematics or physics. This type of thinking is applicable only under quite special circumstances, and what can be learned by analysing it is not directly transferable to other spheres of life. Even when it is applicable, it refers only to a specific dimension of existence which does not suffice for living human beings who are seeking to comprehend and to mould their world (Mannheim K *Ideology and Utopia* 1936:2).

It is this kind of ambiguity, which Mannheim's own comment induces in any

philosophical analysis of his thought, which needs to be explored. It seems that Woldring, in seeking to have Mannheim 'speak for himself' has moved away from any such reflexive confrontation with Mannheim's frame-ofference. Did Mannheim expect that his sociology of knowledge would be subjected to a painstaking philosophical analysis? Woldring seems to shy away from reflexivity in this sense, and thus fails to give himself room to critically develop a justification of his own method of analysing Mannheim's development.

Mannheim, as both Woldring and Loader imply, is not to be identified as an anti-intellectual; to the contrary his contribution is to be interpreted as an attempt to bring about a co-ordination, or even a 'division of labour' between philosophical thinking ('When, however, any human activity continues over a long period without being subjected to intellectual control or criticism, it tends to get out of hand' (p. 1)) and an understanding of 'How men actually think... how (thinking) really functions in public life and in politics as an instrument of collective action' (ibid). In *Ideology and Utopia* Mannheim professes *not* to be interested in 'how thinking appears in textbooks on logic', but in understanding those 'modes of thought which cannot be adequately understood as long as its social origins are obscured' (p. 2). The question is: Is philosophical analysis a mode of thought which itself cannot be adequately understood as long as its social origins are obscured? Is not this the kind of question which Woldring has implicitly asked about Mannheim's philosophy, and has he not attempted to improve our understanding by relating this 'thought' to its social origins? Does not Woldring relate Mannheim's thought to Mannheim's status as a Jewish intellectual, an emigrant in Weimar Germany, a refugee from Nazi Germany and a settler in England? Would not Mannheim be interested in how his thinking appears in books exploring the 'logic' of his own approach? Can not a *philosophical analysis* of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge give us insight which is *directly* useful in deepening our knowledge of the sociology of knowledge itself? Or again: Does not the sociology of knowledge claim to provide a frame of reference for a critical analysis of itself? These sorts of questions seem to emerge naturally from the character and disposition of Mannheim's thought as I have read it. But then, Mannheim also seems to have thrown a spanner in the works by formulating the 'reflexive' and 'evaluative' dimension of the sociology of knowledge in these terms:

The first point... is that the approach of the sociology of knowledge intentionally does not start with the single individual and his thinking in order then to proceed directly in the manner of the philosopher to the abstract heights of 'thought as such'. Rather the sociology of knowledge seeks to comprehend thought in the concrete setting of the historical-social situation out of which individually differentiated thought only very gradually emerges. Thus, it is not men in general who do the thinking, but men in certain groups who have developed a particular style of thought in an endless series of responses to certain typical situations characterizing their common position (ibid: 2-3).

From this it might appear that an examination of Karl Mannheim's thought which seeks to philosophically penetrate to its basic ideas is somewhat ambiguously, if not polemically, postured with respect to the sociology of knowledge as a method of investigation. What is this 'concrete setting' in which 'thought' emerges, and what part, if any, does the person of the thinker

play in relation to the 'historical-social situation'? On the surface Loader, by placing Mannheim's theories in the 'concrete setting' of the history of ideas, appears to have adopted a *Wissenssoziologische* method. But Rodney D. Nelson can yet state: 'As an intellectual biography, however, Loader's study suffers from his failure to give us a sense of Mannheim as a person' (Nelson R. D. 1986:456). But the critical point is that if the secondary analyst of Mannheim's thought adopts Mannheim's viewpoint of the sociology of knowledge we could not expect anything else'. According to Mannheim's rendering of the sociology of knowledge, the utilization of such a method is *not* primarily to give a sense of the individual thinker. Rather, the individual thinker is re-presented as representative of his epoch. Moreover, Mannheim could claim:

Strictly speaking it is incorrect to say that the single individual thinks.

Rather it is more correct to insist that he participates in thinking further what other men have thought before him (Mannheim K 1936:3).

