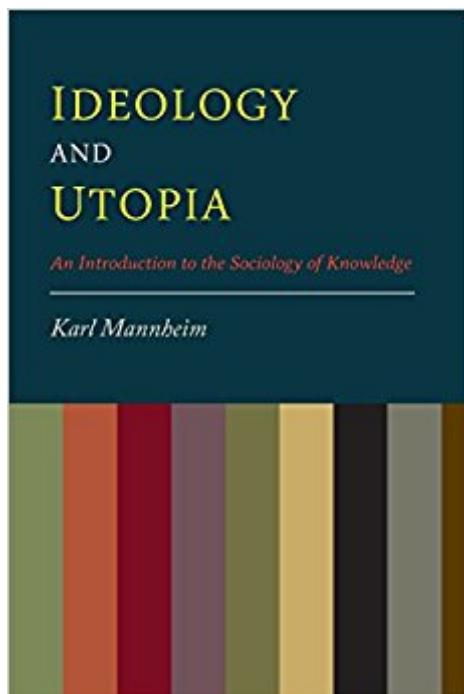


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Ideology And Utopia: An Introduction To The Sociology Of Knowledge



Synopsis

2015 Reprint of Original 1936 American Edition. Exact facsimile of the original edition, not reproduced with Optical Recognition Software. Karl Mannheim was a Hungarian-born sociologist, influential in the first half of the 20th century and one of the founding fathers of classical sociology as well as a founder of the sociology of knowledge. His essays on the sociology of knowledge have become classics in the field. In "Ideology and Utopia" he argued that the application of the term ideology ought to be broadened. He traced the history of the term from what he called a "particular" view. This view originally saw ideology as the perhaps deliberate obscuring of facts. Over time this view gave way to a "total" conception (most notably in Marx), which argued that a whole social group's thought was formed by its social position (e.g. the proletariat's beliefs were conditioned by their relationship to the means of production). However, he called for a further step, which he called a general total conception of ideology, in which it was recognized that everyone's beliefs-including the social scientist's-were a product of the context they were created in. Mannheim points out social class, location and generation as the greatest determinants of knowledge. He feared this could lead to relativism but proposed the idea of relationism as an antidote. To uphold the distinction, he maintained that the recognition of different perspectives according to differences in time and social location appears arbitrary only to an abstract and disembodied theory of knowledge.

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, German (translation) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) held academic posts at the universities of Heidelberg, Frankfurt, and London. His major works include Ideology and Utopia, Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction, Diagnosis of Our Time, Essays on the Sociology of Culture, Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning, Structures of Thinking, and Conservatism. Louis Wirth (1897-1952) was both educated at the University of Chicago and, after a brief period at Tulane University, became a member of its Sociology Department for the remainder of his life. His work "Urbanism as a Way of Life" served as a paradigm in the intellectual history of the profession. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

A very honest and scholarly assessment of the problems in the modern world. It is very much about a social science but is not difficult to read. However it does not have any easy answers, just an idea about the process that could be followed.

received as promised

EXCELLENT

Kessinger's travesty of an edition, thankfully, no longer appears among the list of currently available offerings. I leave my review in place, however, in case the thing should attempt to come back to life. I have moved a few brief remarks (somewhat amplified) on the substance of Mannheim's ideas from the last paragraph to the following paragraph in celebration of the Kessinger edition's falling off the earth--or, at least out of . Today, the term 'Utopian' is achieving a new currency--this time as an element in the conservative characterization of left wing political ideas. Such reappearance of the concept of 'utopia' within the contemporary ideological contest makes it very timely to visit (or revisit) Mannheim's classic work of critique and analysis in which the originality of the author's contribution consists precisely in his juxtaposing the idea of 'utopian' to 'ideological' rather than, as is usual, to 'realistic' [or to 'realizable']. One of Mannheim's central points is that one's sense of what is and is not, realizable in the world has more to do with the nature of his own socially structured thinking than with the limits imposed upon mankind by what is timelessly and objectively possible. Mannheim does not doubt that such limits exist, but he suggests the word: 'utopian', when employed as an epithet, can reveal more about the speaker's position in life and political orientation than it does about the opponent's loss of a practicable sense of reality. Another of

