



Max Weber

From History to Modernity

Bryan S. Turner



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MAX WEBER

FROM HISTORY TO MODERNITY

Max Weber, remains a commanding figure in sociology. Few other sociologists have come anywhere near to rivalling his erudition and remorseless logic. Weber followed his research selflessly, even wrecking his own mental health in the process. This, together with the calm sobriety of his analysis of Western culture, have made him an heroic figure for many.

In this important book, one of the outstanding commentators on Weber in the English speaking world, provides a fascinating portrait of Weber's interests and demonstrates how they connect up with present day concerns, especially the debate on modernity and postmodernity. The author provides particularly clear discussions of Weber's contribution to the sociology of religion and the debate on rationalization. Lucid, informed and accessible this book will be essential reading for students of sociology, political science and philosophy.

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MODERNITY

BRYAN S. TURNER



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Preface

The debate about modernity and postmodernity (especially whether the postmodern critique of modernity has rendered sociology obsolete) has raised once more the question of the exact nature of modernity and modernization. Sociology stands in a critical relationship to this debate, because sociology arose with Saint-Simon's analysis of industrial society as both the study and product of modernization. As the study of the 'social', sociology was quintessentially modern. If sociology has been historically the study of modernization (of which capitalist industrialization was a primary feature), then Max Weber's sociology remains a dominant paradigm for understanding the dilemmas, contradictions and tensions of the processes of modernization.

Weber defined the core components of modernization in terms of a growing rationalization of the various spheres of society, an increasing secularization which brought about the disenchantment of reality, an irreversible development of bureaucratization, and a growing pluralization of values and beliefs. To understand modernity is to understand Weber. The tensions between (rational) enlightenment and (human) survival were described, one could say beautifully, by Weber in the debate about religious asceticism and the modern ethic, the bureaucratization of life and its standardization, the contrasts between hedonism and discipline, the disappearance of the autonomous liberal individual in the iron cage of state regulation, the emergence of science out of the irrational religious quest, the decline of charismatic authority with the spread of the administrative machine, the erosion of the intimate in the face of large-scale administrative structures, the death of God and the pluralization of the life-world. These developments describe modernization, while anticipating postmodernization. It is little

wonder that the first of Jürgen Habermas's twelve lectures on modernity in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987) should address Weber's analysis of occidental rationalism and the problem of universal history.

These chapters on Weber's comparative historical sociology of the problem of modernization were written over a period of some fifteen years, but they address uniformly the primary Weberian question: what is the characteristic uniqueness of the times in which we live? The principal answer is rationalization—of tradition, religion, politics, money, sexuality, the state and the human body. Religion was an important substantive feature of Weberian sociology; in the conclusion, I shall turn to the problem of rationalization, modernism and fundamentalist religion. These various contributions to historical sociology therefore examine the Weber theses in relation to comparative history, with special reference to religion, law, science, medicine, politics and individualism.

Although this focus on the implications of modernization as rationalization structures this collection as a whole, there is a minor theme which concerns the relationships between Nietzsche (the death of God theme), Simmel (as a theorist of modernism and the tragedy of culture), Marx (on the emergence of global capitalism) and Weber (as the tragic theorist of the fatefulness of the times in which we live). In short, these essays outline the broad features of the theoretical debate in classical sociology over 'the project of modernity', but they approach this analytical goal via a comparative and historical examination of culture(s) in relation to social change (especially rationalization). They examine the historical evolution of the ethic of world mastery via an examination of the social consequences of instrumental rationality on the body, the life-world and the institutional orders of the public practices of religion, politics and science.

These themes were first addressed in my *Weber and Islam* (1974) where I critically examined Weber's analysis of Islam as a blocked route to rational, instrumental modernity. In *For Weber, Essays in the Sociology of Fate* (1981), I examined some of the metaphors of fate and determinism in Weber's study of the negative unintended consequences of (progressive) social change. We might argue that Weber rarely considered the positive unintended consequences of

social change, because he adhered to a pessimistic or fatalistic view of social reality. One example of positive unintended consequences might be the growth of citizenship, which Weber argued grew partly out of the requirements of military organization, especially the development of an urban militia and the requirements of infantry training. Some features of this issue are analysed in Chapter 8 of this volume.

