

**MAX WEBER'S SCIENCE OF REALITY. TYPES OF HUMAN BEING AND THE
POSSIBILITY OF LIFE CONDUCT IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE**

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of

PhD

in the Faculty of Humanities

2011

Isabelle Darmon

School of Social Sciences

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Wordcount: 130,449	

ABSTRACT

The University of Manchester
Isabelle Darmon
PhD

Max Weber's science of reality. Types of human being and the possibility of life conduct in contemporary culture. June 2011.

Drawing critically on a line of interpretation opened by Wilhelm Hennis more than 20 years ago, this thesis is concerned with Max Weber's notion of 'human type' (*Typus Mensch, Menschentum*) and the way in which it enables to pose a philosophical question – what can leading a truly human life in the modern age mean? – from the perspective of social and cultural sciences. To that end, it brings out Weber's framework for the analysis of the inner and external shaping of the human type as well as for the consideration of the possibility of life conduct, examining the inner momentum of the life orders in which human beings deploy their actions, and not merely their 'external' arrangements. Weber's theoretical construct of the life orders and value spheres (especially in the 'Intermediate Reflection') and his analysis of the workings of the rationality of particular spheres of human action (as first and most completely exposed in the 'music study') are at the core of this framework.

By suggesting that Weber was critical of – and went far beyond – analyses of the constraining of personality by 'external conditions', I seek to provide an account of his analysis of the manufacturing of adaptation. I show in particular that such fashioning, far from being only the result of the dynamics of rationality pervading all spheres of human action in different ways, rather arises in the interplay between such dynamics and the irrationalities it triggers, including in the rationalised life orders. The adapted human being is not only a carrier of needs or interests, but also of affects and even values: adaptation mobilises 'life'. To such external and inner 'forming' of life, Weber opposed another kind of modern inner vocational connection to specific worldly value spheres. Thus the analysis of the inner momentum of the life orders and value spheres also crucially served Weber's exploration of the possibility of 'life conduct' in opposition to letting life 'slip by' and merely be 'formed'.

The thesis has an important comparative strand, at three different levels. First, it sets out Weber's notion of science of reality against the background of the epistemological debates at the turn of the 20th century. This highlights the divide between Weber's conception of the role of science in a disenchanted world and other conceptions, which tended to be captured by philosophies of life. Secondly, specific comparisons are carried out, e.g. between Weber's and Troeltsch's analysis of the coining of a new *Menschentum* at the time of the Reformation. Finally I provide a more systematic comparison between Weber's and Simmel's analysis of the fate of the modern human being, highlighting the contrast between Weber's affirmation of the possibility of a life conduct that confronts and transforms the world and Simmel's self-referential notion of personality.

Drawing on existing encompassing interpretations and on more specialised scholarship, the thesis above all relies on my own textual analysis and interpretation across Weber's writings (including the music study, the methodological guidelines for the survey on industrial labour, the political writings and the writings on academia), Simmel's mature philosophical writings, as well as Troeltsch's *Social doctrines of the Christian Churches*. The analysis of Dilthey's and Rickert's philosophy of respectively the human and cultural sciences relies on a more selective reading of their major works and on existing scholarship.

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part I contextualises the notion of 'science of reality' and exposes the main features of Weber's notion of human type. Part II addresses the deployment of Weber's approach in the modern life orders; whilst part III explores its prolongations on the plane of life conduct and vocation, which it compares with Simmel's notions of objectivation of 'lived experience' and personality.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to my two supervisors, Professor Mike Savage and Professor Alan Warde for their continuous attentive and cheerful support and more generally for their judgment and humanity. It has been a privilege for me to be able to discuss my work regularly with both of them, in complementary ways.

I would also like to thank Carlos Frade, who encouraged me to undertake this doctorate. Carlos's own reflection on Max Weber and his always careful, grounded and thoughtful remarks have enlightened me without ever closing any path.

I also wish to acknowledge my friend Simone Scherger, who more than once clarified the structure of a complicated Weberian sentence for me, and provided much humorous reassurance about the PhD process.

Finally I am also thankful to my family, who, in various ways and from afar, have provided constant support, be it technological, logistical, affective, or just good-humoured.

INTRODUCTION

In his very first empirical studies, in the East-Elbian provinces of Prussia, Max Weber was confronted to the all-encompassing advance of capitalism, the destruction of patriarchal relations, and their replacement with pure commercial labour relations and class struggle. There, ‘brutal personal rule (*Beherrschung*)’ was transformed into ‘commercial exploitation’, which ‘arising almost unnoticed, was actually much harder to evade’¹. ‘Personal hate’ gave way to ‘“objective hate” – a well-known technical expression of socialism (sic)’; the landed aristocracy turned into a ‘class of commercial entrepreneurs before our eyes’, whilst rural labourers suffered ‘proletarianisation as a class’, affecting not only their ‘material interests’ but also their ‘social physiognomy’. It was, in all respects, an extreme situation, in which the ‘human types’ from the former status groups, each grounded in specific modes of life conduct, were turned into *mere* ‘types of their class’ (*Typus der Klasse*)²: in other words, almost no other characterisation of the protagonists subsisted than that which was actualised in pure economic power relationships.

This transformation ‘beyond recognition’ of the ‘the spiritual face of the human race’³ by advanced capitalism was to become a life theme for Weber, and one which was decisive for his conception of the social and cultural sciences. Already in his famous ‘Inaugural Address’ at the University of Freiburg in 1895, he urged his colleagues to carry out ‘a science of man, and that is what political economy is, [which] investigates above all else the quality of the human beings, who are brought up in those economic and social conditions of existence’⁴. Several

¹ Max Weber, "Entwicklungstendenzen in der Lage der ostelbischen Landarbeiter" [Developmental tendencies in the situation of the East-Elbian labourers], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1924 [1894]), 488-9. Translation modified from Max Weber, "Developmental tendencies in the situation of East Elbian rural labourers", in *Reading Weber* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989 [1894]), 171. Throughout the thesis, Weber’s use of the words formed around the root ‘Hersch’ will be translated as ‘rule’ or ‘rulership’ rather than as ‘domination’. Keith Tribe has opted for ‘rulership’ in his translation of the ‘Basic Concepts’. See Max Weber, "Basic Sociological Concepts", in *The essential Weber: a reader* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004 [1922]), 355.

² Max Weber, "Die deutschen Landarbeiter. Korreferat und Diskussionsbeitrag auf dem fünften Evangelisch-sozialen Kongress am 16. Mai 1894" [The German agricultural workers. Presentation and discussion on the 5th Evangelical-Social Congress], in *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe, Gesamtausgabe / Max Weber I/4* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1993 [1894]), 326-7.

³ Max Weber, "Methodologische Einleitung für die Erhebungen des Vereins für Sozialpolitik über Auslese und Anpassung (Berufswahlen und Berufsschicksal) der Arbeiterschaft der geschlossenen Großindustrie" [Methodological introduction for the survey of the association for social policy concerning the selection and adaptation of the workforce (professional choices and professional fate) in the large self-contained industry], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik*, ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1924 [1908]), 59-60.

⁴ Max Weber, "Der Nationalstaat und die Volkswirtschaftspolitik (Akademische Antrittsrede)" [The Nation State and economic policy: Inaugural Address], in *Gesammelte Politischen Schriften*, ed. Marianne Weber (München: Drei Masken Verlag, 1921 [1895]), 19.

years later, he defined ‘the kind of social science we want to pursue’ as a ‘science of reality’ (*Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*) poised to ‘understand the reality of the life in which we are placed and which surrounds us in its specificity’, in particular ‘the configuration and cultural significance of its individual manifestations in their form of today, and on the other hand the reasons of their having historically become so and not otherwise⁵. A science of reality was to investigate how the human being had come to be how he was in those times of advanced capitalism.

More than twenty years ago, Wilhelm Hennis opened up a wholly new perspective for reading Weber by arguing that the question about the fate of the human being and the type of humanity (*Menschentum*) developing in the modern world was ‘central’ to Weber’s work. In particular Hennis showed that it was this question that had heralded Weber’s best known work, the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (hereafter *PE*). The investigation into the spirit of capitalism was really an investigation of the new type of human being, the ‘vocational-professional type of human being’ (*Berufsmensch*) that had suddenly taken shape and become the carrier of that spirit, as Weber had indeed made explicit in the responses to his critics. Weber investigated the relation between life conduct (*Lebensführung*) and the world and its ‘orders and powers’⁶.

Yet at the same time as he unveiled Weber’s problematique and tracked it in the enquiries on the shaping of contemporary types of human being, Hennis suggested that such questioning was confronted to the insuperable barrier of the rationalisation, that is to say the de-personalisation, of the modern orders and powers:

‘Where there is nothing ‘personal’ to register Weber falls silent, and gets no further than unfulfilled intentions... If Weberian sociology turns, on the one hand, on *Lebensführung* and, on the other, upon the orders and powers conditioning it, then the culmination of rationalisation is the destruction of this connection... There is no place for *Lebensführung* in the “cage”, it is rationalised away, discipline is enough⁷.

These are ambiguous statements, which nevertheless seem to me to possibly restrict the scope of Weber’s endeavour in two ways. Firstly, Hennis seems to confine the possibility of life conduct, in Weber’s highest sense of self-determined life conduct, to traditional orders of social relations in which ethical regulation was still possible because relations engaged persons. But the self-determined life conduct Weber referred to, in particular in the ‘Vocation lectures’ was only possible in a disenchanting world, in which the individual is left to himself to create

⁵ Max Weber, "Die "Objektivität" sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis" [The objectivity of knowledge in Social Science and Social Policy], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*(Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988 [1904]), 170-1.

⁶ Wilhelm Hennis, *Max Weber's Central Question*, trans. Keith Tribe, Second ed. (Newbury: Threshold Press, 2000), 7-31.

⁷ *Ibid*, 97.

meaning⁸ and has to 'fetch his ideals from his own chest'⁹. It is only in such a world that an 'ethical tension'¹⁰ can arise between self-determined goals and rationalised means, which calls for orientation and decisions proper to life conduct.

Secondly, Weber did fear the total depersonalisation of relationships and the concomitant reduction of the human being to a 'type of his class', as suggested above, and sometimes he gave the impression that relationships in the 'cage' could be confined to sheer interests and discipline. But he also found that all dynamic of rationalisation is bound to stumble on irrationalities (be they inherent in the rational principle from the start or brought by the carriers of rationality), which creates a space for the mobilisation of affects, habits and material rationality, i.e. for the mobilisation of 'life' in interplay with formal rationalisation. Even where there is no life conduct in the strict sense of the term, the 'habitus' and 'qualities' fostered by these dynamics do characterise human types, which Weber studied as part of his analysis of active or passive adaptation to the logics of the depersonalised orders (the 'cosmos of the modern rationalised capitalist economy', the 'state cosmos' and that of modern science) as well as the everyday inner adjustment (*Einstellung, Eingestelltheit*) to being governed and administered that such adaptation fostered.

My purpose in this thesis is to further the study of the notion of 'human type' by drawing the main lines of Weber's framework for the analysis of the inner and external shaping of the human type (*Typus Mensch*) and type of humanity (*Menschentum*), to clarify and make explicit the concepts and relations underpinning it, and to bring out its importance for assessing contemporary culture and its orders of social relations, especially through the prism of the opposition between the possibility of life conduct and confrontation of the world on the one hand and the passive and active adaptation fostered by contemporary capitalism on the other hand.

There are three main strands to this investigation.

First, I seek to cast more light on the processes for the *inner* shaping of human types for adaptation, through an analysis of the 'intrinsic logics' and inner momentum of the life orders and value spheres. The framework for this analysis takes its clues from linking Weber's 'theoretical construct' of the life orders and value spheres and their conflicts in the famous 'Intermediate Reflection' of the *Economic Ethics of World Religions* (hereafter *IR*) with the two

⁸ Weber, "Objectivity", 154.

⁹ Max Weber, "Diskussionsreden auf den Tagungen des Vereins für Sozialpolitik" [Debates held at the congresses of the Association for Social Policy], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik*. ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1924 [1905-1911]), 420.

¹⁰ Karl Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), 67.

‘Vocation lectures’ (‘Science as vocation and profession’, hereafter ‘Science’, and ‘Politics as vocation and profession’, hereafter ‘Politics’) as well as with the ‘music study’, which presents us with a unique exposition of the inner dynamic of a specific sphere, but one that Weber thought could be identified in other spheres¹¹. Christoph Braun’s analysis of Weber’s ‘music study’ and in particular his illuminating explanation of the interplay between ‘life’ and ‘ratio’ at the heart of the dynamic of the Western music system have been determining for the elaboration of this analytical framework¹². Although much of the material analysed is well known (except perhaps for the music study), the approach taken here to the shaping, particularly the inner shaping, of the human type, hopefully casts a new light on Weber’s characterisation of modern culture.

Secondly, I propose to read Weber’s teachings for life conduct in the contemporary world as the consistent attempt at preventing the wholesale definition of *Menschenheit* by ‘that most fateful power of our modern life’¹³, advanced capitalism, whilst drawing the full implications of the disenchantment and rationalisation of the world. I will argue that, besides dissecting the workings of adaptation, Weber’s science of reality, when taken to its ‘limits’, that is, when it attained to ‘social philosophy’, put forward the path for a stance of confrontation with the world¹⁴: thus, far from the ‘despaired’, ‘ascetic’, ‘heroic’ image often attached to Weber’s ethics (which I prefer to refer to as his ‘teaching’), the picture emerging is one of a combative affirmation of the possibility of individual and collective self-determination, against the flattening of life by capitalism as well as against mystical flights.

Thirdly, I take a comparative approach, setting out Weber’s science of reality against other conceptions of such a science put forward in the epistemological effervescence of the turn of the 20th century, and more particularly contrasting Weber’s approach to the significance of the human type and the possibility of self-determined life conduct with Simmel’s exploration of

¹¹ Max Weber, "Zwischenbetrachtung: Theorie der Stufen und Richtungen religiöser Weltablehnung" [Intermediate Reflection: Theory of the stages and directions of religious rejection of the world], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1920). Max Weber, *Die rationalen und soziologischen Grundlagen der Musik* [The rational and sociological foundations of music], Theodor Kroyer ed. (München: Drei Masken Verlag, 1921), Max Weber, "Politik als Beruf" [Politics as vocation and profession], in *Gesammelte Politische Schriften*. ed. Marianne Weber (München: Drei Masken Verlag, 1921 [1919]), Max Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf" [Science as vocation and profession], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988 [1919]).

¹² Christoph Braun, *Max Webers "Musiksoziologie"* [Max Weber's Sociology of Music] (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1992), Christoph Braun, "The 'Science of Reality' of Music History: on the Historical Background to Max Weber's Study of Music", in *Max Weber and the culture of anarchy* (Basingstoke; New York: Macmillan; St. Martin's Press, 1999).

¹³ Max Weber, "Vorbemerkung" [Foreword], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1920), 4.

¹⁴ Indeed, as Carlos Frade reflects and demonstrates, Max Weber’s stance, which encompasses his thought as a whole, is itself a stance of confrontation of the world. This suggests a renewed reading of Weber which in fact proposes to continue Weber’s teaching for ‘intellectual integrity’. Carlos Frade, "Max Weber's Teaching: A Stance for Weberian Subjects Today", *Max Weber Studies* (Under review) (2011).

the modern soul and the possibility of unified personality. The comparison brings out the formidability of the confrontation intended by Weber, as it shows the extent to which the temptations of anti-intellectualism and mysticism were present not only amongst the young intellectuals with whom Weber engaged, but also amongst philosophers who considerably influenced 20th century social theory. Conversely it can serve to explain why Weber's study of *Menschentum* and his teaching for life conduct, underpinned by the 'radical dismantling of "illusions"¹⁵' expressed and demanded by his so-called *Methodological Writings*¹⁶ and by his stance of confrontation of the world, could not nourish a social science that was split between the production of 'knowledge on technologies of control over life'¹⁷ (including of 'human action') and an aestheticising/mystical trend: between adaptation and flight from the world, precisely the two stances that Weber consistently fought against in the most varied arenas.

The thesis is divided in three parts, together setting out Weber's approach to the modern human being, the way in which it is shaped in the modern life orders, and the possibility and modalities of self-determined life conduct. Both the first and the third parts are comparative. The first part is contextual and expository, the second part addresses the deployment of Weber's approach to the human type; whilst the third part explores its prolongations on the plane of life conduct and vocation.

Part I ('The emergence of the human type and *Menschentum* as problems in the social and cultural sciences') consists of two chapters. Chapter 1 sets the scene for the coining of the notion of science of reality, contrasting the epistemological concerns of most of its proponents as well as their considerable dependence on *Lebensphilosophie*, with Max Weber's own substantive and methodological concerns for the study of the cultural significance of modern phenomena, in particular through the type of human being they produce.

¹⁵ Karl Löwith, "Max Weber's Position on Science", in *Max Weber's "Science as a vocation"* (London; Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989 [1965]), 148.

¹⁶ As is well known, Weber never intended to publish these essays in one volume. In most of these essays Weber critically engaged in specific debates or with other authors and on this occasion clarified his conception of the social and cultural sciences and more fundamentally the stance underpinning such conception. The *Wissenschaftslehre* was put together by Marianne Weber. Edith Hanke has established that Heinrich Rickert had advised her against this notion, which he found too Fichtean, and had recommended 'Contributions to the logic of cultural sciences' instead. In any case, the translation as 'methodology' or 'methodological writings', which is the choice both of Shils and Finch for the 1949 (incomplete) English translation, and now of Bruun and Whimster for their forthcoming complete English edition, is much to be preferred to the translation chosen by Julien Freund for the available French edition ('Essays in the theory of science'). Edith Hanke, "'Max Weber's Desk is now my Altar': Marianne Weber and the intellectual heritage of her husband", *History of European Ideas* 35 (2009): 5. Max Weber, *The methodology of the social sciences*, Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1949). Max Weber, *Collected Methodological Writings*, trans. Hans Henrik Bruun, Hans Henrik Bruun and Sam Whimster ed. (London: Routledge, Forthcoming).

¹⁷ Weber, "Science", 607.

Chapter 2 is an exposition of Weber's approach to the human type, in particular through the analysis of three dominant types of human being in different cultures and epochs – the cultivated type of human being (*Kultur Mensch*) of Confucian China; the ascetic Protestant vocational-professional type of human being (*Beruf Mensch*); and the modern specialist type of human being (*Fach Mensch*) – as well as of a type of human being facing social and cultural decline (the modern *Kultur Mensch*). The distinctiveness of this approach is emphasised through a comparison of the *Beruf Mensch* with Ernst Troeltsch's analysis of the new *Menschenheit* created by Calvinism, and of the modern *Kultur Mensch* with Simmel's analysis of the 'metropolitan type of individuality' and the 'modern soul'.

Part II ('The shaping of modern *Menschenheit*') consists of four chapters. Chapter 3 has a double introductory function to Part II and to Part III as it sets out Weber's theoretical construct of the life orders and value spheres in *IR*, which was a pivot in Weber's work and a point of entry for both empirical analyses of particular life orders and for his teaching about life conduct in the modern world. This is complemented with my own analysis of the inner 'momentum'¹⁸ of the music sphere – which is the only dedicated in-depth analysis of a worldly sphere carried out by Weber.

Chapters 4 to 6 illustrate Weber's approach to the shaping of specific types of human beings in the spheres of the rationalised capitalist economy, politics and rule under the modern rationalised State and of the sphere of 'intellectual knowledge' and 'science' (*Wissenschaft*). I analyse the interplay of 'ratio' and 'life' in these spheres, the mechanisms of selection of 'adequate' 'subjects' and inscription of habit, as well as the inner tensions of the spheres which might ground the possibility of ethics and life conduct.

The analysis of the spheres of politics and science relies on Weber's *Political writings* and the so-called Academic writings, which should rather be called 'Writings on academia'. They are not strictly speaking scientific texts, but emphasise precisely what is the object of these chapters: the inner dynamic of these spheres and of their 'structural forms'. To the extent that it does not produce any specific type of human being, I have not dedicated any in-depth analysis to the erotic sphere despite its importance in *IR* but I do reflect throughout the thesis upon its place in Weber's construct, for contrasting purposes.

Part III ('The possibility of life conduct and personality in the modern age – a comparison between Weber and Simmel') consists of two chapters. Chapter 7 gives an account of the other component of Weber's science of reality, namely his teachings for life conduct and vocation, their theoretical, perhaps philosophical, premises and their existential and political

¹⁸ As per Christoph Braun's felicitous formulation. Braun, "Music as 'Science of Reality'", 179.

implications. Chapter 8 provides an analysis of Simmel's notions of objectivation and the possibility of personality within his philosophy of life and from the standpoint of a comparison with Weber's conceptions of life conduct, vocation and stance of confrontation of the world.

The thesis seeks to build on existing interpretations of Weber's thought as a whole or of its main tenor (in particular those of Wilhelm Hennis, Lawrence Scaff; but also, Karl Löwith and Dieter Henrich). I bring in more specific Weber scholarship in a more selective way, mostly in support and complement to the arguments made throughout the thesis; there is little critical engagement with Weber scholars, except for clarification purposes, as my work is not polemic but rather exploratory. Above all the thesis relies on my own textual analysis and interpretation across Weber's writings – most notably his sociology of religion, sociology of rulership, the 'economic concepts', some of his writings in the context of social policy surveys, the 'methodological writings', the 'vocation lectures', the music study, the political writings, the so-called 'academic writings', as well as his published correspondence. Detailed textual analysis and interpretation extends to Georg Simmel's mature writings – especially his *Philosophy of money*, philosophy of culture and philosophy of life; and to Ernst Troeltsch's masterpiece *The social doctrines of the Christian Churches and groups* and some of his other writings in the philosophy of culture. The analysis of Wilhelm Dilthey's and Heinrich Rickert's philosophy of respectively the human and cultural sciences relies on a more selective reading of their major works (especially Dilthey's *Introduction to the human sciences* and Rickert's *Limits of concept formation in natural science*) and on existing scholarship.

It is a well known fact that the understanding of Weber in the English (but also French)-speaking world has greatly suffered from inadequate, prejudiced translations. There is currently a considerable effort to remedy this state of affairs, both with the publication of new translations and in the quotations used in scholarly articles, which the authors often find necessary to translate directly from the original instead of using existing translations. I have found the reflections of Hans Henrik Bruun, Wilhelm Hennis and Keith Tribe as well as Jean-Pierre Grossein particularly illuminating as well as useful for the meaning of certain key terms and phrases. The translations used in this work are mine, unless otherwise specified. However I have heavily relied on Jean-Pierre Grossein's as well as, to a lesser extent, on Lassman and Speirs' glossaries and translation choices¹⁹.

¹⁹ Hans Henrik Bruun, "Problems in translation" (paper presented at the Colloquium: Max Weber and the reconfiguration of modernity, Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, 1-3 September 2010), Jean-Pierre Grossein, "Glossaire raisonné" [Argumented Glossary]. in Max Weber. *Sociologie des religions* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), Je14

I use the masculine pronoun and adjective to refer to the human type or the human being. I could equally have systematically used the feminine: exclusion of the other genre cannot be avoided. I have opted for the masculine given the basis of most human types in education and profession, at a time when the share of women amongst students and in the workforce was still limited.

PART I – THE EMERGENCE OF THE HUMAN TYPE AND *MENSCHENTUM* AS PROBLEMS IN THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SCIENCES

Chapter 1 – *Menschentum* and the type of human being, categories of a ‘science of reality’ (*Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*)

Introduction

The 19th century, and particularly the German 19th century, viewed itself as a century of ‘cultivation of history’¹. History was the science which made the ‘concrete’ evolution of humanity or specific peoples and nations palpable and able to nourish *Selbstbesinnung*, that ‘making sense of oneself’ at the core of the formation of personality (*Bildung*)². History, and more generally the ‘historicising’ sciences (including the sciences of the State, out of which grew economic science), were ‘sciences of man’ – studying the evolution of humanity and preparing individuals for their life as autonomous human beings: as Gangolf Hübinger has suggested, the historical sciences were the ‘lead sciences for (self-) orientation’³. Yet Weber’s ‘Inaugural Address’ at the University of Freiburg in May 1895 and above all the essay on ‘The objectivity of knowledge in Social Science and Social Policy’ (hereafter ‘Objectivity’) published in 1904 heralded a new conception of what a ‘science of man’ was, and of the way in which the now named ‘social and cultural sciences’ could be ‘sciences of reality’ (*Wirklichkeitswissenschaften*)⁴. As has been shown by Wilhelm Hennis, the study of the qualities of human beings, of the ‘human type’ was at the heart of such a science. For beyond affirming themselves, as first proposed by Georg Simmel in 1892, against the abstract deduction from general laws found in the natural sciences, the ‘sciences of reality’, as put forward by Weber, sought to educate the gaze of contemporaries, make them ‘see’

¹ As was famously deplored by Nietzsche in his ‘Second Untimely Meditation’ (1874): ‘This consideration is untimely too because I attempt to understand anew something which our time is rightly proud of – its cultivation of history – as damage to it, as its illness and deficiency, because I believe indeed that we all suffer from a consuming fever of history...’ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie; Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen I-IV; Nachgelassene Schriften 1870-1873* [The birth of tragedy; Untimely meditations I-IV; posthumous writings], Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari ed., *Sämtliche Werke: kritische Studienausgabe* (München; Berlin; New York: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag; De Gruyter, 1999), 246.

² Ernst Troeltsch, *Der Historismus und seine Probleme, I. Buch: Das logische Problem der Geschichtsphilosophie* [Historism and its problems. The logic of philosophy of history], *Gesammelte Schriften III* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1922), 19, 508.

³ Gangolf Hübinger, ‘Geschichte als leitende Orientierungswissenschaft im 19. Jahrhundert’ [History as leading orientation science in the 19th century], *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 11 (1988).

⁴ Weber, ‘Inaugural Address’, 19. Weber, ‘Objectivity’, 170.

the world by studying ‘substantive problems’ and the human beings ‘as they will be’, indeed as they are⁵.

In this chapter I will seek to highlight the way in which such an approach purported to transform the practice of the ‘historical’, ‘human’, ‘cultural’ as well as ‘social and cultural’ sciences – beyond the apparent continuity of a search for the concrete education of the human being as human being. This required a vigorous critique of the role of the notion of ‘personality’ in the historical sciences (section I); the anchoring of sciences of reality in the ‘substantial problems’ of the day and their significance rather than in the grasping of ‘reality in its totality’ and in its meaning, the latter being the attempt which especially Dilthey’s and Simmel’s science of reality drifted towards, as it was ‘captured’ by their aesthetics and philosophy of life (section II); and, finally, the development of a notion of type that fully drew the implications of Nietzsche’s *Typus Mensch* for the definition of the object of the social and cultural sciences (section III). The chapter sets Weber’s path against that of the contemporary philosophers and scholars (Wilhelm Dilthey, Georg Simmel, Heinrich Rickert, and to a more limited extent, Ernst Troeltsch) who equally sought to ground a science of reality to study *den ganzen Menschen*, the ‘human being as a whole’⁶.

I – The historical sciences and the notion of personality

History and historical economics as sciences of man

The history of the emergence and development of the historical sciences, particularly in Germany in the 19th century, could be said to have become received wisdom, sometimes boarding on the national myth, amongst German scholars intent on establishing their bases as non-natural sciences.

⁵ Weber refers to the priority of the study of ‘substantive problems’ in a discussion about the place of methodology in history. See Max Weber, "Kritische Studien auf dem Gebiet der kulturwissenschaftlichen Logik" [Critical studies in the domain of the logic of the cultural sciences], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*. ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988 [1906]), 217. Both Wilhelm Hennis and Lawrence Scaff have drawn the attention for some time on Weber’s essential concern with the study of men as ‘they will be’, starting from the ‘Inaugural Address’. See e.g. Hennis, *Central Question*, 123-124. and Lawrence A. Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage: culture, politics, and modernity in the thought of Max Weber* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 30. Hennis also quotes a 1902 letter to Elisabeth Gnauck-Kühne: ‘To your friendly question I reply: I am not an augur and do not think myself capable of satisfying the hungry. My decisive need is for “intellectual righteousness (*intellektuelle Aufrichtigkeit*)”: I say what is’. Hennis, *Central Question*, 166.

⁶ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften. Versuch einer Grundlegung für das Studium der Gesellschaft und ihrer Geschichte* [Introduction to the human sciences: an attempt to lay a foundation for the study of society and history] (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1883), XVIII.

Thus Ernst Troeltsch pointed out that what came to be known as historicism and its purpose for 'life' had thrived on the rejection of the 'abstract' 'teleological universal thought' associated with the ideals of the French Revolution⁷. He put forward the 'affinity' between the natural sciences and the Enlightenment, on the one hand, and between the 'development of the historical sciences essentially first [with] German idealism' on the other hand⁸, even though he also acknowledged that there had been moments of synthesis. The thought of Rousseau, that 'first Romantic', had already contained *in nuce* 'the two main branches [of modern philosophy of history], the Anglo-French positivistic and the German speculative ones'; and Hegel united 'both directions, the formal variant of history and the creation, out of history, of the contents of values of the spirit'⁹.

Georg Simmel associated the idea of 'numerical individualism', or 'individualism of singleness (*Einzelheit*)' – an individualism grounded in the equality of all human beings as members of humankind – with the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and the idea of 'qualitative individualism' or 'individualism of singularity (*Einzigkeit*)' – grounded in the embodiment of the humankind in each individual human being in a singular way in each case¹⁰ – with Romanticism. The two developments analysed respectively by Simmel and Troeltsch were intricately linked, since the historical sciences claimed to foster the singular individual and 'personality', whilst French and English thinkers (Comte, Stuart Mill, Buckle and Spencer), who sought to translate the methods of the natural sciences to the study of society, were deemed by Troeltsch, but also e.g. by Wilhelm Dilthey, to entertain an atomistic conception of the individual¹¹.

Thus the historical sciences were very consciously developed against what was perceived as abstract thought, and oriented to the actuality of the 'concrete and living'. As explained by Hübinger,

⁷ Troeltsch, *Historism*, 19. See also Dilthey, *Introduction*, XV-XVI.

⁸ Troeltsch, *Historism*, 626-7.

⁹ *Ibid*, 19.

¹⁰ Georg Simmel, "Der Individualismus der modernen Zeit" [Individualism in modern times], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 20 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), 256.

¹¹ Troeltsch, *Historism*, 20, 627. Dilthey, *Introduction*, XVI. As summed up by Troeltsch rather characteristically: 'The differences between the German and Anglo-French (sic) philosophy of history thus catch the eye. The former is underpinned by a religious-mystical, pantheistic-theistic trend, through which the mystery of individuality is moved to the foreground; the latter by an atomistic-empiricist-mathematical trend, which can be linked, not in its foundations but in its results with the enthusiasm of Nouveau Christianisme or the Religion de l'humanité, when it is not amalgamated, as is the case with the English, with scepticism or orthodoxy'. Troeltsch, *Historism*, 20.

‘This tight linking of the transformation into a science (*Vernissenschaftlichung*) and the function of *Bildung*, of history as science and at the same time as ‘power for life’ (*Lebensmacht*), is what constitutes the much investigated phenomenon of “historism”.¹²

This stance, partly couched in national terms, also translated onto the field of affirmation and struggle of the historical sciences against the natural sciences. The ‘concrete’, the ‘living’, the singular were emphasised by the historical (as well as the historicising) sciences both as goal (the construction of the personality in its singularity), as object of analysis and as a prerequisite (the qualities required from historians). Thus, for Droysen, history itself is open, in constant elaboration, a living process of appropriation and learning, and built through ‘perspective (*perspektivischen*) knowledge’, i.e. bound to the scholar who writes it; a science of reflection which provides “us with the consciousness of what we are and what we have”¹³; and its object of knowledge is human action¹³.

Similarly, the historical school of economics¹⁴ conceived of itself as ‘science of man’, which, as Hennis has pointed out, should really be understood as ‘science of the whole man’, meant in a polemical sense. Thus the opening words of its foundational work, Wilhelm Roscher’s *System der Volkswirtschaft* (System of economics, 1854¹⁵) are: ‘Point of departure and objective of our science is man’¹⁶. Forty three years later, the new leading figure of the historical school, Gustav Schmoller, renewed the pledge to ‘put man at (the) centre’ of economics¹⁷.

¹² Hübinger, "History as orientation science": 150. As comes out of Hübinger’s analysis, this could be said of all currents of historism – whether this ‘living’, ‘concrete’ character of history was directed to the ‘development of humankind’ and more particularly the unification of Germany as *Kulturnation* (nation in the civilised world), as for liberal historian Johann Gustav Droysen; or to another form of national cultural identity, predicated upon the recognition of the ‘stranger as stranger’ and on the knowledge of ‘the language, law, customs, relics of all Germanic tribes and peoples’, as for Droysen’s main adversary, Leopold Ranke.

¹³ Ibid: 153. Quote of Droysen from ‘Erhebung der Geschichte zum Rang einer Wissenschaft’ [The rise of history to the rank of science], *Historische Zeitschrift* 9 (1863), 1-22.

¹⁴ Literally, it is the Historical School of National Economy. But *Nationalökonomie* seems to have been used interchangeably with *Volkswirtschaftslehre*, which was and is the institutional designation of economic science, or economics. Keith Tribe refers to the Historical school of economics (Keith Tribe, "Historical Schools of Economics: German and English", *Keele Economic Research Papers*, no. 2 (2002)).

¹⁵ Roscher’s *System* was published in five volumes between 1854 and 1894. Keith Tribe translates here as ‘System of Political Economy’.

¹⁶ Hennis, *Central Question*, 126.

¹⁷ This was to be achieved e.g. ‘by looking at distribution and not only production, and at economic institutions, and not only value formation’, as he explained in his *Rektoratsrede* (speech on the occasion of his accession to vice-chancellorship) at the University of Berlin in 1897. See Hübinger, "History as orientation science": 153. and Hennis, *Central Question*, 127.

The social and human sciences and the notion of personality

Against that background, *Persönlichkeit* became a central notion in history and economic science, as well as for the grounding of the ‘social’, ‘cultural’ and ‘human’ sciences as a whole¹⁸. But, as we shall now see, through it, the opposition of the historical sciences to abstraction paradoxically ran the risk of preventing the analysis of human motives and of erecting an unassailable wall around human will, supposedly the seat of a freedom that could not be subjected to the ‘objectifying’ proceedings of science. The ‘science of reality’ which was to support such a concept of personality was thus at a risk of being captured by Romanticism and of drifting towards irrationality. As demonstrated by Antonio Valdecantos, it is in the combat against this notion of personality that Weber forged his own approach to it¹⁹, and that, as I shall argue, he put forward the type of human being as the proper notion for tackling the ways in which the human being shapes and is shaped by the historical and cultural world. Similarly, it is in part against the associated idea of a ‘science of reality’ that Weber developed his own *Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*. The importance of Weber’s review essays *Roscher and Knies: The Logical Problems of Historical Economics*²⁰, can scarcely be exaggerated in these respects.

There, Weber provided an account of the implications of the mobilisation of the category of ‘personality’ in the quest of the historical sciences to affirm their boundaries and principles against the natural sciences. Especially when he discussed the approaches of the two founding fathers of the historical school of economics in which he was himself trained, Wilhelm Roscher and Karl Knies, Weber highlighted how the concept of personality epitomized conceptions which held them back on their path towards the explanation of ‘human motives’ and ‘human action’. Thus, though Roscher considered that history (which pervaded his economics) studied the ‘human, earthly, intelligible motives’, he nevertheless also viewed the workings of ‘divine providence’ in the ‘pre-stabilising creation of

¹⁸ The differences between these classifications are explained further below.

¹⁹ Antonio Valdecantos, "Historicismo, sujeto y moral (Max Weber y el «mito de la transparencia de la razón»)" [Historicism, subject and morals (Max Weber and the "myth of the transparency of reason")], *Isegoría*, no. 2 (1990).

²⁰ Max Weber, "Roscher und Knies und die logischen Probleme der historischen Nationalökonomie" [Roscher and Knies: The Logical Problems of Historical Economics], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988 [1903-6]). English translation (which I will not use): Max Weber, *Roscher and Knies: The Logical Problems of Historical Economics*, Guy Oakes ed. (New York and London: The Free Press, 1975). These were the first in the many critical review essays which Weber wrote throughout his life. As made clear by Wolf Feuerhahn, Weber used these review essays to clarify the use of concepts and logical notions by economists and historians, rather than to ground a ‘theory of science’ (See Wolf Feuerhahn, "Max Weber et l'explication compréhensive" [Max Weber and understanding/explaining], *Philosophie* 85 (2005): 20-1.)

personalities’, understood as ‘metaphysical entities’²¹: two modes of causal relation were thus juxtaposed, without this appearing to create any logical problem for this, in this respect ‘un-modern’, author²².

Knies (Roscher’s disciple) proposed a definition of the ‘historical sciences’ as dealing with ‘external processes which are nevertheless conditioned by mental motives’²³, a definition which, as noted by Hennis²⁴, clearly anticipated Weber’s own approach. Yet these mental motives were referred back to ‘personality’ as the seat of human freedom and dignity, which were equated with ‘incalculability’ (*Unberechenbarkeit*), and thus ultimately with ‘irrationality’²⁵. Hence ‘personality’ was both the agent whose actions are the object of ‘historical sciences’ and itself beyond explanation in the ‘historical sciences’. What can be explained and accounted for are the relations – on the one hand, the way in which free human action is conditioned by the necessity of ‘nomological determination’, and, on the other hand, the causal-creative significance and effects of the ‘acting personality’²⁶.

Thus the notions of personality came to designate the residue, so to speak, of empirical sciences, that which is beyond explanation because it is the seat of Man’s divine parcel (Roscher) or of human dignity (Knies). Furthermore, Knies’ work showed that the notion of the ineffability, or indescribability, of personality could have non-religious roots and in particular be grounded in what Weber exposed as a ‘metaphysical’ belief in progress, first heralded in Kant’s conception of ‘causality through freedom’ according to which ‘all value changes in reality have been brought about by “creative forces” (“*schöpferische*” *Kräfte*)’²⁷.

The theory of the ‘creative synthesis’ developed by the psychologist Wilhelm Wundt was another example of such metaphysics²⁸, fed, in addition, by a nomological approach: the

²¹ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 21-22. In the same way, peoples (*Völker*) have souls, which are, equally, the creation of God.

²² Ibid, 3.

²³ Ibid, 44. Knies meant the historical sciences as a third category, alongside the ‘human’ and natural sciences and as an attempt to overcome the tension between them. By ‘human sciences’ (*Geisteswissenschaften*) he referred to the category put forward by Wilhelm Dilthey. I come back to this further below. Mental motives involve the mind or ‘spirit’ (*Geist*), which is the privileged site of the given analysed by the ‘human sciences’, whilst the nomological regularities of ‘external processes’ are what natural sciences are deemed to address.

²⁴ Hennis, *Central Question*, 132-140.

²⁵ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 64.

²⁶ Ibid, 46.

²⁷ Ibid, 62.

²⁸ Weber quotes the 2nd edition of Wundt’s *Logik*. Wundt had published the 3 volumes between 1880 and 1883. The 2nd edition is from 1893. This is not the only occasion in which Weber discussed and criticised Wundt’s theories and his experimental psychology (see Part II, Chapter 4).

notion of 'creative' can be understood both as the intrinsic value of personality and as having particularly productive effects (through the 'law of the "increase of psychic energy"'²⁹). Weber criticised Wundt for fostering the undue assimilation of both (especially by historians, as was the case with Karl Lamprecht), which made a proper causal analysis impossible.

The idea of ineffability of the self led Wundt's student Hugo Münsterberg³⁰ to distinguish between objectifying and subjectifying knowledge, and more particularly to the view that knowledge of another human subject can only take place through 'empathy' and 'understanding': the 'I' cannot be explained, it can only be experienced. History, therefore, is about allowing the lived reality of personalities, of human values and will to be 'relived' (*nacherlebt*)³¹. Only thus is it a 'subjectifying' discipline, in opposition to the objectifying dissociation of the I and the object of analysis.

At the core of the conceptions criticised by Weber is the suppression of the 'manifold' (*Mannigfaltigkeit*) of the 'given', and the invocation of single 'units', 'things', without acknowledging that this is an operation of construction of the multiple into the one, which requires the 'artificiality' of thinking³². In his view, such approaches were still hampered by 'emanatism' ('anthropological emanatism' in the case of Knies³³). It is worth quoting Weber at length here, as this passage makes clear why the notion of personality could stand in the way of what he understood by 'science of reality', especially as a science aiming to teach contemporaries to 'look the fate of the age in its stern face', against the worship of such 'idols' as 'personality'³⁴:

Where empirical science treats a given manifold as a "thing" and thus as "unit", for example the "personality" of a concrete historical human being, in reality this object is always only "relatively determined". I.e. it is always and without exception an empirically "intuited" self contained construct of thought, but it is at the same time, precisely, a thoroughly artificial construct, whose "unity" is determined through the selection of what is essential from the perspective of determined research goals, a thought product, thus, which has only a "functional" relation to the "given". In consequence it is a "concept", if such expression is not artificially limited to only one part of the transformation of the empirically given through thought and of the thought products describable through words.³⁵

²⁹ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 55.

³⁰ Hugo Münsterberg studied psychology and medicine, and joined William James at Harvard.

³¹ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 75.

³² Ibid, 110.

³³ Ibid, 138.

³⁴ Weber, "Science", 591, 605.

³⁵ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 109-110.

Against this surreptitious essentialism, this unacknowledged imposition of the one on the multiple, most authors who attempted to ground the historical, human, social and cultural sciences as sciences of reality (Dilthey, Simmel, Rickert, Weber and Troeltsch) placed the conscious operation of meaningfully constructing the one from the multiple at the centre of such attempts. Personality, therefore, should be treated as an idea (especially as a religious idea), as it is by Weber and Troeltsch, contributing to the shaping, not only of new *ideals* of human kind, but also of the actual human types (*'Menschentum'*)³⁶. Or it may designate the uncertain outcome of a process of construction of the self, either in the constancy of one's motives and orientation to higher values and tasks (Weber, Troeltsch), or primarily referred to one's inner unity (Dilthey, Simmel).

In these various conceptions of personality as outcome of a construction process, the study of personality must consist in the study of its possibility. But here the similitude ends, for the study of the possibility of constancy and self-determination of endeavour implies an analysis of the way in which and extent to which the orders and powers of the world shape action; whereas the study of the possibility of inner unity requires an exploration of the inner make-up of the individual, so to speak 'from within', and of its connection with the external world. And here we get a first glimpse at a divide between two very different types of 'science of reality' – despite their common starting point in the refusal both of positivism and essentialism – which will become fully apparent in section II.

II – Towards a science of reality: Dilthey's, Simmel's, Rickert's and Weber's notion of *Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*

The focus of the historical school (and those it influenced) on personality as living, creative entity had led to the assimilation of the 'real' (*das Wirkliche*) and 'life', where life is understood as everything that is spontaneous, fluid, non mechanistic, concrete and, ultimately, irrational. As pointed out by Valdecantos, the emergence of the notion of 'science of reality' was very much a 'correlate' of the idea that 'only (what is) individual is real (*wirklich*)'³⁷ – but this needs to be located within the at the time increasingly prevalent framework of *Lebensphilosophie*.

³⁶ I come back to the treatment of the religious idea of 'personality' by Troeltsch and Weber in Chapter 2.

³⁷ Valdecantos, "Historicism": 107.

The 19th century opposition of the concrete and living with the abstract was perpetuated in the grounding of a ‘science of reality’ against the natural sciences (‘law-based sciences’ – *Gesetzwissenschaften*): ‘reality’ could not be deduced from ideal, abstract laws. Indeed this was the basis for Simmel’s definition of a ‘science of reality’ in 1892:

‘The law has an ideal character, no bridge leads from it to a graspable reality... Insofar as the historical science has to represent what has really happened, since it is the science of reality by excellence, it enters in the strongest opposition that can be thought of against all law-based science’³⁸.

To some, this meant that the real had to be grasped directly and portrayed so as to convey life: in the most radical expression of such view – as found in Bergson, but also, as shown by Weber, in Münsterberg’s, Lipps’ and Croce’s thought – the real is only what ‘lives’, what animates and is animated. Conveying this real is rather the task of art and philosophy than it is of science, which, as work of the intellect, ‘dislikes what is fluid, and solidifies everything it touches’³⁹ – unless, as Münsterberg’s ‘subjectifying science’, it limits itself to ‘reports concerning the “acts” of “personalities”’⁴⁰.

The capacity of art to condensate the real also inspired some of Dilthey’s and Simmel’s most beautiful pages, and influenced their conception of philosophy and history – in particular, as we shall see further below, their conception of how to approach the study of the modern human being. Nevertheless, both Dilthey and Simmel, who were amongst the first to refer to a ‘science of reality’, sought to combine an immediate, intuitive approach to the real with the ‘devices of thought’⁴¹. Weber’s own conception of such science found much sustenance in their work, despite an altogether very different orientation and understanding of the ‘real’. In this section I review the various conceptions of a science of reality put forward by Dilthey, then Simmel, Rickert and finally Weber. This will then lead me, in section III, to draw the implications for the analysis of the type of human being.

³⁸ Georg Simmel, "Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie" [The problems of the philosophy of history], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe 2* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989 [1892]), 348-9.

³⁹ Henri Louis Bergson, *L'évolution créatrice* (Paris: Alcan, 1911), 50. quoted by Lucio Colletti, *Marxism and Hegel* (London: Verso, 1979), 157.

⁴⁰ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 74-5.

⁴¹ Dilthey, *Introduction*, 27. Admittedly this became clearer in Dilthey’s 1910 recapitulation and culmination of his reflection on the human sciences. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Der Aufbau der Geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften* [The construction of the historical world in the human sciences], Manfred Riedel ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970 [1910]).

Dilthey and the sciences of historical-social reality

It is generally assumed that the notion of science of reality was coined by Simmel in his *Problems of the Philosophy of History* when it was first published in 1892⁴². However, Wilhelm Dilthey had presented his ‘human sciences’ (*Geisteswissenschaften*)⁴³ as ‘the sciences of [historical-social] reality’ (*die Wissenschaften von [geschichtlich-gesellschaftlicher] Wirklichkeit*), in his *Introduction to the human sciences*, first published in 1883⁴⁴. Indeed both designations (human sciences, sciences of reality) together encompassed Dilthey’s approach to ground these sciences in contradistinction to the ‘law-based sciences’, but also in opposition to the empiricist and the speculative understanding of the human being. Dilthey’s forceful evocation of the ‘insatiable demand for reality (*Verlangen nach Realität*)’ of contemporary science, ‘so as to encompass the world as a whole, where possible, and to acquire the means to intervene in the course of human society’⁴⁵ marked the paths for the ulterior development of the human sciences as sciences of reality.

It is, first, through their aims that Dilthey’s sciences of the human spirit are sciences of reality:

‘The aims of the human sciences – to grasp historical-social reality in its singularity (*das Singulare*) and individuality (*das Individuale*); to recognize efficacious (*wirksame*) uniformities in its shaping (*Gestaltung*); to ascertain the goals and rules of its further shaping (*Fortgestaltung*) – can only be attained through the devices of thought, i.e. through analysis and abstraction⁴⁶.’

For both Dilthey and Weber, no less than for Simmel and Rickert, understanding reality means understanding the singularity, specificity, individuality of phenomena. But this individuality of a phenomenon of ‘socio-historical reality’, of ‘social and cultural life’ is to be grasped in a configuration of relations which takes a specific shape in each studied

⁴² As pointed out by Hans Henrik Bruun, this is due to Rickert, who attributes the notion to Simmel in the 2nd edition of his *Die Grenzen naturwissenschaftlicher Begriffsbildung* (The limits of concept formation in natural science). See Hans Henrik Bruun, *Science, values and politics in Max Weber's methodology*, New expanded ed. (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 117.

⁴³ Dilthey’s *Geisteswissenschaften* encompass both the social sciences and the humanities – ‘not only psychology, anthropology, political economy, law and history, for which (John Stuart) Mill’s expression, “moral sciences” might have served’ (*Geisteswissenschaften* is actually a translation of ‘moral sciences’ in the first place). But Dilthey also included philology and aesthetics. See Rudolph A. Makkreel, *Dilthey: philosopher of the human studies* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), 36-7. According to Ramon Betanzos, the translation as human sciences is justified in the case of Dilthey’s work, since Dilthey himself was unhappy about the phrase for its limitation to the mind: ‘for in this study we do not separate data of intellectual life from the psychophysical living unity of human nature’ (see Ramon J. Betanzos, "Wilhelm Dilthey: an Introduction". in Wilhelm Dilthey. *Introduction to the human sciences: an attempt to lay a foundation for the study of society and history* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), 32.). Hans Henrik Bruun proposes a more literal translation: ‘sciences of the human spirit’. Hans Henrik Bruun, ‘Draft glossary’ for Weber, *Methodological writings (en)*.

⁴⁴ Dilthey, *Introduction*, 129.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 123.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 27.

instance, yet whose elucidation requires the co-operation of history with a generalising discipline (psychology being, for Dilthey, the most fundamental of the *Geisteswissenschaften*⁴⁷) or with theoretical constructs (Weber's ideal types). Indeed, despite their opposed way of conceiving of meaning and causality⁴⁸, both Dilthey and Weber considered that the sciences of concrete and living reality, taken together, need not be purely descriptive or speculative⁴⁹, but can be explanatory without resorting to 'laws'.

Secondly, Dilthey's human sciences are sciences of reality through the 'material' they handle: 'historical social reality (*Wirklichkeit*) visible in its full reality (*Realität*)⁵⁰. Dilthey's historical and psychological research thus meets here the century-long concern evoked at the beginning of this chapter. For Dilthey, it is only because human 'lived experience' (*Erleben, Erlebnis*)⁵¹ and spirit express themselves into 'objectivations' that they become part of the intelligible world, but it is only because objects are objectivated experience and spirit that we can 'understand' them⁵². We cannot interpret experience directly, only its fixed expressions, but we also cannot interpret what has not been experienced (e.g. nature). Understanding (*Verstehen*) for Dilthey is the adequate approach to what human beings have themselves made (but not to nature, which is God's creation), it is an approach which, at a certain level, connects like with like (I will come back to this apparent identification below). But, contrary to Münsterberg, who based his 'science of reality' exclusively on re-

⁴⁷ But it is not a foundation in the sense that the other disciplines could be derived from it. See Makkreel, *Dilthey*, 69.

⁴⁸ Charles Turner, *Modernity and politics in the work of Max Weber* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), 69. The views on an alleged affinity between Weber's interpretive sociology and Dilthey's own notion of *Verstehen* have long been superseded, correctly so. But the more recent tendency to tie Weber to the Neo-Kantians seems to me to be equally exaggerated. The present chapter offers evidence of Weber's affinities and distance to both Dilthey and Rickert.

⁴⁹ Weber showed that speculative thinking could go hand in hand with a fascination for nomological approaches, even amongst those scholars most critical with abstract theories. Thus Weber referred to those who, even in the Historical school, strive for 'a system of doctrinal propositions from which reality might be "deduced"' (Weber, "Objectivity", 172.). Indeed, as we have seen, Wundt's theory of creative synthesis combined the 'metaphysics' of personality with the law of "increase of psychic energy".

⁵⁰ Dilthey, *Introduction*, 124. See also p. 24.

⁵¹ The translation emulates the French in an awkward way but this is in order to distinguish the 'experience' of *Erleben*, a primary, immediate, unified mode of relating to the world, from 'experience' as learning, *Erfahrung*, which is an activity of the mind only and can only occur once the divide subject/object is acknowledged. This is also e.g. Betanzos' solution for his translation of Dilthey's *Introduction to the human sciences*.

⁵² *Objektivierung* is often translated as 'objectification'. However, given its origin in Hegel's notion of objective spirit, 'objectivation' seems more adequate. 'Objectification' should be reserved for the translation of *Verdinglichung* and *Vergegenständlichung* (which stand closer to Marx's notions of alienation and commodity fetishism). I come back to this in Part III Chapter 8, where I discuss these concepts in relation with Simmel's work.

experiencing (*Nacherleben*) through empathy⁵³, and to Bergson's thesis of the possibility of absolute intuition of psychic life⁵⁴, for Dilthey, this understanding is always achieved through the mediation of objects without which there can be no science, only introspection.

Dilthey, and, following him, Simmel, refused both the nomological deduction of the real and the 'flight from the world of abstractions into deep feelings about a living reality, dominated by the irrational, that overrides all knowledge based on the principle of reason'⁵⁵. '*Individuum est ineffabile*', yet this does not mean that we cannot acquire knowledge about him. Dilthey's hermeneutics, in particular, conceives of a mode of understanding of alien *Erlebnis* which does not rest on identification, but rather on re-creation – an operation which entails, in the historian's case, 'a continuing conditioning of one's own life by the great object'⁵⁶, notably through the endless exploration of the context of the event or personality studied.

Nevertheless, since the world is given to us through *Erlebnis*, an immediate form of making sense which mobilises all of our inner functions and not just the intellect, and since we can trace *Erlebnis* under all human expressions and objectifications, lived experience is 'the epistemological basis for all knowledge of the objective'⁵⁷. As we shall see, with the growing prevalence of his philosophy of life over his work as a whole, Simmel gave a similar crucial place to *Erlebnis*, as epistemological foundation of history, and as a foundation for all meaningful objectivation.

Simmel: from 'science of reality' to philosophy and the 'totality of being'

For his own conception of history as 'science of reality' (1892), Simmel put forward a number of fundamental psychological presuppositions which were close to Dilthey's grounding of a 'science of reality', amongst which: the possibility of conceiving of the presence of consciousness in other human beings; and the 'unity of the soul' – but this unity is never given: rather it is the product of a reconstruction. Simmel's approach to the reconstruction of historical psychic phenomena relies neither on induction nor deduction,

⁵³ As he explained in the book reviewed by Weber, *The Fundamental Elements of Psychology*, 1900. Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 70-92.

⁵⁴ Makkreel, *Dilthey*, 212.

⁵⁵ Dilthey, *Introduction*, 49.

⁵⁶ *GS V*, 278, quoted in Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and method, Continuum impacts* (London: Continuum, 2006), 227.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 57.

but rather mobilises the ‘synthesis of imagination’⁵⁸, a notion which stands close again to the key Diltheyan idea of ‘imaginative metamorphosis’ explored in the *Poetics* (1887)⁵⁹.

Simmel’s lifetime reflection on history developed these artistic principles in an extraordinarily fruitful way. Reality (*Wirklichkeit*) is the ‘world given to us as sum of fragments’⁶⁰; in art and philosophy, it is compressed, condensed, re-expanded in images of the world or of concrete figures – a form of elaboration of reality which differs from the abstraction performed by sociology and from the dissections of the natural sciences. In the same way as Dilthey’s poetics illuminated all of the human sciences including his approach to history⁶¹, Simmel’s philosophy of history became increasingly influenced by his studies of artistic creation, and ultimately by the philosophy of life which blossomed in them.

The ‘capturing’ of history by Simmel’s philosophy of life can be seen for example in the way in which he defined the historian’s selection of his subject. Historical objectivation requires the delimitation of specific epochs and periods and of sequences of events⁶². On the other hand, the ‘scope of each particular unit, its concentration in a particular centre and the determination of its limits’⁶³ is defined by the historian according to a specific resonance he has with the epoch studied, enabling him to animate it from within. Simmel first located this capacity in the historian’s endowment with a ‘pronounced individuality’⁶⁴; in his last essays in the philosophy of history, he found it rather in the historian’s ‘pulse’, lent to the historical object, since it is not the specific contents of the historian’s personality which translate themselves to the historical construct, but rather his ‘lived experience’ and overall ‘vital process’. Only thus can life be breathed in the historical ‘individual’ (entity)

⁵⁸ Georg Simmel, "Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie" [The problems of the Philosophy of History], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe*. ed. Guy Oakes and Kurt Röttgers 9 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997 [1905/1907]), 274.

⁵⁹ In particular, through the ‘third law’ of imaginative metamorphosis, the law of completion, the poetic imagination can concentrate the image of an individual in a nucleus or core (*Kern*), and thus incorporate any new element in relation to that innermost core. See Makkreel, *Dilthey*, 102.

⁶⁰ Georg Simmel, "Hauptprobleme der Philosophie" [Main problems of philosophy], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 14 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996 [1910]), 32.

⁶¹ Makkreel, *Dilthey*, 73.

⁶² François Léger, *La pensée de Georg Simmel : contribution à l'histoire des idées en Allemagne au début du XXe siècle* [The thought of Georg Simmel : contribution to the history of ideas in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century] (Paris: Kime, 1989), 154.

⁶³ Georg Simmel, "Die historische Formung" [Form giving in history], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 13 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000 [1918]), 369.

⁶⁴ Léger, *The thought of Georg Simmel*, 155. Weber refers to this statement by Simmel in his first review essay on Knies. He notes that this remark by Simmel must be admitted as fundamentally correct, whilst regretting a lack of precision in the terms chosen which can lead to granting too much credit to historians simply doted with a strong personality (such as Ranke). Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 101.

described, only thus does it acquire unity and only thus does it touch the student of history as a whole person and not only intellectually: 'History is the only kind of [NB scientific] formation in which lived experience, as meaning and movement, as ensoulment (*Beseelung*) and development, is not lost'⁶⁵.

We find the same kind of objectivation, through animation so to speak from within, in history as in art and in philosophy: Simmel's science of reality has given way to an exploration of the meaning of life. And the notion of reality itself becomes absorbed by and subsumed under the notion of life, with which it had first been equivalent⁶⁶.

At the heart of this re-composition is the re-elaboration of the structure of meaning of real phenomena and things, which, for both Dilthey and Simmel, amounts to conceiving of their inner unity beyond apparent fragmentation and making them so to speak more real than the real. In Dilthey's hermeneutics, something derives its meaning by being related to the whole of which it is a part. Life, as the encompassing whole, cannot have meaning (*Bedeutung*) but can be made sense (*Sinn*) of⁶⁷. To Dilthey meaning is the only category which can convey the experience of totality, whereas

'from the perspective of values, life appears as an infinite manifold of positive and negative values of existence (*Daseinswerten*). It is like a chaos of harmonies and dissonances. Each of these values is a tonal pattern or chord that fills a *present* moment, but these chords have no musical relationship to each other.'⁶⁸

As we shall see, it is precisely the pervasion of reality by that chaos of dissonances that Weber thought most important to acknowledge, particularly as a scholar. Interestingly, he had his own musical metaphor⁶⁹.

⁶⁵ Simmel, "Form giving in history", 331-2.

⁶⁶ Indeed, in *Lebensanschauung* (*The view of life*), his last book, 'reality' is just one amongst various ways in which life is formed; it is limited to the practical purposive activities in which human beings engage in order to survive and develop, and takes place alongside other 'ontological worlds' or forms. These are the religious, artistic, knowledge-related and finally the ethical way of apprehending and forming the 'fabric of the world' as a whole (I come back to this notion of world in Part III Chapter 8). See Georg Simmel, "Lebensanschauung" [The view of life], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999 [1918]), 238, 346-7.

⁶⁷ Already in his *Introduction*, Dilthey had stressed that 'although partial contents have been obtained by a process of extraction, their relation to the organism of reality, in which alone life pulses, must not be forgotten'. Dilthey, *Introduction*, 49. Translation from Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to the human sciences*, Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 99.

⁶⁸ *GS* VII, 202, quoted in Makkreel, *Dilthey*, 382.

⁶⁹ As reported by Wilhelm Hennis on the basis of the unpublished manuscript of Hans Staudinger's memoirs, Weber had responded to Staudinger's anxious question as to how he could live without a guiding supreme value: 'Imagine that hanging from the ceiling of my study there are violins, pipes and drums, clarinets and harps. Now this instrument plays, now that. The violin plays, that is my religious value. Then I hear harps and clarinets and I sense my artistic value. Then it is the turn of the trumpet and that is my value of freedom. With the sound of pipes and drums I feel the values of my fatherland. The trombone stirs the

For Simmel, it is philosophy which is concerned with the exploration of the ‘totality’ of existence. It is philosophy, for example, which, more than any individual science, is able to relate to the work of art as a whole, that is to say, both ‘as existence and as experience’, in its individuality and its generality, in order to grasp its meaning, that is to say ‘the relationships between its innermost centre and its outermost periphery in which the world and life are circumscribed by our concepts’⁷⁰. Indeed ‘can be described as philosopher he who has the organ of receptivity and reactivity to the totality of being’⁷¹ and can thus objectivate the sense of the whole which he gets through his *Erlebnis* into his philosophy.

Accordingly it is philosophy rather than history that Simmel most sought to foster and harness for the construction not of reality anymore, but of the meaning of reality. As I shall explain, it is in his philosophy that Simmel explored the ‘processes of the soul’ (*Seelenvorgänge*) of those modern existences which his psychology would categorize as ‘metropolitan type of individuality’, since it is through philosophy that the totality of experience can be reconstructed starting from its inner centre – a very opposed approach, as we shall see, to that of Weber and his human type, analysed from the perspective of his cultural significance, through his formation, orientation, actions, and stance to the world.

Rickert: ‘science of reality’ and the philosophy of values

Despite the controversies of the neo-Kantian philosophers with Wilhelm Dilthey, Heinrich Rickert also claimed the notion of *Wirklichkeitswissenschaft* for history, and more widely for what he referred to as the ‘sciences of culture’ (*Kulturwissenschaften*)⁷².

various values of community, solidarity. There are sometimes dissonances. Only inspired men are able to make a melody out of this – prophets, statesmen, artists, those who are more or less charismatic.’ A melody of meaning can thus arise in lieu of the dissonances, but this is exceptional and requires qualities and a situation far exceeding those of the everyday. Weber finished his mysterious confidence with a reference to his own scholarship: ‘I am a scholar who arranges knowledge so that it can be used. My instruments are to be found in bookcases, but they make no sound. No living melody can be made out of them’. See Hennis, *Central Question*, 173-4. This last statement can be interpreted in line with Weber’s stance regarding the ultimate responsibility of individual human beings for their stance in the world. Science can only help us find our own voice and instrument(s) and cannot produce the sound for us. I come back to this in Part III of the thesis.

⁷⁰ Georg Simmel, "Rembrandt. Ein kunstphilosophischer Versuch" [An essay in the philosophy of art], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe*. ed. Uta Kösser, Hans-Martin Kruckis and Otthein Rammstedt 15 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003 [1916]), 309. Georg Simmel, *Rembrandt: an essay in the philosophy of art* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 3.

⁷¹ Simmel, "Main problems of philosophy", 16.

⁷² The controversy with Wilhelm Dilthey on the grounding of the non-natural sciences was sparked off by Wilhelm Windelband’s Rectoral Lecture in 1894. One of the bones of contention was the neo-Kantians’ approach to *Wirklichkeit* within the framework of a theory of knowledge, in opposition to the Diltheyan continuity between lived experience and knowledge. Rickert also refused the grounding of the ‘human sciences’ in psychology, as his philosophy asserts the transcendental objectivity of values. His

He started from the idea that *Wirklichkeit* is ‘that which resists every conception’, not on the grounds of any ontological premise about the individuality, irrationality and freedom of the real⁷³, but purely from the point of view of the theory of knowledge. Yet his book on the *Limits of concept formation in natural science* was aimed at defining the ‘cultural sciences’ through a mode of conceptualisation that was able to grasp such reality. To that end, he highlighted the affinity between the ‘primordial conception of reality (*ursprünglichste Auffassung der Wirklichkeit*)’⁷⁴, prior to any science, and the elaboration of reality in history and the ‘cultural sciences’. What is determining for the claim of history to reality is the human being’s pre-scientific ‘conception’ (*Auffassung*) of the world, a conception which results from the ‘real human being ...always... willing, valuing and taking a stance’⁷⁵. Rickert would later say, in his own philosophy of life, that it is this stance which underpins *Erlebnis*, as pre-scientific experience mediating meaning. He suggested that it is in this engagement with reality that reality actually becomes reality to the human being: in other words, reality can be apprehended as such by the human being when its ‘infinite manifold’ becomes ordered, from a practical perspective, into essential and inessential elements – when reality becomes culture⁷⁶.

‘sciences of culture’ are underpinned by a philosophy of values. See Heinrich Rickert, *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft* [Science of culture and science of nature] (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1926), XIII. As a result, Rickert’s cultural sciences do not include psychology, contrary to Dilthey’s human sciences. See Makkreel, *Dilthey*, 39.

⁷³ Heinrich Rickert, *The limits of concept formation in natural science: a logical introduction to the historical sciences*, trans. Guy Oakes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 52. This does not appear in the first edition (1896/1902) and was an addendum of the 1913, 1921 or 1929 edition (the English abridged edition is a translation of the 5th edition – 1929). Rickert also rejected what he considered to be the ontological grounding of Dilthey’s human sciences, which was one of the causes of the above mentioned dispute. This controversy led Dilthey to explicitly discard any ontological foundation for the human sciences and to emphasise much more the difference between two modes of apprehension of the real (sense perception and *Erlebnis*) for the grounding of the distinction between the natural sciences and the human sciences: ‘Obviously the difference between the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften* is not grounded in differentiating two classes of objects (*Objekten*). A distinction of natural objects and spiritual objects does not exist’. See *Gesammelte Schriften* V, 248, quoted in Makkreel, *Dilthey*. Rickert also criticised Simmel for resorting to psychological a-priori in his grounding of history as science of reality. See Heinrich Rickert, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung. Eine logische Einleitung in die historischen Wissenschaften* [The limits of concept formation in natural science] (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1896 -1902), 551.

⁷⁴ Rickert, *Limits*, 354.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 355. Dilthey’s notion of *Erlebnis* is also predicated on the fundamentally evaluative structure of our ‘psychic nexus’, which takes in and orders our experiences of the world into an increasingly inwardly consistent whole, which ‘works as a whole’ for practical life (*GS VI*, 143, quoted in Makkreel, *Dilthey*, 100.). Thus, in both Rickert’s and Dilthey’s conceptions of *Erlebnis*, *Erlebnis* mediates meaning. But, for Rickert, *Erlebnis* derives its meaning from values which have objective validity and anchor any sense making of the ‘infinite manifold’ of reality, even though this relation may not be articulated as such (only theoretical analysis is interested in bringing this out), whereas for Dilthey the reference of the evaluative activity is inward, and lies in the totality of consciousness. Precisely, as could be seen from a quote of Dilthey above, values form part of the ‘infinite manifold’ of life (this is anathema to Rickert’s ears!) and order only comes from their inward ordering in the psychic nexus. Moreover, Rickert’s emphasis on the human being as ‘willing, valuating

With this notion of the ‘real human being’ ‘taking a stance’, Rickert’s argument regarding the privileged access of the cultural sciences to reality becomes clear, since the cultural sciences are ‘cultural’ in that they define their objects by referring them to values (in a theoretical ‘value relation’) – these very same values with which ‘real human beings’ concretely engage. The theoretical value relation and the valuating attitude coincide in the value they relate to, which is precisely a ‘general value’ to the extent that it is shared – in the historian’s community and amongst the individuals studied⁷⁷. Both what Rickert refers to as ‘cultural values’ and Dilthey as ‘cultural systems’ take up what Hegel had called objective and absolute spirit⁷⁸. But values are not ‘real’, they cannot be characterised through their existence, but through their validity: they thus transcend reality, which is how they can function as ‘bridges’ between the historian and the historical ‘individual’ studied (that is to say the sequence of reality isolated from the continuum of empirical reality)⁷⁹. The sphere of validity is opposed to that of reality, but, at the same time, reality has “no existence” (*keinen Bestand*) without this “unreal” of the values⁸⁰. Precisely, as we shall see in section III

and acting’ by contrast with Dilthey’s ‘willing, feeling and representing’ faculties mobilised in *Erlebnis* had decisive implications for the study of human beings as carriers of culture, and ultimately for Weber’s notion of human type.

⁷⁷ The literature on Rickert’s epistemological and methodological propositions and Max Weber’s stance to them is immense. My purpose here is not to put forward yet another view of these aspects, but rather to outline the key elements in the understanding of ‘science of reality’ so as to prepare for the analysis of the human being (e.g. as type or carrier) by the authors mentioned in this chapter. Nevertheless it is worth noting that Simmel and Weber seem to have criticised the notion of value relation for similar reasons, as Simmel stressed, in the 2nd edition of his *Problems* (1905), that significance should also be a criterion for selection of the historical individual, alongside value (Léger, *The thought of Georg Simmel*, 165-6.). Weber, for his part, privately regretted the use of the term ‘value’ as the basis for the scholar’s theoretical interests: he too preferred the reference to ‘significant’ or ‘worth knowing’ (Bruun, *Science, values and politics in Max Weber’s methodology*, 27.).

⁷⁸ Rickert, *The limits of concept formation in natural science: a logical introduction to the historical sciences*, 139, 576. Dilthey refers to ‘objectivities’, e.g. Dilthey, *Introduction*, 50-1. The specific values or systems are enunciated differently in different places by both authors.

⁷⁹ Rickert would clarify this in the 1921 edition of the *Limits* (in his major addition to the first edition, i.e. section 9 of chapter IV: ‘Non-real meaning configurations and real understanding’). Values transcend reality, their meaning is thus non-real. But the ‘truly vital’ appropriation of these values by individuals endow them with ‘real meaning’ for the individuals concerned. Where this appropriation is realised in the different members of a community (e.g. a congregation), this meaning can be referred to as ‘spirit’ of that community. As pointed out by Guy Oakes, this new section was Rickert’s response to Dilthey. I am inclined to think that Weber’s notion of spirit in *PE*, and more generally Weber’s criticism contributed to Rickert’s advance on the question of real meaning. Rickert, *The limits of concept formation in natural science: a logical introduction to the historical sciences*, 150.

⁸⁰ Rickert expressed this most clearly in his *System of Philosophy* (1921), which shows the influence of Simmel’s late philosophy of life (and especially of *Lebensanschauung*, *The view of life*). E.g. Rickert writes: “All that we find to be real, leads above and beyond itself (*über sich hinaus*), to an “other” (*ein “Anderes”*), to an “unreal”... As will be explained in Part III, Chapter 8, Simmel’s philosophy of life rested on a similar dynamic opposition between ‘more life’ (subjectivity, creativity) and ‘more than life’ (human creations and institutions), and on the constitution of life by this relation and tension between the two. Rickert phrases it differently but the underpinning philosophy of life is similar: “All real is to a certain extent enclosed in-between values (*Werte*), in-between validities (*Geltendes*), and has no existence without [such] unreal”. Thus, even in pre-scientific reality, the human being is already engaged in valuations, which involve pre-scientific conceptions:

below, the notion of ‘mental historical centre’, which Rickert preferred to ‘type’ and put at the centre of the construction of the ‘historical individual’, linked together the concrete life in which the ‘real human being’ is engaged and the realm of values which he embraces – as Weber’s notions of carrier, and indeed of human type, would do.

Weber’s ‘science of reality’, or the science of ‘inconvenient facts’

Dilthey’s, Simmel’s and Rickert’s science of reality was grounded in sensitivity to the individuality of the real, an individuality which all human beings grasp through *Erlebnis* – whether it is given directly as totality (Dilthey, Simmel) or mediated by values (Rickert). Artists (Dilthey, Simmel), historians and philosophers (all three authors) have qualities which enhance this grasp and its intellectual expression/objectivation. Their science of reality therefore first and foremost depends on the mode in which human beings engage in the world and relate to it pre-analytically, in immediate experience or stances.

For Weber, too, the reality to be understood is ‘individual’ and ‘cultural’ (or ‘historical’)⁸¹.

‘The social science which we want to pursue is a science of reality (*Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*). We want to understand the reality of the life in which we are placed and which surrounds us in its specificity (*Eigenart*). We want to understand on the one hand the configuration (*Zusammenhang*) and cultural significance of its individual manifestations in their form (*Gestaltung*) of today, and on the other hand the reasons of their having historically become so and not otherwise.’⁸²

Karl Löwith noted very early on that this was the fundamental statement for understanding Weber’s work: ‘the fundamental and entire theme of Weber’s investigations is the character of the reality surrounding us and in which we have been placed’⁸³. And as, precisely, this reality ‘in which we are placed and which surrounds us’ is not a reality untouched by analytic thought, there is little point, for Weber, in seeking to reconstruct meaning by grounding one’s endeavour in an alleged untainted experience or original stance. What determines the social, cultural and historical reality of our epoch is the ‘inconvenient fact’

life already goes beyond itself (quotes from *System der Philosophie*, Tübingen, 1921, p. 174-175, quoted in Ernst Wolfgang Orth, "Leben und Erlebnis bei Heinrich Rickert. Zur Frage der Kontingenz im Neukantianismus" [Life and lived experience for Heinrich Rickert. The question of contingency in Neo-Kantianism], in *Sinn, Geltung, Wert: neukantianische Motive in der modernen Kulturphilosophie* (Königshausen & Neumann, 1998), 84.). As noted by Orth, Rickert thus had to conceive of *Erlebnis* (pre-scientific lived experience) as a ‘third realm’ (again, as will be seen, a very Simmelian term) in between ‘real reality’ and unreal, objective, value, in which the pre-scientific is already in a valuing stance, and grasps meaning. Conversely, for Dilthey, art, law, science, the ‘economic order’ and religion are ‘immortal’ ‘cultural systems’ which are ‘products of a dimension of human nature, of an activity rooted in that element, and more closely determined by the purposive configuration of social life’: they are included in the ‘totality of socio-historical reality’. Dilthey, *Introduction*, 52.

⁸¹ Weber, "Objectivity", 168,170.

⁸² Ibid, 170-1.

⁸³ Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, 62.

that 'it has eaten from the tree of knowledge' and that, therefore, 'it must know' that there is no overall, objective basis for meanings, that all meanings have to be created by us, with no unifying experience to go back to either. It is this reality, in which life 'rests on itself'⁸⁴, and the capacity of the human being to face up to such reality, which Weber's science seeks to investigate.

The possibility to grasp the specificity and significance of reality is located in qualities of the human being placed in culture (the *Kultur Mensch*)⁸⁵:

The transcendental presupposition of all *science of culture* is... that we are cultural *human beings*, endowed with the capacity and will to consciously take a *stance* toward the world and lend it *meaning*. Whatever this meaning might be, it will lead us to *judge* specific phenomena of the human being-together in life on the basis [of that meaning] and to take a (positive or negative) stance toward them as *significant*⁸⁶.

'Taking a stance' is what Rickert's ordinary human being does pre-scientifically. But Weber introduces here 'will', which differs from human affirmation through an immediate relation to the world (practical valuation), as I understand Rickert's notion of will in that context. Weber's notion of will here is both will as desire and will as decision: the human being is endowed with the capacity to take a stance, but he may lack the desire to exert it⁸⁷. For such willingness to lend meaning presupposes awareness that this is the modern condition of the human being, who has to pull the ideals 'from his own chest'⁸⁸. As suggested by Karl Löwith, Weber's 'ideal-typical "construct"' to approach this reality is 'based on a human being who is specifically "free of illusions"⁸⁹, thrown back upon himself by a world which

⁸⁴ Weber, "Science", 608.

⁸⁵ In the main, *Kultur Mensch* designates either [1] the 'cultivated type of human being', as the result of a process of education and cultivation (*Bildung*) towards a certain life conduct, e.g. in 'Confucianism' (i.e. by opposition to *Fach Mensch*); or [2] the 'human being of culture' or 'cultural being', by opposition to the 'human being of nature' or natural being (*Natur Mensch*), e.g. in the 'Objectivity' essay. I will adopt the one or the other translation depending on the context, but keeping the German term as well.

⁸⁶ Weber, "Objectivity", 180.

⁸⁷ On the importance of the notion of desire for understanding Max Weber's thought and stance as a whole, see Frade, "Max Weber's Teaching".

⁸⁸ Weber, "Verein debates", 420.

⁸⁹ Weber, "Objectivity", 154. Weber's friend, the distinguished theologian, historian and sociologist Ernst Troeltsch, whose thought on *Menschentum* I analyse more particularly in Chapter 2, also endeavoured to develop an approach to social and cultural science devoid of illusions. Thus he sought to establish new bases for the historical and sociological study of religion, and therefore refused to consider revelation as a source for history, contrary to the 'residual Biblicism' found in the dominant school of thought in theology. More generally, he was wary of taking history as the deployment of an idea, or indeed of any idea of progress. Thus Troeltsch placed the constant 'struggling' (*Kampf, Kämpfen*) and 'wrestling' (*Rängen*) with the world, as well as 'devotion to the real' (*Hingabe an das Wirkliche*) at the heart of his philosophy of culture. What there is to struggle with in particular are 'facts' (*Tatsachen*), against one's own and the others' propensity to entertain chimerical views of the world, views more convenient for our intellectual comfort. The difficulty of such a struggle is summed up by Troeltsch in a sober admission in 1905: 'Many ethical decisions are only possible after the facts have been laid bare, and this laying bare of the facts (*Feststellung der Tatsachen*) is an infinitely arduous task'. Nevertheless, towards the end of his life he attempted to foster a 'morals of personality and consciousness' for maintaining and enhancing the possibility of autonomous personality in the modern world.

has become objectively meaningless and sober and to this extent emphatically “realistic”⁹⁰, provided we do not understand ‘realistic’ to mean deprived of ideals. On the contrary, realistic is the awareness that one has to create ideals for oneself, and it is therefore tributary of one’s own desire, of what Weber calls our ‘daemon’ (see Part III Chapter 7). As demonstrated by Dieter Henrich, although from an altogether too Kantian understanding of the Weberian personality, the fact that such awareness is a rare occurrence does not invalidate the ‘anthropological’ principle contained in the above quoted statement from the ‘Objectivity’ essay and which underpins Weber’s notions of reality and science of reality: that the possibility for the human being to take a stance and create meaning is a possibility given to all⁹¹. And we can follow Henrich in his demonstration that this possibility (if we do not confine it as he does to conscious existence) is both Weber’s object of inquiry, what must underpin the relation of the scholar to his object of inquiry and what inspires what Heinrich calls Weber’s ethics and what, following Carlos Frade, I will refer to as his teaching⁹².

Nevertheless scholars are the first in preferring ‘not to see’ ‘the enormous seriousness of this situation of fact’, and seem unable to desist from their belief in scientific objectivity (e.g. misconstruing the absence of inner conviction or striking the middle ground for objectivity)⁹³. But the ‘cloaking of one’s own standards of value with relativism’ is a more general pattern⁹⁴, which Weber exposed in his essay on ‘the meaning of “value freedom” in the sociological and economic sciences’ (hereafter ‘Value Freedom essay’), that picks up on

Such morals was to be backed up with a suitably renewed Christian church. (References: Robert Morgan, "Introduction. Ernst Troeltsch on Theology and Religion". in Ernst Troeltsch. *Writings on theology and religion* (London: Duckworth, 1990), 5. Michael A Quigley, "Ernst Troeltsch and the Problem of the Historical Absolute", *The Heythrop Journal* 24, no. 1 (1983): 22.) Ernst Troeltsch, "Der Aufbau der europäischen Kulturgeschichte" [The formation of European cultural history], *Schmollers Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reich* 44 (1920): 636.). Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen* [The social doctrines of the Christian Churches and groups], *Gesammelte Schriften I* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1922 [1912]), 986. Ernst Troeltsch, "Meine Bücher" [The books I have written], in *Gesammelte Schriften*. ed. Hans Baron IV (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1925 [1922]), 15. Ernst Troeltsch, *Der Historismus und seine Überwindung* [Overcoming historicism], Friedrich von Hügel ed. (Berlin: Pan Verlag Rolf Heise, 1924), 1.)

⁹⁰ Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, 60.

⁹¹ Dieter Henrich, *Die Einheit der Wissenschaftslehre Max Webers* [The unity of Max Weber's theory of science] (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1952), 104.

⁹² Frade, "Max Weber's Teaching", Henrich, *Unity*, 109.

⁹³ Weber, "Objectivity", 154-5, 157. Weber fought all his life against the pretension to ground ideals in science, given the separate dignity of each sphere. Wilhelm Hennis’s concise demystification of the ‘value freedom’ debate leaves one in no doubt as to Weber’s motivations there. See Wilhelm Hennis, *Max Weber's Science of Man: New Studies for a Biography of the Work*, trans. Keith Tribe (Newbury: Threshold Press, 2000), 149-58.

⁹⁴ Weber, "Objectivity", 155.

some of the threads of the 'Objectivity' essay. Thus, as 'real human beings' (*reale Menschen*), we are much more likely to wilfully ignore the inconvenient fact of the absence of overall meaning and to prefer the comfort of non-decision, pretending that our compromises are more than escape from existential decision⁹⁵. Yet, whether we choose to exert judgment and take a stance or not, we remain 'cultural beings' – that is, we take a stance even if we pretend not to, and not taking a stance ultimately amounts to bowing to the dominant forces, essentially to the pervasive economic order, 'which reaches... through the entirety of cultural processes':

'...all action, as well as of course non-action, as the case may be, means, in its consequences, taking sides for specific values, and thereby – and this today is forgotten so particularly readily – consistently *against others*.'⁹⁶

To the contrast between the fragmentary reality perceived by thought and the unitary relation to reality provided by *Erlebnis*, Weber thus opposed another kind of disjuncture: that between 'the fate of the age' and its warring Gods and the reality of the routine of 'everyday life', which leads us to live as if these conflicts did not exist. Weber thus sets two notions of the 'everyday' against one another: the 'everyday 'life', that both conceals and is shaped by the struggle between values⁹⁷, and the 'everyday' of this struggle:

'The numerous old gods, disenchanted and thus in the form of impersonal powers (*Mächte*), arise from their graves, strive for power (*Gewalt*) over our lives and resume their eternal struggle among themselves. But what is so hard for the modern human being, and particularly for the younger generation is to measure up to such an everyday (*einem solchen Alltag gewachsen zu sein*). All chasing after "lived experience" stems from this weakness. For weakness it is to be unable to look the fate of the age in its stern face'⁹⁸.

