

Karl Mannheim's Sociology ^{as} Political Education

Colin Loader
David Kettler



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Preface

This book originated in a conference, organized by Martin Endreß of the University of Konstanz and Ilja Srubar of the University of Erlangen, to discuss Karl Mannheim's first lecture course at the University of Frankfurt in 1930, a transcript of which had recently been discovered in the papers of Mannheim's one-time student and assistant, Hans Gerth. Convinced of the importance of the find by their respective studies of the text and by the rewarding discussions at Erlangen, the authors undertook to collaborate on an English translation of the materials. As they worked on a modest introduction to the translation, however, they were led to follow the leads opened up by their joint encounter with the text beyond the limits of an introduction. The translation has appeared as a companion volume.

The authors have written separately in the past on Karl Mannheim's sociological thought, Kettler as a partner in a long-standing collaboration with Volker Meja of Memorial University of Newfoundland and Nico Stehr of the University of British Columbia, and they derive from different disciplines and traditions of commentary. Karl Mannheim would have been pleased, we think, by this transmutation of past competition into a synthesis. Both authors worked on every part of the volume.

Thanks are due, first, to Martin Endreß and Ilja Srubar, as well as to Gabriela B. Christmann, who edited the original German version of the transcript and supplied it with helpful notes. Generous support with access to supplementary materials and expert advice was provided by Eberhard Demm and Reinhard Laube. Volker Meja was available for consultations throughout, and Joseph Quittner contributed astute editorial comments. The authors are grateful for logistical support to their home institutions, the University of Nevada at Las Vegas and

the Bard Center of Bard College. Without Irving Louis Horowitz, such books could not appear.

1

The Educational Mission of Sociology

Introduction

When Karl Mannheim arrived in Frankfurt to assume his professorial duties, he faced circumstances not unlike those facing academics today. In 1930 Germany, as in present-day America, it was a commonplace to speak of higher education in crisis, and to assign political as well as cultural significance to the vexing issues at an impasse. The principal themes were similar too: universities under attack from conservatives who wanted to return to the classics in order to guarantee the proper moral education of students, as well as from innovators who wanted to see excluded segments of society represented in the curriculum; the fragmentation of the academic community, as professors followed specialized research agendas and students sought to advance their vocational objectives; the irresponsibility of academics' public utterances and their unwillingness to accept responsibility for civic education; and the lament that a unifying spirit was somehow missing in the nation, as culture splintered into a myriad of individual avant-garde experiments—a plaint countered by scorn for an establishment vested in its refusal to recognize diversity and change. If the historical crux in recent years has been the interpretation of the Sixties, the earlier dispute turned on the meaning of the German Revolution of 1918. And just as the rise and expansion of cultural studies departments are the locus of present-day conflict, the place of sociology provided the occasion for the most intense conflicts in Weimar. Most important, it is common to these angry debates about crisis in

education that the contending parties inveigh not only against each other but also against the many practitioners of higher learning who restrictively define their scientific work as a value-free, autonomous activity remote from all talk of crisis and without regard to its supposed consequences for education in the wider cultural sense.

The conflict, in short, is between proponents of alternate visions for the future direction of the universities, complex institutions that are, in fact, going concerns. Although difficulties in funding and occasional disruptive conflicts are cited as symptoms, the declaration of crisis is as much program as diagnosis. The idea is to disturb complacency. Invariably, however, the talk turns to the politicization of the universities, with the competing diagnosticians of crisis charging one another with injecting destructive political considerations into the work of learning, while the operators of the routinized arrangements fend off both kinds of challenges as "political" interference in an autonomous cultural activity. Under these conditions, even if the immediate issue is something as narrow—and as self-evidently tied to public policy decisions—as "affirmative action" in 2000 or the creation of a Sociological Institute in 1930, no question is left to routine bureaucratic or professional processing. The point of a crisis diagnosis is totalization.