One wonders whether Mannheim, in outlining the basic orientation of the sociology of knowledge, is in fact also giving us a summarizes overview of how he had come to view his own intellectual development. This is confirmed somewhat when he continued in this vein:

He finds himself in an inherited situation with patterns of thought which are appropriate to this situation and attempts to elaborate further the inherited modes of response or to substitute others for them in order to deal more adequately with the new challenges which have arisen out of the shifts and changes in his situation. Every individual is therefore in a two-fold sense predetermined by the fact of growing up in a society: on the one hand he finds a ready-made situation and on the other he finds in that situation preformed patterns of thought and of conduct (ibid:3).

If it is possible to reflexively read these comments to throw light upon Mannheim's view of his own thought and its development, we reach a point of critical confrontation between Mannheim's view of his own development and Woldring's re-representation of it. It seems that an examination of Mannheim's thought, and the development thereof, is itself at odds with the principles for thought which Mannheim enunciated in his writings. Woldring comes close to pinpointing the reason for the contradiction (see his quote p. 7 above from Woldring HES 1986:171) but then does not take the critical step to point out that Mannheim has nowhere shown how the sociology of knowledge can shed light upon its own nature. Woldring, at this point, does not seem to have identified the dogmatic prejudice presupposed in Mannheim's exposition.

Mannheims's Contribution to 20th Century Sociology

Woldring's analysis of Mannheim, the thinker of post-Methodenstreit social scientific culture, helps us to understand some of the twists and turns in 20th century sociology. The sociology of knowledge has been extremely powerful in English-speaking sociology since the 1930's, having been built into the methodological foundations of Talcott Parsons' attempts to find 'convergence' among turn-of-the-century European social thoughts (Parsons T 1937). As a chronological commentary upon Mannheim's writings, Woldring 'fills out'

the retrospective analysis of Mannheim's 'intellectual odyssey' which can be gleaned from Mannheim's view of the development of the sociology of knowledge as a distinct academic discipline (Mannheim K 1936:278-280). Works like this one, which analyze the philosophical underpinnings of a theoretical orientation, by close attention to the details of what the writer 'actually wrote', help us to understand the problematic of the history of the discipline, rather than re-presenting the history of the discipline simply as an endorsement of what it has become. Mannheim and Parsons, with their ambiguous posture with respect to the philosophical character of their own thought, present a corresponding ambiguous stance with respect to the relation of their thought to the history of the sociological discipline.

Woldring writes about Mannheim knowing *that* this 'classical sociologist' has made an important contribution to the social sciences. I am not persuaded that Woldring has resolved for himself *how* Mannheim's thought has been influential. Perhaps that has something to do with Woldring's 'cultural distance' from the English-speaking world. I am not persuaded by Woldring's discussion of the 'decline' of his influence, nor by his assertion, following Shils, that his influence has been inferior to that exerted by Horkheimer (Woldring HES 1986:360). The arguments that Mannheim's 'restricted influence' can be traced to his style of writing, unclear argumentation and contradictory theories, is also not very convincing. As one who, in the English-speaking university context, has been studying sociology for some time, I have 'felt' the impact of Mannheim's influence upon the minds of the discipline on many occasions. Anyone in the university discipline of sociology who wrestles with the *philosophical* foundations of sociological theory, will find themselves up against the observation that either they are not 'really doing sociology' or, almost as a concession, are told that what they are really doing is investigating the 'sociology of knowledge' and had better go and consult Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia*. That kind of response is quite common. It is common, in my view, for good philosophical reasons, namely that any critical examination of the foundations of sociology in Anglo-Saxon context is implicitly a challenge to the theoretical dogmas enshrined in the discipline. That dogma involves the view that sociology as a discipline is capable of establishing its own theoretical foundations without the help of any philosophical reflection. It is to Woldring's credit that he highlights the philosophical discordance between Mannheim's philosophical intention and the American appropriation of his thought. But he does not seem to have grasped the significance of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge for re-establishing the dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought for 20th century American sociology. The manner in which the discipline has traditionally referred to the sociology of knowledge has had the powerful and lasting effect of distracting systematic and critical attention away from the philosophical foundations of sociology. One need only consider the 'general theory of action' promulgated by Talcott Parsons to appreciate something of the extensiveness of Mannheim's influence and how it came about (see Parsons T. in Black M. (ed.) 1961:311-363).