For Weber, 'outward appearances' are made of compromises, whilst meanings are at war. For Dilthey and Simmel, the given reality is fragmented, but there are paths towards the totality of meaning.

Hence Weber's science of reality does not 'register' human actions and map them onto a fixed value system⁹⁹, nor does it recompose a hypothetical inner unity of meaning of social

⁹⁵ Max Weber, "Der Sinn der "Wertfreiheit" der soziologischen und ökonomischen Wissenschaften" [The meaning of "value freedom" in the sociological and economic sciences], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988 [1917]), 507. The essay, initially published in *Logos*, elaborated on a paper given by Weber in 1913 in the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (Association for Social Policy).

⁹⁶ Weber, "Objectivity", 150, 163.

⁹⁷ Weber, "Value Freedom", 507.

⁹⁸ Weber, "Science", 605.

⁹⁹ Weber, "Objectivity", 183.

and historical reality. To Weber a science of reality and the teaching that it supports must lead cultural beings to face up to the ‘inconvenient facts’ and educate their capacity as judging subjects (*Schulung des Urteils*) able to see by themselves the cultural reality in which they are placed, i.e. a reality in which human beings lend conflicting meaning, take conflicting stances and act¹⁰⁰; so that they themselves can act¹⁰¹.

As can be seen, even though Weber phrased his definition of a science of reality in terms which seemed to pertain to the more general debate on the foundations of the human, historical and cultural sciences, it seems clear, as various authors – from Dieter Henrich to Hans Henrik Bruun and recently most forcefully Wilhelm Hennis – have argued, that epistemological concerns were secondary to him¹⁰². But, more fundamentally, it is the notion of reality handled by Weber which is at odds with Dilthey’s, Simmel’s but also with Rickert’s conceptions, since they all grant a higher status of reality to the pre-analytical apprehension of the world through *Erlebnis*, with which the human or cultural sciences seek to connect. To Weber, *Erlebnis* is just a necessary stage in understanding¹⁰³.

What is at stake in Weber’s science of reality is not to heighten our knowledge of reality, i.e. as lacking any ‘objective’ foundations and as pervaded by conflicting powers, since in fact

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 147.

¹⁰¹ In ‘Science’, Weber would further push the limits of science and suggest that it should ‘oblige or at least help the individual to *give himself an account of the ultimate meaning of his actions*’, that is to say to test out the consistency of his own actions against his ultimate standards. Weber, "Science", 608.

¹⁰² Dieter Henrich forcefully argued that Weber had ‘severed the connection between the methodology of science and theory of knowledge’. (Henrich, *Unity*, 32.) Bruun notes Weber’s lack of interest for the delimitation of the cultural vis-à-vis the natural sciences. (Bruun, *Science, values and politics in Max Weber’s methodology*, 128.). ‘To see this Weberian concept of a ‘science of reality’ only in terms of a ‘logical’ contrast to ‘law-based sciences’ is to relapse into long-since superseded perspectives’. Hennis, *Central Question*, 166. Hennis refers to a 1986 article by Friedrich Tenbruck. Indeed the article gave rise to a controversy with Gerhard Wagner and Heins Zipprian, entirely located within such a paradigm. Gerhard Wagner and Heins Zipprian, "Tenbruck, Weber und die Wirklichkeit. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag" [Tenbruck, Weber and reality. A contribution to discussion.], *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 39 (1987). Friedrich Tenbruck, "Ein Diskussionsbeitrag? Erwiderung auf Gerhard Wagner und Heinz Zipprian" [A contribution to discussion? Response to Gerhard Wagner und Heinz Zipprian], *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 39 (1987). Nevertheless, Tenbruck’s insistence on calling Weber’s science a science of reality, to which systematic sociology is subordinated, is salutary in my view.

¹⁰³ ‘What we actually experience (*erleben*) can only become accessible to “interpretation” (*deutende Interpretation*) when the stage of “lived experience” itself has elapsed and lived experience can become the “object” of judgments, whose content, in turn, is not experienced in undiscerning stupor, but can be recognised as valid’. Weber accepted to some extent Dilthey’s grounding of human sciences as sciences of reality in the possibility of understanding the psychic life of other human beings: ‘...even if one accepts (Rickert’s) thesis that the objects of “external” and “inner” experience are “given” to us in fundamentally the same way, it nevertheless remains, against Rickert’s strong emphasis on the “fundamental inaccessibility of psychic life of others (*fremden Seelenlebens*), that the course of human action and human expressions of every sort are susceptible to *meaningful interpretation* – whereas for other objects this would only find an analogue at a metaphysical level’. Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 12-13, 104.

‘we know’ it¹⁰⁴ but rather, provided our desire has been ‘awakened’¹⁰⁵, it heightens our capacity and will to ‘see’ reality, that is to say to apprehend reality in a way that affects us and our perception of ourselves and the world. It allows us to discriminate, and above all it allows us to take in reality. But it is not anodyne that the visual sense used to be directly related to both judgment and courage for action in political philosophy: there is here a crucial affinity, stressed by Hennis, between Weber’s science and that tradition, which placed the ‘power of judgment’ at its core¹⁰⁶. This suggests a direct link between Weber’s science of reality and action, which I will need to explore in Part III Chapter 7, when I examine Weber’s teaching for life conduct.

The social and cultural scientist should be the first one to ‘see’ reality as it is (and not through the convenience of alleged objective laws). The scholar has to ‘educate (his/her) eye’ (*Einschulung des Auges*), and train into the observation of reality, from specific viewpoints and with a specific specialism, ‘isolate and eye its [object] (*isoliert ins Auge fassen*)’, but then immediately again in its causal configuration, or, what Dieter Henrich has shown is the same, in its configuration of meaning¹⁰⁷. Such a gaze also relies on imagination, but in a way that is sharpened in the school of personal experience and method. Indeed it is the researcher’s ‘imagination, educated and oriented to reality’ which ‘judges’¹⁰⁸ and thus identifies the meanings and stances involved. The sociological imagination, in particular, serves the knowledge of reality through its unreal constructs and concepts at a distance from reality¹⁰⁹.

It is important to understand the specificity of the Weberian gaze in a science of reality, as this was a crucial impulse for the study of *Menschenum*. Wilhelm Dilthey had also associated his science of historical and social reality with the visual sense in his *Introduction to the Human Sciences*:

¹⁰⁴ ‘The fate of a cultural epoch which has eaten from the tree of knowledge is that it must know that ... the highest ideals that move us most powerfully are forever effectual only in the struggle with other ideals which, to others, are as holy, as ours to us’ (Weber, "Objectivity", 154.) ‘But the inescapable fruit of the tree of knowledge is no other than to know about these antagonisms, and therefore to have to see...’ (Weber, "Value Freedom", 507.)

¹⁰⁵ Weber, "Objectivity", 214.

¹⁰⁶ Hennis, *Central Question*, esp. 197-204.

¹⁰⁷ Henrich, *Unity*, 64.

¹⁰⁸ Weber, "Objectivity", 170, 171, 179, 194. Similarly, Weber refers to the ‘authentic artistry’ of historians: but this is rather to praise the craftsmanship of those who, thanks to their experience and judgment, know how to ‘create something new out of relating known facts to known points of view’. Weber, "Objectivity", 214.

¹⁰⁹ Max Weber, "Soziologische Grundbegriffe" [Basic Sociological Concepts], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988 [1921]), 560.

‘Whoever studies phenomena of history and society is everywhere confronted by abstract entities such as art, science, state, society, and religion. They are like accumulated mist which prevents the gaze (*Blick*) from reaching to the real (*zum Wirklichen*), and they themselves cannot be grasped. Just as substantial forms, heavenly spirits and essences once stood between the eye (*dem Auge*) of the researcher and the laws which govern atoms and molecules, so these entities veil the reality (*Wirklichkeit*) of historical and social life, the reciprocal action of psychophysical living units subjected to the conditions of nature as a whole and their natural genealogical organisation. I would like to teach how to see this reality (*diese Wirklichkeit sehen lehren*) – an art that demands long practice, as that of intuiting spatial images – and to dissipate this mist and these phantoms.¹¹⁰

With his science, Dilthey wants to dissipate phantoms, as Weber seeks to chase ‘chimeras’. Both want to teach people to ‘see’ reality, both acknowledge that this requires long practice for the scholar. But Dilthey’s mode of ‘seeing’ is best captured by the notion of *Anschauung*, a kind of apprehension of the world which he found in Goethe. As explained by Joseph Bleicher,

‘This key term [*Anschauung*] encapsulates Goethe’s way of ‘seeing’ the object of study; a way of engaging with it that includes looking-at, gazing, contemplating, seeing beyond, beholding, perceiving the core, intuitive apperception, establishing an intuitive bond. It overcomes the subject–object division, on which modern natural science is predicated, through the subject’s full participation in the Oneness of Nature. In it, ‘*Leben* meets *Leben*’. It is an insight that Wilhelm Dilthey made subsequent epistemological use of in his foundation of the *Geisteswissenschaften*.’¹¹¹

The reality which Dilthey wants to unveil is the reality of life, which, even though science only perceives it through its parts and even though knowledge can only be produced through abstraction, is like an ‘organism, through which the very pulse of life can be felt’. To always relate the parts to the whole is the ‘great methodological demand’¹¹² which is also found in Simmel’s conception of history but above all in his philosophical studies (once his ‘science of reality’ had been absorbed by his philosophy of life and his notion of reality by that of life itself). The reality which Weber wants to scrutinise is the reality of cultural life, of cultural phenomena and human actions in their specificity and significance, in particular, as I shall explain immediately below, from the point of view of the type of human being which is both their carrier and product.

Both Dilthey and Simmel had heard Nietzsche’s apostrophe to historians and ‘historically minded’ people, which introduced, through Goethe’s words, his ‘Second Untimely Meditation’ (‘On the uses and disadvantages of history for life’): ‘In any case I hate everything that merely instructs me without augmenting or directly enlivening my activity.’ So had Weber. The three of them (less so Rickert) followed Nietzsche in his call for a science of history that attended ‘life and action’, not for ‘comfortably turning away from

¹¹⁰ Dilthey, *Introduction*, 42.

¹¹¹ Josef Bleicher, "From Kant to Goethe: Georg Simmel on the way to *Leben*", *Theory Culture and Society* 24, no. 6 (2007): 144-5.

¹¹² Dilthey, *Introduction*, 48-9.

life and from action'¹¹³. But Dilthey and Simmel emphasised the service of history for life, for the feeling of life 'pulsing through' their description of personalities and cultural systems. Weber rather heard the call for life as action, and action in and upon the world. As suggested above, he was above all concerned, precisely, with his contemporaries' propensity to the 'comfortable (*bequem*) turning away' from action, to their refusal to measure up to 'uncomfortable (or inconvenient) facts' (*unbequeme Tatsachen*), and with the resulting political ineptitude of all strata, from the traditional ruling groups to the rising working class, and especially of the bourgeoisie¹¹⁴.

It is such concerns which led him, in his 'Inaugural Address' at the University of Freiburg, in May 1895, to urge his colleagues in economics to turn away from their dominant concern with the 'technical' questions of production, distribution and social justice, to busy themselves, not with 'how human beings will feel in the future', i.e., not with their material security, well-being, standard of living, but with 'how they will be'¹¹⁵, with their qualities – especially for self-determined judgment and action – or lack of them: to busy themselves, in short, with the type(s) of human being fostered in and by contemporary capitalism.

III – Science of reality and the study of the human being

The human being is at the heart of all science of reality: but, as can be inferred from the above, the purposes for this as well as the mode in which he is depicted vary extremely.

The portrayal of human beings as 'living units' (or 'real individuals') placed in a network of inner and external connections to the world allows a science of reality to bring out the living (or individual) character of the social (or historical) reality studied. Thus Dilthey considered biography 'as the fundamental historical act, in its purity, fullness (*ganz*), in its reality (*Wirklichkeit*)'¹¹⁶. Makkreel has suggested that, for Dilthey, 'to explain the history of an individual is to render his life an embodiment of much more general features of historical reality'. To talk about embodiment is perhaps to undervalue Dilthey's usual caution with regard to all hypostatization. But he did think that a singular life embraces

¹¹³ Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie ; Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen I-IV ; Nachgelassene Schriften 1870-1873*, 245.

¹¹⁴ Weber, "Inaugural Address", 27-8.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 19.

¹¹⁶ Dilthey, *Introduction*, 33-4.

orientations, actions and modes of relationship which tell us about these more generally, as it does in art:

‘History is an art because in it, as in the fantasy of the artist himself, the general is seen (*angeschaut*) in the particular, it has not yet been separated from [the general] and presented in itself through abstraction, as happens in theory.’¹¹⁷

Rickert for his part developed the concept of ‘mental historical centres’ (*geistiges historisches Centren*), that is to say ‘real’ human beings, who embody in their individuality the ‘real’ orientation to the value under consideration in the historical study: they have appropriated that value¹¹⁸, in a sense which Rickert would designate in the later editions of his *Limits* as “truly vital” (as lived experience)¹¹⁹. They are for that reason at the centre of the real historical nexus constructed by the historian into a ‘historical individual’. In a history of art in Italy, for example, the mental centres will be the individual artists¹²⁰. In both cases, and beyond the difference between Dilthey’s and Rickert’s conception of science of reality, the point of reference is the individual human being – his life conduct (Dilthey), his “truly vital” value-orientation (Rickert).

The human being can also be approached through types. This, in principle, seemed problematic to an understanding of science of reality as science of individuality, since individuality is opposed to abstraction, and hence to type, where type is a construct of generic features and signals the average. Thus, for example, Simmel resorted to types in his sociology, which he did not consider a science of reality: sociological types categorise a particular mode of interaction in society and stand close to social roles. Indeed ‘the stranger, the enemy, the criminal and even the poor’ are types ‘whose sociological significance is inscribed in their very nucleus and essence’ so that we may deduce that these sociological designations prevent the possibility of conceiving of the individuality of those thus labelled¹²¹.

Nevertheless Simmel also coined a ‘type of individuality’ as construct of generic features of the personality. Simmel’s great investigation in the phenomenon of money and its meaning

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 40.

¹¹⁸ Rickert, *Limits*, 561ff.

¹¹⁹ This meaning is only ‘truly vital’ for whoever experiences it. Rickert maintained his stance on the impossibility of understanding alien experience. What can be grasped is the orientation to value, not the experiencing it gives rise to. Rickert, *The limits of concept formation in natural science: a logical introduction to the historical sciences*, 168-9.

¹²⁰ Rickert, *Limits*, 561.

¹²¹ Georg Simmel, *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung* [Sociology. Investigations into the forms of sociation]. ed. Otthein Rammstedt, *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 11 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), 51.

for modern life had started with a 'psychology of money' (1889) in which he addressed the mental characteristics actualised through the money economy, and distinguished 'blaséness' as a particular condition of the well-off strata, evidencing a loss of individuality¹²². In 1903 he further developed his psychological approach to the phenomenon of money by highlighting a 'metropolitan type of individuality'¹²³, whose distinct features of internal psychic organisation (amongst which blaséness) develop in response to 'external stimuli' and are shared by those pertaining to this type.

But it was only in its development at another level that the idea of type enabled Simmel to find a way of exploring individuality in a way which at the same time ensured the generality of what was being said. As I explained above, Simmel considered that the philosopher has specific receptiveness to the 'totality of being'. In *Main Problems of Philosophy* (1910) he explained why: the philosopher feels himself the bearer of energies which have their roots beyond the purely personal 'convictions and opinions', in what Simmel calls 'the layer of typical spirituality (*Geistigkeit*) in us'. These 'typical spiritualities' of which there have only been few in the whole history of philosophy 'express the deepest and ultimate of a personal attitude to the world in a language of an image of the world'¹²⁴. As Lehtonen and Pyyhtinen explain, this 'typicality' of the philosopher is what enables him to construct a philosophy as 'an overall unity of meanings and contents... in accordance with a specific principle articulated by [himself as] type of philosopher'¹²⁵. It is this typifying of himself which allows the philosopher to approach phenomena so to speak from within, i.e. beneath and beyond 'fragmentary positive knowledge', and to reach to the 'totality of life'¹²⁶.

Thus, in between the two psychological essays mentioned, in the monumental *Philosophy of Money* (1900, revised in 1907), Simmel approached the blasé human being and more generally the modern dweller of the money economy through an exploration, from within,

¹²² Georg Simmel, "Zur Psychologie des Geldes" [Psychology of money], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989 [1889]), 57.

¹²³ Georg Simmel, "Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben" [The Metropolis and mental life], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 7 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995 [1903]), 116. The title should really read 'Metropolises and mental life'. Here the psychological focus taken by Simmel warrants the usual translation of *Geistesleben* as 'mental life'.

¹²⁴ Simmel, "Main problems of philosophy", 28, 30.

¹²⁵ Turo-Kimmo Lehtonen and Olli Pyyhtinen, "On Simmel's conception of philosophy", *Continental Philosophy Review* 41, no. 3 (2008): 12.

¹²⁶ Georg Simmel, *Philosophie des Geldes* [Philosophy of Money]. ed. David Frisby and Klaus Christian Köhnke, *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989 [1907]), 9.

of their 'soul processes' (*Seelenvorgänge*)¹²⁷. Here the connection with the surrounding reality is not phrased in terms of psychological adaptation, but rather of connection between inner rhythm and the rhythm of life. Through such exploration the philosopher is able to convey the most intimate experience (the restlessness and longing of modern man) and its generality. (I come back to the outcomes of Simmel's approach in a comparison of the metropolitan type of individuality and its more philosophical version with Weber's *Kulturmensch* in Chapter 2 below.)

Weber's use of the notion of 'human type', which was at the core of his science of reality, stemmed from an opposed purpose: precisely, a science of reality which seeks to bring human beings to see the world and themselves, and to foster 'self-reflection', cannot rest on the inner meaning of experience (although it has to start from the understanding of such meaning) – but rather has to focus on human conduct and its significance. Weber's science of reality always put the human being, his qualities and actions, at the centre, not, however, as point of reference, but as object of study. The notion of human type allowed Weber to characterise human beings and their 'life conduct' as the culturally significant products of a given order of social relations and a given culture, and one that actually defines these orders.

The notion of human type had acquired an evaluative sense through Nietzsche's notion of *Typus Mensch*, which refers to the bearers of the highest achievements of humanity, and characterises a society through its greatest human beings. Simmel was struck by this move, which opposed a cultural evaluation of the highest to the social evaluation of the average, and he contributed to its dissemination in his widely read '*Silhouette*'¹²⁸. Simmel himself made a particular use of this redefinition of type, by seeing it as a path opening up the

¹²⁷ Birgitta Nedelmann draws the attention on the term, which underpins *Blasiertheit* in her view, but she uses it for both the analysis of the Metropolis essay and that of the *Philosophy of Money*. She distinguishes the two analyses, but on other counts than the distinction between Simmel's philosophical and psychological approach. I come back to this in Chapter 2. Birgitta Nedelmann, "On the concept of "Erleben" in Georg Simmel's sociology", in *Georg Simmel and contemporary sociology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), 232.

¹²⁸ 'What appears valuable to him is not that thousand human beings possessed a medium mass of pleasures, freedom, culture, strength; but that a few, or even only a single (human being) represented an excessive mass of these values and strengths in himself, even at the price of pushing these thousand in the abyss – to him this is the meaning of the ideal ultimate purpose of society. It is not the average of human beings which determines the type of human being at a particular time, but rather the highest pinnacle which has been achieved by the humanity as a type (*Menschentum*) at the time.' Georg Simmel, "Friedrich Nietzsche. Eine moralphilosophische Silhouette" [Friedrich Nietzsche. A moral and philosophical outline], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 5 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992 [1896]), 118-9. See Klaus Lichtblau, "Das 'Pathos der Distanz'. Präliminaren zur Nietzsche-Rezeption bei Georg Simmel" [The 'Pathos of Distance'. First thoughts on Georg Simmel's reception of Nietzsche], in *Georg Simmel und die Moderne. Neue Interpretationen und Materialien* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 248.

possibility of objectivation of personality, a question I will pick up again in Part III Chapter 8, but which already found an illustration above, in the self-typifying philosopher.

It can thus be said that Weber assigned Nietzsche's notion of *Typus Mensch* not to the bearers of the highest cultural achievements but to that type of human being who sets the standard in a given cultural and social order. In other words, Weber sought to understand how the way in which an 'everyday' type of human being (*Alltagsmensch*)¹²⁹ actualises the fact of being human carries weight for a whole culture and the orders of social relations underpinning that culture; and how these orders have 'bred' such human type. What is at stake is still the 'development' (not the progress) 'of humanity as type – *Menschentum*'¹³⁰ across cultures and ages: but it is the development of culturally significant, not highest, types.

Had not Nietzsche himself pointed to that interpretation of the 'type man' in his sardonic vision of the 'last men' stamping modern culture, whom he had described not only as immersed in their petty material and self-interested existences, but also as doing so with diligence and self-contentment¹³¹? Weber's own evocation of the 'happiness' of the last men in *PE* ('this nothingness imagines that it has reached a level never reached before in the history of *Menschentum*'¹³²) is one moment – a particularly crucial one – in the unfolding of a life theme, starting with its exposition in the 'Inaugural Address' at the University of Freiburg (1895) and repeated, as a variation, in 'Science as vocation and profession' (1917). Indeed, more than simply a theme, the dread that Nietzsche's cultural diagnosis of the time might become the whole picture seems to have been a constant sting for Weber's work, as has been repeatedly noted (by Hennis in 1986, Peukert in 1986 and Scaff in 1989)¹³³. The

¹²⁹ Max Weber, "Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus" [The Protestant ethic and the spirit of Capitalism], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1920), 104.

¹³⁰ Max Weber, "Antikritisches Schlußwort zum »Geist des Kapitalismus«" [Anti-critical last word on the 'Spirit of Capitalism'], *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 31 (1910): 590.

¹³¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra* [Thus spoke Zarathustra]. ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, *Sämtliche Werke: kritische Studienausgabe* (München; Berlin; New York: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag; De Gruyter, 1999 [1883-5]), 18-21.

¹³² Weber, "PE", 204.

¹³³ Hennis establishes 'the existence of a quite fundamental 'attuning' and 'inspiration' of Weber by Nietzsche's 'epochal consciousness'. See Hennis, *Central Question*, 152. Peukert rightly suggests that 'at those key places where Weber unravels the perspective of his work and allows us to look into the horizon of values out of which he sketches his scientific interests, Weber shows that he shares Nietzsche's cultural criticism and his admonitory vision of the "last men"'. See Detlev Peukert, *Max Webers Diagnose der Moderne* [Max Weber's Diagnosis of the Modern] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 38. Scaff notes Weber's agreement with Simmel's view of Nietzsche as a 'critic of the age, of its "modernity" and incipient nihilism'. See Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 131.

horror of this vision hovered over his work and prompted its 'central question', that of the 'human destiny in the modern world'¹³⁴ and hence much of its direction and problematique: the sociological and historical study of the emergence and contemporary features of the dominant type of human being; the exploration of the external and inner shaping of man and of the possibility, in such context, for a life worthy of man, i.e. a life which will not 'slip by like a natural process (*Naturereignis*), but (be) led in a conscious way'¹³⁵ and above all in a self-determined way, individually and collectively.

When Weber delivered his 'Inaugural Address' at the University of Freiburg, that 'boldly Nietzschean' address¹³⁶, it is probably the thought of self-contented and sated men, together with the endeavour to educate the political judgment of his contemporaries, that led him to state that national economic policy should be concerned not with 'how the human beings of the future feel', but with 'how they will be'; and to remind his listeners of what, in fact, underpinned any science of man (amongst which economic science), 'albeit half unconsciously'¹³⁷:

'A science of man (*Wissenschaft vom Menschen*), and that is what economic science is, investigates above all else the quality of the human beings (*Qualität der Menschen*), who are brought up in those economic and social conditions of existence.'¹³⁸

Both national economic policy (directly) and economic science (indirectly) were thus pressed by Weber to contribute to 'cultivating' (*emporzüchten* or *heranzüchten*) 'human greatness and the nobility of our [human] nature'¹³⁹.

More than twenty years later, in his famous essay on value freedom, Weber reiterated the task of the social and cultural sciences:

'Only one conclusion undoubtedly follows: every order of social relations, without exception and however constituted, is, if one wishes to evaluate it, ultimately to be examined with respect to the human type (*menschlichen Typus*) for which it, by way of external or inner (motivational) selection, optimises the chances of becoming the dominant type. For otherwise the empirical enquiry is not truly

¹³⁴ Hennis, *Central Question*, 101.

¹³⁵ Weber, "Value Freedom", 507-8. Though Weber does not use directly the expression 'worthy of man', the expression can synthesise the ethical qualities required to face up to the real of the modern world.

¹³⁶ Hennis, *Central Question*, 153.

¹³⁷ Weber, "Inaugural Address", 18-9. Both Hennis and Scaff provide evidence that Weber's encounter with Nietzsche's writings took place in the first half of the 1890s. This included Zarathustra, as shown by a letter of 26 July 1894 to his wife. Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 71. Hennis, *Central Question*, 152-3.

¹³⁸ Weber, "Inaugural Address", 19.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 18.

exhaustive, nor is there the necessary factual basis for a general evaluation, whether it is consciously subjective or claims objective validity.’¹⁴⁰

The continuity with the ‘Inaugural Address’ is striking¹⁴¹, but the formulation takes stock of Weber’s later reflection on the nature of social and cultural sciences, as ‘disciplines which consider the events of human life from the perspective of their cultural significance’. As Dieter Henrich has explained, Weber referred to ‘cultural significance’ in different, logically separate, contexts: cultural significance is the specificity imprinted on a culture by the fact that a given content belongs to it; but it can also refer to the fact that a given value content of the past has influence for the present of the culture – and here causal significance and value significance are at one. And finally, as I have just mentioned, the investigation of cultural significance is the object of the kind of science that Weber wants to pursue. Dieter Henrich contended that, even though significance for knowledge, significance as cultural specificity and causal significance should be strictly distinguished from a logical point of view,

‘behind this three-fold character, a substantive unity of the concept is nevertheless revealed. This unity is rooted in the definition of the specificity of being human, which Max Weber’s *Wissenschaftslehre* presupposes... Thus when historical objects which have an important influence for present-day culture are studied, the logical, value-analytical and causal concepts of significance meet. *When Max Weber deals with the concept of significance in the Objectivity essay, he has capitalism, his own domain of work, permanently in view*’¹⁴².

For Weber, cultural significance is not so much set in iterative connection with the value relations in which the historical object is engaged (as is the case for Rickert), as primarily in relation to what the scholar and his times consider to be the ‘great problems’ of the day – most particularly modern capitalism¹⁴³. That this was the problem of the day whose cultural significance had to be assessed was made very clear in the ‘prefatory note’ of the journal (*Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, the ‘Archive for Social Science and Social

¹⁴⁰ Weber, "Value Freedom", 517. Hennis has highlighted the major misunderstanding of Weber’s thought in this major text of his ‘methodological writings’, caused by an (almost incredibly) prejudiced translation by Shils and Finch: ‘every type of social order, without exception, must, if one wishes to *evaluate* it, be examined with reference to the opportunities which it affords to certain types of persons to rise to positions of superiority through the operation of the various objective and subjective selective factors’. As summed up by Hennis, this amounts to ‘transmuting the question: Which human type has the optimal chance of becoming dominant? Into the (certainly easier to ‘operationalise’) question: Which types have the greater possibility to enter into leading positions?’ Hennis, *Central Question*, 50.

¹⁴¹ In the Memorandum of 1913 composed for the Association for Social Policy (*Verein für Sozialpolitik*) which gave rise to the article (published in *Logos* in 1917), Weber remarked that ‘in a certainly immature form I had wished to express this in my inaugural academic address, with which, regarding many important points, I otherwise cannot identify anymore’. In Eduard Baumgarten, *Max Weber, Werk und Person* [Max Weber - his work and person] (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1964), 127.

¹⁴² Henrich, *Unity*, 77-81.

¹⁴³ Bruun, *Science, values and politics in Max Weber's methodology*, 47.

Policy’) of which he became an editor, together with Werner Sombart and Edgar Jaffé, in 1903:

Today our journal will have to regard the historical and theoretical knowledge of the general cultural significance of capitalist development as the specific scientific problem in whose service it stands¹⁴⁴.

The question of the cultural significance of modern capitalism should thus precisely be addressed through the characterisation of the ‘dominant type of human being’ it fosters. In the same way as the scholar’s conception of cultural significance from the point of view of his knowledge interest meets, in the study of capitalism, the understanding of cultural significance as cultural specificity and causal significance, the ‘ideal-type’ of *Menschentum* constructed from the perspective of that knowledge interest meets the evaluative notion of the human type, which characterises the culture of a particular order through the dominance of a particular type of human being.

Thus, in the first substantive piece which Weber contributed to the journal, ‘the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism’, Weber above all investigated, as Hennis has made clear, the creation of a new type of human being, the ‘vocational/professional type of human being’ (*Berufsmenschentum*), bearer of the spirit of modern capitalism. This human type is both genetically significant for present-day culture; characteristic of the specificity of modern Western culture; and Weber studied him by constructing an ideal-type from the perspective of his enquiry in capitalism - ‘that most fateful power of our modern life’¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴⁴ Edgar Jaffé, Werner Sombart, and Max Weber, "Geleitwort der Herausgeber" [Editors' Prefatory Note], *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 19 (1904): V. In 1903 Edgar Jaffé bought Braun's *Archiv für Soziale Gesetzgebung und Statistik* (itself created in 1888) and launched a re-branded journal for social sciences and social policy (*Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, hereafter AfSSp or the *Archiv*), together with Weber and Werner Sombart. The *Geleitwort* appears as a programmatic statement, not only for the journal but for the kind of social and cultural science it will support. Weber's 'Objectivity' essay can be read as the further theoretical and conceptual development of the *Geleitwort*. Recent scholarship has debated the authorship of the *Geleitwort*. Wilhelm Hennis sees the mark of Weber on it and stresses its importance for an understanding of Weber's work as a whole, as a form of programmatic announcement. See Hennis, *Max Weber's Science of Man*, 191 ff. Conversely, Peter Ghosh argues for Sombart's dominant role in the write-up of the piece. See Peter Ghosh, "Max Weber, Werner Sombart and the Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft: The authorship of the 'Geleitwort' (1904)", *History of European Ideas* 36, no. 1 (2010). Whatever the actual respective share of both scholars, it seems clear that the programmatic statement for the *Archiv* also stood for the kind of social and cultural science that Weber wanted to pursue.

¹⁴⁵ Weber, "Author's Introduction", 4. By "ideal-type" of the entrepreneur"] must be understood the specific type of entrepreneur whom *we* take here as object of our study, not whatever empirical average? Weber, "PE", 55.

The conjunction of these three notions of type is stated particularly clearly in the 'Positive Résumé' written as part of his 1910 polemic with his critic Felix Rachfahl¹⁴⁶:

'It was not the advancement of capitalist expansion which represented my central interest, but rather the development of the type of humanity (*Menschentum*), which was created through the encounter between religiously and economically conditioned factors'¹⁴⁷...

'The development of the "vocational-professional type of human being" (*Berufsmenschentum*) in its meaning as a component of the capitalist "spirit", this is the theme to which my examinations have explicitly and intentionally limited themselves in the main'¹⁴⁸.

The encounter of ascetic Protestantism with the modern *Bürgertum*, the 'sociological' emergence of which Weber would analyse in his study on 'the City'¹⁴⁹, not only produced carriers of a new, modern, capitalist spirit. A whole new type of human being, the *Berufsmensch*, who is also the human being of the everyday, the *Alltagsmensch*¹⁵⁰ by excellence, was created. It is the qualities and mode of life conduct of this new type of human being which would, from then on, be fostered in the new capitalist order and in modern culture in general without there being any need anymore for its specimens to be carriers of Ascetic Protestantism nor, indeed, of the early spirit of modern capitalism.

Perhaps this is the reason why Ernst Troeltsch, after masterfully depicting the arrival of the 'purposive human being' (*Zweckmenschentum*) on to the world stage in the study which paralleled Weber's *PE*, did not pursue his analysis into the contemporary period. His concept of the type of human being was very close to that of carrier of a 'spirit', and he finally focused on studying the 'modern spirit' directly. Nevertheless the relinquishing of the link to a sociological analysis made such exercise one purely of history of ideas and political philosophy, a route ultimately very different from that of Weber, despite the proximity of their points of departure¹⁵¹.

¹⁴⁶ That this, and not any causal explanation of capitalism, was Weber's focus in *PE* has been shown in a definitive fashion by Wilhelm Hennis. I usually translate *Beruf* as 'vocation and profession' or vocation-profession (including in the titles of the 'Vocation lectures' on Science and Politics) in order to convey the continuity between the two pointed in Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis. However, I adopt more varied translations when referring to modern *Beruf* (in Weber's time). See Part II Chapter 4.

¹⁴⁷ Weber, "Final Anti-critique": 580.

¹⁴⁸ Max Weber, "Antikritisches zum »Geist« des Kapitalismus" [Anti-critique on the 'spirit' of Capitalism], *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 30 (1910): 202.

¹⁴⁹ Hinnerk Bruhns, *Max Weber: au confluent des sciences historiques et sociales* [Max Weber at the juncture between historical and social sciences], *Études et Travaux de l'école doctorale TESC (Temps, Espaces, Sociétés, Cultures)* (Toulouse: Université Toulouse Le Mirail-écoles doctorales, 2009), 13.

¹⁵⁰ Weber, "PE", 115.

¹⁵¹ See footnote 88 above. I come back to the comparison between Troeltsch's and Weber's analysis of the emergence of a new *Menschentum* at the time of the Reformation in Chapter 2.

But Weber's approach to the cultural significance of the great problems of his age involved the description of 'the general cultural significance of the socio-economic structure of human life in common and the historical forms of its organisation'¹⁵². As we shall have ample occasion to see in Part II of the thesis, this led him to also charter the mechanisms and types of human being upholding the *contemporary* spirit of capitalism, 'which could be understood as a pure product of adaptation'¹⁵³. It was only through an analysis of the mechanisms for the inner and external 'tuning in' (*Einstellung, Eingestelltheit*)¹⁵⁴ of the qualities, patterns of conduct or even simply 'forms of life' of the contemporary entrepreneurial type, of the 'sort of human beings' required as workers, of the 'professional politician', of the 'scientific worker' and 'scientific specialist' that one could become clearer about the 'reality of the life in which we are placed and which surrounds us in its specificity' and act upon it.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to cast light on the context in which Weber developed his science of reality and the notion of the human type which was at the core of it. I emphasised the marked distinctiveness of his approach, not only because he only formally located it in the epistemological debates and disputes of the turn of the 20th century, but because his intellectual project, and indeed his underpinning conception of human life, were very contrary to those of most scholars intervening in the debate on the foundations of the human, cultural, or social and cultural sciences.

From its beginnings, the science of reality had been at risk of being captured by a certain philosophy of life, rejecting the 'objectifying' character of the natural sciences and opposing a 'subjectifying' stance through re-experiencing. We have seen that even though Wilhelm Dilthey and Georg Simmel were adamant that a science of reality is necessarily an operation of thought, they emphasised *Erlebnis*, as primary, total, experience of the world, and as 'the epistemological basis for all knowledge of the objective'. Dilthey and Simmel, but also, from a different perspective, Heinrich Rickert located 'reality' at the level of this primary experience, or for Rickert, primary stance towards the world. For Dilthey and

¹⁵² Weber, "Objectivity", 165.

¹⁵³ Weber, "PE", 55.

¹⁵⁴ Inner adjustment, inner tuning or attuning. As pointed out by JP Grossein, *Einstellung* is the term which Weber adopts in the 'Basic Concepts', but both terms are equivalent. Grossein, "De l'interprétation de quelques concepts wébériens": 712.

Simmel this meant that a science of reality had to recreate the unified meaning of lived experience, beyond the apparent fragmentation of the given. Indeed in Simmel's reflections on the specific disposition of the philosopher to perceive totality, his hesitation between a totality which is philosophically constructed and a totality which is pre-theoretically 'received' in *Erlebnis* and philosophically objectivated became manifest, and with it, the temptation of mysticism, to which I come back in Part III (Chapter 8).

Taking support in Wilhelm Hennis and his emphasis on the continuation of a certain tradition of political philosophy by Weber, I stressed that Weber's interest in the notion of science of reality rather stemmed from his desire to have his contemporaries 'see' the world as it is, i.e. as a disenchanted rationalised world, divested of any encompassing meaning; and as a place in which meanings have to be created through self-reflection but also action and struggle. A reality pervaded by struggling impersonal powers, as opposed to the underlying reality of life as the relatedness of the parts to the whole: we have here one of the key dividing lines which set Weber apart from contemporary philosophers and their attempts at grounding a science of reality.

Weber's appropriation of the Nietzschean notion of 'human type' served his project very well as it highlights those features, qualities and modes of life conduct which are fostered as culturally dominant by a particular order of social relations. It thus prompts a reflection on the orientation of modern culture, and especially its readiness to overlook the struggle being waged by the forces of modern capitalism, their levelling effects and the corrosion of self-determination which they bring about.

We thus have a first clue as to the strong contrast between the Weberian culturally significant human type and Simmel's exploration of modern individuality from within, from an inner reference. The further development of this comparison in the following chapter, in addition to the contrast with Troeltsch's 'purposive human being', will enable me to more fully take the measure of the dividing lines between very different projects for the analysis of the modern human being, in social and cultural science and the philosophy of culture.

The notion of *Menschentum*

The 1885 definition of the word *Menschentum* provided by the Grimm Brothers' German dictionary designates, first, 'men taken as a whole'¹⁵⁵. As noted in the Friedrich Kluge Etymological dictionary¹⁵⁶, whose first edition dates back to 1882, it is similar, in that sense, to the notion of '*Menschheit*' (humanity). Secondly, it also refers to 'being human, from the point of view of the height of moral and spiritual features'.

More generally, the suffix '-tum' (which comes from the substantive '*doms*', and became the suffix *dom* in English) belongs to the suffixes used in the formation of abstract concepts and refers to groupings, collectives, possibly originally related to notions of dignity and status¹⁵⁷. Although, in common use, the frontiers seem to be blurred with words ending in 'schaft' and 'heit', I argue that Weber used the suffix to characterise groups from the point of view of their qualitative feature and characteristics (*Eigenschaften*). He played with the possibilities offered by German suffixes, which can be adjoined in a creative fashion to any root to form substantives with a particular 'colour' or tone. The apposition of the suffix TUM to another substantive than *Menschen* designates a status group or '*Stand*' (as in *BeamtenTUM* – officialdom), since *Stände* are characterised by their qualitative features (education, life conduct, social honour). However this last use is usually purely descriptive. It is the context which can tell us whether the concept is descriptive or evaluative.

Weber usually equally resorted to the terms *Menschlicher Typus*, *Menschentypus*, *Menschentum* and even sometimes *Typus des Menschentums* to designate humanity or the human kind from that qualitative and evaluative perspective: when the meaning is general, I will refer to 'humanity as type' or 'type of humanity'; when the reference is more specific, to the (or a) 'human type'.

Dominant types of human being are characterised as *Menschentum*, as their way of 'embodying' or realising the fact of being human carries weight for a whole specific culture. The main figures distinguished by Weber are *Kulturmenschentum* (usually referring, for the purpose of such contrast, to the cultivated type of human being), *Berufsmenschentum* (the vocational-professional type of human being, the dominant type of the early capitalist world) and *Fachmenschentum* (the specialist type of human being of Weber's contemporary capitalist world).

¹⁵⁵ The Grimm dictionary was started towards the middle of the 19th century and further developed over more than one century before being completed in 1960. The notion of *Menschentum* is included in volume 12 of the dictionary, which was completed in 1885. See Jacob Grimm, Grimm Wilhelm, and Heine Moriz, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), 2070.

¹⁵⁶ Friedrich Kluge, Alfred Schirmer, and Walther Mitzka, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1957), 474.

¹⁵⁷ Walter Henzen, *Deutsche Wortbildung* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1965), 191.

Chapter 2 – The dominant types of human being in the modern and contemporary world

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have seen that Weber's lifelong endeavour to illuminate the great problem of the day, modern Western capitalism, 'that most fateful power of our modern life'¹, was not only explanatory but also evaluative, as he sought to contrast the dominant type of human being fostered in a capitalist order and those types which had characterised other cultures and other epochs. Thus through the investigation into the emergence of a new type of humanity in the West, carrier of the capitalist spirit, Weber observed how the vocational-professional type of human being, the *Berufsmensch*, and now the specialist type, the *Fachmensch*, were ousting the cultivated type of human being, the *Kulturmensch* out of all social inscription, leaving him to quests in the void. On that basis, he sought to ascertain the implications of the dominance of the former and the demise of the latter for contemporary culture.

The purpose of the present chapter is to bring out Weber's analysis of the human type in more detail. I start from Weber's statement of approach to the human type, in the 'Value Freedom' essay, so as to analyse the way in which Weber accounted for the 'inner (motivational)' and 'external' 'selection' (which really included fostering and shaping) of the three above mentioned types of human beings in ways which, in specific circumstances, led them to cultural dominance (section I). I then seek to bring out the way in which the notion of human type served Weber's science of reality, especially through the characterisation of human types through the mode of rationalisation of their life conduct, their more or less adaptive or transformative stance towards the world and the idea of personality of which they are the carriers (section II). The following two sections serve to highlight the distinctiveness of Weber's approach to the human type by contrasting it with two other analyses of key moments and figures: the emergence and genesis of a new, modern *Menschentum*, a moment magnificently analysed by Ernst Troeltsch in the *Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (section III); and the fate of the modern human being, for which I compare Weber's observations with Simmel's own analysis of the 'metropolitan type of individuality' and the 'processes' of the [modern] soul' in the *Philosophy of Money* and the essay on 'The Metropolis and mental life' (section IV).

¹ Weber, "Author's Introduction", 4.

I – Weber’s statement of approach to the human type

Weber stated most clearly how one should go about ‘empirical work’ in ‘the empirical disciplines’ – ‘sociology (including of “politics”), economics (including of “economic policy”), history (of all sorts, i.e. specifically including e.g. history of law, religion and culture)’² – in a passage of a 1913 memorandum for a discussion of the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (Association for Social Policy) on the issue of value judgment, reviewed and published in *Logos* in 1917 (the ‘Value freedom’ essay):

‘Only one conclusion undoubtedly follows: every order of social relations, without exception and however constituted, is, if one wishes to evaluate it, ultimately to be examined with respect to the human type (*menschlichen Typus*) for which it, by way of external or inner (motivational) selection, optimises the chances of becoming the dominant (*herrschenden*) type. For otherwise the empirical enquiry is not truly exhaustive, nor is there the necessary factual basis for a general evaluation, whether it is consciously subjective or claims objective validity.’³

In this section, I take a closer look at Weber’s statement and unfold its main components: I seek to define the nature of the order to be assessed as well as the process of ‘external or inner (motivational) selection’ of the dominant human type, before turning, in section II, to the analysis of the parameters characterising the human types themselves.

From the order of social relations to culture as a whole

The order to be assessed through the type of human being it fosters is ‘the order of social relations (*Ordnung der gesellschaftlichen Beziehungen*)’, a phrase which does not appear elsewhere in Weber’s work but stands very close to the title of Weber’s contribution to *Economy and Society* (hereafter *ES*) in its 1914 outline, *The economy and the social orders (gesellschaftliche Ordnungen) and powers*. As suggested by Hennis, such notion of order points to the “institutions”, “groupings”, “enterprises”, “associations”, “sects”, as well as to “acquisitive activity”, “exchange”, and the “market”⁴. Indeed, as will be shown in Part II of the thesis, Weber investigated and documented the types of human being ‘selected’ and fostered by the bureaucracy, the large industrial firm, the research institutes and universities, also mentioning more cursorily the spread of *Berufsmenschentum* in all associations and groupings (*Vereine*), once they become organised and ‘objectivated’⁵.

² Baumgarten, *Max Weber - his work and person*, 102.

³ Weber, "Value Freedom", 517. This passage was not changed in the revision for the *Logos* publication.

⁴ Hennis, *Central Question*, 50.

⁵ Max Weber, "Geschäftsbericht und Diskussionsreden auf den deutschen soziologischen Tagungen. 1910, 1912" [Report and debates of the sociological conferences], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik*. ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1924 [1910, 1912]), 445.

But, as I suggested in Chapter 1, Weber also situated his assessments at another level. The manner in which the human type actualises the fact of being human characterises cultural areas and epochs, approached through their practical ethics, their institutions, their social stratification, but nevertheless treated as cultural ensembles. As explained by Wolfgang Schluchter, Weber's distrust of all notion of epoch, age or culture as a cover for essentialism did not prevent him, especially in those texts where he draws the lessons of his universal history and comparative sociology, from referring types of humanity to such ensembles, which Schluchter defines as 'configurations of order that shape an entire civilization', precisely because such texts come as conclusions to careful comparisons, set out in concrete contexts of actual social relationships, all brought to bear from the perspective of the same research interest and in their interconnections⁶.

Thus, in the 'Author's introduction', with which Weber prefaced the *Collected Essays on the Sociology of Religion* and explained the scope of his research for the contrasting of Western rationalism with other forms of rationalism in other cultures, the *Fachmensch* appears as the direct product of the kind of training developing through the rational, specialised practice of science today in the West; and as the key player (through the figure of the specialised official) not only in the organisation of the modern State but also in the modern economy. The *Fachmensch* thus both characterises – and is the joint product of – the scientific and technical, state and economic orders of relations: indeed he is 'constitutive of the social order', and here, probably, social order has to be understood as formed by the various orders of relations and their interconnections:

'Elsewhere there are only rudiments of [the specialised official], and nowhere else as in the West has he become in any sense as constitutive of the social order.'⁷

The mechanism of diffusion through which the figure of the *Fachmensch* comes to define the social order as a whole resides in the concrete role played by this type of human being for the discharge of 'all most important functions of social life':

'No country and no age has ever known, in the same sense as the modern West, the absolutely inescapable spell on our whole existence, on the political, technical and economic conditions of our being (*Dasein*), cast from the carapace (*Gebäuse*) of an organisation of officials trained as specialists; nor

Versachlichung (and hence *versachlicht*) can be understood as objectivation, in the sense of emptying relationships of their personal character, or subordinating it to 'objective' matter-of-fact processes, not dependent upon the persons involved.

⁶ Wolfgang Schluchter, *Paradoxes of modernity: culture and conduct in the theory of Max Weber*, trans. Neil Solomon (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 192-5.

⁷ Weber, "Author's Introduction", 3.

the fact that technically, commercially, but above all legally trained State officials are the carriers of the most important everyday functions of social life.⁸

But these two quotes also show that, through this characterisation of the social order by means of its dominant type of human being, it is the modern Occident as cultural area and epoch that is being assessed.

Already in the 'Objectivity' essay, which can be considered a programmatic statement for the kind of social and cultural science that Weber (and his fellow editors of the *Archiv*) wanted to encourage, he had stressed that taking a particular empirical approach of a specific realm is the only way to cast light on culture as a whole. Socio-economic exploration is particularly suited for that purpose, as it encompasses 'not only "economic phenomena", but also "economically relevant" and "economically conditioned" phenomena' and as

'the domain of such objects extends naturally – and varyingly in accordance with the direction of our interest at the moment – throughout the entirety of all cultural processes'⁹.

Accordingly, Weber's first contribution to that programme, a historical investigation of a (partial) cultural conditioning of the economic sphere (*PE*) had sought to sketch out the wider implications, for the entirety of Western culture, of the arrival of the *Berufsmensch* onto the scene: the rational life conduct of the *Berufsmensch* is not only one of the 'constitutive elements of the modern capitalist spirit', but also of 'modern culture'¹⁰. Through his rational mode of life conduct, the *Berufsmensch* marked the most

⁸ Ibid. I translate *Gebäuse* as carapace, following Lassman and Speirs. Despite, and precisely because of its fame, it is important to challenge Parsons' translation of '*stahlhartes Gehäuse*' as 'iron cage' (see E.g. Peter Baehr, "The "Iron Cage" and the "Shell as Hard as Steel": Parsons, Weber, and the Stahlhartes Gehäuse Metaphor in the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism", *History and Theory* 40, no. 2 (2001).) *Gebäude* can be translated as carapace, but also 'housing' or 'casing'. Peter Baehr prefers 'shell' as the organic metaphor renders most suitably the idea that a new type of human being has emerged from it. Elisabeth Kaufmann, who translates *Gebäude* both as casing and as shell, argues more specifically that this combination of the mechanical and the organic conveys very well the 'conjunction of a very modern and rational organisation with organicism' which Weber feared, for Russia as well as for post-war Germany (see Elisabeth Kaufmann, "Écrits politiques de Max Weber: le défi de la liberté" [Max Weber's Political Writings. The challenge of liberty], in *Max Weber et le politique*(Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 2009), 161.) The organic metaphor holds with Lassman and Speirs' 'carapace'. They also use casing where it has a more mechanic than organic character. 'Housing' is more correct in the expression 'the housing for future serfdom'. I have tended to follow their usage. See Lassman and Speirs, "Glossary", Max Weber, *Political Writings*, Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs ed., *Cambridge texts in the history of political thought* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 68, 90.

⁹ Weber, "Objectivity", 163.

¹⁰ Weber, "PE", 202.

‘heterogeneous spheres of human action’¹¹. In this way he came to define Western culture as a whole during the specific historical period of early modern capitalism, largely relegating another type of humanity which Weber only vaguely evokes at the end of *PE* for the sake of contrast – that ‘full and beautiful’, ‘Faustian all-rounded *Menschentum*’, of another age, perhaps the Antiquity or the Lay Catholicism of the Middle Ages, these ages of ‘naïve “affirmation” of the world by an unbroken *Menschentum*’¹².

Thus dominant types of human beings define not only the ‘orders of social relations’ which directly produce them, but also the cultural configurations underpinned by these orders. They do so both through the places they occupy, through the role they carry out in these places, and through their mode of life conduct. The factors of their significance are thus both ‘external’, to be found in the socio-economic, political, scientific and educative ‘orders of social relations’, and ‘inner’ factors, found in the ethic steering their conduct as a result of their orientation to a religious belief or cause and whose influence depends on its affinity to the relevant ‘orders of social relations’.

It is such double-sided characterisation of cultural configurations (through a particular ethic or rationality and through an order of social relations) that later, at the time of the elaboration of the *Sociology of Religion* and the *Economic Ethics of World Religions* (hereafter *Economic Ethics*), led Weber to coin the notion of life order, which can be defined as order of human action, endeavour and accomplishment (rather than merely of social relations). In Part II, I will probe deeper into this notion and analyse the shaping of specific human types in the contemporary, worldly and differentiated life orders. But Weber’s most systematic exploration and characterisation of culture along these two dimensions took place in his studies of the *Economic Ethics*. There he analysed the link between economic rationalism (and its determinants) and the practical life conduct fostered by Confucianism (and Taoism), Hinduism (and Buddhism), and Ancient Judaism through their economic ethics, combining a historical approach of these religions (i.e. treating them as ‘historical individuals’) with a ‘sociological approach’ probing into relations (between the inner momentum of the religious ethics and the ‘external conditions’ – notably those of carrier

¹¹ Weber, "Anti-critique": 202. Weber was nevertheless cautious not to specify this statement further, since he could not materialise the programme he had outlined at the end of *PE*. ‘It would have been easy, from there to move to a punctilious “construction” which would *deduce* logically from Protestant rationalism *all* that is “characteristic” of modern culture. But let us leave rather such kind of undertaking to the type of dilettantes who believe in the “unitary character” of “social psyche” and its reducibility to one formula’. Weber, "PE", 206. Troeltsch’s *Social Teachings* addressed this in part.

¹² Max Weber, "Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen. Einleitung" [Introduction to the Economic Ethic of World Religions], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1920), 263.

strata)¹³. It is thus to the study on *Confucianism and Taoism* that I will now turn to examine the conditions of external and inner fostering and selection of a culturally dominant type of human being (here the *Kultur Mensch* of Confucian Imperial China).

Paths of selection of the dominant type of human beings: first approximation through the Chinese/Confucian Kultur Mensch

Confucianism and Taoism is the only of the three studies of the *Economic Ethics* which Weber had time to substantially revise for its publication in the *Collected Essays*. It is also the study which carried out the above mentioned programme furthest and which thus examined the fostering of a certain type of human being along both dimensions. The analysis of the ‘external conditions’ or ‘sociological bases’ for an economic ethic in traditional China¹⁴ particular stressed the development of patrimonial bureaucracy and the system of education and exams which it set up. The analysis of the ‘inner conditions’ for such economic ethic put forward the orientation by the Confucian ethic of the education and life conduct of its carrier stratum. Weber showed that the two dimensions concurred in the formation of a social stratum which constituted itself as a *Stand*¹⁵, and was the bearer both of the ideal of literary cultivation fostered in the education system, sanctioned in exams to qualify for a position of official, and furthered in the discharge of such position; and of the Confucian ethic of ‘distinction’ and the ‘gentleman-ideal’¹⁶. As recapitulated by Weber in his study of patrimonialism in *ES*,

¹³ Ibid, 259, 265. These studies were first published between 1915 and 1918 in the *Archiv*, then revised for their publication in the *Collected Essays on the Sociology of Religion*. Weber’s project was to develop a similar analysis of Christianity. *PE* and the *Protestant Sects* only explored the inner side of the determination of practical life conduct, but Weber planned to complement them with a study of the ‘sociological bases’ of Christianity. Hinnerk Bruhns has convincingly argued that the fragment on ‘the City’ formed part of that project, through its analysis of the conditions of emergence of modern *Bürgertum*. Bruhns, *Max Weber: au confluent des sciences historiques et sociales*, 11-13. I come back to Weber’s combined historical and sociological approach in the conclusion of Part II Chapter 3.

¹⁴ As noted by Jean-Pierre Grossein, ‘despite the title of the studies, the analysis does not only bear on the economic ethic of specific religions, but rather of the social formations in which the religions studied are included’. (Jean-Pierre Grossein, “Présentation”. in Max Weber. *Confucianisme et taoïsme* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), XII.)

¹⁵ As widely acknowledged, the notion of *Stand* is difficult to translate in English or French through a single concept. Historically it designates a social group with its legal-political prerogatives (See Jean-Pierre Grossein, “Présentation”. in Max Weber. *L'éthique protestante et l'esprit du capitalisme; suivi d'autres essais* (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), LXII.). This use roughly corresponds to the notion of ‘estate’ (this is for example the translation opted for by Lassman and Speirs for the *Political Writings*). I will usually keep the German word for the traditional notion. For the modern usage, ‘status group’ would seem to be usually adequate.

¹⁶ *Gentleman* is used in German.

the unity of Chinese culture is essentially the unity of the very stratum [constituted as] *Stand*, which is the carrier (*Trägerin*) of the bureaucratic classical-literary education (*Bildung*) and of the Confucian ethic and its specific ... ideal of distinction¹⁷.

This sentence treats bureaucratic *Bildung* and the Confucian ethic separately, and Weber also dealt with each in a different chapter of *Confucianism*¹⁸. In this way their affinity can be better highlighted, even though they were so intricately bound with each other that it is difficult to apprehend all of the relations pointed out by Weber. On the one hand, Confucianism appears as the crudest translation of the interests of the bureaucracy officials onto the ethical plane, and it is probably the religion analysed by Weber which appears most dependent on the external conditions of its carrier stratum:

‘What effect can the practical rationalism of rule by a stratum of prebendaries of office (*Amtsprüdnerschaft*) have? This situation resulted in orthodox Confucianism¹⁹.

On the other hand, Confucianism has a conception of salvation, provided salvation is understood as plenitude and fulfilment (*Heil*) rather than as deliverance (*Erlösung*)²⁰, which demands from its carriers that they ‘adapted to the cosmic harmony of the eternal supra-divine orders of the world (the Tao) and to the social demands deriving from it’ and that they did nothing which could perturb this harmony²¹. This corresponded to the ideal of distinction of the literati, whose reasons for considering that only a position as official could allow them to become accomplished personalities included the constancy of disposition warranted by constancy of income. But here Weber talked about the ‘ethical

¹⁷ Max Weber, *Grundriß der Sozialökonomik, III. Abteilung. Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* [Economy and Society], Marianne Weber ed. (Tübingen: J.C.B Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1922), 709.

¹⁸ As noted by Jean-Pierre Grossein, in the 1920 version, chapters V, which bears on the formation of a ‘*Stand* of the Literati’ and VI (which addresses the Confucian life conduct of the same *Stand*, as carrier stratum) have a ‘pivotal role’ in the study (Grossein, "Presentation (*Confucianism*)". XIII.). In effect, chapters I to IV (which expand on chapter I of the first version) put forward the ‘sociological bases’ for the economic ethic (the City, the princely administration and its conception of the divine, the Feodal State and the Prebendary State, administration and agricultural regime, the self-administration of the village and the subjection of economic relations to sips, the patrimonial legal structure). But chapter V can also be considered as part of the sociological bases, since it addresses social stratification (and especially the formation of the *Stand* of the Literati) and the education system, whilst chapter VI and VII cover the field of religious conceptions and their practical implications (Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism). Chapter VI, which bears on Confucianism, thus complements Chapter V by looking at the ‘inner side’ of the life conduct of the Literati. The book culminates in a comparison between ‘Confucian and Puritan rationalism’, in fact between the Chinese/Confucian *Kultur Mensch* and the Western/Puritan *Berufsmensch* (Chapter VIII). Notwithstanding this well delineated chapter structure, Weber constantly refers back and forth so as to bring out the infinity of causal relations at play.

¹⁹ Max Weber, "Konfuzianismus und Taoismus" [Confucianism and Taoism], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1920), 440.

²⁰ Grossein, "Glossaire Raisoné". 124.

²¹ Weber, "Confucianism", 514.

transfiguring of the official's point of view²²: it is the Confucian ethics which gives this point of view its meaning.

The life conduct of the Confucian literati officials is thus determined both externally, through their education and position in the bureaucracy and 'internally', through the Confucian ethic. Yet Weber clearly singled out the education system as the main determinant for their shaping into *Kulturmenschen*, the cultivated type of human being. Indeed, in the absence of the kind of psychological grip through 'psychological premiums' that salvation religions have on believers, Confucianism found its main channel of influence over life conduct in the education system set up by the patrimonial power. There, following the models given in the great literary works, the pupils learnt to cultivate certain inner states and types of external conduct ("“elegance and dignity”... accomplishment of the traditional duties... vigilant rational self control and repression of all perturbation of self-balance by irrational passions' etc.²³). The inner dimension of life conduct was oriented to the ideal of the Gentleman, and thus to conforming one's bearing to that required, a striving through modelling which far differed from the inner unified 'disposition' and inner 'general habitus' characterising, as we shall see below, the Puritan *Berufsmensch*. In other words, the 'selection' of the *Kulturmensch* was more 'external' than 'inner (motivational)', both in its channels and in its outcomes.

The *Economic Ethics* studies suggest that the notion of selection put forward by Weber in his 'Value freedom' essay went far beyond the usual designation of tests (which might test external attitudes as well as inner motivations), and included the fostering of these attitudes and dispositions, both through 'external' arrangements (typically education) and through inner drives (especially those derived from the psychological tensions arising from religious belief). Indeed, already in *PE*, Weber had highlighted the limits of a narrow concept of selection, and the need to encompass the prior fostering of attitudes and dispositions:

“Today's capitalism, then, which has come to dominance in economic life, creates and trains, by means of economic *selection*, the economic subjects – entrepreneurs and workers – that it needs. But here is precisely where the limits of the concept of “selection” as a means of explaining historical phenomena are reached. In order that this kind of conduct of life and attitude to one's profession [*“Berufs”-Auffassung*], “adapted” as it is to the peculiar requirements of capitalism, could be selected and emerge victorious over others, it obviously had first to come into being, and this not in single isolated individuals, but as a way of seeing carried by human *groups*.”²⁴

²² Ibid, 448.

²³ Ibid, 515.

²⁴ Weber, "PE", 37. This paragraph was already in the 1905 version. The only difference with the 1920 version lies in the emphasis of selection (added in 1920), and in the inverted commas (“economic selection”) which disappeared in 1920.

Paths of selection of different dominant types of human beings – the *Kulturmensch*, the *Fachmensch* and the *Berufsmensch*

On the basis of the Confucian example, Weber put forward a tentative typology of the main purposes of education which he related to his typology of modes of rulership, as well as to the type of human being that they seek to mould. He distinguished two opposed poles: on the one hand the awakening of charisma and the testing of the personal gifts, on the other hand the inculcation of specialised instruction for the ‘training’ of a specialised type of human being (*Fachmensch*). The former corresponds to the charismatic structure, the latter to the bureaucratic-rational structure of rulership. In between one finds those types of education which, as in the case of patrimonial Confucian China, seek to cultivate a certain type of life conduct associated with a specific *Stand*²⁵. A ‘pedagogy of cultivation’ brings the pupil to be a *Kulturmensch*, i.e. to develop a ‘specific inner and external conduct’ whose content depends on the cultural ideal of the ‘determining stratum’, but also, in the case of Chinese education, on the ‘exams, monopolised by the political power’ of the patrimonial sovereign²⁶.

Contrary to the awakening of charisma, the ‘training’ (*zŭchten*) or ‘cultivation’ (*Kultivation*) of specific types of human being is, in principle, undertaken with ‘anyone’ (*mit einem jeden*). Thus, Weber tells us, ‘the commandments of Confucianism were tailored to average human capacities²⁷ and, on the other hand, the education as *Kulturmensch* was the only qualification required to be a member of the *Stand* – there were no requirements of nobility or wealth. This does not mean that there were not ‘masses’ in Confucianism²⁸, and precisely one of the key features of a dominant type of human being, if it is to be defining for a whole culture, is how it relates to the rest of social groups. I come back to this in section II.

The two types of human beings fostered by education systems concerned with the shaping of average human beings are the *Fachmensch* and the *Kulturmensch*, equally opposed to charismatic personalities and the favouring of charisma, but also dramatically at odds with

²⁵ Weber, "Confucianism", 408.

²⁶ Ibid, 409. This definition also applies to the 19th century *Kulturmensch* formed through classical *Bildung* in Germany and who occupied leading positions as higher officials in the bureaucracy.

²⁷ Ibid, 515.

²⁸ Its Gentleman-ethic was really for its carrier stratum, whilst the rest of the social groups, and especially the ‘poorest popular circles’ maintained an attitude ‘excluding’ such an ethic, as it was highly contrary to specialisation and to the risky pursuit of gain (i.e. any gain pursuit for who does not have a place in the bureaucracy). Ibid, 517-8.

each other. Weber recorded the ‘inimicality’²⁹ of the Literati *Stand* for the ‘small path’ (*der kleine Weg*) of ‘economic, medical or sacerdotal activity... which leads to professional specialisation’, as they strove for the ‘all-roundedness (*Allseitigkeit*) which only *Bildung* (in the Confucian sense) provides, and which the official charge, precisely, demands from man...’³⁰. This echoed his observation of the supplanting, in the West, of those with a humanist education by specialists, and of the associated loss of direction for young intellectuals. Weber drew this parallel both in Confucianism and in his analysis of bureaucracy in *ES* (elaborated in the same years just before the First World War) and suggested that the struggle between the *Kultur Mensch* and the *Fach Mensch*, which materialises in particular in competition for the same positions and in the loss of influence or ascent of their respective status groups³¹, has a culturally defining character:

‘Behind all current discussions of the bases of the education system lies, in some decisive place, and served by the unstoppable grip of bureaucratisation on all public and private relations of rule and by the ever increasing significance of specialised knowledge, the struggle of the “specialist” type of human being against the old “cultural type of humanity”, going on in all cultural questions [which touch us] most intimately.’³²

Both the *Fach Mensch* and the *Kultur Mensch* are above all products of the education system, and, as I have already explained for the *Kultur Mensch*, their qualification remains more ‘external’ than ‘inner (motivational)’: this seems even clearer in the case of the *Fach Mensch*, whose qualification sanctions a technical capacity, although, as we shall see when I discuss the modern *Fach Mensch* in section III, the acquisition of the attitudes (especially discipline) required in the places aspired was also sanctioned.

Nevertheless, the *Stände*, with their ‘cultural ideal’ and status honour, were also, in traditional societies, powerful mechanisms for the upholding of a specific form of life conduct. Thus the honour of the *Stand* of the Chinese/Confucian Literati sprung above all from its oath and conduct of piety towards all authorities. Shame of poverty also played its role, so that the inner inscription of the Confucian ethic through feelings of honour and

²⁹ Max Weber, *Hinduismus und Buddhismus* [Hinduism and Buddhism]. ed. Marianne Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1921), 146.

³⁰ Weber, "Confucianism", 448-9.

³¹ In Imperial China, the literati officials repressed any attempt at reform of the bureaucracy in the direction of increased specialisation. In the West, the commanding positions in the civil and military administration used to be filled by individuals with a humanist education. *Ibid*, 409, 449.

³² Weber, *ES*, 677. Rita Aldenhoff suggests that this contrast was a key theme of Weber’s sociology. Rita Aldenhoff, "Nationalökonomie und Kulturwerte um 1900" [Nationalökonomie and cultural values around 1900], in *Kultur und Kulturwissenschaften um 1900* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1989), 59.

shame relayed the educational shaping of the *Kultur Mensch* and reinforced the ideal of conformity. The *Stände* in modern democratic (democratising) societies fall short of being such mechanisms for the inner inscription of ideals and Weber denounced, especially in the *Political Writings*, their tendency to create and preserve external positional distance, which he compared with the only distance possible in democratic societies in his view, i.e. 'inner distance'³³. This is not to say that modern status groups do not constitute shaping mechanisms: for in defending positional interests as a matter of priority, they certainly foster a more general stance which I will refer to as active adaptation to the world as it is. More generally, the *Kultur Mensch* and the *Fach Mensch*, in traditional or modern configurations, are figures of adaptation to the prevailing order rather than transformation.

A new *Menschenart*, a new type of everyday human beings, only emerged and became dominant with the figure of the *Beruf Mensch*, fundamentally brought about by ascetic Protestantism, once a Bourgeois stratum had been formed which could be its carrier. Even though Weber also studied the role of the ascetic Protestant sects in the 'regulation' of the qualification as *Beruf Mensch*, his main approach to the arrival of this human type on the scene was through the analysis of 'the aspect most difficult to grasp and prove': its inner shaping by way of the 'psychological' fostering of an 'inner general habitus'³⁴. Weber's well known thesis is that the ascetic Protestant is placed in a situation of extreme doubt about his own salvation which can only be quieted down in the adoption, mediated by the ascetic Protestant practical ethic, of a methodical life conduct in work considered as vocation and procuring him with the feeling of certainty of his grace³⁵.

The mode of 'selection' of the *Beruf Mensch* is thus above all 'inner (motivational)', and its mechanisms are the (internal) 'psychological rewards'³⁶ of proving one's grace, as well as the (external) control of religious qualification by sects. Its result is a highly rationalised mode of life conduct, steered from within (through the inner orientation to salvation and

³³ Max Weber, "Wahlrecht und Demokratie in Deutschland" [Suffrage and Democracy in Germany], in *Gesammelte Politische Schriften*. ed. Marianne Weber (München: Drei Masken Verlag, 1921 [1917]), 316.

³⁴ Weber, "Anti-critique": 199-200, Weber, "PE", 182. The most specific characterisation of *habitus* appears in the 1910 Final Rebuttal (regarding PE), where Weber stressed that the early capitalists' *habitus* 'arose out of their own religious life, out of their own religiously conditioned family tradition, and out of their religiously influenced style of life'; and 'made them qualified in a very specific way to respond to the specific demands of early modern capitalism' (Weber, "Final Anti-critique": 592). *Habitus* thus seems to refer to explicitly and implicitly transmitted dispositions which together form a pattern. As 'inner general habitus' (of the Puritan) it is, as suggested by Hennis, indistinguishable from the notion of inwardly rationalised life conduct. (Hennis, *Central Question*, 15-6.). However, this is not the only context of use: Weber used this notion for example in his guidelines for the Survey on industrial workers, which I study in Part II chapter 4.

³⁵ Weber, "PE", 200. The idea of mediation is Jean-Pierre Grossein's. See Grossein, "Presentation, PE". XLII.

³⁶ Weber, "PE", 114.

grace) and giving rise to unified, systematic, and constant dedication to one's profession as calling. It is very important to note that the intensity of the psychological drive of ascetic Protestantism was all the greater that it concerned 'everyday human beings' (*Alltagsmenschen*): Calvin, a 'durably charismatically qualified human being', but also the early carriers of Calvinism, were sure of their state of grace and content with persevering in their faith in an inscrutable God³⁷. It is the permanent and intense inner tension fostered and maintained, for the average human being, by the need to prove oneself, which, arising from the ascetic Protestant's orientation to salvation and grace, turned the *Berufsmensch* in a force of transformation of the world (as matter for proving oneself), i.e. of Western capitalism and culture.

II – Characterising types of human being

The interest of the notion of human type for Weber was, as argued in Chapter 1, its capacity to grasp human beings through their 'qualities' (*Qualitäten, Eigenschaften*). But what does this imply? Are these qualities 'characterological'? In part. Thus *PE* relies on accounts of contemporaries of ascetic Protestantism, highlighting for example the Puritans' 'melancholy and moroseness' (in English)³⁸. *Confucianism* draws on the reports drafted by missionaries, 'of a very variable quality, but which ultimately offer the relatively most secure accounts'³⁹: Weber's reliance on these is an example of his absence of methodological dogma and his view that 'old' categories (as the ones used by the missionaries in their reporting on typical features of Chinese character) may still be much preferable to the application of new psychological classifications which have not proved themselves (e.g. psychopathology of religions in the *Protestant Ethic*) or which seem to him outright questionable (e.g. experimental psychology for his study of workers of the large industrial firms). Weber even recommended, in his guidelines for the industrial work survey, falling back on the 'four humours' (*Temperamente*) (see Part II Chapter 4)⁴⁰.

³⁷ Weber opposes 'durably charismatically qualified human beings' and 'everyday human beings' in Weber, *ES*, 228.. The reference to Calvin's inner security is referred to in Weber, "PE", 103-4. The Puritans are also religious virtuosi, in the sense that they seek to prove their religious qualification.

³⁸ Weber, "PE", 167.

³⁹ Weber, "Confucianism", 517.

⁴⁰ Weber, "Methodological introduction", 25. Hennis has addressed Weber's relationship to and use of the various disciplines of his time dealing with the characterisation of man. He shows that Weber had found nothing of help for his own questions in the anthropology of his time (which overwhelmingly dealt with racial features), nor in experimental psychology. Hennis, *Max Weber's Science of Man*, 20-38.

Thus, Weber enumerates the ‘qualities’ of the Confucian Chinese as reported by missionaries: [1] their ‘striking absence of “nerves”... boundless patience and composed politeness, tenacious attachment to the customary, absolute insensitivity to monotony and an unceasing working capacity ...’; but also [2] ‘extreme, unusual, fright towards all that is new and is not directly penetrable, and which manifests itself as ineradicable distrust ... which apparently contrasts with good humoured and boundless credulity towards any magic trick, however far-fetched ...’ etc.

Rather than any direct ‘characterological’ picture of the Chinese, what Weber stressed about this list is the consistency of the first and the ‘violent contrasts’ of the second set, which together point to the ‘instability of all the features of the Chinese life conduct where they are not – but this is not often the case – externally regulated through fixed norms’, ‘through countless conventions’⁴¹. ‘Characterological’ qualities do not interest Weber as evidence of ‘distinct psychic or physical dispositions’⁴² but rather insofar as they can be related to a general and acquired pattern, a general and acquired ‘habitus’. In particular, Weber studied the formation of ‘ethical’ qualities ruling conduct⁴³, and the extent to which these are consistently grounded in an inner foyer or rather less systematic – perhaps because they have been acquired through imitation. As Hennis has argued, the investigation of *Menschenheit* implies the investigation of their *Lebensführung*⁴⁴. Thus the disjointedness of the qualities of the Chinese lent support to Weber’s thesis that Confucian life conduct is externally rather than inwardly rationalised and that it ‘lacks’ the inner consistency of, for example, ascetic Protestant life conduct. It is that contrast which Weber was first interested in bringing out.

But if the dominant type of human being defines a culture and the ‘orders of social relations’ underpinning it, then his qualities and life conduct must convey a sense of the

⁴¹ Weber, "Confucianism", 517-8.

⁴² Weber, *Hinduism*, 374.

⁴³ Weber, "Confucianism", 521.

⁴⁴ Hennis, *Central Question*, 30. Weber never defined *Lebensführung*, and used the term extensively and in the widest contexts. Indeed as soon as there is an element of rationalisation of ways of behaving, starting with stereotyping rituals, there is already life conduct, i.e. some rule of action is followed (See Weber, *ES*, 231. The masses also have life conduct in that sense. Weber, "Confucianism", 516.). The modes of rationalisation of life being extremely varied, the intensity of the conduct of life is also very varied. This intensity is highest when there is an inner rationalisation of conduct, steered from an inner disposition and orientation (*Gesinnung*) – e.g. to salvation, or to an inner-worldly cause or higher task. But life conduct can also consist of the rules for the orientation and organisation of life characterising a *Stand* – and this, in modern status groups, is closer to the notion of style of life or form of life than to the inwardly steered ethical life conduct.

direction that this influence takes⁴⁵. In Chapter 1, I suggested that Weber's teaching particularly sought to expose the modern levelling of everyday life and the lack of resistance to subjection. Even though these are features of the modern age, Weber's characterisation of culturally significant types of human being in different social orders and cultures gives a sense of these dimensions through the notion of inner-worldly 'stance to the world' (*Stellung zur Welt*) – essentially, for the types of human being studied here, adaptation (e.g. *Anpassung*), flight from the world (*Weltflucht*) or transformation (e.g. *Umgestaltung*)⁴⁶; and through the 'positive' or 'negative' (i.e. productive or hampering) influence of dominant human types on other social groups⁴⁷. At the basis of and supporting this stance and influence we find the construction of the inner being and the development of 'ethical qualities' of the human type concerned. Let us probe deeper into each of these dimensions of the characterisation of the human type – starting with the stance; moving on to the inner supporting structure; to finally the mode of influence.

Adaptation to vs. transformation of the world

The inner vs. external rationalisation of the life conduct of different types of 'everyday' human being provides a strong indication, as hinted above, on their transformative or adaptive take on the world. Thus the *Kultur Mensch*, the *Fach Mensch* and the *Beruf Mensch* have opposed stances, even though the modern *Fach Mensch* is the *Beruf Mensch*'s heir.

The *Beruf Mensch* is the product of 'the powerful tension, full of pathos', of a religious ethic 'against the "world"'⁴⁸, as his life conduct is shaped inwardly by the 'unified and *powerful motivations*' stirred by this tension⁴⁹. These motivations set him to see himself as 'instrument' of God, to see the corrupted world as 'matter' for proving himself, and thus to 'rationally revolutionise and master it'⁵⁰ for the glorification of God. As explained by Weber, the economic sphere, although despised by the Puritan along all other worldly spheres, offered possibilities of objectivation which suited his rational asceticism⁵¹. There was 'adequacy'

⁴⁵ Actual influence can only be assessed through the analysis of the interaction between the life conduct of the dominant type and other 'shaping elements of modern culture'. Weber, "PE", 205.

⁴⁶ Weber, *ES*, 331. Weber, "Politics", 449. Weber, "Confucianism", 527.

⁴⁷ Weber, "Confucianism", 517.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 513.

⁴⁹ Weber, "Final Anti-critique": 575.

⁵⁰ Weber, "Confucianism", 535.

⁵¹ Weber, "IR", 544-6.

between a 'spirit' (that of inner-worldly asceticism) and a 'system' (the capitalist economic system already in place) to 'such a degree as to set out an evolution of an inwardly unbroken unity'⁵²: this resulted in the creation of the 'cosmos of the modern rational capitalist economy'⁵³, with its own logic of objectivation and depersonalisation. Yet such evolution would not have taken place if the 'spirit' of inner-worldly asceticism had not been one of tension with the world. For the 'spirit' of Confucianism also bore a strong degree of adequacy to the 'system' of patrimonial bureaucracy in imperial China: yet precisely the outcome of this adequacy, in the absence of any tension with the world and therefore of any leverage for the inner shaping of the *Kulturmensch's* life conduct, was one of maintenance of tradition and prevention of any new development (e.g. economic relationships remained subordinated to relations of piety, which limited the possibility of objectivation of the economic sphere)⁵⁴. The Confucian *Kulturmensch* 'lacked' the anchor in the beyond which was so absolutely determining for the Puritan. 'Where any reaching out beyond the world is lacking, then one lacks the weight to oppose the world'⁵⁵. On the contrary, as we have seen, adaptation to the world was required because the world was part of the global harmony of the Tao.

The adaptation of the modern *Fachmensch* is yet of another kind: the *Fachmensch* is the dominant human type of the modern West in a period in which the spirit of capitalism has become a spirit of 'pure adaptation'⁵⁶. The life conduct of the *Fachmensch* is both determined by his training, by his belonging to a *Stand* (for government officials), and by his position. Thus, although the *Fachmensch* is an offshoot of the *Berufsmensch*, he is far from having the inwardly steered life conduct characterising the latter. Let us examine this figure and its brand of adaptation in more depth, taking clues from Weber's *Political Writings* (especially 'Suffrage and Democracy in Germany' – 1918) and his analysis of 'Bureaucracy' in *ES* (old manuscript, written between 1910 and 1914)⁵⁷.

⁵² Weber, "Anti-critique": 200.

⁵³ Weber, "IR", 544.

⁵⁴ Weber, "Confucianism", 522-3.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 521.

⁵⁶ 'At present, under our political, legal and trading institutions, with the business structure characteristic of our economy, this "spirit" of capitalism could, as we have said, be understood as a pure adaptation product (*ein reines Anpassungsprodukt*).' Weber, "PE", 55.

⁵⁷ According to the editors of the *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe*, there must have been a first version of the text; revisions and the preparation for impression are likely to have taken place in 1912/1913. Edith Hanke and Thomas Kroll, "Anhang" [Annex to Economy and Society (Rulership)], in *Max Weber Studienausgabe* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2009), 287.

The *Fachmensch* of Weber's time is an official (*Beamte*), that is to say, an office worker. He is employed both in government and local administration and in large private firms, where he has become indispensable for the 'management of the modern office' (*moderne Amtsführung*)⁵⁸. He is also found in the newly created research institutes, akin to '*staatskapitalistische Unternehmungen*' ('state capitalist enterprises') whose operation requires a 'high concentration of resources' necessitating specialised management⁵⁹.

The *Fachmensch* is, as suggested above, first the product of specialist training. Although *Fachmenschen* were typically recruited amongst propertyless classes (but there were of course huge differences amongst these)⁶⁰, the pressure for 'ever more regulated curricula and specialised examinations' increasingly came from the new propertied classes (of the industrial bourgeoisie). This was because 'the acquisition of an education patent requires considerable expense', but also because it was their young people who were most eager to have access to officialdom through 'specialised examinations', as the certificate converted into a 'patent' for secure careers and for entry into 'society' and mixing (including through marriage) with the 'notables' of the classically educated bourgeoisie (higher officials still often came from the *Bildungsbürgertum*)⁶¹. It was the specialised certificate which granted officials their position. The burgeoning students' fraternities also played their role in inculcating discipline so that students could exhibit this added merit 'in higher places'⁶².

⁵⁸ Weber, *ES*, 651.

⁵⁹ In the new section on bureaucracy in the 'new manuscript' Weber added other domains of expansion: schools, clinics and hospitals, political parties, the church and the army. Weber, "Science", 584. Weber, *ES*, 127, 666.

⁶⁰ Weber, *ES*, 179.

⁶¹ Ibid, 676. Max Weber, "Parlament und Regierung im neugeordneten Deutschland. Zur politischen Kritik des Beamtentums und Parteiwesens" [Parliament and Government in Germany under a New Political Order. Towards a critique of officialdom and the party system], in *Gesammelte Politische Schriften* (München: Drei Masken Verlag, 1921 [1918]), 149. Weber does not refer to *Bildungsbürgertum*, as far as I can see, but in the section on economic classes in *Economy and society*, puts together the possessive class and those 'privileged through *Bildung*'; however, in the section on *Stände*, it is clear that the latter form a *Stand* whilst the former do not necessarily. Weber, *ES*, 179.

⁶² The multiplication of the students' fraternities was a way for aspiring officials to be part of 'old boys' networks' and achieve their ends quicker through this added boost. Corporations and fraternities gather both the current students of a discipline and the alumni. Weber has highly ironical pages on the intellectual limitation of these clubs, in which 'contact with other young people of the same age but of a different social or intellectual backgrounds is abhorred or at least made very difficult'. These formations, he adds, 'certainly do *not* train the individual to be a *man of the world*... The most mindless English club offers more in this respect... (as) although often highly selective, they are always built on the principle of *strict equality of the gentlemen*, and not on the principle of *hazing* which the bureaucracy prizes so highly in our colour corps as a *preparatory instruction for the discipline of office*, and which the clubs do not fail to cultivate in order to ingratiate themselves in higher places'. Weber, "Suffrage", 310. Translation altered from Weber, *PW (en)*, 117. (hereafter *PW (en)*).

Whilst 'office employees' across all sectors together form a class⁶³, the government officialdom or bureaucracy very much constitutes an occupational group with its own claims to social esteem and its own life conduct, that is to say, a *'Stand'*. Indeed officialdom seems to be what Weber had in mind when he wrote, in the latest version of *'Stände and classes'*, that 'in relation with "classes", the "*Stand'*" comes closest to the "social" class and is furthest from the "commercial class". *Stände* are often created by propertied classes'⁶⁴. In effect, the origin of an increasing share of the officialdom in the German propertied bourgeoisie, whose social prestige was inferior to those 'privileged through their education', seems to have been of high consequence for the life conduct of its members. As suggested by Weber's analysis of the social claims of the officialdom and of its eternal struggle with the cultivated strata (*Kulturmenschen*), the officials' life conduct was steered by the dominant concern for bridging the gap in status honour with the 'privileged through education (*Bildung*)', and by the related concern for economic advantage.