A striking instance of this parallelism is the change in the debates internal to institutionalized disciplines, where questions that the scientific mainstream dismisses as merely pedagogical suddenly appear more important than questions about scientific priorities. The teaching activities of the faculties, as the most direct link between the university and the larger society, come under demanding scrutiny, and claims about the inherent development of science no longer suffice to guide, defend, and legitimate academic practices. Both the German and the American academic traditions celebrated the priority of science as recently won constitutional principles that marked the emancipation of the university from tutelage by external authorities: it was the core of the concept of academic freedom. Yet both traditions also had alternative, latent conceptions of their teaching work available, philosophically related to each other, but politically distinct.¹ In the United States, there was the Emersonian notion of the college as the appropriate scene for the formation of republican individuals (Bledstein 1976: 259–268), and in Germany, the reassertion of the inner connections between university education and the social practice of cultivation (*Bildung*).² Stated differently, the idea of a crisis in the university, in

1930 as in 2000, called into question whether a university, oriented to the advancement of science alone, can sustain even those activities without reevaluating and reconstituting its relationship to its community and notably to its youth.³

Mannheim as Educator

In a piece of cultural journalism published in 1922 in a liberal newspaper, Karl Mannheim, newly arrived in Heidelberg and freshly disappointed in his hopes of habilitating in philosophy, illustrates a non-conservative argument against allowing conventional scientific considerations to monopolize decisions about university education. More precisely, he argues that a dramatic redirection of the educational function is itself indispensable to rejuvenating sciences that are in danger of sclerosis. The academic disciplines must teach in a way that lets them learn from the youth. Mannheim draws on the language of vitalistic philosophy to state his case, but his critique of imposed specialist schooling is not wholly dependent on that current.

He tells three stories to identify the critical problem, sketches of students who arrive in the university inspired by burning questions generated by their prior commitments to the movements of the times and who are stopped short by a disciplinary course of studies that requires them to forget their questions and to subordinate themselves to the present questions and methods of their respective sciences.

Mannheim reports that his first student comes from an activist political movement, the second, from a religious-mystical community, and the third, from an intimate involvement with art—that all three arrive at the university, in short, with profound experiences and insights. What they are required to do in the faculties of social science, philosophy, and art history, however, ignores or disparages what they bring. Mannheim finds this a cruel waste, but he is, nevertheless, not satisfied with a romantic gesture of solidarity with youth and its supposed vital rootedness in fellowships devoted to ultimate mysteries and missions. He is, in fact, ambivalent about such external, extra-scientific formations. The students' ideas, after all, may be nothing more than faded shadows of obsolete notions, he cautions, and they are, in any case, bound to be vague and unfocused. Besides, youth is destined to mature beyond the attitudes appropriate to these intense involvements. The universities are quite right to initiate the students in

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the sciences, he concludes, but they must also open the sciences to the urgencies of youth. Work in education should be a source of regeneration for scientific work (Mannheim [1922] 2001).

As the 1920s progressed, the generally hopeful tone of Mannheim's moderate proposal for tapping youthful cultural renewal for the benefit of university studies gave way to more bitter readings of the disparities between the perceived turmoil in culture and the concerns proper to the university, especially among those who saw Mannheim himself as a representative of the forces undermining the order of which the old university and its orderly inquiry had been an integral part. Mannheim's teaching in Frankfurt was deeply marked by these controversies. Heedless of the criticism of his sociology, he sought to exemplify both a diagnosis and a therapy for the crisis in higher education.

When Karl Mannheim became professor of sociology at the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe University of Frankfurt in 1930, he was the newly famous author of a work which its many bitter critics as well as eager supporters treated as an epitome of the cultural-political controversy. *Ideology and Utopia*, indeed, belongs squarely within the politics of educational crisis. His pedagogical interests, moreover, figured in his public image, as well as in his controversial ideas.⁴ Writing in the newspaper that had published Mannheim's article on youth and science eight years earlier, Siegfried Kracauer welcomed his appointment with the following words:

A marked pedagogical gift especially qualifies Mannheim for the activity of academic teaching. As is known from Heidelberg, he takes a real interest in his students and is a dedicated discussion partner, who always enters passionately into the dialectic of direct exchanges of views. In him, the university gains an instructor who conveys his teachings through teaching. (*Frankfurter Zeitung*, 11 December 1930. Cit. in Hoeges 1994: 78)