Mannheim's points is that utopian thought, which he defines as thinking that transcends the bounds of the existing order, seemingly is, to humanity's loss, actually disappearing. This disappearance ushers in a world that no longer, even in part, orients itself toward possibilities of transcendence to a higher historical and sociological stage. Mannheim's sense of the loss of utopian aspirations harmonizes compatibly with Critical Theorist Herbert Marcuse's notion of the squelching of dialectical oppositions in the contemporary social universe as leading to mankind's existence being confined to a single dimension--cf that author's One Dimensional Man. [BELOW IS A RETURN TO THE REVIEW OF THE APPARENTLY NOW-DEFUNCT KESSINGER EDITION] The publishers of the Kessinger edition are arrant idiots. The book, in its authentic form, is a landmark collection of essays by Karl Mannheim which was first published in German under the title "Ideologie und Utopie." Kessinger Publishing, LLC has mis-titled this volume by inserting the word "An" in front of the translated words: "Ideology and Utopia." They have done this either because members of Kessinger's editorial staff do not know the real title or, more likely, because they figure that such insertion insures that their caricature will appear before any of the authentically titled versions on a search. For that reason alone this edition would deserve to be avoided--even if that left no alternative but to learn German and read the original. There are alternatives however. These range in price from dirt cheap for a used umpteenth printing to sky high for a collectible edition. Take your pick of those, I advise, but do not choose this Kessinger travesty. The work itself (in a respectable edition) stands as a highly readable and much discussed introduction to a specialized branch of sociology known as the sociology of knowledge. The two principal exponents of this specialized study are Mannheim and Max Scheler. A search on their names will produce an intriguing list of titles available on , but "Ideology and Utopia" is the right place to begin for anyone not already familiar with the literature. (Also, worth considering is the volume: "From Karl Mannheim" which contains selections from a broad range of Mannheim's writings together with editors' and translator's introductions that set forth the development and the interpretive tradition of Mannheim's body of work.) "Ideology and Utopia" includes a twenty page preface by Louis Wirth (one of its translators) which well serves the intention of acquainting an English speaking audience with the basics of Mannheim's approach. Today, the term 'Utopian' is achieving a new currency--this time as an element in the conservative characterization of left wing political ideas. Such reappearance of the concept of 'utopia' within the contemporary ideological contest makes it very timely to visit (or revisit) Mannheim's classic work of critique and analysis in which the originality of the author's contribution consists precisely in his juxtaposing the idea of 'utopian' to 'ideological' rather than, as is usual, to 'realistic' [or to 'realizable']. The following quote from one of the essays in "Ideology and

"Utopia" suggests (but does not fully encompass) Mannheim's idea of both the limitations on human thought and the possibilities for its advancement--"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."On the bottom line: consider the author; experience the work; but avoid the edition.

Perhaps it was the translation, perhaps it is the author's inherent style, or perhaps it is just too academic but I found this very tedious. That does not stop me from endorsing the material though I reduced my rating based on the fact that this is hardly an enjoyable read and a downright unaccessible read (because of its dense, academic style) for of the vast majority of the public. Nonetheless (is that even a real word?), if one can slog through the first several chapters, Mannheim's attempt to identify the motivations and devices of knowledge and ideology create a esoteric bridge linking this achievement with Aristotle's "Metaphysics", Locke's "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding", and later continued with Foucault's "The Archaeology of Knowledge". This is also an important piece when examined in the historical and geo-political context which existed in the 1920s. I would label this as "neccesary" reading for any graduate sociology student, any self-appointed philosopher, or anyone with extreme time on their hands--such as the incarcerated. (For more on that subject read the chapters by Foucault entitled "Panopticism" and "The Carceral".)

I think Karl Mannheim would have a lot to say about how expensive this book is. Is that like a mistake? I want this book for my thesis and was perfectly willing to purchase it for my Kindle, but at that price I'll just borrow it from the library. I mean: it costs more than a dollar per page. I mean: honestly. I mean: please see this review and lower the price. I mean: the irony in how (a) contributes to the idea that internet merchants can increase the potential for equal proliferation of privileged knowledge through ubiquitous accessibility but (b) simultaneously charges this much for this book; how can this be real?

This translation is not correct as compared with the German version, which uses more abstract terms. However, it doesn't mean its content is less correct. I like this translation more than the German version because it is easier to read. This book consists of three articles and the prelude. The first chapter is the same as the title of this book and the most interesting. It explains the term of the ideology in the context of the history of the epistemology. This term was derived from Marxism,

which exposes the ideal as the legitimization of the individual interest to invalidate it. The sociological explanation inspired by this method, ironically speaking, makes the ontological existence of the class by Marxism relative as the historical production, and regards it as the particular epistemology determined by the history. It is succeeded by the Max Weber's concept of the stratification, which means the epistemological constitution of the subject of the analysis. This article's aim is to make the concept of the ideology of Marxism more useful by generalizing it. The thesis that the consciousness doesn't determine the social conditions, but that the social conditions do the consciousness applies to anybody without any exceptions. Therefore, this thought is named as 'the sociology of the knowledge' or consciousness. The necessary for readers is the knowledge of the basic modern epistemology and the basic Marxism. After reading it, we will locate the thought of Plato, Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Weber under the appropriate historical context and find 'the situational determination' is the primary leading discipline of the sociology.

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