Inwardly, beyond their material and status interests, officials were likely to consider officialdom as 'vocation'. They were the carriers of *'that ultimate and only value of... good administration'*⁶⁵ and efficient provision for the needs of the citizens. The blossoming of the *Fachmensch* appeared as both a factor and a symptom of the drift of contemporary culture towards the overriding concern with good administration and the satisfaction of needs. Weber warned against such drift consistently throughout his life, starting, as we have seen in Chapter 1, from his 'Inaugural Address', and further, in the meetings of the Association for Social Policy (*Verein für Sozialpolitik*), where he was critical of a seemingly widely shared view of bureaucracy as an 'ethical' ideal (served by a supposedly highly moral body of officials, allegedly with 'social convictions')⁶⁶. Not that questions to do with the administration of life should not be dealt with – but the general orientation of the organisation of a society, the shaping of aspirations and conducts primarily towards that end appeared to him to be the recipe for stifling the whole 'social structure' (*Gesellschaftsgliederung*, a word Weber almost never employs) and for 'preparing the housing

⁶³ Max Weber, *Briefe 1911-1912* [Letters 1911-1912]. ed. M. Rainer Lepsius and Wolfgang J. Mommsen in collaboration with Birgit Rudhard and Manfred Schön, *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1998), 750.

⁶⁴ Weber, *ES*, 180.

⁶⁵ Weber, "Parliament", 151, Weber, *ES*, 60. As for the notion of 'life conduct', Weber seems to distinguish different intensities of 'vocation' in the contemporary world. In the Vocation lectures, Weber works with a restrictive notion, inherited from the times of the *Berufsmensch*, of an inner orientation to a higher cause or task which reaches beyond the everyday, yet in that process meets the 'demand of the day' (See Part III Chapter 7). The vocation for officialdom involves no pursuit outside of the everyday, it is at best a vocation for service deployed entirely in the everyday.

⁶⁶ Weber, "Verein debates", 412-6.

(*Gebäude*) of future serfdom⁶⁷. Indeed, as pointed out by Beetham, such orientation is, from the point of view of formal rationality, irrational, since it may spur the further extension of administration as a good in itself⁶⁸. I come back to the implication of this and other irrationalities in Part II Chapter 5.

Weber evoked the '*Ordnungsmenschen*' – human beings of order, who are panic stricken when an order does not arrive to spare them the trouble of thinking the situation through, and, given the division of labour which goes hand in hand with this cult of order and hierarchy, he warned against the increasing 'fragmentation of the soul'⁶⁹. However elsewhere he rather depicted bureaucracy as a 'living machine'. The discipline constitutive of the bureaucracy does not mean that the official does not have energy, even initiative within the boundaries delineated by the initiating order:

Autonomy of decision, organisation capacity according to one's own ideas is expected from the "official" no less than from "leaders", not only in countless details but also in important matters⁷⁰.

The difference between the political 'leader' and the 'official' does not lie in the capacity for autonomy and initiative, but rather in the 'kind of responsibility' besetting each of them (the official disagreeing with his superior must finally comply with the latter's order, whilst the leader would only get contempt, should he not stand for his positions).

The main reason for Weber's warning, however, was that the *Fachmensch's* universe is totally and utterly engulfed in the everyday, that is, in a rationalised everyday. His life conduct is oriented to interests concerned with his own social position and economic advantage; his responsibilities are bound up with the administration of 'everyday functions' (all of them, Weber tells us); at the same time, he has a 'highly developed sense of status honour (*ständischen Ehre*) with a concern (*Interesse*) for integrity⁷¹ and the 'ultimate value' he pursues, the 'high and unique ideal of the precise discharge of matter of fact tasks' and the 'passion for bureaucracy' praised by Weber's *Verein* colleagues⁷², in fact comfort him in his task (good administration) without lifting him in the slightest above it. In no way do they stand in any tension with everyday activity, whereas stretching beyond the everyday, is, to Weber, the condition for a life that is steered from within and thus a condition, as we shall see in

⁶⁷ Weber, "Parliament", 151-2.

⁶⁸ David Beetham, *Max Weber and the theory of modern politics*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985 [1974]), 65.

⁶⁹ Weber, "Verein debates", 414.

⁷⁰ Weber, "Parliament", 154.

⁷¹ Weber, "Politics", 407.

⁷² Weber, "Verein debates", 413-4.

Part III, for individual and collective self-determination. The pursuit of values which are contained in the everyday is part of what Weber refers to as ‘adaptation’⁷³ when he mentions the spirit of adaptation of modern capitalism. Adaptation does not mean lack of life, it can require energy, and even, as we have seen, initiative and autonomy – indeed orders can be ‘actively carried out’⁷⁴. Yet all the energy, initiative and autonomy is directed to the administration and reproduction of what exists, to the maintenance of the everyday – and, what Weber most forcefully attacks, to its further extension.

The construction of the inner being and the development of ‘ethical qualities’

This dimension of the human type develops on the basis of the idea of ‘personality’ of which that particular type is the carrier. In the Confucian’s conception, inner formation took place through constant work upon himself to overcome the imperfect (though considered natural) everyday of passions and imbalances and attain self-perfection in this world. But such self-perfection, Weber argued, was achieved through detachment, and therefore only by ‘evacuating the real powers of life’ (*durch Entleerung von den realen Mächten des Lebens*)⁷⁵. The Confucian *Kultur Mensch* had a place in the administration, but ‘politics and administration were merely a prebend for him’, and he left the concrete dealings with it to subaltern assistants, so that he could dedicate to study and conversation⁷⁶. More generally, at the same time as he adapted to the powers that be because he considered them as part of the Tao, he remained unconcerned with the ‘inner and material orders of the real world’, which, in Confucian China, included ‘nature, art, ethics and the economy’⁷⁷. Overall, Weber showed that the Confucian’s studied detachment from the great human passions and from their spheres of expression was preserved at the cost of maintaining the uncultivated ‘masses’ under the spell of magic and thus immersed in human impulses: the powers of life expressed themselves in all their strength and without much sublimation there and ‘there

⁷³ On the spirit of modern capitalism as spirit of adaptation, see footnote 56 above. Weber expresses the idea of adaptation through different terms (e.g. also *Fügsamkeit*) and not necessarily through the word *Anpassung*, which he was reluctant to use given its biological overtones. Nevertheless, we still find the term in the ‘Basic Sociological Concepts’, where it is opposed to creative capacity and accomplishment. Weber, *ES*, 20.

⁷⁴ Max Weber, "Über einige Kategorien der verstehenden Soziologie" [On Some Categories of Interpretative Sociology], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988 [1913]), 472.

⁷⁵ Weber, *Hinduism*, 378.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 373.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 378. ‘Ethics’ must here refer to another source of ethics than Confucianism. I lack the knowledge for making sense of this partly obscure passage of Weber’s conclusion on Asiatic religiosity.

lacked precisely what was decisive for the economy of the West – the break with and rational objectivation of the character of impulse of the striving for gain⁷⁸.

Conversely, as the Puritan sought to master the world in the name of God (and only as an instrument of God), he also had to grapple with its matter, for which he took support in the ‘counterweight’ of the idea of salvation. The Puritan moulded his inner self, his inner motives so that they should remain constantly fixed on that point in the beyond, and this was the basis for his systematic methodical action upon the world. The Puritan dealt with the great passions of life to the extent that he could radically rationalise them: Weber did not tire of stressing the gulf between the impulsive drive for gain and the methodical construction of profitability, which so rationalise the impulse for gain that nothing was left of that initial impulse. All drives and passions were either fought against or turned into something useful for ascetic proving and the glorification of God. Nevertheless, in contrast with the Confucian *Kulturmensch*, the Puritan did not shy away from such human matter – he attacked it, he sought to methodically master it, and thus he apprehended and faced it. Indeed the ‘specifically Western meaning of the notion of “personality”’ remained ‘underpinned by the idea that the relation to the real world can be won through sober action according to the “demand of the day”⁷⁹. As we shall see in Part III Chapter 7, Weber retained this idea whilst putting it at the service not of the transformation and mastery of the world, in the Puritan mode, but of a stance of confrontation of the world.

The *Fachmensch* represents the antithesis of the ‘unbroken unity of the profession and the personality in its most intimate ethical core’ characterising the *Berufsmensch*, as such unity has more generally been ‘inwardly dissolved⁸⁰’ with the settling in of the spirit of adaptation. An apparently similar identification of the individual with his profession would seem to persist in the *Fachmensch*, but the absence of personal pursuit of a point beyond the everyday (the *Berufsmensch*’s salvation) in fact transforms such identification into pure and simple ‘self-denial’, as demanded by the ethics of bureaucracy, that is to say the ethics of discipline⁸¹. As suggested by Stefan Breuer, this manifests itself through the officials’ ‘will to inwardly tune themselves, to transform into a machine, to instrumentalise their own person’⁸². Indeed, administrative employees seemed to Weber to form ‘the class in which

⁷⁸ Ibid, 372.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 377.

⁸⁰ Weber, "Final Anti-critique": 593.

⁸¹ Weber, "Politics", 415.

⁸² Stefan Breuer, "Rationale Herrschaft. Zu einer Kategorie Max Webers" [Rational rulership: a Weberian category.], *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 31, no. 1 (1990): 17.

the development of personality is in part more seriously threatened, due to its conditions of professional existence, than in many of the upper strata of the labour force⁸³.

Nevertheless Weber also had a seemingly different outlook on the *Fachmensch* and his personal interests as member of a status group:

‘The specialist examination as precondition of all lucrative and above all ‘secure’ private and public office positions; the examination diploma as the basis for all claims to social standing (connubium and social intercourse with the circles counting themselves as ‘society’); the secure pensionable salary “appropriate to one’s status” and, if possible, increments and promotion according to seniority: all this was, as was well known already before, the actual “demand of the day” brought along by both the universities’ interests in increasing student numbers and their pupils’ hunger for prebends, both within the State and outside it. What concerns us here are the consequences for political life⁸⁴.

In this context, Weber suspected that *Fachmenschen* really sought to advance their own material and positional interests under the guise of the ethics and value of good administration, as shown by the ironical reference to the Goethean ‘demand of the day’ as interested claim of the day (whereas the nobility of this mundane demand of daily task lies precisely in that we are supposed to ‘set our own person aside’ a little⁸⁵).

As I will argue further and more generally in Part II Chapter 5, these two perspectives – de-personalisation on the one hand, expression of immediate interests and affects on the other – are in fact connected in the shaping of adaptation.

The cultural reach and influence of human types

As already argued above, the culturally defining role of the dominant type of human being implies an influence over the whole of the order concerned – an influence which can be ‘positive’, i.e. productive, or ‘negative’, i.e. rather in the form of obstacles to evolutions⁸⁶. Two kinds of relationships seem decisive here: to the masses, on the one hand; and to other ‘types’ of human being, on the other hand.

The Confucian *Kultur Mensch* is not a religious virtuoso separated from the masses through his particular religious qualifications (as argued above, the Confucian ethics is in principle open to all). The divide from the masses rather arises from the formation of a *Stand* and its closure through the required philosophical-literary education (*Bildung*) on the basis of the

⁸³ Weber, *Letters 1911-1912*, 750.

⁸⁴ Weber, "Parliament", 149. Translation modified from Weber, *PW (en)*, 155.

⁸⁵ Weber, "Value Freedom", 493. I come back to this in Part III (Chapter 7).

⁸⁶ Weber, "Confucianism", 517.

ancient classics, which itself requires sufficient economic means⁸⁷. His ethical ideal is thus inaccessible to the great masses first on account of economic limitations, but also because detachment and a gentlemanly ideal were inaccessible to the common of the Chinese engaged in everyday activity. Weber further suggested that the Confucian literati sought to ensure the preservation of widespread respect and piety towards sip and personal relations and towards authority in general by maintaining the hold of magic on the masses (they themselves could not help bowing to the ‘spirits’) and preventing the emergence of, or repressing, prophetic teachings:

‘The decisive influence of the educated stratum on the life conduct of the masses has taken place with all likelihood above all through a few negative effects: on the one hand, the total hampering of the emergence of a prophetic religiosity, and, on the other hand, the far reaching purge from all orgiastic components of animist religiosity’⁸⁸.

Conversely, the ascetic Protestant, or Puritan, is a religious virtuoso, a ‘virtuoso of inner-worldly professional virtue’⁸⁹, who strives for a never to be reached certainty of grace in endless asceticism in this world. Given the sinning condition of all human beings, religious virtuosity (i.e. qualification) can never be certain and can only be endlessly proved – but this makes it paradoxically accessible to all, especially as proof is in economic activity (even though the ‘Bourgeois style of life’ bore particular affinity to such proving⁹⁰). Nevertheless Weber did not directly carry out the programme he had sketched out at the end of *PE* for the study of the further influence of ascetic Protestantism (through the *Berufsmensch*) on other areas of culture than the economy and, as suggested above, he warned against any hasty generalisation.

The attitude of dominant types of human being towards the *Fachmensch* has proved of special cultural significance. In the concluding chapter of *Confucianism*, Weber showed that such attitude is intimately connected to ultimate ethical goals: wanting to be an instrument of God, as the Puritan *Berufsmensch* did, or refusing this and pursuing self-perfection for its own sake, as was the case of the Confucian *Kulturmensch*:

‘For – and this was what was decisive – the “distinguished man” (gentleman) was “no instrument”, i.e. he was his own ultimate goal in his world-adapted self-perfecting process, and not a means for objective goals of whatever sort. This principle of the Confucian ethic rejected specialisation, the

⁸⁷ Ibid, 514.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 517.

⁸⁹ Weber, *ES*, 310.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 810.

modern specialist bureaucracy and specialist training, and above all the economic training for acquisitive activity⁹¹.

Only with the advent of the Puritans was specialist knowledge systematically organised as educational goal⁹², in view of the Puritan's aim to rationalise the corrupted world for the glorification of God. This provided the means for the expansion of the figure of the *Fachmensch* towards a position of cultural domination once the Puritan's 'anchorage' in the beyond had subsided and thus once the most extolling commands of his ethic had become entrenched into everyday life.

As may be surmised from the previous section, the factors underpinning the cultural reach of the modern *Fachmensch* himself are multiple and far from only being linked to the acknowledgement of the superiority of the bureaucracy for the efficient discharge of an increasing number of 'functions of life'. Rather the positional interests of the offspring propertied bourgeoisie, the interests of the university in increasing student numbers⁹³ combined with the growing grip of the orientation to the value of 'good administration' on the whole modern social order and culture⁹⁴ and further consolidated the position of the *Fachmensch* as the defining human type in modern culture.

To conclude, the analysis of Weber's characterisation of the dominant types of human beings confirms the centrality of the notion of life conduct, but it also shows its graded use, from a restrictive to a more encompassing sense. The inwardly rationalised life conduct of the *Berufsmensch* is an example of the restrictive sense: in this case, life is conducted from within, in a consistent and persistent manner. It is fuelled by an inner feeling of extreme tension, caused by religious belief in the absence of certainty of grace, and it is endlessly assuaged and endlessly renewed by the ascetic Protestant ethic of 'proof'. External regulation of religious qualification exists through the sect, but the ascetic Protestant feels his inner habitus to be under the eye of God⁹⁵. The externally rationalised life conduct of the Confucian *Kulturmensch* is an example of a laxer sense: life conduct is here the main attribute of the traditional *Stand* of the literati, and the main source of its social honour. The externally rationalised life conduct of the *Fachmensch* points to an even laxer sense, as

⁹¹ Weber, "Confucianism", 532.

⁹² Ibid, 533.

⁹³ Weber, "Parliament", 149. Translation modified from Weber, *PW (en)*, 155.

⁹⁴ Weber, "Parliament", 151.

⁹⁵ Weber, "Confucianism", 531.

the *Stände* of the specialist type of human being, for example, the *Stand* of the officialdom, are modern versions of *Stand*, with their patterns of life conduct clearly subordinated to their material interests. Weber's assessment of the possibility of life conduct in contemporary culture clearly referred to the first, 'ethical' mode of life conduct, whereby the tensions faced by human beings derive from their own inner orientation – not to the otherworldly beyond, but to a cause or task beyond the everyday – and whereby, therefore, life conduct is not a mere tool for adaptation to what there is but engages the human being as a whole in existential decisions.

III. The advent of modern *Menschentum*: Troeltsch's concept of the purposeful type of human being

Ernst Troeltsch's lifetime interest in unravelling the specific contribution of Protestantism to modern culture and its 'spirit' also led him to investigate the formation of modern *Menschentum* in an exploration of the *Social Teachings of the Christian Churches and Groups* (hereafter *Social teachings*). In this section I seek to bring out, alongside the considerable affinities with Weber's *Protestant Ethic*, the distinctive contribution of the *Social teachings* for the understanding of the religious matrix of modern *Menschentum*, through a figure which could be seen as the direct predecessor of Weber's 'vocational-professional type of humanity' (*Berufsmenschentum*): the 'purposeful type of humanity' (*Zweckmenschentum*).

The *Social teachings* trace the history of the inevitable tension between, on the one hand, the new ideal of humanity set out by the Gospel – grounded in the ideas of the 'self-contained personality' (*geschlossene Persönlichkeit*) and the 'universal humanity' (*Menschheit*) – and 'inner-worldly life formations' (*innerweltliche Lebensformationen*), or 'world orders' (*Weltordnungen*), on the other hand. Indeed Troeltsch suggested that the whole of the social doctrine of the Church could be explained as an attempt to overcome that 'tension' and bridge that 'rift'⁹⁶.

One of the main findings and conclusions of the *Social teachings* is that only two systems of religious thought – Medieval Catholicism and Ascetic Protestantism – achieved a consistent and pervasive social influence, due to the 'encounter' (*Zusammentreffen*), which was really an 'accident' (*Zufall*), with external 'systems' (feudalism, early modern capitalism) and carrier groups, an accidental encounter in which the 'adequacy' (*Adäquanz*) and 'elective affinity'

⁹⁶ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 57.

(*Wahlverwandtschaft*)⁹⁷ of these systems of thought and external systems were revealed and could become active. Nevertheless Medieval Catholicism did not produce a new, actual, type of human being. It can thus be inferred, although Troeltsch did not state this as an explicit conclusion, that the coincidence of a religious system of thought with adequate external conditions is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the emergence of a new *Menschentum* on the world scene, that is to say, for the profound and comprehensive transformation of the average human being: but, where Weber emphasised the tension of the religious ethic with the world as the ‘lever for the influence of life conduct through inner forces (*Gewalten*)’⁹⁸, to Troeltsch it was the religious idea of the unified personality promoted by inner-worldly asceticism which did away with the compromises with natural life and the social order preventing such transformation.

This process and its outcome (what *Menschentum*?) require more explanation.

In the Middle Ages, the tension between the ideal of humanity of the Gospel and the world was resolved by leaving it to a special stratum (the monks) to care for the realisation of this ideal and thus by allowing for its ‘influence over life as a whole’ though vicarious atonement and accomplishment (*stellvertretenden Büssung und Leistung*)⁹⁹, whilst avoiding to ‘encroach too deep into the common life [of the common people]’¹⁰⁰.

It is Luther, as is well known, who did away with this distinction between Monastic and ‘natural’ life. In the words of one of Troeltsch’s sources, ‘by the very fact that Luther carried the monastic ideal to its extreme, he destroyed it in its roots’¹⁰¹, since all possibility of fleeing from the world was denied. Instead, Luther introduced a *common* ideal of Personality, to be striven for in this world by *all*. But his ideal of personality, focused on the cultivation and depth of the feelings associated with grace¹⁰², the ‘humble self-surrender to God, and the loving self-surrender to one’s neighbours’¹⁰³ maintained a form of dualism, which was simply transferred to the individual subject – split between inner and outer self,

⁹⁷ Here, Troeltsch takes up explicitly the Weberian conceptual apparatus for the analysis of causality in *PE* (Ibid, 713., n388).

⁹⁸ Weber, "Confucianism", 522.

⁹⁹ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 232.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 178.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 506. The only reference provided by Troeltsch is Braun, ‘The meaning of concupiscence’ (*Bedeutung der Concupiscentz*).

¹⁰² Ibid, 618.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 668.

person and office (*Person/Amt*)¹⁰⁴ – and was rooted in a dual morality, a morality of grace and a worldly morality (*Gnadenmoral/Weltmoral*)¹⁰⁵. The later attenuation of this moral dualism, as world order came to be considered as God’s order, only led to the unification of the personality to the extent that inwardness, inner freedom, took precedence and no attempt was made to alter the divine order of things, at times patiently tolerated, and at times enjoyed as God’s creation. As Troeltsch concludes, in an incisive formula, the social doctrine of Lutheranism, at least in its ‘orthodox age’, manifested a ‘dreadful indigence of spirit and thought’¹⁰⁶, which meant that it was utterly deprived from any transformative social power, even though Troeltsch considered that its inwardness had gone on representing a significant inspiration in the realm of ideas and values.

The emergence of a new type of human being was only achieved through the decisive impulse of Calvinism:

‘In the form of a general spiritual power (*eine allgemeine geistige Macht*), a new type of humanity (*Typus des Menschentums*), which it [Calvinism] has bred (*gezüchtet*), is reaching out throughout European culture...¹⁰⁷

We are here entering very Weberian grounds – with a similar analysis of the nexus of causality, the use of the same concepts (‘type of human being’, ‘bred’), and the establishment of similar relations of affinity between, on the one hand, religious systems of thought and organisation, and on the other hand, specific orders of social relations. Indeed, Troeltsch agreed with Weber that Calvinism was joined by the Protestant sects in its endeavour, and benefited from the joint effect (*Mitwirkung*) of ‘political and social life conditions’¹⁰⁸. This lent an ideological coherence to ascetic Protestantism, and all the transformative power of an ‘overall (religious) power (*Gesamtmacht*)’¹⁰⁹ fully attuned to its time and the prevalent ‘external conditions’:

‘Ascetic Protestantism has the required hardness and pliability, the religious energy and the sober matter-of-factness, the adaptability to the ethical thinking of the average (human being), and the dogmatic simplicity, so as to likewise, in its own way, [as Catholicism had], dominate the whole of life, and, in the same way as Catholicism was connected with the general conditions of Medieval life, Ascetic Protestantism is connected with the modern political-economic-social and technical developments’¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 500.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 501.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 555.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 607.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 608.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 792-3.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 794.

The apparently paradoxical characterisation of ascetic Protestantism as both hard and pliable unveils the key coincidence between Troeltsch and Weber's analysis, in both the characterisation of ascetic Protestantism through its 'methodical-ascetic strictness of life conduct' (*Lebensführung*)¹¹¹, that is to say, 'inner-worldly asceticism', and the total adequacy of this ethical orientation for the pursuit of the ascetic Protestants' worldly affairs. The term 'inner-worldly asceticism' was first coined by Weber, as Troeltsch acknowledged¹¹², to suggest the ascription of asceticism to, in Weber's words, 'everyday human beings' (*Alltagsmenschen*)¹¹³, or, in Troeltsch's words, the 'average human being' (*Durchschnitt, menschliche Durchschnittlichkeit*) in lieu of the 'other-worldly' or 'side-worldly' asceticism of Catholic monks¹¹⁴.

Weber and Troeltsch both painted a striking portrait of this new type of human being and his ethical qualities, and they did so in similar terms. The inner-worldly ethics of asceticism

¹¹¹ Ibid, 792-3.

¹¹² Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt* [The significance of Protestantism for the emergence of the modern world], *Historische Bibliothek* (München u. Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1911 [1906]), 42. However, in the *Social teachings*, Troeltsch acknowledges other debts: e.g., p. 646, Max Goebel's *Geschichte des christlichen Lebens in der rheinisch-westfälischen evangelischen Kirche* (Coblence, 1849 - I, 1852 - II, 1860 - III) (History of Christian life in the Protestant Church of Rhine-Westphalia): "The hereby used concept of "inner-worldly asceticism" is already found in Göbel III 334: "The Roman Catholic external world-renunciation and external sanctification, as against the inner overcoming of the world and joy in faith of the Protestants". This is nothing else than the contrast meant by Weber and myself between other-worldly and inner-worldly asceticism, which is of course more easily understood and recognised by a Pietist than by a rigid Churchman such as Ritschl or even a rationalist such as Rachfahl.' The idea of 'joy in faith' seems however more attuned to the Lutheran faith than to Calvinism or ascetic Protestantism, and Weber would probably not call this asceticism (see below in text).

¹¹³ Weber, "PE", 115.

¹¹⁴ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 506. There was, nevertheless, a difference of scope in Weber's and Troeltsch's notions which, given the differences in their purpose and research interests in these two studies, was logical, and was acknowledged by both as such. Troeltsch, who above all sought to understand the genesis and effects of religious ethics, opted for a definition of asceticism which included Lutheranism (since the extension of monasticism to all believers was really Luther's ideal) but distinguished between the Lutheran' (unstable and inconsistent) depreciation of the world and the Calvinists' ethics of world mastery, whereas Weber, who sought to account for the dissemination and appropriation of a specific, purposeful and systematic, type of life conduct, akin to monastic exercise – 'for this is what the word "asceticism" means' – excluded Lutheranism from the scope of Protestant asceticism (see Weber, "Final Anti-critique": 590.). Weber defined the 'historical bearers' of ascetic Protestantism as: 1. Calvinism, in the form it had in the main Western European areas under its rule, especially in the course of the 17th century; 2. Pietism; 3. Methodism; 4. the sects which grew out of the Anabaptist movement. See Weber, "PE", 84. Troeltsch's definition, already provided above, is more dynamic. This is probably due to the fact that the inter-relationships between the different movements are an essential component of Troeltsch's analysis. Jean-Pierre Grossein has alerted on the wrong translation of the *Täufer* movement as Baptism, whereas Baptism emerges later, together with other movements, from Anabaptism. Numerous passages in *PE* are difficult to understand if one does not distinguish between 'Täuferum' and 'Baptismus'. Grossein was criticising a new French translation, but the criticism could well be extended to English translations (e.g. Parsons translates Täuferum as Baptism; Baehr and Wells do the same, but maintain the German term between parentheses. Kalberg translates it as the 'baptizing movement'). See Jean-Pierre Grossein, "A propos d'une nouvelle traduction de l'Éthique protestante et l'esprit du capitalisme" [About a new translation of the Protestant Ethic], *Revue française de sociologie* 43, no. 4 (2002): 663.

is ‘ascetic self-control of the single individual’¹¹⁵. This implies the shunning of all ‘natural’ instincts and feelings of pleasure and enjoyment – e.g. in work, marital and family life¹¹⁶, which to a large extent had been preserved and even sometimes magnified by Lutheranism into the glorification of everyday life as the gift of God. The believer’s loneliness, both inwardly and socially, is brought to an extreme. The Calvinist human being is ‘totally on his own’ (*völlig einsam*), and is left to ‘feel and discharge in and of himself the effects of his election by grace’¹¹⁷. Both Troeltsch and Weber also refer to the more social aspects of this loneliness, the ‘isolation’ (*Isolierung*) of the believer¹¹⁸. It is characteristic that both authors use a similar word (Weber’s ‘*Loslösung*’, Troeltsch’s ‘*Lösung*’), which in both cases, can be translated as ‘severance’ to describe the break from all previous, traditional or natural, attachments and enjoyments. Referring to the ascetic Protestant’s dramatically transformed attitude to work, for example, Troeltsch emphasized

‘the inner *severance* of feeling and enjoyment from all objects of labour (*Arbeit*); the unceasing harnessing of labour to an aim which lies in the beyond, and which therefore must occupy us until death; the depreciation of all earthly things and possessions to mere expediency; the methodical training for work (*Arbeit*) so as to suppress all impulses to distraction and sluggishness; ...’¹¹⁹.

But this break of all bonding concerns all spheres of life, and Weber, for his part, forcefully depicted ‘the severance of all too strong links to the creaturely (hence e.g. the objectionable character of intense personal friendship)’¹²⁰. All spheres are to be organised according to a criterion of ‘adequateness for the purpose’ (*zweckmässig*)¹²¹ so that they can be enlisted in the exclusive service of the glorification of God. This methodical overcoming of all ‘natural human instincts’ constitutes ascetic Protestant ‘life conduct’ (*Lebensführung*), that is to say, the methodical and systematic arrangement and subordination of all activities to a purpose which lies in the beyond.

It is precisely this aspect, the consistently purposeful orientation to the world and organisation of life, which is at the heart of the new ‘type of human being’ unveiled by Troeltsch and Weber. But due to their different orientation and problems, they cast light on the new ‘*Menschentum*’ from different angles, at different moments and for groups of bearers characterised in different ways.

¹¹⁵ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 959.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 949-51.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 669.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Weber, "PE", 95.

¹¹⁹ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 949. My emphasis.

¹²⁰ Weber, "Final Anti-critique": 590.

¹²¹ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 949.

Weber's new *Menschentum* is formed by those entrepreneurs and workers who, in the course of the 17th century, became the main bearers of Calvinism and the Protestant sects, and whose ethical need of proving themselves, stemming from varied but always extreme religious doctrines which nevertheless coincided in this ethical pressure, found an (always to be renewed) resolution in economic activity. The exclusive, systematic, and determined dedication to work, at first for other-worldly motives, represented a complete break with what economic activity had signified, for the common of mortals, until then. The characterisation of the new type of human being as '*Berufsmensch*' allowed Weber to evoke the religious sources of a drive turned into a mechanized routine as well as the idea of the permanence of a single overriding concern with economic activity¹²².

Troeltsch shared, indeed relied on, Weber's analysis of the economic ethic of Calvinism and of the Protestant sects¹²³. In particular he highlighted the very specific meaning that the notions of vocation-profession (*Beruf*) and of work in one's calling (*Berufsarbeit*) took with Calvinism, and the 'nothing less than natural' character of the inner disposition to work (*Arbeitsgesinnung*) for its own sake, a transformation, which, in full agreement with Weber's thesis, 'can only be understood as stemming from religious energy'¹²⁴.

Nevertheless, Troeltsch explicitly abstained from giving an account of the formation of *Berufsmenschentum*, as this was a modern development, which, in his view, only fully 'fructified' with 'Manchester capitalism' and 'belonged to the history of economics, not to that of Calvinism'¹²⁵. Indeed, it is more specifically the direct religious impulse and organisation underpinning the formation of the new *Menschentum* which was the object of Troeltsch's study and it is therefore purposefulness itself (*Zielbestimmung*), the consideration of everything as means to the purpose of glorifying God, rather than methodical life conduct, which Troeltsch chose to define modern *Menschentum*. In this analysis, Troeltsch emphasised the Calvinist notion of personality and its impact on early Calvinist believers; and he focused on the dynamics taking place between the Protestant churches and sects, as a key step accounting for the wider purchase of this purposeful orientation to life. In other

¹²² The notion of *Beruf* really encapsulates Weber's thesis since it conveys the superimposition of religious and this-worldly meanings which it assumed after Luther's translation of the Bible (see Weber, "PE", 66.), but it can also be understood, following the recess of its religious meaning, strictly as 'profession' (See Part II Chapter 4).

¹²³ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*. See, in particular, pp. 657, 704, 716, 906, 950.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 655. *Gesinnung* refers to an overall inner orientation of the spirit, which, as highlighted by Grossein, does not necessarily translate into action. Nevertheless the inner rationalisation of life conduct means its consistent steering by *Gesinnung*. (Grossein, "Glossaire Raisonné". 120-1.)

¹²⁵ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 718.

words, in seeking to deal with the question of how the creation of a new type of human being was at all possible, Troeltsch elucidated the more strictly religious part of the equation.

Primary here, for Troeltsch¹²⁶, is Calvin's conception of God, as 'absolute Sovereign Will', of which Calvin drew much more consistent dogmatic and ethical implications than Luther, who had maintained a concomitant vision of God as God of love. Thus, the Calvinist doctrine of predestination stems from the idea that God's will is inscrutable, and that no good works (contrary to Catholicism), no inner cultivation of the feelings associated with grace and faith (contrary to Lutheranism) can justify grace or the maintenance of the grace. This gives rise to a Calvinist idea of Personality which stands in complete opposition to the humble, self-searching, Lutheran one:

'The strongest sense of personal worth, the high feeling of a divine mission in the world, of being favoured by Grace amongst thousands, and an immeasurable sense of responsibility fill the soul of the [Calvinist] human being, who, completely alone and in himself, feels and acts upon the effects of the Grace of election'¹²⁷.

The Calvinists, free from Catholic guilt and from Lutheran self-searching, convert into 'Christ's warriors and champions'¹²⁸. It is the assurance of a divine mission which sets them to turn away from their inner self and relentlessly 'shap[e] [the world orders] into an expression of the Divine Will'. The Calvinist personality is thus unified to a so far unknown extent, one's experience of life is not anymore divided into inner faith and constant searching on the one hand, and endurance of the world, on the other hand: everything is endowed with an active meaning. This unification of the personality in the active glorification of God was decisive for the shaping of a new type of human being amongst early Calvinists, willing and able to submit all spheres of life (the sphere of economic activity and work, but also the political and social spheres) towards a single purpose (*Zweckmenschentum*):

¹²⁶ Weber also gives a central role to Calvin's conception of God, but this is within his account of the doctrine of predestination, and in order to explain the exacting character of the tension besetting believers. As is explained below, the conception of God as pure and absolute will is primary and prevalent over the dogma of predestination for the understanding of the emergence of ascetic Protestantism.

¹²⁷ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 668-9.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 617-623. Contrary to Weber, Troeltsch did not emphasise the tensions created by the uncertainty of election. This, for two reasons: first of all, he focused, in the first step of creation of this new *Menschentum*, on the carriers of early Calvinism, who are characterised by their certainty of being amongst the elect (as also made clear by Weber – see above). Secondly, Troeltsch argued (as did Weber) that the doctrine of predestination was not taken up by the most important sects (notably the Baptists) and faded away rather quickly, even within Calvinism. Weber gave special importance to the doctrine of predestination because of its particularly clear link to the ethics of self-proof, but, as we have seen, Weber also thought that the anxiety created by the uncertainty of election was only one of the bases for 'proving oneself', which is the real drive for the inner rationalisation of life conduct. (See Weber, "PE", 124-5.)

This [asceticism] is what underpins this combination of practical sense and cool utilitarianism with the other-worldly orientation of life, of methodical consciousness and systematic striving with utter disinterest in any enjoyment of its result, which characterises Calvinism ... It [this combination] is the source of an active interest in politics, but not for the sake of the State; of diligent labour in the economic sphere (*wirtschaftliche Arbeit*), but not for the sake of wealth; of zealous social activity, but not for the sake of earthly happiness; of uninterrupted labour, ever disciplining the senses, but not for the sake of the object of such labour. The glorification of God, the gathering of the holy community, the achievement of this blessedness prescribed as a goal by the election [by grace]: this is the one and only purposeful idea (*Zweckgedanke*) of this ethics, to which all other formal characteristics are also subordinated¹²⁹.

The unification of the personality also assumes a crucial role in Weber's account of the emergence of a new *Menschenart*: but this concerns the Puritans or ascetic Protestants of the 17th century, not the early Calvinists, and it points to that very unification, unique in history, between the Puritan's profession and the 'inner ethical core of his personality'¹³⁰. This is, again, consistent with the difference in the 'moments' of the Troeltschian and Weberian analyses. Between the moment, studied by Troeltsch, in which Lutheranism and Calvinism transformed the notion of Personality into a religious principle for all, and the ascetic Protestants' life dedication to their vocation-profession, studied by Weber, a process had unleashed whose possibility had been ingrained in Protestantism since its inception, i.e. the loosening of any link of the notion to a Church institution, and its possible mobilisation 'to freely merge with all the interests and powers of life (*Mächten des Lebens*)'¹³¹.

The type of 'carriers' (*Träger*) studied in these two moments is thus quite distinct. Troeltsch usually designates as carriers the dedicated bearers of a particular creed or intellectual/philosophical movement (e.g. the Enlightenment) rather than carriers established in a particular social stratum and appropriating a set of ideas. Thus the human beings forming Troeltsch's *Zweckmenschenart* in its first stages are primarily characterised as bearers of early Calvinism, and are defined, above all, by their religious beliefs, whilst Weber studied the ascetic Protestants both as bearers of religious principles and orientations *and* as the bearers of early capitalism, be they entrepreneurs or workers.

In a second stage, according to Troeltsch's account, the new type of human being reached out to wider strata. In this, the coming together of the Calvinist church and the sects played a crucial role. The sects had developed, starting with Anabaptism, for the sake of regenerating a Reformation which had become too secular for their taste, but precisely the Calvinist conception of God, and of the human being as an active instrument of divine will, was very much attuned to their own quest. Thus, when other forms of approximation

¹²⁹ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 649.

¹³⁰ Weber, "Final Anti-critique": 593.

¹³¹ Troeltsch, *Significance of Protestantism*, 21.

occurred, i.e. ‘the progressive congregationalism (*freikirchlichen*) of the Calvinist church’ (also under the influence of the third ‘type’ studied by Troeltsch alongside Church and sects, i.e. Mysticism), ‘the shift of Anabaptism to the Bourgeois stratum (*Verbürgerlichung*) as well as ... the ever greater incorporation of Pietism into the Church¹³², and the more general growth of sects up to the point of becoming large national churches, a new ‘joint force’, that of ascetic Protestantism, also called by Troeltsch ‘Protestantism of individualistic and active holiness’, could emerge, with a very wide reach and transformative power, and the ‘purposeful type of human being’ extended – throughout Europe, to the United States and back.

These two foci in Troeltsch’s study – the analysis of the religious notion of ‘Personality’ as ethical conduit of religious doctrine, on the one hand, and the dynamic analysis of the types of religious organisation, their mutual influence over each other and the implications of this dynamics for the evolution, spread and impact of religious ideas, on the other hand – can be considered as the key contribution of his sociology of religion to the understanding of the shaping of a new type of human being.

Certainly, and this is one more coincidence with Weber, religion, in relation to other life spheres, ‘is always more a moulding (*gestaltende*) than a productive force (*Kraft*)’ with ‘illogical, fragmentary effects, marked by compromise’¹³³. The coincidence seems to extend further, almost literally so, when Troeltsch draws the implications of this characterisation of religion. His words of conclusion for his study of ascetic Protestantism: ‘today, the spirit (*Geist*) [of ascetic Protestantism] has of course largely escaped (*entwichen*) from what it has so decisively helped to create’ echo Weber’s famous evocation of the ‘spirit (*Geist*) escaping (*entwichen*) from the carapace’ at the end of *PE*¹³⁴.

Yet, the very phrasing of Troeltsch’s assertion, with the use of the verb ‘create’ (even qualified), as well as the specific use of the verb ‘to breed’ in the above quoted phrase – ‘a new type of human being (*Typus des Menschentums*), which it [Calvinism] has bred (*gezüchtet*)’ – suggested the action of Calvinism alone. These expressions point to the productive rather than merely moulding role of early Calvinism for the emergence of a new type of human

¹³² Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 948-9.

¹³³ Troeltsch, *Significance of Protestantism*, 88. We are reminded here of Weber’s analysis of the paradoxical development of religious ideas, and his famous switchman metaphor: ‘Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly rule over the action (*Handeln*) of human beings. Yet very frequently the “world images” which have been created by ideas, like a switchman, have determined the tracks along which acting has been pushed by the dynamic of interests’. Weber, “Introduction”, 252.

¹³⁴ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 963. Weber, “PE”, 204. ‘*Geist*’ means spirit, mind, intellect, depending on the contexts. I have mostly translated it as spirit throughout the thesis.

being. Indeed I would argue that this is the steering idea of Troeltsch's analysis of Calvinism. The force of attraction, organisational ability and transformative capacity of Calvinism are first grounded in its very 'idea':

The reason for this wide spread of Calvinism first lies in the fact that it gained footing amongst the Western nations (*Völkern*) which found themselves in [a phase of] great political development. But *it lies even more deeply in the essence of Calvinism itself...* It lies in the active character, the ability and energy (*Kraft*) for forming churches, in the international contacts and conscious expansionary impulse of Calvinism, and not least in its capacity to permeate the political and economic developments of Western nations with its religious idea, a capacity which Lutheranism lacked from the very beginning¹³⁵.

It is the combination of the extreme consistency of the dogma with its practicability (through its expression in all worldly activities), which made it very attractive for 'average' believers both impatient at the lack of system in Lutheranism and eager to find practicable ways of expressing their faith¹³⁶. Troeltsch also emphasised the dynamics of religious organisation both for the shaping of these ideas and for their spread: all in all, therefore, it can be said that he drew the attention on the need to analyse the power of religious ideas and the organisation of the religious sphere in and of themselves as a step for the proper understanding of the *genesis* of the modern human being, and for a 'truer image of historical reality (*Wirklichkeit*)...', than the one provided by the ecclesiastical, supra-natural and modern-ideological accounts¹³⁷.

The contrast, and complementarity, between Weber's and Troeltsch's approach to the creation of a new *Menschentum* is synthesised in the table below.

¹³⁵ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 605. My emphasis.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 644.

¹³⁷ Troeltsch, "My books", 12.

Table 1 – Summary of Troeltsch’s and Weber’s characterisation of the formation of modern *Menschentum*

	Formation of the ‘purposeful type of human being’ (<i>Zweckmenschentum</i>)	Formation of the ‘vocational-professional type of human being’ (<i>Berufmenschentum</i>)
Steering dogma	God as sovereign will, predestination	God as sovereign will, predestination
Ethical implications	Serving God by transforming the world according to His Will (certainty of election)	Justification, proving oneself (uncertainty of election)
	Unification of personality (<i>Persönlichkeit</i>) towards the single purpose (<i>Zweck</i>) above	Unification of personality through methodical life conduct (<i>Lebensführung</i>) in one’s vocation-profession (<i>Beruf</i>)
Carriers	Early Calvinists (16 th century)	Ascetic Protestants (17 th century)
Spread	Through the approximation between Calvinist Church and the sects and the formation of the joint power (<i>Gesamtmacht</i>) of ascetic Protestantism	Through the affinity between methodical life conduct and the requirements of modern capitalism

Troeltsch’s emphasis on ideas and their organisation, in the religious sphere but also more widely, led him to leave aside the study of the evolution of the modern type of humanity: as dominant type, it could not be the carrier of any ‘spirit’ anymore. Indeed Weber located the culmination and finalisation of the process of religious disenchantment in ascetic Protestantism¹³⁸, and showed how extreme religious rationalisation had expressed itself in the ‘rationalisation of the real’ and had finally and paradoxically brought about the cornering of religion into the sphere of the irrational¹³⁹. But, even though Weber also saw no true ‘spirit’ driving the *Fachmensch* – the spirit of adaptation being a form of non-spirit – he did not confine the shaping of conduct by a ‘spirit’ to the religious sphere and examined the conditions of its production in the various value spheres in the modern age (this is the object of Part II).

Troeltsch’s account of what happened to modern *Menschentum* once the religious mould has receded into an irretrievable past and once its ‘creations have passed into other hands and are being shaped by these according to their own purposes’¹⁴⁰ is succinct and essentially coincides with Weber’s analysis of the dissolution of the calling. It is stressed briefly

¹³⁸ Weber, "PE", 94-5.

¹³⁹ Weber, "Introduction", 253.

¹⁴⁰ Troeltsch, *Social teachings*, 964.

although forcefully in the *Meaning of Protestantism* (1911)¹⁴¹, and without Weber's caution regarding the analysis of the spread of *Berufsmenschentum* to other spheres of culture:

Indeed, this Calvinistic professional, specialist and business (*Berufs-, Fach, Geschäfts-*) *Menschentum*, founded on trust in God and drawing its force from this, which reserves for private life a gentle inwardness and generous charity (*Nächstenliebe*), constitutes perhaps, from the mere quantitative point of view, both the main bulk of Protestantism today and the main carrier (*Hauptträger*) of the more outward technical, social and political powers (*Mächte*) of modern culture¹⁴².

Thus the type of human being referred to here is considered the dominant carrier in the whole of 'modern culture' and more specifically of its technical, social and political 'powers', and not just in the economic sphere (included amongst the former). These dominant carriers are not carriers of values anymore, but just of the powers in place: at most, says Troeltsch, can they be informed by a 'utilitarian-individualistic worldview' and the doctrine of the harmony of interests. But often enough they are simply caught in the modern 'organisation of life' (*Lebensverfassung*) which enslaves them¹⁴³. It reigns as

'a dull fate (*Schicksal*) devouring all labour (*Arbeitskraft*) and leaving no time for reflection, which is accepted as a matter of course without any thinking about its reasons and aims, and from which one rests with whatever can do that service'¹⁴⁴.

Thus we understand that not only has this *Menschentum* lost all of its initial *Geist*, but, in the process, Protestantism has also lost part of its spirituality.

Troeltsch found more sustenance in the study of ideas which, out of a lack of consistency and/or of adequate political and social purchase, were not conducive to the formation of any dominant type of human being, yet were persistent sources of inspiration and further intellectual development. The absence of adequate social and political conduit can stifle, 'narrow and harden', an initially rich stream of thought (such as the Romantic idea of individuality, heir to the Lutheran notion of personality), and it is the historian's remit to re-ascertain the initial thrust, contexts and carriers of ideas, as well as the paths taken through time, their connections and implications. What emerges from this type of historical investigation is another, more encompassing, notion of *Menschentum*, as 'common historical fate', where fate is not the 'dull fate' of simple repetition, but rather what is *a posteriori* identified as something, an idea, an event, which has shaped, directly or indirectly, the

¹⁴¹ The final and enlarged version appeared in 1911 and thus took full account of the *Social teachings* Troeltsch, *Significance of Protestantism*, 1-2.

¹⁴² Ibid, 90.

¹⁴³ In fact, Troeltsch does refer to capitalism as a modern form of serfdom. Ibid, 102.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 90.

whole cultural area designated under *Menschentum*, and of which Troeltsch thought it could only be *Europäertum*, the European type¹⁴⁵.

IV – The *Kultur Mensch* and Simmel's metropolitan type of individuality

Towards the end of the 'Intermediate Reflection' of the *Economic Ethics (IR)*, Weber sketched a portrait of the contemporary *Kultur Mensch*, the product of *Bildung*¹⁴⁶, engaged in the endless pursuit of ever 'differentiating and multiplying cultural goods', towards ever elusive self-perfection. It has become impossible to absorb what is "essential" in culture, indeed it has become impossible to define the criteria for what is "essential". The *Kultur Mensch*, seeking to 'create or appropriate "cultural contents"', is bound to find this quest ever more meaningless¹⁴⁷. This portrait directly echoed Simmel's evocation of the 'tragedy of culture' and of its impact on the modern human being, as 'objective culture' cannot nourish personal, 'subjective culture' anymore and thus fails to constitute culture in the full sense of the term. Indeed, in the *Philosophy of Money* (1900/1907), whose last chapter ('The style of life') already wove some of the main threads of the 1911 essay on the 'Tragedy of culture', Simmel put forward an analysis of the 'processes of the soul' of the modern human being, which emphasised the restless movement of a quest for lost meaning. But the *Philosophy of Money* is an exploration of the 'meaning' of modern life, where – as I have explained in Chapter 1 – 'meaning' resides in the relation of the parts to the whole, and even though the modern human being painted by Simmel felt a lack of meaning in his own life, this figure and its quest can nevertheless be inserted, at another level, in an overall frame of meaning.

Conversely, Weber analysed the *Kultur Menschen* from the point of view of their cultural significance – and in particular through their stance to the world. He did so from his intense engagement with many and variegated groups, movements and communities¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁵ To Troeltsch the 'burning task' was 'to formulate the European essence and work out the European future'. Troeltsch, *Historism*, 711.

¹⁴⁶ See above, footnote 26.

¹⁴⁷ Weber, "IR", 570.

¹⁴⁸ Weber, "Science", 611-2. The range of groups, 'sects', associations and communities of young people which Weber was acquainted with – and the depth of the knowledge he had of them, through sustained contact with some of their members, is remarkable. He knew well some members of the circle of the poet Stefan George, who put aesthetic form at the service of a new cult; members of the anarchist communities of Schwabing (Munich) and Ascona, who partly revolved around the figure of Freud's disciple, Otto Gross and sought to nurture their true nature against the repressions of society, partly drew their inspiration from Tolstoy's mysticism, anarchism and even, for some of them, from his agrarian

Towards the end of the first decade of the century, Weber became interested in developing a complete sociology of culture, in which he foresaw an ‘all arts encompassing sociology’ as well as a sociology of ‘literature, science and *Weltanschauung*’¹⁴⁹. The sociology of *Weltanschauungen* would probably have addressed some of these groups. The sociology of associations, which he proposed as part of the work programme for the German Sociological Society at its first conference in 1910¹⁵⁰, went in the same direction. Weber was finally unable to carry out most of this programme but the sustained observation of these groups and communities (including by living in their midst) nourished his analysis of the stance to the world adopted by these *Kulturmenschen* which culminated in his lecture on ‘Science’ but also in the other ‘Vocation lecture’, ‘Politics as vocation and profession’ (‘Politics’)¹⁵¹.

In what follows I briefly seek to unravel some key aspects of Simmel’s and Weber’s respective analysis of the *Kulturmensch*, whom Simmel addressed as typical of modernity and especially of a culture dominated by the money economy, and whom Weber considered of great cultural (and political) significance although the social and cultural order did not foster such significance – and in part perhaps due precisely to this.

From the type of individuality to the movements of the soul: Simmel’s analysis of the modern human being from the perspective of meaning

In Chapter 1 I had explained that Simmel analysed modern subjectivity and its interactions with the modern world through two lenses, a psychological and a philosophical ones. The

communitarianism (See Sam Whimster, ed., *Max Weber and the culture of anarchy* (Basingstoke; New York, N.Y.: Macmillan ; St. Martin's Press, 1999).); with the students of the *Freistudentenschaft* (Free student community) movement, which sought to reinvigorate the foundational principles of the Humboldtian university (for the education of the individuality) against the dangers of ‘studies for breadwinning’ (*Brotstudium*) (See Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Wolfgang Schluchter, and in collaboration with Birgitt Morgenbrod, "Anhang" [Editors' Appendix to Science as vocation and profession. Politics as vocation and profession], in *Studienausgabe der Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* I/17 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1994), 119); and with young Socialist idealists, such as Ernst Toller, Ernst Bloch and Georg Lukács, who uncomfortably juggled with pacifism and revolution (See, in particular, Sam Whimster, "Introduction to Weber, Ascona and Anarchism", in *Max Weber and the culture of anarchy* (Basingstoke; New York, N.Y.: Macmillan ; St. Martin's Press, 1999), 33.)

¹⁴⁹ Braun, *Max Weber's Sociology of Music*, 13. I come back to this in Part II Chapter 3.

¹⁵⁰ Weber, "Sociology conferences", 442.: ‘... a sociology of associations (*Vereinwesen*) in the broadest sense of the word, starting – let us say quite drastically! – with the bowling club and going on to political parties and religious, artistic or literary sects’.

¹⁵¹ ‘Science as vocation and profession’ and ‘Politics as vocation and profession’ were respectively delivered in November 1917 and in January 1919, as part of a lecture series organised by the Bavarian Association of the Free Student Federation (*Freistudentischen Bund. Landesverband Bayern*), on ‘intellectual work as vocation and profession’, and which interestingly was to include, in addition to the two lectures given by Weber, a lecture on Education and another on Art (speakers were contacted but it is unclear whether the two lectures actually took place). See Mommsen, Schluchter, and Morgenbrod, "Appendix to Vocation lectures", 123-4.

essay on the 'Metropolis and mental life', which Simmel wrote later (1903) than his first version of the *Philosophy of Money* (1900) nevertheless presented a psychological analysis, closer to Simmel's earlier interests, whilst the exploration of the movements of the soul in the *Philosophy of Money* corresponded to Simmel's increasing turn to philosophy for its ability to explore reality 'from within' and reconstruct meaning.

Both the *Philosophy of Money* and the 1903 essay on the 'Metropolis and mental life' painted a striking picture of the encroachment of money on all spheres, and the resulting 'levelling through a socio-technical mechanism'¹⁵², arguing that this went together with 'counter-tendencies' bringing about the entrenchment of a closed subjectivity and the widening rift between subjectivities and objective culture. In that context Simmel developed an analysis of 'remoteness' (*Entfernung*) from oneself which he did not call alienation (*Entfremdung*), but which in effect put forward the consequences of the modern money economy and its bloated material culture on the inner make up of personality: his analysis of 'blaséness' (*Blasiertheit*). Here was a special, limit case ('admittedly never fully actualised'¹⁵³), in which the personality 'internalises' the levelling principle at the core of money to the point that it becomes unable to perceive value differences, and can only momentarily alleviate such plea by continuously seeking 'excitement' (*das "Anregende"*)¹⁵⁴.

In the essay on the Metropolis, Simmel proposed a psychological analysis of the 'metropolitan type of individuality'¹⁵⁵. The 'intellect', the 'understanding' (*Verstand*), are described as an autonomous function of the personality, which, as of itself, is 'without character', a pure processing and calculation tool. It is for this reason 'the most adaptable of our inner forces'. It is located so to speak at the surface of ourselves, and is what allows us to relate to a world of 'swift and uninterrupted change'. The over-developed 'intellect' is thus the main feature of the metropolitan type¹⁵⁶, and especially of the blasé disposition, with its corollary of atrophied emotions, which it both protects from exposure and thereby asphyxiates further. The 'blasé' disposition is one of the key figures of adaptation and complete subordination to material culture which Simmel painted, alongside that, for example, of the specialist. But contrary to the latter, the 'blasé' human being suffers the flooding of material culture in his very body, in the exhaustion of his 'nerves', which have

¹⁵² Simmel, "Metropolis", 116.

¹⁵³ Simmel, *Money*, 334.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 336.

¹⁵⁵ Simmel, "Metropolis", 116.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

almost ceased to function. Other possible directions of adaptation of the metropolitan type are his response to the multiplication of occasions of social contact through ‘reserve’ or outright ‘aversion’ for the preservation of his personal freedom¹⁵⁷; and his response to the ‘atrophy of the personality all too often’ produced by the ‘ever-more one-sided performance’ demanded from him in the division of labour through ‘exaggeration of [the most personal in him], in order to remain audible, if only to himself¹⁵⁸. The Metropolis essay thus put forward an analysis of the ways in which the structure of the personality psychologically ‘adapts’ to its external environment and develops specific dispositions.

In the *Philosophy of Money*, Simmel did not emphasise so much the response of the personality to external stimuli as he sought to reconstruct the modern ‘soul’ from within. The ‘soul’ here captures more than the inner structure of the personality, and touches upon what is singular and personal in each human being, one’s ‘inner centre’ as well as one’s inner movement.

Thus, the blasé disposition is painted there as one in which intelligence and affects are without a centre, stimulations are pursued compulsively, and subjectivity is entirely defined by the money economy, since all personal aims have been taken hold of by the ‘domination of the means’, indeed since the very ‘seat of these aims’ has been conquered¹⁵⁹. More than ‘adaptation’ it epitomizes total surrender to material culture. This is referred to by Simmel as *Verdinglichung*, reification¹⁶⁰.

But, as said above, Simmel saw the case of the ‘blasé’ disposition as a limit case. In the *Philosophy of Money*, he also painted the more general case of modern human being, split in two by an ‘insuperable barrier... between himself and what is most authentic and essential in him’, ‘remote from himself’ (*aus sich selbst entfernt*). In order to be ‘remote from oneself’, this ‘most authentic, most essential’ being, what Simmel calls ‘belonging-to-oneself’ (*Sich-Selbst-Gehören*), must still exist as such, somewhere, and not have completely surrendered to the domination of the ‘thousands of habits, thousands of distractions, thousands of needs

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 122.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 130.

¹⁵⁹ Simmel, *Money*, 674.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 652. I come back to Simmel’s analysis of reification, and more generally of objectivation, in Part III (Chapter 8).

of a superficial kind¹⁶¹, as is the case with the blasé being. Only if there remains something to be remote from is it possible to conceive that

‘the spirituality and concentration of the soul, drowned under the loud splendour of the scientific-technical age, takes revenge under the guise of an obscure feeling of tension and disoriented longing (*Sehnsucht*)’¹⁶².

Sehnsucht is here meant as a longing or nostalgia for meaning – the missing meaning of one’s life. It is vague and ‘disoriented’, a form of ‘secret disquiet, restless urgency’, stemming from the ‘lack of definitiveness at the centre for the soul’, which, as much as the development of the intellect, both originates in and further spurs the pace and stimulation of modern life¹⁶³. Although Simmel did not use the term in the *Philosophy of Money*, we know that this is a longing for that primary human state of *Erleben*, where the personality is at one with itself and the world.

But this very lack (through loss) of an inner centre, this permanent imbalance, which causes such ‘disquiet’ and ‘longing’, also pushes one to ever more and ever renewed pursuits; it is, for Simmel, a kind of tension which resonates with the pulse of modern life.

Indeed this constant tension besetting the modern individual, if he/she is able to withstand it, provides him/her with the ‘momentum of interiority’¹⁶⁴. It is movement which is determining here, and partial, momentary, syntheses between one’s interiority and the world of objects probably take place, which are subordinated to that movement:

the meaning of life is absolutely not to obtain in reality the continuity of reconciled conditions for which it strives¹⁶⁵.

In this perpetual imbalance, a contact between objective and subjective culture is still maintained, as the disquiet, longing and restlessness felt by the subject and manifesting itself in ‘the mania for travelling, the wild pursuit of competition, the specifically modern

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 674. My discussion of blaséness above partly relied on this section of the *Philosophy of Money*, although it is not explicitly dealing with blasé individuals. As Simmel treats blaséness as a limit case, it is my view that this passage, which deals with the modern personality in general, contains formulations which more readily apply to that extreme (e.g. when Simmel suggests that personal aims have been taken hold of by the ‘domination of the means’, because the very ‘seat of these aims’ has been conquered). On the other hand certain formulations used there, in particular the notion of ‘remoteness from oneself’ seem to me to be applying to blasé people as well.

¹⁶² Ibid, 675. Here, as in many crucial places, the English translation poses problem. Compare especially the verb (highlighted in italics) for the translation of ‘*sich rächt*’: ‘Spirituality and contemplation, stunned by the clamorous splendour of the scientific-technological age, *have to suffer for it* by a faint sense of tension and a vague longing.’ Georg Simmel, *The philosophy of money*, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby, David Frisby ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2004 [1900, 1907]), 484.

¹⁶³ Simmel, *Money*, 674-5.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 674.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

lack of loyalty with regard to taste, style, inner convictions and relationships’, stem from the very restlessness of modern life and further fuel it¹⁶⁶. It may therefore be asked whether this longing, this *Sehnsucht*, was not, in Simmel’s understanding of it (as originating in the impression of loss of the centre of personality) what allows for the reciprocal action between the material objective and subjective world to be preserved. As the ‘blasé’ attitude, with which it can quite conceivably alternate in one and the same individual, it involves an ‘atrophy of individual culture’¹⁶⁷. But, at the same time, Simmel seemed to suggest that, contrary to the pure ‘blasé’ attitude which simply organises subjectivity through its ‘internalisation of the money economy’ and hence total submission to objective culture, this disquiet and restlessness perhaps epitomize a new culture more at one with the movement of life. We thus see how Simmel’s quest for the unveiling of meaning turned him away from an analysis of the encroachments of money on all spheres of life as analysis of the reification of relations and thus away from a critique of contemporary capitalism, and rather led him to subsume this analysis under a more general understanding of money as symbol of life, with its endless dynamic of form-giving and form-submerging. This ultimately pointed to the possibility of ‘reconciliation’ of the modern soul at a higher level, with the pulse of life (I come back to Simmel’s philosophy of life in Part III Chapter 8). The Metropolis essay also ended on the possibility of reconciliation offered by the modern city, between the two forms of individualism distinguished by Simmel (liberty and uniqueness) but his psychological analysis of the metropolitan type bore no trace of that possibility, contrary to his exploration of the inner movement of the soul as angle of approach to the modern human being.

Weber’s observation of – and engagement with – the modern Kulturmensch and his stance to the world

Weber did not seem to think that such endless restless movement could remain without resolution and suspended in a permanent imbalance. After evoking in *IR* the *Kulturmensch* confronted with the meaninglessness of culture, he portrayed him further in the lecture on ‘Science’, delivered in 1917 to an audience of young intellectuals, most of whom were probably children of that *Bildungsbürgertum* whose decline the first part of the lecture implicitly acknowledged¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 675.

¹⁶⁷ Simmel, "Metropolis", 130.

¹⁶⁸ Peter Lassman and Irving Velody, "Max Weber on Science, Disenchantment and the Search for Meaning", in *Max Weber's "Science as a vocation"* (London; Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 179. Indeed, even

Weber this time depicted the *Kultur Mensch* engaged in the quest for lived experience (*Erleben*) and personality, which echoed, perhaps on a more inward mode, the frantic consumerist pursuit of Simmel's modern human being:

‘One puts oneself to torture in order to “experience” things – for this fits in a life conduct conform to the status of a personality – and if one does not succeed, then one must at least do as if one had this gift of grace’¹⁶⁹.

And in the same way as Simmel's metropolitan man exaggerates the most personal in him, ‘in order to remain audible, if only to himself’, Weber mocked the tendency of intellectuals who try and ‘prove that [they] are something else than mere “specialist[s]”’, and ask themselves ‘how [they can] manage and say something in form or substance that no one has ever said this way’¹⁷⁰. Overall he exposed the confused and contradicting idea of personality entertained by these young intellectuals: personality is to be found in the immediacy of *Erlebnis* but actually going through *Erlebnis* demands convoluted, all but immediate, striving; intellectualism is rejected and the irrational is coveted but the latter is romanticised and thus intellectualised. In short Weber exposed the impasse of all self-referential idea of personality.

Thus he suggested that the ‘inner tuning in’ (*Einstellung*) of oneself in the service of the two ‘idols’ of lived experience and personality could not satisfy the intellectual thirst for meaning¹⁷¹; and that the latter was thus likely to look for other resolutions than the permanent disequilibrium evoked by Simmel. This was already attested by the multiplication of youth communities ‘which interpret their own human community relations in religious, cosmic or mystical terms’. Whilst questioning the need to supplement ‘fraternal bonds’ between human beings with an added layer of meaning, Weber abstained from criticism as long as this remained confined to group members. But, taking support in the comparison with art, he pointed to another possible step, consisting in ‘forcing’ something more ‘monumental’ than this intimate experience, the coining of new religions without new prophecies in times in which precisely ‘the ultimate and most sublime values

though Weber could not address their earlier shaping as *Kulturmenschen* in great detail, we know that many of these young people with a humanist *Bildung* probably themselves stemmed from the ‘possessive class and those ‘privileged through *Bildung*’ (Weber, *ES*, 179). Until recently, they would normally have had exclusive access to a career in a governing function whereas they now had to compete with newcomers trained as specialists (*Fachmenschen*) (Weber, "Confucianism", 409).

¹⁶⁹ Weber, "Science", 591.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 592.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 591. As I shall explain in Part II and take up again in conclusion, the notions of *Einstellung* and *Eingestelltheit* (tuning-in, attuning oneself) refer to a process of acquisition of disposition which creates habits for adaptation or obedience and is thus opposed to the notion of life conduct (in its strict, ethical, sense).

have retreated from public life'. This could only lead to 'wretched monstrosities' inwardly, 'bound to have even worse effects externally', e.g. the creation of fanatical sects and/or the 'longing and waiting' for 'new prophets and saviours'¹⁷². Weber thus raised the question of the stances towards the world fostered by this longing, this *Sehnsucht* which Simmel conceived of as the key to the movement of the modern human being, and ultimately of modern life. He surmised the likely shift from a stance of flight from the world either to one of return to the world with a fanatical will to transform and master it without any anchorage in a genuine prophecy, as he interpreted the evolution of the poet Stefan George and his circle; or to subjection to such fanatical leaders¹⁷³.

When, in 1919, Weber faced again his audience for his 'Politics' lecture, some of them were actively involved in the 'Soviet Republic' in Munich in times of revolution and war, despite their orientation towards pacifism and anarchism – and thus towards what Weber called the anti-political, religious/mystical ethics of brotherhood¹⁷⁴. Towards the end of the lecture, he again engaged in an assessment of the stances to the world then assumed by his audience and those which they were likely to take on ten years from then, in what Weber foresaw would be an 'Age of Reaction': after the defeat of all the ideals they had fought for, what else was there in sight than actual mystical flight from the world 'for those who are gifted for it' or the 'dull acceptance', possibly of the embittered kind, of the world and of one's position?

¹⁷² Ibid, 612-3.

¹⁷³ Stefan George evolved towards what Stefan Breuer has characterised as 'aesthetic fundamentalism', where 'art provides meaning which reaches beyond it' in a 'metaphysical eschatology, an other-worldly promise' (See Stefan Breuer, *Ästhetischer Fundamentalismus: Stefan George und der deutsche Antimodernismus* [Aesthetic Fundamentalism: Stefan George and German Antimodernism] (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1996), 8-9.). In a letter of June 1910 to Dora Jelinek, Weber provided a condensed analysis of George's evolution and of its significance as a case study of 'false prophecy'. See Max Weber, *Briefe 1909-1910* [Letters 1909-1910], ed. M. Rainer Lepsius and Wolfgang J. Mommsen in collaboration with Birgit Rudhard and Manfred Schön, *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1994), 559-563.

¹⁷⁴ In *IR*, Weber locates the origins of the ethics of brotherhood in the overtaking by new religious communities of the principle of reciprocity at work within the boundaries of kin- and neighbour-communities to expand it beyond such group boundaries, into a universal principle. In its most extreme versions, arrived at in ecstatic mystic states, the ethics of brotherhood could turn into what Weber calls the 'acosmism of love without object' – boundless love for the suffering human, but which becomes absorbed in its own sacrifice (Weber liked to quote Baudelaire's "holy prostitution of the soul" there). The ethics of brotherhood found its most accomplished and simple statement in the 'absolute ethics of the Gospel', that is to say the Sermon of the Mount ("ye shall not resist evil with force"), which Weber also often quoted, and the more modern and yet unconditional formulation of Tolstoy's ethics and mysticism at the end of his life. Indeed Tolstoy was a reference to both anarchists and pacifists. In *IR* (as well as in 'Politics as a Vocation and Profession'), Weber showed how such ethics stands in utmost tension, conflict and competition with the political sphere: it competes with the 'pathos' of war, but from 'radically anti-political' grounds, since all politics has to deal, at one time or other, with the fact of force. See Weber, "IR", 546,8,9. Weber, "Politics", 440.

He thus confronted the dramatic failure of modern intellectuals to face up to the ‘fate of the age’, a failure which he linked to the quest for meaning that had always defined intellectual strata, and that had been pushed towards increasingly irrational expression through the evolution of the sphere of intellectual knowledge towards its ‘modern representative in organised, specialised, vocational, authoritative science’¹⁷⁵. I would thus argue that the modern *Kultur Mensch*, with his confused search for himself, his tendency to a stance of flight from the world possibly evolving towards resigned and embittered adaptation, was, in part, an indirect product of the dynamic of modern science (I will analyse this dynamic in Part II Chapter 6) – and that this was a powerful motive for Weber to question that dynamic and to become effectively engaged in attempts (not only through his direct contact with young intellectuals but also through his participation in the association of higher education teachers) to reinstate what he considered the vocation of science.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to unravel Weber’s approach to the notion of human type more specifically. I have highlighted, in particular, that there are both inner and external channels of formation of the type of human being, with outcomes both for the inner orientation of the human being and for his external actions and relations. I have accounted further for the centrality of this notion for a science of reality by suggesting that Weber’s systematic analysis of the dominant types of human being through their life conduct (and the extent to which it is externally or inwardly rationalised) also gives rise to the exploration of their stance to the world; of the anchorage of this stance in the formation of their inner being; and of their influence and reach across the order of social relations and the culture it underpins. The table below sums up these features of Weber’s analysis for three dominant types of human being in their own culture and epoch and his less systematic observations of the young intellectuals of his time of whom I have argued that they complemented the type sketched in *IR* for the modern *Kultur Mensch*.

The comparison with Troeltsch and Simmel has allowed me to cast additional light on some aspects of Weber’s approach to the human type or type of humanity. Whereas Troeltsch identified the new *Menschenart* specifically with the early Calvinists, as carriers of the Calvinist idea of personality, and characterised it as ‘purposeful type of humanity’,

¹⁷⁵ Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 228.

subjecting all spheres of life to one single purpose (the glorification of God), Weber situated it later, in the phase of appropriation of ascetic Protestantism by strata engaged in economic activity, as entrepreneurs or workers: although he analysed the content of religious ideas, his prime interest lied in the mechanisms of this appropriation by individuals who were not the prime Calvinist followers, but rather *Alltagsmenschen*, involved in the everyday. He thus did not treat them merely as the carriers of a religious idea (of personality) but rather as individuals subjected to a psychological tension and oriented to psychological rewards. Weber's inquiry into the fashioning of a new *Menschentum* convinced him that the human being is not shaped purely through his orientation to ideas but rather through the way in which he deals with the everyday tensions set out by these ideas (this perhaps could be read as a further specification of the switchman metaphor¹⁷⁶).

The comparison between Simmel's exploration of the 'inner movement' of the soul of the modern human being and Weber's observation of the modern *Kultur Mensch* has highlighted common elements of diagnosis (the restless quest for experience and meaning, their vague longing or *Sehnsucht*), but integrated in completely different intellectual projects and indeed global stances to the world. Simmel sets out the modern human being as a free-floating electron in the world of material culture and examines his connections within that world. Conversely Weber's types of human being are the products of the dynamics of specific life orders and orders of social relations: the modern *Kultur Mensch* cannot be understood without pointing to the contemporary evolution of the university and the dynamic of modern science. Simmel's philosophy explores possible horizons of meaning and thus of reconciliation beyond the present disjunctions and fragmentation, whereas Weber's approach, which seeks to educate judgment, points to the existential and political implications of the stance of the modern *Kultur Mensch* to the world – especially the risk of fanaticism and subjection.

¹⁷⁶ See above, footnote 133.

Table 2 – Summary of characteristics of dominant types of human being

Type of human being	Mode of rationalisation of life conduct (LC)	Stance towards the world	Conception of personality and formation of inner being	Influence and reach
(Puritan) <i>Berufsmensch</i>	Ethical, inwardly rationalised, LC	Transformation of the world (for world mastery)	Consistent moulding of inner being oriented to salvation, acting according to the 'demand of the day'	Likely (not studied) considerable 'positive' cultural reach and influence
(Confucian) <i>Kulturmensch</i>	<i>Stand</i> -based, externally rationalised, LC	Adaptation to the world, in accord with cosmic order	Personality reached through detachment from drives and passions and from the everyday	Mainly 'negative' cultural influence
(Modern) <i>Fachmensch</i>	Interests-driven, externally rationalised, LC	Active adaptation to the world (i.e. to the logics of the social and life orders)	De-personalising ethics	Considerable 'positive' cultural reach and influence
(Modern) <i>Kulturmensch</i>	LC inwardly driven to a cause or <i>Weltanschauung</i>	Initially flight from the world. Possible evolution towards 'monstrosities' (false prophecies) or simply the 'dull acceptance' of the world	Self-referential idea of personality	Mainly 'negative' cultural influence, with nevertheless possibly wide reach

PART II – THE SHAPING OF MODERN MENSCHENTUM

Chapter 3 – Max Weber’s ideal-typical construct of the life orders and value spheres

Introduction

What is this ‘everyday’ that modern *Fachmenschen* and *Kulturmenschen* equally do not see – or ‘do not want to’ see¹? As Weber put simply and soberly in ‘Science’, it is an everyday in which

‘life rests on itself and is understood on its own terms, knows only the eternal struggle of the Gods among each other’².

Life which rests on itself: this is, perhaps, Weber’s most synthetic and most striking definition of modernity. There can be no ‘naturalness’ of any of the orders of life nor can there be any grounding in any encompassing belief. Any order, realm, sphere, any field of life has to be understood ‘on its own terms’, according to its own logics and inner demands, which are undoubtedly affected by those of other spheres, but can never be wholly derived from them. This also means that there is no overarching hierarchy of values according to which our affections and allegiances to this or that sphere could be justified: the Gods are struggling, and our own ‘chests’ are the seat for this struggle³, between value spheres and life orders as well as within them.

The present chapter is an exposition of Weber’s theoretical construct of the life orders and value spheres on the basis of the ‘Intermediate Reflection’ of the *Economic Ethic of World Religions (IR)*, the ‘Value Freedom’ essay, the two ‘Vocation lectures’ and the ‘music study’. This might seem a very disparate collection of texts. In fact, as will be seen, my reading of *IR* is a reading from the perspective of the worldly orders and spheres (a reading bolstered by the ‘Value Freedom’ essay), their affinity or struggle with the religious sphere, their inner momentum and the external structures which underpin them: it casts light on those very channels and mechanisms for the inner and external shaping of human types that we saw at

¹ Weber, "Value Freedom", 507.

² Weber, "Science", 608.

³ Weber, "Verein debates", 420.

work in Part I Chapter 2. And precisely the ‘Vocation lectures’ and the ‘music study’ constitute the most systematic studies by Weber of the inner momentum and external conditions of the modern worldly orders and spheres.

Such a reading of *IR* is a reflection of its pivotal place not only for Weber’s sociology of religion, but, I will argue, for his wider work. I therefore start Section I by explaining this positioning, before turning to Weber’s theoretical ideal-typical scheme of differentiation of the life orders and value spheres, and the idea of the rationale which underpins it. In Section II I propose an understanding of the life orders and value spheres as spheres of human endeavour, in which the matter of human action (‘life’) is given form, and, under certain conditions, steered and conducted. The section serves as an introduction to chapters 4 to 6 in which the dynamic of more specific life orders and of their production of types of human being is examined. Section III provides a case study illustration of the dynamic of a life order/value sphere: that of the music sphere in the West between the 16th and 19th centuries, which casts light, in particular, on what Weber saw as the determinants of the inner momentum of spheres of human action, and which therefore serves to rehearse a possible approach to the analysis of the inner momentum of other spheres of human endeavour.

I – The dynamics of differentiation of the life orders

The place of Weber’s theoretical and ideal-typical construct of the life orders

The ‘Intermediate Reflection’ (whose full title is: ‘Intermediate Reflection: Theory of the Stages and Directions of Religious Rejection of the World’⁴), is, together with the ‘Introduction’ to the *Economic Ethic of World Religions* (hereafter ‘Introduction’), one of the key texts in which Weber provides theoretical frameworks and reading grids for conceptualising the way in which religious ethics interact with worldly orders to orient and shape human practices. Insofar as *IR* offers a ‘schematic and theoretical construction’ of the types of conflict between the spheres of the ‘world’ and the world-rejecting salvation religions⁵, it is a keystone of the sociology of religion. But its specific link with the

⁴ First published in the *Archiv* in 1915, and then revised for the first volume (1920) of the *Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion*, *IR* is posited between the first two of the three monographs of the *Economic Ethic of World Religions*, i.e. between the study on ‘Confucianism and Taoism’ and ‘Hinduism and Buddhism’. Weber added the characterisation of *IR* as a theory in the 1920 revision. See Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer and Petra Kolonko, “Anhang” [Appendix], in *Studienausgabe der Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991), 261.

⁵ Weber, “IR”, 536.

‘Sociology of Religion’ written for *ES*, especially chapter XI (the ‘religious ethics and the world’, hereafter *REW*), which uses the same material, highlights its very special position, not only in Weber’s sociology of religion, but in his work as a whole⁶.

Wolfgang Schluchter has qualified *IR* as ‘connecting joint’ between the monographs of the *Economic Ethic* and the more transversal and conceptual ‘Sociology of Religion’⁷. Indeed Weber indicated that the essays on the *Economic Ethics* and the ‘Sociology of Religion’ were intended as mutually assisting in the interpretation of one another, and this has particular relevance for *IR* and *REW*⁸. *REW* addresses the way in which religious ethics in general deal with ‘the inner-worldly orders’, and brings in illustrations from salvation religions but also from Confucianism and Islam, whereas *IR* focuses on salvation religions and emphasises the instances of conflict in ideal-typical fashion (and therefore goes much less into detail in the content of the ethics). This means that the analysis extends to understanding the ‘intrinsic logic’ (*Eigengesetzlichkeit*)⁹ of the worldly life orders themselves and not only religious ethics.

Indeed, in learning about the tensions between salvation religions and an autonomous rationalised economy, the modern state and administration, the spheres of art and eroticism and their emancipation from religious practice, as well as self-sufficient intellectual knowledge, we also learn about the ‘intrinsic logic’ that pervades each sphere: this makes *IR*

⁶ It is thanks to Friedrich Tenbruck that the attention of Weber scholars was finally drawn to the *Economic Ethics of the World Religions* and to the importance of understanding its construction, as well as that of the *Collected Essays*. He considered the ‘Author’s Introduction’ to the *Collected Essays*, the ‘Introduction’ to the *Economic Ethics*, and the ‘Intermediate Reflection’ as the ‘*summa* of Weber’s inquiry into the processes of rationality’. Tenbruck provided a summary of his thesis in a 1975 article in the *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, which was translated to English and published in Keith Tribe, *Reading Weber, Economy and society* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989). See Friedrich H. Tenbruck, “The problem of thematic unity in the works of Max Weber”, in *Reading Weber, Economy and society* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989). Whilst Wilhelm Hennis recognised the importance of this work and of the problem of rationalisation for Weber, he places it within Weber’s more encompassing concern with what becomes of the human being ‘qualitatively’ in different societies and cultures, especially ours (Hennis, *Central Question*, 6-7.).

⁷ Wolfgang Schluchter, *Rationalism, religion, and domination: a Weberian perspective*, trans. Neil Solomon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 118.

⁸ Max Weber, *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen Konfuzianismus und Taoismus: Schriften 1915-1920*, Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer and Petra Kolonko ed., *Studienausgabe der Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* (Tübingen J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991), 1.

⁹ I follow here JP Grossein’s translation, which renders the idea of the specific inner momentum of all spheres of action (including, but not only, the life orders) and points to a potential development, a ‘chance of development’, which needs to be actualised. Grossein, “Glossaire Raisoné”. 122. In addition, as we shall see, the intrinsic logic does not have a closed formulation and can evolve. In 2005, Grossein moved to a new translation (‘own logic’) in order to avoid the idea of an immanent logic. But Weber himself refers to these logics as immanent (Weber, “IR”, 544.), and yet also points to their specificity for a particular historical life order (e.g. the logic and dynamic of tonal ratio in Western classical music). See the footnote by JP Grossein in Max Weber, “Les relations économiques des communautés en général” [The economic relations of communities in general], *Revue française de sociologie* 46, no. 4 (2005): 936.

a conceptual pivot for Weber's observation, reflection and study of each sphere in parallel with his study of religion, in the same period or in the following years. The economic sphere is further explored in *ES* (special affinity is to be noted with the unfinished chapter on the market); the political sphere in his study of rule (*ES* again) and in his *Political Writings*, especially during the First World War and with the 'Politics' lecture; the artistic sphere in the study of music (1910) as well as in the projected 'all arts encompassing sociology' and sociology of 'literature, science and *Weltanschauung*'¹⁰; and the sphere of intellectual knowledge through the writings on academia and especially his 'Science' lecture. The erotic sphere is mostly dealt with as a separate sphere in *IR* itself (as a magic and religious field of practice, it is extensively studied, as some arts, in the *ES Sociology of Religion*). In this sense, *IR* could also be considered as the keystone to the projected 'sociology of culture'.

Finally *IR* was also a crucial moment for Weber's reflection on the possible forms that one's relation to – and engagement with – the world could take today, a reflection he intended especially for the younger generation, and the communication of which was central to his own stance as a teacher. In fact, this utmost task of the teacher (it is the last contribution which Weber emphasises for science in the exposition of what science can achieve for 'practical and personal "life"'¹¹) is a "moral" task, an adjective which Weber stressed between inverted commas to distance himself from any misinterpretation of 'moral' as conform to morality. Indeed, were it not for Weber's extreme caution in this regard, we could talk about a philosophical task: although Weber is always at pains to distance himself from philosophy as contents, and indeed does so again in his 1920 revision of *IR*, he takes 'philosophical disciplines' to be specifically concerned with the so

¹⁰ See Braun, *Max Weber's Sociology of Music*, 13. Weber's projected 'sociology of cultural contents' would have included a study of 'the arts, literature and world views', as he wrote to his publisher at the end of 1913. The only actually developed monograph within this programme is what I will refer to as the 'music study' (see below, section III). However, in addition to the fact that the sociology of religion largely addresses the evolution of the relation of religion to art, Weber's reflection on and preparation of a sociology of cultural contents led to numerous fragments inserted especially in the essay on value freedom, in the 'author's introduction' to the *Collected essays* and in *IR*, as well as in his lectures at the University of Munich), but also earlier, in his interventions at the first and second conferences of the German Society for Sociology, and in his correspondence. It can be surmised that the sociology of 'conceptions of the world' (*Weltanschauungen*) would have included the planned sociology of the press, for which Weber wrote a detailed outline and methodological guidelines. The study had been proposed to the *German Society for Sociology* and Weber had gone some way towards gathering the funds for it, but difficulties to find the whole sum as well as colleagues willing to work on it were crowned with a dispute with a newspaper and Weber abandoned the project. See Wilhelm Hennis, "The media as a cultural problem: Max Weber's sociology of the press", *History of the Human Sciences* 11, no. 2 (1998): 109.

¹¹ Weber, "Science", 607. See below, Chapter 6.

to speak topographical clarification of one's stance to the world and with the associated search for greater consistency¹². I come back to these aspects in Part III Chapter 7.