In the Weimar context, *Ideology and Utopia* was unmistakably about political education.⁵ Mannheim proposed sociology of knowledge as a method for opening practical life to the guidance of sociology. A primary step toward this end was the disclosure that the knowledge on which Mannheim's educated contemporaries relied lacked the authority and sanction they thought it possessed. This deficiency did not render it worthless, in his view, but it made its worth dependent on social circumstances which nonsociological knowledge—ideological knowledge—was incompetent to appraise.⁶ Instruction in sociology of

knowledge consequently serves as propaedeutic to teaching sociology. The educational mission of sociology extends, according to Mannheim, to party schools and other sites⁷ where a sociological apprenticeship mediated by sociology of knowledge can be established, while its primary locale remains the university course in sociology.

The intimate connections that interlink sociology of knowledge, sociological education, and the cultivation requisite for civic practice in Mannheim's work have been obscured by the standardized debates over Mannheim's book, especially after it was translated into English and incorporated into the canon of a sociology, notably American, driven, paradoxically, by the sort of teaching enterprise Mannheim sought to challenge; but the records of Mannheim's disrupted tenure as professor in Frankfurt make the importance of his educational project clear. Mannheim's published works during this brief period are few and appear scattered, ranging from a handbook article on sociology of knowledge through a carefully reasoned analysis of the striving for success, a central theme derived from Max Weber, to a lengthy prospectus for sociology as academic subject (Mannheim [1930b] 1952; [1931b] 1936; [1931c] 1953; 1932a; 1932b). Only the handbook article has received careful attention in the literature, since it counts as the prime text for sociology of knowledge taken as a technical academic subject. The others have been neglected. Mannheim's most ambitious project during these years produced a posthumously published volume, *The Sociology of Culture*, but the editorial emendations in the published version in English and the loss of the original German text, regrettably make it unreliable for present purposes precisely where it is most original.⁸ The Dutch transcription of a lecture on intellectuals that Mannheim presented to students in Amsterdam in 1932 (Mannheim [1932] 1993; cp. Pels 1993), as well the archival lecture notes of Mannheim's historical sociology courses in 1931 and 1932, have already been used by some commentators to shed light on Mannheim's pedagogical and political aspirations at the time, but only the recent recovery of the notes for Mannheim's introductory sociology course during his inaugural year in Frankfurt makes possible a full appreciation of the extent to which Mannheim's contributions to sociology are channeled through his hope of contributing decisively to the debate about sociology as education.⁹

It is not too much to say that Mannheim's "Introduction to Sociology" course consists largely of a reflection on and justification for the

very activity of teaching the course. This surprisingly self-reflexive text is the principal document in the companion volume (Mannheim [1930a] 2001). Supporting texts include three previously uncollected newspaper articles, one of them dating from Mannheim's first years in Germany; a key excerpt from Mannheim's book on the sociological curriculum, never republished or translated; the protocol of a joint seminar held by Mannheim and Alfred Weber; a retrospective exchange of letters between Mannheim and Eduard Heimann, an intimate during the Frankfurt years; as well as excerpts from several other letters and lecture notes. These texts form a primary source for the present study. An understanding of Mannheim's thought enriched by these documents should make it impossible in the future to treat his Frankfurt work simply as a foil for the so-called Frankfurt School (e.g., Jay 1970). Mannheim's creative participation in the Weimar equivalent of the present-day academic "culture wars" shows that neither *Ideology and Utopia* nor his other writings can be interestingly understood as representing nothing but the attempt to neutralize Marxism through a relativistic sociology of knowledge, as his neighbors at the Institute for Social Research maintained. Horkheimer and Adorno did not set the intellectual agenda in 1930, as they do not set it at present.

Mannheim's first teaching assignment, like his last, was in a school of education. In 1919, he taught philosophy of culture in the Institute of Pedagogy at the University of Budapest¹⁰; in 1942, he was made professor of educational sociology at the Institute of Education at the University of London. Although both appointments have their curious histories and neither one corresponded to his highest aspirations as a sociological theorist, they capture a vital dimension of his intellectual efforts. The contributions that Mannheim makes to sociology by his reflections on the teaching of the discipline bear directly on key issues in social education as well.