Weber's tortured view of the ironies of modern history brought me eventually to a consideration of Nietzsche's theory of resentment (with Georg Stauth) in *Nietzsche's Dance* (1988). In response to the major changes which have taken place in the modern world in the 1980s, I have turned (with Robert Holton) to consider the implications of Weber's version of liberalism for contemporary politics in *Max Weber on Economy and Society* (1989). Finally, I have attempted to examine Weber's sociology in relation to the problem of romantic nostalgia for stability and order in a world of apparently uncontrolled change, in *Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity* (1990).

The essays in this collection attempt to consolidate and develop some of the themes which have appeared separately in earlier work. More importantly, they attempt not simply to interpret Weber as a historical sociologist, but to do historical sociology around a set of themes which have been inspired by the work of Max Weber. A number of people have been particularly helpful and influential in my intellectual development. Roland Robertson has been a source of inspiration in forcing me to move outside a national or local paradigm to consider the emergence of the global order. Mike Featherstone and the editorial team around *Theory Culture & Society* have driven me to engage with the postmodern debate. Jan Rupp of the University of Utrecht has been both a friend and a mine of information on European history. While I was a student at the University of Leeds, Professor Trevor Ling was important as my avenue into comparative sociology of religion; my attempts to undertake a Weberian sociology of Islam were originally inspired by his lectures. In more recent years, the editorial board of *The Journal of Historical Sociology* has provided an enormous stimulus to reinforce the essential character of sociology as a historical science. My colleagues at the University of Essex have offered me a stimulating environment to follow my interests in historical

research. Finally, I would like to thank Gordon Smith for his friendship and editorial support.

Chapter 1 was first given as a public lecture in 1990 to the Max Weber Study Group at Brunel University. Chapter 2 and Chapter 6 first appeared in *The Journal of Historical Sociology* 3(2), 1990:192–208 and 1(3)1988 322–33). I am grateful to Professor Derek Sayer for his comments on the original manuscripts. Chapters 3 and 5 were originally published in *The British Journal of Sociology* (25, 1974:230–43 and 38(1), 1987:1–23). I am grateful to the publishers for permission to reprint these two articles. Chapter 7 was first published in S.Lash and S.Whimster (eds) *Max Weber: Rationality and Modernity* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987). Chapter 8 was first given as a public lecture in 1989 in the Department of Anthropology, University College, The University of London. Chapters 9 and 10 first appeared in *The Sociological Review* (34(1), 1986:93–115 and 30(3), 1982:367–91). The final chapter is the product of research which was originally undertaken at Bielefeld University in 1987–8. I am grateful to the publishers for permission to reprint these articles.

I would like to thank Kathy Pinney, who struggled to put my bibliography into some sort of order.

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Introduction

1 *Max Weber and the Panic Culture of Postmodernism*

Introduction

Max Weber has long been regarded as a major figure in historical sociology. Indeed, Weber's sociology can be taken as a paradigm of how to undertake comparative and historical research in the social sciences. In specific terms, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930), *Ancient Judaism* (1952), *The City* (1958a), *The Religion of China* (1951), *The Religion of India* (1958b) and *General Economic History* (1927) have made a major contribution to the debate about the relationship between history and sociology. The scale of Weber's contribution to the development of historical sociology is explored in Chapters 2 and 6 in this volume. Although Weber's stature as a historical sociologist is not in dispute, his influence has unfortunately often been confined either to debates about methodology—in terms of *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (Weber 1949)—or to the origins of rational capitalism.