The unravelling of the ideal-typical 'intrinsic logics' of the various life orders (of which I will argue, in what follows, that they are also value spheres) fulfils precisely this function: for, in relating one's stance back to its fundamental premises, one can locate one's endeavours in the 'adequate' order and thus become more aware of the need to come to terms with the logic pervading that order, and with the meaning and implications of one's stance¹³. Weber certainly intended his account of the conflicts between the ethic of brotherhood and the logics of the inner-worldly orders with such topographical perspective as well¹⁴: not by chance did he read it aloud, as already mentioned, in one of his and his wife's 'Sundays', to a circle of young intellectuals¹⁵. It is especially in that light that the text is related to the opening lecture given by Weber at the Fall session of the 1917 Burg Lauenstein conference convened by publisher Eugen Diederichs, whose text has unfortunately been lost ('Personality and the life orders [*Die Persönlichkeit und die Lebensordnungen*]') as well as to the two 'vocation lectures'¹⁶. In this sense, it might be asked

¹² Weber, "IR", 566, Weber, "Value Freedom", 470. The notion of topography used here seeks to render Weber's proposition, at the beginning of *IR*, that his theoretical construction should allow to determine the 'so to speak typological location' of 'particular historical phenomenon(a)'. Weber also exchanged with Lukács on the question of the 'geographical place' that could be allocated to the erotic sphere. 'It (the erotic) shares the fate of the guilt-laden with all formed life; and in the quality of its opposition to everything that belongs to the sphere of the "form alien" (*formfremd*) God it is close to the aesthetic attitude. Its geographical position has yet to be determined, and I am quite curious to see where it is going to be located in your work'. See Max Weber, *Briefe 1913-1914* [Letters 1913-1914]. ed. M. Rainer Lepsius and Wolfgang J. Mommsen in collaboration with Birgit Rudhard and Manfred Schön, *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2003), 117. Translation altered from Georg Lukács, *Selected Correspondence 1902-1920*, Judith Marcus and Zoltán Tar ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 222. Incidentally, this letter casts some light on the gestation time for *IR*. It is generally accepted that a first draft was complete in 1913, since he read it then to his friends. The letter to Lukács, dated from the 10th of March, shows that Weber was still working on it, at least on the part on the erotic sphere.

¹³ Weber, "Science", 610.

¹⁴ Wolfgang Schluchter, whose analysis of *IR* in the context of his study of religious rationalism mostly bears on the typologies of religious stances to the world, points, in passing, to this possible role for *IR*: 'Aside from its heuristic value for science, this broader perspective and means of orientation may be deemed valuable in terms of the question of how to live. The 'understanding' (*Verstehen*) of historically important constellations of conflict and the 'solutions' thereof by means of their mental reconstruction can in fact (in Weber's terminology) help the 'cultural being' (*Kultur Mensch*) to find the demon who 'holds the different threads of his life together' (Schluchter, *Rationalism*, 125.). Wilhelm Hennis, who showed the centrality of the question of the relation between personality and the life orders, strangely does not seem to have made much of *IR*. See Hennis, *Central Question*. Lawrence Scaff seems to hesitate between considering that *IR* contributes to 'demarcat[ing] a realm of existential choice' and treating it as a more modest 'commentary' on the 'relentless struggles waged by those dwelling within the different life-orders and value-spheres'. Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 92-3.

¹⁵ Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: a Biography*. ed. Harry Zohn and Guenther Roth, trans. Harry Zohn (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 471. Weber, "Science", 607.

¹⁶ Weber, *Biography*, 596-600. The publisher Eugen Diederichs had convened 'scholars, artists, political writers, *Lebenspraktiker* [men in practical life (sic)] and Freideutsche Jugend [Free German Youth] [to] exchange ideas about the meaning and the mission of the age'. Wilhelm Hennis already highlighted in 1987

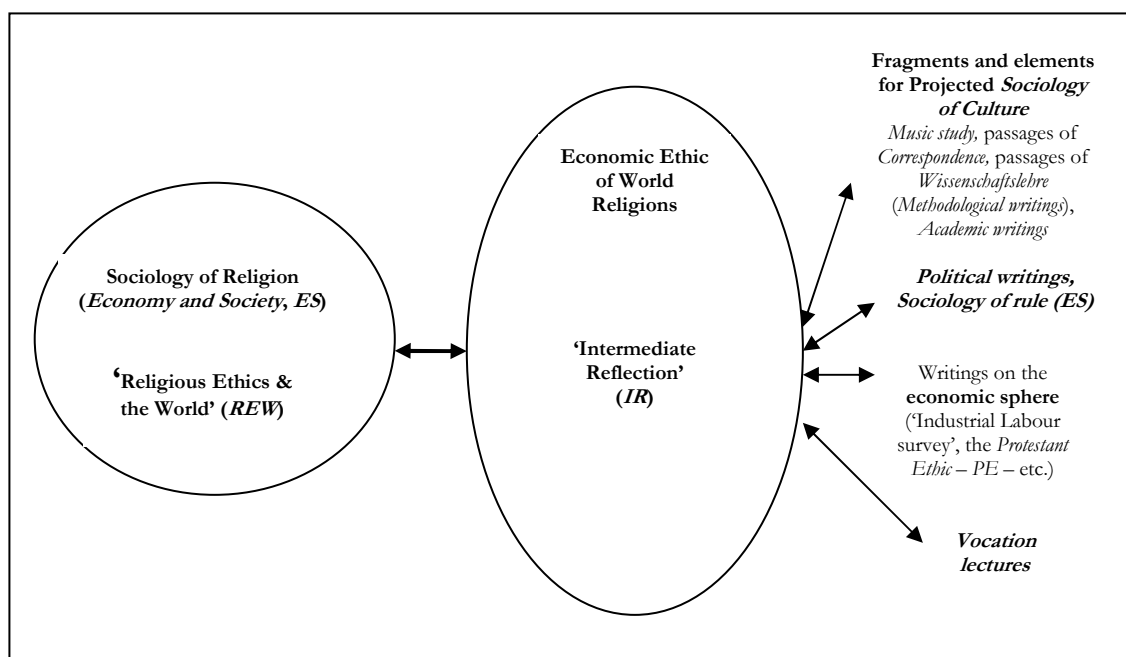
whether Weber did not come closest here to deliberately writing a philosophical piece¹⁷. In any case, it is no doubt this conjunction of very distinct levels of argument linking into almost all strands of Weber's work as well as the sometimes elliptic, enigmatic style of this piece which have made it one of the most studied of Weber's texts in the last 20 years¹⁸.

the logical link between the Lauenstein conference and the vocational lectures, and this was an important point for his thesis concerning Max Weber's 'Central Question'. Hennis, *Central Question*, 62-3. The editors of the *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* confirmed this connection by highlighting the role of Immanuel Birnbaum, both a participant in the Burg Lauenstein conference and a member of the Bavarian Association of the Free Student Federation which organised the lecture series. See above Part I Chapter 2 (footnote 151) and Mommsen, Schluchter, and Morgenbrod, "Appendix to Vocation lectures".

¹⁷ This was indeed Karl Jaspers' judgment on the essay: 'He [Weber] introduced the *Zwischenbetrachtung*, the 'intermediate reflection' on possible conflicts of meaning, as merely one way among others of looking at things. It is, I think, much more: a key piece in his philosophical thinking.' Letter of May 1967 to Else Jaffé, quoted by Joachim Radkau, *Max Weber: A Biography*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 559.

¹⁸ The literature in English on the 'Intermediate Reflection' is profuse. Some studies give a central place to *IR* for reconstructions of Weber's comprehensive approach to culture (in general or more specifically of modernity), starting with Habermas's interpretation of *IR* for his analysis of Weber's alleged 'explanation' of modernity (with the capitalist economy, the modern state and formal law as constitutive for the 'rationalisation of *society*' to be explained, and modern science, technology, autonomous art and a 'religiously anchored ethic' as explanatory factors). See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984). Habermas's interpretation, which is too fitting to his own theory of modernity, has been rightly challenged e.g. by Charles Turner. Turner's criticism of Schluchter's interpretation is also very relevant (in particular his criticism of Schluchter's invention of an ethical sphere, which is 'nowhere to be found' in Weber's construct) (see Turner, *Modernity and Politics*, 66, 90.). See also, in addition to the already quoted books by Lawrence Scaff and Charles Turner, Ralph Schroeder, *Max Weber and the sociology of culture* (London; Newbury Park, Calif.: SAGE, 1992). Others focus more on a particular aspect of *IR* and/or address it in the context of a comparison with another author: Howard L. Kaye, "Rationalization as Sublimation: On the Cultural Analyses of Weber and Freud", *Theory Culture Society* 9, no. 4 (1992), Sam Whimster, "Max Weber On The Erotic And Some Comparisons With The Work Of Foucault", *International Sociology* 10, no. 4 (1995). Robert N. Bellah, "Max Weber and World-Denying Love: A Look at the Historical Sociology of Religion", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 67, no. 2 (1999). The bulk of discussions of *IR* takes place in connection with Weber's thesis on modern polytheism and the 'war of the Gods', which is more directly mentioned in 'Science as vocation and profession'. Recent contributions here include Guy Oakes, "Max Weber on Value Rationality and Value Spheres: Critical Remarks", *Journal of Classical Sociology* 3, no. 1 (2003). and Hans Henrik Bruun, "Objectivity, Value Spheres, and "Inherent Laws": On some Suggestive Isomorphisms between Weber, Bourdieu, and Luhmann", *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 38, no. 1 (2008).

Diagram 1 – The pivotal role of the ‘Intermediate Reflection’



The ideal-typical construct of the life orders as theory of cultural differentiation

The ideal-typical construct of the life orders and their conflicts was intended, and operates first, Weber tells us, as a heuristic device (with what I have referred to as a ‘topographical’ ambition). However Weber admitted, with caution, that it ‘could also be more than that’ and have the status of a theoretical scheme (Weber added the reference to a ‘theory’ in his subtitle in the 1920 revision – see footnote 8 above).

Indeed the ideal-typical construction of the conflicts between salvation religions and the worldly life orders/value spheres¹⁹ rests and is organised through a key postulate: the idea that the ‘rational’ (*das Rationale*), understood as the inner ‘logical or teleological consistency’ (*Konsequenz*) of whatever ‘intellectual/theoretical or practical/ethical stance’, is a ‘power’ (*Macht*) which has exerted ‘force’ (*Gewalt*) over human beings in all times and everywhere²⁰. Tenbruck has highlighted the insistence of Weber himself on the multiple forms taken by rationality and rationalisation²¹. Nevertheless, the ‘rational’ understood as ‘consistency’, in *IR*, is mainly confined to two processes heightening the competition and conflict between the worldly and the religious spheres: ‘sublimation’, in the chemical sense of separating out

¹⁹ The distinction between life orders and value spheres is explained further below.

²⁰ Weber, "IR", 537.

²¹ Friedrich Tenbruck placed this sentence at the heart of his thesis on the ‘thematic unity’ of Weber’s work around the notion of rationalisation, more specifically the breeding of modern rationalisation (modernisation) by religious disenchantment after it came to completion in ascetic Protestantism. Tenbruck, "The problem of thematic unity in the works of Max Weber". See also Schluchter, *Rationalism*, 423.

and distilling²², through heightened ‘consciousness’ and ‘knowledge’, men’s relationships to the worldly spheres procuring inner (psychological) ‘goods’ (e.g. art and eroticism, but also intellectual knowledge and the political sphere); and ‘rationalisation’, in the sense of de-personalisation, of their relations to the spheres procuring (material) ‘external goods’ (the economy and, in the political sphere, administration). More synthetically put, the world becomes ‘more rationalised in its external organisation and the conscious lived experience (*Erleben*) of its irrational contents becomes more sublimated’²³.

It is not that what Weber referred to as the ‘a-rational or anti-rational... inner-worldly life powers’, i.e. the aesthetic and erotic spheres, cannot be rationalised in their ‘external organisation’²⁴. Indeed Weber situated the origin of experimentation in art: ‘the fact that art was “rationalised” and that experimentation then migrated from the terrain of art to that of science, has been decisive for the West’. In *IR*, he also referred to a period of codification of erotic relations (the period of courtly love)²⁵. But the kind of rationalisation he dealt with mostly in *IR* is the de-personalisation of relations in the ‘external organisation’ of the life orders, as this is the kind of rationalism which directly challenges religious ethics, especially the ethics of brotherhood. Nevertheless, Weber also dealt specifically with the rationalisation of the ‘formation of ultimate images of the world’ at work both in the realm of intellectual knowledge and in the religious sphere, as this creates a particularly ‘central’ inner tension for salvation religions²⁶.

Overall, the ideal-typical construction of *IR* presents the life orders/value spheres as they would be if the process of differentiation into relatively autonomous spheres, each

²² Kaye, "Sublimation": 54-5. Kaye explains that this was the common usage at the time in German (as in English). He also points to proximity of meaning with Nietzsche’s concept of sublimation (where what is ‘preserved is the “essence”, now spiritualised and intensified, while only the “accidental” is removed’), but there is no idea of essence in Weber’s construction – as sublimation is a historical process linked to intellectualisation and rationalisation, which are forces of transformation rather than reduction to an alleged essence. Thus Weber refers to the process of ‘sublimation of sexuality into “eroticism”’ (Weber, "IR", 567). Kaye rightly stresses the different uses to which Weber puts the word (e.g. he also uses it in a Freudian sense). Sam Whimster also stresses the importance of the notion of sublimation for a correct assessment of the dynamics of differentiation between life orders, in Max Weber, *The essential Weber: a reader*, Sam Whimster ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 207-8. But he links it to the progress of civilisation and to elevation in that sense – which does not seem to correspond to Weber’s intention. In the 1915 version, Weber used the word ‘Raffinierung’. The change in the 1920 version is in line with Weber’s use of *Sublimierung* in the ‘Basic Sociological Concepts’: ‘There is sublimation when an affectually determined action comes up as the *conscious* release of feeling. It is then most often (though not always) already on the way towards “value rationalisation” or purposive action or both’. Weber, "Basic Sociological Concepts", 566.

²³ Weber, "IR", 571.

²⁴ Ibid, 554.

²⁵ Weber, *Hinduism*, 378. Weber, "IR", 559.

²⁶ Weber, "IR", 565.

pervaded by their own intrinsic logic (*Eigengesetzlichkeit*)²⁷, was taken to its ultimate consequences. Historical configurations approximate and can indeed come very close to this construction.

On the one hand, as said, these rationalisation and sublimation processes give rise to conflicts and tensions between the religious and the worldly spheres: thus the objectivation and depersonalisation of everyday action in the rationalised worldly spheres clash frontally with the ethics of brotherhood of salvation religions, whilst art, eroticism, but also politics and intellectual knowledge can offer a kind of sublimated 'extra-ordinary goods' (literally goods out of the ordinary, of the everyday), feelings of salvation from everyday reality, which compete with (and, historically, can become 'surrogates' for) the inner states procured, in particular, by the mystical fusion with God. Erotic 'intoxication' (*Rausch*) appears as being in the most intense relation of substitutability or fusion with mystical states²⁸. But Weber significantly used that very term, in the 'Vocation lectures', albeit with more distance and irony, to refer to the kind of intellectual excitement which can submerge the scholar as well as the "politicians of inner conviction" ("*Gesinnungspolitiker*")²⁹ during the 1919 Revolution. Weber also appeared to play with the ambiguity of the term *Hingabe*, which both refers to devotion as dedication and to erotic abandon³⁰.

²⁷ Ibid, 541. The concept of *Eigengesetzlichkeit*, which only became widely used, especially in Lutheran theology, in the 20th century, was used by Kant e.g. in relation to the autonomy of moral consciousness. See Ahti Hakamies, "Der Begriff "Eigengesetzlichkeit" in der heutigen Theologie und seine historischen Wurzeln" [The concept of *Eigengesetzlichkeit* in contemporary theology and its historical roots], *Studia Theologica - Nordic Journal of Theology* 24, no. 1 (1970). Turner mentions that Kant's culture and nature are '*eigengesetzliche Ganzheiten*' (which I would translate as totalities with their intrinsic logic). See Turner, *Modernity and Politics*, 39.

²⁸ Weber, "IR", 562-3.

²⁹ Weber, "Science", 589. Weber, "Politics", 450. The *Gesinnungspolitiker* is the carrier of *Gesinnungsethik*. Jean-Pierre Grossein has shown the limitations of the famous translation as ethics of conviction (as opposed to *Verantwortungsethik*, ethics of responsibility). *Gesinnung* corresponds to the inner disposition, an inner orientation, rather than 'convictions', which can be assimilated to strong opinions. Indeed the mobilisation of *Gesinnung* plays for example a crucial role in the sociology of religion, where Weber opposes the Protestant life conduct steered from the very inner foyer of the individual's faith and the life conduct of e.g. Catholics, more concerned with the balancing of the individual, discrete, actions. In order to render the idea of interiority rightly stressed by Grossein (and thus the proximity to inner religious orientation) and yet maintain the idea of convictions with regard to values, which is also correct, I propose to translate *Gesinnungsethik* in the political context as ethics of inner conviction. Lassman and Speirs prefer 'ethics of principled conviction'. (See Grossein, "Glossaire Raisoné". 120-1. Lassman and Speirs, "Glossary". 374.)

³⁰ As said, Weber reserved a special place to the analysis of the competition and struggle between salvation religions and the sphere of intellectual knowledge, as this conflict took a specific form, not experienced with any other worldly sphere. Charles Turner draws the attention on the specificity of the intellectual sphere in that regard. See Turner, *Modernity and Politics*, 118. I come back to the particular struggle between lay intellectual and religious rationalism in chapter 6.

On the other hand, these conflicts further contribute to the differentiation of the spheres and to the consciousness of their intrinsic logics³¹. Thus, for example, Weber provided clues in *IR* of how the advent of the rationalisation of the everyday by the *Berufsmensch* pushed eroticism back into the sphere of the extra-ordinary (out of the everyday, *außeralltätlich*), the irrational and the private, thus bringing about the further concentration of eroticism on the erotic sensation as such.

As we shall see, Weber provided examples of both dynamics, and thus sketched a dialectical process, whose historical resolutions are partial, never actually stabilised: there is no ending to the differentiation process of culture – and therefore, as pointed out by Lawrence Scaff, no fixed set of life orders³².

Thus the intrinsic logic of the political sphere (namely, the pragma of force or ‘power pragma³³’) shapes action in the political sphere of the modern occidental state in radically different ways than within the Hindu organic social system, as the latter organises the differentiated spheres into castes, thereby actually outlining their differentiation even more sharply, but within one encompassing whole³⁴. Similarly, Weber referred to the intrinsic logics of the ‘rational economy’, of the kind of art that has become a ‘cosmos of specific and autonomous values’, of ‘the eroticism of intellectualism’ (that is, in our modern age, once the sphere of sexuality has been ‘systematically elaborated’) and of ‘self-sufficient intellectual knowledge’. Within art, as we shall see, different ‘cultural contents’ (literature, music etc.) are distinguished for the pursuit of different goods and according to their specific logics³⁵.

Sociologically speaking, although the striving for consistency was posited by Weber as exerting force and attraction on all men, it is a more specific drive for ‘intellectuals’³⁶. A

³¹ Weber, "IR", 541.

³² Ibid, 571. Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 96. This is why Weber’s construction is, contrary to Rickert’s, no ‘exhaustive and permanently valid philosophical system’, as pointed out by Bruun (See Bruun, "Value Spheres": 101.) This (as also mentioned by Bruun) seems to unsettle some commentators: thus, Oakes calls Weber’s analysis a ‘digression’ rather than an ‘intermediate reflection’, and finds it ‘surprisingly casual’ (Oakes, "Value Rationality": 29.)

³³ Weber, "IR", 547. Max Weber, "Zwischen zwei Gesetzen" [Between Two Laws], in *Gesammelte Politischen Schriften*, ed. Marianne Weber (München: Drei Masken Verlag, 1921 [1916]), 63.

³⁴ Weber, "Politics", 444-5.

³⁵ Weber, "IR", 540,544,561,566.

³⁶ Intellectuals may be ‘distinguished’, ‘plebeian’ or ‘pariah’; privileged or ‘proletaroid’; and they may have received a very thorough education or be autodidacts. Speaking more particularly about those intellectual strata which were the ‘carriers and propagators’ of world religions, Weber stressed that they should be regarded ‘...not as exponents of their profession or of material “class interests”, but as ideological

correlate of Weber's consistency postulate is that, wherever intellectual strata have taken hold of and shaped a particular sphere, starting with religion, its exposure to the principle of consistency has been heightened³⁷ and its intrinsic logic has become more visible and prevalent. In particular, 'the religious interpretations of the world and the religious ethics, which have been created by intellectuals according to a rational purpose, have been strongly exposed to the imperative of consistency'³⁸. The rationalisation and sublimation of the ideas of suffering and salvation have tended to lead to a heightening of the inner foyer of religion (as opposed to external ritual) and hence to a heightening of the consciousness of one's relation to the world – with the paradoxical consequence of a further differentiation of the worldly orders and their emancipation from all religious concerns and meanings³⁹.

It is thus the principle of consistency which underpins, and, Weber tells us, has always underpinned, a process of differentiation of the life orders which make up human culture, ever since the 'organic circular course of time' of natural life⁴⁰, has been left behind. It is this attraction to the inner coherence of human pursuits which, however often baffled in practice, has led, under the 'adequate' historical impulses of specific tensions and conflicts between religion and 'the world' – themselves heightened by the growing and general 'intellectualisation' of all life orders – to the 'universal context of rationalisation and intellectualisation of culture'⁴¹. It is this principle which has led to the mutual irreducibility of the life orders to each other (which does not mean of course that they do not mutually influence each other; and which does not mean either that the orders of social relations associated to them are autonomous). And, finally, it is this principle which has led to their antagonism and the modern 'battle of the gods' – a battle all the more fierce as intellectualisation contributes to the 'subjectivation' of culture and the impossibility for the individual to take support in any encompassing worldview.

What are we to make of the evolution sketched by Weber, from 'the organic cycle of peasant existence', whose 'contents' concern the 'totality of existence', to the valorisation of specific 'cultural contents, whether they were intellectual or supra-individual in any other

bearers of an ethics or salvation doctrine, which accord particularly easily with their social situation'. Weber, *ES*, 293.

³⁷ Weber, "IR", 537.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid, 541-2.

⁴⁰ Weber, "Science", 594.

⁴¹ Weber, "IR", 558.

way'? On the one hand, this is described by Weber as 'increasing enrichment of life'⁴², understanding 'enrichment' from a quantitative point of view, since the separation of spheres of value leads to the fostering of more specific values in each; as well as from a qualitative point of view, in that the 'possession of culture' (that is: the enjoyment of cultural goods) becomes 'what is highest for the inner-worldly human being', who even transfigures worldly values into 'timeless values' (e.g. in science or art)⁴³. On the other hand this evolution is no progress from an ethical point of view – since all prospect of finding an encompassing meaning to the world has been lost⁴⁴. Overall, therefore, this process is expressed concisely as 'the ever further development and differentiation of a culture which becomes ever more meaningless'⁴⁵.

Thus it can be seen that Weber's evocation of an 'evolution' is sketched in purely ideal-typical terms, grounded in an elaboration of the value spheres and life orders as 'rational wholes', a state which they 'rarely achieve in practice'⁴⁶. The materialisation of this development depends on historical events and their carriers. Highlighting developmental trends (towards ever more differentiation) does not amount to forging a 'developmental history', an endeavour Weber was consistently and highly critical of, for the erroneous (value-laden) concept of 'progress' underpinning it⁴⁷.

II – Life orders/value spheres as spheres of human action, endeavour and pursuit

Life orders and value spheres

The notions of life order (*Lebensordnung*) and value sphere (*Wertsphäre*) have given rise to very different, critical and sometimes puzzled analyses, in part due to the fact that Weber seems to use both terms (as well as 'cosmos') interchangeably in *IR* and *REW*, in part due to the central place of the concept of 'order' in Weber's work and the notable 'variability in

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid, 568-9. The transformation of the creations of men's subjectivity into 'timelessly valid', objectivated, contents is also the mark of culture for Simmel. See below, Part III Chapter 8.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 570-1.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 568, 71.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 537.

⁴⁷ This shows in the well-known discussion of the notion of progress in the 'Value Freedom' essay, as well as in Weber's contempt for the work of Karl Lamprecht, whose developmental historical approach (e.g. to the history of Germany) was highly popular at the time. For these reasons as well, Jean-Pierre Grossein takes some distance from Klaus Lichtblau's analysis of Weber's 'historical developmental' approach to social rationalisation as differentiation, in Grossein, "De l'interprétation de quelques concepts wébériens": 714-6.

its extension'⁴⁸. Thomas Schwinn (a disciple of Wolfgang Schluchter), for example, conflates the notion of life order with that of 'the orders and powers of society' entitling Weber's contribution to the *Grundriss*, as outlined in 1914. The problem of the possibility of *Lebensführung* is then seen as dependent on the greater or lesser 'capacity [of each sphere] to be formed into an order' (*Ordnungsbildungsfähigkeit*), since such formation, and its suitability for the stabilisation of 'reproductive cycles of action', appears to condition the possibility for systematic and methodical life conduct (a rather paradoxical and strange implication of this being that this author cannot account for artistic vocation)⁴⁹. The relation studied is between an 'inner' core oriented to values, the seat of personality, and the 'external' order, which constrains action⁵⁰.

Other authors (most notably Hans Henrik Bruun and Guy Oakes) focus instead on the notion of value sphere. Value spheres are pervaded by 'intrinsic logics', and thus are uneasily strained between the 'subjectivity' of the 'free choice' of a value sphere and the objective constraint of 'iron inherent laws'⁵¹. This conflates, unduly in my view, two levels of analysis, that of the shaping of men's actions by the intrinsic logic as soon as they are located in the life order concerned and whether or not this corresponds to a vocational engagement, and that of the decision (not 'free choice') to engage in a value sphere, of which we shall see in Part III Chapter 7 that, precisely, it involves, in Weber's understanding of the ethics of *Lebensführung*, recognising what such a decision entails – in particular recognising the intrinsic logic that constrains but also gives shape to one's endeavour.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 699. The notion of 'life orders' is found in *IR* and other parts of the *Economic Ethic* as well as in the 'Politics' lecture. Similar notions include: 'orders of life', which Weber uses for example in 'Science' and in *REW*; and 'orders' (as shorthand for life orders). Weber sometimes specifies when he refers to the non religious life orders, by using the notions of 'orders of the world' and 'earthly orders'. The notion of 'life sphere' also appears in *REW*.

⁴⁹ Thomas Schwinn, "Wertsphären, Lebensordnungen und Lebensführungen" [Value spheres, life orders and life conducts], in *Verantwortliches Handeln in gesellschaftlichen Ordnungen: Beiträge zu Wolfgang Schluchters Religion und Lebensführung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998), 308, 314.

⁵⁰ Schwinn presumably follows Schluchter, for whom each life order is related to a value sphere, which it socially and institutionally actualises. 'Moreover, the historical theory of rationalization also requires assumptions about the actualization of values: only "historical individuals" realize values, and such processes are regulated not only by the inherent claims of the various kinds of values but also by their "value interests". Socially significant value realizations congeal into institutional arrangements, which can have a history of their own'. However, this process of actualisation and congealing is rather reminiscent of Simmel's tragedy of culture than of Weber's account. See Wolfgang Schluchter, *The rise of Western rationalism: Max Weber's developmental history* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 20.

⁵¹ Bruun, "Value Spheres": 101. Oakes, "Value Rationality": 30-1.

Finally some authors recognise a double strand in encompassing spheres⁵². Thus Lawrence Scaff defines the life orders as ‘spheres of life-activity and value’ or, even more concisely as ‘spheres of action and valuation’, with their own ‘internal and lawful autonomy’. Although the approach presented below is in broad agreement with such definition, the main tensions highlighted by Scaff are those taking place between orders, most specifically between the dominant rationalised and the ‘a-rational or irrational’ orders, but less those within each of the orders. As a result, Scaff considers commitment to a life order as a reaction to the two most rationalised spheres of the economy and administration, rather than as having a meaning and dynamic of its own (except for science).

Wilhelm Hennis’s chief concern is less with the reconstruction of life orders and value spheres than with the investigation of the possibility of a Weberian ‘anthropology’, an ‘idea of the subject’⁵³ which, in the same fashion as Dieter Henrich’s ‘specific concept of the human being as reasonable being’, would connect the different parts of Weber’s work⁵⁴. But in the process which leads Hennis to explore the shaping – both constraining and formative – of the human type and the possibility of an inwardly steered life conduct (i.e. the possibility of personality) in the contemporary world, he defines the relationship of the human being to the life orders and is therefore led to broadly characterise the life orders themselves. He starts, as Weber always does, from ‘the “external” given conditions’, but further points to their ‘inner regularity, an organised form of rationality that must be confronted by all who become involved in it’, and finally to the ‘tension between the regularities of these orders, “spheres”, “values”’⁵⁵. Hennis much prefers to unveil the concrete workings of the shaping of human beings and of their possibility of ethical life conduct in the context of the specific realms studied by Weber, to systematising the analysis of the life orders and value spheres. Indeed Weber himself did not incur in such systematisations – except, to some extent, precisely, in *IR*. Nevertheless Hennis tends to equate the life orders with the ‘orders and powers of society’, whereas, as already argued, I would contend that Weber distinguished the two levels of analysis (cultural, through the life orders/value spheres; and social, through the orders of social relations in which the life orders they are deployed). Hennis thereby posits a confrontation between the ‘personality’ and the ‘life orders’ on a single plane (‘What “fate” do these orders dictate, open up or

⁵² Sam Whimster refers to the life orders ‘and their respective value spheres’ (in Weber, *Essential Weber*, 207.); Charles Turner also considers the two together (Turner, *Modernity and Politics*, 65.).

⁵³ Hennis, *Central Question*, 87.

⁵⁴ Henrich, *Unity*, 3. See Part I Chapter 1.

⁵⁵ See Hennis, *Central Question*, 65.

withhold from the persons placed in their power by conditions of time and place? Is this Weber's "theme"?⁵⁶).

The 'inner' and 'outer' relation of the human being to the life orders/value spheres

My premise here is that Weber sought to distance himself from models positing human action as a straightforward relation between a given inner orientation of the human being and the constraints (however formative) of the external world. Experimental psychology and psychiatry (as represented, for example, by Wilhelm Wundt and Emil Kraepelin) were geared by such a model of relation between the inner human being (and his 'set disposition' of psycho-physical components nevertheless constituting a unity) and his environment (conceived of as a source of stimuli), and Weber confronted these views in his essay on Roscher and Knies and in his work on the psycho-physics of industrial work as well as in his guidelines for the survey on industrial workers⁵⁷. As Hennis has shown, Weber's approach was closer to the model developed in the historical school of economic science, especially by Karl Knies, who had been Weber's professor and whose approach Weber nevertheless confronted in the above mentioned essay. As we have seen in Part I Chapter 1, in distinguishing the 'historical sciences' from the already classically opposed 'natural sciences' and 'human sciences' (*Geisteswissenschaften*), Knies had wanted to focus on human action as a relational object, as 'external processes, which are nevertheless also conditioned by "mental" (*geistige*) motives'. But, in Weber's view, Knies' endeavours had been hampered by his equation, on the one hand, of the inner seat of human action, 'personality', with freedom in the sense of intrinsic dignity and 'therefore' unaccountability; on the other hand, of external with nomological processes; and therefore by a difficulty to juggle the two together in the explanation of economic processes⁵⁸. As I shall explain in Part III, Simmel's own concepts of subjective and objective culture and their relation presented in part similar problems.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 51-64. Max Weber, "Zur Psychophysik der industriellen Arbeit" [The psychophysics of industrial work], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik*. ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1924). Weber, "Methodological introduction".

⁵⁸ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 44, 46. Wilhelm Hennis, who usually displays an empathetic understanding of Weber, does not hide his annoyance at what he considers an undignified critique by Weber of Knies, in which Weber omits any acknowledgement of his, real, intellectual debt to his teacher. Nevertheless Hennis's own analysis of the tension between 'personality' and the life orders possibly leads him to overstress the proximity between Weber and Knies. See Hennis, *Central Question*, 132-140.

Weber's life orders can be defined as spheres of human endeavour and pursuit. These pursuits (of gain, of the expression of artistic will, of erotic love for another individual, of political and scientific 'causes') give rise, in the various orders, to 'rational purposive action', but also to 'creation', to 'accomplishments' (*Leistungen*), in which 'life' and the matter of human passions, interests and affects are 'given form' and shaped inwardly and externally – both according to the 'intrinsic logic' of each sphere as well as by the dynamics of the 'structural forms' (*Strukturformen*)⁵⁹ associated with it.

In the 'Value freedom' essay, Weber's reflection on the way in which students are to be taught to relate to their task led him not only to raise the question of the inner 'laws' of a task, but also of its 'claims' (*ibr Recht*), which I understand as referring to the inner demands of the 'thing as such' (*die Sache als solche*) – be it of politics, art or science. In another section of the essay, which is only found in the 1917 *Logos* version, Weber discussed the nature of the erotic sphere as a sphere of value, and was inclined to recognise it as such, with its own "immanent" dignity'. This, again, points to the idea of the existence of immanent demands made on those involved in a sphere⁶⁰. But it is important to stress that such inner demands stem from the fact that life orders are also value spheres: inner claims are made on those acting with 'unreserved devotion' within the sphere, out of passion – there is no sense in evoking inner claims with those who have no inner connection to a sphere, no sensitivity to its 'vocation in the overall life of humanity'⁶¹.

Human action does not necessarily have a social component: indeed, in his essay on the 'Categories of the Sociology of Understanding' (hereafter 'Categories'), published in 1913, and thus very much at the time of his development of the *IR* ideal-typical construct, Weber explicitly distinguished actions of 'conception' and social action (which, in the essay, he calls 'community-related action' – *Gemeinschaftshandeln*⁶²) and considered both to coexist in the 'spheres of human action' (note, however, the absence of the political sphere):

⁵⁹ Weber, *ES*, 183.

⁶⁰ Weber, "Value Freedom", 494, 507. The first draft of the essay was a memorandum which Weber presented in a meeting of the Association for Social Policy in 1913, i.e. in the year of his drafting of *IR*. The comments on the 'right' of the 'task in itself' were already in that draft, whilst the paragraphs on the erotic sphere and the following section on the struggle of the gods were not.

⁶¹ Weber, "Science", 595. As discussed below in Chapter 4, the status of the rationalised economic sphere as value sphere is unclear. In any case there is no inner vocational connection anymore in the epoch of advanced capitalism, and there are no other inner demands than those of the intrinsic logic.

⁶² *Gemeinschaftshandeln* is the term used in the Categories essay as well as in the 'old manuscript' of *Economy and Society*, both written before the war. In the 'Basic Sociological Concepts' written in 1920, 'community-related action' becomes 'social action'. See Weber, "Categories", 441. Roth and Wittich (the editors of *Economy and Society* in English) translate both as 'social action'. Edith Graber, who translated the 'Essay on categories', also translates *Gemeinschaftshandeln* as social action. Orihara proposes to translate as

Its very conceivability [the case of Robinson Crusoe] is sufficient, therefore, to illustrate clearly that not all "economic" action even conceptually implies *community-related* action. The situation is rather, quite generally, that precisely the conceptually "purest" types in the individual spheres of action lie beyond community-related action and consensus (*Einverständnis*) – in the domain of religious in the same way as economic, scientific and artistic conception. The path of "objectivation" as a rule, though not necessarily, leads quickly to community-related action and clearly as a rule, though again not necessarily, particularly to consensual action.⁶³

Where human action has a social component, it is affected by the dynamics pervading the main 'structural forms (*Strukturformen*) of community-related action'⁶⁴, which Weber enumerated in the 1914 outline for his contribution to the *Grundriss* (i.e. *ES*) – the domestic community, the neighbourhood community and the commune, ethnic communities, religious communities, the market and political groupings. I have already suggested that Weber repeatedly manifested his wish to develop in parallel a 'sociology of cultural contents' (of which only the music study materialised). Weber thus also meant to investigate the 'external conditions' (social, economic and technological) of fields of human action which are not primarily fields of social action but rather oriented to creation⁶⁵. In a fragment which the editors of the *Gesamtausgabe* consider as an extract of an introduction to the texts of *ES* on communities (prior to 1914), and which they entitle 'Economic relations of communities in general', Weber argued that each of the 'structural forms' has its own intrinsic logic and therefore always has to be analysed in its relations to economic forms, relations which can be of 'mutual adequacy or inadequacy', but never of pure and complete determination and dependency⁶⁶.

The diagrams below schematise, first, Weber's understanding of common representations by contemporary or recent scholarship (e.g. Knies) of human action as taking place in the tension between the inner human being and the external world; secondly, the web of relations substituted by Weber for characterising relations to the world and the ways in which human action is shaped – both through the inner orientation of human beings to particular spheres and through the social relations in which human beings are enmeshed.

community action, but the usual everyday meaning of that term is too distant from what Weber suggests (See Hiroshi Orihara, "From 'A Torso with a Wrong Head' to 'Five Disjointed Body-Parts without a Head': A Critique of the Editorial Policy for Max Weber Gesamtausgabe I/22 ", *Max Weber Studies* 3, no. 2 (2003): 152.) Grossein proposes 'action en communauté', and I seek to render a similar idea in my translation. (See Grossein, "De l'interprétation de quelques concepts wébériens": 687.)

⁶³ Weber, "Categories", 462.

⁶⁴ Weber, *ES*, 183.

⁶⁵ See, in particular, Weber's letter of 30.12.1913 to Paul Siebeck, his editor. Weber, *Letters 1913-1914*. Also Weber, *ES*, 194.

⁶⁶ Weber, *ES*, 183. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Anhang" [Editors' Appendix to Economy and Society (Communities)], in *Studienausgabe der Max Weber Ausgabe I/22 (1)* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2009), 158.

Diagram 2: Action as result of tension between external world and inner personality (e.g. Knies)

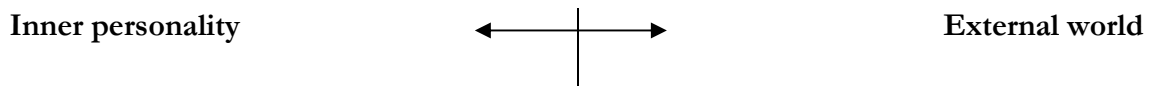
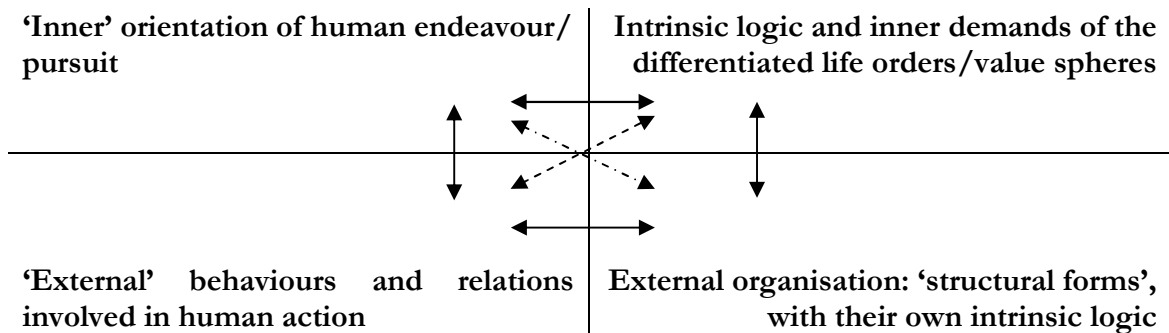


Diagram 3: The inner and outer shaping of human action/endeavour (Weber)



The shaping of human action in the life orders/value spheres

How should we more specifically understand, then, the shaping of human endeavours in the life orders/value spheres? What are these intrinsic logics pervading the life orders/value spheres, and ‘according to which these are further rationalised and sublimated’⁶⁷? And what are the inner claims or demands of the value spheres?

Weber insisted that spheres of human action, whether the life orders or their ‘structural forms’, should be defined through their means rather than through their contents or subjects. Indeed the ‘intrinsic logic’ of each sphere can be understood both as the ‘form-giving principle’ (*formendes Prinzip*, as stated in the ‘music study’⁶⁸), which shapes action in its means. Art is characterised by form, not by its subjects⁶⁹, and specific logics shape each art form (e.g. harmonic ratio in the Western musical sphere between the 16th and the 19th centuries). Similarly, it is formal economic rationality, not the provision for need or the pursuit of gain, what marks out the economy as a differentiated sphere of human action.

⁶⁷ As pointed out by Hans Henrik Bruun, Weber never defines the notion of intrinsic logic. Bruun, "Value Spheres": 102. See above footnote 9 for the explanation of the translation chosen.

⁶⁸ Weber, *Music study*, 79.

⁶⁹ Weber, "Sociology conferences", 452.

And it is ‘power and violence’⁷⁰, the ‘inescapable’ means of politics, rather than political contents, which characterise political action as well as political groupings⁷¹.

Thus, the inner momentum of a sphere of human endeavour first stems from the grappling and wrestling of its intrinsic logic with the living ‘matter’ constitutive of human action. This momentum does not consist of the mere subjection of such life matter to the logic or ‘pragma’ of the sphere, but, as I shall explain through an analysis of the ‘music study’ in section III below, stems from the dynamic of relation between the rational and the irrational triggered by the intrinsic logic itself: ‘life’ is given form to by the intrinsic logic of the sphere and the interplay of ratio with in-built irrationalities which it contains or sets out, and endlessly re-actualises. Indeed we shall see that this interplay is what enables life to be endlessly mobilised, even in the almost fully rationalised economic sphere.

Secondly, the inner momentum of the spheres derives from their inner claims as value spheres, their inner claims for the ‘thing as such’.

Perhaps the clearest and in a sense most didactic text of Weber’s in this regard is a short and now well known text of 1916 (‘Between two laws’), an open letter he wrote to the editor of a monthly magazine (*Die Frau*) in the context of a debate on the meaning of the war. There, Weber argued (as he had done in *IR*) that the intrinsic logic which has governed ‘all political history’ and especially the ‘*Machtstaat*’ (literally the power-State), is the ‘pragma of force’. Such logic imprints the actions carried out in the name of the State, whether we want it or not. But, Weber insisted, such logic has to be claimed and abided by whoever consciously wants to defend worldly, cultural values, and, contrary to those pursuing other-worldly love and universal brotherhood, stand up for the ‘beauty, dignity, honour and greatness of the creature’. It is only where it is placed in the service of values such as these that the intrinsic logic of the political sphere can be more than a logic of naked power⁷². Human endeavours are thus not only shaped by intrinsic logics but also by the inner demands of their sphere of deployment: the example illustrates the dynamic of the political sphere, whereby political action is pervaded by the intrinsic logic of the pragma of force, but, in order to be ‘genuine political action’, has to abide by the inner demands of the sphere – and in particular be geared to the pursuit of a cause. Weber insists that power struggle for the sake of power is not politics: ‘The sin against the holy spirit of his

⁷⁰ Weber, "Politics", 444.

⁷¹ Ibid, 396.

⁷² Weber, "Between two laws".

profession begins where his striving for power becomes detached from the task in hand (*unsachlich*)⁷³, that is to say from politics as a task.

Precisely, as I shall explain more in depth for each life order/value sphere in the following chapters, the most important inner requirement, for all spheres, is to orient one's action to a cause, a higher task, or, in the case of art, to the expression of one's artistic will, so that action is not purely left to the workings of the intrinsic logic of the sphere and of its dynamic of rationalisation, but is constructed in the tension between such dynamic and one's own self-determined pursuit. This is what gives rise to the 'ethical [or, for that matter, aesthetic] tension'⁷⁴ between self-determined goals and rationalised means, pointed to by Löwith. For it is the existence and acknowledgement of such a tension which creates the need and the possibility for the human being to decide and engage; which creates, in other words, the possibility of ethics, not as an extrinsic, cross-cutting field of moral demands but within each sphere⁷⁵. 'Genuine action' in politics; acting with 'intellectual integrity' in teaching; expressive, artistically meaningful creation in art⁷⁶ designates human action which seeks to respond to the inner demands of its sphere of deployment, and more particularly, to cope and wrestle with the intrinsic logic of the sphere in pursuing goals which stretch this logic.

The mere processing of the matter of human action, the drives, passions, interests, through the dynamic of rationalisation set out by the intrinsic logic of a sphere dries up action and transforms it into pure technique. Thus form must stand in the service of expression of artistic will, as Weber stressed in his criticism of Stefan George⁷⁷. The 'assault of self-sufficient intellectual knowledge'⁷⁸, with its logic of calculation, can also desiccate all passion and mechanically produce scientific 'truths', unless it stands in the service of a higher task, such as teaching individuals' 'clarity' about themselves and about the world

⁷³ Weber, "Politics", 436. Weber, *PW (en)*, 354.

⁷⁴ Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, 67.

⁷⁵ I come back on the impossibility of a cross-cutting field of ethics in Part III Chapter 7.

⁷⁶ These seem to be Weber's criteria for judging George's art – he is looking for a form that has conquered 'expression' (*Ausdruck*) by opposition to form for its own sake or in which artistic will is too manifest. Towards the end of his assessment, Weber also refers to the 'artistic meaninglessness' of George's most recent achievements. Nevertheless, Weber thought George's existence to be 'genuine' – which probably has to be understood here as stemming from inner necessity. But George's attempt at coining a salvation prophecy was 'an alien body' in that 'genuine existence' which also impacted his art and rendered it meaningless. Weber, *Letters 1909-1910*, 559-563.

⁷⁷ Weber's critique of the 'objective' turn taken by Stefan George's poetry testified to his preoccupation at the progress of objectivation including in the spheres of expression of the most personal in the human being. See *Ibid*.

⁷⁸ Weber, "IR", 566.

they are placed in⁷⁹. The ‘specialist type of human being’, that *Fachmensch* that we have found to be the dominant bearer of modern culture in Weber’s age, is a direct product of such exclusive steering by the objectivation logic of the economic order and of the bureaucratic structure of the modern state. The absence of tensions between the ‘ratio’ of the capitalist economy and the value which steers it (gain) means that there is no ‘stretching beyond’ the ‘flattened everyday’, and hence in principle little possibility of life conduct in the strict sense of the term (ethical life conduct) in the contemporary economic sphere⁸⁰. I have already quoted the words of Wilhelm Hennis in the introduction: ‘there is no place for *Lebensführung* in the “cage”’.

On the other hand, the possibility of life conduct is not as ‘straightforward’ as Hennis suggests when the “cause” or “cultural value” is something out of the ordinary⁸¹. Is there an ‘ethical tension’ or its equivalent in the erotic sphere, for example, which would warrant the possibility of life conduct? There was, in the epoch of courtly love: vassals had to ‘prove themselves’ by arousing the lady’s ‘erotic interest’. And there was tension as well in the epoch of the salons, when the ‘manifest or latent’ erotic sensation constituted the indispensable stimulus for conversation: ‘salon culture relied on the conviction of the value-creating power of intersexual conversation’⁸². But once the consistent rationalisation of everyday life by the *Berufsmensch* had intensified the irrational appeal of sexual love and the search for (inner-worldly) salvation from the rational, the conscious enjoyment of the erotic sensation became both the logic which characterises a differentiated erotic sphere and what is valorised most highly in eroticism. Hence there would seem to be no tension in a sphere which is situated completely out of the everyday. Nevertheless the indications on the modern erotic sphere provided in *IR* could also point to a tension between the logic of erotic sensation for itself and the pursuit of fusion in erotic union – and hence to the possibility of inner, immanent demands there as well. Weber’s mention, in the last draft of *IR* (1920), of ‘genuine “passion”’ would seem to point in that direction⁸³. As I explain in Part III Chapter 7, Weber seems to have hesitated as to the ‘place’ of the erotic on the map of value spheres, that is to say, as to its ‘vocation in the totality of human life’.

⁷⁹ Weber, "Science", 608.

⁸⁰ Nevertheless, as we shall see in Chapter 4, Weber considered the struggle waged by trade unions for a different treatment of workers, oriented in part to non-economic values (justice, dignity), as ferment for life conduct.

⁸¹ Hennis, *Central Question*, 89, 97.

⁸² Weber, "IR", 559.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 562.

III – Lessons from a case study: the modern Western music sphere and its inner momentum

Weber summed up the ‘central problem’ he set out to address in his music study⁸⁴ in the ‘Value freedom’ essay as being, ‘from the point of view of the interest of the modern European human being (value relevance!): Why was harmonic music developed, from the popular polyphony developed almost everywhere, only in Europe and only in a particular period’⁸⁵. As pointed out by Braun, this was but one of the instances of Weber’s recurring question about the specific mode of rationalisation of all realms of human activity in the West, an enquiry which oriented his historical and comparative work and culminated into the 1920 ‘Author’s Introduction’ to the *Collected Essays* and the highlighting of calculability as the core of Western rationalism.

Yet this is not what makes us hold our breath, when we read the summary in the Value Freedom essay, and indeed the whole of the music study. Nor is it, despite their range and erudition, the sources brought to bear by Weber, from musicological treatises to the state of the art in acoustics (with the work of Hermann Helmholtz) and the most recent ethnographic studies of musical cultures, relying on phonograph recordings (in particular by the group directed by Carl Stumpf at the university of Berlin), as well as, probably, first-hand listening to the material of the *Phonogramm Archiv* developed by Stumpf and his team from 1900 onwards⁸⁶.

⁸⁴ I will refer to Weber’s main publication on music as the ‘music study’. The title of the English translation, *The rational and social foundations of music*, is the translation of a posthumous title devised by the editors (Marianne Weber and Theodor Kroyer), but Weber most often referred to it as his ‘history of music’ (which is consistent with the fact that the study is mostly about the inner momentum of the music sphere). Christoph Braun has established that Weber had worked on it in the autumn of 1912 and during the winter of 1912-3, and that he sought to go back to it in 1917 (as shown in his additions for the *Logos* publication of a 1913 *Verein* communication) and then again in 1919/1920. The manuscript remained unfinished and was published as such in 1921 thanks to Marianne Weber’s transcription.

⁸⁵ Weber, "Value Freedom", 483.

⁸⁶ Braun, *Max Weber's Sociology of Music*, 252. I cannot comment on the relevance of the study to musicologists today. However, notwithstanding the fact that historical and technical knowledge has moved forward, what needs to be assessed is the explanatory power of Max Weber’s comparative approach, distinctions, categories and ideal-types. Thanks to this approach, Weber was able to convincingly discard the deductions and conclusions of authors whose empirical work he nevertheless used – and it thus seems that he was able, as in the monographs of the *Economic Ethic of World Religions*, to grasp the essential principles and ‘spirit’ of the Western music system on the basis of and sometimes against the state of the art. The French editors (a semiologist and a sociologist, both specialised in music) talk about Weber’s ‘dazzling intuitions’. For Christoph Braun, the specialist on Weber’s study, and well versed into musicology, the study ‘reveals a breadth and depth of thinking and a synthetic achievement, which is as yet unequalled, and which now more than ever can serve as the model for a sociology of culture’. (See Braun, "Music as 'Science of Reality'", 190.)

Rather the main reason why the music study is so intriguing is that the whole text can be seen, beyond all the qualifications, nuances, and words of caution that Weber constantly interjects, as the unfolding of the consequences of the first seemingly cryptic sentences of the essay:

‘All rationalised harmonic music rests upon the octave (vibration rate 1:2) and its division into the fifth (2:3) and fourth (3:4), i.e. in two divisions according to the formula $n/(n+1)$, called super-partial divisions ... the powers of these divisions can never meet on one and the same note no matter how long the procedure be continued. The twelfth perfect fifth $(2/3)^{12}$ is larger by the Pythagorean comma than the seventh octave equalling $(1/2)^7$. This unalterable state of affairs together with the further fact that the octave is only divisible through super-partial divisions into two unequal intervals, forms the fundamental core of facts for all rationalisations of music.⁸⁷

From this initial division onwards, Weber’s demonstration is not merely that the history of music has been a history of rationalisation, but rather, as Christoph Braun has very finely stressed, that it has been the terrain of struggles between rationalisation and the irrational lodged at its very heart. In effect, though the consonant intervals (octave, fifth and fourth) obtained by pressing down the string of a one-string instrument (‘monochord’) in different places, correspond, in the length of the string segment, to mathematical ‘ratios’ (respectively $1/2$, $3/4$ and $2/3$, which, in addition only resort to prime numbers) – a discovery attributed to Pythagoras⁸⁸, the encounter between mathematical and musical ratios quickly found its limits, since, for example, cycles of fifths and octaves end up meeting on the same note, whereas the corresponding powers of their ratios never equalise (they differ by a very small, inaudible, interval called the ‘Pythagorean comma’). Far from stifling the development of music theory, Weber showed that this ‘inescapable’ irrationality forced music theorists into devising ways to address it which were foundational for the world music systems: this, possibly, was the first instance of a pattern of development spurred by the tensions between the rational and the irrational, in which the decisions made by theorists and innovations of practitioners (especially instrument manufacturers) to deal with these tensions oriented music systems in a characteristic way, and progressively marked a path in which new decisions and practices came to reinforce earlier ones, so that music systems were formed:

⁸⁷ Weber, *Music study*, 3. Translation modified from Max Weber, *The rational and social foundations of music*, Don Martindale, Johannes Riedel and Gertrude Neuwirth ed. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1958), 3.

⁸⁸ Jean Molino and Emmanuel Pedler, "Préface" [Preface to the Sociology of music. The rational and social foundations of music]. in Max Weber. *Sociologie de la musique. Les fondements rationnels et sociaux de la musique* (Paris: Métailié, 1998), 14. The discovery had fuelled the Ancient Greeks’ idea of a world ordered by numbers.

‘The various great systems of all peoples and ages differentiated themselves above all in the art and manner in which they have covered up or bypassed this inescapable irrationality, or, conversely, put it at the service of the richness of tonalities’⁸⁹.

But what is most striking is that this inner dynamic of the music sphere appears to stem from the tensions and relations of ‘cooperation’ and ‘struggle’ between the intervals themselves⁹⁰. The human actors of this struggle are forced to reckon with a movement which has been triggered by the search for rationalisation, but which has its own ‘inescapable’ force, starting with the tension between the 4th and the 5th (as their asymmetric complementariness towards the octave creates an imbalance – and therefore a dynamic). It is this creative grappling of men with the impersonal powers which they have themselves unleashed that forms the substance of the ‘inner dynamic’ of the music sphere, and Weber’s vivid description of the ‘struggles’ between intervals, notes, or between melody and harmony (see below) is very far from the naturalistic accounts of a Hermann Helmholtz (whose work Weber extensively but critically resorted to) and from the latter’s attempts at providing ‘a theory of music on a ‘physiological basis’⁹¹.

In the West, it is the 5th that comes out, when the 3rd, which was only recognised as a consonant interval in the Middle Ages, joins forces: the 3rd and 5th then combine in chords which become representative of tonalities – hence the reinforcement of the initial harmonic grounding of the Western music system. Conversely, in all other music systems the 4th becomes dominant (whereas it was relegated to the category of dissonant intervals in the West). The octave is regarded, for example in Arabic music theory (probably under Greek influence), as divided by two 4ths (+ one tone); and further divisions of the fourth are not based on a harmonic principle but on the principle of the melodic distance between notes. As a result, the possibilities of organisation of the notes within the fourth are manifold, though only distinguished from one another by very small intervals (which trains the ear into hearing very fine differences of pitch). The contrast between harmonic and melodic systems can also be described as a contrast, for the organisation of tonalities, between a principle of ‘affinity’ (*Vermundtschaft*) and a principle of proximity: progression from one tone to another comes about through representative chords and their inversions (harmonic affinity) or through the proximity (in melodic distance) between tones⁹².

⁸⁹ Weber, "Introduction", 253.

⁹⁰ Weber, *Music study*, 39.

⁹¹ Braun, "Music as 'Science of Reality'", 190.

⁹² Weber, *Music study*, 7.

The two principles are struggling within each music system as well. Thus Weber argued that, contrary to the dreams of rational consistency entertained by the great theorist of Western harmonic music, Jean-Philippe Rameau, melody ‘cannot be derived harmonically’ although ‘it is, in truth, harmonically conditioned and bound’⁹³. This means that melody carries with it, inside the harmonic system, the principle of tone ‘proximity’, which clashes with that of harmonic ‘affinity’ or ‘relatedness’; the melody and its harmonically irrational succession of notes thus create a tension, looking for resolution.

However, it is precisely these chord-alien tones which are, through the contrast with chord-based requirements, naturally the most effective means of the dynamics of progression, on the one hand, and on the other hand, of the linking together and interdependency of chord successions. Without the tensions motivated by the irrationality of melody, there would be no modern music, since these tensions count amongst its most important means of expression⁹⁴.

Scale fixing, which is required in particular for transposition purposes and for the tuning of fixed-tuning (keyboard) instruments, unveils further irrationalities, which are ‘concealed in the harmonic system itself’. Thus, as minor and major keys manage the same tonal material, the 3rd and the 7th have to be tonality ‘markers’, which the 7th can only be for minor scales if it is chromatically raised: but this is contradictory with other harmonic requirements and in turn creates more ‘rebel’ and ‘revolutionary’ chords.

Above all, scale fixing concerns led to yet another compromise with the distance principle: the full, equal temperament of the scales.

A tonal scale is tempered, in the broadest sense of the term, when the distance principle is applied in such a way that the purity of the intervals is relativised for the purpose of compensating for the contradiction between the various “cycles” of intervals through the reduction to distances which have only approximate purity⁹⁵.

However it cannot be said that this amounted to the arbitrary imposition of a principle of distance on the scales: the temperament adopted (the division of the octave into 12 distances of half-tone each, each equal to $^{12}\sqrt{1/2}$, which absorbs the Pythagorean comma) only ‘operates as “temperament” of tones which were obtained harmonically’ in the first place⁹⁶. Again this was a most fruitful innovation, which was not only the ‘condition for the free progression of chords’, but offered new possibilities of (‘enharmonic’) modulation⁹⁷.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 8.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 75.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 78.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 77.

The music study thus progressively unveils the springs of the dynamic moving the Western music system forward and progressively structuring it, namely harmonic tonal ratio and its tensions with the irrationalities it holds at its core. All momentary resolutions of these tensions serve to maintain this principle as the backbone of Western music, and in fact as its ‘form-giving principle’ (*formendes Prinzip*). On the one hand, this principle ‘can only accommodate the living movement of musical means of expression to a limited extent’⁹⁸, contrary to the endless elasticity of melodic systems, where ‘the ear that is not harmonically trained can enjoy intervals which cannot be classified harmonically’⁹⁹ and acquire much more refinement of hearing than the somewhat ‘deadening’ effects of tonal harmony. But, on the other hand,

‘the whole of modern chord-harmonic (*akkordharmonische*) music is unthinkable without temperament and the logic of its consequences. Only temperament has brought it to full freedom’¹⁰⁰.

The ‘freedom’ afforded by the ‘form-giving’ principle of tonal ratio is of another nature than the free-floating espousing of life encountered in the melodic systems – and the kind of musicians it fosters is also different. Melodic systems are more prone to the flourishing of virtuosi singers and players, characteristically deploying their talents of expression in complex and endless chromaticism. Melodic rationalisation is very unstable, as its accommodation of intervals through the principle of distance means that no boundaries are put in principle to the use of the most ‘irrational’ intervals, especially thirds (irrational in the sense of not corresponding to ‘ratio’, ‘proportion’, i.e. from the point of view of harmonic rationality). In the Arabic system, for example, the only limit that was put in some specific epochs and places was through the ‘stereotyping’ of melodic sequences (i.e. their fixing and repetition)¹⁰¹, but these did not resist the search for increasingly refined melodic expressivity and the accession of the ‘virtuoso or professional artist (*Berufskünstler*) trained in virtuoso-like performances as carrier (*Träger*) of the musical development’, whose ‘entirely irrational expressive means’ rely on specific qualities – ‘recherché, baroque and affected aesthetic mannerism, as well as intellectualist gourmet refinement’¹⁰².

⁹⁸ Ibid, 79.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 71.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 78. The idea of the translation of ‘*Konsequenzen*’ as ‘the logic of its consequences’ stems from the French translation. It is a way of rendering the double sense of the German root – both consequence and consistency – and thus to make the reader aware of the connection with the principle of consistency at the heart of Weber’s theoretical construction of the life orders.

¹⁰¹ In his *Sociology of Religion*, Weber rooted the beginnings of religious rationalisation in stereotypical rituals, but nevertheless opposed stereotyping and rationalisation from within, e.g. through an ethics of inner disposition (*Gesinnungsethik*). Weber, *ES*, 238, 331.

¹⁰² Weber, *Music study*, 70-1.

Conversely, once rationalisation had brought about a fixed notation system (an innovation in which the Dutch who dominated the papal chapel during the two centuries following the return from Avignon played a role, through their desire to ‘bring the [plurivocal] composition written according to a plan at the centre of religious music’¹⁰³), the type of musician fostered by the harmonically rationalised system was the composer. Contrary to the virtuoso artist, the composer does not seek immediate expressivity but rather mediates expression through the creation of new forms. It is the figure of the composer which can make the most of the ‘tension between musical ratio and musical life’¹⁰⁴, musical life consisting not only of the manifold irrationalities contained in the tonal harmonic system, which can burst out if the composer relaxes some of the balances built into the tonal architecture, but also of the life of feelings and passions which form the matter of the composer’s inspiration, of his artistic will.

A paradigmatic example in Weber’s study is that of J-S. Bach, whose ‘Well tempered clavier’ was the effective agent for the generalisation of equal temperament to all instruments with fixed keys. Bach was also the one who brought counterpoint form to its perfection. Counterpoint is a form of polyphony which

‘carries out a progression of the voices such that all can independently come to their melodic rights, but nonetheless also such that, wherever it is possible, and precisely through this very device, the whole maintains as such a strict musical (tonal) unity.’¹⁰⁵

In both instances, then, Bach sought to effectuate a synthesis between the melodic and harmonic principles – in the organisation of sounds through equal temperament, as said, harmony clearly remained the backbone, whereas, in counterpoint, the two principles are much more intricately intertwined. Indeed Weber remarks that the form not only generated fierce opposition in late Renaissance Italy, but also was ‘difficult to interpret for contemporary chord-oriented sensitivity’, ‘including and even precisely when interpreters are themselves creators (*schaffende Künstler*)’.

Thus not only are composers spurred to actualise, through the ‘form-giving’ principle, this tension between ‘ratio’ and ‘life’, between ‘harmony’ and ‘melody’, but their very creation consists of new forms which impact tonal harmonic ratio in return. They create ‘value-

¹⁰³ Ibid, 68. The Papal Chapel consists of ecclesiastics who participate in religious ceremonies wearing their liturgical vestments or the dress proper to their rank and office (*Annuario Pontificio* 2008, p. 1911).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 80.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 52.

forms¹⁰⁶, which as all value-related 'goods', in all life orders, become such only when their origin in the matter of personal feelings has been transformed through the interplay with the logic of the music system into something 'supra-individual', 'objective'¹⁰⁷ (Weber's notion of objectivity is here close to Simmel's¹⁰⁸). However, as argued by Weber in his commentary on the evolution of the poet Stefan George, this interplay by itself is not sufficient still to produce new value-forms, and it must be steered by the artist's personal will, or else musical creation may degenerate into spiritless form or mere technique: this forms part of the inner demands made by a life order/value sphere on us, and our response to these demands condition, for example in the art sphere, the type of 'creator' that we become.

As we have seen, 'tonal ratio' in fact conceals irrationality at its very core, all new forms associated with it can threaten to shatter the construction: the system is 'undermined from within'¹⁰⁹. And indeed Weber pointed to the 'most modern developments of music, which practically and in many ways move towards a corrosion of tonality'¹¹⁰, through heightened chromaticism – as pointed out by Braun, he was probably thinking in the first place of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*¹¹¹. Weber thought nevertheless that tonal ratio was persisting in these developments, if only through their opposition to it, which indicates that he probably did not grant enough autonomy to the new movement, and tended to consider it too much as a reaction. But his positing of the tension between the rational and the irrational at the heart of the Western musical system, as its 'intrinsic logic', and his analysis of the inner dynamic generated by this 'ratio' as a tension with 'life', shows that he viewed the 'real' of the life order of 'Western modern music' as a characteristically precarious equilibrium, whose very precariousness however was the spring of its creativity and therefore also its strength.

Weber's study was very much focused on the inner dynamic of the music sphere, its inner architecture, means and tensions. As we have seen, this above all entailed a precise analysis of the modes of organisation of sounds in the Western music system and differentially in

¹⁰⁶ Weber, "Sociology conferences", 452-3.

¹⁰⁷ Weber, "IR", 558. Weber, "Sociology conferences", 441,7.

¹⁰⁸ See Part III chapter 8.

¹⁰⁹ Jean Molino and Emmanuel Pedler, "Appendice Technique" [Technical annex to the Sociology of music. The rational and social foundations of music]. in Max Weber. *Sociologie de la musique. Les fondements rationnels et sociaux de la musique* (Paris: Métailié, 1998), 207.

¹¹⁰ Weber, *Music study*, 71.

¹¹¹ Braun, *Max Weber's Sociology of Music*, 29.

other music systems; but also, subordinated to this, an analysis of the carriers characterising the various music systems in various epochs, and, in the last part of the draft¹¹², an analysis of several string and keyboard instruments and their place in Western music.

As is logical, it is mostly through the study of instruments that Weber introduced the more 'sociological' side of his analysis, concerning the influence of specific religious, social and economic factors on music, although some prior reflections concern the 'elective affinities' between the ethos of specific carrier groups (notably the monks, and amongst them the 'puritanical' Cistercians) with some specific musical modes and forms (e.g. in that case the pentatonic)¹¹³. The inner orientation and relation of carriers to music can be dealt with in itself (e.g. Bach's already mentioned way of relating to the inner tension of modern Western music between harmony and melody through the perfection of counterpoint); it can also be looked at from the point of view of influences external to the field of music proper (e.g. the influence of Bach's pietistic outlook on his music¹¹⁴, and the paradigmatic example of the Cistercians, above), in which case, since the relation between the 'spirit' of music and external conditions becomes the focus of the analysis, the approach becomes 'sociological', as per Weber's 1910 distinction (see below, in conclusion). Clearly, the two aspects are often interwoven in a historical account, since some developments of music as a differentiated sphere are entirely dependent upon these 'external conditions'.

Each family of instruments, and within it, each instrument, deserves a specific study, for the intricate relations between the properties of the instrument and their evolution, the position of the manufacturers, their relationships to composers and orchestras, and what drives them, the conditions of production and patterns of consumption in different countries, all this varies for each instrument and also has varying influence, in turn, on the evolution of musical subjects and composition. Thus some of the features of the evolution of the violin stand in stark contrast to those of keyboard instruments, especially the harpsichord and the piano, although in both cases, the evolution of the instruments took place in a frame of tight relations between individual court orchestras (from the XVIth century onwards) and instrument makers. Thus the three Italian families who dominated the violin trade (the Amati, Guarneri and Stradivari) were moved by aesthetic

¹¹² Christoph Braun has convincingly argued that what has been published as second part of the study had probably been written by Weber before the so-called first part. The edition of Weber's manuscript was a particularly difficult task for Marianne Weber, and several editorial choices were questionable – in particular the title, and the decision to publish the second edition of the work as an appendix to *Economy and Society* (See Ibid, 136-9).

¹¹³ Braun, "Music as 'Science of Reality'", 189. Weber, *Music study*, 12.

¹¹⁴ Weber, *Music study*, 89.

considerations (as well as by considerations of handiness): they looked for ‘expressive sonorous beauty – a “singing” sound – and probably the elegance of the instrument as well’¹¹⁵. They achieved quasi-perfection through purely traditional empirical knowledge and experimentation, and the result far exceeded the demand of the times: in particular, their instruments could perfectly accommodate the needs of virtuoso soloists – but this type of virtuoso practice in fact arrived much later, and the ‘performance capacity of the Amati instruments does not seem to have really been exploited for decades’. The product of this fabrication process was thus not a means for favouring harmonic music (contrary to earlier string instruments): rather the violin was the ‘carrier’ of ‘melodic effects’. In brief: ‘the creation of the great violin-makers had definitely lacked a rational foundation’¹¹⁶. This overall judgment seems to refer both to the fact that the violin, as musical object, had become an end in itself for the Italian makers, and to the structural tension of its melodic effects with harmonic ratio.

The hammer piano is a later development. In the same way as the violin is associated with Italy, the hammer piano was fostered in the country with the broadest musical base at the time, Saxony. Its musical properties, ‘the possibility to dampen or increase the sound, to hold it, and the beauty of the chords played in the form of arpeggios on any interval’ (despite the as of yet insufficient ‘freedom’ in the fast passages), raised general interest: amongst the choirs (*Kantoreien*), which were the carriers of ‘bourgeois musical culture’, the ‘virtuosi’, the ‘instrument-makers’, as well as at the ‘court musical formation’ (‘chapel’, *Hofkapelle*). But the ‘final victory’ of the piano came as a result of the rise of mass music consumption which it itself had contributed to foster (e.g. due to the diffusion of its musical possibilities through Mozart’s internationally known virtuoso art, and to its unrivalled possibilities for knowing the musical literature – before the invention of the phonograph, as well as for accompanying and teaching music). The search for ever more technical perfection of the piano was steered both by the competition between industrial piano manufacturers and by composers (as pointed out by Weber, Beethoven could not have been content with the earlier instruments)¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 83.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 84-5.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 93. Weber also made that point in his response to Sombart’s lecture on ‘Technology and culture’ in the Sociological conference of 1910. ‘Development of the Haydn orchestra was made possible by conditions of a sociological, and partly an economic character. But its underlying idea is his most personal possession and is not technologically motivated. As a rule, the artistic will (*das künstlerische Wollen*) itself gives birth to the technological means for problem solving’. Weber, "Sociology conferences", 455. Translation from Max Weber, "Remarks on Technology and Culture", *Theory Culture Society* 22, no. 4 (2005): 30.

Weber concluded that part of his study with an account of the undisputed reign of the piano over the musical field, which naturally has dramatic consequences for the way in which we listen to (and thus create, practice) music: in particular for the loss of ‘delicacy in hearing’, and therefore of that ‘melodic refinement of the musical culture of the Antiquity’, caused by the tempered scale. It had now become difficult to coin innovations that would allow for more chromaticism and smaller intervals (such as Helmholtz’s proposal for a 24 keys in the octave), given the dependency of production on mass consumption (inimical to such complexity). The piano is the ‘carrier’ of modern harmonic music¹¹⁸, and, as such, can be regarded as the most systematic agent of its form-giving principle. This was a forceful demonstration of the way in which the (evolving) physical properties of an instrument, a technical means can combine with specific social conditions to create a mass phenomenon of cultural consumption which ends up impacting back, in turn, the intrinsic logic of the cultural sphere concerned¹¹⁹: in that case, in a way which both reinforced that logic (as the piano brings harmonic ratio to a sort of apex) and heightened its inner tension (by closing even more outlets for irrational expression).

The music study thus provides us with a wonderful and complex analysis of the inner momentum of a cultural sphere (the Western harmonic music system), [1] grounded in a universal impetus of rationalisation (of chords) which, looking to implement a model of ‘correct (here mathematical) rationality’ inescapably encounters the ‘empirical behaviour’ (of chords) and thereby discovers its own in-built irrationality. [2] The tension between the rational and the irrational becomes constitutive of different music systems and of their creativity, as they adopt a principle (an ‘intrinsic logic’) for productively coping with it whilst inevitably perpetuating it. [3] The encounter of the intrinsic logic (of tonal ratio in the Western music system) with the needs of musical expression (‘life’) actualises the tension in a way that is creative and ‘form-giving’ but can also ultimately undermine the whole system, if its intrinsic logic is stretched too far. And [4] it is the artist/creator, guided by his own artistic will, who, in expressing and dealing with these tensions, himself produces – or steers the production of – new technical means, as well as new ‘value-forms’. Further, Weber’s study of the musical sphere also unveiled the relations between the ‘external conditions’ of the sphere and its inner dynamic, in particular the way in which the organisation of production (of technical means) and consumption (of the means

¹¹⁸ Weber, *Music study*, 94.

¹¹⁹ As suggested in diagram 2 above.

themselves and of the cultural goods produced) itself impacts on the inner dynamic of the sphere.

IR, in its two versions, that published in 1915 – which does not specifically refer to music but more generally to the intrinsic logic of art as a ‘power of life’, and the second draft of 1920 – which provides a specific illustration in music, seems to put the final touch to Weber’s apprehension of music as a ‘cultural content’ of the aesthetic sphere: in ‘sublimating’ this field of culture into a ‘cosmos of specific and autonomous values’, that is to say, in separating off art from its religious cradle, the intrinsic logic of self-sufficient form (harmonic ratio in modern Western music) actually carves out receptacles for the outward expression of the most personal in the human being: this not only produces the objectivated synthesis of form and will in the shape of value-forms, but also offers a path of psychological, irrational, relief (indeed, of this-worldly ‘salvation’) from ‘everyday life and above all from the increasing pressure of theoretical and practical rationalism’. And this very process further accentuates the distinctiveness of art, especially its emancipation from those salvation religions which themselves followed their path of ‘sublimation’ towards ever more inwardness: both because this kind of religion ‘only considers meaning, not form’ – and thus is opposed to art in its intrinsic logic; and because of the direct competition in the psychological states obtained – deliverance/salvation and emotion¹²⁰.

Weber clearly thought that the inner dynamic he had unravelled for the music sphere could be identified in others: he even thought that precisely the same kind of unbalanced dynamic, spurred by a model of ‘correct rationality’ (that is to say ‘expectations formed on the basis of valid experience’¹²¹) here, the arithmetic of fractions, the division of the octave into the fourth and fifth, and its frictions with ‘life’ (and the empirical limits to the model), could be looked for ‘in all fields of life’, as he indicated in a famous footnote in the ‘Categories’ essay:

‘The way in which the relationship between the correct type of a behaviour and the empirical behaviour has an effect and how this developmental factor is related to sociological influences (e.g., in a particular art development) I hope to illustrate in the future with an example (music history). Not only for the history of logic and other disciplines, but also in all other fields, precisely these relationships are the juncture at which the tensions between the empirical and the correct type become apparent and they are thus dynamically of the highest developmental significance. Further (and the situation is individually and basically varying in each area of culture) I hope to illustrate that (and how) an unequivocal correct type is not practicable but that compromise or choice between a

¹²⁰ Weber, "IR", 555,6.

¹²¹ Weber, "Categories", 432. Translation from Max Weber, "Some Categories of Interpretive Sociology", *The Sociological Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (1981): 154.

number of such bases of rationalization becomes possible or inevitable. Such substantive problems cannot be discussed here.¹²²

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to unravel the dynamics of differentiation and deployment of what Weber calls the life orders and value spheres, and which I have treated as together constituting spheres of human action, endeavour and pursuit. These dynamics account for the inner and outer shaping of human action and therefore of types of human being in the differentiated spheres of the modern age in the West. I have suggested that the dynamic set off by the intrinsic logic of each sphere of interplay between the ratio governing the means of action in the sphere and 'life', i.e. the matter for that action, is particularly important to understand how life is 'formed' in the various life orders.

The music study provides a wonderful case study of the inner momentum of a cultural sphere (the Western harmonic music system), in which the impetus of rationalisation so to speak discovers its own in-built irrationality, and where this interplay between the rational and the irrational and the way in which it is resolved becomes constitutive of musical creativity. Nevertheless it is the gearing of human pursuits to causes which can orient action rather than merely giving form to it. I have suggested here (and will probe further in the following chapters) that the possibility of *Lebensführung* in its strong sense is given by the steering to values which stand in tension with the ratios of the various spheres, by the possibility of 'reaching out' rather than merely adjusting to these ratios. In music, the composer is the figure, in the West, who can make the most of the 'tension between musical ratio and musical life', but this is because his own resolution of the tension between harmonic and melodic principles is steered to the creation of new value forms able to convey his artistic will.

According to Christoph Braun, the 'music study' led Weber to fully formulate the need for a two-fold approach to the analysis of spheres of human endeavour and pursuit, as is apparent in the structure of the study, with its focus, in the first part, on the inner dynamic of music systems; and with its analysis, in the second part, of some social and economic determinations of music through the study of the development of music instruments. In this connection, Braun exhumed from perhaps characteristic oblivion the intellectual exchange with Karl Vossler, a Romance scholar, whose clarity of vision regarding the

¹²² Weber, "Categories", 438. Translation from Weber, "Categories (en)": 179.

practice of his discipline and the place it should make for sociology seems to have bolstered Weber's own approach, not only to his planned sociology of literature and to his study of music, as pointed out by Braun, but also more generally. It is worth quoting Vossler's introduction to his essay on the 'Art of the first Troubadour' in full:

'The history of the emergence of the first modern poetry - that is, Provençal lyric poetry' – will always retain its obscure pages. In order to cast light on them, we should be much more thoroughly informed than we are about the form which the economic, social and religious conditions, and cultural conditions in general, took in southern France in the course of the 10th and 11th centuries. But even the most thorough and encompassing 'milieu' research in cultural history remains insufficient, if poetry itself is not asked the secret of its birth and illuminated by its own spirit¹²³

As also suggested by Braun, it is manifest that Weber's involvement, roughly in the same period, in the launch of the German society for sociology (DGS) led him to think through the specificity of the individual disciplines within the broader set of the cultural and social sciences. Thus, in the intervention on the occasion of Werner Sombart's lecture on 'Technology and culture' (*Technik und Kultur*)¹²⁴ in the first Conference of DGS, Weber

assigns this 'question of the connection between the artistic will and the technical means of music' to the field of 'music history'; while 'sociology poses the other question, about the connection between the "spirit" (*Geist*) of a particular music and the general technical bases of our present, and especially our big-city, life, which influences the tempo of life and our feelings towards it'¹²⁵.

In other words, history should study the inner momentum of the creative spheres and the 'spirit' of these 'cultural contents' (music, literature etc.) which derives from that momentum, whilst sociology should focus on the affinity between specific 'structural forms' and that 'spirit'. This could be generalised to the study of all spheres of human action¹²⁶.

IR, in setting out the process of differentiation and tension between life orders/value spheres, also evokes, more or less in depth, the inner dynamic of each sphere. This is yet another reason for considering it a 'connecting joint' – this time between sociology and history. And it is plausible to venture that *IR* not only tapped into, but also prepared the ground for, more 'historical' studies of each sphere – an endeavour which found actual and furthest translation, on a scholarly plane, into the music study and the 'Vocation lectures'. Nevertheless, as suggested in the Introduction of the thesis, Weber's *Academic Writings* and

¹²³ Karl Vossler, "Die Kunst des ältesten Trobadors" [The art of the ancient troubadour], in *Miscellanea di studi in onore de Attilio Hortis* (Trieste: 1910), 419. See also Braun, "Music as 'Science of Reality'", 186.

¹²⁴ As per the English translation proposed in Weber, "Remarks on Technology and Culture".

¹²⁵ Braun, "Music as 'Science of Reality'", 178. Weber, "Sociology conferences", 455.

¹²⁶ As explained in Part I Chapter 2, the *Economic Ethics of the World Religions* is structured around this distinction. Weber for example characterises 'patrimonialism' as the 'foundational structural form' for the 'spirit of Confucianism'. Weber, "Confucianism", 330.

*Political Writings*¹²⁷ are often texts designed for public intervention in the respective spheres and thus bring out his reflections on the inner dynamic and inner demands of modern science and academia and modern politics, meant to unveil the inconsistency of their current external organisation. They are therefore very fitting for an analysis of the life orders of science and politics seeking to emulate the double dimension of the ‘music study’. Nevertheless, we are already provided with many clues as to the inner dynamics of each sphere in *IR*: and it is with these clues, supplemented with those provided by other texts that I will proceed further in the following chapters.

¹²⁷ Even though Weber was adamant that these were not scientific writings, their analyses are nourished by Weber’s scientific work, as highlighted e.g. by Patrice Duran (Patrice Duran, "Max Weber et la fabrique des hommes politiques. Une sociologie de la responsabilité politique" [Max Weber and the making of politicians. A sociology of political responsibility], in *Max Weber et le politique*(Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 2009), 75.)

Chapter 4 – The ‘cosmos of the modern rational capitalist economy’: the ‘inner tuning’ of the contemporary worker and of the entrepreneur

Introduction

I have suggested in the introduction to the thesis that young Weber had been struck, in his survey of East-Elbian labour relations, by the ruthlessness of the transformation of two ‘*Stände*’ (the positively privileged *Stand* of the Junkers – the landed aristocracy supporters of the Reich, and the negatively privileged *Stand* of the rural labourers) into mere ‘classes’ (respectively commercial entrepreneurs and proletarianised labourers), as what had been ‘brutal personal relations of domination’ were transformed into ‘commercial exploitation’¹. However there can only be a temporary identification of types of men with pure class actors: even adaptation to the logic of modern capitalism requires the fostering of a ‘form of life’, and not only the economically rational discharge of one’s class role under the pressure of respectively need and interest, even though modern entrepreneurs come close to being reduced to their class features.

Starting from the account of the differentiation of the economic sphere in *IR* and taking further support in Weber’s investigation of contemporary capitalism in *PE* (chapter 2, ‘The spirit of capitalism’), in *ES*, and in the preface to Weber’s course on *General economic history*, I analyse the inner momentum of the rationalised economic order (section I). I then explore the factors and mechanisms shaping such forms of life as well as those who uphold them, especially the worker (section II) and the entrepreneur (section III). The analysis of the *ES* section on the drives towards economic action in a market economy combined with, on the one hand, Weber’s methodological introduction to the *Verein* survey on industrial workers (for my analysis of the shaping of the contemporary worker) and, on the other hand, chapter 2 of the *PE* (for my analysis of the shaping of the contemporary entrepreneur) will bring me to emphasise the notion of *Eingestelltheit*, ‘tuning in’, to account for the continued mobilisation and adaptation of both types to the logic of the economic order.