The activist and rhetorical components in Mannheim's sociology have been too exclusively assimilated to Marxist conceptions of consciousness raising, themselves traceable, in fact, to Hegelian extrapolations from the nineteenth-century debate about cultivation (*Bildung*). Mannheim certainly offers some textual grounds for such a reading. Yet the perspective on his thought opened by his Frankfurt teaching years allows a concretization of the concepts he abstracts from the Marxist political analyses of his time, specifically their return to the

educational contexts in which they are most comfortably at home. The intellectuals Mannheim seeks to bring to consciousness will express themselves not by becoming politicians, let alone revolutionaries, but by becoming teachers in the broadest sense, cultivators of the social mind and instructors of the democratic mass.¹¹

The Primacy of Cultivation (*Bildung*)

Seen in the perspective of German intellectual history, the pedagogical issues that Mannheim addressed during his Frankfurt period concerned a new phase in the older conflict between a traditional and elitist system of higher education, on the one side, and, on the other, the intellectual proponents of modernity who had variously called this system into question. What was new was the deep division within each of the historic contending sides. The established humanistic curriculum of the higher schools was now perceived by many anti-modernists as well as modernists as having ever less to do with the knowledge required for effective participation in intellectual or practical life. The advocates of the established institutions were divided between the genuine traditionalists, who upheld a curriculum centered on the old philology, with a canon of Greek, Roman, and German texts treated as "classics," and radical revisionists, who used a romanticized Nietzsche—and the myth of the trenches—as their icon. The modernizers were split, in turn, between those who wanted schooling to be guided by the newer state of the sciences and the newer requirements of the market for educated labor and those who wanted to adapt schooling to the requirements of fostering progressive social change.¹²

Distinctive too was a new urgency attaching to a contentious theme present throughout the more than one-hundred-year history of the characteristic German institutions of higher education. While the question of comprehending the flux of historical change without the loss of standards and ideals was an old one, the problem of "historicism," as it appeared in the early twentieth century, signaled the widely shared conviction—epitomized by the neo-Romantic mood—that the great philosophical systems of the nineteenth century could no longer be counted upon to guarantee order and meaning. In the name of philosophy of history, many historicists acknowledged the flux of history without abandoning the faith that history had meaning.

Karl Mannheim's first German publication in 1920 fit into this

context. It was a review of Georg Lukács' *Theory of the Novel* ([1920] 1993) in which Mannheim commended above all Lukács' theory of history for providing norms and structures without denying a dynamism that moved both observer and observed. The periodical in which the review appeared, *Logos*, was founded in 1911 and uniquely brought together an interdisciplinary group of the most prominent writers on philosophy, culture, and society. Symptomatically, each of its bound volumes featured an embossed head of Heraclitus, whose concept of logos was thought somehow to reconcile chaos and unity without idealist transcendence (Kramme 1995: 134–135).¹³ The questions were philosophical, of course, but Lukács' central chapter dealt with Goethe's paradigmatic *Bildungsroman*, *Wilhelm Meister*, decisive also for Hegel's *Phenomenology*, and the key question he found in Goethe emerged from the insufficient and irreconcilable idealist and romantic visions of the formation of spirit over time. Lukács had been Mannheim's most influential, if informal, teacher, and Mannheim's reflections on Lukács over the years were always also reflections on that education. Above all, the recurrent theme was how to live and learn in history.

The Weimar debate about the presumed crisis in education, like the wider debates of which it formed a part, was carried on under the threat of disorienting relativism and chaotic change, but also in the conviction that the outcome of the debate would itself make history. Historically, the rationale for the system of higher education, encompassing collegiate secondary schools for boys as well as the universities in their teaching functions, is traceable to the late eighteenth century. Like the religious designs that it displaced, at least in part, this popular-philosophic account contained strong organic assumptions, namely that the individual could orient himself to unified values because he was embedded in the soil of a national culture comprising a coherent totality that transcended political arrangements but made irresistible claims on political authority in exchange for the widest grants of legitimacy. The central concept of this powerful educational philosophy was cultivation (*Bildung*). *Der große Brockhaus*, the standard German encyclopedia at the time of Mannheim's arrival in Frankfurt, defined cultivation in this historical sense as follows:

The fundamental principle of the science of education, it signifies a forming of the soul through the resources of the culture enveloping it. Among other things, cultivation implies a) an *individuality* to be developed, as unique starting point, into a personality endowed with form or enriched with value; b) a measure of *universal-*

ity, a wealth of essential meanings, to be won through the understanding and experiencing of objective cultural goods; c) *totality* or wholeness, meaning inner resolution and firmness of character. (*Brockhaus*, II: 729; quoted in somewhat different form by Ringer 1969: 86)

This summary statement lays out the key concepts that carried the design, and it permits a preliminary overview of the inner difficulties confronting the historic case. Individuality, universality, and totality, in the required senses, were all highly problematic by the end of the nineteenth century.

Karl Mannheim's youthful lecture to the Budapest School for Humanistic Studies in 1917 (Mannheim [1918a] 1970) can well be taken on its own claim to serve as a representative statement for his generation. While he accepts the idea of the soul as the ultimate repository of infinite value, he has no faith at all in the articulation of this soul in an individuality capable of direct development into a personality constrained and empowered by aesthetic, ethical, and cognitive form. All articulations of the soul are caught up in a confusion of clashing, changing forms. The surrounding culture, thus, is rich beyond imagining, but its elaborations do not constitute a universality congruent with the soul. Adapting Georg Simmel's conception of the "tragedy of culture," Mannheim finds the past objectifications of the human spirit—as the self-articulation of the soul is called in this discourse—to be alien and, in effect, hostile to the soul. The wholeness and integration requisite for authentic cultivation, then, cannot be rationally anticipated or explained: it can only erupt in a revolutionary reversal of the current flow. Mannheim and the generational grouping for whom he speaks do not propound an alternative to cultivation through culture, it should be noted, but accept as their own the mission of making the key concepts good, despite their seeming dissolution by time.

During the summer semester of 1919, the last weeks of the Soviet regime in Hungary, Mannheim lectured on sociology of culture in the Institute of Pedagogy, a new subdivision of Budapest University mandated by Georg Lukács, his mentor, who was now commissar for culture in the Soviet regime. The notes for these lectures show clear continuities between the novice teacher, earnestly marking out the only choices he supposes to be open to humanists in a revolution, and the established professor a dozen years later, delineating the place of sociology in the crisis of Weimar. With epigrammatic intensity, the young Mannheim asks his students to consider three "forms of life"

and he confesses his own choice. After weighing a life as saint or politician, he opts for the educator. In the peroration of the lecture, Mannheim distances himself from both the saint and the politician:

The politician does not believe in God; he believes in history. The saint believes in God, but says that his kingdom is not of this world. The educator believes in neither God nor history, but in culture.

The saint believes that only the direct way—the power of an exemplary life—can heal the world. Evil breaks out. The politician sees evil and suffers from it. Because he believes in history, he fights for humanity through institutions. The educator does not believe in these two ways, but he thinks that there is a means of fighting against mere institutions: cultivation, the inherently transformative effects of culture. He cannot disregard history; and he cannot simply follow the saint, because he does not believe in the power of the exemplary soul to accomplish total transformations....The educator is resigned. He cannot touch people with the immediacy of the saint because he knows that the gesture would be false. He knows that *art*, valuable as it may be, is not a cure, yet he hopes that the music of the soul somehow breaks through by its means. The susceptibility to art is the only thing given unto us all. And if the educator also knows and accepts that he cannot reach the infinite, he does as much as Charon: he guides across the dark water. (Mannheim [1919a] 1985: 230–231; Kettler/Meja 1995: 107–8)

In his Weimar work, Mannheim clearly abandons the attempt, documented in these lectures, to look to a new aesthetic, a concept he expressly traces to Schiller, as the way past the crisis of culture and cultivation, yet he never rescinds his commitment to play educator rather than politician or saint.

The decisive element in Mannheim's subsequent development of these themes was, of course, his conversion to the view that the inner, philosophical difficulties of the ideal of cultivation could not be understood or met without an adequate understanding, at the same time, of its external, social vicissitudes. For present purposes, we put aside Mannheim's own social interpretation of the crisis of individuality, universality, and totality, somewhat narrowly focused on functional logics imputed to class structures and dynamics, in favor of the more institutionalist general consensus of recent historical scholarship.