It is increasingly clear that these two loci of debate—methods and capitalism—are not only too narrow, they have also somewhat distorted the reception of Weber's historical sociology. Following Wilhelm Hennis's interpretation (1988) of Weber's *Fragstellung*, it is clear that Weber's sociology was driven by clear philosophical and ethical concerns, which were to understand the nature of Man and life-orders, that is, how specific social conditions gave rise to personality. I have retained the use of 'Man' throughout this volume, because it is not appropriate to modernize and transform Weber's own language. While much attention has been given to Marx's ontology in his view of Man, labour and nature, insufficient

interest has been focused on Weber's implicit ontological presuppositions. Thus, Weber's analysis of the Protestant, the bureaucrat or the aristocratic warrior was a consequence of wider concerns with the problem of character in the context of what he called life-orders. Weber's historical sociology reflected a German philosophical tradition which divided human inquiry into the understanding of mind, body and soul. To understand Weber's comparative sociology of civilizations we need to turn not to a set of antecedents in Marxism, but to the critical philosophy of Nietzsche and his followers such as Stefan George and Ludwig Klages (Stauth and Turner 1988). Some aspects of Weber's relationship to Nietzsche are considered in Chapter 10. Weber's historical sociology was very different, therefore, from the tradition of English empiricism; we could more safely describe Weber's purpose as the production of a moral characterology of modern times.

The Modern Revolution

Two major changes—one sudden and immediate, the other slow and persistent—are gradually transforming the theoretical paradigms and perspectives of the social sciences as a whole, and of sociology in particular. The first is the collapse of communism in eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union, and the second is the corrosive critique of modernism by postmodernism. These two developments, although dissimilar in many ways, are also closely tied together. They represent an attack on grand narratives, and thereby a challenge to more traditional strategies in social theory, and at the same time they embody an assertion of the importance of difference (Turner 1990a). In this commentary on Max Weber in modern sociology, I want to reflect on the fact that both developments (political and cultural) are to some extent anticipated in Weber's sociology. They are present in Weberian sociology, because he remained highly ambiguous about the content and consequences of modernization and rationalization. I explore these ambiguities in this collection with respect to Weber's views on science in Chapter 5, on the body in Chapter 7 and on the reification of value in money in Chapter 9.

Weber's ambiguities over capitalism were also expressed in his ambivalent attitudes to socialism as a rational planning of the market. His critique of Soviet socialism (and his more enduring fear of the threat of Cossacks on the plains of Europe) is well known, and does not concern me here (Runciman 1978). For Weber, socialism was another step in the growth of rational management of resources; socialism represented a further development of the second serfdom—to calculation, planning, and instrumental rationalism. These rational systems would eventually destroy the entrepreneur who is essential to dynamic capitalism (Mommsen 1974). Various features of Weber's political sociology are examined in Chapters 6, 8 and 9. The main issue in Weber's political sociology is the absence of any analysis of the processes of democratization, about which Weber remained sceptical, if not dismissive. In this respect, Weber was significantly influenced by Robert Michels's theory of 'the iron law of oligarchy', which suggested that all mass-party organization would come to depend on an élite (Mommsen 1989).

My aim at this stage, however, is simply to draw attention to some respects in which Weber's ambiguous evaluation of modern rational capitalism provides a curious parallel to modern 'panics' over postmodernism (Holton and Turner 1989). The intention is not to suggest naively that all aspects of postmodernism were foreshadowed in Weber's complex, uncertain and unstable endorsement of modernization. However, there is a tension in Weber between a Nietzschean celebration of life against system-rationality, which at least prefigures more contemporary uncertainties about the end of history, the end of philosophy and the end of the social. Weber's uncertain and somewhat reluctant acceptance of modernization has been the subject of much recent debate (Sayer 1990; Sica 1988), but so far, few sociologists have made the link between his ambiguities over modernity and the postmodern scene.