¹ Weber, "Developmental tendencies", 488.

I – The dynamics of the modern rationalised economic life order

The differentiation of the economic life order

In the revised version of *IR*, Weber defines the economic sphere through money – which is not his point of departure in his more systematic expositions of the economy and economic action in *ES* (Chapter 2, ‘Sociological categories of economic action’). There it starts from a sociological characterisation of economic action, as the ‘peaceful exercise of a power of disposal that is primarily economically oriented’ that is to say, that is oriented ‘to the provision for the desire of utilities (*Nutzleistungen*)’, to which Weber, in his *General Economic History* (hereafter *GEH*), adds ‘or chances of disposal’ thereof². These definitions will help me in a moment to make sense of the dynamics of the economy evoked in *IR*, but the originality of Weber’s approach to the economic sphere there must be stressed, all the more so that the writing of the conceptual part of *ES*, the course on economic history and the revision of *IR*, all took place in the same period (1919-1920).

The importance of money for Weber’s account of the rational economy relates to the characterisation of the spheres of culture as life orders with their own dynamic. Money is the means conditioning the economy, and money is ‘what is most abstract and “impersonal” in men’s life’: we have here expressed, in an utterly concise fashion, the spring of the dynamics of the rationalised economic life order. The monetised character of the economy and its abstracting and depersonalising implications had remained limited so long as economic relationships were embedded in social relations, and therefore above all geared to status. In this context, the pursuit of wealth was considered ‘self-evident’; work carried out by un-free labour (serfs and slaves), under the personal rule of the masters, was amenable to ethical regulation (since the form taken by the relationship depends on the ‘personal will of participants’). But when and where the ‘relation of men to the sphere of [economic] goods’ becomes formally ‘rationalised’, its logic of absolute ‘objectivation’

² Weber, *ES*, 31. Max Weber, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte: Abriss der universalen Sozial- und Wirtschafts-Geschichte. Aus den nachgelassenen Vorlesungen* [General Economic History], S.Hellman and M.Palyi ed. 2nd edition (unchanged) (München: Duncker & Humblot, 1924), 1. The *General Economic History* was first published in 1923, put together from student notes from the lecture course that Max Weber gave during the Winter Semester of 1919-1920 at Munich University. However, the 1927 translation to English (which was the first of Max Weber’s works published after his death) did not include the ‘Conceptual Preface’, the translator being under the impression that it had been elaborated by the editors on the basis of chapter 2 of *Economy and Society*. But Johannes Winckelmann established that Weber had actually started his course with this conceptual exposition. Keith Tribe has finally made this text available to the English-speaking reader and explains this in his introduction to it (see Keith Tribe, “Max Weber’s ‘Conceptual Preface’ to *General Economic History*: Introduction and Translation”, *Max Weber Studies Beiheft* I (2006).

(*Versachlichung*), and therefore the de-personalisation, of economic relationships³ comes to the fore.

However this was not a straightforward dynamic of rationalisation: the logic of ‘formal rationality’ and objectivation of the ‘cosmos of the modern rational capitalist economy’⁴ clashed with material rationalities stemming from a traditional conception of the economy as embedded in social life – for which the separation of things economic and their ascent to a ruling position are thus experienced as ‘irrational’⁵. Thus, traditionally, economic desires and needs have not been unlimited – on the contrary, the typical attitude has been to work in order to get sufficient income for covering the needs of one’s family, and Weber pleasantly tells us about the failure of those agricultural employers who had wanted to raise their workers’ productivity by raising their piece-rate, for

‘The Human being does not wish “by nature” to earn more and more money, but rather, simply to live, and to live as one is used to, and to earn as much as is required to that end. Wherever modern capitalism began its task to raise the “productivity” of human work by increasing its intensity...’⁶.

This tension has been constitutive of the economic sphere as separate sphere. Indeed the attempt at doing away with material rationalities has been at the core of the rational capitalist economy:

‘Thanks to the penetration of accounting procedures, today’s economic organisation (*Wirtschaftsverfassung*) is highly rationalised, and in a certain sense and to a certain degree the whole of economic history is the history of economic rationalism based upon calculation becoming victorious today’⁷.

Weber’s well-known thesis is that probably only the force of this religious striving could achieve such a radical break with tradition as was operated by the stratum of ascetic protestant early capitalists:

‘But, above all, the “summum bonum” of this “ethic”, namely, the acquisition of money, and ever more money, under the strictest avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of it (...) is so much considered as an end in itself, that it appears as utterly of a transcendental origin and always irrational if set against the “happiness” or “need” of the individual. [In this ethic] the human being is oriented to acquisition as the purpose of life, rather than acquisition being a means to the end of satisfying the material needs of life’⁸.

³ Weber, "IR", 544. On the translation of *Versachlichung* see above Part I Chapter 2, footnote 5.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Weber, "PE", 62.

⁶ Ibid, 44-5.

⁷ Weber, *GEH*, 15.

⁸ Weber, "PE", 35-6.

The paradox was all the greater as Protestantism radically devalued all worldly spheres, including the economic sphere, as inherently and hopelessly corrupt. But the objectivity of money and economic relations, by contrast with the worlds of feelings, at least allowed for the exercising of consistent and systematic self-discipline in this world⁹: the affinity between the quest for proving oneself and the intrinsic logic of objectivation of the economic sphere was what unleashed a dynamic of formal rationalisation so far unknown. The notion of money as the most abstract and impersonal thing in this world is strongly reminiscent of Simmel's approach to it, and it may be thought that Weber also had this connection in mind when he wrote about the affinity between the objectivity of the economy and the Puritans' search for a terrain of inner-worldly exertion, since Simmel had emphasised not only the objective character of money but also its devaluing effect as all goods are approached through the same standard of equivalence¹⁰.

This dynamic of formal rationalisation ended up undoing the ties and limits still encumbering (from the point of view of economic rationality) the workings of the economic sphere and led to its autonomy in the West:

‘Today the economy is, to the extent that it is a market economy (*Verkehrswirtschaft*), in large part economically autonomous: set (*eingestellt*) only to economic viewpoints (*Gesichtspunkte*) and with a high level of calculable rationality’¹¹.

Indeed, one may ask whether the economic life order has become identical with the structural form of the market – and has become reduced to the workings of its intrinsic logic, which completely shapes its ‘matter’ (human interests and needs) into objectivated goods, without the productive tensions of yore with substantive rationalities, let alone with non-economic quests, such as ‘magical and religious considerations – the striving for salvation goods; political considerations – the striving for power; and *Stand* interests – the striving for honour’¹². This identification of the life order of modern capitalism and the ‘structural form’ of the market appears very clearly when we compare Weber's exposition of the economic sphere in *IR* and the characterisation of the ‘market community’

⁹ Weber, "IR", 545.

¹⁰ ‘To the extent that things are exchanged for money - but not when they are bartered - they share this lack of individuality. The absence of any inherent worth in an object cannot be more distinctly expressed than by substituting for it, without any sense of inadequacy, a money equivalent’. Simmel, *Money (en)*, 123-4.

¹¹ Weber, *GEH*, 15. Tribe (Tribe, "Conceptual Preface": 37.) translates *Verkehrswirtschaft* as ‘commercial economy’, arguing that Weber would have used *Marktwirtschaft* if he had meant market economy (and indeed he does use the term sometimes, though very infrequently). Yet because of the very rare occurrence of the term *Marktwirtschaft*, and because the expression ‘market economy’ seems indeed to correspond to what Weber meant by *Verkehrswirtschaft* (i.e. an economy where ‘market exchange dominates’ - Weber, *GEH*, 3.), I will use market economy here (as Roth and Wittich do in *ES*).

¹² Weber, *GEH*, 15.

(*Marktgemeinschaft*) as structural form (in *ES*, a fragment written in 1914, apparently in tight conjunction with the first draft of *IR*, and which visibly inspired Weber for the 1920 revision). Weber points to the market community as being the ‘most impersonal practical relationship in life, which men can enter with one another’¹³ and adds:

‘Where the market is left to its intrinsic logic, it only has regard for things, but knows no regard for the person, no duty of brotherliness and piety, none of the elemental (*urwüchsig*) human relations born by the personal communities (*Gemeinschaften*). All of these represent obstacles to the free development of naked market communitisation (*Marktvergemeinschaftung*)... As indeed Sombart has stressed repeatedly and often brilliantly, such absolute objectivation antagonizes all elemental (*urwüchsig*) structural forms of human relations’¹⁴.

To put it in the terms of *PE* and the following ‘Rebuttals’, whereas the ‘form’ of capitalism had historically been ‘filled by very different kinds of “spirit”’, and, ‘most frequently, though to very varied extents, stands in relations of elective affinity with historically defined kinds of that “spirit”’, the separation of the modern capitalist cosmos has meant that it has been left only with a spirit ‘which can be understood as pure product of adaptation’ to what there is¹⁵.

The inner momentum of the economic order

Yet, for all the objectivation achieved, Weber pointed out that the economic sphere was bound to always ultimately stumble upon two main inner irrationalities, which can be seen as playing for the economy the role of the Pythagorean comma for music, thus displaying, after music, a new case of tension between a ‘model of correct rationality’ and the empirical reality with which it has to confront itself:

‘Today the economy is... oriented only to economic perspectives and with a high level of calculable rationality. But strong material irrationalities persistently intrude into this condition of formal rationality, arising in particular from the distribution of income... and also from domestic and speculative interests which are, from the perspective of commercial enterprise, irrational in nature.’¹⁶

In generalising his findings of the music study concerning the workings of rationality, Weber suggested that the in-built irrationalities of all rationalisation processes are directly traceable to the motives and interests of the carrier strata of such rationalisations, a hypothesis he put forward in the ‘Categories’ essay (1913), as well as, more explicitly, in the ‘Introduction’ to the *Economic Ethics* (already in the version published in 1915):

‘Phenomena apparently directly conditioned by instrumental rationality were actually historically brought into being through wholly irrational motives, and thereafter, because changing life conditions

¹³ Weber, *ES*, 364.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 365.

¹⁵ Weber, "Anti-critique": 200. Weber, "PE", 55, 204.

¹⁶ Weber, *GEH*, 16. Tribe, "Conceptual Preface": 37.

let them accrue a high degree of technical “correct rationality”, they survived as “adaptations” and occasionally became universal¹⁷.

‘In the same way as in music, the Pythagorean “comma” resisted complete rationalisation steered to tonal physics, the various great [music] systems of all peoples and ages differentiated themselves above all in the art and manner in which they have covered up or bypassed this inescapable irrationality, or, conversely, put it at the service of the richness of tonalities, this seemed to happen to the theoretical image of the world but even far more to the practical rationalisation of life. There too, each of the great types of rational methodical life conduct were characterised above all through the irrational presuppositions, taken as a given, that they had integrated. What these were was determined, at the very least to a very large extent, by the specificity of those strata which were the carriers of the methodical [conduct of] life in question, at the decisive time for its coining, i.e. by their external (socially conditioned) and inner (psychologically conditioned) interests.’¹⁸

In the economic sphere, the Puritans’ restless irrational need to prove themselves meant that the systematic rationalisation of their economic activity became an end in itself, independently from the economic needs it was supposed to serve. The rational economic model of ‘*homo oeconomicus*’ which was made possible by certain material conditions, and was decisively coined by ascetic Protestantism, can be considered as the bearer of ‘correct economic rationality’.

From there, the first in-built irrationality stems from the fact that the orientation of economic action ‘to the provision for the desire of utilities (*Nutzleistungen*)’, ‘or chances of disposal’ thereof, has, ‘since the middle of the 19th century’, been effectuated in a ‘capitalistic way’, that is to say, with ‘absolute indifference (in the case of a fully free market)... towards all material postulates whatsoever’, and hence also towards the distribution of income. The provision of goods is thus steered merely to the ‘constellation of marginal utilities’ in ‘the income group with typically the purchasing power and the purchasing inclination for a given utility’. This constitutes ‘the limit of principle to its rationality’¹⁹ but one which is constitutive of the rationalised capitalist order. ‘Socialist theory’ has labelled this irrationality ‘anarchy of production’,

‘because it is unconcerned whether the individual interest of the entrepreneur in selling his products, i.e. the profit interest, functions in such a way as to guarantee provision for those needing these goods.’²⁰

Weber went further and showed that, more than indifference, the formal rationality characterising modern Western capitalism depends on explicitly and resolutely securing the

¹⁷ Weber, "Categories", 435. Translation modified from Weber, "Categories (en)": 155-6.

¹⁸ Weber, "Introduction", 253. See above, chapter 3.

¹⁹ Weber, *ES*, 31, 59. Weber, *GEH*, 1, 239. Weber, "IR", 545.

²⁰ Max Weber, "Der Sozialismus. Rede zur allgemeinen Orientierung von österreichischen Offizieren in Wien 1918" [Socialism. Speech of general orientation for Austrian army officers in Vienna in 1918], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik*. ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1924 [1918]), 500.

conditions for ‘formally free labour’ (and hence impeding any kind of regulation of income distribution), that is to say for the exposure of workers to necessity, so as to ensure the ‘superiority of owners over workers in labour market dealings’²¹. Indeed,

‘rational capitalistic calculation is possible only on the basis of free labour; only where in consequence of the existence of workers who in the formal sense voluntarily, but actually under the compulsion of the whip of hunger, offer themselves, the costs of products may be unambiguously determined by agreement in advance’²².

‘The fact that the maximum of formal rationality of capitalistic calculation is only possible where workers are subjected to the rule of entrepreneurs, is a further specific material irrationality of the economic order’²³.

Such tension between the (relative) dependency of modern capitalism on the ‘constellation of marginal utilities’ for the consumption of its products and its striving for enforcing what classical economists considered as the natural ‘whip of hunger’ ultimately opens up a terrain for social struggle, and, with socialism, for the destruction of formal capitalistic rationality and the steering of the economy purely to a material rationality of provision for need.

‘This fundamental and ultimately unavoidable irrationality of the economy is one of the sources of all “social” problematic, and above all: of that of all socialism’²⁴.

The second in-built irrationality pointed out by Weber occurs in case of separation between the owner and the entrepreneur of a commercial enterprise, a separation which corresponds in principle to the highest formal rationality of capitalism, since it allows for the selection of the firm manager on the grounds of his qualification for the task²⁵. But, on the other hand, this leads to the emergence of wealth pursuits which ‘are irrational by the standards of commercial interest’, that is to say by the standards of the interests of the enterprise, and yet ‘play a part in the conduct of the enterprise’²⁶. This second irrationality stems from the interjection of the material rationality of private wealth interests into the formal rationality of rational business management, as owners become interested in increasing their wealth without any regard as to whether this will ultimately strengthen the

²¹ Weber, *ES*, 78.

²² Weber, *GEH*, 240.

²³ Weber, *ES*, 78.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 60.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 94.

²⁶ Weber, *GEH*, 14.

economic – ‘commercial’ – position of the firm. It is thus in this sense and to this extent directly at the root of speculative activity, which itself spurs capitalist crises.

‘The influence of these interests, which are external to the enterprise, on the mode of control over leading positions, precisely and at most where their selection abides by formal rationality, constitutes a further specific material irrationality of the modern economic order (...). The influence exercised by external, purely speculative interests over market chances above all of capital goods, and thus over the orientation of the commercial production of goods, is one of the sources of the phenomena known as the “crises” of the modern market economy’²⁷.

Thus we see how, in the economic life order as in the music sphere, the model of ‘correct rationality’, i.e. the ‘formal rationality’ of the modern capitalist economic sphere, stumbles on empirical ‘irrationalities’ which it itself creates and which, in their turn, re-ignite material (or substantive) rationalities in tension with the logic of the sphere: even though this now takes place on different terms to the confrontation between traditionalist views of the economy and early modern capitalism, the rationalised capitalist cosmos exhibits renewed ‘struggle[s] of formal and material rationality’²⁸.

The three main types of economic actors in a ‘market economy’

Thus it is the combination of the ‘model of correct rationality’ operating in the logic of formal economic rationality with material or substantive economic rationalities which shapes types of actors, and indeed types of men, by contrast with the abstract ‘*homo oeconomicus*’, the ‘economic subject’, whom Weber evokes in *IR* alongside ‘*homo politicus*’, as bearer of pure formal ratio, if that ratio did not have to confront itself with ‘life’, and whose features Weber had listed in the printed outline of his 1898 lectures in economics:

To ascertain the most elementary life conditions of economically mature human subjects it [abstract theory] proposes a *constructed* “economic subject”, in respect of which, by *contrast* with empirical man, it

(a) *ignores* and treats as *non-existent* all those motives influencing empirical man which are *not* specifically *economic*, i.e. not specifically concerned with the fulfilment of material needs;

(b) *assumes* as existent qualities that empirical man does not possess, or possesses only incompletely, i.e. (i) complete *insight* into a given *situation* – economic omniscience; (ii) unfailing choice of the *most appropriate means* for a given end – absolute economic rationality; (iii) complete dedication of one’s powers to the purpose of acquiring economic goods – “untiring acquisitional drive”.

It thus postulates an unrealistic person, analogous to a mathematical model²⁹.

²⁷ Weber, *ES*, 79.

²⁸ Weber, *GEH*, 16. Tribe, "Conceptual Preface": 37. For Richard Swedberg, the ‘pair’ formed by formal and substantive rationality is one of the keys for coming to terms with Chapter 2 of *ES*. Richard Swedberg, "Max Weber's Central Text in Economic Sociology", in *The Sociology of Economic Life*. ed. 3rd (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 2011), 68-9.

²⁹ In *Grundriss zu den Vorlesungen über Allgemeine (theoretische) Nationalökonomie*, p.2 quoted in Hennis, *Central Question*, 121. For the mention of *homo oeconomicus* in *IR*, see Weber, "IR", 547. For the notion of *homo politicus*, see below Chapter 5, footnote 54. The ‘unrealistic’ character of this model was not, of itself, a

In *ES*, Weber distinguished three main economic actors ‘under conditions of a commercial economy’ – the propertyless, the privileged through property or the education afforded by property, and those ‘sharing in the chances of economic enterprises’³⁰. These of course are the actors of the economic situation which is a class situation. But Weber, in identifying the kind of drives leading them, or forcing them, to participate in the market³¹ also showed how the confrontations of ‘correct rationality’ with ‘empirical reality’; of formal with material rationalities; and of the intrinsic logic of capitalism with ‘life’ shape types of men and not merely class roles.

Thus the ‘propertyless’ (workers) are forced to take part in the market through the ‘compulsion (*Zwang*) exerted by the risk of complete deprivation (*Unversorgtheit*) for themselves and those personal “dependents” (children, wives, sometimes parents) whose care the individual(s) typically assume(s)’. But they may also experience, ‘although to a varying extent, an inner adjustment (*Eingestelltheit*) to economically productive work as form of life (*Lebensform*)’.

For those ‘sharing in the chances of economic enterprises (*Erwerbsunternehmungen*, literally: acquisitive, more simply: profit-making, enterprises)’, a category which I will unbundle further below, there is the typical economic motivation for the fructification of ‘one’s own capital risk and own profit chances’. But this combines with

‘an inner “professional” adjustment (“*berufsmäßige*” *Eingestelltheit*) towards rational acquisitive activity as α) “proof” (“*Bewährung*”) of one’s performance (*Leistung*); as β) form of autonomous free hand with (*Form autonomen Schaltens über*) those human beings dependent on one’s own orders; and besides γ) with the chances of an undetermined number of people to access important cultural or life goods: in a word, power’.

Finally there are those who, ‘effectively privileged on account of property (*Besitz*) or advantageous education (available to the propertied)’ are drawn to their occupations for the ‘chances of advantageous (*bevorzugter*) professional income’, but also by ‘ambition’, and,

problem for Weber. Ideal-types are, precisely, unreal constructions meant to approach reality, and, in the ‘Objectivity’ essay, Weber refers to abstract economic theory as a domain relying on such ‘synthetic constructs (Weber, "Objectivity", 190.). But the knowledge goal pursued by Weber is different to that of abstract economic theory – it is to understand cultural reality in its specificity, and in particular through the type of human being it shapes. Such shaping process can not be approached through ratio alone but through the dynamic of rationality and irrationality spurred by the logic of the sphere of human action concerned.

³⁰ Weber, *ES*, 60.

³¹ As opposed to the kind of drives underpinning economic action in a planned economy: this is section 14 (‘Market economy and planned economy’) in the *ES* chapter on the ‘Basic sociological concepts of economic action’.

finally, because they value their ‘preferred work (*bevorzugten Arbeit*) (intellectual, artistic work and work involving specialised technical competence) as “vocation and profession (*Beruf*)”³².

This characterisation expands on the one found at the end of *PE*, where the vocational drive (the ‘calling’) of the entrepreneur has vanished, and the only two categories of actors who can or must make sense of the accomplishment of their professional duty are the two opposed poles in the spectrum of motives – the workers under the pangs of necessity, and those whose professions relate to the ‘highest intellectual cultural values’³³:

‘Where the “fulfilment of occupational/professional duty” (“*Berufserfüllung*”) cannot be directly connected to the highest intellectual cultural values – or where, conversely, it is not in the case where it must be subjectively felt simply as economic compulsion (*Zwang*) – the individual will today most often give up on all interpretation’³⁴.

As can be seen, I have opted for a differentiated translation of ‘*Beruf*’ and related words³⁵.

In *ES*, the array of motives for adaptation and ‘participation’ becomes wider. The main addition consists in the identification of forms of *Eingestelltheit*, which can be translated as inner adjustment, tuning or attuning³⁶, for workers as well as for entrepreneurs – and thus motives which, though arising from the purely economic drives of necessity, on the one

³² Weber, *ES*, 60.

³³ Yet already in *PE*, Weber had questioned the exclusive reliance of modern capitalism on the payment of subsistence rates to its workers – and remarked that some form of disposition (*Gesinnung*) towards work as an absolute end in itself, ‘at least whilst at work’, and therefore some form of emancipation from the ‘obsessive question’ of survival, was required for modern capitalist firms to operate rationally, that is, not undermining their own longer-term profitability through short-term cost-cutting. See Weber, “*PE*”, 46.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 204. This passage, whose negations are admittedly difficult to grasp, has been systematically wrongly translated (with errors in very different directions!). I am fairly confident of my way of understanding it, all the more so given the parallels with *ES*.

³⁵ For Weber’s uses of *Beruf* in the contemporary period, I translate as ‘vocation and profession’ when it seems that Weber highlights a relationship to one’s work which compares with the earlier religious notion of a calling – bearing in mind that we are talking here about the *possibility* of vocation (whether actual vocation occurs and materialises or not is then a question for the individual); as ‘profession’, when this reference is still in the background but the possibility of vocation has receded or become more diluted (as in the case of the entrepreneur); and as ‘occupation’, when it seems to take on a more generic meaning, or when Weber seems to refer more to the technical definition of *Beruf*, e.g. in *ES*, where what is at issue is the external continuity of employment and task definition, rather than the inner drives for it. ‘Occupation (*Beruf*) is a person’s task specification, task specialisation or a combination of both, which constitutes a continued chance for provision [NB for need] and acquisition’. Weber, *ES*, 80.

³⁶ Jean-Pierre Grossein has highlighted the importance of the term for Weber and characterises it as a ‘specific mediating operator between individual and collective social action: an “inner attitude” which stabilises through various psychic and psychophysical processes of habituation and inculcation, which he [Weber] does not directly analyse’. This author also highlights the use of the term in mechanics and optics, to signify ‘adjustment’ (See Grossein, “De l’interprétation de quelques concepts wébériens”: 712.). Charles Camic has also drawn attention to the term in a discussion of the notion of habit, not only the habit of traditional action, but also the revolutionary *Habitus* of the Puritan. (See Charles Camic, “The Matter of Habit”, *The American Journal of Sociology* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1057-66.) Here I will show that *Eingestelltheit* seems to refer more to inadvertent processes of inscription of habit as unintended consequence (in the case investigated, as unintended consequence of imposed discipline). It is of course to be radically distinguished from that of conscious, inwardly driven life conduct.

hand, and gain expectations on the other hand, nevertheless come to acquire a dynamic of their own. In the opposition between 'life' and 'ratio', it can be said that the *ES* notion of *Eingestelltheit* brings in 'life' in the equation.

The two following sections are meant to explore this 'tuning in' of workers and entrepreneurs and to make sense of the figures of the worker and of the entrepreneur as stressed in *ES* (I will only mention in passing the figure of the *Privatbeamte*, which is a variant of the *Fachmensch* studied in Part I Chapter 2)³⁷.

II – The shaping of the contemporary worker

The question of the shaping of workers (*Arbeiterschaft*)³⁸ was at the core of a collaborative survey on the problems of workers and the conditions of industrial work in Germany between 1907 and 1911, launched by the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (Association for Social Policy)³⁹, and which Weber contributed to co-ordinate. Accordingly that question steered Weber's guidelines to survey collaborators in his 'Methodological introduction':

'What sort of men (*Was für Menschen*) does the modern large industry stamp (*prägt*) through its immanent characteristics, and what occupational fate (*berufliches Schicksal*)⁴⁰ (and through this, indirectly, extra-occupational fate as well) does it prepare for them?⁴¹

³⁷ I will refer to some of the figures of the third group distinguished by Weber in the chapters on politics and science, and have earlier referred to the composer.

³⁸ The notion of *Arbeiterschaft* designates the collective of the workers, the 'workers taken together'. This can be at the level of a specific firm or branch, in which case it corresponds to 'workforce' in English; but it can also be at a more general level, and is there the equivalent of *Beamtentum* for officials and *Unternehmertum* for entrepreneurs, whereby the collective refers more to an array of qualities, and thus to a type, than to a mass of individuals. The term *Arbeitertum* did exist but was seldom used. It later became a Nazi masterword in lieu of proletariat.

³⁹ See Weber, "Methodological introduction". There is an English translation available (which I do not use): Max Weber, "Methodological introduction for the survey for the Society for Social Policy concerning selection and adaptation (choice and course of occupation) for the workers of major industrial enterprises", in *Max Weber. The Interpretation of Social Reality* (London: 1971). This enquiry is still little used by Weber scholars, including in the English-speaking world. However see Robert Michael Brain, "The Ontology of the Questionnaire: Max Weber on Measurement and Mass Investigation", *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 32, no. 4 (2001). Brain provides an analysis of the scientific and methodological stakes of the survey.

⁴⁰ The notion of *Beruf* is difficult to render here. On the one hand, the terms of the survey agreed in the *Association for Social Policy*, as well as the published outcomes, make it clear that what is understood under *berufliches Schicksal* is the occupational path afforded to workers: *Beruf* is meant in the *ES* sense provided above (definition of tasks, continuity of employment). But, on the other hand, Weber was interested in unravelling workers' inner relation to their jobs.

⁴¹ Weber, "Methodological introduction", 37. Weber wrote the 'Methodological introduction' once the survey questionnaire and work plan had already been adopted. Alfred Weber had drafted the questionnaire, and it is not known whether Max Weber took part in this first draft, but both the questionnaire and the work plan were collectively worked upon in the session of the responsible subcommittee of the *Verein* in June 1908, and both can be regarded as the product of collective work. See Wolfgang Schluchter and with the collaboration of Sabine Frommer, "Anhang" [Appendix], in *Studienausgabe der Max Weber*

Most instructive is the comparison between this question, which heads part III of the 'Methodological introduction', i.e. the methodology proper, and the two overarching opening questions:

'The present survey seeks to establish, on the one hand, what effect large self-contained industry exerts on the personal particularity, the occupational fate and extra-occupational "style of life" of workers as a whole (*Arbeiterschaft*), what physical and psychic qualities it develops, and how these are expressed in the general life conduct of workers (*Arbeiterschaft*); on the other hand, to what extent large industry, for its part, is bound, in its development capacity and development direction by given qualities of its workforce (*Arbeiterschaft*), generated by its ethnic, social, cultural provenance, tradition and life conditions.⁴²

What was pointed out there was the possibility of a bi-directional process of influence, with industry shaping the fates of its workers, but at the same time depending upon the characteristics which these workers bring in due to their provenance, and the traditions and life conditions thereof. The two questions were immediately followed by a warning that they should be taken as intricately related, but it is in the third part of the 'Methodological introduction', once Weber has dealt with the 'general character of the survey' (part I) and reviewed the 'problems pertaining to the natural sciences' in the survey (part II), that we realise exactly how this intricate relation works: if workers bring their specificities to the workplace, this can only be looked at from the overriding point of view of their being shaped by the workplace; the labour force is primarily stamped by the 'selection of the efficient', the remuneration policies of the firms, as well as by the 'huge calculation machinery reaching to the simplest manipulation by the worker'⁴³. Weber had explicitly ordered the issues to be addressed in this way in a letter to his brother before the *Verein* had even decided to launch such a survey:

'I was thinking however in any case of bringing in the inner structure of individual industries – with respect to the extent and kind of *skilling* of the work, the permanency of the labour force, occupational chances, occupational change etc. From this 'morphological' aspect of the thing then [we would] approach the question of the psychophysical selection exercised by the industry, the direction it takes in the individual industries, and conversely, its conditioning through psychophysical qualities of the population fostered be it through heredity, be it through historically given social and institutional conditions; but *not* starting, for quite apparent methodical reasons, from these 'characterological' qualities as a given, but rather from the *social* life chances today and in the immediate *past* as origin for the selection and – possibly – the 'creation' of these qualities. The inner

Gesamtausgabe, Max Weber Studienausgabe (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1998), 229-30. The methodological part proper in Max Weber's 'Methodological introduction' stands very close to the work plan. Alfred Weber, *Schriften zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik (1897 - 1932)* [Writings on Economic and Social Policy], Hans G. Nutzinger ed., *Alfred Weber Gesamtausgabe* (Marburg: Metropolis Verlag, 2000), 437-447.

⁴² Weber, "Methodological introduction", 1. The notion of 'self-contained' (*geschlossene*) industry refers to the fact that the totality of operations take place on the premises of the firm, by contrast with the cottage industry.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 46, 60.

structure and life chances which the self-contained large industry forms and creates, would in any case in my opinion be the *first* factor to investigate...⁴⁴

It thus seems that Weber introduced the survey with this double questioning in order to bring in the results of the review of the literature on psychophysics which he was about to publish, and thus both to acknowledge the considerable work carried out on these issues by the 'natural sciences' (experimental psychology being considered as such) and, as highlighted by Hennis⁴⁵, to suggest the limits of 'psychophysics' (and, by the same token, of studies of heredity⁴⁶), especially with regard to 'characterological' classifications, which in his view were far from being thought through and even remained inferior to the old notion of the 'four humours' (*Temperamente*)⁴⁷. At most, the influence of the 'ethnic, social, cultural' provenance of the workers and the traditions associated could (and would) be explored, in continuation with the observations made for *PE* on the negative and positive dispositions of workers towards industrial work stemming, for the former, from a general attitude to life amongst certain communities (e.g. of peasants), and for the latter, from certain religious orientations (e.g. Pietism, which fostered an attitude to work as duty alongside an aptitude for calculation very fit for modern capitalism amongst certain working communities⁴⁸). Indeed Weber had no doubt Pietistic education in mind when he evoked the possibility of inner tuning to economically productive work as a form of life. Nevertheless, as shown by what I consider as the core question of the survey and by Weber's letter to his brother, exploring the implications of workers' provenance was only deemed worthy of consideration to the extent that they were reflected in the selection processes of industrial firms⁴⁹.

⁴⁴ Letter dated 3/9/1907 quoted in Schluchter and Frommer, "Appendix Psychophysics", 227.

⁴⁵ Hennis, *Max Weber's Science of Man*, 36-8.

⁴⁶ Schluchter and Frommer, "Appendix Psychophysics", 231. Weber made a point of always mentioning the latest developments in the social and cultural sciences as well as in the natural sciences, including heredity issues. But he was consistently sceptical as to what these could achieve.

⁴⁷ Weber, "Methodological introduction", 25. The notion of '*Temperament*' was imported from the French in the 17th century, where, applied to the human being, it referred to the particular blend of the 4 'humours'. The Grimm dictionary quotes Kant's definition of the term, which refers to the 'bodily constitution' and 'complexion', and, 'psychologically', to the 'capacities of feeling and desire' of the 'soul', the four basic temperaments being the 'sanguine, melancholic, choleric and the phlegmatic'. (Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Das Deutsche Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm auf CD-ROM und im Internet* (Kompetenzzentrums für elektronische Erschließungs- und Publikationsverfahren in den Geisteswissenschaften an der Universität Trier, 2004 [cited 2010]); available from <http://germazope.uni-trier.de:8080/Projekte/DWB.Vol. 21: 249-51>).

⁴⁸ Weber, "PE", 47.

⁴⁹ The second important difference to note between the two sets of questions is the disappearance of the notion of life conduct in what I have referred to as the core question. The notion does re-emerge in the questions suggested in the methodological part, but only when Weber refers to those workers who are members of worker organisations. Did Weber consider that 'life conduct' was an apt term to describe the

Thus, it is the way in which the profitability driven ‘apparatus’ set up in firms of the large self-contained industry seeks to shape worker’s performance (*Leistung*), so as to get maximum profit from it, which needs to be at the core of the survey. Weber suggested that this takes place through procedures and systems of selection, remuneration, control, which he later generically referred to as ‘discipline’⁵⁰.

Indeed the whole practice of discipline towards workers was already contained in the invention of ‘formally free labour’, which Weber analysed in *ES*. Formally free labour, of which one should not forget that it is predicated upon the ‘coercive power of the property order’, presupposes the employers’ freedom of selection according to performance, the ‘selection of the efficient (*leistungsfähig*)’. This, for the bulk of workers, happens ‘on the job’, through the ‘on the job learning test’ – but does not stop there: productivity is continuously monitored and the associated threat of dismissal is in fact the continuation of selection on a daily basis⁵¹.

‘That a selection of the profitable workers takes place in some continuous way at all is a basic necessity of each specific industry for its existence under the rule of capitalism, whatever their remuneration system and other economic bases of working conditions...’⁵²

Part of this continuous selection process is, in addition, transferred to the worker himself, since the ‘work-seeker’ must make sure and show that he is up to the task. The remuneration system can also play its part, especially in the case of the system standing in closer ‘adequacy’ with ‘formally free labour’ and rational calculation: piece-rates. This system compels the worker to hold his own productivity constantly in check, so as to maintain his earnings. In forcing thus the implacable formal rationality of profitability calculations directly on to the worker himself, this remuneration system pertains to the most ‘eminently dynamic, economically revolutionary’ systems of income available in capitalism⁵³. By contrast ‘salaries’ (paid for a period of time) are ‘economically conservative’: they do not advance the cause of formal rationality, but rather find themselves on the side of material rationalities⁵⁴.

relation of workers to their lives (and if yes which workers), or not? I come back to this question below in the body of the text.

⁵⁰ In the lecture on ‘Socialism’ (1918) and above all in chapter II of *ES* (‘The sociological categories of economic action’), written in 1920.

⁵¹ Weber, *ES*, 71, 88. Weber, “Methodological introduction”, 46.

⁵² Weber, “Methodological introduction”, 46.

⁵³ And as such it faced considerable resistance from workers’ material rationalities, as we have seen above with the peasants’ example.

⁵⁴ Weber, *ES*, 87, 121. Weber, “Methodological introduction”, 46.

The creation of formally free labour also means the transfer of the ‘responsibility for reproductive tasks’ (support to one’s family and dependents) onto the individual worker, which in itself is the most powerful incentive for the worker’s continued ‘willingness to work’, even at subsistence wages.

Weber points here to the emotional, affective component of the discipline of ‘formally free labour’, through the use of the word *Sorge*, which is both worry and care (the latter meaning also responsibility or duty for the care of). Thus, the transfer to the worker of the responsibility for family maintenance and for permanent self-selection (e.g. through piece-rates) is not only a transfer of responsibility: by generating anxiety and worry, it ties the worker further to his job with an economy of means that far outdoes the systems of unfree labour⁵⁵. This constitutes much of the enforced ‘spirit of adaptation’ of workers to modern capitalism⁵⁶.

The survey on industrial workers aimed at exploring not only the conditions and implications of selection but also the modalities of adaptation to the task and their own consequences. For that purpose, the observation of the production process, and more particularly of the operation of machines, coupled with worker interviews, were meant to test the hypothesis that the key qualities required for the operation of a machine determined not only the selection of workers but also their occupational path within the firm – and thus their objective ‘occupational fate’:

‘Naturally it is the ‘technical’ peculiarity of the production process, especially of the machines, which directly determines all those qualities of the workers, which a particular industry needs, and, further, their possible occupational fate as well. In ascertaining the form taken by this connection, one will in no way aim at describing the machines but only at analysing in detail those manipulations which workers have to carry out on the machines, and this only to investigate what highly specific capacities are exerted by various categories of workers in their concrete handlings. This analysis indeed can certainly never be too thorough’⁵⁷.

A key to understand in what ways the task has a structuring effect on the whole make-up of the worker’s life, his whole ‘*habitus*’⁵⁸, is Weber’s recurrent treatment of the question of workers’ attitudes to job change and change in general, a crucial question for analysing the

⁵⁵ Weber, *ES*, 87.

⁵⁶ Indeed tying the worker down through a demand that he should be the actor of his own employment and through the ‘worries’ and anxiety that this generates, including about oneself, is still at the order of the day for the functioning of today’s capitalism.

⁵⁷ Weber, "Methodological introduction", 11.

⁵⁸ In the ‘Methodological introduction’, Weber talks about the ‘intellectual and moral *Habitus*’ of workers, alongside references to their ‘humours’ and ‘character’, and more generally ‘soul qualities’: all of which lacks any possibility of a scientific understanding in the current state of things – he therefore advises his colleagues to rely on their own observation, intuition and everyday categories to describe and analyse differences in dispositions and interests (Ibid, 25.)

course of rationalising ‘developmental trends’ in the large capitalist industry. Taking into account that the question of job change is only revealing where earnings are not negatively affected⁵⁹, it does appear, says Weber, that workers in these conditions may be willing to move firm and place, but not job contents. So that one can wonder whether some kind of habituation to the machine and the task one performs with it takes place, which perhaps even translates into an inner attuning (*Eingestelltheit*) to the task. Weber expressed strong reservations with regard to the possibility, aired by psychiatrists and experimental psychologists Wilhelm Wundt and Emil Kraepelin (whose work he extensively reviewed), of ascertaining a psycho-physical attuning (i.e. the inner effectuation of set dispositions through ‘practice’), as well as with regard to its relevance. Nevertheless, he did consider it as a definite possibility, worth exploring, that workers’ attitude to job and task change could be linked to the nature of the work and to an ‘inner binding’ to the job, which in part could take the shape of a feeling of ‘mastery’ (*Beherrschen*) over the machine⁶⁰.

In other words, I would contend that Weber was looking to account for workers’ ‘subjective attitude’ to their job directly in processes of habituation which, whilst they could be rationally encouraged and spurred by firms, since the general idea is that familiarity with a task brings about maximum output⁶¹, were nonetheless at the same time irrational, in the sense of engendering an inner bonding (*Bindung*) of the worker to his task, job and machine: a combination of habituation and affect which must stand as the ‘polar opposite’ to economic self-interest, be it under the guise of need⁶². In his 1918 conference on Socialism, Weber acknowledged the very strong feelings of a certain kind of honour (as they were expressed e.g. in strikes) that bound workers together⁶³, and it is not implausible to see this feeling as also originating in part in the inner relation of the workers to their task and machine: in any case Weber thought it was worth investigating the link between this relation and occupational and extra-occupational stratification amongst workers⁶⁴. If we put together the ‘Methodological introduction’ and the conference on Socialism, we can see that the bonding to the job and machine might be generating both differentiation and unity

⁵⁹ The ‘Methodological introduction’ makes clear that one has to start from the premise that workers’ attitude to job change is overwhelmingly determined by the economics of the equation: and since any job change requires a period of adaptation during which one’s productivity is likely to be below standards – which, in systems of remuneration through piece-rates immediately translates into lower earnings, workers usually resist change (Ibid, 23-4).

⁶⁰ Ibid, 15.

⁶¹ Ibid, 23.

⁶² Weber, "Basic Sociological Concepts", 572.

⁶³ Weber, "Socialism", 494.

⁶⁴ Weber, "Methodological introduction", 56.

amongst workers along shifting lines of solidarity and honour. Thus, whilst cross-category solidarity led to ‘pace-braking’ by the quicker workers (the so-called “runners”, who are also often employed as foremen) so as to prevent the lowering of piece rates⁶⁵, on the other hand enmities were never so harsh as in the immediate, personal, daily relationship between workers and their foremen, by contrast with the much more distant enmity with stakeholders⁶⁶.

In short, it seems that Weber pointed to the formation of a ‘form of life’⁶⁷ (and various sub-forms) developing amongst workers, which was more and more alien to the traditional or pious form of life of worker communities described in *PE*. Such form of life derives from ingrained habits, themselves acquired through discipline, but habits can become valued and thus give rise to actions oriented to ‘value rationality’⁶⁸. But does such form of life (by which Weber seemed to refer to the external organisation of the life of a group or type of society) amount to a possibility of life conduct, i.e. bearing on systematic inner attitudes and orientations as well? As suggested above, after referring to *Lebensführung* in the opening questions, Weber left aside the term in the whole of his ‘Methodological introduction’ and only took it up again towards the end of the document, when he mentioned membership of worker organisations⁶⁹. Indeed Weber saw associations and movements as powerful mechanisms of diffusion and control of forms of life conduct, where membership engaged individuals inwardly. And such was therefore his premise with regard to worker organisations:

‘Finally, to the extent that they pertain to the problematique of this investigation..., the often deep-reaching influence of membership in worker organisations of various kinds on the kind of life conduct would also need to be described.’⁷⁰

But more specifically and fundamentally Weber viewed the participation of workers in unions and the unions’ ‘ordered struggle’ against employer organisations prior to collective agreements on employment conditions as an essential condition for the everyday education to self-determination which alone prepares a nation to be a ‘nation of citizens and not of slaves’. In 1912, Weber denounced

⁶⁵ Ibid, 35. This example was provided by Weber in his ‘Methodological introduction’ as an illustration of typical behaviours which cannot be reproduced in the experimental laboratory.

⁶⁶ Weber, "Socialism", 509.

⁶⁷ This is the term used in the *ES* definition of the drives to ‘economic action’ for the ‘propertyless’ mentioned above.

⁶⁸ Weber, "Basic Sociological Concepts", 565.

⁶⁹ See above, footnote 49.

⁷⁰ Weber, "Methodological introduction", 56.

‘the increasing pointlessness of orderly strikes, which results from the increasing predominance/superiority of the entrepreneurial organisations of all sorts in connection with judicial and police bullying; and the systematic formation of subsidised troops for the protection of employers within the workforce [NB this is how trade unions used to refer to the workers’ committees set up with the support of employers]’ and pledged to ‘fight without reservation the conditions of capitalist rule in the model of Pittsburg, the Saar region, of the heavy industry in Westphalia and Silesia and the help it receives from state power (*Staatsgewalt*), because we want to live in a country of citizens, not slaves’⁷¹.

This was one of the main points of social policy which Weber tried to push forward through the creation of a working group stemming from the left wing of the *Verein*⁷². He regarded it as a point of social policy in the sense that the authorities had to guarantee the contest – rather than engaging, as they did, in blatant employer support. As we shall see in the following chapter (on the shaping of *Menschenheit* in the political life order), this connection between the possibility of everyday struggles (and thus the curbing of the spread of bureaucratic regulation and especially of its carrier, the *Fachmensch*⁷³) and the type of nation that a state community could be or aspire to be was fundamental to Weber’s conception of liberty – and of ‘genuine’ politics.

Nevertheless, Weber’s ascription, in the ‘Methodological introduction’, of the possibility of life conduct to union members only seems to point to, perhaps, other forms of life for the less politicised bulk of the working class, whose anchoring point may be the habitual, and possibly affective, bond to one’s job. As Weber’s notion of life conduct oscillated between an encompassing meaning and a stronger, more restrictive meaning where external behaviour is directed from an inner conscious foyer, it may be argued that he possibly contrasted the strict life conduct of the militants, the conscious, distanced and purposive attitude of, say, the ‘scientifically trained Socialist’⁷⁴, with the more diffuse ‘*Lebensform*’ organising the affects, attachments, and more immediate solidarities and enmities to which workers are ‘tuned’ almost inadvertently, as an unintended consequence of modern rational factory discipline⁷⁵.

⁷¹ Weber, *Letters 1911-1912*, 750.

⁷² Hinnerk Bruhns notes that this initiative has been little studied by Weber scholars, with the early exception of Wolfgang Mommsen. He himself provides a brief account of it in the context of his examination of the values driving Weber’s science and politics. Hinnerk Bruhns, "Science et politique au quotidien chez Max Weber: quelques précisions historiques sur le thème de la neutralité axiologique" [Scholarship and politics in the day to day in the work of Max Weber: some historical observations on the theme of value-freedom], in *Max Weber et le politique* (Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 2009), 123-4.

⁷³ Aldenhoff, "Nationalökonomie", 60.

⁷⁴ Weber, "Socialism", 502.

⁷⁵ Through the notion of *Lebensform* Weber usually seems to refer to the external organisation of life of a group or type of society, and, when in the plural, to the specific instances of that organisation (including expected forms of behaviour, as in Weber’s *ES* definition of *Stand*). Such organisation can be ‘rigid and

Incidentally, this points to opposed mechanisms of inscription of habit, as unintended consequence of imposed discipline, i.e. *Eingestelltheit*, and as consciously self-imposed discipline in some modes of *Lebensführung*⁷⁶. In the case of factory discipline, the habituation generated nonetheless also usually serves rational purposes, since the workers' inner binding to their form of life is also, besides pure necessity, what makes them endure, overall, the everyday of the factory. This is therefore an important basis for the continued rule of the entrepreneur or firm management over the workforce. Yet habituation can also very well be targeted and crushed by that very discipline, if it is seen as hampering the workings of the economic logic (e.g. as workers are made to be more and more mutually substitutable⁷⁷).

III – The shaping of the contemporary entrepreneur

Let us now return to the entrepreneurs. Are they not the carriers by excellence of the modern capitalist order? Are not their economically rational interest in the profitability of their business and their 'pure adaptation' to the capitalist order sufficient in today's capitalism, as suggested by Weber in *PE*⁷⁸? Indeed. Weber's imagined interview with entrepreneurs about their 'motivation' (probably a reflection of very real conversations for that matter) finally brings about the 'only possible answer': that their business has become 'indispensable to their life'⁷⁹.

In depicting those entrepreneurs in the section of *PE* which introduces us to the 'spirit of capitalism' from the starting point of the observation of its contemporary features, Weber no doubt had in mind those families akin to Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, whose religious piety, still impregnating their life in the first half of the 19th century, had become very thin in the second half of the century, but in which all other aspects of the habitus of the early capitalist entrepreneur had been transmitted and reproduced from one generation to the

undifferentiated prescribed by the (household) community' or can have fixed conventions on the grounds of strong inner ideal unity (as in a sect).

⁷⁶ Hence the little use, as far as I can see, made by Weber of the term *Eingestelltheit* (or of the related verb) in his writings on the Protestant ethic. The term is only used once in the conclusions of *Confucianism*, where he compares it to the 'Puritan ethic', which fosters self-mastery 'in the interest of the methodical unity of one's inner tuning to the will of God'. Weber, "Confucianism", 527.

⁷⁷ Weber, "Socialism", 508. In 1915, Weber described capitalism as that 'struggle... in which not millions but hundreds of millions of people, year after year, waste away in body and soul, sink, or lead an existence bereft of any recognisable "meaning"...' Weber, "Between two laws", 62.

⁷⁸ Weber, "PE", 55.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 54.

next. Weber pointed out, in particular, those ‘personal moral qualities’ stemming from earlier ‘ethical maxims’, such as the feeling of inner duty and responsibility to one’s business; dedication to the task (*Sache*); hard work (Weber remarks on various occasions that managing a firm is also ‘work’, ‘labour’, i.e. *Arbeit*, even though the term has come to be associated with the working class); and trustworthiness in the eyes of both the clients and the workforce, so that they will follow him when he ‘innovates’ and imprints his ‘new style’⁸⁰.

It is thus intriguing that Weber, when reflecting, as we have seen, in the 1920 *ES* chapter on economic action, on the motivations for such action (notwithstanding the primacy of the striving for income), does not refer to the pattern of life conduct (the purposeful and methodical orientation to gainful activity) which he had associated with the early modern but also contemporary enterprising segment of the bourgeoisie, but rather to purely individual interests and passions – risk taking on one’s own capital and increasing one’s profit chances, performance testing through rational acquisitive activity and the enjoyment of power as such:

‘The decisive impulse for all economic action under the conditions of a market economy is ... for those sharing in the chances of economic enterprises: a) one’s own capital-risk and own gain chances, combined with b) an inner “professional” adjustment (“*berufsmäßige*” *Eingestelltheit*) towards rational acquisitive activity as α) “proof” (“*Bewährung*”) of one’s performance (*Leistung*); as β) form of autonomous free hand with (*Form autonomen Schaltens über*) those human beings dependent on one’s own orders; and besides γ) with the chances of an undetermined number of people to access important cultural or life goods: in a word, power’⁸¹.

We should first ask what is the status of the orientation to risk on one’s own capital and drive towards one’s gain chances. The striving for income and gain constitutes the ‘ultimate drive of all economic action’⁸² and must accordingly be placed first in the analysis of motives for economic action in a market economy. But such risk taking,

‘however hazardous from a purely objective point of view, has absolutely not the meaning of “adventure”, since it is a component of a rationally calculated business deal, imposed by the “task” itself.’⁸³

Interestingly, in *PE*, Weber included this drive in the general characterisation of the entrepreneur’s ‘vocation’ today:

‘The capitalist economic order necessitates such dedication to the “vocation” (“*Beruf*”) of money-making, it is a form of behaviour towards external goods which is so very ‘adequate’ to this structure

⁸⁰ Ibid, 53. On ‘*Arbeit*’ in management positions, see Weber, *ES*, 62.

⁸¹ Weber, *ES*, 50.

⁸² Ibid, 120.

⁸³ Weber, "Final Anti-critique": 597.

[NB of the economy of today], so intricately tied to the conditions for victory in the struggle for economic existence, that in effect there cannot be any mention anymore, *today*, of any necessary relation between this “chrematistic” life conduct and any kind of unitary world-view⁸⁴.

Thomas Schwinn notes that the reference to vocation (*Beruf*) and dedication (*Hingabe*) here points to the rationalised economic order being also a value-sphere, as the quest for gain is a value in itself which cannot be merely explained through external market selection⁸⁵. But this characterisation of the entrepreneur is provided, precisely, in the context of Weber’s explanation regarding the evolution of the spirit of capitalism into a ‘mere product of adaptation’, whereas the notion of vocation is totally opposed to any spirit of adaptation (which does not mean, as we shall see in Part III Chapter 7, that vocation should be blind to the conditions of its deployment). Furthermore, as already said above, the final pages of PE make no mention of such vocation for entrepreneurs – who seem therefore to be included in those who ‘give up on all interpretation’, that is on all explicitly acknowledged meaning: money-making through a capitalist enterprise has simply become ‘indispensable’ to their lives – an ingrained habit, an attachment (as comes out in the *ES* notion of *Eingestelltheit*). With this in mind, I wonder whether the use of ‘dedication’ and ‘vocation’ in the quoted *PE* passage does not evince a certain degree of irony from Weber – an irony which becomes quite visible in the notion of a ‘chrematistic life conduct’ and which we find again in the *ES* passage when Weber uses ‘*Bewährung*’ (proving oneself) to refer to the testing of one’s performance.

Precisely, the drives to performance testing and power have little to do with the proving oneself of the *Berufsmensch* of yore, and, as will now be seen, are inculcated largely through the explicit and implicit requirements of selection by the market. As said above, ‘if left to its own intrinsic logic’, the market is the structural form in which the most impersonal relations prevail, motivated ‘by regard to the thing, not to the person’, regulated by ‘interest compromises’, and rooted ‘in property purely as such’ – in ‘stern polar contrast’ with authority⁸⁶. The term ‘naked’ (as in ‘naked interest situation’, ‘naked market principle’, ‘naked property’) surges up again and again in Weber’s account of the ideal-typical ‘market situation’, to signal the complete uprooting of any personal relations susceptible of ethical regulation, the complete opposition to any form of life conduct and the pure interplay of market forces⁸⁷. Where the market approximates this ideal type, it becomes an area of

⁸⁴ Weber, "PE", 55-6.

⁸⁵ Schwinn, "Value spheres", 305.

⁸⁶ Weber, *ES*, 365, 606.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 15, 23, 631-9, 661.

economic stakes for themselves, indifferent to the materiality of needs, and this can spur the kind of attitude to acquisitive activity which Weber had found in the United States, and which he evoked at the end of *PE*:

In the region where it is unleashed most, in the United States, the acquisitive striving, stripped from its religious-ethical meaning, tends today to associate with purely agonistic passions, which not infrequently imprint on it the character of a sport⁸⁸.

Indeed the *ES* portrait, with its focus on the drive towards risk and profit, as well as towards economic activity as a test of one's performance, suggests the universe of games, where one's own purely egotistic passions, can come to the fore: the reference to 'agon' above must not mislead us. Weber viewed struggle not only as an inevitable component of human life, but also as a way of confronting oneself with the real world. One thus takes an agonistic stance in particular situations, out of a particular inner necessity to be up to that situation: which is very different from indulging in agonistic passion as a style of life, as is the case of the American entrepreneurs alluded to in the above quote.

But the leader of the modern firm is not only a market actor, he exerts his power within his firm. How is that power to be characterised? Modern firms have become bureaucracies, indeed they can be described as 'unequalled models of strict bureaucratic organisation'⁸⁹. The 'objective discharge of business' is put to the service of 'the pursuit of naked interest', and this means, vis-à-vis workers, the enforcement of naked power, since the only principle is the rational profitability of the firm. In addition, Weber showed how bureaucratic organisation, far from placating these power relations, reinforces them as 'staff' (that is to say, employees of the administration of the firm) are very keen to demarcate themselves from workers⁹⁰. The advent of the bureaucratic firm⁹¹ is thus a direct accelerator of the transformation of what remained of relations of personal authority of the entrepreneur over workers into pure power relations, effectuated, as suggested above, through the enforcement of discipline. Furthermore the exercise of this power over 'those human beings dependent on one's own orders' is likely to be all the harsher as the margin of

⁸⁸ Weber, "PE", 204.

⁸⁹ Weber, *ES*, 661. Edith Hanke notes that this link between bureaucracy and capitalism was frequently made amongst contemporary scholars (and Marxist politicians), especially with regard to their 'cultural significance' (Alfred Weber) and to their combined levelling effects. Weber was alone however in characterising bureaucracy in a systematic way (especially with regard to the administration without regard to the person). See Edith Hanke, "Nachwort" [Postface to *Economy and Society (Rulership)*], in *Max Weber Studienausgabe I/22,4* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2009), 245.

⁹⁰ Weber, "Socialism", 510.

⁹¹ Today we would refer to the managerial firm and to managerialism similarly cutting across the public administration, the university and the private sector.

manoeuvre of firm managers decreases with regard to those who do not depend upon them, but rather indirectly and directly dictate their conditions, i.e. competitors and bankers⁹².

To really grasp the ruthlessness of the form of power evoked by Weber in his *ES* characterisation, we must remember that he acknowledged the very definite orientation to the affirmation of their own power that both the politician and the entrepreneur must have, since power forms the 'element of [their] life' (*Lebenselement*)⁹³. But Weber insisted that this went together with the 'full responsibility for one's task (*Sache*)' whether one is a politician or an entrepreneur⁹⁴, whereas in that passage of *ES*, he crudely refers to power as a form of 'free hand' (*Form autonomen Schaltens*) over one's workers and customers.

Thus the figure of the entrepreneur has been considerably transformed by the logic of formal rationality and objectivation of which he is the carrier, as the foundations for the life conduct which supported the development of modern capitalism are progressively undermined, especially through the divestment of power from any personal relationship, due to the mutually reinforcing objectivation dynamic of market and bureaucracy. The methodical life conduct of the first generations of modern entrepreneurs becomes removed from the web of relations and obligations which used to orient and check it, and gives way to a 'life' of naked interests and self-centred passions, whose fulfilment nevertheless does require personal skill in 'overcoming practical problems' (e.g. 'inspiration'⁹⁵). This array of qualities, though not the mere result or requirement of economic selection as it arises rather in the interplay between the rational and the irrational, nevertheless ultimately upholds the market and the conduct of firms.

It is important to note that the category of economic actors Weber refers to in the *ES* passage designates those 'sharing in the chances of economic enterprises' rather than 'entrepreneurs': although the characterisation, which explicitly links capital ownership, performance on the market and the exercise of power, is one of an entrepreneur both owner and manager, the designation points to a transition towards the separation between

⁹² Weber, "Socialism", 502. The other area in which firm leaders can enjoy their power is with regard to customers: Weber takes a partly sceptical view on the role of consumers' marginal utility to influence firms' 'direction of production' in the current 'power situation', and highlights the capacity of capitalist firms to 'awaken' and 'direct' the needs of the consumer – provided he has a certain acquisitive capacity (see Weber, *ES*, 49.)

⁹³ Weber, "Parliament", 154.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Weber, "Science", 590.

ownership and management, with the consequent rise of, on the one hand, ‘financial magnates’, who usually control the shareholding companies, and rentiers, i.e. ‘a stratum of people who just draw dividends and interests, without doing mental work for it’; and, on the other hand, the increase of officialdom, the firm manager becoming the ‘first official’, selected by the ‘association of stockholders’⁹⁶. Indeed, it may be surmised that the qualities of the modern entrepreneur are diffused to the other categories – stakeholders are not only oriented to risk on their capital share and profit, they may also measure their own ‘performance’ as investors and enjoy the power that they indubitably have, for the larger amongst them, over the fates of a great many individuals dependent upon their decisions⁹⁷; the same applies to bureaucratised firm managers except for the first type of drives, unless they share in the capital of their firm. It seems plausible that Weber viewed this evolution as an intensification of the realisation of naked interest and power rather than a brake on it. Indeed increased ‘free hand’ over workers (and possibly customers) may very well be seen as a mode of coping with the irruption of speculative interests in the economic conduct of the firm.

Finally, it is useful to ponder on these remarkable features of latest-day ‘capitalists’⁹⁸, which we find especially in the later texts – Chapter II of *ES* (written in 1919-20) and the conference on Socialism (1918), and to note that the strongest statements were uttered in moments when Weber compared the capitalist order with the substantive rationality of socialism⁹⁹. Even though his accounts of the intervention of early capitalism into traditional conceptions of work pointed out the irrationality of the logic of the capitalist order from the point of view of a rationality of the good life, their main focus had been on the revolutionary effects of modern capitalism, whereas comparisons with the economic programme of socialism tend to suggest the senselessness, brutality and suffering entailed

⁹⁶ Weber, *ES*, 85. Weber, "Socialism", 508.

⁹⁷ The fact that they do not have influence on the specific day to day management of the firm (as Weber explains in ‘Politics’) does not mean that they may not enjoy their power over those depending upon their more general ‘economic directives’ (Weber, "Politics", 411.).

⁹⁸ I use this term here to convey the idea that the category of the entrepreneur is in transition. In *ES* Weber did refer to capitalists as a general category (gathering e.g. bankers and entrepreneurs). Weber, *ES*, 441. Elsewhere Weber also used the term to designate those involved in the stock exchange, or, in the past, to individuals at the head of large capitalist ventures, as far back as in Roman times.

⁹⁹ Weber had already engaged in such comparison (though not focusing specifically on the figure of the entrepreneur) briefly but quite strikingly as well at the end of his ‘Methodological introduction’: ‘Certainly however – and here, again, would lie the limit of that point of view – the substitution of any form of “solidarity” in a shared economy (*gemeinwirtschaftlicher “Solidarität”*) for today’s “selection” along the principle of private economic profitability, with its chaining of the whole existence of all those bound in the firm, whether leading or obeying, to the outcome of the employer’s private calculations of costs and profit, would fundamentally change the spirit which lives today in this monstrous carapace, and nobody can even surmise with what consequences. See Weber, "Methodological introduction", 60.

by the modern capitalist logic, as the comparison is implicitly or explicitly established at the level of the motives and ends pursued.

Conclusion

I have shown how the dynamic of the rationalised economic life order, as that of the music sphere and indeed more generally, is underpinned by the confrontation between the intrinsic logic of the order (formal economic rationality) and the ‘material rationalities’ which are immanent in a non-rationalised economic sphere. By ‘stumbling’ on these irrationalities, the logic of formal ratio actualises them. Weber suggests that these tensions underpin the social struggles and crises which have punctuated the course of modern capitalism: they are thus also a ferment of innovation, though under the guise of ‘compromises’ between represented interests rather than creative syntheses (there is no such thing as the interplay characterising the aesthetic life order – whereby the irrational, in the sense of the most personal, found its utmost, sublimated, expression through rational formalisation). Such compromises ultimately uphold the intrinsic logic of formal capitalist rationality, that is to say rational calculation oriented to profitability: anything more drastic would have to be framed as a political struggle for the abandonment of the capitalist system¹⁰⁰.

Whereas it is true that ‘today’s capitalism, which has succeeded in ruling over economic life’ selects ‘for itself the economic subjects – entrepreneurs and workers – that it needs’, this selection amounts to ‘educat[ing] and shap[ing]’¹⁰¹. Weber’s reluctant use of the notion of selection pointed to the need to look at the wider conditions of production of patterns of conduct. Indeed, as in the music sphere, it is the dynamic of interplay between ‘ratio’ and the irrationalities it raises, but also the interplay between ‘ratio’ and ‘life’ (an overlapping but not equivalent relation), which shapes types of ‘economic subjects’ – even in such an objectivated sphere as the modern capitalist economy: again, this is why even the rational capitalist economy constitutes a ‘life order’.

¹⁰⁰ Thus Weber dealt with unions both as ‘economically regulative organisations’ (in Weber, *ES*, 38.) – fighting for the economic interests of their members by pushing for e.g. wage and working time regulations; and as political actors (especially as major exponents of a ‘politics of inner conviction’, in the *Political Writings*). In ‘Politics’ he evokes the revolutionaries’ intent of ‘expropriation within capitalist businesses’ after having expropriated the expropriator of political power (the legally established authorities) without providing a full assessment of their possibilities to achieve this (Weber, “Politics”, 402.).

¹⁰¹ Weber, “PE”, 37.

But does it constitute a value-sphere? This question has given rise to debate amongst Weber scholars: as suggested by Schwinn, this amounts to asking whether motives for taking part are valued 'in and for themselves' and standing in a relation of affinity to the logic of the sphere or whether they are merely subsumed under it¹⁰². Schwinn identifies the profit motive as a value which would foster participation in economic action and uphold the rationalised capitalist sphere. I have argued instead that interests (the profit motive, the striving for income) are the everyday fuel of economic actions in a rationalised market economy, which are actualised and processed by the formal ratio of modern capitalism in what has become a self sustaining mechanism. This does not mean that periodically new justifications are not felt to be required for this mechanism to go on, but justifications are not inner motives. As explained in Part I Chapter 2, the pursuit of values which are contained in the everyday pertains to what Weber calls 'adaptation'. In other words, it seems to me that the interplay between the logic of rational calculation oriented to profitability and economic and social 'life' provides constantly renewed forces upholding the economic system, and that orientation to value is subsumed under the intrinsic logic.

This also means that there are constantly renewed grounds and matter ('life') on which to exercise the 'revolutionary' rationalisation power of capitalism, its 'revolutionary' force of objectivation of all relations¹⁰³:

'The 'apparatus' as it is today, with the effects it has ..., has changed, and will go on changing, the spiritual face of the human race (*das geistige Antlitz des Menschengeschlechts*) almost beyond recognition¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰² Schwinn, "Value spheres", 305. Thomas Schwinn mentions R. Brubaker and H. Tyrell for a questioning of the characterisation of the rationalised economy as value sphere (ibid, 300). Conversely Guy Oakes sees this characterisation as 'unproblematic', but strangely enough only because Weber reduces this sphere to 'the cosmos of the modern, rational, capitalist economy ... in which actors attempt to maximize financial gains in competitive markets by calculating monetary prices' (Oakes, "Value Rationality": 29).

¹⁰³ Weber, *ES*, 119. Again an apparent paradox: the logic demands full adaptation to it to exert its full revolutionary power.

¹⁰⁴ Weber, "Methodological introduction", 59-60.

Chapter 5 – Modern politics and rule under the modern rationalised State. The shaping of the politician and the nation

Introduction

The political life order/value sphere occupies a very special place in Weber's writings: it is the only life order which has the shaping of the 'qualities' of men as members of the political grouping as its direct outcome, thus directly contributing to the 'coining of *Menschentum*'¹. As stressed towards the end of *IR*, where Weber enumerated the outcomes of the various life orders/value spheres, the political life order transforms the 'external order of the social community' into a 'cultural community of the state cosmos'², that is to say, it shapes the mass of individuals who live within the boundaries of what Weber considered as the relevant political 'group body' (*Verband*) today, the state, into 'citizens', at the same time as into 'a group of human beings' sharing in "cultural goods"³.

Only the sphere of 'intellectual knowledge' (science) has a comparable remit, on the individual existential plane, to the one that the political sphere has on a political collective plane, since it sets out, alongside with the production of 'truths', to help individuals acquire greater clarity about themselves and their stance in/to the world, and therefore an enhanced capacity to determine their own lives⁴. To Weber, indeed, the sharing in of 'cultural goods' by the state community depended first and foremost on the capacity to govern itself as a people, i.e. on 'the lasting, determined will of a nation not to be governed like a flock of sheep'⁵.

Weber's *Political Writings*, in particular, illuminated with the more specific treatment of his sociology of rulership (in both the 'old' and the 'new' manuscripts of *ES*), provide an analysis of political action and rulership, of their dynamic, of what they produce – and how this is likely to evolve. Once again the dynamic of the order is fed by the tension between

¹ As per Weber's expression in Weber, "Inaugural Address", 19.

² Weber, "IR", 554,568.

³ Weber, *ES*, 629. The exact definition of *Kulturgemeinschaft* is 'a group of human beings (*Menschen*) who, by virtue of their specificity (*Eigenart*), have particular access to certain accomplishments (*Leistungen*) regarded as "cultural goods". Weber also used the term *Kulturgemeinschaft* elsewhere in the more restrictive sense of community of language and literature.

⁴ See Part III Chapter 7.

⁵ Max Weber, "Zur Lage der bürgerlichen Demokratie in Rußland." [On the Situation of Constitutional Democracy in Russia], *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 22 (1906): 121. I come back to the notion of nation below in text.

the rational and the irrational, between formal and substantive rationality, unleashed by the intrinsic logic of the political sphere (the ‘pragma of force’), especially in its declension as reason of state⁶ (section I). But what appears particularly crucial for the shaping of the *Menschentum* of the nation is the tension which arises between the logic pervading the modern rationalised state (the ‘objective pragmatics of reason of state’) and the ‘higher tasks’ of politics as human activity, i.e. of politics as struggle. In other words, the kind of nation and cultural community that a state community becomes depends on the extent to which politics as struggle checks the rationalisation of the sphere in the forms organising political life (analysed in section II) and in the external and inner shaping of the professional politician (section III). Ultimately, as we shall see in section IV, whether the *Menschentum* formed by the political life order turns into an ‘administered... herd of cattle’ with a ‘will to powerlessness’ or whether it becomes a ‘people of masters’ (*Herrenvolk*)⁷, i.e. a people in charge of its own affairs and affirming itself in its actual, lived, qualities, is a measure of how much politics in the ‘genuine’ sense, rather than administration and adaptation to the rule of today’s ‘high capitalism’, is left to take the reins⁸.

I – The dynamic of the rationalised political life order and the shaping of the ‘ruled’

In the same way as form, not expression, is what specifically characterises art; and objectivation through money, not the provision for need or the pursuit of gain, is what marks out the economy as a differentiated sphere of human action; it is ‘power and violence’⁹, the ‘inescapable’ means of politics, rather than political contents, which characterise political action, and it is thus the logic governing these means, the ‘pragma of force’ (*Gewaltsamkeitspragma*), from which ‘no political action can shirk’¹⁰, which grounds it as specific human endeavour. Thus engaging in a rationalised life order (understanding

⁶ Weber, "IR", 547,555. The analysis of the dynamic of the modern state and its shaping of its staff and of the ‘ruled’ should be complemented, in future work, with an analysis of the modern realm of law. As explained by Edith Hanke, it is pervaded by the same ‘principles’ – the same logic – as the economic sphere and bureaucracy – impersonality, objectivity and formal calculability. Hanke, "Nachwort", 267.

⁷ As explained by Lassman and Speirs, ‘Weber’s use of the term *Herrenvolk* ought not to be confused with the National Socialists’ later misappropriation of Nietzschean vocabulary. Weber’s usage does not have imperialist implications but rather conceives of a nation in which each individual is master of his own life’ and takes responsibility for the collective political fate. I prefer to translate ‘*Volk*’ as people (rather than nation) for Weber uses the term *Nation* as well when he wants to. The two terms are nevertheless very close. Weber, *PW (en)*, 129.

⁸ Weber, "Parliament", 210, 259. Weber, "Suffrage", 322. Weber, "Democracy in Russia": 119.

⁹ Weber, "Politics", 444.

¹⁰ Weber, "IR", 549.

rationalised in the sense which *rationalisiert* takes in *IR*, that is to say, ‘in its external organisation’¹¹) implies having to come to terms with the ‘diabolical powers’ which hover over its means of action¹²: the very intrinsic logic which gives shape to our endeavours is also what constrains us to adopt the means of action proper of the life order concerned – and these means (money that objectivates, violence that brings about more violence, calculative reason that disenchant the world etc.) can appear to us as a diabolical force which possesses our action against our will¹³. Whatever the direction of our efforts, the ‘demands’ of the life order ‘leap at us’, to take up Henrik Bruun’s image¹⁴.

Precisely in order to give an account of these ‘diabolical’, ‘un-brotherly’ powers, which dwell in the intrinsic logic pervading the political life order, *IR* sets the scene of the differentiated political life order in state rule. The modern state is that specific configuration (or ‘external organisation’) in which the possession of the means of rulership, and thus of force, is monopolised by one instance: from which, therefore, all bearers of power that used to coexist with the ‘prince’ have been ‘expropriated’. The ‘expropriation’ of all state competitors from the means of rule went together with the development of a centralised staff for the administration of these means¹⁵, at the same time as it signified the orientation of state politics toward the ‘absolute end in itself of maintaining (or re-organising) the inner and external distribution of force (*Gewaltverteilung*)’, that is to say its orientation to the ‘objective pragmatics of reason of state’¹⁶. Thus, in the same way as the structural form of the market underpins the rationalised economic sphere to the point of identity, the structural form of the state is today determining for the cosmos of modern rationalised politics. Similarly, whilst the economic logic of objectivation takes, today, the specific shape of formal economic rationality, the pragma of force is framed by the monopolisation of the legitimate use of force/violence by the state.

Hence the striking concentration of *IR* on administration, on the one hand¹⁷, and war, on the other hand, as the two sides of the same coin, for the characterisation of the modern

¹¹ See Chapter 3 above.

¹² Weber, "Politics", 444. Elsewhere, Weber explicitly linked his reference to the diabolical character of power to Jakob Burckhardt (Weber, "Between two laws", 60.)

¹³ It is the fate of ‘all rational action in the world’ to be ‘ineluctably linked to the un-brotherly conditions of the world, which necessarily constitute its means or ends’; and, conversely, it is also its fate to escape all fixed standard by which its ethical value could be determined. Weber, "IR", 552.

¹⁴ Bruun, "Value Spheres": 100. I come back to and discuss this image in Chapter 7, section II.

¹⁵ Weber, "Politics", 402.

¹⁶ Weber, "IR", 547.

¹⁷ ‘For rulership in the everyday is primarily administration’. Weber, *ES*, 126.

rationalised political life order. The dispassionate, objective discharge of their tasks by bureaucratic staff following the rational rules of the 'order of state power' and 'the realisation of the threat of resort to force' in war are two instances of almost naked exposition of the intrinsic logic of the modern 'state cosmos'. This is made strikingly palpable in *IR*, since Weber there sought to account for the process of differentiation of worldly life orders through an analysis of their confrontation with salvation religions, in particular in their 'consequent ethics of brotherhood' (a confrontation all the more pertinent in Weber's time, since, as we have seen in Part I Chapter 2, the message of the Sermon of the Mount was being revived in Pacifist movements). Precisely the point of bureaucratic state administration is to proceed 'without any regard for the person', '*sine ira et studio*', 'without hate and hence without love', and hence in total contradistinction to any ethics of brotherly love (unless it is taken to the depersonalised extreme of a-cosmic love). And the call for one's complete surrender (*Hingabe*) and sacrifice in war appears to directly compete with salvation religions in the highest 'good' they can offer, a 'meaning' for one's life, when modern culture has rendered such encompassing meaning inaccessible¹⁸.

This extremely concise characterisation of the modern rationalised political life order (three pages in the last version of *IR*, published in the *Collected Essays*) highlights the concurrence of the most thorough rationalisation and depersonalisation of relations (in dealings with the administration) with the summoning of the most irrational ('pathos') as well as of what might appear as the most personal in the human being – search for meaning, fraternity, readiness to die. It is as if modern politics was caught in the paradox of feeding off, in its extra-ordinary manifestations (out of the everyday), from a life of emotions and feelings which its everyday operations deny or even crush. But the paradox is only apparent: as in other life orders, the intrinsic logic of the political life order sets out a productive and dynamic relation between the rational and the irrational, as well as between formal and substantive rationalities, and it is in that relation (which demagogic politicians know how to control) that the *Menschentum* of the nation is moulded.

Thus, state administration does not solely operate according to the formal rationality demanded by the logic of monopolisation of the means of rule. In the latest version (1920) of the sociology of rule written for *ES* (chapter III), Weber distinguished two components in the 'spirit' of rational bureaucracy: first, its 'formalism'; and second, 'apparently, and in part genuinely, in contradiction' to the first component, a tendency to a 'substantive utilitarian' rationality, i.e. an orientation to the welfare of the greatest number, which

¹⁸ Weber, "IR", 546-49.

nevertheless eventually translates into more formal regulatory measures¹⁹. Both find an echo amongst ‘the ruled’, through habituation and ‘inner adjustment (*Einstellung*) [a term very close to *Eingestelltheit* – Weber uses both interchangeably²⁰], ‘by virtue of the belief in the validity of legal *statutes* and objective “competence” grounded in rules elaborated rationally’, to ‘obediently fulfilling statutory obligations’, for ‘everyday life as a whole is set in [that] frame’; but also through the increasing substantive and conscious orientation of men to being administered and provided for as a value *per se*, and as the only horizon for the ‘conduct of their affairs’ – here ‘inner adjustment’ and the habitual orientation to a mode of rulership can give way to conscious, and thus ‘value-rational’ orientation, as per the distinctions of the ‘Basic Sociological Concepts’²¹.

On the other hand, the extra-ordinary character of fraternity and death at war makes war very similar to the ‘experience of sacred charisma and the community with God’. The individual ‘can *believe* he knows that he dies “for” something’ and feels lifted above the everyday. Yet this is put to the service of the legitimisation of the intrinsic logic of the modern rationalised political cosmos:

‘This operation of insertion of death in the series of meaningful and consecrated events ultimately underpins all attempts to support the specific dignity of the political group resting on violence’²².

The modern state is able to successfully conduct such operation and to stir a community ‘pathos’ amongst the ruled because it can rely on the emotionalism of the masses (and this is true of all masses, whatever their social composition). Precisely the constitution of the state community as a mass of mobilisable individuals has become facilitated by the levelling brought about by bureaucratic rule. Thus emotionalism, far from being contradictory with de-personalisation, flourishes in the ‘administered’ mass, where the singularity of human beings and their stance to the world is erased, and where therefore the emotions of the ‘dull, undifferentiated, vegetative “underground” of personal life’, can come to the fore²³.

¹⁹ Thus here the irrationality of this material orientation eventually directly upholds the formal logic of bureaucracy.

²⁰ Thus, in the chapter on bureaucracy in the old manuscript of *ES*, Weber referred to the ‘inner adjustment (*Eingestelltheit*) of the human being to observing the accustomed rules and regulations’. Weber, *ES*, 669.

²¹ Weber, "Politics", 398. Weber, *ES*, 128, 130. Weber, "Parliament", 151. Weber, "Basic Sociological Concepts", 566. The dependency of the development of bureaucracy on the value attached to it has been pointed out by Stefan Breuer (See Stefan Breuer and Robert C. Maier, "The Illusion of Politics: Politics and Rationalization in Max Weber and Georg Lukács", *New German Critique*, no. 26 (1982): 58.).

²² Weber, "IR", 548-9.

²³ Weber, "Parliament", 221. Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 132. ‘Personal’ here simply refers to the life of the individual.

In the political writings of the war years, especially, Weber came back on this conjunction of everyday administration and extra-ordinary mobilisation which epitomizes the modern political order when it is handed over to the dynamics of its intrinsic logic – and drew the political implications. The modern state ‘offers all its citizens... sheer physical security and the minimum for subsistence, but also the battlefield on which to die’: an ‘equality of certain *fates*’²⁴. Men are thus apprehended through what makes them rigorously identical: subsistence needs and death, that is to say, life stripped bare – and the stream of feelings attached to it. Whilst such equality fosters a form of social and cultural democratisation which will eventually force through its political counterpart in equal suffrage (see below), it also does away with what, for Weber, makes the human being a human being: not the heights of emotions which are at the source of devotion and sacrifice at war; but rather what is singular about the human beings, their stance to and in the world, their accomplishments. It can thus do away with their very will to govern themselves, since this reduction of life to bare life is accompanied – as explained above – by happy consent to being administered and provided for.

With the overtaking of the whole political life order by the bureaucratic apparatus and with the concomitant absorption of the political value sphere by considerations of efficient need satisfaction, it is the concept of the political which is suppressed. As pointed out by Beetham, this can be interpreted as a limitation of the strict formal rationality of the bureaucracy, since it should just be an instrument, not a value²⁵. This is yet another example of the lodging of the irrational at the heart of the rational; in this case, it is an irrationality which both unsettles the formal rationality of bureaucracy and the whole political life order. If politics is first of all the sphere of the struggle for power itself (*Gewaltkampf*), and, in today’s state context, the struggle for leadership or influence on the leadership of the state, and if struggle is the ‘essence’ of political action, the ‘flattening of the everyday’ (*das Verflachende des “Alltags”*) operated by bureaucratic rule can only lead to the eviction of the political²⁶. Thus, in the heated end of the war debates about the desirable political regime and type of suffrage in Germany, Weber took issue with those ‘democrats’ who thought that

²⁴ Weber, "Suffrage", 299.

²⁵ Beetham, *Max Weber and the theory of modern politics*, 65.

²⁶ Weber, "IR", 548, Weber, "Parliament", 166, 210, Weber, "Value Freedom", 507.

“politics” was perhaps very “interesting” for layabouts, but ultimately a sterile activity: what it came down to, especially with regard to the broad strata of the nation, was good ‘administration’, which alone would secure “true” democracy...²⁷

Weber fought for universal suffrage and against nationalising the economy, not, however, out of any kind of ‘liberal’ convictions, but to defend the possibility of politics against the supremacy of administration. The on-going and planned further expansion of the latter could only bring about an ever greater encroachment of objectivation over all spheres of life; and, on the other hand, the further spread of attitudes whereby the administered simply let their life ‘slip by’ like a ‘natural process’ (*Naturereignis*)²⁸.

Nevertheless if we are to understand how *Menschentum* is shaped in the political sphere as life order, we cannot be content with the analysis of the moulding effects of the dynamics set out by the ‘objective pragmatics of reason of state’ (the logic ensuring the maintenance of the monopolisation of means of rule)²⁹ and I will now turn to Weber’s analysis of the field of politics as struggle.

II – The forms of democratic politics and the shaping of the ‘public’

Weber dedicated several texts to the reflection on political forms towards the end of the war, urging the political class to be up to its historical task of reconstructing – or perhaps rather constructing – Germany as a ‘nation’.

In these texts, Weber emphasised that any reflection on the forms of the political had to be subordinated to and serve the ‘political tasks facing the nation’. He insisted on the merely technical character of such reflection and professed a lack of dogmatism with regard to the democratic and parliamentary forms – all this no doubt in part strategically, to highlight the unreasonableness of objections to a parliamentary order on the right as well as on the left³⁰.

But it can be argued that, for Weber, and already in his 1895 ‘Inaugural Address’ at the University of Freiburg, the ‘political task’ underpinning all others was the political

²⁷ Weber, "Suffrage", 319.

²⁸ Weber, "Value Freedom", 507.

²⁹ Weber, "IR", 547.