Woldring's work would have been much improved had he tried to explain how the critical re-consideration of Mannheim's work, in the light of his own biographical picture of Mannheim's life, together with the important new material which he discusses, sheds light upon his (often mis-understood)

contribution. Then we would be in a better position to understand why Mannheim's thought seems to have been incorporated into the sociological discipline, as a sociologically-controlled, if not contrived, form of philosophical analysis. Critical investigation along these lines would help christian thinkers who would like to develop a critical dialogue with the sociological discipline on the basis of a 'transcendental critique of theoretical thought'. Such an approach might also avoid the ambiguities which surface in Woldring's (not inconsiderable) references to the christian philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd.

Will an Imaginary Discussion Between Karl Mannheim and Herman Dooyeweerd Suffice?

Woldring, a Vrije Universiteit academic, no doubt has a deep appreciation for the critical contribution to social thought attempted by Dooyeweerd. But can an imaginary discussion, re-constructed in very brief form (5 pp±), actually help us in our appraisal of the issues which Mannheim has raised through his writings? What I want to know is why this discussion, irrespective of its merits in its own terms, should come at the culmination of a discussion of Mannheim's scholarly and intellectual development?

This part of the work, whilst giving evidence of the cultural milieu from out of which the author operates, nevertheless concludes the analysis in a most ambiguous way. I am not sure from what Woldring writes how he views his work in relation to the call by Dooyeweerd for a 'transcendental critique of theoretical thought' which would lay bare the transcendental conditions that alone make theoretical thought possible. Does Woldring think that the self-critical and philosophical critique of Dooyeweerd needs to be supplemented by the reflexive and sociological critique of knowledge mounted by Mannheim (or vice versa?).

This exposition of Mannheim, from which, towards the end, an appended 'Dooyeweerdian interlude' hangs disconcertingly, is, seemingly, addressed not only to scholars interested in Mannheim's contribution, and the intellectual history of the sociology of knowledge, but also to christian scholars who are interested in contributing to the critical exchange concerning the leading thinkers within 20th century social thought. In this sense Woldring's attempt to fruitfully engage the sociology of knowledge tradition in the beginnings of a scholarly exchange about the basis for social thought is laudable. But that does not mean that Woldring, in this reviewer's opinion, has been totally successful in achieving his goals.

Mannheim and Dooyeweerd may both be reformed or reforming Kantians, and it is against such a philosophical background that their theories are comparable. Mannheim, in placing theoretical thought in the dialectic between knowledge and culture, can be usefully compared with Dooyeweerd who contended that the logical aspect of our thought can only be distinguished from all other modal aspects of our experience, in terms of an intentional (theoretic) separation of that which, in naive experience, is 'indissolubly inter-related'.

The Mannheim/Dooyeweerd comparison (and even the imaginary discussion) is valid and possible, but in my view undermined by the fact that

Woldring's treatment of Mannheim leaves Kantian and neo-Kantian influences back in the first 'philosophical' phase of his career. When we come to an exposition of *Ideology and Utopia* we do not gain any impression that Mannheim was seeking to *replace* Kantian epistemology with the sociology of knowledge, as Werner Stark (1967:151) says he was. We only get an indirect hint of the conflict (Woldring HES 1986:342).

Conclusion

In Woldring's work can be gleaned Mannheim's deeply-held view of how he, as a matter of necessity, was embedded within the intellectual tradition. Woldring also shows how Mannheim laboured to bring into a new crystallization all the various intellectual currents that went to make up the 'thought world' of this 'free floating intellectual'. Woldring, by focussing upon the development of Mannheim's thought, has begun to challenge the *Wissenssoziologische* dogma. Overall his work suggests that the idea that the thought of an individual thinker can only be understood in terms of the thought current in an epoch needs to be subjected to critical investigation. Moreover, by subjecting the development of Mannheim's thought to critical scrutiny, Woldring makes a contribution which has implications for the philosophical analysis of sociological theory which in important respects has taken on the 'sociology of knowledge' as its (non-philosophic) philosophical basis.

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