During most of the nineteenth century, on this view, the educational activities ordered, more or less, in accordance with the cultivational ideal stood in alliance with two other institutionalized practices—university science and the rationalized, non-democratic state. After the failure of 1848 and especially in the era of Bismarck, as the emancipated scientific establishment and the authoritarian state apparatus demanded ever more training for functional specialization, on the one

hand, and ideological mobilization, on the other, this alliance required that inherent contradictions among the three be ignored. Along with the converging conservative and national-liberal main currents of which they formed a part, almost all of those concerned with cultivation continued to cling to the belief that the nation formed an organic totality, in the hope that such contradictions could be superseded. The difficulties epitomized by Mannheim's 1917 address were of course already widely discussed in cultural circles. Widespread academic support of Bismarck's anti-Catholic and anti-socialist campaigns, however, and, above all, the wild enthusiasm for the "Ideas of 1914," an epiphany of denial among the educated classes, show the strength of the factors upholding the alliance.

The sociopolitical conditions of the Weimar Republic represented the definitive fragmentation of that assumed totality—what has been referred to as the crisis of classical modernity (Peukert 1993). Notably, this "crisis" intensified questions about the relationship of science (*Wissenschaft*) to both the ideal of cultivation and to the new sociopolitical reality. Again, questions about this relationship were not new, but they did not appear to have reached the critical stage until the demise of the imperial state, which had maintained a "discursive coalition" (Wagner 1990) with the academy. Thus the university representatives as well as the organizational and intellectual spokesmen for the old unified ideal of cultivation were forced to face a set of contradictions which had always been there, but which they were able to ignore as long as there seemed to be some institutional basis for their organic assumptions.

War and revolution drew a firm line. The institutions of science had gained a novel legitimacy by virtue of their direct contributions to the power of the state and the wealth of society, notably during the war, but these gains were a function of a new level of technical specialization, self-enclosure, and opacity to both political and educational agencies. To counter the denigration of their classical cultural subject matter by neo-Romantic publicists and especially by the flamboyant leaders of the youth movement, the guardians of higher education sought validation by propounding aggressive conceptions of heroic vitality, no less remote from the technical demands of science than the orderly enactment of responsibility demanded by public and private officialdom, old and new. The argument is not that these conditions first arose in the Republic, but rather that they reached a level of crisis there.

Crucial to the crisis was the demise of what had been seen as the umbrella organization that provided unity for an otherwise divisive civil society—the nominally impartial, indeed universalistic state apparatus comprising the military, the legal estate, and the bureaucratically organized officialdom under the leadership of the sovereign head. In Weimar, this state was seen to have been replaced by a parliamentary government, which no longer stood above party, class, and interest divisions but rather incorporated them. More accurately, notwithstanding the euphemisms common to the discussions of the time, the state was seen to have been disrupted by the rise of hitherto excluded social actors, widely deemed to be antithetical in their very makeup to the key conceptions of the cultivation ideal—the organized working class, the women's movement, and the cosmopolitan economic actors epitomized in the image of the Eastern Jew. How could these newly influential actors in public life be identified with the “individuality” presupposed by cultivation, how oriented to the “universality” of the national culture, how credited with the soldierly virtues of allegiant, “totalistic” activism. The parliamentary government, however, was seen to treat these interlopers as important supporters and clients, even where they were not actually in command. To academic traditionalists, there now seemed to be no institution able to resist the fragmentation of the organic unity upon which individual values and orientation depended. With the advent of democratic rule, in short, the contradictions between the ideology of idealistic cultivation and the pragmatic-technical interests of both university science and the state apparatus suddenly ceased to be merely an undercurrent of uneasiness among those who spoke for higher education. The fatal threat to cultivation had a name, and it was mass democracy.