³⁰ Compare the first and last pages of the essay on ‘Parliament and Government in Germany’: ‘Technical changes... can only clear away mechanical obstacles in [the running of the state] and are therefore a means to an end’. ‘The typical snobbism of many litterateurs (even quite intelligent ones) regards these sober problems of parliamentary and party reform as definitely subaltern ones – as “ephemeral technicalities”...’ Weber, "Parliament", 126-30, 260. Translation slightly modified from Weber, *PW (en)*, 134, 270.

education of the 'nation', its 'classes' (1895 lecture) and 'citizens' (in the later political writings), for them and for it to take control over their own affairs in a 'sovereign' or 'masterly' manner, that is affirmatively (rather than reactively, or merely negatively). Hence the words of cautionary soberness introducing his major essay on political forms (*Parliament and Government in Germany under a new Political Order*) – 'technical changes in the running of the state do not in themselves make a nation vigorous, nor happy nor valuable'³¹ – appear to belittle somewhat unduly the importance of political forms: for only the organisation of frequent, positive (e.g. for the shaping of policies) and public political struggle can foster the 'political maturity' of the 'nation'³². And such maturity appears, for Weber, to be synonymous with a notion of liberty as self-determination and affirmation through participation in government, or at least as the 'will of the nation not to be governed like a flock of sheep'³³: it raises people over the mere 'go[ing] about [their] daily business'³⁴ under the rule of 'high capitalism' and the concomitant relinquishing of the 'administration of their affairs' to specialists, by refusing or putting limits to this separation and by reinstating the administration of affairs (as an individual and as a people) as a political, not an administrative, task. Certainly, in modern capitalist democracies where everyday life is absorbed in everyday work, much depended, in Weber's eyes, on the figures of 'professional politicians with a vocation' 'selected' by free peoples to provide vision, orientations and the terms of the choices ahead, but the possibility of such leaders itself is conditioned by suitable forms for their training and proving³⁵.

I would thus argue that the reflection on forms was central to Weber's conception of politics given his definition of the essence of political action as struggle and given the absolutely central place of political struggle for the education into and possibility of liberty.

³¹ Weber, "Parliament", 129. Weber, *PW (en)*, 134.

³² Weber, "Parliament", 223.

³³ Weber, "Democracy in Russia": 119-20. Weber, *PW (en)*, 69. I translate *Freiheit* sometimes as freedom and sometimes as liberty. Freedom refers to the notion of *Freiheit* which has stemmed from specific historical developments, which, from the religious foundations of freedom of conscience to the rights of man, have coined our modern understanding of freedom, especially in terms of rights. I translate as 'liberty' when Weber refers to individual and collective self-determination and the refusal to be dominated, be it by the flow of life or by administrative and capitalist mechanisation.

³⁴ Weber, "Parliament", 259. Weber, *PW (en)*, 269.

³⁵ Weber, "Parliament", 258. Weber, *PW (en)*, 269. Patrice Duran has also stressed the importance of the question of the 'forms of the state', especially for the formation of 'political competence' of 'professionalised politicians' and for the possibility of vocation. The notion of political competence nevertheless appears too restrictive with regard to Weber's conception of political vocation (the notion of 'proving oneself'), and more generally with regard to the formation of a self-determined and determining people. Duran, "The making of politicians", 86-7.

The ambivalence of democratisation: the figure of the citizen

In the political writings of the war years, especially, Weber showed how any reflection on the forms framing political struggle had to start from the fact of ongoing and unstoppable democratisation, understanding by democratisation not primarily the extension of suffrage, but rather the much more pervasive workings of a form of equality in society that had that same ‘mechanical’ character as equal suffrage³⁶. Weber referred to democratisation as the ‘levelling of the structure of social estates by the *state run by officials*’: in that sense, the modern concept of ‘citizen of the state’ (*Staatsbürger*) was first a creation of bureaucratic rule³⁷. As we have seen, such levelling and the resulting mechanical equality amounted to considering individuals from the point of view of what makes them rigorously identical. A comparable principle of identity could be said to be at the core of equal suffrage, which conceives of men solely in their shared and formally identical quality of citizen³⁸. This commonality of principle demonstrates the necessity of equal suffrage today as the only way of organising the political translation of such ‘equality of fates’, in the same way as ‘all inequalities of political rights in the past ultimately derived from an economically determined inequality of military qualification which one does not find in bureaucratised state and army’³⁹.

However, identity, in the condition of citizen, stems from a political construction, which constitutes both the citizen and their collective actively and ‘positively’. Equality is not presupposed (‘it has of course nothing at all to do with any theory of natural “equality” of human beings’) but, through equal suffrage, which ‘creates a certain counterweight to the social *inequalities* which [themselves] are *neither* rooted in natural differences nor created by natural qualities...’, is put at the core of political unity and poses some limits to the influence of the ‘privileged by property’ and ‘the purse’ on national politics⁴⁰. In other words, equal suffrage constitutes the unified collective not merely through the mechanics

³⁶ Weber, "Suffrage", 297.

³⁷ Ibid, 299, 322. Tocqueville had also envisaged democracy as a social phenomenon (the passion for equality) and not only as a political regime. Wilhelm Hennis has suggested that Weber belongs to a ‘tradition of modern political thought, which can be associated with the names of Machiavelli, Rousseau and Tocqueville’ and that he was ‘certainly well-acquainted with Tocqueville’. Hennis, *Central Question*, 69, 208. This is indeed likely, all the more so given the interest of both in America (however I have not found any direct reference in Weber’s prose).

³⁸ Weber, "Suffrage", 297.

³⁹ Ibid, 299. Weber, *PW (en)*, 105.

⁴⁰ Weber, "Suffrage", 297. Translations slightly modified from Weber, *PW (en)*, 103. Weber was always critical of the constitutional theory of the state and its basis in natural law, as well as of theories of popular sovereignty. Cf. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics. 1890-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 393-5.

of addition, but also through the formal offsetting, on the plane of political rights, of social and economic divisions: this is the first step towards the characterisation of this collective as a 'nation'.

The figure of the 'citizen' thus embodies the tensions of the political sphere: first formatted as administered recipient of everyday administrative and welfare provision, he shapes through his vote the body which exercises control over the administration – thereby reaffirming politics.

The ambivalence of democratisation: the effects of party machines and Caesarist leadership

The political forms brought about by equal suffrage are also ambivalent. The political struggle, in democratic politics, mainly takes the form of 'leadership democracy with a "machine"', where the machine – a term Weber borrowed from the works of Ostrogorski and Bryce on the transformation of political parties – refers to 'the rationalisation of party organisation' for mass propaganda and mass canvassing; and where leadership contests are likely to be organised as plebiscites for the selection of the leader of the state⁴¹. The implications of such 'party machines' and 'Caesarism' for the quality of political struggles, and hence for the possibility of 'genuine political action', are not straightforward, as logics which are only contrary in appearance intermingle (i.e. the rational logic of bureaucratisation and the irrational appeal of charisma). They can mutually amplify each other and reproduce, in party life, the same shaping processes of the 'public' (*Öffentlichkeit*)⁴² as the shaping of citizens through everyday administrative rule and mobilisation for the war⁴³.

⁴¹ Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs, "Introduction". in Max Weber. *Political Writings* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xvii. Weber, "Parliament", 202-3, 212. Weber, "Politics", 434. Weber also mentioned the form of 'democracy without leader' (with parties of notables), as this reflected the system in place in Germany at the time (see below in text). However Weber pointed to the fact that 'every democracy tends to' leadership democracy.

⁴² Weber, "Parliament", 208.

⁴³ Wolfgang Mommsen refers to this as an 'antinomic model', for 'an order of rule fit for the future' whereby 'the material rationality of the charismatically legitimate and thereby great innovative politician could face up to the formal rationality of the bureaucratic rule apparatus'. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Politik in Vorfeld der "Hörigkeit der Zukunft". Politische Aspekte der Herrschaftssoziologie Max Webers" [Politics in the run-up to the "serfdom of the future". Political aspects of Max Weber's sociology of rulership], in *Max Webers Herrschaftssoziologie: Studien zur Entstehung und Wirkung* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2001), 313. Mommsen's 'antinomic model' thus focuses on the counterweight brought to bear by charismatic leadership on bureaucratic rationality, and does not seem to consider the other possible face of such structure, i.e. the mutual reinforcement of both, where 'ratio' and 'life' call for each other. However, by suggesting that this antinomic structure is an order of rulership, he implicitly recognises that the formal rationality of legal rulership is thereby upheld.

Weber saw party machines everywhere on the ascent, and this contributed to the decreasing importance (or the continued lack of importance) of parliaments, as party officials marginalised their own parliamentary representatives, be it in the elaboration of party policy, in the selection of the leader or both. There were great differences between the party machines analysed by Weber⁴⁴ and they were the vehicles of very different kinds of ‘spirit’⁴⁵. In all cases however they were liable to ‘stereotyping’ and ‘ossification’, through the ‘loss of their soul’ in the total subordination to the leader and the unique focusing on the leader’s success, or, on the contrary, through the absence of any nourishment through new men and new ideas⁴⁶. Furthermore parties constitute the mass of citizens into “‘active” [party followers] and “passive” participants in political life”⁴⁷. Citizens are, there as well, transformed into mere recipient of party propaganda and left with minimum participation in political life.

⁴⁴ These included: the well disciplined armies at the service of the leader’s victory for future sharing in the distribution of prebends (as in the American spoils system); the also well disciplined armies of the parties with a ‘vision of the world’ (typically the social democratic party, especially in its beginnings, or any revolutionary party) likely to fall into ‘spiritual proletarianisation’ and ‘loss of the soul’ very quickly, as is the case in any process of ‘objectivation’ (*Versachlichung*) of charisma; and the German parties where, in part due to the absence of any great stake in parliament, party officials are those who rule the party and tend to turn it almost into a party of notables, hostile to the rise of new leaders, and at risk of ‘succumbing to bureaucratisation in much the same way as the state apparatus’.

⁴⁵ I.e. the blind discipline and devotion to the charismatic leader – for the sake of prebend hunger, as in the American system or out of faith – as with the Social Democratic party in its beginnings; or ruling officialdom and notabilisation – as in the German parties in general (see Weber, "Parliament", 208, 219, 220. Weber, "Politics", 433-4.) The ‘spirits’ can be combined and the passage from one to the other can be fluid. In particular Weber argues that the ‘following of a man fighting for a faith, when it begins to rule, tends to decline particularly easily into a quite ordinary stratum of prebendaries’ Weber, "Politics", 447. Weber, *PW (en)*, 365.

⁴⁶ This includes Weber’s assessment of the Social Democratic party, which was highly nuanced and varied over time. Party bureaucratisation combined with ideal and material interests and with the political practices of campaigning to produce an alternative, more productive, dynamic. Thus, whilst Weber considered it as the ‘most strongly bureaucratized party’ he saw that its officials were also ‘idealists’ and trained ‘in the struggle with the public’, which prevented them from ‘ossifying into a stratum of party prebendaries’. Similarly, in ‘Politics’, he stressed the transformation of the party into a party of officials after Bebel’s death, but he also noted that ‘“officials” submit fairly readily to a leader with a strong, demagogically affective personality, for their material and ideal interests are, after all, intimately connected with what they hope the power of the party will achieve under his leadership’, which contrasted with the notabilisation of the ‘bourgeois parties’. See Weber, "Parliament", 207-8. "Politics", 423 Weber, *PW (en)*, 216-7, 339-340. It is perhaps euphemistic to say that Weber’s account of social democracy was nuanced. It could also appear to be contradictory – but perhaps this was only a reflection of the narrow path trodden by the party itself. Thus, in ‘Politics’, the post-Bebel period is characterised as the ‘rule of the officials’ – when, 10 pages earlier, he put this characterisation in the mouth of ‘some Social Democratic circles’ and qualified their opinion by referring to the party’s ‘ready submission’ to a strong leader. Similarly, whilst Weber derided, in his account of the Mannheim party conference (1907), ‘the thick innkeeper face, the petit bourgeois physiognomy [that] came to the fore and dominated so clearly: not a word of revolutionary enthusiasm, just heavy, sententious debating and reasoning’ (see Weber, "Verein debates", 410.), in his essay on ‘Parliament’ in 1918, he praised ‘the numerous impeccable political characters’ amongst the party officials of the social democratic party. (Weber, "Parliament", 207.)

⁴⁷ Weber, "Politics", 419.

Democratic politics organises the mobilisation of the masses through ‘trust and belief’ in the person of party leaders (and then state leaders), as is characteristic of charismatic leadership. Indeed, the charismatic element, ‘hidden under the form of legitimacy that derives from the will of the ruled, and only subsists through it’, is the actually effective principle of “plebiscitary democracy” and is dominant in modern democratic politics⁴⁸. Processes of selection of leaders (at party level and nationally) rest on the power of the (written and spoken) word and hence on ‘demagogy’, with ‘the possibility that emotional elements will become predominant in politics’. This danger is minimally kept in check by the organisation of political life around ‘rationally organised parties’, which means that Caesarist leaders have to conform to certain rules and that the irrationality of ‘the street’ is kept under control⁴⁹.

The combination of party machines and Caesarist leadership seemed to be the path increasingly taken by democratic politics, with its combination of formal and substantive rationalities, as well as formal and charismatic rule. The character of political life thus formed is therefore uncertain – potentially swinging between the ossification of pure discipline and the periodic ‘intoxication’ of emotional enthusiasm of followers for a leader: more of a recipe for adaptation and subjection than for liberty.

It might thus appear as if all was really decided by the type of human being that the politician is, or, what is the same, by the ethics he adopts in that uncertainty. Yet Weber had more to say on forms, and types of ‘politicians’ are also in part a product of these forms.

The decisive element for the external shaping of ‘genuine’ leaders (I come back to the notion of genuineness below) and self-determining citizens consists in the organisation of the possibility of political struggle. As is well known, Weber emphasised the role that parliament could play in this endeavour – provided it was a ‘working parliament’: that is to say, first, a parliament engaged in ‘positive’ politics, debating and shaping the crux of policies, rather than in the ‘negative’ politics entailed by its confinement as registration chamber for the budget; and, as a pre-condition for such ‘positive’ politics, a parliament

⁴⁸ Weber, *ES*, 156. The reference to citizens as ‘the ruled’, and the merely formal character conceded to their will seems to shock Mommsen (he signals this use several times in the above quoted 2001 article on the politics of Weber’s sociology of rulership). Indeed, in Weber’s science of reality, *Einstellung* to being administered on the one hand and affectual devotion on the other hand are the actual mechanisms shaping adapted citizens and thus upholding democratic rule; whilst will is usually only the formal principle underpinning the constitutional framework for such rule.

⁴⁹ Weber, “Parliament”, 212, 221-2. Weber, *PW (en)*, 230-1.

engaged in the ‘unremitting, strenuous work’ of committees and enquiries. Only such a ‘working parliament’ (whose model Weber thought to be persisting in ‘England’ despite the subjection of MPs to external party machines), can present sufficiently important struggles for attracting people with a vocation for politics; only such a parliament can train future leaders for the grounding of their worldviews and positions, in short, of their ‘word’, in the ‘knowledge’ and ‘well considered experience’ provided by work on concrete policy issues; and only such a parliament can be an open testing ground, through which leaders ‘prove themselves’ (*sich bewähren*) and through which the ‘public’, the citizens of the state, can learn to ‘trust and believe in’ certain leaders on the grounds of their work and positions, their ‘intellect’ and ‘strength of will’, in addition to the knowledge and experience just mentioned, whereas more reduced public exposure leads to the over-emphasis on demagogic talent⁵⁰.

In other words, in order for the co-operation (*Zusammenwirken*) between the formal-rational logic of bureaucracy and the charismatic logic of Caesarist leadership not to be absorbed in a mutually reinforcing circle of ossification and demagogy, co-operation has to be organised not only on the terrain of the plebiscites (within parties and on the national scene), but also on the terrain of parliamentary activity: only then can these logics be supplemented and checked with a conception of politics as a task and as struggle, and hence avoid total absorption by the ‘power pragma’⁵¹. But this was a tenuous path, which was likely to become more and more uncertain, as the progress of party machines de facto reduced the margins of parliamentarians, hence also the meaningfulness of the struggles in that arena.

⁵⁰ Weber, "Parliament", 174. Weber, *PW (en)*, 181-2. Kari Palonen also establishes the link between Weber’s advocacy of parliamentarism and a conception of politics as struggle. Yet the likening of political struggle to rhetoric and contestation between arguments and the comparison with ‘struggle’ in science, where objectivity would arise as a result of the ‘competition between perspectives’, of ‘academic controversies’, seem to me to be misrepresentations of Weber’s thought. There is no such benefit of controversies as ‘objectivity’, nor are ‘moderate and balanced results’ the aim of parliamentary struggles. Weber always derided the idea of the middle ground, e.g. precisely in the very ‘Objectivity essay’ that Palonen quotes: “The ‘middle way’ is *not one jot closer to scientific truth* than the most extreme party ideals of left or right...”. See Kari Palonen, "Max Weber, Parliamentarism and the Rhetorical Culture of Politics", *Max Weber Studies* 4, no. 2 (2004): 279, 281. Weber, "Objectivity", 154. Max Weber, "The 'objectivity' of knowledge in social sciences and in social policy", in *The essential Weber: a reader* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004 [1904]), 364. (Hereafter ‘Objectivity (en)'). In the same vein, Mommsen, who judiciously refers to the ‘antinomic model’ of bureaucracy and charismatic leadership, and insists on the struggle at the core of this model, surprisingly argues that it amounts to the ‘classical liberal model of the balance of powers returning under a new guise’. Mommsen, "Politics and sociology of rulership", 312.

⁵¹ Weber, "Parliament", 174.

III – The shaping of the professional politician

The political life order, whose main configuration of deployment today is the modern state, produces two dominant ‘figures’⁵². Both these figures testify to the professionalisation of the political life order, both are *Berufspolitiker*, but only one is a figure of politics: the political leader (the party leader, the candidate to leader of the state and those aspiring to take part in leadership – as well as, in times of turmoil, the revolutionary leader), whose whole ‘element’ is opposed to that of the second figure, the government official, the bureaucrat, who does not engage in politics but merely ‘administers’⁵³. The latter belongs to the wider group of *Fachmenschentum*, the specialist type of human being, whose portrait I have drafted in Part I Chapter 2, since I there addressed what Weber saw as the culturally significant type of human being in modern times (in the West)⁵⁴. I will focus here on the professional politician.

The development of plebiscitary leadership, as the corollary of bureaucracy, emphasised the ‘personalisation of power’, at least in principle. But the nature of such personalisation needs to be specified.

Certainly, the political leader’s ‘element’ is almost antithetical to the party official’s continuous work in the shadow, though he is even more opposed to the bearer of de-personalisation, the government official, who is never exposed to struggle, and it is from that contrast that Weber started his exposition of the politician’s world. ‘Partisanship, fight, passion’, this is what the politician’s life is about: and such daily agonic matter requires ‘temperament’ – Weber used again this word to refer to the politician’s character, and it is striking how, to designate this kind of agonic energy, he found the reminiscence of the ancient vocabulary of the four medieval ‘humours’ and their ‘temperaments’ (*Temperamente*)

⁵² ‘Figure’ is a term that Weber used particularly in the *Political Writings* and in the sociology of religion as an exact equivalent to the notion of type of human being, with their specific task and orientation and the inner qualities and external characteristics associated with them. See e.g. Weber, "Politics", 418-9, 429. Weber, "Parliament", 182,207.

⁵³ Weber, "Politics", 414.

⁵⁴ Indeed it is only in that connection to the rest of a class of rational, specialist professionals that, in *IR*, Weber refers to the bureaucrat as ‘*homo politicus*’, and establishes a parallel to the ‘*homo oeconomicus*’ – a designation and a parallel which are rather confusing, although they may serve to point, on the one hand, to the absorption of the political by the administrative, and the likening of officials more and more to abstract types. See Weber, "IR", 546. Weber refers to other ‘figures’, in particular those of the party official and of the professional Member of Parliament, ‘indispensable’ but less to the fore. It is to be noted that he highlights the need for the formation of an adequate ‘professional parliamentarian as type’ (*Berufsparlamentariertum*) (Weber, "Parliament", 182.) Weber does not stop his series of political portraits there in ‘Parliament’ and above all in ‘Politics’: he also includes the political journalist (who, as such, is considered by Weber amongst those dedicating their professional life to politics, indeed, as the prototype of the ‘demagogue’), and the American ‘boss’, i.e. the political capitalist entrepreneur who works along the party machine, and ‘supplies votes on his own account and at his own risk’. Weber, "Politics", 415, 429.

more appropriate than modern psychology (as he had explicitly said in the 'Methodological introduction' to the survey on industrial workers)⁵⁵. The highly personal character of political deeds, since the politician is expected to place his honour in throwing his own weight into them and not deflecting responsibility, is also a drive which Weber mentions in contrast to the official (whose honour consists precisely in carrying out an order given by his superior even if he disagrees with it)⁵⁶.

Above all of course there is the attraction towards power and the sense of power, as was the case in the economic sphere: power forms the dominant 'element of [their] life' (*Lebenselement*)⁵⁷. Political power, however, is different, in that it is not only in relation to people (as in the *ES* definition⁵⁸) but also in relation to history – the sense of history in the making, i.e. contributing to giving shape to history through the moulding of events – or 'strands' of events:

'The professional politician can have a sense of rising above everyday existence, even in what is formally a modest position, through knowing that he exercises influence on people, shares power over them, but above all the knowledge that he holds in his hands some vital strand of historically important events'⁵⁹.

But it is easy to see how this 'element' of the life of the politician may very well remain confined to the expression of the egotistic, self-interested desire for power. The mere advance of Caesarism does not suffice to foster leader 'personalities' – indeed of its own, it is much more likely to produce 'demagogues', a designation which Weber sometimes used as an almost technical description of the politician relying on the power of speech (including written speech), referred back to its origin in Pericles' election as leader of the 'sovereign *ekklesia* of the *demos* of Athens'⁶⁰, but which he also uses in keeping with the pejorative usage. The modern political leader is a demagogue in the sense that he is 'forced to count on making an "impact"'. Weber saw this inescapable condition in mass politics as particularly propitious for the flourishing of unsubstantial politicians, either engrossed in themselves and vain, or pursuing a cause corresponding to an ethics of inner conviction, without feeling the implications of such engagement. In both cases, the former possibly

⁵⁵ Weber, "Politics", 415. Weber, "Parliament", 221. As I shall explain in Chapter 7, if life is to be conducted, this 'temperament' needs to be transformed into ethical qualities.

⁵⁶ Weber, "Politics", 415.

⁵⁷ Weber, "Parliament", 154.

⁵⁸ 'Power is the chance, within a social relation, to impose one's own will in spite of resistance, regardless of the basis on which this chance rests'. Weber, *ES*, 28.

⁵⁹ Weber, "Politics", 435.

⁶⁰ 'Ever since the advent of the constitutional state, and even more so since the advent of democracy, the typical leader in the West is the "demagogue"'. *Ibid*, 415.

derived from a “blasé” attitude’, the latter from ‘romantic intoxication’, the ‘tragic’ of ‘all human action but quite particularly political action’ is missed. Ultimately, power can be struggled for without ‘inner weight’ and without ‘inner distance’⁶¹.

But, very strikingly, Weber argued that it is then the ‘appearance of power rather than its reality (*wirkliche Macht*)’ which is striven for, if real political power is about shaping the cultural community, defining the cultural conditions for men’s actions. Through such an assessment, we perceive what Weber felt to be the inner, immanent, demands of politics as ‘task’ (*Sache*), as sphere of ‘genuine human action’, those inner demands towards which a politician with a vocation (*Politiker kraft Berufes*) orients himself⁶², although they may or may not be reflected in actual political forms: as explained above, Weber saw a working parliament as a testing ground for the politician to ‘prove himself’, and this has to be understood as ‘proof’ of ‘genuineness’ as a politician, in the same way as the Protestant sects had monitored the religious qualification of their members, who proved themselves in their economic success. External forms may foster political vocations, they may also provide the arena for the deployment and test of such vocations; but, in the disenchanting modern world, Weber argued that the inner orientation of a human being towards the inner demands of politics could only come from one’s ‘own chest’⁶³.

What are these inner demands of politics which steer all genuine political action and all political vocation?

First, political action cannot be ‘mere power-politics’. Whilst power is the inescapable means of politics, the struggle for power for its own sake, which is always a possibility, is a ‘sin against the holy spirit of the profession’, as the power seeker really takes himself as his own goal. This can only lead to ‘emptiness and absurdity’. Power-politics needs to be enlisted in the service of (inner and external) ‘historical tasks’. Where there are no politics of culture (*Kulturpolitik*), that is to say no notion that certain values should be promoted, cultivated and defended, and where there are no causes, there is no point in politics: contrary to Bismarck and his *Realpolitik*, Weber held that ‘...the possible would never have been attained unless again and again the impossible had not been striven for in the world’.

⁶¹ Ibid, 437, 448.

⁶² Ibid, 399, 437-8.

⁶³ Patrice Duran suggests as much, but does not explicitly distinguish between the analysis of the forms, and that of the ‘spirit’ – the inner momentum of the sphere. Thus when he highlights that for Weber, ‘politics cannot be reduced only to the pursuit of power for itself’, we are entitled to ask – where does this ‘cannot’ come from? Duran, “The making of politicians”, 91.

But, conversely, responsibility for exerting power politics, and thus facing up, if need be, to the pragma of force and violence, should not be eluded⁶⁴.

Whereas the precise way in which responsibility for power-politics and the pursuit of a cause are brought in interplay is a matter which the politician will have to decide in accord with his own conception of politics and in each particular situation, a consistent and genuine relation to politics demands both components of political action:

‘In this sense the ethics of inner conviction and the ethics of responsibility are not absolute antagonists but are mutually complementary, and only when taken together do they make up the genuine human being who *is able* to have the “vocation for politics”⁶⁵.

Equally, politics cannot be a mere ‘frivolous intellectual game’ – for, whatever the cause embraced, political power implies ‘thrusting [one’s] hands onto the spokes of the wheel of history’, and contributes to shaping the culture in which present, but also future generations will inscribe their actions. At the very least, the cause needs to be carried with passion, whilst at the same time not falling into ‘sterile excitement’⁶⁶. The kind of passion demanded is the passion of those who know what the cause entails, who have thought it through – i.e. passion allied with ‘judgment’ and ‘responsibility’. These are the well-known features of the politician of vocation but they can also be read as the immanent demands of politics which spur vocations – indeed Weber’s exposition, in ‘Politics’, can be read on both planes⁶⁷.

Finally, politics cannot be confused with the moral crusades fed by feelings of ‘being in the right’ (*Recht haben*). The power struggle is an antagonism between two sides of equal dignity, to be decided by the power relation, not by righteousness or guilt. Yet, says Weber, such moralisation of inner and external struggles is characteristic of the modern rational state⁶⁸. Indeed the overriding consensual confusion of politics with administering may lead rulers to treat any group refusing to be administered and policed (for example, workers on strike)

⁶⁴ Weber, "Politics", 436-7, 450. Weber, "Parliament", 126. Weber, "Between two laws", 61.

⁶⁵ Weber, "Politics", 449.

⁶⁶ It is the lack of genuine passion which, amongst other things, quickly made Stefan George’s charisma and his pretension to develop a new prophecy suspicious to Weber. As he explained to Dora Jelinek, George’s voice had shrunk to a ‘mad harp chord’, it was the ‘roar of a voice’ without its contents. His art had come to ‘fray, dismember, dissolve all passions so much’, all ‘personal’ inspiration had vanished, which led Weber to ask: “‘Salvation’ – where from?... These people, it seems, are precisely only too ‘saved’”. In other words, if the kind of asceticism practised by George amounts to emptying life of its passions, not only is there no ‘content’ anymore in poetry, but there is no content in prophecy either: the combination of detachment and asceticism into impersonal, objective form also conduces to the fruitlessness of the prophecy. See Weber, *Letters 1909-1910*, 561.

⁶⁷ Weber, "Politics", 435-436.

⁶⁸ Weber, "IR", 547. Weber, "Politics", 439.

as an inner enemy⁶⁹. And, externally, the operation of legitimisation of the state through the consecration of death at war requires, as we have seen, the creation of a 'pathos' for the 'masses', which, it may be surmised, finds more immediate sustenance in the designation of the enemy as evil than in explanations about antagonisms of world-power interests and cultural values. But moralisation and self-righteousness taint modern politics and not only the modern state. Weber exposed these amongst party followers 'under the conditions of modern class-warfare' – where the 'inner rewards' pursued by party members may become geared to 'the satisfaction of hatred and revenge, of *ressentiment* and the need for the pseudo-ethical feeling of being in the right, the desire to slander one's opponents and make heretics of them'⁷⁰.

Thus the inner demands of politics, which include assuming the 'pragma of force' shaping any political action, nevertheless stand in stark tension with key components of the modern mode of rulership in the modern rationalised state – more particularly the transformation of political matters and practices into concerns of good administration, the concomitant moralisation of inner and external political struggle and a mode of personalisation of leadership more conducive to demagoguery than to the emergence of 'genuine' politicians, with 'inner weight'.

IV – The shaping of the nation

If *Menschentum* is humanity apprehended through its stances, qualities and accomplishments, then each cultural parcel of humanity is the active depository of *Menschentum* which, in Weber's words, it 'stamps' in a particular way⁷¹. It is as if all given cultural community was 'entrusted' certain 'cultural goods' of worldly culture (in both sense of the word 'worldly'); and as if 'fate' had placed a certain obligation on each to act as 'custodians' of these values and 'virtues', an obligation whose modalities very much depend on the political status of the community, and in particular on its status on the world scene of political power, its way of dealing with the 'pragma of force' and on whether or not it has the status of a *Machtstaat*⁷². Weber defined 'world power' as the 'power to determine the character of

⁶⁹ See above, chapter 4 (section II).

⁷⁰ Weber, "Politics", 446. Weber, *PW (en)*, 364-5.

⁷¹ Cf. '...that coining of *Menschentum* which we find in our own beings (*Wesen*)'. See Weber, "Inaugural Address", 19.

⁷² That is to say a state organised so as to be involved in international struggles for power (this is not a term that Weber uses a lot, but he does in the context of two political essays written during the war, one of

culture in the future' and hence argued that the responsibility of a *Machtstaat* such as Germany was to ensure that such definition was not left completely to the English (and American) and Russia, or at least not left 'without a struggle'⁷³.

Culture and politics are thus intricately intertwined, which is the reason why Weber considered the relevant 'cultural community' as being that of the nation state, at least in the world of his time, and admittedly of ours – and not out of any enthusiasm for the nation state at all⁷⁴. Cultural possibilities depend (negatively and positively⁷⁵) on political obligations, at the same time as coping with political obligations only makes sense with regard to the genuine fostering and assertion of values and qualities. Thus a cultural community whose dominant type of human being is the 'specialist type of human being' must be marked, as we have seen, by the wider spread of material contentment and security as dominant values and readiness to submit to administrative rule. To Weber, a community marked by such values abdicates its self-determination in the everyday and can hardly be thought to reclaim it on a grander scale. It is not that Weber subjected all concerns to the capacity of Germany to be a *Machtstaat*, as has sometimes been suggested⁷⁶: rather, to him, in order to avoid disasters as well as ridicule, there should be consistency between the virtues cultivated on an everyday basis (in particular through policies as well as the use of administration and other state forces), which are very much part of those shared goods of the cultural community, and the affirmation of a cultural singularity as a people, or as a nation, on the world scene. The expectations, for example, that the 'own existence and honour' of the state will be defended by its citizens if need be must cannot be blatantly denied in the everyday conduct of the state, e.g. through the repression of unions' defence

which - 'Between two laws' - is a particularly clear exposition of the link between cultural possibility and political responsibility).

⁷³ Weber, "Between two laws", 60-1.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Jaspers' quote of his exclamation in response to a Swiss visitor who had argued that we must love the state: "What! On top of everything you want us to love the monster?". Karl Jaspers, *Leonardo, Descartes, Max Weber; three essays* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1965), 190.

⁷⁵ Weber somewhat ironically evoked the difficulty for a state organised as a 'military camp' to be a blossoming ground for the finest cultural developments. Weber, "Between two laws", 60.

⁷⁶ Thus, in *The destruction of reason*, Lukács reproached Weber with taking democratisation only as a 'means to help achieve a better functioning imperialism'. And Mommsen, who quotes Lukács, adds that such criticism is 'very difficult to quarrel with'. See Mommsen, *German Politics*, 396. I hope to have shown that, for Weber, the democratisation of politics had to be established both to reflect the ongoing social democratisation and to counteract objectivation as well as foster some measure of self-government. The fact that Weber rejected natural law and constitutional theories of the state in order to practice a 'sociological state science' (*Staatslehre*) as 'a science of pure empirical typical human action', as he wrote to the jurist Kantorowicz, does not mean that he fell prey to functionalism. (See quote in Hanke, "Nachwort", 263.)

of the working class interests in the 'everyday economic struggle'⁷⁷. Bearing in mind what has been said above on the mobilisable character of the administered mass, Weber's argument can be understood in two ways: as a warning that the mobilisability (so to speak) of the people may have its limits; and, secondly, as an argument for the fostering of another, more 'mature' and reflective kind of readiness to stand for the nation in 'emergency situations' than that obtained through emotionalist appeals. In any case, Weber's support to workers' struggles remained bound to the strict limits of collective bargaining and was thus much more restrictive and far less subversive than his teaching for life conduct in vocation (studied in Part III Chapter 7).

Weber provocatively asserted that there are only two ultimate consistent possibilities: subjection, in the everyday, as well as on the world scene, which may well accommodate on the other hand a nation of 'good officials, appreciable office workers, honest merchants, able scholars and technicians and faithful servants'; or control over the common affairs, participation in government and affirmation – an 'administered herd of cattle' or a 'nation of masters'⁷⁸.

Thus the politically fashioned 'nation' is, for Weber, the bearer of both the possibility of values, qualities and virtues of the *Kulturgemeinschaft* and of the political obligations of the state. Weber had defined the 'nation' as a 'value' in the sociology of rule of the earlier *ES* manuscript⁷⁹. Although Weber was thus adamant that nation and political community could not be taken as synonyms, in his *Political Writings*, he treated Germany (as indeed its main *Machtstaat* competitors) as cultural community and as nation, sharing in a common political fate. In such cases, 'everything that shares in the goods of the *Machtstaat* is inextricably enmeshed in the logic of the "power pragma" that governs all history', and it is only the actual political make up of the nation, its 'political education', its 'political maturity' and capacity for self-rule which can turn this into a positive dynamic, conducive to more liberty and assertion. Conversely, the other route, that of absorption of politics by administration,

⁷⁷ Weber, "Suffrage", 318. Weber, *Letters 1911-1912*, 749. Weber, "Parliament", 137. Weber viewed social classes (by contrast e.g. with economic classes) as being close to status groups, and this shows here quite clearly with the mention of specific class honour. It is such conviction which spurred Weber's involvement in associations or groups through which he could take part in the struggle for the self-determination of collectives (of workers, higher education teachers etc.). E.g. see Bruhns, "Max Weber's science and politics".

⁷⁸ Weber, "Parliament", 259. Weber, "Suffrage", 322.

⁷⁹ The nation spells out the configuration of conceptions and expectations of solidarity between certain groups vis-à-vis other groups. The bases of such expectations of solidarity are varied, ranging from common language, to common confession, beliefs in common ethnicity, or yet again 'memories of a political community of fate' – as was the case between Alsace and France. Weber, *ES*, 627-8.

and hence subjection to regulations as well as to authoritarianism of various kinds (from monarchy without political rights to demagogic Caesarist dictatorship) is always possible, indeed it is favoured by the modern development of the state according to its intrinsic logic, as well as where 'material interests' are 'left to their own laws'⁸⁰.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to characterise the dynamics of the sphere of politics analysed by Weber, that is to say as it is deployed in the frame of the modern rationalised state, in particular with a view to account for the shaping of *Menschentum*.

I have argued that Weber rendered this dynamic particularly visible in his *IR* juxtaposition of everyday rational rule and the extra-ordinary conditions on the war front, as this highlighted the constitution of the state community as a mass of mobilisable individuals approached through what makes them rigorously identical: subsistence needs and death, that is to say, life stripped bare and the emotions attached to it. De-personalisation does not only objectivate relationships, it erases the singular, or the possibility of the singular, in the human being, and thus the ethical qualities, the 'inner weight' and 'inner distance' which alone can ground individual self-determination and the 'political maturity' of a people⁸¹.

Weber argued that such consistency and maturity come about in the confrontation of human beings in the struggle for causes and beliefs and in everyday struggles. But precisely, he showed that the 'flattening of the everyday' operated by bureaucratic rule could only lead to the eviction of the political understood as struggle – and that even the 'co-operation' of bureaucratic rule with Caesarist leadership characterising democratic politics was no guarantee for the practice of politics; on the contrary the political sphere could become absorbed in a dynamic of mutually reinforcing ossification and demagogy which would further entrench the shaping of the nation as a 'herd of cattle'.

The fostering of politics demands forms organising political struggle so as to mobilise and test the corresponding 'qualities' both of the professional politicians, of their staff and of the citizens themselves. The attraction of vocational, rather than merely professional,

⁸⁰ Weber, "Between two laws", 63. Weber, "Parliament", 258. Weber, "Democracy in Russia": 119.

⁸¹ Weber, "Parliament", 223.

politicians should, in Weber's eyes, be a crucial remit of such political forms. Only vocational politicians can respond to what I have referred to as the inner demands of politics and carry out 'genuine' political action, rather than letting themselves be carried by the external dynamic described. At the core of these inner demands is the passionate and responsible orientation of the politician to a cause, as 'mere power politics' is not 'real politics'.

Weber's hopes for the possibility of a life of liberty, individually and collectively, in the "fully" developed economically and intellectually "sated" West⁸², were thin, and dependent on the possibility to curb the influence of the 'specialised type of humanity' through the education of the nation to politics and the cultivation of 'genuine' politicians able to meet the inner demands of politics as a task. This also required the 'inner' orientation and conduct of one's life – i.e. a form of ethics which I will turn to in Part III, Chapter 7. Only in the Russia of 1905, and perhaps in the United States, did it seem possible to envisage the development of "free" cultures "from the bottom up", where 'an "inalienable" sphere of freedom and personality' for the 'individual of the wide masses' could still be fought for, supported by 'the lasting, determined will of [the] nation not to be governed like a flock of sheep'⁸³.

⁸² Weber, "Democracy in Russia": 121.

⁸³ Ibid: 119-121. Weber, *PW (en)*, 69-71. The translation for *Freiheit* here is closer to freedom than to liberty (cf. the distinction indicated in footnote 33 above) given Weber's reference to an "inalienable" sphere of personality and freedom and thus to human rights.

Chapter 6 – The sphere of ‘intellectual knowledge’ and ‘science’ (*Wissenschaft*) in the age of specialisation and the shaping of the contemporary scholar

Introduction

I have kept the exposition of the life order of intellectual knowledge/science for the end, as not only does its intrinsic logic have implications for all other life orders, but the existential task, in which it partakes, of forming the individual as human being, also points to a cross-cutting, underpinning, role¹. Furthermore, Weber attached particular importance to this sphere as the sphere of formation of intellectuals in general (not only future scholars) whose relentless quest for encompassing meanings he both understood and saw as the source of major political and cultural peril if left unaware of itself.

It is in his ‘Science’ lecture that Weber set out to unravel the dynamic of science (*Wissenschaft*)² as a differentiated life order and self-sufficient value sphere, but the tragic character of this dynamic can only be fully appreciated by considering science as the latest development of the sphere of ‘reflexive’, ‘intellectual’, ‘rational knowledge’ (*denkendes Erkennen, intellectuektuelles Erkennen, rationales Erkennen*), as Weber calls it in *IR*. For it is the logic of which the intellectual strata were historically the carriers which is tragic, and was even regarded by Weber’s young intellectual audience as diabolical: precisely those strata most drawn to the apprehension of the world as meaningful cosmos were thereby led to coin a rationalism that disenchanting the world and divested it of overall meaning. In the first section of this chapter, I seek to establish the main steps of this inner dynamic, before examining, in section II, how Weber linked it to the ‘external conditions’ of the university and the research world (as set out in ‘Science’ as well as in his earlier writings on academia) for his analysis of the shaping of today’s student and scholar. Finally, in section III, I look at the implications of the inner and external dynamic of the sphere for the possibility of vocation.

¹ This will only be fully spelled out in Chapter 7, where I address Max Weber’s teaching towards an ethic of life conduct.

² As noted by Keith Tribe, the term *Wissenschaft* ‘denotes systematically organised knowledge’ and thus corresponds to a much wider realm than what is designated as ‘science’ in English. When I have referred in the text to Max Weber’s ‘science’ I usually mean his ‘science of reality’. As for the life order of *Wissenschaft*, it is not unwarranted to refer to it as the life order of ‘science’, since the life order as a whole is marked by the logic of ‘empirical science’ (calculation), even though it also encompasses philosophy as ‘specialised discipline’. Tribe, "Translator's Appendix". 209.

I – The inner dynamic of intellectual knowledge and science

IR addresses this life order as that of ‘reflexive’, ‘intellectual’, ‘rational knowledge’ (*denkendes Erkennen, intellectuektuelles Erkennen, rationales Erkennen*), all of them designations which only rarely appear in other parts of Weber’s work³. It is, however, the very same life order and value sphere which Weber refers to as ‘science’ (as well as ‘scientific knowledge’) in ‘Science’, and indeed *IR* establishes the equivalence⁴. The reasons for the different labelling of the sphere lie, first, in the *IR* focus on the tensions between worldly orders and salvation religions: tension and competition between the order of science/intellectual knowledge and the religious order are all the higher as both are directly shaped through intellectual worldviews and life conduct and they are made more conspicuous in the designation of the life order as that of reflexive or intellectual knowledge. Secondly, with intellectual activity increasingly becoming ‘self-sufficient’, connections to metaphysical meaning eroded and differentiation became more and more marked. Like art, the economy and politics, science/intellectual knowledge turned into modern science when it came to have its own end in itself: and indeed the reference to ‘science’ highlights the high degree of completion of the differentiation of the sphere, including institutionally⁵.

The ‘fate’ of science is indissolubly linked to that of intellectuals, and this is what makes the logic of science tragic. Weber devoted much attention to this troubled relationship, which in fact is triangular, as the ‘fate of religions’ is also conditioned by the intellectual strata ‘to an extraordinary degree’⁶, and lay intellectual and religious rationalism both mutually fed each other and competed with each other. It is therefore important to unravel the dynamics

³ The Introduction to the *Economic Ethics* refers to ‘rational knowledge’. Weber also discusses kinds of knowledge in his essay on Roscher and Knies, but this is within the entirely different perspective of the debate on the grounding of human, or historical, sciences, and their difference with both philosophy and natural sciences.

⁴ ‘Rational knowledge – *das rationale Erkennen* – ... formed... a cosmos of truths. And although science, which created this cosmos...’ Weber, “IR”, 569. Nevertheless, whereas the sphere of ‘rational knowledge’ in *IR* includes metaphysical speculation and philosophy in general, in ‘Science’ it is only philosophy as ‘specialised discipline’ which is included. Below in the text I suggest that Weber considered the whole of modern science to be marked by the imprint of empirical science.

⁵ This is also how Thomas Schwinn understands the formation of science as a differentiated sphere. See Schwinn, “Value spheres”, 283-4. However I do not share his subsequent analysis of the ‘limited capacity’ of science ‘for order formation’, which rests, as already explained, on the assimilation of life orders with their structural forms.

⁶ Weber, *ES*, 286, 295. As already suggested above, under ‘intellectual strata’ Weber includes groups with very varied education and relations to study, whether they dedicated their life to study or were drawn to it in periods of extreme religious fervour, as was the case for peasant circles drawn to Protestantism in the 17th century, studied the Bible, and even participated in ‘abstruse and sublime dogmatic controversies’.

between these three poles in order to get an understanding of the intrinsic logic of science *per se*.

Whilst in *ES* Weber sought to characterise 'intellectualism', i.e. the array of specific attitudes to the world taken by the (variously) educated strata, particularly in the context of his study of religions, it is logically⁷ in the 'Introduction' to the *Economic Ethics of World Religions* that he summed up the relation of the intellectual strata to religious doctrines and ethics. In particular, the intellectuals' 'own inner need to apprehend the world as a meaningful cosmos and to take a stance towards it' made them the main carriers of religious rationalism⁸. But in *IR* Weber showed how this drive towards rationalism led religions to become 'religions of the book and doctrine', giving rise to 'rational lay thinking, emancipated from the priests', and to intellectuals hostile to priesthood, 'sceptics' and 'philosophers opposed to religious belief'⁹. Religiously driven intellectualism bred its lay counterpart, inaugurating what Weber described as a long history of complex and tense relationships between the two.

Both types of intellectualism came to develop a theoretical rationalism for which phenomena "'are" and "happen" in the world, but do not "mean" anything anymore'¹⁰: but whilst the religious intellectual carriers of religious rationalism, 'disenchanted' the world from its magical meaning, were thereby all the more drawn to finding meaning in an ethically unified cosmos and life conduct, 'the intellectualism of science', by considering everything as 'in principle controllable by means of calculation'¹¹, 'disenchanted' the world further and pushed religion as a whole towards the irrational¹², thus depriving its own carriers of any possibility of finding such unified and unifying meaning. Things are thus very complex and intertwined, since not only intellectual rationalism but religious rationalism itself, by rationalising the world practically and ethically, contributed to the rationalisation of the 'external organisation' of the world and 'sublimation of the conscious experience of its irrational contents' that led to 'all that makes the specific content of the

⁷ The *Economic Ethics* is a series of 'Comparative essays in the sociology of religion' and as such seeks, as we have seen, to connect the 'spirit' of religious ethics, their inner momentum, and their 'external conditions' (especially through their carriers).

⁸ Weber, *ES*, 286. Weber, "Introduction", 253.

⁹ Weber, "IR", 565.

¹⁰ Weber, "Science", 598. Weber, *ES*, 290.

¹¹ Weber, "Science", 594.

¹² Weber, "IR", 564.

religious beginning to become all the more unworldly (*unweltlich*) and all the more alien to all formed life¹³.

Thus the intellectuals' thirst for meaning ultimately led to the relegation of that quest to the 'hinterworld' of mysticism. Weber explained this process, in the 'Introduction', by unravelling, here again and perhaps most clearly and fundamentally, the paradoxical workings of the rational. He stressed that the fact that the impulse to rationalise the theoretical image of the world had emerged from the (irrational) psychological interests of the intellectual strata, and that these 'irrational presuppositions, taken as a given, had been integrated' in the rationalisation endeavour itself, constituted the 'Pythagorean comma' of scientific and religious rationalisation, which re-appears whenever the 'not easily repressible need [of intellectuals] for the possession of supra-real values' surges¹⁴.

But Weber suggested that the process of rationalisation affecting the sphere of intellectual knowledge and constituting it as a sphere of 'rational knowledge and domination over nature' which transforms the world in a 'cosmos ruled by impersonal laws' pretended to expel all irrationality out of itself, rather than seeking to go round it or compromise. Scientific ratio thus forces all pursuit of 'supra-real values' to take refuge in

'mystical "experiences" (*Erlebnisse*) whose ineffable contents remained the only beyond possible in a world which has become a mechanism deprived from any god - in truth an impalpable hinterworld (*hinterweltlich*) realm of individual possession of salvation, in the intimacy of the divine'¹⁵.

It was therefore no wonder to Weber that the young intellectuals with whom he mixed and whom he observed viewed such 'intellectualism' as 'the worst of devils'¹⁶ (as suggested above – Part I Chapter 2). No wonder either that they opposed life, that could only be 'lived', in the sense of 'experienced', expressed in full, 'with the entire "soul"'; and science, which had become 'an instance of calculation, something produced in laboratories or statistical card indexes, just as "in a factory," with nothing but cold reason.'¹⁷ But this, to Weber, merely showed that the dynamic of science produced both technicians and world fleers.

Weber's account of the differentiation of value spheres and life orders pointed to yet another in-built irrationality in the intellectual/scientific rationalisation process, which

¹³ Ibid, 571.

¹⁴ Weber, "Introduction", 253-4.

¹⁵ Ibid, 254.

¹⁶ Weber, "Science", 609.

¹⁷ Ibid, 589, 591.

seemed to be borne by rationality itself rather than through the interests of its carriers – and hence seemed to come even closer to the phenomenon of the Pythagorean comma. This second irrationality consists in the fact that the rationalisation of the intellectual sphere undermines all possibility of extrinsic objective foundations for science and hence the value of scientific truth can only be subscribed to (alongside the ‘validity of the rules of logic and method’¹⁸), not demonstrated or taken for granted. The consistent rationality of science thus has to look into the abyss of ultimately having to be believed in, and irrationality catches up with ratio¹⁹:

‘For whom this truth has no value – and this belief in the worth of scientific truth is the product of certain cultures and absolutely not a given – there is nothing we can offer with the means of our science.’²⁰

Weber’s well known argument that no ‘evidence’ can hold as to what is worth knowing also derives from his analysis of the deployment of scientific rationalisation and its inevitable stumbling on the irrational (i.e. the unavoidable resort by the scholar to the ‘ultimate meaning’ that his work has for him, which, though explainable, nevertheless belongs to the order of values, not objective necessity)²¹.

Indeed Weber’s position in the famous value freedom debate stemmed in part from this analysis of the irreducibility of the irrational in science and of the perverse effects of the pretension of science to total rationality, for example when professed scientists treat their own scientific work as an objective necessity²². As I explain in section II below, Weber’s

¹⁸ Weber, "IR", 540-1.

¹⁹ Lassman and Velody express this by referring to the idea of ‘fate’ for science in Weber’s conception: ‘there is, at least in the modern world, a self-destructive edge to this activity because it is now the “fate” of such processes of understanding to continually question and, ultimately, to undermine their own foundations’. Certainly it is not to diminish this sense of fate and tragic, of ‘anxiety and doubt’ assailing the ‘inner world’ of the modern scientist of vocation, but rather to account more precisely for the ‘paradox’ noted between the notions of ‘fate’ and ‘disenchantment’ that I take up Christoph Braun’s thesis that Weber’s ‘rationalisation thesis’ is rather one of struggle between the rational and the irrational. The uncovering of a ‘Pythagorean comma’-like mechanism in all workings of rationalisation contributes in my view to account more precisely for the mentioned paradox. Lassman and Velody, "Max Weber on Science", 172, 175, 183, 187-9.

²⁰ Weber, "Objectivity", 213.

²¹ Weber, "Science", 599.

²² All this touches upon the debate on ‘value-freedom’, in which Weber has been variously criticised for his alleged positivism, subjectivism, relativism, even nihilism (e.g. the contrasted contributions from Weber contemporaries in Peter Lassman and Irving Velody, eds., *Max Weber's "Science as a vocation"* (London; Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989)). An account of this debate as such falls out of the scope of this thesis, but it is obvious that the proper understanding of the dynamic of the life orders/value spheres, especially science, entails the confrontation with Weber’s own insistence on the question of value freedom. It is clear enough that Weber’s refusal to ground worldviews and political projects in scientific ‘truths’ does not stem from a positivistic position which would strictly separate a supposedly objective knowledge and subjective value judgments, but rather from drawing the full implications of the disenchantment and rationalisation of the world by science, which entails the impossibility of providing any extrinsic justification, including scientific

writings on academia make clear how such absolutisation of science, such ‘assault of self-sufficient intellectual knowledge’²³ went hand in hand with subservience to governmental authority and contributed to shape science and young scholars into a mix of self-aggrandizement and servility.

But, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, the interplay of the rational and the irrational in the inner momentum of the life orders is not only caused by the periodic outburst of in-built irrationalities but also by the simple fact that the matter a life order gives form to is human matter, ‘life’ itself. Certainly, science demands calculation. It demands specialisation, not only as a mode of external organisation of universities and research institutes but as an inner condition for science itself. Yet Weber mocked the naivety of those who thought that science could operate just on this basis. The practice of science demands ‘life’ because it demands the elaboration of ‘conjectures’, perhaps the most basic unit of ‘scientific conception’²⁴, since science is, in principle, a creative activity.

Conjecturing necessarily brings in the irrational of imagination, inspiration and passion – in short *Erlebnis* (‘lived experience’). In part self-ironically, in part to confront the young intellectuals’ prejudiced view on science (but also on life itself), Weber adopted the vocabulary of his audience. ‘The “experience” of science’ demands ‘passion’, indeed it demands more than passion, or a passion of a very specific kind, i.e. ‘intoxication’, close to madness (hence the invocation of Plato’s ‘mania’²⁵): almost playing a game on his audience, Weber hinted at a paradox – the more specialised the science, the more extreme the passion required. Science also demands ‘inspiration’: it is inspiration which differentiates science from ‘simple calculation’. A ‘scientific worker’ without a ‘valuable idea of his own’

justification, to ultimate standpoints, including those very ultimate standpoints from which science itself operates. As pointed out by Karl Löwith, the ‘facts’ of science are actually underpinned by preconceived ideas and value judgments, which one is better advised to become aware of and admit (in Lassman and Velody, eds., *MW's "Science"*, 146.). Weber especially criticised the belief in the equivalence made between scientific progression and the progress of humanity. But this refusal to derive values from knowledge does not mean either that Weber endorsed the blind adoption of value positions: on the contrary, science can and should cast light on the foundations and likely implications of such and such value choice, in a way that can/should help each individual decide. Weber simply emphasised that the ultimate decision belongs to the individual, who alone is in a position to justify and account for his/her choice. On many occasions he argued that his insistence on the separation of the discussion of values from scientific accounts was grounded in his will to stress the fundamental dignity of value decisions, which can therefore not be reduced to being necessary implications from scientific theories or empirical results. Wilhelm Hennis’s clarification of Weber’s position in the value freedom debate is highly illuminating. See Hennis, *Max Weber's Science of Man*, 149-58. See also Bruhns, “Max Weber's science and politics”.

²³ Weber, “IR”, 566.

²⁴ Weber, “Science”, 588. Weber, “Categories”, 462.

²⁵ Weber, “Science”, 591. I come back to this notion and its importance for Weber’s notion of vocation in Part III Chapter 7.

is just an ‘outstanding worker’, and science without inspiration handles no ‘conjectures’ but rather procedures. But ‘inspiration’ depends on ‘fates that are hidden from us’: in science ‘something, and the right thing at that, has to *occur* to one, if one is to accomplish anything worthwhile’ – even though the ‘fates’ of inspiration can and should be courted by nurturing ‘gift’ (*Gabe*) through ‘hard work’²⁶. Thus science also demands devotion to the task (*Hingabe*)²⁷, a word Weber no doubt chose, again, to challenge his audience, since *Hingabe* also means surrender and characterises erotic love (as in *IR*). Science thus has to work with the depths of human capacity for feeling and desire, that is with human ‘temperament’. Passion, inspiration and devotion constitute both the inner demands of science as creative activity and, to take up a notion Weber used in his ‘Politics’ lecture, the ‘element’ of the scholar, the matter for creation.

Yet Weber seemed to agree with his audience when he came, toward the end of the lecture, to describe what science ultimately produces, what is its “vocation”: for such vocation has to be a contribution to “life” (‘personal and practical “life”’) ²⁸. What the specialised, forward moving, self-justifying science that Weber had described brings about is, first of all, ‘knowledge of the techniques whereby life, external things as well as the action of men, can be controlled (*beherrscht*) through calculation’; secondly ‘the methods of thought, the tools and training required’ to the effects of such knowledge²⁹. In the vocabulary of *IR*, science produces ‘truths’ contributing further to the transformation of the world in a causal mechanism³⁰. To these Weber added ‘clarity’, of a kind which allows one to know the implications of one’s decisions concerning means-ends relations. Summing up, Weber conceded that ‘these are all problems that can arise for any technician’, provided the end is given³¹.

Weber thus painted a scene of modern science in which the matter and fuel of science, the ‘element’ of the scholar, could become completely absorbed and processed by the intrinsic logic of calculation.

²⁶ Ibid, 589-91.

²⁷ Ibid, 592.

²⁸ Ibid, 607. Here Weber stands close to Simmel’s notion of culture, which is only truly culture if it nourishes the cultivation of individuals.

²⁹ Weber, "Introduction", 253. Weber, "Science", 607.

³⁰ Weber, "IR", 564.

³¹ Weber, "Science", 608.

Only the orientation to a higher task and accomplishment could raise science above its mechanism by stretching its logic to its 'limits' at the same time as, perhaps, defeating the intellectuals' longing for meaning by preparing them for stronger struggles and pleasures: to teach, with the help of philosophy as 'specialised discipline'³², the 'only virtue' that could still be taught in the lecture room, namely 'intellectual integrity' (*intellektuelle Rechtschaffenheit*) and thus the testing out of one's capacity to 'stand the fate of the time'³³. I will examine the conditions for this possibility in the last section of this chapter. But I will first draw the implications of the inner dynamic of science, and of its combination with its 'external organisation', for the shaping of the scholar type, and more generally of the student.

II – The 'external conditions' and the shaping of the contemporary scholar

The recent publication in English of Weber's complete writings (and speeches) on academia, as well as Wilhelm Hennis' analysis of Weber's interventions for the conferences of higher education teachers, have cast light on yet another aspect of Weber's engagement in the public sphere, in what could be called university politics and which he sought to expose from a perspective of university Politics with a capital P and from concern with the 'type of scholar' fostered. Wilhelm Hennis, as well as to a lesser extent, Rüdiger Vom Bruch and Björn Hofmeister, have characterised the type of scholar produced and its external mechanisms of production – which Hennis has linked, in addition, to the debate on value freedom and the readiness of scholars to teach worldviews³⁴. In this section I am thus not providing new elements on the external shaping mechanisms in research institutes and universities, but I will seek to highlight the connections between these mechanisms and the inner dynamic of the sphere sketched out in section I in the coining of scholars as workers or as "people of the trade" (*Geschäftsleute*)³⁵.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 612. Nietzsche thought that *Redlichkeit* (probity) was the 'youngest virtue' and 'the only one from which we cannot get away'. Nietzsche, *KSÄ, Zarathustra*, 37.# I.3, Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Zur Genealogie der Moral* [Beyond good and evil. Genealogy of morals], Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari ed., *Sämtliche Werke: kritische Studienausgabe* (München; Berlin; New York: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag; De Gruyter, 1999), 162.# 227

³⁴ Hennis, *Max Weber's Science of Man*, 122-133. Rüdiger Vom Bruch and Björn Hofmeister, *Gelehrtenpolitik, Sozialwissenschaften und akademische Diskurse in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* [Scholar politics, the social sciences and academic discourse in German in the 19th and 20th centuries] (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006).

³⁵ Max Weber, *Max Weber's complete writings on academic and political vocations*, trans. Gordon C. Wells, John Dreijmanis ed., *Classics series* (New York, NY: Algora Publishing, 2008), 124. Translation altered: Wells translates *Geschäftsleute* as 'operators'.

Weber established such connection in his 'Science' lecture when, immediately after leaving the terrain of the 'external conditions' by seemingly recognising the expectations of the audience – 'but I believe that you in truth want to hear about something else, about the inner vocation for science'³⁶ –, he rather brutally shattered any misplaced hopes that this might be the moment for the rescue of the 'authentic spirit' of *Wissenschaft* from the 'corruption' of its institutions, by announcing that the specialisation of science is not only external but has rather become a constitutive inner component of modern science³⁷. In particular, the audience must have become quickly aware of the real affinity between the 'spirit' of modern science, its specialisation and its orientation towards technologies for the 'control of life' and its 'external' organisation, especially in the 'Americanised' research institutes³⁸. In front of other audiences, those of the conferences of higher education teachers, Weber had also made clear another connection, between the absolutisation of science, its pretension to ground worldviews and the 'system' of patronage and dependence of universities on government administration.

The technification of science was particularly visible in the natural sciences, where large scientific and medical research institutes had started to flourish. It is with respect to these that Weber, as we have seen in Part I Chapter 2, talked about the development of 'state capitalist enterprises', with their huge resources and huge resource needs (which were the determining factor in pushing towards a capitalist model), a new type of decision-making figures and bodies ('An extraordinary gulf... separates the head of a large capitalist university enterprise of this sort and the standard full professor of the old style') and the figure of 'assistants', who, contrary to the *Privatdozenten* in the University, were employed by the institutes, and who were 'often as precarious as any proletaroid existence'. The capitalist character of this organisation, which bears particular affinity to the logic of calculation of modern science, showed in the 'separation of the worker from the means of production' and his total dependence on the institute director³⁹.

³⁶ Weber, "Science", 588.

³⁷ A text written by Walter Benjamin in 1914 ("The life of students") strikingly denounces the 'corruption' of the very possibility of a life of the spirit implied by specialist training. Benjamin was by then still very much influenced by the education reformer Gustav Wyneken and president of the Berlin Free student community movement (*Freie Studentschaft*) – which was precisely the movement whose Munich branch, also close to Wyneken, invited Weber to give his vocation lectures. Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings I. 1913-1926*, Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings ed. (Cambridge, MA; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 47.

³⁸ But universities also contributed as we shall see. Weber, "Science", 607.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 584.

The parallel with the worker evokes the discipline, and the ‘tuning in’ to discipline which was analysed in the context of the industrial firm in Chapter 4. However I am more inclined to think that Weber did not see such organisation as necessarily entailing the loss of his ‘element’ by the scholar-worker. Indeed ‘the “spirit” which reigns in [these research institutes]’⁴⁰ was none other than the primary orientation of modern science to ‘knowledge of the techniques whereby life... can be controlled (*beherrscht*) through calculation’⁴¹. And, since inspiration can be put at the service of purely technical production (‘in the factory or in a laboratory’), as well as ‘solving the problems of practical life by the entrepreneur’, it seems plausible, as suggested at the end of section I, that Weber simply considered inspiration, and perhaps passion and devotion as well, as perfectly mobilisable in the service of a logic of production of technological innovations.

But the orientation of science to controlling technologies was also buttressed by the organised subjection of universities to the government policy agenda. Thus, in texts mainly published on the occasion of the yearly conferences of higher education lecturers (especially between 1908 and 1912), Weber exposed the main mechanisms of what had become a ‘system’⁴². In the plutocratic regime in place⁴³, the appointment policy first implemented by Friedrich Althoff, the Prussian privy counsellor (ministerial staff) in charge of universities, functioned on the basis of promises and obligations⁴⁴, which both subjected

⁴⁰ Ibid, 585.

⁴¹ Ibid, 607.

⁴² See especially Weber’s address in the 4th Conference of Higher Education teachers in Dresden on 12 and 13 October 1911, published in English in Weber, *Academic writings*, 108-116. Weber was not alone in his criticism of the Althoff system – thus the most famous critical piece was that published by Sombart in the *Neue Freie Presse* (4/8/1907), where he explicitly referred to the ‘proliferation of servilism’. See Bernhard von Brocke, “Von der Wissenschaftsverwaltung zur Wissenschaftspolitik. Friedrich Althoff (19. 2. 1839-20. 10. 1908)” [From the administration to the politics of science: Friedrich Althoff], *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 11, no. 1 (1988): 3.. But Weber seems to have been more cautious than many in the attribution of all evils to Althoff and he pointed to the responsibility of university professors and aspiring professors themselves.

⁴³ Weber, “Science”, 587. The ‘wild hazard’ prevailing with regard to appointments, the endless waiting times before obtaining a professorial post, accounted for the ‘plutocratic’ character of universities. Despite the chance character of appointments, the *Privatdozent* nonetheless had to prove himself by attracting students, which Weber saw as an unwelcome application of ‘democracy’ in the lecture room. Attracting students was also important because student fees for each class were the only income received by *Privatdozenten*. (Incomes from these very rarely exceeded 1500 Mark a year, to be compared with 40 000 for the highest paid professors). Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins. The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (University Press of New England, 1990), 37-8. Weber referred to the necessity of teacher popularity in less chosen words in a letter to Franz Eulenburg as ‘licking the students’ shoes’ (*kriechen*) Letter to Eulenburg 20/5/1908, Max Weber, *Briefe 1906-1908* [Letters 1906-1908]. ed. M. Rainer Lepsius and Wolfgang J. Mommsen in collaboration with Birgit Rudhard and Manfred Schön, *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1990), 568.

⁴⁴ When Althoff had a *Privatdozent* in mind for a professorial post, he informed him and asked him to give up on any other offer until the promised post became free (which often depended on the death of a professor). This was, in Weber’s terms, a sort of ‘promissory note’ which marked the renunciation to

candidates to Althoff's will and contributed to the subjection of universities in other states, as it meant that they could not have a free hand over their appointment policies (they were thus drawn into a 'cartel-relationship'⁴⁵). This was reinforced by the attitude of Berlin professors who, supposedly having Althoff's ear, gained considerable influence over their provincial colleagues who sought their intercession for whatever issue they needed to get governmental approval for. Thus Althoff's system was buttressed by a system of 'patronage' steered by Berlin professors⁴⁶. As Weber foresaw the transformation of universities into state capitalist enterprises, he may well have envisaged the combination of the continuation of such 'cartellisation' and service to the government administration with the new business-like organisation.

In 1911, Weber published his most pointed and synthetic analysis of the 'corrupting effects'⁴⁷ of such a system, which had only become more entrenched and mundane after Althoff's retirement, deprived from the latter's 'grand vision'.

'The system [which still exists today] worked through undertakings: (1) undertakings by lecturers on every imaginable subject, by no means limited to the acceptance or non-acceptance of appointments from other institutions. (2) Undertakings by the educational administration regarding such matters as prospects conditional on the death of professors in Berlin and elsewhere. Other features are the imposition of the duty of silence, disruptive interference in relationships among colleagues, paying for advertisements or cancelling them depending on the mood, releasing administrative documents for the purpose of press campaigns...'⁴⁸

What he exposed was the systematic and effective undermining of the organisation of the university under the 'old University constitution'⁴⁹, i.e. as pointed out by Rüdiger Vom Bruch, that of the Humboldtian idea of the university, whose formula was 'isolation and freedom' (*Einsamkeit und Freiheit*), isolation being here applied to the university (the community of professors and students) as a whole in relation to interests external to science, in particular to the state⁵⁰.

Weber showed how the climate of 'business' (he used 'business' in English here, meaning trade, dealings, arrangements) created by the 'system' corrupted both the professors and

independence as one submitted to governmental demands both in the waiting period and afterwards, once one was established.

⁴⁵ Weber, *Academic writings*, 118.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 56.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 113, 120.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 123-4. Text slightly modified on the basis of German text provided in Vom Bruch and Hofmeister, *Scholar politics*, 216.

⁴⁹ Weber, "Science", 585.

⁵⁰ Vom Bruch and Hofmeister, *Scholar politics*.

the ‘young generation’ of academics (*Nachwuchs*), in persuading them of their own self-importance, when in fact the type of behaviours they were indulging into merely exposed the declining authority, independence and solidarity of university teachers⁵¹: ‘This is a system that aims gradually to transform our young academic generation into some kind of academic “people of the trade”⁵². By people of the trade Weber meant ‘compliant’ academics, with their loyalties entirely vested in government rather than in their faculties.

As summed up by Hennis,

‘a type was emerging that felt itself the “creature” of the ministerial officials presently in power, and who felt obliged to act accordingly. As always in Weber, it is the “human type” that is furthered or suppressed by the materiality of a life order’⁵³.

Although this could appear as a self-standing development, with its own dynamic, Hennis has shown that the discussions around the Althoff system and its cultural effects had actually framed the debate on ‘freedom to teach’ (*Lehrfreiheit*) and on the ‘postulate of value freedom’ (*Wertfreiheit*)⁵⁴. I would like to suggest, in complement, that the generalised submission to government demands generated by the ‘system’ was in fact, and paradoxically, not independent from the absolutisation of science and its pretensions to ground worldviews; that, therefore, there was an ‘affinity’ between this external system and the inner dynamic of the life order.

In a debate on the ‘freedom to teach’ which Weber triggered at the second Conference for higher education teachers, he put on the table the question of the implications of a State-University relationship in which the State is the main source of funding for universities and does not consider such power as ‘assumption of *cultural* tasks’ but rather as an instrument for the achievement of a particular political proficiency on the part of the academic youth⁵⁵. One can see here how the system of ‘promissory notes’ described above would fortify such

⁵¹ Weber, *Academic writings*, 56-58, 112-113. The term ‘*Nachwuchs*’ referred to the young generation of scholars preparing themselves, usually in positions of *Privatdozenten* and *Extraordinarien*, to take up professorial posts. Franz Eulenburg, a young national economist with whom Weber was in close contact, carried out a survey on the ‘external composition of the teaching body’, the ‘internal significance of unofficial teaching forces’ and the ‘personal relationships of the academic *Nachwuchs* [towards academic life]’, i.e. ‘scientific accomplishments, their activity as teacher and their ideals’. The design of the survey bears the mark of Weber’s influence. Eulenburg published a short presentation of his survey in the *Archiv*. Franz Eulenburg, “Der ‘Akademische Nachwuchs’” [The young generation of academics], *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 27 (1908).

⁵² Weber, *Academic writings*, 124. Translation altered.

⁵³ Hennis, *Max Weber's Science of Man*, 133.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 129. Hennis has shown that Weber’s stances in the two debates were in fact two expressions of the same concern (contrary to the usual separation of the two stances, one belonging to policy views, the other to methodology).

⁵⁵ Quoted by Hennis, *Ibid*, 127.

views. But also, and Weber immediately made that connection, how the idea that academics can teach ‘worldviews’ – for example a positive view of the state – would necessarily foster such expectations. In other words, the belief in the ‘self-evidence’ of science can, ultimately and in what is only an apparent paradox, go alongside a de facto subjection of science to the powers that be (the state, but also, sooner or later, the students’ father, ‘who has sent his son to university at his own expense, for a guarantee that it will also be *his* worldview that is represented⁵⁶.) Furthermore, the orientation of science to ‘technologies of control over life’ (including of ‘human action’) pointed to by Weber also stood in a relation of affinity to a system in which science was enlisted in the preparation and justification of public policy.

Hence we can understand why Weber averred that the ‘old constitution’ had ‘become a fiction’ not only externally but also internally⁵⁷. The external organisation of the university and the inner dynamic of ‘modern science’ combined to undermine Humboldt’s idea of the university and *Wissenschaft*. What was emerging instead was the coupling of the willing instrumentalisation of science with a belief in the self-justification of universal scientific truths; and a corresponding figure of the scholar that could be both ‘arrogant’ and subservient⁵⁸, as well as chiefly preoccupied with ‘the uninhibited exploitation of their “job for life” – “satiated beings”... “beati possidentes”⁵⁹. Although Weber conceded that the system did not only benefit ‘complacent mediocrities’ but also clever and apt young men who knew how to take advantage of it⁶⁰, overall it was highly corrosive for the scholar’s passion and devotion, either through direct ‘tuning in’ to a satiated life or through the bitterness caused by exclusion from it. It might also ‘produce’ scholars ready to embrace and/or themselves propagate new prophecies, and I have suggested in Part I Chapter 2 that Weber considered such ‘monstrosities’ in part at least as outcomes of the inner and external dynamic of modern *Wissenschaft*.

However Weber probably also thought, since no ‘ratio’ can go on without ‘life’, that the inner element of the scholar, the passion, inspiration and devotion (which are also the inner ‘pre-conditions’ for scientific vocation) would always be renewed at least in some measure,

⁵⁶ Weber, *Academic writings*, 73.

⁵⁷ Weber, "Science", 585.

⁵⁸ Weber, *Academic writings*, 73.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 70. (translation modified: I follow here Tribe’s translation in Hennis, *Max Weber’s Science of Man*, 127.)

⁶⁰ Weber, *Academic writings*, 54-5.

despite the discouragement and the bitterness; but also that such 'life' was, of itself, incapable of re-directing science.

Weber expressed some hope that the new University Teachers Congress (founded in 1908) would be able to

‘reawaken the *professional pride of the young generation in the face of the business [in English] approach*, and at the same time help gradually to restore the *diminishing moral authority of the higher education institutions*’⁶¹.

‘Communitisation’, of an associative and professional nature, could thus help to re-establish the dignity of the university and the ‘vocation’ of science by fortifying and supporting young scholars in their own individual vocation. But the conditions for the possibility of such vocations of science and of the scholar had to be clarified if such defence of professional dignity was to be consistent. Weber believed in the educating and testing power of such struggles, but only to the extent that they were fought from ‘within’, from vocation, that is love for scientific truth, love for teaching, without deluding oneself about one’s object of love⁶².

III – The vocation of science and the conditions for scientific vocation

As stressed by Lassman and Velody, the ‘essential question [for Weber in ‘Science’] is that of the significance of the “vocation” of science within “the totality of human life” (*des Gesamtlebens der Menschheit*)’⁶³. As long as science, as politics, is considered as a sphere of value, it cannot be reduced to the ‘calculative spirit’ fostered by its intrinsic logic. In the same way as politics as a ‘task’ stretches the logic governing the means of politics to its limits, there must be a higher task, a vocation, for science similarly reaching out beyond its calculative logic whilst still upholding it. For Weber, this task consists in fostering ‘clarity’, not only about the ‘objective connections’ that operate in the world, but above all about oneself, helping students to ‘make sense of themselves’ (that is the literal meaning of *Selbstbesinnung*), of where they stand and in what sort of world⁶⁴.

As Weber himself recognised, this is a philosophical task – although he immediately qualified this admission by referring to philosophy as specialised discipline – but one which he associated to the practice of science from the very beginnings of his reflection on the

⁶¹ Ibid, 57.

⁶² Frade has shown that the vocational daemon is eros, see below Chapter 7, section II.

⁶³ Lassman and Velody, "Max Weber on Science", 197. Weber, "Science", 595.

⁶⁴ Weber, "Science", 608-9.

kind of ‘social and cultural science’ he pursued. Indeed the ‘Objectivity’ essay, which marked out a programme for the social and cultural sciences, had almost opened on this very task, in strikingly similar terms to those of ‘Science’, and in association with philosophy as specialised discipline (‘social philosophy’) as well:

‘To help [the human being as willing/desiring being (*wollenden Menschen*)] to a *consciousness* that all action – as well as, naturally, depending on the circumstances, *non-action* – means, in its consequences, an endorsement of specific values, and thus the consistent *rejection of others*, as is today particularly readily overlooked... Offering knowledge about the *significance* of what is desired and willed as such (*des Gewollten*)... Opening up to intellectual understanding these “ideas” over which men have actually or allegedly struggled, and still do... Helping the willing/desiring human being to self-knowledge (*Selbstbesinnung*) of those axioms which underpin the contents of his will... Rendering *conscious* these ultimate standards...

An empirical science cannot teach anyone what he *should* do, only what he *can* do and, in some circumstances, what he *wants/desires*⁶⁵.

We can see here how such a task would take the logic of modern science to its limits. For, whilst the kind of philosophy offering this questioning might be dubbed ‘social’ and ‘specialised’, the reflection on value stances and their underpinning axioms whatever the scientific field of the enquiring student clearly requires an overall conceptualisation of value stances, indeed a knowledge of life *tout court* for which mere specialist theorisation cannot suffice. Karl Löwith highlighted Weber’s profound ambivalence regarding the question of specialisation, ‘a fundamental contradiction... between man and man-as-specialist’⁶⁶. Weber expressed the frustration of the sociologist who can never attain to the perfection of the specialist. But the kind of theoretical conceptualisation of values which he himself developed in *IR* and which underpinned what could be considered as a ‘social philosophical’ reflection stemmed, precisely, from such relatively un-specialised sociology (however erudite it also is) (I come back on this reflection in Part III Chapter 7). What did this mean for the vocation of science and indeed of the scientist? Weber’s response seemed to be that there could be no modern science without specialisation – but that specialised knowledge without support in a broad reflection about one’s own stance and its implications is blind.

But there is another sense in which the proposed fostering of self-reflection in students stretches the logic of science. For, as various commentators have highlighted, such support to self-reflection really amounts to taking disenchantment to its ultimate consequences – in Löwith’s words, to the ‘radical dismantling of illusions’⁶⁷, e.g. the illusions concerning the

⁶⁵ Weber, "Objectivity", 150-1.

⁶⁶ Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, 77.

⁶⁷ Löwith, "Max Weber's Position on Science", 148.

objectivity of science and its capacity and right to ground action in other spheres on that basis, which Weber denounced in his position on 'value freedom'. Taking the logic of science to its limits thus also means undermining all naturalisation and hypostasis of science, and stressing the impossibility of extrinsic justifications for any sphere of value:

'The assumption that I am offering you here admittedly always starts from a fundamental circumstance. This is that as long as life is left to itself and understood on its own terms, it knows only the eternal struggle of the gods amongst themselves – said without metaphor, it only knows the incompatibility of the ultimate standpoints to life that are at all possible, and thus also the undecidability of the struggle (*Unaustragbarkeit*), and hence the necessity of *deciding* (*entscheiden*) between them.⁶⁸

Yet at the same time, and again contrary to the way in which science is usually coping with its own in-built irrationalities, it could be sustained that Weber's vision of the vocation of science recognised the intellectuals', the aspiring scholars' quest for meaning and offered it the only expression it could take in a disenchanted world – i.e. the creation of meaning for oneself through the existential decision for a particular 'god'. If that god is that of science, that means not only carrying out one's specialised pursuits but also ensuring that they can directly or indirectly nourish the reflection of students and other audiences on the world and their own stances in it.

For that science must prepare students by 'sharpen[ing] his eye for the actual conditions of his striving'⁶⁹, that is to say by educating his 'judgment' – judgment is, as we have seen in the comparison between Simmel's and Weber's approach to the modern *Kultur Mensch*, very much opposed to longing, and may be an antidote for it, at least this seems to have been, in part, Weber's attempt with his 'Science' audience.

But this judgment itself must not be eluded. The teacher should oblige ('or at least help') the student 'to give himself an account of the ultimate meaning of his own actions'⁷⁰, that is to say teach him the 'only virtue' which can still be taught as universities are not (or should not be) 'institutions of moral edification (*Gesinnungsunterricht*)'⁷¹. Weber's notion of 'intellectual

⁶⁸ Weber, "Science", 608. The meaning of this last part of the sentence is that the struggle between ultimate standpoints can never be decided of itself, as process, and that we therefore ourselves have to decide in favour of the one or the other. This once more shows how far Weber's concept of struggle was from any 'social Darwinism'. I am indebted to Carlos Frade for bringing this to my attention.

⁶⁹ Weber, *Academic writings*, 72.

⁷⁰ Weber, "Science", 608.

⁷¹ This is the translation given by Keith Tribe, which seems here more appropriate than 'teaching ultimate beliefs' (as proposed by Wells), as it conveys better Weber's irony regarding certain professorial practices, more intent on shaping dutiful subjects of the monarch than on teaching worldviews. See Hennis, *Max Weber's Science of Man*, 128, Weber, *Academic writings*, 72.

integrity' (*intellektuelle Rechtschaffenheit*)⁷² parallels that of 'genuine human action' in politics, i.e. an action seeking to cope with, and assuming the full implications of, the tension between the 'pragma' of politics and the inner demands of political action. Indeed intellectual integrity is intimately linked to the idea of genuineness, since 'there is one element of all "genuine" worldviews', and this is, precisely, the 'duty of intellectual integrity'⁷³.

Intellectual integrity is a virtue, not a capacity: it is an inner orientation, a commitment at the same time as a quality which is cultivated, and whose cultivation requires strength of character and constancy of effort. It is the virtue which leads one to 'look the fate of the age in its stern face'⁷⁴, and thus to recognise both the logic steering modern science, its everyday dynamic, as well as its tasks – and thus the everyday struggles it takes to deploy one's vocation in such a field of tension. But this means that the 'fate of the age' has been adequately depicted and understood: could 'intellectual integrity' provide lucidity, responsibility and, ultimately, commitment and faithfulness, if it was not guided by a philosophical understanding as ruthless with itself as Weber's? And did 'intellectual integrity' necessarily entail the courage, the 'inner weight' to act? These are some of the issues I will have to confront in Part III.

Conclusion

The sphere of *Wissenschaft* is pervaded by a peculiar, extreme, version of the antagonism between the rational and the irrational, given the unwillingness of intellectual rationalism and particularly of the sphere of modern science to acknowledge any irrationality in its midst. Weber's analysis of the intellectual strata and intellectualism, in particular in his sociology of religion, showed the tragic character of such pretension, since intellectuals are first defined through their quest for meaning, which a science claiming total rationality cannot quench.

Such aporia underpins the double outcome of the dynamic of the sphere in the production, on the one hand, of fanatical believers in the objective foundations of science and spiritless but ambitious 'experts' (*Fachmenschen*) readily satisfied with the production of knowledge geared to 'technologies for the control of life' (combinations of the two figures are of course possible); and, on the other hand, young intellectuals disgusted with 'cold' science

⁷² Weber, "IR", 569, Weber, "Value Freedom", 491, Weber, "Science", 613.

⁷³ Weber, *Academic writings*, 72-3.

⁷⁴ Weber, "Science", 605.

and in search of 'meaning' (demoted *Kulturmenschen*), who also can turn into fanatical followers of false prophecies. In other words, I argue that Weber denounced the blindness of science to its own irrationalities as leading both to its technification and to the creation and entrenchment of an anti-intellectualist stance amongst young people.

Accordingly, the possibility of vocation in science demands that the full implications of the disenchantment of the world be drawn, and the irrational bases of science itself be recognised: for then *Wissenschaft* has a duty to foster the capacity, or rather the virtue, needed for the individual to face up to such a world and engage in it.

Thus in 'Science' Weber put forward conditions for the possibility of vocation in *Wissenschaft* that did not eschew the deepest motives of its carrier strata and gave them a response, whilst at the same time taking into account the logic of modern science. By putting forward a task (teaching clarity and intellectual integrity) which reaches out beyond the logic of science and stretches it, Weber was seeking to re-introduce a tension in the sphere of science, which scientific rationality avoided and which the technification, bureaucratisation and instrumentalisation of science were threatening to render more and more impossible, but without which scientific vocation was likely to become trivialised and instrumentalised.

**PART III – THE POSSIBILITY OF LIFE CONDUCT AND
PERSONALITY IN THE MODERN AGE – A COMPARISON
BETWEEN WEBER AND SIMMEL**

Chapter 7 – Max Weber and the possibility of vocational life conduct

Introduction

In the last part of this journey into the notion of *Mensbentum*, I come back to the interrogation which had spurred Weber's enquiry about the dominant type, or rather types, of human being: the question as to the possibility (both existential and political) of a life that was 'conducted', and not merely left 'slipping by', in the age of advanced, bureaucratised capitalism. Modern man is placed in a 'cultural epoch' which has eaten from the tree of knowledge. He has thereby become that cultural being (*Kultur Mensch*), able and, in principle, willing to 'adopt a stance towards the world, and lend it meaning'. But Weber's enquiries and everyday observation of his contemporaries showed him that 'in the context of everyday life, the human being is not conscious – above all, does not *want* to become conscious' of the world as it has become: through the 'levelling down of the "everyday"' and 'the compromises made at every step at the factual level, in the external appearance of things', a cultural struggle is played out in silence and is being won by the 'most fateful power of our modern life', advanced capitalism.