A minor theme of this introduction therefore, is that, if we look at the history of sociology—and possibly at the social sciences as a whole—then we can see that certain crucial debates appear to be repeated by each new generation of scholars, albeit with a new terminology and often for rather different reasons. If the debates are not exactly repeated, at least the same problematics seem to

recur with alarming uniformity. The obvious examples are the nature/nurture controversy, the methodological struggle around positivism, the intellectual contest over methodological individualism, and the definition of the social. More interestingly, it can be argued that the current controversy surrounding sociology as a global or national science is a repeat of the debate in Saint-Simon about the necessity for a European parliament and the plea for a global sociology as the science of humanity rather than of national social systems (Turner 1990b). One can also speculate that the current condemnation of the negative effects of centralized planning in terms of its preclusion of democratic cultures in socialist Europe and the Soviet Union will almost certainly rehearse arguments which were fully developed in Karl Wittfogel's *Oriental Despotism* (1963). Even the ghost of Evgeny Preobrazhensky, whose *The New Economics* (1965) caused Stalin such displeasure, may be resurrected.

The issue I wish to raise here is posed on a broader scale: to what extent is the contemporary modern/postmodern debate a repeat of earlier battles inside sociology, and in particular how does this debate relate to Max Weber? It is worth noting that Weber has already been drawn into this debate. Because Nietzsche's philosophy has proved fundamental to both poststructuralism and postmodernism, the revival of interest in Nietzsche has inevitably linked Weber with the critique of modernist rationalization (Lassman and Velody 1989). In order to understand Weber's introduction into the debate about postmodernism, we will have to look more closely at the history of postmodernism, and confront the problem of defining terms. A number of recent interpretations of Weberian sociology have paved the way for the inclusion of Weber into the postmodernist debate. I shall briefly mention four of these developments in Weberian scholarship;

Redirecting Weberian Scholarship

The first reorientation is that the traditional (and possibly sterile) debates about Marx versus Weber (Antonio and Glassman 1985) have largely collapsed. (Some features of the recent developments in the interpretation of Weber's historical sociology with reference to the Marx/Weber issue are considered in Chapters 2 and 6.) These

issues with Marxism have been partly replaced with a new emphasis on Weber's relationship to Nietzsche and to the romantic critique of capitalism in Germany. Although many early comments on this relationship drew attention to possible connections between Weber's concept of charisma in relation to Nietzsche's *Übermensch*; between Weber's methodological notions of value-relevance and Nietzsche's perspectivism; between Weber's analysis of the ethics of the world religions and Nietzsche's alleged psychologization of morals in the idea of *ressentiment*; or between Weber's views on politics as endless struggle and Nietzsche's will-to-power philosophy, the complexity and depth of Weber's relationship to Nietzsche has probably yet to be fully explored. However, two areas of inquiry appear to be especially important. The first is the implications of Nietzsche's death-of-God prophecy for Weber's analysis of polytheism in the 'science as a vocation' lecture (Lassman and Velody 1989) and the second, as I have just argued, is Wilhelm Hennis's development of what might be called 'characterology' from Weber in his studies of personality and life-orders as part of Weber's underlying philosophical anthropology (Hennis 1988). At this stage the validity or otherwise of these interpretations is not especially relevant. The point is that the revival of interest in Nietzsche (especially, and paradoxically, in France) for the development of poststructuralism and postmodernism in Michel Foucault (Bernauer and Rasmussen 1988), Giles Deleuze, Jean Baudrillard (Gane forthcoming), and Jacques Derrida (Norris 1987) has been parallel to the revival of interest in the shaping of Weberian sociology by Nietzsche.

These issues—Weber's relationship to Nietzsche, his controversial but rather hidden connections with the George Circle, his moral interest in character and life-order—are important for understanding Weber's interest in the sociology of religion. On the one hand, the Judaeo-Christian faith was the source, in Weber's view, of western civilization. On the other hand, religion is the great fountain of irrationality. It was the historical transformation of this irrationality into rationality which constituted the essence of the civilizational process. Weber, however, retained the residual view that a religious framework was essential for social, especially moral, order. Charisma was ultimately the driving force in the historical ruptures of social processes. This view of religion

informed much of Weber's general sociology, and in this volume Weber's sociology of religion is discussed in Chapters 3, 4, and 6.1 have concentrated on the issue of Islam, because Weber's faulty treatment of Islamic civilization raises a number of general problems in his sociology as a whole. I consider these issues in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