Writing in 1924, Max Scheler and his students, notably Paul Honigsheim, developed an analysis of the cultural situation that focused specifically on changes in institutions of culture. Scheler took note of the nineteenth-century expectation that democracy and scientific learning would be mutually reinforcing, but distinguished between the concomitants of individualistic democracy “from the top down” and the emotional mass democracy “from the bottom up.” While rule by the liberal elite fostered cultivation for a while, at least in the sense of elementary education and the positive sciences, it could not prevent its own self-transformation into mass democracy, with the extension of the franchise even to women and youth, or the democrati-

zation of culture and education, with the consequent disparagement of the ever more specialized higher knowledge in favor of competing "vague metaphysics" that incline the new "ecstatic class and *Volk* movements" in "caesaristic, dictatorial and anti-parliamentary directions" (Scheler 1924: 134). Honigsheim analyzes the institutional articulation of these changes with special attention to the fate of cultural "institutes," notably the university. He finds that the universities during their great epoch, extending throughout the nineteenth century, were characterized by a comparative homogeneity of life patterns among both professors and students, founded upon the converging support provided by the state, the Protestant church, and liberalism, with early socialism serving in many respects as a continuator of liberal interests. Developments internal to each of these institutions undermined their concert and power. The state has been divided up among competing interest groups; the Protestant church has sunk with the unified state; liberalism has been reduced to the interest organizations of commerce and industry; and socialism is now mostly embodied in trade union officialdom. There is no coherent power upholding the university, and its fragmentation turns it into "an accidental assemblage of people who are inwardly foreign to one another." "They do not know each other," Honigsheim writes, "they do not feel that they belong together, they will not stand up for one another or for the whole at the decisive moment, and the effective force will be slight when it comes time to fend off assaults and when a changed public opinion calls their privilege into question" (Honigsheim in Scheler 1924: 432).¹⁴

While Honigsheim, as a young outsider, envisioned transformative cultural-political maneuvers that built on the new developments, a much more common type of response to this perceived crisis was to reject the political changes, to line up in opposition to the new governmental system in the name of cultivation. Towards the end of the Weimar decennium, this increasingly took the form of frank alignment with enemies of the constitution, but more common was adhesion to the political forces that purported to find grounds for a "dual legality" in the 1919 constitution itself. The legislation enacted by parliament and the regulations imposed by ministers must give way, on this view, to the higher legality of the unrevolutionized state, speaking through the president under his emergency and residual powers and through the courts.¹⁵ Writing under the admittedly extreme circumstances of 1932, Eduard Spranger asserted that the present is always to be under-

stood as an "emergency situation" because there is no natural law to comprehend it, because the valid law that appears applicable may be appealed to a higher authority, and because "there is no moral law that does not first require translation by living choice from its merely legislative form to a conviction infused with the soul (*beseelten Gesinnung*)" (1932: 200). Spranger recognizes that he is introducing a weighty and a highly relevant legal concept when he speaks of "emergency situation." As he was writing, the German parliament had been reduced for two years to the position of helpless endorser of state actions taken under presidential decrees issued under the constitutional provisions for "emergency situations." The emergency situation of 1930, he opined, had refuted the democratic experiment of 1919, and reinstated the orientation to the imperfectly realized but immortal state that the Weimar constitution had attempted to overlay, a state congruent with cultivation. Other commentators did not need the "emergency situation" to deny the validity of the constitutional new founding. Although the Hegelian philosophy had lost favor, its vision of the monarchical and bureaucratic state as the objective actualization of the spirit towards which all cultivation aspires continued to move the self-consciousness of the academic estate.

Yet questions about cultivation were not merely philosophical. Public educational policy and funding were essential features of life in the institutions of higher education. The parliamentary regime, its ministers, and officials could not be simply conjured into unreality, at least until they could be displaced by new authorities. Proponents of the old cultivation ideal had to rethink its elements in the face of practical governmental designs, backed by instruments of power that could have their effect, to a point, whatever the opinions in the academy about their legitimacy.

Public policy, moreover, directly set itself against the charge that the new political order meant the end of cultivation. Some republican officials, especially those based in the Prussian Cultural Ministry, sought to revitalize the traditional ideal in light of the new sociopolitical configuration. A central figure here was Carl H. Becker, who viewed sociology as the critical discipline in this new phase of cultivation. Sociology, he thought, could provide the common civil understanding that would enable individuals to recognize themselves through their dealings with others as peers and partners, without the discredited elitism and romanticism of the older conception. A sociological cul-