The various life orders 'create the subjects they require' and manufacture adapted workers, administered citizens, disciplined officials and complacent scholars; however, as explained in Chapter 2, this is not a 'cage' but a 'carapace', from which forms of life emerge in which habituation, affects, orientation to the value of good administration, drive for power and even contentment are fostered. Formed 'life' can be rich in affects, imagination and attachments, yet it is processed in a way that subsumes it entirely to the logic of the life orders and their structural forms. In itself, it therefore offers no resistance to the objectivation pervading the rationalised economic sphere as a whole, the structures of the rationalised state as well as all those organisations (e.g. in scientific research) modelled after the capitalist enterprise; no resistance to the unceasing transformation of ever more trades into markets; no resistance to the technification of knowledge either. Indeed not only passive but active adaptation characterises some of the types of human beings studied.

On the other hand, the young intellectuals, formed as *Kulturmenschen*, fleeing a world which they perceive as petrified and taking refuge in sects or quasi-sect groups characterised by their strict life conduct, or in groups claiming the rights of authentic life, 'lived experience' and immediacy, infuse their aesthetic, ethical, erotic pursuits with what is really a religious quest for encompassing meaning, thus also denying the real struggle going on. Their stance of flight from the word, Weber surmised, would leave them without any inner resistance when the experience came to an end; and ready for an embittered form of adaptation.

However it is also such a world, where the individual is left to 'create the meaning of the events of the world himself'¹, which, whilst it is not completely under the rule of objectivation, opens the possibility for the human being to conduct his life as a 'chain of ultimate decisions' through which 'the soul, as in Plato, chooses its own fate, in the sense of the meaning of what it does and is'².

In Part II, I sought to bring out Weber's assessment of the conditions for the possibility of life conduct in the rationalised life orders, and especially in the life orders subjected to a greater or lesser extent to rationalisation understood as objectivation (*Versachlichung*). In the present chapter, I examine Weber's path for this possibility to materialise. In section I, I analyse Weber's idea of a teaching that, by creating a situation of shock and rupture, as well as by providing means of orientation, brings individuals to grasp and face up to the struggle being played out. In section II, I review the components of Weber's notion of life conduct in vocation – being seized by one's daemon, overcoming the self and constructing one's inner being, in the constancy of one's pursuit and in the struggles that this implies; so as to explore, in section III, the kind of resistance to the rule of high capitalism and the bureaucratisation supporting it allowed by such a notion of life conduct.

Anyone studying Weber's substantive research questions on the fate of the modern human being is bound to also ask him/herself about the ethics underpinning his work. Thus Dieter Henrich reconstructs an ethics of 'personality' in Weber, where personality stands for conscious and free human existence. Hennis notes that 'the central category of Weber's work [i.e. *Lebensführung*] is ... also the central concept of his ethics'. More restrictively, Scaff discerns a 'path' of the 'modern subject' toward that 'elusive and hard quality called

¹ Weber, "Objectivity", 154.

² Weber, "Value Freedom", 507-8. Max Weber, "Value-judgments in Social Science", in *Max Weber: Selections in translation*. ed. W.G. Runciman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 [1917]), 84. (Hereafter 'Value Freedom (en)').

“freedom” or “emancipation”³. My own questioning cannot be very different and concerns what I refer to as Weber’s ‘teaching’, for it is explicitly as a teacher that he sought to foster clarity and intellectual integrity as well as the recognition of one’s own desire, all of which is required to conduct one’s life and resist being levelled down.

I – The role of the teacher

Weber conceived of situations of intense submersion into a chaotic reality, out of the everyday, which could perhaps provoke individuals into grasping themselves and the world with a sudden acuteness that broke with, or prevented, the petty compromises and resignations of everyday life. Such was perhaps the case in 1905 Russia – and in the United States. In both cases, a

lack of ties to “history”, ... their almost limitless geographical territories [presented them] perhaps [with the] “last” opportunities to build “free” cultures “from the bottom up”.

There where the world had not yet become “fully” developed economically and “sated” intellectually’, where ‘the economic and intellectual “revolution”, the much despised “anarchy of production” and equally despised “subjectivism” are still at their height’, the struggle of the Gods is (still) explicit and manifest and the individual is ‘left to himself’. To Weber, this is a unique conjuncture for ‘an inalienable sphere of personality and freedom [to be] won and conquered for the individual of the great masses’⁴.

Weber thereby did not suggest that personality and freedom belonged to a specific sphere, which would have stood alongside the other worldly spheres, but rather that new understandings of ‘personality’ and ‘liberty’ had to be imagined and carved out – for none could be rescued, in these times of ‘advanced capitalism’, from the highly specific historical configuration in which these ideas had been coined in the West. In the Russian situation, the disorder brought about by the ongoing import of an advanced capitalism which had not been fully bureaucratized yet and the volatility of the ‘intellectual movement’⁵ left the individual face to face with a life that ‘rested on itself’, with still little possibility of escape into the routines of the everyday: possibly a unique moment of solitude and lack of chartered paths for the individual to touch the ‘real forces of life’ in the modern world.

³ Henrich, *Unity*, 49. Hennis, *Central Question*, 87. Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 240. Also: Ralph Schroeder, "'Personality' and 'inner distance': the conception of the individual in Max Weber's sociology", *History of the Human Sciences* 4 (1991).

⁴ Weber, "Democracy in Russia": 121-2.

⁵ Ibid: 93.

There is also a sense in which the erotic experience opens up to such direct contact with, indeed to the 'direct possession' of 'reality' (*Realität*)⁶. This 'reality' is that of our 'dull, vegetative underground', but transfigured through the intellectualisation of eroticism: its 'naturalness' is not equated with the animal condition anymore but with life as 'embodied creative power'⁷. Yet, this creative power has its end in the erotic union and is absolutely alien to any 'ethical or aesthetic logic, any cultural significance and any value of personality'⁸: although it irrupts in the everyday, and although it is the most radical worldly salvation from the flattening of all things, it is unclear whether it also builds this inner weight necessary to oppose a more general resistance to the logic of objectivation.

Nevertheless, if 'in the context of everyday life, the human being is not conscious – above all, does not *want* to become conscious' of the world as it is, breaking with such a state demands almost an existential rupture, and certainly much more than knowledge. The vocation of science is – or rather should be – to bring 'clarity', but such clarity will not come from the dim light of a desk lamp: rather it is to be provoked by shock. Reason, for Weber, is far from being only the 'cold reason' censured by *Lebensphilosophie* and by Weber's 'Science' audience. Students, listeners and readers have to be shaken out of their naivety, as well perhaps as their complacency and self-delusion, by a teacher who has gone and is going through exactly the same demanding process⁹. They have to be 'compell[ed], or at least help[ed] *'to give [themselves] an account of the ultimate meaning of [their] own actions'*. Learning to 'make sense of oneself' and of one's stance in the world cannot be innocuous, technical learning: indeed Weber put this in practice in his 'Science' lecture, which profoundly unsettled his audience. In the words of Karl Löwith: 'He tore down all the veils of the objects of our desires, yet everyone must have felt that the heart of this man of clear understanding was of the most profound humanity'¹⁰. The teacher must to some extent bring about a situation for his students in which they 'see' themselves, and themselves in the world, disarmed, in order for them to become capable of grasping and perhaps facing 'life on its own terms'.

⁶ Weber, "IR", 561.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Weber, "Value Freedom", 507.

⁹ 'We are in a position to offer you a third contribution, namely clarity. Provided of course that we possess clarity ourselves'. Weber, "Science", 607.

¹⁰ Karl Löwith, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933: ein Bericht* [My life in Germany before and after 1933: a report] (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1986), 19.

A social and cultural science approached as a 'science of reality' constitutes such a teacher's equipment. As suggested in Part II Chapter 6, it has to combine empirical science with the 'specialised discipline of philosophy' ('Science') or 'social philosophy' ('Objectivity'), in order to provide a sort of map of the value spheres/life orders, an ideal-typical 'means of orientation', allowing to determine 'so to speak, [the] typological location' (*typologischen Ort*) of concrete historical phenomena¹¹, but also of practical stances. What might be called the topographical question was one of the key questions guiding Weber in his elaboration of the value spheres and life orders. Weber had stressed such vocation for science already in the 'Objectivity' essay, reiterated it in his communication on 'Value Freedom'; put it in practice in IR, through the elaboration of an ideal-typical construct of the value spheres, their intrinsic logics and their conflicts, and further referred to it in 'Science'¹².

He sought to determine the 'geographical position' that could be given to a specific sphere on such map, which depended on the types of conflicts incurred with others, especially the religious sphere. Thus, as explained in Part II Chapter 3, Weber exchanged with Lukács on the question of the 'geographical position' that could be allocated to the erotic (indeed he seems to have hesitated on the place of the erotic as sphere of value until his death¹³). This required thinking through the conflicts between opposed intrinsic logics and competition over the 'inner goods' procured. On such basis the teacher (or any individual by himself) unravels the ultimate conception of the world in which the student's or his own practical stance is grounded, and it becomes possible to, so to speak, locate such practical stances in particular value spheres. Thus Weber did not tire of teasing and questioning the Pacifist students he knew about their 'readiness to fashion their entire lives in accordance with the teachings of the Sermon of the Mount'¹⁴.

But to that purpose, the teacher must be ready to take his science to its limit and, as argued in Part II Chapter 6, be ready to stretch the intrinsic logic of modern science. But where is

¹¹ Weber, "IR", 536-7. Detlev Peukert refers to 'science' in general as the arena (*Turnierplatz*) in which stances can be made explicit and thus enter into dialogue with each other. But the latter assertion goes too far in the direction of a Habermasian worldview. Weber stressed again and again the impossibility of rational dialogue between the spheres. But it is true that the tenor and dynamic of each sphere can be grasped through science (philosophy), which is why I think Weber's own designation of 'map' is very appropriate. Peukert, *Diagnose*, 15.

¹² Weber, "IR", 536-7, Weber, "Value Freedom", 508, Weber, "Objectivity", 151, Weber, "Science", 608.

¹³ Weber considerably expanded the scope of the IR section on erotic love, with regard to the corresponding passage in the *ES* Sociology of Religion, and revised it again for the second draft of IR in 1920. According to Eduard Baumgarten, 'this last work on the 'Intermediate Reflection' accompanied Weber up until his last days'. Baumgarten, *Max Weber - his work and person*, 474-5.

¹⁴ Weber, *Biography*, 602.

this limit, and how far should this stretching go, those were questions on which Weber's reflection evolved between the 'Objectivity' essay and his lecture on 'Science'. This evolution was towards more boldness. Weber pushed back the limits of science and teaching as he sought to reassert the vocation of science and moved from the education of judgment to the teaching of the 'only virtue' that can still be taught in the classroom, 'intellectual integrity', which not only gets one to see where one is located on the map of ultimate standards and to understand the implications of such standards, but also to test out the consistency of one's own actions against one's ultimate standards:

'Now, to bring to consciousness these ultimate standards, as they manifest themselves in concrete value judgments, is admittedly the most they can accomplish without entering speculative grounds. Whether the judging subject should commit to these standards is his own affair and a question for his will and conscience, not for experiential knowledge'¹⁵.

We can then, if we understand our matter (which must here be assumed) oblige or at least help the individual to *give himself an account of the ultimate meaning of his own actions*¹⁶.

But the essential remit which Weber, in the 'Value Freedom' essay, assigned to a 'genuine philosophy of values', is to provide a means of orientation for individuals' 'ultimate decisions'. Weber sketched out some of the fundamentals that such a philosophy of values should consider, and, in his 'Vocation lectures', suggested that locating each sphere also required ascertaining their specific 'vocation' (*Beruf*). Thus Weber raised the question of the 'vocation' of science and its value 'in the overall life of humanity'; and of the 'vocation' of politics within the 'overall moral economy of life conduct'¹⁷.

In fact, the 'meaning' of a value sphere and its place within a 'moral economy of life conduct' are equivalent. After Weber had asked, in his 'Science' lecture, what could be the 'meaning' of science today, he first excluded all possibilities of encompassing, universal, meaning, and then re-phrased his question thus: 'what does science then actually accomplish positively for practical and personal "life"?' Knowledge for the control of life is no doubt the output of science, but it cannot constitute its vocation, for vocation has to be referred to the highest in the human being, i.e. judgement, decision ('practical' life) and singularity (personal life). Such accomplishment of science – and of any sphere – must be 'positive', i.e. not an indirect, unexpected effect but rather a specific contribution. Weber's question could thus be phrased as: 'What is the specific contribution of science to the

¹⁵ Weber, "Objectivity", 151.

¹⁶ Weber, "Science", 608.

¹⁷ Ibid, 595. Weber, "Politics", 438.

human being's possibility of exerting judgment and decision, and of expressing the most singular in him?' – which brings us close to the 'Politics' question, 'What is the vocation of politics in the overall moral economy of life conduct?'

Why a 'moral economy'? Against those of his friends (e.g. Ferdinand Tönnies, Robert Michels) who sought to promote a new 'ethical culture'¹⁸, indeed against all those who sought to raise a particular mode of life conduct (aesthetic for the George circle, erotic in the Ascona community, etc.) into an absolute¹⁹, Weber argued from early on that there could not be any cross-cutting, general ethics anymore, for two reasons: a negative one, i.e. the assault of 'any material development, and particularly the advanced capitalism of today' on the historically coined "ethical" specificity and the "cultural values" of the modern human being²⁰; and a positive one, namely the specific inner demands that each sphere makes on conduct:

'But is it then true that there could be an ethics in the world which could establish commandments with the *same* content for all relationships, whether erotic or commercial, family or official relationships, for the relationship to one's wife, the greengrocer's assistant, one's son, competitor, friend, or the accused? Can the ethical demands made on politics really be so indifferent to the fact that politics operates with a highly specific means – power, underpinned by violence?²¹

As I have explained in my review of the dynamics of the life orders in Part II, for a life order/value sphere to be more than just processing life according to its intrinsic logic, it has to be a sphere in which human pursuits are possible that will stretch the intrinsic logic 'to its limits'. Only on such condition is there a possibility for life conduct, even perhaps for new understandings of 'personality' and 'liberty' as Weber had put it in his essay on democracy in Russia, and not the mere adaptation to the logic of the order and the dynamic it creates. It is that possibility, or its absence, which determines the 'original ethical location' of each sphere and its contribution to the 'overall moral economy'.

Weber's apparently nondescript notions of 'map' and 'means of orientation' put forward the impossibility of any universal ethics or worldview, and their prolongation in the 'Vocation lectures' not only demonstrated the inanity of seeking personality for its own sake, but seemed to tie the possibility of life conduct at least in part to abiding by the ratio or pragma of the sphere, which, to Weber's audience, were 'diabolical powers'. Weber the teacher thus perfectly succeeded in creating a situation of shock and in getting his audience

¹⁸ Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 22, 97-9.

¹⁹ See Part I Chapter 2. Also Turner, *Modernity and Politics*, 122-3.

²⁰ Weber, "Democracy in Russia": 120.

²¹ Weber, "Politics", 439.

to see 'inconvenient facts'. But he did not leave them to such state and also positively represented to them the life conduct and stance that could help them not only withstand the fate of the age but construct themselves as human beings. I now turn to these more substantive aspects of his teaching.

II – The construction of the inner being in vocational life conduct

How does one move from a map and teaching providing (perhaps painful) clarity and orientation to conducting one's life? How can we be 'prepared to create [the meaning of world events] ourselves'²²? As Lassman and Velody, taking support in Wolin, have highlighted, 'it is only by means of a commitment to 'vocation' that the individual's subjectivity does not degenerate into "a pure arbitrary subjectivism"²³. Vocation had once been wrestling with human affects and drives in the name of world mastery. Vocation in a disenchanted world harnesses passion and seeks to master the self; but it does so in the name of particular causes which it upholds through devotion and struggles and, in so doing, both confronts and engages with the world.

Here it is opportune to recall an earlier text of Weber's, his critique of Roscher's historical method, first published in 1903, in which we already see associated the idea of map, of topography of what there is, furnished by science for the student's self-orientation, and the idea of the 'daemon', expressed in the Nietzschean rephrasing of a Greek saying: 'Become what you are'²⁴.

'When Roscher summarises his methodological standpoint, by claiming that he has fundamentally renounced working out general ideals, and that he wanted to provide orientation "not as a signpost but as a map", this does not mean that he would answer to those who turn to science in their search for "ideals providing direction" : "Become what you are"²⁵.'

²² Weber, "Objectivity", 154.

²³ Lassman and Velody, "Max Weber on Science", 183.

²⁴ The command was also evoked in close terms by Goethe ('So you must be, from yourself you cannot flee'). Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 68-70. Scaff shows that Weber's understanding of the daemon was inspired from Goethe's vision of it in the eponymous poem of the cycle 'Urworte, Orphisch'. Scaff has recorded two direct quotes of the phrase, one in his discussion of Oldenberg's lecture at the 8th meeting of the Evangelical-Social congress in June 1897, the other in a memorial speech he gave for his friend Georg Jellinek. Scaff suggests that both held the daemon for the fate of the individual, 'the characteristic and preformed essence of individual identity'. Nevertheless, as for the Greeks, fate is both 'limitation and infinitude, actuality and possibility', and Scaff shows that Weber's conception particularly stressed this paradox and ambiguity. I discuss this ambiguity below in the text.

²⁵ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 38.

And this is because, Weber added, despite Roscher's claim that he would not seek to demonstrate ideals, he still thought that there were objective foundations for norms. But Weber posited the direct relation between a science that provides orientation and a conception of human liberty in vocation, in a calling, a 'fate'.

'Become what *you are*': with the emphasis on 'you are', vocation is the deployment of a kind of immanent inner necessity. '*Become* what you are': the emphasis is here on creating oneself, in the process of construction which alone can lead to our singularity. The daemon is 'the fate that the soul chooses for itself, in the sense of the meaning of what it does and is'²⁶: each decision is thus a recognition of the 'daemon' – or perhaps daemons – that 'holds the threads of our life', and is at the same time its further definition²⁷. In Weber's idea of the daemon, there is not exactly an essence of our being which we would have to express and come to terms with, but rather an inner force, an inner compulsion which takes hold of us, but must be given further form in accomplishments and directed to a cause. As Carlos Frade beautifully explains, in an article about the academic calling, these two components are the components of eros, love, which is in fact the daemon Weber has in mind²⁸.

Thus vocation will only be constructed if we first have let ourselves be possessed by our daemon, by its 'mania', its madness, in the same way as the poet is seized, in Phaedrus, by the madness of the Muses:

'...possession and madness from the Muses, seizing a tender and untrodden soul, arousing it and exciting it to a Bacchic frenzy toward both odes and other poetry, adorns ten thousand works of the ancients and so educates posterity; but he who comes to poetic doors without the Muses' madness, persuaded that he will then be an adequate poet from art, himself fails of his purpose, and the poetry by the man of sound mind is obliterated by that of the madmen.'²⁹

As for Plato, 'art' without passion, that is to say, technical skill and ease, remains dry, unlikely to be infused with inspiration³⁰. Without passion, discipline and the enjoinder to

²⁶ Weber, "Value Freedom", 507-8. Weber, "Value Freedom (en)", 84.

²⁷Thus, to come back to Henrik Bruun's powerful image, in Weberian vocation the demands of the life order/value sphere to which we commit cannot 'leap at us', as vocation cannot be blind and demands the kind of clarity that Weber's teaching sought to instil. See Bruun, "Value Spheres": 100.

²⁸ Carlos Frade, "The Sociological Imagination and Its Promise Fifty Years Later: Is There a Future for the Social Sciences as a Free Form of Enquiry?", *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 5, no. 2 (2009).

²⁹ Plato, *Phaedrus*. ed. James H. Nichols (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 48.

³⁰ Weber, "Science", 591. At the end of his study on 'Confucianism', Weber again evoked Plato's 'mania' to contrast 'all that is great' in the human being, which, 'despite Greek *Sophrosyne*', necessarily has its origin in 'beautiful madness', and the 'distinction' of the Confucian, which refuses any intoxication and precisely resides in the 'balance of the soul'. See Weber, "Confucianism", 519.

self-restraint to one's task would be mere commandments of petit bourgeois morals³¹, whereas, animated by passion, it becomes 'devotion' (*Hingabe*), the manifestation of one's sustained commitment and engagement: in other words, it is akin to faithfulness to one's passion and its object.

Indeed the second component of vocational life conduct consists in focusing on one's task, in self-discipline and 'self-restraint'. This has given rise to frequent commentaries on the supposed 'asceticism' characterising Weber's understanding of life conduct, his view, for example, of the scientist as 'self-renunciatory hero', and even his 'almost self-destroying intellectual honesty'³². He himself acknowledged that 'self-restraint' is about the only legacy of the notion of 'vocation' or 'calling' (*Beruf*) as it had been understood in Puritan inner-worldly asceticism, a legacy which, in his eyes, it was important to assume, for it is at the core of a way of envisaging the relationship of Western man to life whereby the individual 'gains this relation to the real world (*reale Welt*) simply through action in accordance with the "demands of the day"³³.

Nevertheless, whilst acknowledging its roots in asceticism, Weber subordinated self-restraint in the fulfilment of a task to 'unreserved devotion' to it, inspired by passion – whereas devotion, in inner-worldly asceticism had been directed to God, the task being objectivated as a mere instrument for His glorification. Devotion, to Weber's eyes, is very

³¹ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 38. Weber expresses some surprise at Roscher's 'absence of any subjective limit of ethical commands in the domain of the ethics of everyday life', referring to Roscher's comments on Goethe's lack of any 'deep understanding of sin, consciousness, justice, grace, at which we so marvel in Shakespeare'. Wilhelm Roscher, *Geistliche Gedanken eines National-Oekonomen* [Spiritual reflections of an economist] (Dresden: V. Zahn & Jaensch, 1917 [1896]), 76.

³² Wolfgang Mommsen and Wolfgang Schluchter put forward that 'it is in the readiness for such work, full of renunciation (*entsagungsvoller Arbeit*), in the tension between devotion and distance, that lay, in Weber's eyes, the future of both the German nation and modern culture'. The tension pointed to is indeed defining, provided it is subordinated to the passion put in pursuing one's task (see below in text). But it is slightly misleading, in my view, to talk about a work full of renunciation as Weber's use of *Entsagung* at the end of *PE* rather refers to the renunciation to the idea of all rounded humanity, alongside the limitation of one's own 'self' (interest, untrained affects) (*Beschränkung*) as a condition for action today. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Wolfgang Schluchter, "Nachwort" [Editors' Postface to Science as vocation and profession. Politics as vocation and profession], in *Studienausgabe der Max Weber Gesamtausgabe I/17* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1994), 91. They further argue that Weber's 'personality concept' is one of 'ascetic humanist individualism' – individualism, because the individual 'chooses', ascetic, because the pursuit of supra-personal cause is carried out through methodical action, and humanist because this cause requires the constant link to ultimate values. But inner-worldly asceticism itself required the constant orientation to an ultimate value, the glorification of God. The association with humanism is rather curious, although it is possibly derived from Weber's views on the continuation that he thought was necessary for his study of *PE* (indicating that the link of this ethic to humanist rationalism was to be studied). Mommsen and Schluchter, "Nachwort", 115. The 'self-renunciatory hero' is Wolin's, the self-destroying intellectual honesty Lassman and Velody's. See Lassman and Velody, "Max Weber on Science", 176, 183.

³³Weber, *Hinduism*, 377. Incidentally he showed in this, contrary to what Troeltsch reproached him with, that he thought it important to be conscious of one's own intellectual tradition, not in order to maintain it alive artificially but rather to learn about ourselves – for example concerning the meaning of self-restraint in Western culture. Troeltsch, *Historism*, 569.

worldly, but not for this should it lose its intensity. As I have already explained in Part II Chapter 6, *Hingabe* means devotion as well as 'surrender' and Weber also uses this word when he evokes the total gift of oneself in the erotic relation³⁴.

Weber's simultaneous call for the individual to 'exercise self-restraint' and for 'unreserved devotion' strikingly draws the attention on how he defines what is proper of the human being, and on the difference between human being and the self or 'person'³⁵. The construction of one's qualities is the third aspect of life conduct which needs to be addressed.

What is most personal, for Weber, is not what the self-searching individual can get at by taking himself directly as his own object. The search for experience as means to get to one's deeper personality is based on a concept of personality which equates nature and authenticity and views any workings of society as violence done to the expression of one's inner self. This is an extreme neo-Romantic view, which can only lead to flight from the world and can ultimately oppose no resistance to the de-personalising powers of modern life. But there is also another Romanticism, the "Romanticism of the intellectually interesting", of which the individual can think that it brings out the highest in him, and which in fact, 'aimless and unfocused' because of its lack of 'sense of responsibility', can only amount to 'that inner state of mind which my late friend Georg Simmel liked to describe as "sterile excitement"'³⁶.

In Weber's eyes, such conceptions appeared to reduce what being a human being is about, by rooting the personal in the 'dull, undifferentiated, vegetative "underground" of personal life'³⁷ or, in the latter case, by being content with a pose. He opposed to them his vision of what is human about the human being as that which succeeds in rising above the substratum of our affects and interests, by directing, in a constant and sustained manner, one's passion, intellect and courage to realms of human endeavour and culture which, though demanding application from us in the everyday, anchor such work in causes and ends located outside of the everyday:

³⁴ Weber, "IR", 560. Nevertheless at the beginning of the essay on 'Value Freedom', and before making any mention of the choice by the soul of its own fate, Weber encouraged teachers to teach their students to be content with 'the humble fulfilment of the task' to which they devote themselves. He thus seemed to suggest that there can be some form of training of one's attitude to a task, whereas in 'Science', devotion is clearly an extension of the passion inspired by one's daemon.

³⁵ Weber, "Value Freedom", 489.

³⁶ Weber, "Politics", 435.

³⁷ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 132.

‘... the “freer” “action” is, in the sense [of free] used here, i.e. the less it retains the character of a “natural event”, the more does a concept of “personality” thus finally come into force, which finds its “character” (*Wesen*) in the constancy of its inner relation to specific ultimate “values” and life “significations”, which are forged into purposes for its action and thus transform into teleological-rational action’³⁸.

In that constant application, in that devotion, we seek to honour the inner demands made on us by these spheres of value and action by juggling with the tension between the ideals guiding our pursuits and the ratio pervading its means: it is in that tension that the force of our daemon can be given a more sharpened form to and that what is most personal is shaped. Thus, far from being the most subterranean and rough in us, the most personal, for Weber, only emerges as a conquest over our own selves (Weber does not use any specific notion of the self, he simply uses the reflective pronoun, yet the distinction between the self and personality is very clear³⁹). It is this conquest of ourselves, as can be seen in the above quote from his 1906 essay on ‘Knies and the problem of irrationality’, which manifests human “freedom” (note the inverted commas: it is here a very specific sense of freedom, the refusal to let life just slip by)⁴⁰; but secondly (and this second condition is what makes the first possible), personality, the inner being, only emerges out of a genuine struggle with the conditions of human culture – genuine in the sense that the individual throws his whole weight in that battle. Indeed, as suggested by Carlos Frade, it is the very same eros which seizes the human being in a calling and which is embattled against the world: ‘For contrary to common understanding, eros is neediness and discontent with the world as the world is.’⁴¹

I have preferred to refer to the ‘inner being’ than to ‘personality’, since the constancy through which Weber characterised personality in 1906 (in the above quote) then became

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ ‘Whoever is given a vocational-professional task must limit his own self (*sich*) and exclude whatever does not strictly form part of the thing in itself (*Sache*), more particularly his own loves and hatreds’. Weber, “Value Freedom”, 494.

⁴⁰ Dieter Henrich considers that this quote from the Essay on ‘Knies and the problem of irrationality’ holds the key to the whole *Wissenschaftslehre*. Freedom is this unburdening from the irrationality of the given (‘Reason and freedom are in this sense identical’), and hence the possibility to conduct one’s life as a chain of ultimate decisions. ‘Interpretive science is therefore the science of the possibility of freedom’, and Weber’s ethics is about life conduct and personality. As suggested already in Part I Chapter 1, Henrich’s interpretation is very illuminating for an understanding of the overall structure and coherence of Weber’s work, but he does not address the dynamic of the life orders, and the fact that the animal life above which one should seek to rise is maintained and further developed by the logic of objectivation in the life orders. Henrich, *Unity*, 45-9.

⁴¹ Frade, “Sociological Imagination”: 19.

the principle structuring life conduct with a vocation, whilst personality became a possible but uncertain outcome of constancy in one's endeavours (and hence in one's struggle)⁴².

This characterisation of one's construction as human being raises the question of the two limit cases: does one attain this in the erotic *Hingabe*? Does one attain it in the economic sphere, where one's pursuits are merely identical with one's interests and pose no challenge to the everyday ratio? The case of union workers, whose union membership can 'often have very deep reaching influence over their life conduct'⁴³, points to the possibility of developing life conduct and one's personal qualities in a struggle for the defence of class interests, which is also a struggle for their own dignity and honour. As I explained in Part II (Chapters 4 and 5), Weber considered such struggle, on the part of workers, as an instance in which essential personal qualities were fostered.

The erotic opens the possibility of the 'personal' as 'experience'. In Weber's *IR* ideal-typical construct, eroticism creates a unique, unrepeatably, incommunicable, hence totally unobjectivable and irrational union between two individuals. But the sublimation of natural affects in the erotic sensation, and the surrender to this something that is happening between two beings, means that there is a creation, a personal creation, but that this creation has its end in itself: it is, in that sense, an 'experience', but, again, *Hingabe* prevents it from being an experience focused on one's own drives and affects.

The inner being, then, consists of qualities which are ethical rather than characterological. Indeed the features of 'temperament' become truly one's own when they have been elaborated, constructed into qualities⁴⁴.

In his exposition of the qualities demanded by a vocation in science and in politics, Weber started, in both Vocation lectures, with 'passion'. Is this then a 'quality'? If it is the *mania* communicated by one's daemon, does not it mean that we are possessed? This is undeniably so. But this passion, if it is passion, and not 'longing'⁴⁵, also has to be active and

⁴² Weber, "Value Freedom", 494.

⁴³ Weber, "Methodological introduction", 56.

⁴⁴ Charles Turner also highlights the ethical, non naturalistic character of qualities, but then considers them as features of asceticism, going as far as saying that 'passion is matter-of-factness' – whereas *Sachlichkeit* should here clearly be translated as 'concern for the thing in itself' as per Lassman and Speirs' translation. See Turner, *Modernity and Politics*, 156.

⁴⁵ That is to say not the longing evoked by Weber at the end of 'Science' or by Simmel in his portrait of the modern human being. Nietzsche's longing (*Sehnsucht*) was different and rather close to Weber's directed passion, to eros: the 'arrow' of man's love and pursuit thrown, from within 'chaos' which alone can 'give birth to a dancing star', a tightened 'bowstring' (*Sehne*) which 'flows past, beyond man'. Nietzsche, *KS.A, Zarathustra*, 19.

learn how to apply and direct itself. Passion is passion for something, the ‘thing in itself’ (e.g. politics), commitment to a cause, it is not a general attitude to life as longing can be. It is a ‘thirst’ that makes us ‘hurry forth’ in our causes and pursuits, and which we can only quench in the light of the ‘stars’ of our values, as per the verses from Faust which Weber quotes at the end of the ‘Objectivity’ essay:

‘A new impulse awakes
I hurry forth to drink the eternal light [of the Goddess],
Before me the day, behind me the night
Heaven above, beneath me the waves’
(Goethe, Faust, Part One, Scene II)⁴⁶.

Passion (as directed passion) is not only the first quality mentioned but is also primary for human action. All other qualities highlighted by Weber depend upon the sense of responsibility for one’s realm of activity, and for one’s cause or task. For it is only such sense of responsibility which makes us decide to apply ourselves not only passionately but also in a sustained way: thus passion, buttressed with responsibility and endurance, turns into faithful devotion. It is passion and responsibility which jointly lead us to engage our imagination, inspiration, insight, judgment (*Angenmaß*, also translated as ‘sense of proportion’). Although they certainly depend on a gift – ‘talent’ – they only ‘thrive on very hard work’⁴⁷, which, again, warrants their status as qualities.

At the core of the exercise of our responsibility is our relation to ‘realities’, in the sense here of ‘things and people’⁴⁸: it is our sense of responsibility which leads us to balance our passion for the ‘thing’ (political, scientific, artistic) with ‘judgment’ and ‘distance’ with regard to ‘things and people’. The correct ‘distance’ is that which finds us ‘receptive’ to realities, but at the same time ‘composed and calm’⁴⁹, that is, able to take them in without letting them damage ourselves or only stimulate the direct expression of our affects. Certainly such inner stature and perceptiveness are rooted in our ‘temperament’, but they are also very much exerted and refined in the trials of existence.

⁴⁶ Weber, "Objectivity", 214. Weber, "Objectivity (en)", 404. Weber announces the verses with a metaphor of the ‘stars’ of values and evaluative ideas. Yet, in Faust, the eternal light is that of the Goddess of the sun, who, on the horizon, is about to leave for other regions of the world.

⁴⁷ Weber, "Science", 589-90.

⁴⁸ Weber, "Politics", 436.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

All these qualities are mediate in the sense that they grow through the friction with situations⁵⁰ – but if they are to constitute the human being in us, they cannot be dependent on external buffers and other artificial boosts. On the contrary, Weber saw the erosion of institutionalised and social marks of singularity through democratic levelling as a ‘test’ of one’s personal stature, in the very same sense of ‘proving oneself’ that he used in his analysis of the Puritan vocation (calling). As Weber himself highlighted, such a notion of inner distance stands in stark contrast to Nietzsche’s conception of aristocratic distance ‘between oneself and the “all too many”’⁵¹.

Thus Weber’s conception of vocation rests on unreserved ‘passionate abandonment to one’s daemon’⁵²; the force of passion is directed, it is harnessed in the pursuit of a cause – and thereby in the conquest the self and the construction of one’s qualities. Being seized by one’s daemon is something that ‘has to occur’ to one and upon which the teacher has no grasp. But it seems to me that the education of judgment and teaching of intellectual integrity went further than causing the initial shock at seeing oneself and one’s stance in the world: the training of one’s eye (*Schulung des Auges*) is also what, in life situations, allows for that distance, that capacity to gauge events, to be won – let us remember (from Part I Chapter 1) that resort to the visual sense united Weber with a tradition of political philosophy linking judgment and action. We find it expressed in the ‘sense of proportion’ needed to gauge reality and its implications for action, as the German word (*Augenmaß*) is composed with ‘eyes’ and ‘measure’⁵³; it is also in the ability to sustain our gaze, to fearlessly ‘look the fate of the age in its stern face’⁵⁴.

For its part, intellectual integrity must lead one not only to acknowledge the meaning of one’s actions but also creates a tension within the individual to draw the implications of such acknowledgement in one’s actions and seek greater consistency in one’s engagements. Thus, to come back to the question asked at the end of Part II Chapter 6, the teaching of intellectual integrity cannot foster action of itself: indeed this would have been contrary to Weber’s core conception of the fundamentally personal character of life decisions and

⁵⁰ As David Beetham notes, Weber’s ‘belief in the value of conflict’ has nothing to do with Social Darwinism of which he has often been accused. ‘The personal qualities developed by such conditions were sufficient justification in themselves’. Beetham, *Max Weber and the theory of modern politics*, 43.

⁵¹ Weber, "Suffrage", 316. Weber, *PW (en)*, 122-3.

⁵² Weber, "Politics", 435.

⁵³ Weber refers to this quality in his *Political Writings* (especially in ‘Politics as a vocation and profession’) but it could be argued that it is a general quality which a science of reality would seek to foster. Ibid, 435, 436, 450.

⁵⁴ Weber, "Science", 605, 607.

actions. One has to be seized, and one has to decide whether to obey one's daemon or not – but Weber's conception of the highest task for science and teaching provided the frame in which such concept of vocation and its deployment could be thought, including, and this is what I will turn to now, in its implications for the dynamic of the life orders and value spheres.

III – Ethics, vocation and the possibility of resistance

Vocation is an inner connection developed by the modern human being to a particular sphere of human endeavour. It is in the constancy of that orientation and in the struggles demanded for upholding the vocation of politics, science or art, that he turns the 'matter' of his feelings, even of his gifts, into qualities which constitute him as a human being with 'inner weight'⁵⁵. This shaping of oneself is an ethical question:

'But the question facing him [the professional politician] is, then, through which qualities he can hope to do justice to this power...., and thus to the responsibility it imposes on him. This takes us into the area of ethical questions, for to ask what kind of a human being one must be in order to have the right to seize the spokes of the wheel of history is to pose an ethical question.'⁵⁶

The vocational politician, scholar or artist has to respond to the inner demands of the sphere of vocation, which means, as I explained in Part II, to 'genuinely' face up to the intrinsic logic of the sphere whilst not subsuming his pursuits entirely to it. Although this is a question for each individual being committing to a sphere or a cause, in each particular situation – for there can be no cross-cutting ethics – it seems to me that Weber put forward what he considered to be the way of facing up to such questions which was most consistent with and truest to an engagement with the modern world as it is, at the same time as seeking to bring out its possibilities for a renewed greatness of human accomplishment. In other words, I would contend that Weber constantly strove to represent what could be a stance of confrontation of the world, in both senses of measuring up to the age and fighting for a culturally alive world and against subjection.

Take your pursuits to the limit, this is the injunction of both Vocation lectures: the teacher's attempt at 'compelling, or at least helping, the individual *to give himself an account of the ultimate meaning of his own actions*'⁵⁷ is, precisely, what pushes modern science and intellectual knowledge to its limits. In the 'Objectivity' essay, Weber had characterised the 'scientific genius' as the scholar whose way of posing the problems comes to

⁵⁵ Weber, "Politics", 449.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 435. Translation slightly modified from Weber, *PW (en)*, 352.

‘define the “conception” of a whole epoch, i.e. are able to be decisive not only for what is regarded as “valuable”, but also concerning what is regarded as significant or insignificant, “important” or “unimportant” in the phenomena’⁵⁷.

And we also recognise the genius in the scholar who, at the end of the ‘Objectivity essay’, realises that the routine of specialised ‘analysis of material’ has lost sight of the ‘great cultural problems’, and ‘hurries forth’ to find where the stars of valuation are now casting their light⁵⁸. In both evocations it is obvious that, to Weber, genuine, *a fortiori* great, achievement in science cannot stem from specialised application and devotion per se but rather from their connection to encompassing grasp and insight of the modern world as well as a will to foster students’ capacity to see that world.

In politics, the ‘genuine human being, who is *capable* of having a “vocation for politics”’ will strive for his cause with ‘passion, responsibility and judgment’ – and face up to the implications of the ‘power pragma’ whilst at the same time ‘trying to achieve the impossible in this world’. Although to be able to maintain such a tension takes a steadfastness and vision which are only encountered in human beings of extraordinary stature (‘hero[s] in the very straightforward sense of the word’), such must in any case be the horizon of all person with a genuine political vocation⁵⁹.

The artist’s vocation presents him with a similar demand. As I have shown in Part II Chapter 3 with the example of JS Bach, the composer seeking to create new forms bridging and transcending the ever renewed tension between melodic expression and the harmonic principles of the tonic ratio constitutive of modern Western music, also does this in a way that avoids subsuming one to the other and thus at the same time brings that tension to the maximum. For this, the creator, like the scholar, needs to be moved by passion, inspiration as well as devotion and the latter also means dedication through hard work.

Thus, whilst each sphere has its own inner demands on the vocational human being, honouring these demands takes, for Weber, a particular structure of life conduct across all life orders/value spheres of vocation, which is why Hennis refers to Weber’s ethics of life conduct. However, it is not an ethics which cuts across all spheres, as Weber deemed that for impossible in an age in which ‘life rests on itself’. Rather I would argue that it is part of his teaching and located in the sphere of science and intellectual knowledge.

⁵⁷ Weber, "Objectivity", 182. Translation slightly altered from Weber, "Objectivity (en)", 381.

⁵⁸ Weber, "Objectivity", 214.

⁵⁹ Weber, "Politics", 449-450.

It is through such structure that the most singular in oneself is tried, tested and distilled and can be transformed into creations and actions which will uphold the vocation of the political, scientific or artistic sphere and thus vindicate it against the inner tendencies towards technification (and the concurring drive towards the immediate expression of affects) and its bolstering by capitalism, against the ‘cold skeletal hands of the rational orders as well as the dullness of the everyday⁶⁰’. But how is this possible if

‘Our age is characterised by rationalisation and intellectualisation, and, above all, by the disenchantment of the world. Its resulting fate is that precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have withdrawn from public life’⁶¹?

Vocational life conduct transforms the orders of the day into the ‘demand of the day’, which is ‘simple and straightforward when one obeys the daemon which holds the threads of one’s life’⁶². This provision is, of course, the key. For the demand of the day is not an effect of the implementation of the logic of the sphere. It is the ‘inner demands’ of our sphere of vocation that constitute those demands of the day which we should honour, and these are never that we should subject ourselves to the ratio of the sphere but rather that such ratio needs to be stretched to its limits, and perhaps even changed, by the goals that we set ourselves in our pursuits.

It seems to me very important to insist on this point. For it is tempting to agree to some extent with Weber’s ‘Science’ audience by considering intellectualisation as the ‘devil’, and the logic of a sphere as a ‘price to pay’⁶³ for achievements in that sphere. This would tend to confirm the view of Weber’s allegedly ascetic conception of vocation, which, like his ‘realism’, ultimately could be ‘destructive of all ideals’⁶⁴ – for who can bear paying the price of the will to knowledge with disenchantment⁶⁵? My argument is that abiding by the logic of the sphere whilst ‘pursuing the impossible’ changes the conception of that logic. In the same way as composers’ creation of value forms impacted back on the logic of tonal ratio (e.g. Bach’s ‘Well tempered clavier’ and the generalisation of equal temperament to all instruments with fixed keys), always subjecting one’s specialist research and teaching to the fostering of life conduct in students and readers cannot leave the logic of calculative ratio intact. Nor can the pursuit of the constitution of the state community into a ‘cultural

⁶⁰ Weber, "IR", 561.

⁶¹ Weber, "Science", 612.

⁶² Ibid, 613.

⁶³ Lassman and Velody, "Max Weber on Science", 202.

⁶⁴ Beetham, *Max Weber and the theory of modern politics*, 23.

⁶⁵ Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 230.

community' and into a 'nation of masters' can be indifferent for the way in which the 'fact of force' is dealt with in politics⁶⁶, or for the extension of objectivation.

Precisely because life has been disenchanting and has become devoid of any pre-empting meaning or direction, it must be conducted, and ideals fetched, entirely from one's own chest and without any possible support in an encompassing ethics⁶⁷. Although, in 'Science', Weber above all sought to confront those who seek to escape the modern human condition, in other texts, the essay on 'Value freedom' and some of the political writings and the writings on academia, it is the possibility of the renewed, completely modern, dignity of man – after it had been baffled by Christianity – which he put forward.

By dignity, Weber did not only mean the courage and honour to withstand the 'age'. The choice of 'manly dignity', in everyway opposed to a 'religious dignity' which it finds undignified⁶⁸, goes further and vindicates this-worldly culture for itself. Indeed, the world that the Gospels oppose

'...wants to be a world of this-worldly "culture", i.e. of beauty, dignity, honour and greatness of the "creature"⁶⁹.'

Weber's evocation of Nietzsche (here, implicitly, in a war-time article of 1916; but also explicitly in *IR*⁷⁰) manifests the extent to which the radical enmity between the affirmation of this-worldly values and the world-denial of religious ethics was at the core of both their thoughts and underpinned their respective vision of what could be fought for in a world without God.

Thus the possibility for the renewed dignity of the worldly world is inseparable from the struggle for it. Weber not only ascertained the renewed agonistic character of the world, he also claimed it. His science of reality, to start with, insisted on the analysis of the inner momentum of each sphere, as having its own dignity, and warned against explaining such specificity away through disciplines and approaches emphasising exclusively economic and

⁶⁶ Weber, "IR", 568.

⁶⁷ Weber, "Verein debates", 420. Karl Löwith has shown all the ambivalence of the relation between rationality and freedom for Weber: 'This freedom can be in inner accord with rationality only if it is not a freedom from the rationalised world but a freedom within the iron cage'. Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, 72. Nevertheless I do not share Löwith's conception of Weber's notion of freedom as a sort of heroism of renunciation.

⁶⁸ Weber, "Science", 604.

⁶⁹ Weber, "Between two laws", 63.

⁷⁰ Weber, "IR", 562. The reference to *The Will to Power* is in relation to the analysis of the total impossibility of understanding between the euphoria of love which wants to be and the cold abstractness of the ethics of brotherhood.

social determinations. Siegfried Landshut put this at the core of what we should understand about Weber: ‘no factor in reality is ultimately preponderant... what is revealed is that all being has the *same* degree of reality’⁷¹.

Weber made it very clear that the conflicts he unravelled between value spheres and conceptions of the world are irreconcilable, these are ‘deathly struggles’: although often referring to John Stuart Mill’s ‘absolute polytheism of the values’ in the context of expositions or evocations of his theory of the value spheres⁷², Weber emphasised the difference between ‘polytheism’, where one chooses between ‘alternatives’, and ‘irreconcilable struggle to death’, where one commits to one god (or several) and ‘offends all others’⁷³. Weber rejected the criticism (e.g. by his friend Ernst Troeltsch, and by many since then, the most famous of all being Leo Strauss) of the alleged ‘relativism’ of such theory. Many are also the authors (starting with Karl Jaspers and Dieter Henrich) who have pointed out that the inner demands made by each sphere on the vocational subject, the nature of the commitment to one’s own daemon are very contrary to any notion of relativism. Furthermore, Weber vindicated conflict in the name of the dignity and self-determination of man. For reclaiming conflict is not simply warranting it, it is also, to some extent, shaping it, and hence putting a brake on the process of objectivation of life. If left unacknowledged, the conflict of the gods and devils, invariably and relentlessly advances the cause of modern capitalism and furthers its practical encroachments of all spheres of life: for, as noted already in Part I Chapter 1,

‘...all action, as well as of course non-action, as the case may be, means, in its consequences, taking sides for specific values, and thereby – and this today is forgotten so particularly readily – consistently *against others*.’⁷⁴

Non-action, that is to say refusing to take a stance and thereby following the current, is also action, by furthering the logics of technification and objectivation without any check or struggle.

Thus there are not ‘two possibilities’ of stances, but three. In his famous letter to Robert Michels dated 4/8/1908, Weber seemed to contrast two stances, ideals and flight from the

⁷¹ Siegfried Landshut, "Max Weber's Significance for Intellectual History", in *Max Weber's "Science as a vocation"* (London; Boston Unwin Hyman, 1989), 108.

⁷² Weber, "Between two laws", 63. Weber, "Value Freedom", 507. Weber, "Science", 603. In the latter two essays, Weber refers to him as ‘the old Mill’: a familiarity which has confused some readers into thinking that he was talking about Mill’s father, James. In ‘Between two laws’, Weber actually refers to ‘the old sober empiricist, John Stuart Mill’.

⁷³ Weber, "Science", 608.

⁷⁴ Weber, "Objectivity", 150, 163.

world on the one hand, or affirmation of the world and thus necessarily adaptation to its logics. Indeed this is how Lawrence Scaff proposes to read it. Let us take a closer look:

‘There are *two* possibilities: either [1] “my kingdom is not of this world”... i.e. “the goal means nothing to me, the *movement* everything”...or [2] *affirmation* of culture (that is, *objective* culture, expressing itself in *technological* and other “achievements”) through *adaptation* to the sociological conditions of all technology, whether it be economic, political or whatever else... In the *second* case all talk of “revolution” is a farce, *any* thought of *replacing* the “domination of man over man” by *any* kind of “socialist” society or ingeniously devised forms of “democracy” is a *utopia*... Whoever wants to live as a “modern man”, if only in the sense that he has his newspaper, railroads, tram etc. everyday *renounces* all those ideals that hover darkly around you, as soon as he completely *abandons* the terrain of revolutionism for its own sake, *without* any “goal”, indeed without the *conceivability* of a “goal”. You are a thoroughly honest fellow and will on your own... complete the critique that has long since brought me to this way of thinking and *thereby* stamped me as a “bourgeois” politician, *so long as* the little that one *can* want/desire as such does not also get pushed into the limitless distance.⁷⁵

In Scaff’s interpretation, the alternative is between an absolute ethics with all its consequences or being prepared to live in the world with its tensions and thus according to an ethics of responsibility. But Weber here is talking about a very specific modern figure: that of the modern human being who ‘talks of revolution’, who engages in ‘revolutionism’ ‘for its own sake’, but becomes completely adapted to the current conditions of the world when he leaves the revolutionary terrain, because he lacks a concrete goal for which he would take responsibility – including and above all in the everyday. But whilst ideals in the void lead to complete and utter adaptation in the everyday, utopia substantiated by goals is very much needed. The stance of confrontation of the world, which affirms the world as a place of culture – not merely ‘objective’ culture but a place in which stances are taken, and pursuits are engaged with, opposes adaptation as well as flight from the world and intertwines the ethics of conviction and responsibility.

Conclusion

Weber drew all ultimate implications of the fact that the world had entered an age in which ‘life rests on itself’ and every single human being is left to himself for orientation and life conduct. He considered that this fact placed the scholar and teacher specifically in front of the obligation to compel individuals to ‘see’ such reality and, by laying bare the connections of practical stances to ultimate standards, to help them reflect upon the significance and implications of their own actions and upon the stance that they manifest.

Through such teaching, individuals were also to realise that the only way in which a particular sphere of human endeavour can be upheld as a sphere with a vocation in its own

⁷⁵ Weber, *Letters 1906-1908*, 616. Translation slightly altered from Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 97.

right is through their own dedication to it: there are no other possible foundations, and not engaging in a sphere in this way means leaving it to the dynamic of rationalisation set out by its intrinsic logic, and buttressed (in science, politics and increasingly in art) by its external organisation along capitalistic and/or bureaucratic lines.

Thus Weber's teaching also presented the individual with a high sense of what human life can be in the modern age, through the possibility of vocation. I have defined the Weberian vocation as an inner connection developed by the modern human being to a particular sphere of human endeavour. Vocation starts with the daemon, a force which takes hold of the individual, but must be given a form in accomplishments and directed to a cause. It is in the constancy of that orientation and in the struggles demanded for upholding the vocation of politics, science or art, that the individual turns the 'matter' of his feelings, even of his gifts, into qualities which constitute the 'human being' in him. It is this constant orientation and struggle which equips the individual with the 'inner weight' required for resisting the assaults of objectivation as well as the reduction of human beings to bearers of affects and interests and as mere matter for subjection.

I cannot enter the debate regarding the more or less philosophical character of Weber's thought. Nevertheless it seems clear to me that there is, to say the least, a philosophical background to his thought, in which, after Nietzsche, the consequences of the world's estrangement from God are drawn, against any temptation of nihilist relativism or romantic mysticism – and of course against any idea of adaptation to capitalist objectivation. The modern age, provided we look it in its stern face and provided we do not shirk away from our daemons and from struggle, provided that is, we adopt a stance neither of adaptation or flight, but of confrontation of the world as it is, would thus seem to coin new possibilities for regaining control over our lives individually and collectively.

Chapter 8 – Georg Simmel and the possibility of personality

Introduction

Simmel once recorded his diagnosis of the malaise of the age in a single phrase in his diary: “Perhaps in our current life, there is on the one hand too much “I” (“ich”), and too much mechanism on the other hand”¹. As put forward in the essays on ‘the tragedy of culture’, published in 1911, and especially in ‘the conflict of modern culture’, published in 1918, all culture supposes the wielding of ‘creative life’ into ‘carapaces’ (*Gehäuse*) giving it ‘content and form, scope and order’ in different ‘individual areas of culture’². But these formations acquire autonomy from the impulse that once created them and develop according to their own ‘intrinsic logic’ (*Logik* or *Eigengesetzlichkeit*): Simmel’s carapaces become ‘stiff, remote from life and even hostile to it’³. This is the endless process of culture, whereby life, to express itself, requires form and yet can never be contained into form; erodes it as soon as it is created; and finally bursts out of it and looks to be accommodated by a new form. But, as concisely shown in the diary entry, Simmel thought that this dynamism of culture had become blocked in modern times perhaps more than ever before in preceding ‘crises of culture’, as the contemporary mood was not so much in search of new forms as hostile to all form, and on the look out for the direct expression of ‘life’, the ‘movements of the soul’⁴, be it in art (with Expressionism), in philosophy (with pragmatism), in religion (with mysticism) and in ethics (with the quest for erotic authenticity in couple relationships). Hence the mutually feeding development of, on the one hand, the ‘mechanism’ and of the ‘I’ looking for one’s ‘most specific and innermost’ expression on the other⁵.

This seems an echo of Weber’s impatience with the search for one’s ‘personality’ through ‘experience’, introspection and spiritual pursuits on the one hand, and with those who let life just ‘slip by’, carried as they are by the sheer mechanism of modern bureaucratic capitalism on the other hand⁶, and his diagnosis of the age as an ‘age of subjectivist culture’,

¹ Georg Simmel, "Aus dem nachgelassenen Tagebuch" [From the Diary in the Estate], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 20 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), 264.

² Georg Simmel, "Der Konflikt der modernen Kultur" [The Conflict of Modern Culture], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), 183, 196.

³ Ibid, 183.

⁴ Ibid, 191.

⁵ Ibid, 200.

⁶ Weber, "Value Freedom", 507.

‘mechanism’ and ‘congealed spirit’ was sometimes put in strikingly Simmelian terms⁷. Indeed Weber’s demand to the individual that s/he engaged in the world by both knowingly facing its everyday rationality and at the same time pursuing a cause beyond that everyday, seems close to Simmel’s search for ‘reciprocal action’ between ‘subjective’ and ‘objective culture’.

Yet, this apparent similarity of motives, diagnosis and even expression hardly hides the fundamental differences in what is at stake in Simmel’s and Weber’s respective thoughts. Weber wants men to be up to the age by being of it and at the same time struggling against it, whilst Simmel’s quest is towards a different mode of being in the world: the rift between man as ‘subject’ and the worlds of ‘objects’ he has created for himself, now made of ‘impersonal formations and nexuses’⁸, calls for a different, more unified, grasp of the world, whereby ‘forms’, or ‘objects’ are not abolished – since this would be the negation of culture – but where ‘objectivation’ into forms is grounded in – and elaborates on – ‘lived experience’ (*Erleben*).

Consequently, whilst both Weber and Simmel were suspicious of letting life merely slip by, in a context which both diagnosed as prone to the growth of the ‘mechanism’, to the exacerbation of subjectivities and to the increasing rift between the worlds of ‘objects’ (or forms) and inner subjectivity, I will seek to show in this chapter that Simmel’s exploration of the ‘de-subjectivation of the individual’⁹ is really a quest for a unified human existence (*Dasein*), which contrasts with Weber’s analysis of the possibility of life conduct and his own way of combating the ‘fragmentation of the soul’ through engagement in the world¹⁰.

The chapter is structured around the notions of objectivation and personality, and is meant to echo the analysis of the possibility of life conduct in the Weberian life orders and indeed to allow for a comparison between the two endeavours. Simmel’s exploration of the possibility of personality is tightly related to his analysis of the dynamic of culture and thus what he called the process of ‘objectivation’, which is why the chapter opens on an analysis

⁷ Weber, "Verein debates", 416, 420. Weber, "Parliament", 151. The proximity of the diagnosis of the age as one of subjectivist culture has been emphasised by Lawrence Scaff (Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 150.).

⁸ Georg Simmel, "Der Begriff und die Tragödie der Kultur" [The concept and the tragedy of culture], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 14 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996 [1911]), 403.

⁹ 'My problem is the objectivation of the subject, or rather, since the former is more Kant's and Goethe's task, the desubjectivisation of the individual, and therefore also, the significance of the temporal for eternity'. See Simmel, "Diary", 262. François Léger has highlighted the importance of this concern throughout Simmel's work and I have found support in his analysis for the present chapter. See Léger, *The thought of Georg Simmel*.

¹⁰ Weber, "Verein debates", 414.

of this process (section I). I then more particularly focus on the embedding of Simmel's analyses of the modern economy and culture in his philosophy of life so as to account for the rift between his conception of objectivation in differentiated 'worlds' and Weber's conception of the stance and orientation of the human being in the life orders and value spheres, notably due to the consideration of *Erlebnis* ('lived experience') as primary relation to the world (section II). It is also the understanding of the status of *Erlebnis* for Simmel and Weber which underpins the comparison between Simmel's accounts of the possibility of unity of the personality as against Weber's analysis of the possibility of vocation and life conduct (section III).

I – Culture as objectivation

The two roots of the notion of objectivation

In his 1911 Essay on the 'Tragedy of culture', Simmel defined culture as a process of 'objectivation', whereby we wield the creations of our mind into artefacts and constructs outside of ourselves, at a distance from ourselves and our subjectivity, so that they become partly detached from us and take a course of their own. This is referred to by Simmel with two different words, *Vergegenständlichung*, which literally means transformation into a thing, an artefact, and may be translated as 'objectification'; and *Objektivierung*, or *Objektivwerden*, literally 'objectivation'. The latter subsumes the meaning of the former but conveys the additional idea of impersonality of the things created, of their detachment from the initial creative impulse and of their further operation according to the intrinsic logic (*Eigengesetzlichkeit*) of the 'series' (*Reihe*) they cling to¹¹. It is important to bear in mind that what I have translated as objectivation in Weber's case is *Versachlichung*, but this objectivation does not concern the human creative process, but rather relationships. Simmel's objectivation highlights the becoming impersonal of anything projected outside of the human mind, Weber's objectivation refers to the de-personalisation of relationships. The differences between Simmel's and Weber's accounts of the 'worlds' or 'life orders' and their intrinsic logics will become clearer throughout the chapter.

In unravelling the process of objectivation, Simmel sought to take support in Marx's notion of 'commodity fetishism' but, in extending it to all creations of the human mind,

¹¹ Simmel, "Tragedy", 415.

fundamentally changed its meaning and that of the correlate concept of ‘alienation’, or more literally ‘estrangement’ (*Entfremdung*)¹², as processes inherent in all cultural dynamics:

“The “fetishist character” which Marx attributed to economic objects in the epoch of commodity production is only a particular modified case of this general fate of the contents of our culture. These contents are under the paradox – and increasingly so as “culture” develops – that they are indeed created by subjects and are meant for subjects, but follow an immanent development logic in the intermediate form of objectivity which they take on... and thereby become estranged (*sich entfremden*) from their origin and purpose”¹³.

In this approach, objectivation is also a process of ‘sublimation’: the living creations of our minds which it turns into objects have much more general and more permanent, ‘timeless’, validity and ‘objectivity’ than the flow of our own subjectivity¹⁴. Thus it is because there is first alienation, distancing from the initial subjective and creative impulse, that there is ‘objectivation’ in the sense of the endowment with ‘objective validity’:

“The external or immaterial work in which the life of the soul is deposited is felt to be a value of a certain kind... This is however the specifically human wealth that the products of objective life belong at the same time to an order of value that does not flow away and is objective (*nicht verfließende und sachliche*), be it logical or moral, religious or artistic, technical or legal... Indeed there is perhaps no more sublime personal enjoyment of our own work than when we feel its impersonality and detachment from everything subjective in us”¹⁵.

“This objective spirit makes it possible for the work of humanity (*Menschheit*) to preserve its results beyond all individual persons and individual reproductions”¹⁶.

The second aspect of such sublimation is the generalisation that occurs as the object takes its place in the ‘series’ (*Reihe*), (also referred to by Simmel as ‘cultural area’ or ‘world’), in which the subject has inscribed his action, since the object is thus set in relation to nexuses (*Zusammenhänge*) of existing objects.

Such assimilation of objectivation with alienation on the one hand and with objectivity on the other hand was in fact in part bringing Simmel back to Hegel’s notion of objectivation, rather than to Marx’s. As Lucio Colletti has shown, the parameters of the 20th century debate on objectivation, objectification and reification (with Henri Bergson, Georg Lukács and Martin Heidegger as key protagonists) had been largely defined by Hegel’s and Marx’s respective conceptions of alienation: alienation as estrangement and externalisation of the spirit vs. alienation through commodification and wage labour. Colletti argues that the links

¹² Hegel and Marx used both *Enttäusserung* and *Entfremdung* (literally, externalisation and estrangement).

¹³ Simmel, "Tragedy", 408. Translation slightly modified from David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds., *Simmel on culture : selected writings* (London; Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1997), 70.

¹⁴ Simmel, "Tragedy", 385.

¹⁵ Ibid, 391-2.

¹⁶ Simmel, "Main problems of philosophy", 68.

mistakenly established between the two conceptions (in part due to the misreading of Marx's take on Hegel before the 1930 publication of his early *Manuscripts*) had fuelled, in the 20th century quests for a lost unity of human life shared in many quarters (including Marxist ones), the substitution of a critique of reification as the 'product of science and technology' for Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism as a product of capitalism¹⁷. But it must be added that the development of the 'human' and 'cultural' sciences¹⁸, especially in Germany, was tightly related to this question, as their dissociation from the natural sciences meant establishing the bases for a different approach than what was viewed as the mechanizing and stultifying effects of the 'analytical' intellect¹⁹. Indeed, as I have explained in Part I Chapter 1 on the basis of Weber's essays on Knies, there were even calls for a different form of knowledge altogether, through the interpretation of experience (*Erlebnis*) alone and through intuition, as objectivating abstract knowledge was seen as unable to deal with a fundamentally unfathomable and free human personality, or for a psychologist like Hugo Münsterberg, with the human way of immediately being in and committing to the world²⁰. In most cases, however, the irrational bend fuelled by the will to distance the cultural/human from the natural sciences was compounded with the will to establish 'sciences', and the attempt was rather to seek ways of 'fluidifying' (Dilthey) or 'irrigating' (Simmel) the objectivations of knowledge rather than doing away with them.

For his part, Simmel more often referred to 'distancing', 'remoteness' (*Entfernung*), from oneself and from the external world, than to alienation (*Entfremdung*). The object, the product, the thing is placed at a distance from the subjective intent of his creator and in relation to other objects or things of a series: this is not specific of a capitalist production process, and it is not necessarily indicative of the depersonalisation of human relations either. Rather it is significant of the cultural process whereby the mind projects its creations

¹⁷ Colletti, *Marxism and Hegel*, 157-198. Thus, as Lucio Colletti recalls, Lukács discovered in 1930, when the Manuscripts were first published, that Marx had unequivocally criticised Hegel's use of the notion of objectivation and the conflation with alienation: 'I can still remember even today the overwhelming effect produced in me by Marx's statement that objectivity was the primary material attribute of all things and relations'. What derived therefrom was an understanding of the fact that 'objectification is a natural means by which man masters the world... By contrast, alienation is a special variant of that activity that becomes operative in definite social conditions' (From Lukács' introduction to the 1971 edition of *History and Class Consciousness*).

¹⁸ See Part I Chapter I for the definition of – and contrast between – the two notions.

¹⁹ The importance of the questions of reification and alienation for the foundation of German 'sociology' and more widely for the social sciences has been established by Frédéric Vandenberghe. See Frédéric Vandenberghe, *Une histoire critique de la sociologie allemande. aliénation et réification Tome I, Marx, Simmel, Weber, Lukács* [A critical history of German sociology. alienation and reification] (Paris: Éditions la Découverte : MAUSS, 1997). The book has now been published in English as Frédéric Vandenberghe, *A philosophical history of German sociology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

²⁰ Weber, "Roscher and Knies", 70-122.

into the external world, and generalises itself. This much is obvious in Simmel's choice of the term *Objektivierung* (and, to a much lesser extent, *Vergegenständlichung*), which emulates Hegel.

But Simmel's resort to the notion of objectivation also signified, to a certain extent, his distance from Bergson's critique of 'reification' (*chosification*) and of the intellect as that which 'dislikes what is fluid, and solidifies everything it touches' as well as from the neo-Romantic longing (*Sehnsucht*) for the return to 'unity' and 'inwardness'²¹, and this despite an undeniable leaning towards their vision. As we shall see, Simmel's quest for the unity of the personality and its unity with the world is rooted in a vision of original unity and connection with the 'essence' of the 'being of things' and with life, but there can be no life without 'crystallisation' into form ('crystallisation' and 'congealing' are words Simmel took from Bergson, but he uses the former as description of the process, without any pejorative undertone); there can be no life without objective culture, although objective culture needs to be 'irrigated' (*durchströmt*) by life²². What is more, this 'detachment' of contents from the continuity of 'life' in order to cast them into forms whose continuity is organised in 'worlds', is not merely an operation of the 'intellect' of science, but of the mind at large: the same occurs in artistic creation, religious belief, and ethics²³. Indeed the principle underpinning this theory of differentiation of 'worlds', 'cultural areas' or 'series', is that of the human aspiration to finding meaning in the activity itself: 'The human being has reached a stage of existence which stands above purpose. His most authentic value lies in that he can act without a purpose'²⁴. Their autonomy lies in that, as Weber's value spheres,

²¹ Bergson, *L'évolution créatrice*, 50. quoted by Colletti, *Marxism and Hegel*, 157.

²² Simmel, "Form giving in history", 322.

²³ Simmel wrapped up his theory of the worlds in his last book, *Lebensanschauung*. He conceived of five 'ontological worlds' (alongside reality, which is a world as such, these are art, knowledge, religion and *Sollen* – to which he seems to have wanted to add love), corresponding to the 'great functions of the mind', which form our way of apprehending the world according to their own logic. The whole of human experience, which Simmel refers to as '*Weltstoff*' (the fabric of the world), is thus organised and shaped in the world of 'reality' (*Wirklichkeit*) as well as potentially in each of these different worlds: all 'state the whole fabric of the world in their own language'. However, the worlds of 'reality' and that of '*Sollen*' are worlds encompassing the totality of each individual life: therefore contents 'set from an artistic, religious, scientifically perspective' together form an 'experiential series' (*Erlebnisreihe*) respectively in the world of 'the reality of life' but also on that other plane of consciousness, in the world of *Sollen*, in which we articulate our individual lives within the unity of our 'individual law'. Simmel also conceived of the economy as a 'world for itself'. He refers to the economic process as one following 'purely objective, matter-of-fact and technical logics and forms', and to the modern economy as 'opposed with the most ruthless objectivity and demonic violence to the authentic meaning and authentic demands of life'. There is no mention of politics, but 'law' is another of the worlds mentioned. Simmel, "The view of life", 238, 292-3, 346-7.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 248.

they establish their own foundations, that they find their justification in themselves and have their own “‘immanent’ dignity²⁵’.

The role of the money economy for objectivation

What was Simmel’s position with regard to the other pole of the debate on objectivation/reification, i.e. the critique of the modern capitalist economy? In the *Philosophy of Money*, Simmel suggested that money, from ‘absolute means’, had become ‘absolute end’, relegating all values – including ‘wisdom and art, personal significance and strength, indeed beauty and love²⁶ – to means. Thus, money imposes its ‘forms’ (exchange) onto all realms and indeed, as all ‘flux’, seeks to dissolve all other forms:

‘Since the abstract construct that constitutes the value which extracted from things has the form of arithmetical precision and thus absolute rational accuracy, this character must irradiate back on the things themselves. If it is true that the art of an epoch gradually determines the way in which we see nature.... then so too will the superstructure of money relations erected above qualitative reality encroach even more upon the inner image of reality and define it according to its forms.²⁷’

This encroachment, and the resulting ‘levelling through a socio-technical mechanism’²⁸, goes together with ‘counter-tendencies’ bringing about the entrenchment of a closed subjectivity. Simmel went as far as seeing money as ‘the gatekeeper to the innermost, which can now develop within its very own boundaries’:

‘And therefore now that these counter-tendencies have been coined, may they strive for the ideal of absolutely pure separation; where every material content of life becomes ever more matter of fact and impersonal, so that the non-reifiable (*nicht zu verdinglichende*) remainder becomes all the more personal and all the more indisputably the property of the I²⁹.

The latter sparked off Lukács’ ire³⁰, but perhaps wrongly so, if we interpret this tendency strictly as the closure upon the self and the search for one’s own subjectivity pointed out by Simmel (and Weber), as the corollary of the mechanisation of the world: Simmel’s ideal was not one of self-enclosed quest of the personality, even where it led to ‘the subject’s refinement, distinctiveness and turn to the inward (*Verinnerlichung*)³¹’ but, as we shall see, one of unity in objectivation. Thus, in this line of analysis, the money economy encroaches upon all cultural areas and ‘reifies’ them (the quote above is one of the very few occasions

²⁵ Weber, "Value Freedom", 507.

²⁶ Simmel, *Money*, 312.

²⁷ Ibid, 615.

²⁸ Simmel, "Metropolis", 116.

²⁹ Simmel, *Money*, 652.

³⁰ Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971), 156-7.

³¹ Simmel, *Money*, 653.

in which Simmel uses the term³²): what is not reified, what does not become a pure mechanism, is pushed back in the depths of subjectivity. Indeed, as I explained in Part I Chapter 2, Simmel developed in that context an analysis of ‘remoteness’ from oneself which he did not call alienation, but which in effect put forward the consequences of the modern money economy, its encroachments and its bloated material culture, on the inner make up of the personality and the inner movement of the modern soul, in particular in his analysis of ‘blaséness’ (*Blasiertheit*).

But it could be surmised that Simmel’s desire to distance himself from subjectivism and psychologism (or rather to reframe them) led him to relegate, by the same token, an analysis of ‘reification’ which was more specific to the modern money economy, and in fact, although this was not his angle of analysis, to modern capitalism³³. Thus, in the ‘Tragedy of culture’, Simmel explicitly cast aside this explanation:

‘Hence, this discrepancy [between objective and subjective culture] is in no way identical with what is often stressed, namely with the growth of means into the value of ultimate ends, which advanced cultures show at every turn. For that is something purely psychological, an accentuation based on psychic (*seelische*) coincidences or necessities, and without any firm relationship to the objective connections of things. Here however, we are concerned precisely with the latter, with the immanent logic of the cultural formations of things³⁴.

It seems to me that this text, central to Simmel’s thought, presents us with a particular illustration of the confusion pointed out by Colletti (although it takes the shape here of lumping together, rather than confusing, different lines of argument) which is also highly revealing of the rift with Weber’s approach to the logics governing the spheres of human action. Let us take a closer look.

Simmel here constantly interweaves two lines of analysis together, one concerning the logics governing the modes and means of production in most areas of modern culture, including art (division of labour, specialisation, effects of scale and of the supply of specific technical skills and abilities – *das technische Können*³⁵); and the other delineating a phenomenology of objects, whereby, as a result of the dynamic created by objectivation (i.e. the distancing of the ‘material construct’ from the spirit which created it),

³² David Frisby comments on the allegedly frequent use of ‘reification (*Verdinglichung*)’ by Simmel, whereas *Verdinglichung* or terms with the same root only appear 3 times in the CD of Simmel’s works, admittedly all in the *Philosophy of Money*. But Frisby and Bottomore translate the most diverse array of expressions (e.g. *Substanzjierung* – substantialisation, *Verkörperung* – embodiment, *Wirklichkeit* – reality, alongside *Verdinglichung*) as ‘reification’. See Simmel, *Money (en)*, 20.

³³ This hypothesis would need to be substantiated further but I cannot dwell on this here.

³⁴ Simmel, "Tragedy", 410-1. Translation slightly altered from Frisby and Featherstone, eds., *Simmel on culture*, 72.

³⁵ Simmel, "Tragedy", 410.

‘an intellectual meaning (*ein geistiger Sinn*), objective and reproducible for every consciousness, can be tied to a material construct, without being laid by any consciousness but adhering instead to the pure and most inherent facticity of this form³⁶.

As can be seen, Simmel highlights here the intrinsic meaning of objects (and of the ‘worlds’ as ‘series’ of objects), on the one hand, and the intrinsic logics governing their production, on the other hand: the reason why the two are so intermingled in this essay being that Simmel saw the former (the autonomous meaning and ‘validity’ of objects) as building the ‘metaphysical foundation’ for the latter³⁷. So that what are in fact capitalist logics of production (and consumption) appear as the mere modern effect of ‘quite a general human spiritual fate’³⁸.

Weber also grounded the differentiation of the life orders/value spheres in their acquiring a value in themselves: as I have explained in Part II, this generates both inner demands on those engaging in the value sphere and a logic, intrinsic to the life order, which shapes action, whether one wants it or not. Even though the two are intimately linked, the logic acquires, as we have seen, its own momentum and sets out a dynamic of rationalisation, which, however, is not necessarily one of objectivation (as shown by the rationalisation of art forms). Furthermore the structural forms associated with the life orders (public administration, the university, markets, including the markets of artistic production and consumption) also have their own intrinsic logic.

We shall see further below how Simmel’s unitary conception of the ‘cultural areas’ or ‘worlds’ of objects led to a completely different consideration of meaningful ways of being in the world to the stances advocated by Weber. But my more immediate point here is that the resulting subsumption of the analysis of the production process under that of a general dynamic of culture meant that Simmel actually deprived himself of the possibility of further analysing the encroachment of the modern money economy on all cultural areas which the analysis of the relegation of all values by money had afforded him. Thus the attendant portrait of the modern personality, split – as we have seen in Part I Chapter 2 – between adaptation and flight into extreme subjectivism, was not taken up again in the philosophy of culture nor in the philosophy of life³⁹. If the main process to study is not the relegation

³⁶ Ibid, 407.

³⁷ Ibid, 406.

³⁸ Ibid, 408.

³⁹ Yet ultimately I will suggest that Simmel’s emphasis on the ‘moment’ for the lived experience of unification of oneself and unification with life, as against, for example, the commitment of vocation, bore a strange affinity to his understanding of the plight of the personality in the modern money economy.

of all values to the rank of means for the money economy, but the ‘formula of culture’, whereby

‘subjective-psychic energies gain an objective form (*Gestalt*), henceforth independent from the creative life process, and this form, in its turn, is drawn again into subjective life processes in a fashion that brings their carrier to a well-rounded perfection of his central being’⁴⁰,

then the question is not anymore how to ‘withstand the contradictions’ and ‘maintain them alive’ between our adaptation to the supremacy of money and the ‘means’ in which our subjectivity takes refuge⁴¹, but rather the extent to which the formula of culture becomes actualised. For Simmel, this really meant embedding more firmly and explicitly his philosophy of culture in his philosophy of life, and probing into the hindrances to the ‘continuity’ of the ‘flow from subjects to objects to subjects’ – the flow, or stream (here, *Strömung*), always being, in Simmel’s works, a metaphor for life.

II – The all pervasive movement of life

From objectivation to the self-transcendence of life

Simmel’s emphasis on the need to maintain a flowing relation between subjective and objective culture implied to fall neither into pure submission to the ‘mechanism’, as does the ‘fanatic, self enclosed, specialist’, nor into pure absorption into one’s own ‘individual inner development’⁴²: this could strike a chord with Weber’s demand that we should withstand the tension between the intrinsic logic binding our pursuit and the higher tasks and causes orienting them, rather than adapt or take refuge in one or other form of flight from the world. But fostering the capacity to ‘look the fate of the age in its stern face’⁴³, was not what moved Simmel – as Lawrence Scaff, playing with a well known reflection of Weber’s on himself, puts it: ‘Simmel was decidedly “unmusical” in the political sphere’⁴⁴. Rather, any form of tension, any form of struggle in cultural life, is subordinated to a higher perspective of ‘reconciliation’, not in culture – where reconciliation or compromise is as meaningless for Simmel as it is for Weber, but with life. Very early on, Jankélévitch has suggested that the idea of life coloured the whole of Simmel’s work and indeed it can be seen as the idea organising Simmel’s epistemology, his studies in the social sciences and his

⁴⁰ Simmel, "Tragedy", 405.

⁴¹ Simmel, *Money*, 674.

⁴² Simmel, "Tragedy", 399.

⁴³ Weber, "Science", 605.

⁴⁴ Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage*, 125.

philosophy, before finally expressing itself in his metaphysics⁴⁵, and we must understand the tenets of this idea before proceeding further with the analysis of objectivation and personality.

Life is not purely a stream of creative energy, opposed to and stumbling upon the 'forms' shaped by the human spirit, it is in the constant relation and adjustment between the two. Life is constantly expressing itself through form and at the same time bursting out of form and 'reaching out beyond it'⁴⁶. Life seeks its own flow and expansion, it seeks to be 'more life' (*Mehr-Leben*). Simmel seems to have elaborated this notion particularly in his analysis of Nietzsche's philosophy developed in the 1907 essay on *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche* (and which he summed up in the 'Main Problems of Philosophy'– 1910). That life is 'more life' means that in every single episode of life ('even the comparatively more humble and degraded one') there is movement and 'continuous regeneration'⁴⁷. Whereas for Nietzsche, the values, the '*Sollen*' of the overcoming of man, are the direct vehicles for the expansion (i.e. heightening) of life', Simmel preferred to analytically separate the 'forms' created by life as 'more than life' (*Mehr-als-Leben*): their being values in themselves also means that they unfold according to their own intrinsic logic, which can become stifling for life⁴⁸. Hence

⁴⁵ Vladimir Jankélévitch, "Georg Simmel, philosophe de la vie" [Georg Simmel, philosopher of life]. in Georg Simmel. *La Tragédie de la culture et autres essais* (Marseille; Paris: Rivages, 1988 [1925]), 11, 20. Jankélévitch's exact phrase is that 'the idea of life has always exerted a mysterious attraction on Simmel'. On the other hand, *Lebensphilosophie* constituted a powerful current and mood in Germany before, during and after the First World War, and, as suggested above, had formed part of the soil for the development of the 'human' or 'cultural sciences'. Rudolph Weingartner also argued that Simmel's philosophy of life wove together the many threads of his work. Rudolph Herbert Weingartner, *Experience and culture; the philosophy of Georg Simmel* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1962).

⁴⁶ Simmel, "The view of life", 231.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 229.

⁴⁸ Another difference between Nietzsche and Simmel concerns the place of self-preservation in the drive for 'more life'. For Nietzsche, self-preservation is only an indirect result of will to power and 'the struggle for existence is only an exception, a temporary restriction of the will to life', as explained by Carlos Frade, "Europeanism, Philosophical Politics and Political Action" (paper presented at the 'Badiou's Europe vs. Nietzsche's Europe: Emancipatory Politics and Great Politics' Conference, University of Salford (Manchester), October 2007). Conversely it seems that utilitarian and practical interests, or sheer 'physiological self-preservation' are included in that movement and that Simmel does not treat self-preservation as a separate function, but as one of the manifestations of 'more life'. (See Simmel, "The view of life", 229.). In the theory of the emergence and development of the 'worlds', Simmel refers to a state or stage of teleology of life, in which self-preservation is prominent. 'More life' seems to become expressible in a different way only when the worlds have emerged as forms. As noted by Gertrud Kantorowicz, this appears most clearly when Simmel refers to the emancipation of the world of love from 'the biological purposive meaning (*Zwecksinne*) of the life flux'. Gertrud Kantorowicz, "Vorwort zu Georg Simmel: Fragmente und Aufsätze aus dem Nachlass und Veröffentlichungen der letzten Jahre" [Preface to Fragments and essays from the estate and the publications of the last years], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe*. ed. Torge Karlsruhen and Otthein Rammstedt, *Gesamtausgabe* 20 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004 [1923]), 478.

Simmel's use, again in this context, of the notion of *Selbstentfremdung* (remoteness from itself) of life vis-à-vis itself⁴⁹.

'Life' is thus both flux and expansion ('more life') and the movement of transcendence of life into 'more than life'. Simmel used the same term, *Leben*, for life which seeks to expand itself and for the encompassing notion which is both life as expansion and life as form⁵⁰. Thus, whereas he took a relativist, or better said, with François Léger, relational, perspective on life, culture and society⁵¹, there is one absolute, which Simmel unveiled in *Lebensanschauung* but which in truth had pervaded his work much before then, most clearly from the *Philosophy of money* (first published in 1900)⁵²: the absolute principle of the self-transcendence (*Selbsttranszendenz*) of life (and this is the whole subject of Jankélévitch's admirable essay):

'The transcendence of itself [i.e. of life] thus appears as the unified act of building up and breaking through its limits, its other, as the character of its absoluteness... life is from the outset nothing else than a reaching-out-beyond-itself (literally reaching out above itself, *Über-sich-Hinausgreifen*).⁵³

It is this principle, which is itself immanent in life, which puts at a distance Simmel's philosophy of life from that of Bergson (for whom there cannot be anything like 'non-life')⁵⁴, and which, at the same time, differentiates him from the 'secret sceptic' that Heinrich Rickert, for example, suspected him of being due to this relativism⁵⁵. Indeed, this constant movement of form-giving and superseding points to a global harmony, a general balance of life⁵⁶ subsuming these opposite currents.

If 'being and becoming are the most general, formal, and encompassing configuration of the basic dualism that is the pattern of all human being (*menschlichen Wesens*)⁵⁷, it can be

⁴⁹ Simmel, "The view of life", 232.

⁵⁰ This mode of reasoning with encompassing terms subsuming both a restricted version of themselves and their reversal is very characteristic of Simmel's thought.

⁵¹ Léger, *The thought of Georg Simmel*, 25.

⁵² The *Philosophy of Money* is Simmel's most voluminous and structured book. I agree with F. Léger that it contains *in nuce* all the posterior themes of Simmel's thought, including his philosophy of culture and his metaphysics. Ibid, 114.

⁵³ Simmel, "The view of life", 228, 233.