A second and related reorientation is that seeing Weber as a major theorist of capitalism (alongside Marx, Veblen, Schumpeter, and Spencer) has given way to interpreting Weber as *the* theorist of rational modernity and modernization. While in the 1960s and 1970s radical sociologists in the sociology of development and underdevelopment condemned concepts like 'modernity' and 'modernization' as pseudo-concepts in functionalism which really meant 'western' and 'westernization', it is interesting to note how thoroughly in the 1980s modernity and modernization have been revived and restored as explanatory paradigms. First, we can note that Marx has been restored as an interpreter of the modern by Marshall Berman in *All that is Solid melts into Air* (1983). More recently, Derek Sayer in *Capitalism and Modernity* (1990) regards both Marx and Weber as developing a theory of modernity of which capitalism is a sub-text. Anthony Giddens, in the collection by Christopher Bryant and David Jary (1990), argues that he (Giddens) has all along been concerned with modernity rather than with the narrow debate over capitalism. The majority of the authors who contributed to the collection by Lash and Whimster (1987) adopted a similar stance, namely seeing Weber as a theorist or even interpreter of modernity rather than as a sociologist of capitalism. The title *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity* was indicative of this orientation. There appears to be a broad if gradual turning away from traditional debates about the structure of capitalism to interpretations of the culture of modernism and postmodernism. Indeed 'culture' as such has somewhat replaced the original hegemony of 'structure' in the sociological canon (Archer 1988; Robertson 1990; Wuthnow 1989). Since Weber devoted much of his intellectual endeavour to the problems of cultural sociology, we may expect Weberian ideas to play a major part in the revival of a culturalist perspective. These orientations towards Weber as a theorist of modernity have also redirected the exegesis of Weber's work, away from limited debates with Marx to include

other theorists of modernity, notably Georg Simmel. In this volume, Weber's view of rationalization is compared in Chapter 9 with Simmel's analysis of the reification of money as a specific illustration of the 'tragedy of culture'. It is already evident that Weber and Simmel will be connected in these contemporary debates about culture, *fin-de-siècle* capitalism, postmodernism and the end of organized capitalism (Weinstein and Weinstein 1990).

A third theme in current views of Weber is possibly not new, but it is closely related to the postmodern question. A number of commentators on Weber have recently drawn attention to the problem of sensibility and sympathy not only in Weber's sociology, but also in relation to his own life. This contextualization of Weber has referred again to the question of Weber's own relationship to sexuality with regard to his commitments to the educational and moral virtues of a calling or vocation in life. For many years, of course, writers have drawn attention to the tensions in Weber's biography between (in Nietzsche's terms) Dionysus and Apollo, between the ecstatic sexual energies and the rational form-giving intellect, and between yes-saying and no-saying philosophies. The work of Arthur Mitzman is an obvious case in point; in *The Iron Cage, a Historical Interpretation of Max Weber* (1971) he attempted to analyse Weber's 'illness' in psychoanalytic terms as a solution to the conflicts within the domestic sphere between the secular authoritarian father and the pious sympathetic mother. A similar view of the complex relationship between Weber's personal sexual mores and his relationship to the nascent women's movement was analysed in Green's study (1974) of the von Richthofen sisters. More recently, W.Lepenies in his *Die drei Kulturen, Soziologie zwischen Literatur und Wissenschaft* (1988) has drawn parallels between the psychic crises of major figures in social sciences in relation to the theoretical development of their work, including J.S.Mill and Max Weber. These tensions in his biography may also exhibit an aspect of the general problem of masculinity in Weberian sociology (Bologh 1990). Some aspects of this issue in Weber's sociology are raised in Chapter 7, where I consider the implications of the sociology of the body for Weber's notion of rationalization.

