Is it then an overstatement to conclude that ideology, utopia, counter-utopia, and the "end of ideology", though varying in substance, form, and function, are but different expressions of an all-pervasive alienation and reification? Hence the need for a "futurological" outlook and method, trying to overcome all four estranged approaches is all the more pressing. In contrast to ideology - of the original as well as of the "de-ideologized" type - this "Futurology" affirms the constructive function of a radical criticism of the status quo and the need for an orientation of the present towards the future. Futurology conceives of the future neither as a utopian paradise nor as a counter-utopian hell. Its vision of the world of tomorrow is that of an ever open, manifold, and contradictory universe full of potentialities and purposes. By introducing the concept of counter-utopia Futurology disenchants the utopian dream. Thus utopia is no longer a position to be defended but a proposition to be examined. Both utopia and counter-utopia turn into hypothetical categories in the sense of Vaihinger's philosophy of the "as if".

But Futurology cannot merely concern itself with the formal reconciliation of ideological, utopian, and counter-utopian elements. As Walter Dirks noted, a compromise can never be an ultimate goal; it results from the clash of human effort with the force of circumstances. Especially today, in an extraordinarily dynamic age it is not compromise, but Karl Mannheim's "dynamic mediation" that matters. A true synthesis is achieved whenever a propelling force succeeds in overcoming the weight of dead matter. In contrast to conservative and ideological attitudes that are accepted as self-evident truths and are thus regenerated in an automatic and instinctive fashion, the utopian outlook is a late product of civilization. It is perennially threatened, maintaining itself only with the utmost effort. Time and again the age-old system of power, domination, and violence with its bureaucratic and plutocratic elements asserts itself against all co-operative, fraternal, and functional tendencies of reform and revolution. In recognizing the relative place-value of these two different principles, Futurology tries to support the weaker though more humane forces. In other words, the Futurologist accepts the "spirit of utopia which overcomes utopia" (Paul Tillich) or in Hegel's language he annuls, preserves, and elevates utopia, ideology and counter-utopia.

Futurological criticism of the present dialectically rejects the untheoretical impressionism as well as the supertheoretical and speculative glorification of the closed universal system. Between the Scylla of an "empirical" pragmatism only acknowledging the past and the present, and the Charybdis of a dogmatic "monism", wedded to an illusory future, Futurology must try to find its own way. Fully aware of the tragic limitations of human existence, but also inspired by the hope of human progress the futurologist acts more critically than the utopianist, more