⁵⁴ Jankélévitch, "Georg Simmel". 68-70. Léger remarks that this also shows the limits of the influence of Hegel's concept of objective spirit on Simmel, since objectivation is not inherent in the dynamic of the Idea but in the dynamic of life. Léger, *The thought of Georg Simmel*, 303.

⁵⁵ Letter to Heinrich Rickert, 15 April 1916. Georg Simmel, *Briefe 1912-1918 ; Jugendbriefe*, Otthein Rammstedt and Angela Rammstedt ed., *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 23 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008), 637.

⁵⁶ Jankélévitch, "Georg Simmel". 41.

⁵⁷ Georg Simmel, "Schopenhauer und Nietzsche. Ein Vortagszyklus" [Schopenhauer and Nietzsche], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 10 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 402.

argued, with Gertrud Kantorowicz, that the idea of the self-transcendence of life was Simmel's own metaphysical response to that disjuncture, one which united, in one single 'unified act' the poles of being and becoming:

“The transcendence of life”, this reversal of itself, is, at the same time, life's inborn drive, its immanent necessity. Life brings forth, as an identical function, movement infinitely becoming and its transformation into being⁵⁸.

Thus the self-transcendence of life into form was the way in which Simmel accounted for the unavoidability, indeed for the necessity, of mediation for human expression. Not only is reification due to the production process embedded in cultural objectivation. Cultural objectivation itself is embedded in the dynamic and movement of life⁵⁹, and the transformation of the restless subjectivity into a fixed cultural objectivation of itself is in fact the translation, onto the plane of culture, of the transformation of life into form.

Implications of Simmel's philosophy of life for the possibility of personality: the notion of Erleben

Whereas it is difficult to imagine, in Simmel's conceptualisation of self-transcendence as the absolute of life, how life as a whole could cease creating forms and then bursting out of them to create new ones, this movement can become blocked in culture, that is to say, in Simmel's understanding, it can cease to nourish the development of personality, and lead to accumulative 'objective culture' rather than to 'cultural value'⁶⁰. New objects are constantly created in modern culture but they remain 'tangential' to the 'cultural development of lively human beings'⁶¹. How is this to be understood?

The formulation of this disjuncture is in fact predicated on three key premises of Simmel's thought, which also underpin the difference with Weber's thought on personality, life conduct and the life orders. These premises are: Simmel's conception of personality as unity and his affirmation of the possibility of personality; his conception of the relation between the individual and the 'worlds' as a face to face between subjective and objective logics; and the idea that only 'life' can nourish 'life' in culture. Let us review each of these

⁵⁸ Kantorowicz, "Preface to Fragments", 474. Translation slightly modified from Gertrud Kantorowicz, "Preface to Georg Simmel's Fragments, Posthumous Essays, and Publications of his last years", in *Georg Simmel, 1858-1918: A Collection of Essays, with Translations and a Bibliography* (Ohio State University Press, 1959), 4.

⁵⁹ As is made clear by the take up of the relations between subjective and objective culture in his outline of the formation and dynamic of the 'worlds'. Simmel, "The view of life", 255-6.

⁶⁰ Guy Oakes, "Introduction". in Georg Simmel. *Essays on interpretation in social science* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 20-1.

⁶¹ Simmel, "Tragedy", 411.

premises in turn before comparing them with Weber's own stance and turning to their implications.

First, personality, for Simmel, is the unity of life at the individual level: 'the organism is given as unity from the very beginning, first and most decisively in the full consciousness of one's own personality'⁶². Simmel grounded this unity in an 'ideal plan', or 'ideal programme' of 'core forces', which are there from the beginning, but which only actualise themselves through interactions with the world. Personality develops 'from the closed unity to the deployed multiplicity and finally the deployed unity'⁶³. Only the mediation of objectivation, and objects, can bring about the full deployment of one's 'core forces', and, through that transcendence of oneself, to another, more profound, form of unity – not only with oneself but, as we shall see, with 'life' and its movement. This is why (and this brings us to the other two premises) the possibility of personality, i.e. the possibility of unity, is rarely achieved.

Secondly, the process of objectivation is one, as we have seen, of transformation of human subjectivity, which Simmel posits as having its own intrinsic logic, into an objectivated form, these forms constituting 'series' or 'worlds' which, once autonomous, unfold according to their own intrinsic logic only. As explained above, the worlds are not themselves spheres of tension, as Simmel conceptualised their intrinsic logics as emanating directly from their immanent value. The tension arises in the creation, and indeed in the appropriation of cultural contents, when the subjective logic confronts and is confronted by the objective logics of the worlds.

Thirdly, the possibility of personality (and hence the possibility of culture) is made dependent on modes of re-subjectivation in which objects can be nourishing for the individuality as a whole⁶⁴. For Simmel, as for many of the scholars of the 'human' and 'cultural sciences', a lifeless object can bring no such full nourishment: life nourishes life, spirit nourishes spirit, individuality nourishes individuality⁶⁵. Only an object which in one way or another is still endowed with the movement, the individuality of its creator, can conceivably address other individualities as a whole. But this is only possible if the objectivation process mobilises not only the particular capacities of the creating 'subject'

⁶² Simmel, "The view of life", 364.

⁶³ Simmel, "Tragedy", 387. See also Simmel, *Money*, 624.

⁶⁴ Simmel, "Tragedy", 414.

⁶⁵ This is not the same as saying that only like understands like. As I had suggested already in Part I Chapter I, neither Dilthey nor Simmel ground understanding in mere identification and empathy.

but also his personality as a whole, the movement and meaning of his life, prior to, or beyond, the subject/object divide. A unified, immediate and yet dynamic mode of relation to the world must thus be posited, of which we have seen in Part I Chapter 1 that it has been at the heart of the epistemological debates concerning the specificity of the human as well as social and cultural sciences: *Erleben* (or *Erlebnis*), i.e. lived experience and the modalities of its mobilisation in human objectivation must be unravelled.

Drawing on his studies of great artists (in particular on Goethe and Rembrandt), it is in his article on 'Form giving in history', first published in *Logos* in 1918, that Simmel spelled out most clearly the idea of an undifferentiated, undivided 'expression of our wholly primary relation to the world' as *Erleben* and generalised it to a state (*Zustand*) which could 'persist alongside' the state of differentiation of subjects and objects:

'As for lived experience (*Erleben*), we may well describe it as the response of our total existence (*Gesamtexistenz*), drawn from much wider and very fundamental layers, to the being-there (*Dasein*) of things; as our side of the relation between the object and the totality or unity of our being. In 'lived experience' (*Erleben*), life, that most intransitive of all concepts, is set in an immediate functional connection with objectivity, and this in a unique mode, through which the activity and passivity of the subject, indifferent to the fact that they logically exclude each other, combine in unity'⁶⁶.

Lived experience appears thus as the primary, undivided mode of relation of 'total existence' to the world, but it also has a particular 'connection with objectivity', that is to say it is already a mode of self-transcendence of life even though not through the mediation of an object⁶⁷. This means that *Erleben* is not just a closed stage of unity which would only remain in our consciousness as an object of longing, but that its reach extends into culture (and individual cultivation): lived experience is what provides our apprehension of the world with 'meaning and movement, ensoulment (*Beseelung*) and development'⁶⁸, as distinct from the apprehension of the world through *Erkennen* (knowledge) and *Erfahrung* (experience as learning).

Personality as actualised unity is rarely achieved – except in the figure of the genius, who, in the image of Goethe, 'possesses [and maintains] that original unity of the subjective and the objective'⁶⁹, and thus objectivates himself in ways which fully connect with his intimate *Erleben* of the world. Indeed Simmel's mature philosophical work can be read as a parallel exploration into the unifying objectivations of great artistic personalities, each in their very

⁶⁶ Simmel, "Form giving in history", 321-2.

⁶⁷ This formulation will become clearer when I address Simmel's 'discovery', in his study on Rembrandt, of the 'you' as primary category, and thus as already present in *Erleben*.

⁶⁸ Simmel, "Form giving in history", 331-2.

⁶⁹ Simmel, "Tragedy", 397-8.

specific way, and the fragmenting modes of objectivation usually at work in the modern money economy and in modern culture (this is the theme of the ‘Style of Life’, the last chapter of the *Philosophy of Money*; of the ‘Metropolis and mental life’; and of the ‘Tragedy of Culture’); and in fact inherent in the human fate altogether (as emerges from Simmel’s later philosophical pieces, in the philosophy of history and in *Lebensanschauung*):

‘The human personality is, on the one hand, felt as a microcosm – i.e. as the reverse image of the unique and absolute totality (*Ganzheit*) – but on the other hand as the most fragmentary that can be thought of, a bundle of fortuitous psychic events blown in by nature and history from all directions of the winds; the radical character of the demand of unity upon us brings out, precisely, how far we are from being ‘wholes’ (*Ganzen*), up to the longing for a post-existential “completion”.⁷⁰

In opposition to the conception of the personality as originally and potentially unified, Weber’s conceptualisation of the life orders and value spheres as themselves pervaded by tensions placed the human being immediately, and so to speak from the start, in a world of conflict which could only be avoided or faced as such.

If there was a state of unity of human life and the world, it could only have corresponded to a mode of organic, still undifferentiated, life which pertained to a historically revoluted age. As we know, Weber’s own presupposition for the cultural sciences is that man, as cultural being (*Kulturmensch*), is able and willing to ‘adopt a stance towards the world, and lend it meaning’⁷¹. But by definition the *Kulturmensch* is not a pre-cultural human being, and these ability and willingness are possibilities in culture, which are or are not actualised. Hence the notion of *Erleben* cannot have any privileged status, either for the approach taken in the cultural sciences⁷² or for the conception of the personality.

Furthermore, he conceived of the possibility of such undivided experience of the world in moments preceded and prepared by intense intellectual activity: as we have seen in the analysis of Weber’s response to the mystical leanings of his audience in the ‘Science’ lecture, he also contested the privileged status of particular spheres of human action for their alleged conduciveness to such experience. Thus there is a distinctive ‘lived experience of science’ which arises in analytical intellectual activity, akin to ‘intoxication’ and thus a

⁷⁰ Simmel, "Form giving in history", 340-1.

⁷¹ Weber, "Objectivity", 150, 180.

⁷² Even though, as we have seen in Part I Chapter I, Weber accepts that lived experience is a first stage in the formulation of judgments.

comparable depth of ‘conscious lived experience of irrational contents’ as other, less rationalised, orders⁷³.

Finally, in the same way as it totally discourages any continued reference to a hypothetical pre-cultural or pre-scientific immediacy of man to the world, Weber’s theory of the life orders and value spheres could not possibly include any sphere of unification through personality. Personality can only be characterised by the permanency of commitment and of the direction of one’s endeavours and, from the point of view of the individual, is better conceived of, as we know, as a possible consequence of such constancy than as a goal of its own right.

Hence it is Weber’s study of the possibility of life conduct which must be compared with Simmel’s analysis of the possibility of personality, that is to say, the possibility of unity of the personality and it is to such comparison that I will turn to in the rest of this chapter.

III – Objectivation and the possibility of personality

The longing for personality and the impossibility of vocation in modern culture

In view of the characterisation of culture as synthesis between subjectivity and the objects, those ‘spirits’ or intellectuals who ‘create lasting contents, i.e. the objective element of culture’ were of particular interest to Simmel, as men of vocation were for Weber: indeed, under these terms, they designated the same or similar men – ‘the founder of a religion and the artist, the statesman and the inventor, the scholar and the legislator’. In the same way as Weber’s vocational men reach out beyond the everyday towards the impossible whilst meeting the demand of the day, and thus maintain alive the dignity of each value sphere and ultimately the possibility of human liberty, Simmel’s ‘creative spirits’ mobilise their inner creative forces whilst utterly submitting to the demands of the objective task: in both cases there is passion (*Leidenschaft*) and devotion (*Hingabe*), in both cases there is also a form of elevation over oneself⁷⁴.

In the *Philosophy of Money*, Simmel defined the ‘professional classes’ by the fact that they ‘place their productivity in contents far beyond all economic movement’⁷⁵. They roughly correspond, as a class, to the cultural role of the ‘creative spirits’: Simmel also characterised

⁷³ Weber, "Science", 589. Weber, "IR", 571.

⁷⁴ Simmel, "Tragedy", 397. Weber, "Science", 592.

⁷⁵ Simmel, *Money*, 416.

them as 'seeking the thing in itself' (*die Sache suchen*). It is the money economy which allowed for the emergence of such classes in the first place: in detaching property from status and rendering it mobile, the money economy also cut the links between certain intellectual or creative activities, involving one's 'being', and property-owning ('having'), thus contributing to the development of such activities as professional activities of their own right⁷⁶.

But, on the other hand, the money economy fosters 'freedom from' – not 'freedom to'⁷⁷. It is inimical to any mobilisation of intelligence for other tasks than calculation and the pursuit of material interest. In principle, the money economy, which thrives on the intellect, its 'indifference' and 'objectivity', should not interfere with the other components of our personality: in principle therefore, the fact that money and intelligence 'lack character' does not necessarily imply that character is impossible, understanding by 'character' that 'commitment to an individual mode of existence as distinct from and excluding any other'⁷⁸. Yet the intellect needs to retain its neutral properties, an intellect 'without qualities' so to speak⁷⁹. The type of one-sided conduct of life implied by 'character' would, precisely, harness all the components of one's personality, including the intellect, in a certain direction, and thus deprive the intellect from its 'neutrality' and availability as carrier of the objectivity of the money economy within our selves.

Occupations and professions (*Berufe*) are life contents which, precisely, provide a certain 'determination and colouring' to life: far from relying only on labour power, on pure energy, they shape the material of life into 'objective forms and a decisiveness of activity'. 'Colouring' is an essential term here (and it is quite a frequent term for Simmel): it points, precisely, to the orientation given to the whole of life's material by a specific activity – it is akin to value but perhaps allows for a more diffuse notion. In the same way as Weber argues that the characteristics of factory work and discipline contribute to the shaping of a 'life form' for workers, Simmel puts forward that even the most unskilled work cannot be

⁷⁶ As we have seen, Weber also has a concept of the 'professionals' – but precisely roots it in part in property-ownership, not as status but as economic advantage (see above part II chapter 4).

⁷⁷ Georg Simmel, "Anhang: Philosophie des Geldes (Selbstanzeige)" [Annex: author's notice for the Philosophy of money], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989 [1901]).

⁷⁸ Simmel, *Money*, 432. As can be seen, character for Simmel comes close to Weber's notion of personality.

⁷⁹ More precisely, Simmel describes the intellect as 'lacking character', and compares it to money. But he does refer to money as something 'without qualities'. Austin Harrington has drawn the attention on the Simmelian traits of Ulrich, the main character in Musil's novel. Interestingly, Musil had attended Simmel's lectures. See Austin Harrington, "Knowing the social world through literature: sociological reflections on Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*", *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 5, no. 1 (2002): 53-4.

completely 'colourless', or else the unions in England would not have tried to organise it. '*Beruf*' implies the 'a priori determination of life contents', all the more so if one has a 'calling', a vocation, which Simmel defines as 'that firm ideal line between the person and a life content'⁸⁰. It is, as such, one of the manifestations of 'character' and opposed to the 'levelling by money'.

Crucially, in such an occupational or professional frame, the intellect takes the form of 'prudence' (*Klugheit*), that is to say that it is 'tied to the norms of the task or idea'. But the kind of intelligence fostered and demanded by the money economy is an intelligence 'set free' from such ties, which, in those unspecific occupations particularly characteristic of the 'highest point of monetary circulation' ('agents', 'intermediaries'), can even be described as 'shrewdness'. Shrewdness is a form of intelligence which, contrary to 'prudence', is 'unreservedly put to the service of the personal interest of the moment'. The 'colourlessness' of both money and the intellect in the modern money economy has 'become the colour of certain occupational contents' – such as the kind of occupations just mentioned. This 'colouring' is that of self-interest exclusively. Designating it as 'colouring' is unsurprising given, Simmel's unravelling, in the *Philosophy of Money*, of the status of money as ultimate end, and hence as value, as we have seen above.

Money dissolves all intrinsic values and all forms, reduces everything to a continuous flow, to undistinguishable and scattered matter within a unique purposive chain, which also means that

'clearly, the personality creates new units of life with the material thus shaped, that is to say rather, not shaped, and obviously operates with greater independence and variability by comparison with the earlier situation of tighter solidarity with existing units'⁸¹.

This scattering thus suggests that categories such as vocation, and their determinacy of content, may be seen as too fixed for the shifting of 'taste, style, opinions and personal relationships'⁸² favoured by the mobility of money.

Weber was of course himself very much persuaded of the obsolete character of the notion of vocation once all spirit other than that of adaptation had been expelled from the economic sphere⁸³. This however did not prevent him from querying the possibility of

⁸⁰ Simmel, *Money*, 597. The English translation misses the reference to the calling and translates '*Berufesein*' (literally: to be called) as 'professional existence'. Simmel, *Money (en)*, 433.

⁸¹ Simmel, *Money*, 366.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Wilhelm Hennis quotes Weber's views on the notion of *Beruf* already in 1982, when, replying to a critic of his friend Paul Göhre's book *Three Months in a Workshop*, 'asks in reply whether his critic is properly

vocation in an existential sense. But where Weber associated vocation with the inner commitment to cope with the tension inevitably besetting the deployment of one's pursuit, the split of the creative personality which Simmel saw as being implied in vocation as a form of objectivation, led him to discard this notion in his reflection on the possibilities of unification of the personality.

Simmel's conception of creation as the 'discharge' of 'essential forces', for which day to day work is of course required but is not constitutive, and secondly, his conception of worlds (or 'sub-worlds') exclusively through their intrinsic logics, means that he situates the tension exclusively between passion and the creative spirit of personality on the one hand and strict adaptation to the intrinsic logic of the specific 'world' of engagement on the other. Creation is thus placed in front of a paradox and disjuncture:

In the case of the founder of a religion and the artist, the statesman and the inventor, the scholar and the legislator, there is a double process at work: the discharge of their essential forces (*Wesenskräfte*), the elevation of their nature to the height at which they release the contents of cultural life – and passion for the task (*Leidenschaft für die Sache*) whose accomplished intrinsic logic makes the subject become indifferent to itself and obliterated⁸⁴.

Whereas, for Weber, vocation (and more generally life conduct) only arises in fields of tension, for Simmel, full and lively interaction between subjectivities and the objective worlds can only take place through a particular mode of objectivation of individuality (and, conversely, resubjection of objects), in certain worlds and sub-worlds: indeed, Simmel conceived of 'worlds' as various 'cases of objectivation of life'⁸⁵ (even though of course, and as will be seen presently, there are variations within each 'world' according to the creator, or the approach taken). In any case, no such interaction can be conceived of when the 'intrinsic logic' is a logic of mechanisation, indifferent for its realisation to the individuality of its carriers – whether they are involved in production or in reception: such logic 'still consumes the forces of the subjects, still draws subjects into its orbit, without elevating them to their own height'⁸⁶.

aware "of the anachronism implicit in this assignment of men and women to fixed professional categories at a time when a steadily increasing proportion of the population is losing a sense of a profession so defined, a sense which moreover the economic upheavals of today dictate *must* be lost'. Hennis, *Central Question*, 90.

⁸⁴ Simmel, "Tragedy", 397.

⁸⁵ Simmel, "The view of life", 296. The extent to which any 'world' at all can escape being a mechanism is unclear in the 'Tragedy of culture', which abounds in paradoxical statements. Only art seems to finally escape this, as it is art where 'the creation preserves the creator in his uniqueness most'. Simmel, "Tragedy", 414. But Simmel elsewhere clearly highlights history, philosophy, religion, the world of *Sollen* and love as able to convey and grasp individuality (e.g. in his later essays on *Rembrandt*, on 'Form-giving in history' and the 'nature of historical understanding', and in *Lebensanschauung*).

⁸⁶ Simmel, "Tragedy", 411. The translation provided by M. Ritter and D. Frisby has 'without elevating them to its own height'. This is grammatically possible but not very likely from the point of view of

Objectivation of oneself in art

Thus there are ultimately two types of interaction between the individual and the external world for Simmel: interactions (objectivations and re-subjectivations⁸⁷) which engage the whole human being, as creator or as self-cultivating individual, and interactions which only need to mobilise analytical understanding, and thus, in performing their works, contribute to further the divides in modern culture without any possibility that they could proceed otherwise. He found instances of the former objectivation path especially in his studies of art and great artistic personalities, from Michel-Angel to Rembrandt and Rodin, from Goethe to Stefan George, and it is his understanding of that process in art which made him attentive to the possibility of similar processes in other 'worlds'⁸⁸. As suggested in Part I Chapter 1, Simmel also identified such modes of objectivation in the practice of history and philosophy, but here I will focus on his analysis of the process in art as this can be considered the matrix for Simmel's conception of objectivation of personality.

Simmel's studies of art display, each time under a very specific and personal guise, a process of generalisation (*Verallgemeinerung*)⁸⁹ of the individuality of the creator as a whole, whereby creation has life and can thereby 'sweep the observer along', also as a whole person⁹⁰: a process, thus, of vitalistic objectivation and re-subjectivation, which is predicated upon the personality of the creator and is nourishing for the whole personality of the receiver.

Simmel explained this process in a particularly precise fashion in his study on Rembrandt. There he unveils the painter's animation of his figures from within, this breathing of life into their whole appearance, a life which is completely theirs – it is not a projection of the

meaning, since the process at issue in the essay is the growth of the individual according to his own path. Objects are there to nourish this development, not so as to raise individuals to their height.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 408.

⁸⁸ Simmel's theory of 'ontological worlds' (see footnote 23 above), placed on an equal ontological footing with 'reality', allowed him to look for the transcendence of the subject/object divide in all these worlds without privileging everyday experience and the 'external praxis of life', and without considering this merely as 'salvation from' reality, but as a unified mode of apprehension of the world in its own right. Simmel, "The view of life", 242.

⁸⁹ The generalisation I refer to here concerns the personality of the creator, not the represented figures. Simmel is critical of types and general characters in painting – which place the viewer in a position of external observer of a recognizable style (types are, according to Simmel, characteristic of classical Italian painting in the Renaissance, which he sets, so to speak, as an ideal type against what he sees as the German spirit of individuality in painting, as represented e.g. by Rembrandt). This contrast is developed in a particularly systematic way in the essay on Rembrandt. See also Georg Simmel, "Germanischer und klassisch-romanischer Stil" [Germanic and classical-romanic style], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe*. ed. Klaus Latzel 13 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000 [1918]). Georg Simmel, "Germanic and classical-romanic style", *Theory Culture and Society* 24, no. 7-8 (2007).

⁹⁰ Simmel, "Rembrandt", 407.

painter's life, except in the self-portraits – but a life which is nonetheless instilled by the painter himself. This process is one of transformation of the whole personality of the painter into the personality of the painted figure. It is therefore necessarily a process rooted in *Erleben*, not in any kind of rationalised apprehension of oneself and the others. But *Erleben*, as we have seen, precedes any division between subject and object: how could the life of another being be completely felt and experienced by the painter, how can he lend his life energies to this other life?

Simmel is led there to make a very daring hypothesis, which nonetheless is implicit in all his analyses of great artists: the artist's faculty to objectivate himself in that way, i.e., his faculty to transform the most individual and intimate into the general, can only be envisaged if the 'you' is a primary category, that can be experienced in an immediate way, through *Erleben*⁹¹. In other words, there is a mode of consciousness of the I and the you prior to the consideration of oneself as subject (but which can be maintained once one has become a subject), a way in which the you, the 'not-I', can be 'represented' within oneself as an 'I for itself':

‘This you is not merely an external impression on the I, as trees and the clouds are. It is inwardly closer than that which is only a content of the soul without being a soul itself, and at the same time further away, because the you cannot simply be addressed as *my representation*, but rather must be thought of as a true being-for-itself. In short, the you is probably quite a primary category, which is only to be experienced (*zu erlebende*) directly, that cannot be traced back further’⁹².

This is a crucial hypothesis, since it allows for *Erleben* not to be a static experience of immediate connection with the world (as that which Simmel had associated with the feminine absolute) and rather to constitute a full experience of the world which can ground a different mode of apprehension than that afforded by the divide subject/object. Simmel does not say, like Goethe, that the same spirit breathes through subjects and objects and that it is this identity which makes it possible for us to objectivate ourselves without losing ourselves⁹³. Rather he posits difference in the condition of *Erleben*: without this hypothesis, the consideration of *Erleben* as a dynamic state in which life already self-transcends itself

⁹¹ In 'How is society possible', Simmel had put forward the 'fact of the you' as a sociological a-priori: 'we feel the you as something independent from our representation, something which is for-itself, exactly as our own existence'. But Simmel puts this forward as an a-priori precisely in order to highlight the conditions of representation in society and the impossibility of knowing the other completely. Simmel, *Sociology*, 45.

⁹² Simmel, "Rembrandt", 338.

⁹³ 'There is no need for performing the unification of the inner form and external matter [contrary to Kant] – "for what is inside is outside". This is however possible because it is *one and the same* life, the life of divine nature'. Georg Simmel, "Kant und Goethe" [Kant and Goethe], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 10 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995 [1906/1916]), 134.

would have remained obscure⁹⁴. Here Simmel was going further in the sort of ‘determination’ pre-figured in the state of *Erleben* than Heinrich Rickert, who, as Ernst Orth explains, posited in his 1921 *System of Philosophy* the distinction between the ‘I’ and the ‘not-I’ (as an opposition which can never be fully synthesised)⁹⁵. The ‘determinations’ there seem to concern the I and its relation to everything else – the not-I – rather than the I and the you.

Generalisation, and therefore objectivation⁹⁶, can be grounded in *Erleben* because there is already there a possibility of transcendence of one’s own boundaries, not through the creation of a form, the positing of an object, but through the perception of another’s life as a whole. As does the actor, we all can do:

‘We can think, speak, and act *from within the soul of another*; i.e. elaborate such constructions as are only possible in a soul (whatever its body), but what our soul now provides for this creation is so to speak only the dynamic, and no longer the I which itself feels as its authentic, qualitative, personal I’⁹⁷.

The ‘viewer’ is thus ‘swept along’ through his own *Erlebnis* of the work of art, not through any ‘identification’ with the represented figure or with that of the artist, but rather a ‘melting into’, ‘empathy’ and ‘intuition’ of the ‘life process’ as such:

‘The grasping of the totality encompasses... a melting of the self (*Sich-einschmelzen*), an empathy (*Sich-einfühlen*), that, in the moment of contemplation, allows the subject-object setting to be immersed into the greater indivisibility of intuition’... ‘The sensed individual uniqueness of a resulting specific appearance of the surface phenomenon of a life [NB in a Rembrandt portrait] is only a synonym or a symbol for the fact that its process of becoming is invested in it; that the life process, as such a single, unmistakable, series of events, always only a being-in-itself, is what is really seen in this given [appearance].’⁹⁸

It is this immediate connection with the pulse of the life process as such which, as we shall see, is conducive to the perception of one’s unity as personality.

⁹⁴ Of course this solution itself raises questions, since *Erleben* is a state of immediate, unified relation to the world, in which therefore we must accept that a certain mode of perception of difference is nevertheless possible. François Léger also discusses the importance of this hypothesis for Simmel and the questions it raises. He draws attention on the parallel with Husserl’s questioning and own hypothesis (‘if, “really”, all monad is an absolutely bounded and closed unity, the unreal, intentional penetration of the other in my primary sphere is not unreal in the sense of a dream or fantasy. It is being in intentional communion with being. It is a link which, by principle, is sui generis, an effective communion, that which precisely is the transcendental condition for the existence of a world, a world of men and things’. From the 5th of the *Cartesian Meditations*, quoted by Léger. Léger, *The thought of Georg Simmel*, 279.

⁹⁵ Ernst Wolfgang Orth, "Preface". in Heinrich Rickert. *Science de la culture et science de la nature* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), XI.

⁹⁶ Let us not forget that generalisation – through the inscription of an object in a series – is a condition for objectivation. I understand Simmel’s reasoning here as the consideration of the translation of one’s anima into another being as starting point for generalisability.

⁹⁷ Simmel, "Rembrandt", 338.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 396,8. Translation slightly altered from Simmel, *Rembrandt (en)*, 67-8.

As I have said, the modes of objectivation in art are different for each artist and Simmel's studies of artistic personalities each time set out their own very specific manner, although he also conceived of modes of objectivation common to a 'style' (e.g. Italian Renaissance). But it can also be seen that Simmel was attracted to certain artists and their art for their resonance with his other pursuits – in particular the unravelling of the kinds of objectivations performed in the human and cultural sciences, in philosophy, as well as his exploration of ethics in a frame of philosophy of life. As we shall see, the Rembrandt essay was an important stage for the latter, particularly the analysis of 'old' Rembrandt⁹⁹. Similarly, the kind of objectivation performed in Stefan George's poetry is reminiscent of the abstraction and distillation of life which Simmel saw as characteristic of sociology (and indeed of sociability, as example of 'pure... form of the being together, [as] strict societal process'¹⁰⁰); whilst his philosophy of history of the last years seemed to oscillate, as indeed his philosophy of life in general, between Rembrandtian objectivation, in which it is the pulse of a whole individual life which is made to beat in the objectivated creation, and Rodinian objectivation, in which all individuality becomes blurred and it is the pulse and movement of life as such which fills in forms from within.

The impossibility of life conduct for the Simmelian individual and the notion of individual law: objectivation in the world of Sollen

Let us now return to the face to face, so to speak, between the subjectivity of the individual and the objectivity of the 'worlds'. As explained, this direct relation between the intrinsic logic of individual subjectivity and those of the objective worlds meant that Simmel had to conceive of a world of integration of the personality, whereas Weber's conception of the ethics of life conduct located the pursuit of a cause in specific life orders, without any cross-cutting realm which would have been very contrary to the idea of the struggle of the gods. As will presently be seen, Simmel's idea of that 'world' (the world of *Sollen*) and its logic (that of the individual law, springing from and constantly renewed through, life itself) is very specific and its Goethean and vitalist inspiration places it under a very different light from the conceptions of a separate ethical sphere, as those entertained for example by

⁹⁹ As highlighted by Alan Scott and Helmut Staubmann, Simmel 'used his intellectual engagement with art as a sort of treasure trove for his theoretical concerns'. He explicitly referred to this, on one occasion by 'borrowing a formulation by the poet Friedrich Schiller ...: "Through the morning door of beauty you entered the land of knowledge".' Alan Scott and Helmut Staubmann, "Editors' introduction". in Georg Simmel. *Rembrandt: an essay in the philosophy of art* (New York: Routledge, 2005), xii.

¹⁰⁰ Georg Simmel, "Soziologie der Geselligkeit" [Sociology of sociability], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 12 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001 [1911]), 178.

Michels and Tönnies¹⁰¹. Yet what matters here is that it is a plane of realisation of the unity of life for the individual, as life as a whole takes precedence over its individual contents, and therefore a plane of reconciliation (or rather search for it), which, ultimately, is what Weber criticised ethics and the pretension to 'ethical culture' for. Whereas Weberian life conduct juggles inwardly and externally with the tensions inner to a sphere, and between that sphere and the others, it is the unity of the life process what is at stake for Simmel's individual.

It is the temporal dimension of the life course which provided Simmel with the key for the integration of individual lives. In his essay 'On the metaphysics of death' (1910), which he then developed in chapter III of *Lebensanschauung*, Simmel posited that death, far from being only the instant of the end of our life, an event symbolised by the scissors of the third Parca (Fate), shapes our lives from the beginning and throughout¹⁰². We are constituted as an 'I', as a whole, as a 'particular fragment of the world', with 'essence and value, rhythm and so to speak inner meaning', 'from the beginning, and yet not in the full sense'¹⁰³, for this interplay of life and death at each moment of our lives accrues as our lives unfold: Simmel posits here every single human life as having its own inner dynamism, its own 'consistency' as opposed to the consistencies of the 'worlds'. Thus, whilst the interaction between the subjective and objective logics takes place in each 'world' (which can shape the whole of the world's matter into forms according to their own logic) and whilst individual lives are the succession of moments of actualisation of the objective logic of the worlds as they unfold in the world of 'reality' (*Wirklichkeit*)¹⁰⁴, there is also a plane in which an individual life itself takes its meaning as a whole, is given form and objectivated into personality: the plane, or 'world', of '*Sollen*'¹⁰⁵.

Meaning ascends from one's life and has a temporal dimension; it becomes more visible as life passes by,

¹⁰¹ See Chapter 7.

¹⁰² Heidegger took up this conception of death in *Being and Time*.

¹⁰³ Georg Simmel, "Zur Metaphysik des Todes" [Metaphysics of death], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe*. ed. Rüdiger Kramme and Angela Rammstedt 12 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001 [1910]), 87.

¹⁰⁴ Simmel, "Form giving in history", 332-3. This is true in particular of those worlds which are the historical manifestations of ontological spheres and which 'to a certain extent surround us, in their ideal drafts, and which, in every act of mental productivity (*geistige Produktivität*), we seem to discover and conquer rather than create'. Simmel, "The view of life", 243.

¹⁰⁵ The world of '*Sollen*' is amongst the four (or five, with love) ontological worlds distinguished by Simmel. *Sollen*, the term of the categorical imperative in Kant, is usually translated in the English translations of Kant as 'ought to'. I will keep *Sollen* in the text, since in this way it is clearer that Simmel is elaborating on Kant's notion so as to transform it.

‘to the effect that the I gathers itself more purely in itself, that it works its way out of all the flow of the contingencies of lived contents, and develops itself with ever more security and independently from these, according to its own meaning and idea’¹⁰⁶.

Contrary to any notion of *Sollen* as an heteronomous law that one confronts with one’s real life and in which one’s life is transformed into discrete acts, each susceptible of moral scrutiny¹⁰⁷, Simmel’s notion is the meaning emanating from the ‘totality of life’ itself. Every single moment is not considered from the perspective of the meaning of its contents anymore, but from the perspective of its meaning for the unity of an individual life as a whole. Indeed every single moment is part of the continuity of life as a whole: it contains in itself all those moments which have led to it but also the anticipation of the future ones, since, as Simmel remarks, our perception of the present can never be only of the strict present instant but always spans in the past and future: the time of individual life has its own pace and duration:

‘The subjectively *lived* life... feels itself, no matter whether logically justified or not, as something real in a temporal dimension. Common usage indicates this, if in an inexact and superficial way, by understanding under “present” never the bare punctuality of its conceptual sense, but always including a bit of the past and a somewhat smaller bit of the future...’¹⁰⁸

The temporality of the world of *Sollen* is deployed in the moment as such and over life as a whole¹⁰⁹ and is thus very much opposed to the temporality of Weberian life conduct and its ‘demand of the day’ which the vocational subject inscribes in a finalised pursuit. Simmel’s coupling of moments with life as a whole does not only occur through our perception of ‘life [as] an irreversible current in which each moment dissolves into the next’¹¹⁰, but also through the demand that we should consider each moment as encapsulating our life as a whole. In this way, each moment must reach ‘generality’ (*Allgemeinheit*)¹¹¹, which is how Simmel envisages the possibility of an ‘objectivity of the individual’¹¹². If every moment

¹⁰⁶ Simmel, "Metaphysics of death", 87.

¹⁰⁷ Simmel constructs his idea of individual law against the heteronomy of Kant’s universal moral law. See Léger, *The thought of Georg Simmel*, 314-6.

¹⁰⁸ Simmel, "The view of life", 218. Georg Simmel, *On individuality and social forms; selected writings*, Donald N. Levine ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 359.

¹⁰⁹ The moment of ‘adventure’ is the most intensive exemplification of the double meaning of each moment in life: it is at once entirely ‘for itself’, completely cut off from the usual deployment of life (indeed this is how adventure is commonly defined, says Simmel), but it also, in another way, condenses the deepest and most secret core meaning of one’s life. Thus, says Simmel, the is, in all moment of lived experience, a shadow of adventure understood in this way – since every moment both has a meaning for the series in which it is inserted (it can be adventure, but it may be love, religion, art etc.) and for one’s life as a whole. Georg Simmel, "Das Abenteuer" [The adventure], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 14 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996 [1911]).

¹¹⁰ Simmel, "Form giving in history", 350.

¹¹¹ Simmel, "The view of life", 386.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 408.

condensates our whole life, it escapes the ‘accidentality of its presentation in the only-now and only-here’ as do Kant’s infinite repetition of an action by all in society (in his idea of the categorical imperative) and Nietzsche’s infinite repetition of an individual action of the same individual (in the idea of eternal recurrence)¹¹³. As in Kant’s universal law and in Simmel’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s idea of recurrence, the objectivity derived from generalisation also stems from the ‘responsibility’ infused by such generalisation – hence the ‘moral’, regulative, function of these ideas in Simmel’s eyes, although this does not exhaust his interpretation of them¹¹⁴. Simmel’s ‘individual law’ is yet another mode of plastic, ‘living’, objectivation, alongside objectivation in the worlds of art, philosophy and the human sciences and religion, since its imperative derives from and is immersed in the life process itself¹¹⁵.

Now, real life, for most human beings, unfolds as an arbitrary succession of unrelated moods and actions. As we have seen in Part I Chapter 2, the loss of centre causes a rift between a subjective life which is disoriented and tempted to be concerned only with itself, and an objective life of adaptation. Thus, for most men,

subjective life, insofar as it follows its impulses, personal necessities and bare nature, only has an accidental relationship with the objective value of its products and results¹¹⁶.

But at the same time, we see how connected Simmel’s idea of the individual law is to his diagnosis of the age with its relentless changeability, the longing of individuals for a centre, and the sole consolation of ‘momentary reconciliations’¹¹⁷. The individual law proposed by Simmel is to direct us to our life as movement, and as unity, as if we were asking ourselves for each action, ‘Can you will that this act (*Tun*) of yours should determine your life as a

¹¹³ Simmel, "Schopenhauer and Nietzsche", 395.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 394. Simmel above all assesses the significance idea of eternal recurrence on the metaphysical level, through its particular way of juggling ‘being’ and ‘becoming’. On Simmel’s idea of responsibility through the individual law, and the way in which he builds it on his interpretation of Nietzsche’s ‘doctrine’, see Lichtblau, "Pathos of Distance", 260-2.

¹¹⁵ As noted by Klaus Lichtblau, Simmel surprisingly criticises Nietzsche for coming up with an idea of *Sollen* which is still as a “tablet hanging over life”, and thus becomes ‘detached from a purely immanent consideration of the increases of value (*Wertsteigerung*) of the life process’. Lichtblau, "Pathos of Distance", 261.

¹¹⁶ Georg Simmel, "Goethe und die Jugend" [Goethe and Youth], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe*. ed. Klaus Latzel 13 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000 [1914]), 102.

¹¹⁷ Lilyane Deroche-Gurcel, in her beautiful study of Simmel and modernity, links the notion of moment to acedia and melancholy, which she sees as the defining features of Simmel’s picture of modernity (as testified by the figure of the blasé man and by the indifference propagated by the money economy). However, as I have explained above, I see restlessness, disquiet and longing as more general features of Simmel’s modern man than melancholy. Lilyane Deroche-Gurcel, *Simmel et la modernité* [Simmel and modernity], *Sociologies* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1997).

whole?¹¹⁸. Hence, whilst the personality lives through the ‘deployed multiplicity’ of reality, its unity and totality – which are its determining features – are to be found through this ‘function’ of *Sollen*: ‘The particular *Sollen* is a function of the total life of the individual personality... [akin to] that guiding angel or genius which represents to [each human being] the “idea” of his life¹¹⁹, its centre.

This brings us to the heart of the difference with the Weber’s vocational human being and his life conduct. Both Simmel and Weber enjoin the individual to transcend the disperse array of ‘impulses, necessities and bare nature’, to refuse to be the mere conjunction of affects, needs and interests, to refuse an existence just ‘slipping by’¹²⁰ by being inwardly ‘consistent’ and finding that ‘guiding angel or genius’, alias the “idea” of [one’s] life’ or the ‘daemon’ that ‘holds the threads of [one’s] life’¹²¹. However the Weberian daemon summons the human being as a whole to take a stance, engage in the world and accomplish his task with a ‘genuineness’ which alone can restore or confer stature and depth to the human cultural world. The point of reference of life conduct is a point beyond, beyond the everyday, beyond the possible, a point imagined and yet very much about the real world. Conversely there is no content, no orientation to the ‘idea’ of life represented by the guiding angel or genius to the Simmelian human being: as appears clearly by bringing together Simmel’s chapter on the ‘individual law’ in *Lebensanschauung* and his essays on ‘great personalities’, especially on Rembrandt and Goethe, the ‘idea’ of our life, our ‘principle’ is the particular way in which our life embodies and manifests the vital process. The point of reference is our own centre, that is, our own way of being alive.

The inner consistency that Weber demands must be rooted in an intellectual understanding of the world ‘as it is’ – that is to say, absolutely without justification or unifying principle. It is also based on self-knowledge for taking a stance in the world, choosing one’s ‘god’, in a way that is consistent with the inner forces, the daemon, that move one. By contrast, the idea of ‘consistency’ for Simmel came to take its reference increasingly exclusively in the concept of life, in the intimate connection between one’s own centre and the life process¹²².

¹¹⁸ Simmel, "The view of life", 408, 421.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 390.

¹²⁰ Weber, "Value Freedom", 507.

¹²¹ Weber, "Science", 613.

¹²² Simmel’s notion of individual law evolved over time. In *Main problems of philosophy* it is, for the philosopher, still predicated upon the mind. The mind objectivates itself in connection with essential, universal, themes (see Part I Chapter 1, on the notion of typicality). Simmel, "Main problems of philosophy", 27.

Our inner consistency arises from the particular way in which our actions are connected to our 'centre'¹²³, in other words, it depends on the way in which we let life flow in our own life, in each of its moments, from what is its centre to each of our actions.

The differences between the two stances to the world/life are subtle: for there can be no inner consistency for Weber either if one goes against what one's inner forces lead one to do. But the kind of 'necessity' which ultimately is the criterion of the genuineness of our life and works, is not the same for Weber and Simmel. The necessity of a flowing life can accommodate very different contents, whilst the necessity stirred by the Weberian Daemon pushes us to a particular task and inner consistency demands that we bear the consequences.

The kind of transcendence of the self demanded by both Simmel and Weber is located on different planes. The Weberian human being accomplishes this self-transcendence in conducting his life in the life order(s) in which he engages (or explicitly locates himself outside of the world). As explained in the former chapter, it is his accomplishments in a given value sphere which uphold the sphere as a sphere of vocation and, at the same time, restrain the affects and interests of the self. The transcendence of the self for the construction of the 'personal' defeats what makes one pure processable matter or pure agent of the dominant logics of objectivation, but it only achieves this in vocation, or more generally in the pursuit of a cause.

But Simmel came to view the relationship to things as inherently corrupt if not subjected to the deployment of one's idea of oneself. In opposition to the '*Sachmensch*', the matter-of-fact human being, only concerned with the contents of life, always thinking about 'what there is in there for him', and thus as if always in old age¹²⁴, the Simmelian human being accomplishes self-transcendence by seeking to unfold his life according to the idea of himself, according to the particular way in which he embodies human life. 'The individual is not necessarily subjective and objectivity is not necessarily supra-individual. On the contrary, the decisive concept is the objectivity of the individual'¹²⁵, the 'generality ...of

¹²³ Simmel, "The view of life", 390.

¹²⁴ Simmel, "Goethe and Youth", 104. Georg Simmel, "Goethe", in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe*. ed. Uta Kösser, Hans-Martin Kruckis and Otthein Rammstedt 15 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003 [1913]), 14. Here is a term which Weber could have used, but in another sense: in connection with *Versachlichung*, objectivation in the Weberian sense of the process of transformation of personal drives and relations into reproducible matter, according to abstract norms.

¹²⁵ Simmel, "The view of life", 408.

each particular individual¹²⁶, the 'idea' of this individual. It seems to me here that Simmel echoes what he understood to be Nietzsche's notion of objectivity, assigned

[to] being, [to] the quality of human type (*Typus Mensch*) which presents itself in that being – measured simply against the objective standard of the stage of the evolution of humanity occupied by such individual being¹²⁷.

Through the individual law, life is made to unfold with 'the uniqueness of pure becoming'¹²⁸. But it is precisely to the extent that it is unrepeatable that it accesses generality, as it becomes a particular embodiment of the humankind, of *Menschentum*. In conceiving of the world of *Sollen* as a plane in which each individual unfolds their own individual law organically from their own life, it seems to me that Simmel generalizes this approach to every human being. And thus the real actor may well be 'life' as such, which as such is a 'reaching-out-beyond-itself'¹²⁹ in and through the fate of human beings, whereas 'reaching beyond' is, for Weber, what the individual human being seeks to do to conduct his own life.

The 'third realm' and the horizon of mysticism

As he often did for exposing and solving philosophical problems, Simmel personified what he saw as the two modes of apprehension of the world characterising the contemporary age (the mechanistic and vitalist ones) in respectively Kant and Goethe, in order to pose the question of their contribution to the contemporary *Weltanschauung*¹³⁰. To that end, he confronted their respective *Weltanschauung* with exquisite precision; but perhaps the essential tenor of his comparison is encapsulated in the passage in which he evokes Kant's and Goethe's 'grand gestures'. Both are great thinkers and must therefore seek 'the final unity of the elements and thereby of the conception of the world', both develop their visions out of their very nature and personality¹³¹. But Kant's gesture is to set boundaries, to delimitate; whilst 'Goethe's inner movements find their ultimate expression in the unification of elements'¹³². Goethe's momentum is above all the artist's, whilst Kant's *Weltanschauung* is first of all congenial to modern science. And although Simmel felt

¹²⁶ Ibid, 386.

¹²⁷ Simmel, "Schopenhauer and Nietzsche", 381.

¹²⁸ Simmel, "Rembrandt", 397.

¹²⁹ Simmel, "The view of life", 233.

¹³⁰ In his eponym essay of 1916.

¹³¹ Simmel sees this as proper of any philosophy. But it is more strictly the idea encapsulated in the notion of *Weltanschauung*: see Part I Chapter 1 on the notion of *Anschauung*.

¹³² Simmel, "Kant and Goethe", 139.

particularly close to Goethe's unified conception of the world, he concluded his essay by stressing the need to 'apply the one and the other to different groups of problems'.

However, as often, Simmel wished for a third path, a third realm, 'in the coming epoch', which was not one of synthesis or reconciliation in culture between opposed concepts, but a path in which 'life' would take over, i.e. flow through these contradictions and deny them in their conceptual form through the fact of their 'becoming lived experience' (*Erlebtwerden*). Simmel argues that such overtaking of these oppositions by life 'does not in the least reduce their antagonism but rather accomplishes itself through it', and the modality is that of *Erleben*: the modality of the 'primary' relation to the world becomes that which is capable of encompassing, not the contradictory concepts, but the experiences of these concepts, because as lived experiences they cannot be contradictory. This is again another instance of the subsumption of two antithetical terms under one of them elevated to a more general category: life in lived experience takes over, and subsumes the intimate and unified conception of the world as well as the divided one, as a concept of lived experience which is itself self-transcendence, the encompassing of the contraries by movement¹³³.

Simmel regularly referred to such an imagined realm in which life would submerge every single act or experience – a realm in which life would take over to such extent that it would even dissolve individuality, leading to an ultimate generality and typifying of life as pure movement and therefore evading 'the ultimate individual differentiation... [through] an anti-individualist form'¹³⁴. In Simmel's eyes, Rodin's statues prefigured such a realm: their individual contours are blurred as they are swept by movement, and as they are 'dragged into the infinity of emergence and destruction', and 'constantly stand at the point where becoming and demise meet', 'giving up each substance and unity of life to the mere moment of absolute becoming'¹³⁵.

Simmel's third realm is similarly a realm of pure movement, in which the self-transcendence of life is so continuous that form is constantly on the brink of being dissolved into flux. This same intimation as well as quest of an approximation to pure movement was already there in the *Philosophy of Money*, with money being both 'the carrier of a movement in which everything that is not movement is completely dissolved, ... so to speak [an] *actus purus*...' and, 'what is most constant, ... the point of indifference and

¹³³ Ibid, 165-6.

¹³⁴ Georg Simmel, "Die ästhetische Bedeutung des Gesichts" [The aesthetic meaning of the face], in *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 7 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995 [1901]), 40.

¹³⁵ Simmel, "Rembrandt", 445. Simmel, *Rembrandt (en)*, 105.

compensation between all other contents of this world, whose ideal meaning is, as that of the law, to give their measure to all things without measuring itself to them'. Money is, in each moment, the confluence of the contraries, movement and constancy, indifference and value¹³⁶. But the value of money, by measuring all things, contributes to the very dissolution of all values and forms that the movement of money as flux also entails – that is why Simmel talks about an anti-individualism of money, money is close to pure movement which does away with particularisation.

Indeed I would argue that such aspiration to being constantly on the border of complete submerging of form by life is Simmel's own peculiar mystic quest, whereby merging into the One is always ahead, as well as behind, and life a perpetual imbalance so as to preserve this overall encompassing equilibrium. Thus, coming back to the figure of the troubled and longing man of the modern money economy¹³⁷, it seems to me, paradoxically, that, by immersing the momentary reconciliations allowed between subjectivity and objects into restless movement, Simmel pointed to the possibility of a 'reconciliation' at a higher level, a reconciliation and unity with the movement of 'life' as such. But then this meant a re-anchoring of the idea of individual unity in that of life rather than that of cultivation: and indeed, as we have seen, Simmel undertook this task in the last chapter of his last book (*Lebensanschauung*), in which the 'individual law' is shown to be found in every instant of one's life, for 'life does not reserve a somehow separable "purity" and being for itself beyond the beat of its pulse'¹³⁸, and which thus enabled Simmel to preserve the idea of the unity of existence (as a never to be reached horizon) whilst acknowledging its relentless changeability.

Conclusion

Whilst Simmel did not go all the way with the attack on intellectualism waged by Bergson and the neo-Romantics, he did establish a dichotomy between modes of objectivation of the creations of human subjectivity exclusively predicated on the analytical intellect and understanding (*Verstand*), that divides and separates, and other modes of objectivation

¹³⁶ As noted by many commentators, Simmel likened money and its effect on values to Nicolas de Cusa's vision of God as *coincidentia oppositorum*. Simmel, *Money*, 305.

¹³⁷ Studied in Part I Chapter 2.

¹³⁸ Simmel, "Rembrandt", 314. Simmel, *Rembrandt (en)*, 6.

mobilising another kind of apprehension of the world, unified and immediate: 'lived experience' (*Erleben*).

The possibility of personality and of a living culture is thus dependent on the mobilisation of the totality of experience in the process of objectivation of human creation: Simmel described such process in artistic creation, as well as in the work of the historian and the philosopher. Conversely, the worlds and forms of analytical intellect – 'technology', the 'economy' and the natural sciences – were marked as 'mechanisms' which continued to build up objective culture without endowing it with cultural value since they were unable to reflect, grasp and address individualities as more than sets of components. The movement 'from the subjects to the objects to the subjects', Simmel's 'formula of culture', could only be conceived as a flow in certain 'worlds' or 'world contents'.

In contrast with such disjuncture between what could be referred to as fluid vs. mechanising objectivation, Weber conceived of vocation and more largely of life conduct as developing in fields of tension between the dynamic of rationalisation pervading most spheres of human endeavour and the pursuit of higher tasks and causes. Indeed it is this tension which creates the need for human decision and action, for conducting one's life.

Weber in part coincided with Simmel regarding the dynamic of the cosmos of the rationalised capitalist economy, and there their concepts of objectivation met. Nevertheless, as we have seen, even the almost complete objectivation of the economic sphere did not mean that all conduct of life was banned. But science (which Simmel considers as 'mechanised' with the exception of historical science) and politics (which Simmel symptomatically does not address) are very much fields of tension and thus arenas in which Weber's modern type of vocation, in the sense given to it in Chapter 7, could emerge and deploy itself.

But in addition to conceiving of meaningful objectivation in the creation process, Simmel also developed an ethics of personality which put forward an 'organic' objectivation of oneself. What is objectivated is the 'idea of the individual' that impregnates his life, and is contained in each of its moments. Each human being thus becomes a particular embodiment of *Menschentum*, by taking this idea of himself as the 'objective' regulation for his own life, as 'individual law'. Simmel's idea of objectivation of oneself on the plane of *Sollen* thus stands in sharp contrast with Weber's idea of life conduct, and particularly of vocational life conduct. Whilst the former finds its centre in the individual's life as such, the latter, though grounded in the individual's personal daemon, perpetually seeks to 'reach out' to the 'impossible', engaging with the world in that process and finding ways of coping

with the tensions inherent in such engagement.

Finally, Simmel's 'tragedy of culture' is but the expression of a more metaphysical tragedy: that which prevents 'human *forces* [from being] able to live and deploy themselves fully in the human *relations*' as they are. 'There lacks the pre-established harmony or posterior adaptation' between the world and us¹³⁹. But nevertheless Simmel demanded that we should affirm every single moment as a moment of our own lives, a philosophy of life very much inspired by Goethe's own views of life, but without the latter's belief in a natural harmony between men and things. It is this idea which led Gertrud Kantorowicz to ascertain that 'there is no evasion' possible in such a philosophy of life¹⁴⁰. Yet this is only the case for those whose life has found its centre, its 'idea', and who are under the obligation of their own individual law to 'indefatigably' 'deploy and live themselves inside out'¹⁴¹. For those who have not, there only remains the longing for such centre and 'idea' of themselves, the restless search for that idea, and the 'momentary reconciliations'.

This meant demanding permanent tension from life in this world as, so to speak, proof of life: but a tension that was antithetic to the tension required in Weberian life conduct, a tension of equilibrium through permanent imbalance, an 'immobile dialectic'¹⁴², rather than a tension born from taking stances and pushing back the boundaries of the possible.

¹³⁹ Simmel, "Kant and Goethe", 161.

¹⁴⁰ Kantorowicz, "Preface to Fragments", 478.

¹⁴¹ Simmel, "Kant and Goethe", 162.

¹⁴² Léger, *The thought of Georg Simmel*, 323.

CONCLUSIONS

Weber's investigations of *Menschentum* show how a philosophical question – what can leading a truly human life in the modern age mean? – can be addressed from the perspective of the social and cultural sciences. As Löwith put it, reformulating Weber's conception of social science as a science of reality, 'historical investigation [as indeed investigation in the social and cultural sciences more generally] should render comprehensible how we are today as we have become'¹. Weber's vision of his own age – that of a radically disenchanted world, in which capitalism and its "apparatus" had already changed and would 'go on changing the spiritual face of the human race almost beyond recognition'² – led him to think, precisely, that the features of the human being were being redefined along lines marked by advanced capitalism. My work has been underpinned by the hypothesis that Weber's conception of a science of reality, his investigation into *Menschentum* and his teaching for life conduct and vocation were prompted by the same acute sense of what was at stake. In these conclusions, I seek to sum up the main outcomes derived from taking such perspective, as well as to elaborate them further, in the three strands just mentioned, which have been the strands addressed in this thesis.

Regarding, first, Weber's investigation of the shaping of modern *Menschentum*, the thesis suggests that it is intricately bound up with an analysis of the mechanisms for the fostering of adaptation to the dominant logics of the depersonalised orders. My main argument is that rationalised spheres do not produce rational agents but shape human types with material orientations, affects and attachments besides their rational interests, as each sphere 'selects the subjects it needs' not only externally but also inwardly. This is possible because the life orders do not have only an 'external organisation' but also their own inner momentum. Only in this way can we understand how the 'spirit of adaptation' of modern capitalism seemed to Weber to be sufficient for a capitalist order to be maintained.

My second key findings concern what Weber considered as the opposite to adaptation to the depersonalised orders: life conduct, especially vocational life conduct, including *within* these orders. Vocation is possible in rationalised orders thanks to the fact that they have their own 'vocation within the totality of human life' and their own 'ethical tensions' which beg human decision, although this is with the crucial exception of the capitalist economic

¹ Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, 52.

² I do not repeat here the references for the quotes already used in the thesis.

sphere. My main argument here is that Weber saw the possibility of steering one's conduct to a self-determined higher task or cause as the only path for strengthening one's 'inner weight' and 'inner distance' with regard to the levelling attacks of everyday life by testing and further elaborating one's feelings and capacities into 'qualities' in the struggles waged in the deployment of one's vocation. But beyond resistance, I argue that vocation, for Weber, is the path for confronting the world and challenging its dominant logics by stretching them to their limits, and thus that it has a profound transformative charge.

Finally, I come back to Weber's notion of a science of reality and stress the importance of its focus on *Menschentum* and its stance to the world for the characterisation of social and cultural orders, as such a science is an instrument for *Selbstbesinnung*, 'making sense of oneself' in the world. Together with the teaching for 'clarity' and 'intellectual integrity' that complements it, it is a science which prepares the human being for action and struggle in the world – in contradistinction to the contemplative trend of other conceptions of *Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*, and, in Dilthey's and Simmel's case, the drift to *Lebensphilosophie*, with the dependence that this implied on the notion of *Erlebnis*, i.e. the pre-intellectual, undivided experience of the world as totality.

The shaping of *Menschentum* and the manufacturing of adaptation

In the disenchanted world, where values have lost their 'binding force'³ and there only remain 'logics' of action, the human type most significantly characterising modern culture can only be a carrier of dominant logics (e.g. objectivation as de-personalisation – *Versachlichung*, calculation), i.e. not only adapted to these logics, but 'actively' adapted and even oriented to them, and thus willing and able to carry them into an ever increasing number of areas of life. In Weber's time and for a considerable time after that, this carrier was the *Fachmensch*, the specialist human being with specialist training and with a position as administrative employee or official. Today, it could be argued that the equivalent ubiquitous figure is the manager, the carrier, similarly, of logics of calculation and deprofessionalisation in, also similarly, the 'cosmos of the modern rationalised capitalist economy', the 'state cosmos' and that of modern science (but also the voluntary sector, art etc.). Drawing such parallel would require another study, but this raises the possibility that it may more important and fruitful to interrogate our present with Weber by taking the type of human being as the point of entry to the analysis and assessment of 'orders of social

³ Landshut, "Max Weber's Significance for Intellectual History", 104.

relations' and the cultural orders they underpin, and thus by focusing our interest on management figures and managerialism, rather than, for example, through a questioning of the ideal-type of the bureaucracy and its validity today.

The *Fachmensch* is a figure of active adaptation: he is not content with abiding by the logic of objectivation of the orders in which his action is inscribed, but rather transfigures this ratio into a value, the 'value of good administration'. This infuses him with energy, and even relative initiative and autonomy within the boundaries set by orders and procedures. Yet all the energy, initiative and autonomy is directed to the reproduction and further extension of the rationalised everyday. The conversion of ratio into value, considered from the point of view of the strict rationality of bureaucracy, is irrational, since bureaucracy is supposed to be just an instrument. Weber's *Fachmensch* was not only a cog, but a cog boasting to be a cog⁴, and, as Nietzsche's last men, thinking he has 'discovered happiness'.

The *Fachmensch* has thus come to 'define', socially and culturally, an increasing number of orders of social relations, including large private firms, where Weber suggested that entrepreneurs were sometimes themselves turning into in the first *Fachmensch* in a hierarchy of *Fachmenschen*, but also schools, clinics and hospitals, political parties, the church and the army⁵. Scientific research has become organised like a private concern and is administered by *Fachmenschen* as well. The cultural reach of the *Fachmensch* does not only reside in his ubiquitous placement across the 'social order' and in his responsibility for the discharge of 'all the most important functions of life', but also of the diffusion amongst the 'ruled' of the value of '*good administration*' as the 'ultimate value for deciding the conduct of their affairs'.

But more generally Weber showed that the dynamics of rationalisation set out by the intrinsic logics of almost all life orders did not create any *homo oeconomicus* or *homo politicus*⁶ conceived as the bearers of pure formal ratio, but rather types of human being in 'their element', with their 'form of life', with their material rationalities, and not just their rational interests. In other words he showed that life is not 'rationalised away' but rather that drives and affects of a certain intensity and a certain level of energy are fostered, mobilised and renewed purely to the service of the maintenance and further extension of the dominant logics, i.e. alongside the all pervasive logic of objectivation, the no less all pervasive logic of

⁴ Weber, "Verein debates", 413.

⁵ Weber, *ES*, 127.

⁶ For the problems raised by the notion of *homo politicus*, see Part II Chapter 5, footnote 54.

calculation (for profitability in the modern rationalised capitalist economy, for electoral and governmental statistics and accounting, and as calculative reason in modern science).

On the basis of his discovery of the workings of rationality in music and of the irreducible irrationality of the 'Pythagorean comma', Weber sought to demonstrate that the interplay between the rational and the irrational is prompted by every rationalisation process. Since Christoph Braun's analysis of Weber's music study, we know that it is this interplay between the rational and the irrational which actually gives the music sphere its inner momentum, and allows for the continuous interaction of 'ratio' and 'life'. Following Weber's own indications regarding the generalisability of this process, I have sought to unravel this inner momentum in the spheres of the capitalist economy, the politics of the modern state and modern science. Although I would contend that Weber did not find a 'Pythagorean comma' in all cases, the stumbling of rationalisation processes on 'irrationalities' does in all cases generate a dynamic that both upsets and upholds such processes by interjecting material rationalities and mechanisms of 'attuning' and inscription of habit (*Eingestelltheit, Einstellung*). The famous *Gebäude* is not a cage but a carapace, an organic metaphor which thus conveys the fact that life is never annihilated but shaped and given form, even in thoroughly rationalised life orders. This did not prevent Weber from seeing it as the *Gebäude* for future serfdom (which is then translated as housing), or, as Georg Simmel put it, as 'stiff, remote from life and even hostile to it', provided life is understood as creative life (for Simmel) or as self-determined, conducted life (for Weber).

The inner momentum uncovered by Weber for all spheres, including the cosmos of the rationalised capitalist economy, points to an *inner* shaping of *all* human action, as motivational drives arise in this interplay of the rational and the irrational. Thus alongside the figure of the *Fachmensch*, we find, for example, the modern scholar in the modern university. Weber observed how the inner momentum of the life order of modern science concurred with the structural features of the modern university to transform the latter into a producer of knowledge about technologies for the control of life, geared to a government agenda, and how this was done at the cost of placing in professorial positions specialists disposed to abide by that agenda and keen to secure a good standard and style of living for themselves, '*beati possidentes*'. The modern scholar, like the *Fachmensch*, is all the more *beatus possidente*, or has all the more of the last man's happiness, that he proclaims the objective necessity of science, thereby absolutising the value of science, against the very disenchantment at the core of scientific rationality. But it is paradoxically this irrationality which allows the university to count with the type of scholars it requires.

Thus it is important to remember that Weber did not suggest that all spirit had vanished from the ‘carapace, as hard as steel’ of rationalised capitalism: only the ascetic spirit had fled from it, but a ‘spirit of adaptation’ was, and would be, necessary, and this spirit, like the ascetic spirit, develops in the interplay between the rational and the irrational. As I have shown in the thesis with the example of the worker, adaptation mobilises affects, e.g. worry, attachment, as well as bonding and meaning. Furthermore Weber’s analysis of the *Fachmensch* showed that adaptation may take energy, drive, even initiative. Unless this is recognised, and unless the antagonism between such forms of active adaptation and the liberty at the heart of Weber’s notion of ‘life conduct’ is acknowledged, we are bound to fail to see that our own age is an age of fundamental repetition, rather than one of any ‘new spirit’⁷, and we are also bound to confuse new forms of mobilisation of the workforce (through new forms of discipline) with the enhanced possibility for conduct.

The moulding of the human type more generally involves not only the positive shaping of a whole habitus of adaptation, but also the uprooting of what, in the human being, resists such adaptation and levelling, what gives the human being his ‘inner weight’.

The formal rationality of advanced capitalism has schooled the drive for gain, the taste for risk is framed by strict parameters, the political art of demagogy has shrunk to ‘making an impact’, the mad excitement of scientific creation is forced to apply to ever more specialised tasks and subordinated to the processing of knowledge, and even some artists seek to create pure forms. Weber, like Simmel, unveiled the partition of existence between exacerbated subjectivism on the one hand and the ‘mechanism’ of form on the other hand. But Simmel saw this rift as a rift between the intellect and the soul and as the origin of the vague and undirected longing which besets the modern human being but at the same time constitutes the movement of modern culture and life. Weber rather emphasised the rationalisation of the ‘passion for the thing in itself’, the rationalisation and instrumentalisation of the vocational drive and the implications for the entrenchment of subjection and the shaping of adapted masses and individuals.

On the other hand, the inner momentum of the modern life orders can also stir powerful feelings and drives, but these, unlike vocation, are ‘adequate’ to the upholding of dominant logics, and are left to be expressed in all their roughness and immediacy. Thus Weber

⁷ Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme* [The new spirit of capitalism] (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).

evoked the fostering of 'community pathos' for mobilisation on the front and the legitimisation of the state through the seeming evidence of the meaningfulness of death at war. I have explained that there are powerful irrational drives in the modern capitalist cosmos as well, for example the inner motivational drive of the contemporary entrepreneur towards the 'naked power' which he enjoys over workers (which is only possible due to the irrational fact that 'the maximum of formal rationality of capitalistic calculation is only possible where workers are subjected to the rule of entrepreneurs'). The feeling of power thus enjoyed is obtained without any risk for the entrepreneur as a human being since he is ultimately ensuring the continuous application of capitalist rule, and it can be expressed in its full bluntness without the taming of personal trials and exposure: it is for that reason that Weber referred to it as 'naked' power. In short, I have suggested that Weber had shown that the most extreme rationalisation goes hand in hand with the everyday fostering of adequate material rationalities, affects and attachments, as well as untamed drives, and with more extra-ordinary explosions of emotionalism.

The construction of the inner being and vocational life conduct

Opposing resistance to the dominant spirit of adaptation thus involves, for Weber, strengthening one's 'inner weight' and 'inner distance' by testing and trying one's own 'temperament', feelings and capacities in the trials of life. But this can hardly take place if one does not conduct one's life as a 'chain of ultimate decisions' through which 'the soul, as in Plato, chooses its own fate, in the sense of the meaning of what it does and is'. Ultimate decisions thus have to be understood as decisions which engage one as a whole human being. Life conduct, understood in that strict, ethical sense, is the opposite of adaptation. One does not need to throw one's whole weight for conforming to what there is.

The retreat of binding norms and values from the public sphere and the reign of intrinsic logics evoked above also demands that the human being should 'fetch his ideals from his chest' and decide who his gods and demons are. More than ever since the coining of the modern Western idea of personality, the individual is obliged to construct himself by, as pleasantly put by Weber, 'pulling himself out of the swamp'⁸: the force for that, the goal, as well as the swamp are one's own. But, in Weber's idea of modern life conduct, the kind of battle which is waged in the construction of one's inner being is a battle waged in the name

⁸ Weber, *Hinduism*, 378.

of one's own pursuit. Yet, as in the Puritan's ever to be renewed proving of himself, the battle is endless because one needs to construct one's stance in every situation – there is never anything to fall back upon⁹.

If one has to set one's own pursuits and goals to oneself, they cannot be mere pretence or pose, they have to be felt as one's own, as a 'necessity' for oneself: one has first to have been seized by one's daemon, 'as in Plato', have let passion (for art, science, politics, for a cause) take hold of oneself and have engaged with it. Only if it is suggested by the daemon can the cause or task constitute that anchor beyond the everyday which gives meaning to one's endeavours and in particular to the conquest of oneself. That conquest of one's interests, affects, petty 'hatreds and loves', was not meant by Weber in any way as renunciatory asceticism, but rather to strengthen one's capacity for inner resistance to and distance from the levelling assaults of everyday life on passionate vocational pursuits.

As I have explained, Weber also retained from the Protestant notion of personality the idea that these passions, drives as well as capacities have to be turned into 'qualities' by so to speak being 'proved' and put to the 'test' of genuine struggles. Genuine struggles could be defined, first, in opposition to the kind of power struggles waged in complete adaptation to the logic of the life order concerned (e.g. competition of economic interests) – they are the struggles fought in the course of one's pursuit. But genuine struggles are also real to the extent that they are not quixotic, that they are not led in the void but take place in a concrete life order/value sphere, with its intrinsic logic, tensions and inner demands.

There is a sense in which this elaboration of qualities compares with the 'objectivation' of oneself in Simmel's ethics of the 'individual law' (objectivation in the sense of *Objektivierung*, not of de-personalisation, *Versachlichung*). Qualities, in Weber's conception, are endlessly worked upon, yet this is also how they acquire permanency, and with time become more defining of the human being. The depth of the engagement required when one throws the whole of oneself into a battle compares with the thinness of interaction between the self and the world when only rationalised interests or immediate affects are mobilised, and it could be said, adopting Simmel's vocabulary, that those qualities which we have grown have acquired a status of objectivity to us, in contrast with the subjectivity of emotions. Both Simmel's 'individual law' and Weber's life conduct are in stark contrast to the glorification of the immediacy of experience in which personality is supposed to reveal itself. But Simmel's objectivation through individual law is spurred by a longing for this lost

⁹ Landshut, "Max Weber's Significance for Intellectual History", 105.

immediacy, whereas no such Romantic remnant can be found in Weber, for whom *Erlebnis* did not have any particular status. Furthermore qualities, in Weber's conception, are elaborated and developed in outward directed pursuits whereas Simmel's individual law is self-referential¹⁰.

But how is life conduct at all possible in a rationalised world? It is here that Weber's analysis of the life orders as value spheres comes into play, i.e. as realms in which action is not only shaped by the inner momentum of rationalisation but can also be geared to pursuits which challenge adaptation to the ratio of the sphere. As I have explained, Weber sought to ascertain the 'geographical location' of spheres of human action on a kind of map of value spheres, in other words, to determine their 'vocation in the totality of human life', not, of course, by relating them to any set of objective values, but rather by identifying the inner immanent demands made on those acting within the sphere. In the almost fully rationalised sphere of the economic cosmos, there are no other immanent demands than to abide by the intrinsic logic of formal capitalist ratio. Its vocation in the totality of human life is thus to be 'the most rational form for procuring the material goods indispensable to all inner-worldly culture'¹¹ – which stands in no tension at all to the logic of the sphere and thus offers no scope for human decision. This does not mean that it is not possible to pursue causes within the modern capitalist economic sphere which stretch its logic and foster life conduct (as shown through the case of union struggles), but rather that no other vocation than 'the "vocation" of money making' is possible, as ironically stressed by Weber.

The inner demands of a sphere as sphere of value include of course the assumption of the logic of the sphere but they challenge the mere processing of life through the ratio emanating from that logic. Thus art cannot be reduced to formal techniques, science to expertise, politics to administration. In other words, art, politics and science have a vocation within "the totality of human life" that provokes human decision and engagement, and thus can stir individual vocations¹².

Such vocations of the life orders/value spheres have to be sustained and cultivated on an everyday basis by adequate 'structural forms' – such as parliamentary work for attracting, educating, testing out and selecting politicians of vocation; policies guaranteeing the

¹⁰ And the confusing use of words referring to objectivity and objectivation for different purposes begs us to abstain from designating the elaboration of qualities as objectivation of oneself.

¹¹ Weber, "IR", 568.

¹² As for the erotic sphere, whose 'geographical position' on the map of the value spheres Weber sought to establish, I have suggested that it was perhaps possible to identify such 'inner requirements' but this would demand further study.

possibility of genuine everyday ‘ordered’ struggles, e.g. in the context of collective bargaining; and joint collective action, in unions or professional associations, for the concrete bolstering and assertion of a shared sense of the profession or class, a shared sense of pride. However it is above all up to individual (and collective) vocations to endlessly nurture the vocation of their sphere of endeavour. Only so can the ‘element’ of the artist, the scholar, the politician, or, for that matter, of a people, be turned into ‘qualities’, only so can life not only be formed but conducted.

Fostering the possibility of vocational life conduct is Weber’s response to the stance of adaptation displayed by the dominant type of human being as well as to the stance of flight from the world borne, in reaction, by the young intellectuals and demoted *Kulturmenschen*. Conducting one’s life in the pursuit of a higher task or cause challenges the de-personalising powers and thus confronts them, as vocational accomplishments stretch their logics to their limit. But it is also transformative, although not from the *Berufsmensch*’s perspective of world mastery, but due to the effects that one’s vocational practice in a sphere necessarily has on the logic of that sphere. In this connection I have argued that the ascetic reading of the ‘demand of the day’, in the famous last two sentences of the ‘Science’ lecture, is erroneous: it makes no sense to think that what our daemon requires us to do is to ‘pay the price’ for our passion by complying dutifully with the ratio of the sphere. Rather the pursuit of ‘the impossible’ must stretch the logic of the sphere to the point of affecting, and perhaps upsetting, the ratio set out by that logic. In this sense, it seems that the struggles envisaged by Weber in the deployment of vocations, for ‘reaching out’ to the ‘impossible’ were more subversive for the dominant logics than his proposals for organising ‘orderly struggles’ in the economic sphere.

A science of reality

I have sought to demonstrate that Weber’s science was a science of reality oriented towards action in the world. The notions of *Menschentum* and type of human being are at the core of such a science, as they depict the human being as he is, not characterologically but in his qualities, in his habitus, in his conduct, and above all in the stance to the world that these qualities, habitus and conduct convey. Through such a science, and through the teaching that went with it, Weber particularly wanted to reach the young intellectuals of his time (and future times) and have them reflect on their own stances and the implications for ‘the world’. For no stance is indifferent: flight from the world leaves the world to the powers which struggle for it, and thus to the further advance of the ‘most fateful’ of them,

capitalism.

In disciplinary terms, such a science of reality has to combine an empirical social and cultural science with the ‘specialised discipline of philosophy’ (‘Science’) or ‘social philosophy’ (‘Objectivity’), in order to unravel the connections between ultimate values and practical stances, and to ‘elaborate’ them, through a theoretical construction, from the unique point of view of their ‘consistency’. And it has to rely on analyses of the spheres of human action that highlight their specific dignity and momentum (i.e. historical analyses) as well as their external social and economic determinations and mutual influence through conflict and competition (i.e. sociological analyses), without explaining away the former through the latter.

But the quest for meaning which Weber’s sociology of religion had unravelled as that which defines and has always defined the intellectual strata, received powerful support from other conceptions of what a science of reality should be, as I have shown through the brief review of Dilthey’s, Simmel’s and Rickert’s notions and through a more systematic comparison with Simmel’s work.

The notion of ‘reality’ is of course the key here. Dilthey seemed to grant more ‘reality’ to what is perceived through *‘Erlebnis’*, that immediate form of making sense of the world which mobilises all of our inner functions and not just the intellect. Even though no science can be based directly on that immediate perception of reality, *Erlebnis* suggested a possibility to apprehend the world as totality rather than as the fragments distinguished by analytical thought – hence Dilthey’s as well as Simmel’s attempts to emulate artistic devices. This also accounts for Simmel’s move towards philosophy, with the purpose of reconstructing the totality of experience and thus the meaning of reality, behind or beneath its ‘fragments’. Even Rickert’s approach to science of reality, which emphasises the value-related construction of reality by the cultural scientist, nevertheless also found its justification in a ‘primordial’, pre-scientific ‘conception’ of the world by the ‘real human being’ as willing, valuing and taking a stance, a conception of which he later said that it underpins *Erlebnis*, as pre-scientific experience mediating meaning.

It can thus be said that the notions of science of reality handled by Dilthey, Simmel and Rickert all seemed to convey an idea of the grounding of the human or cultural sciences in a pre-analytical, immediate experience or stance of the human being. Although foundations in unified experience are in stark antagonism to foundations in discriminating valuation, in both cases the real seemed to be equated with what had not been touched by thought, even though access to it, in a science of reality, required the operations of thought. This also

pointed to the 'living' or 'real' human being, his 'lived experience' or his 'truly vital' values, as being not only the object of study but the point of reference for a science of reality: hence Dilthey's emphasis on biography as the matrix for history, Rickert's emphasis on 'mental historical centres', and Simmel's philosophical exploration of the 'inner movement of the soul'.

Weber formally seemed to locate his own definition of a 'science of reality' in this wider debate on the foundations of the human, or cultural, or social and cultural sciences. Like Rickert, he linked the possibility of the cultural sciences to 'the capacity and will to consciously take a stance toward the world and lend it *meaning*', and thus to the condition of the human being as 'cultural being'. But he did not suggest that such will and capacity antedated analytical thinking, or that the value relation underpinning the research interest of the cultural scientist should be identical with that of the 'real' human beings at the centre of the construction of the historical individual. For Weber, the grounding of a science of reality in a pre-scientific, or rather pre-analytical experience or stance had little interest: the reality with which human beings of culture have to deal is, precisely, the reality that has been bestowed on us since we have 'eaten from the tree of knowledge', and it is that reality that human beings have to 'see' and face up to. And thus a purpose of a science of reality is to lead cultural beings to face up to this and other 'inconvenient facts' and foster their capacity as judging and acting subjects.

Granting the unified, total experience of *Erlebnis* more 'reality' status than the analytical perception through the intellect must necessarily bring about a longing for unity with the world, a unity which is inaccessible to the analytic mind and in our analytic world. Simmel acutely depicted the modern condition in the money economy as one of vague, undirected and restless '*Sehnsucht*', the longing for meaning and thus for unity with oneself and the world which accompanies the feeling of loss of one's centre. But in the *Philosophy of Money*, *Sehnsucht* appeared as the drive for an unceasing movement, pushing the modern individual into ever renewed pursuits, and resonating with the pulse of modern life: Simmel pointed to a horizon of reconciliation of the modern individual with 'life'.

Weber's observations of the young intellectuals of his time (as he couched them, for example, in the Vocation lectures) described their drives and quests in sometimes very similar terms, but this was only a first step in order to point to the relation to the real and stances to the world implied by such quests, and thus ultimately, to the existential and political implications of the endless pursuit of meaning and of one's own inner unity. The combined teachings of the two 'Vocation lectures' showed that the denial of the struggles

of the gods in a disenchanted world as well as the tendency to actual or feigned flights from the world could ultimately lead to embitterment and dull adaptation, or to the ready subjection to fanaticism.

Simmel staged a divide, which has given way to a rift in modernity, between creative subjectivity and the intrinsic logics of objective series (or ‘worlds’), only fully bridged by the ‘genius’, for whom subjectivity and objectivity are at one. This conception of creative action led Simmel to differentiate between processes of objectivation of subjective creation according to whether they engage the whole human being and are able to convey the totality of *Erlebnis* and to mobilise the totality of *Erlebnis* in the receiver, or not. Ultimately this is down to the more or less ‘mechanising’ character of the intrinsic logic of the world in which the creation is inscribed and a meaningful, living kind of objectivation can only take place in art, philosophy and history. In short, there are spheres of human action which are conducive to an integral life experience, and others (the economy, the natural sciences) where human beings are cut off from that experience. For Weber, acting is locating oneself in a field of tension from the outset. Action is not only pervaded by the intrinsic logic of its sphere of deployment, it is also geared to the inner demands of the sphere and thereby towards a cause or higher task. Human endeavours are shaped in this tension, not prior to or outside it, and this in politics as well as in science and art.

Simmel’s pursuit of the possibility of meaningful objectivation and the integration of the individuality finally led him to put forward a new conception of ethics within his philosophy of life, in which the key to individual integration is the condensation of one’s life into each of its moments – so that one’s ethics grows organically from one’s own ‘centre’, one’s own ‘life pulse’. Despite the commonalities of Simmel’s and Weber’s idea of objectivation, such law of ‘ought’ (*Sollen*) is thus in complete opposition to Weber’s notion of vocational life conduct, in which the impulse to act stems from our personal ‘daemon’ but the reference to one’s action is not one’s centre but a cause or task. It is commitment to such cause or task out of the everyday which pools together and exerts one’s qualities in an engagement in the world and a struggle with the everyday, which are contrary to the logic of mechanisation and depersonalisation and manifest this contrariness in action.

Confronting the world

The age of the ‘spirit of adaptation’ of capitalism diagnosed by Weber is still with us. For all the will to read a ‘new spirit’ into the latest forms taken by capitalism, which could be

matched by new forms and a new spirit of critique, it is my contention that Weber's explanation of how types of human being were formed and endlessly mobilised anew for the upholding of the logic of the 'rationalised capitalist economic cosmos' more adequately reflects our own age as an age of repetition. Active adaptation, the stance of Weber's *Fachmensch*, is still the order of the day, and such stance does not breed its resisting, critiquing counterpart, but rather tends to spur a reverse stance of 'flight from the world' amongst the intellectual strata disgruntled by the cultural and social rule of the *Fachmensch* (as suggested we only need to replace the *Fachmensch* with 'the managerial type of human being', and to evoke the counter-temptation of 're-enchantment' to make sense of this for now). Against all longing for unification with oneself and the world, Weber's analysis of the dynamics of the life orders as well as of *Menschentum*, life conduct and vocation in the contemporary age emphasised conflict, waged with passion, judgment and responsibility, as most contrary to the silent 'peaceful cultural work' of capitalism. In his science as in his teaching and public life, Weber fought for the distinctiveness of the spheres of human endeavour and pursuit, against levelling from various quarters. Thus he emphasised the need to always combine the sociological analysis in a given domain with a discipline able to convey the inner momentum of that domain without reducing it to being an outcome of the ideal and material interests of its carrier groups. The forming and shaping of types of human being is not only a function of their 'external' positioning in society nor of the constraints of the social order but of their inner connection to a sphere of action, and the dynamic of that connection must be understood. Weber's social-philosophical teaching frames life conduct as a combat, waged in the everyday, so that one's pursuit does not become absorbed by the ratio of its sphere of deployment but rather that it 'stretches' that logic and even transforms it. Against the temptation of self-centredness and self-reference of the philosophy of life and more generally of intellectuals, Weber's science of reality, his notion of *Menschentum* and his conception of life conduct are compelling calls to throw our own weight in the battle of the definition of the human being today.

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