In a related fashion, there has been increasing interest in Weber's relationship to romantic criticisms of capitalism which look

towards life, love and sexuality as an alternative to work, labour and productivity as the *raison d'être* of the contemporary world. I shall refer to work on Weber's connection with Otto Gross in the Mommsen and Osterhammel collection *Max Weber and his Contemporaries* (1987). Here once more it is difficult to get away from the more general influence of Nietzsche. To my mind, we do not as yet have a very clear picture of how deeply the Nietzschean philosophers and poets around Stefan George at Heidelberg influenced Weber. It appears that Weber admired much of the visionary poetry of Stefan George while rejecting his romanticism as inappropriate for modern times. Ernest Troeltsch tells us in 'The Revolution in Science' from *Schmollers Jahrbuch* of 1921 that Weber said that George's romanticism would smash on the hard rocks of economic necessity and social reality (Lassman and Velody 1989:64).

However, we may suggest in addition a rather closer relationship between Weber and the so-called Romantics. Writers like George, Klages and Gundolf were specifically adopting a Nietzschean critique of modern rational, industrial culture which accepted the idea that this form of modernization would produce a standardization of social and cultural reality. Only a new breed or a new creation (a Nietzschean *Übermensch*) could overcome this debasement. In this respect they appear to have followed Nietzsche's critique of Social Darwinism, not the survival of the fittest but the survival of the herd. The goal of the George Circle was to foster a new character or personality which could transcend the vulgar standardization and uniformity imposed on Germany by mass technology, bureaucratization and the civilization of the capitalists. George in particular had a metatheory which drew a distinction between spirit, intellect and embodiment (or between soul, mind and body). In the modern world, the rational intellect was threatening to destroy both the soul (*Geist*) and the body. This idea was basic to Klages' major work *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (1929–32)—the consciousness as the adversary of the soul. Is not this perspective reproduced in Weber's famous lament against the technocrats without a soul, the bureaucrats without a spirit, and, we might add, the intellectuals without bodies? Is not this philosophical anthropology of characterology and life-orders in Weber also a legacy of Nietzsche which is parallel to, or even

derived from, the Romanticism of the George Circle? The Romantics around George have been neglected, probably because of their overt connection with anti-Semitism and their alleged, but probably mistaken, association with the Nazi regime.

This interpretation draws attention to a contradiction in Weber's life between the overt commitment to an ascetic vocation in science and the covert empathy for a life-philosophy embracing romanticism and mysticism. There is an undercurrent of sympathy for more transcendental values, for the Other in a world of standardized Sameness, for prophecy against science. This split in Weber is surely connected with a lesson which he took from Nietzsche, namely that all rational thought is necessarily tragic because it must constantly explore its own horizons, that is its limit. For Weber, this tragedy is represented by the contradiction between scientific rationality and meaning. While science can make the world understandable by making the world predictable, science cannot make the world meaningful. In fact, quite the contrary. As science advances, meaning retreats, leaving the world disenchanted.

The Debate on Modernity and Postmodernity

These four interpretations—Nietzsche, modernization, sensibility and the romantic critique of rationalism—suggest parallel relationships to the debate on modernity and postmodernity. In his account of architecture, urban space and humanism, Scott Lash (1990) has argued that some versions of postmodernism are humanist in the classical sense that they are anthropomorphic in rejecting the formalism, rationalism and structuralism of high modernism (as represented, for example, by Corbusier). In this perspective, postmodernism celebrates the intimate, the affective and the sympathetic over and against the public, large-scale, instrumental rationalism of modernism. If this version of postmodernism has any validity, then it suggests a critique of modernism which has much in common with the romantic anti-capitalist critique of the George Circle. It also suggests a relationship with Weber as a critic of the standardization and insensitivity of bureaucratized capitalism, with Weber as a cultural interpreter of the soulless characterology of the modern state, and

with Weber as a Dionysian character protesting against the Apollonian requirements of academic professionalism.

Defining Concepts

In these opening remarks, I have drawn attention to the ways in which reinterpretations of Weber have suggested possible lines of development between Weberian sociology and postmodernism. Of course, in suggesting these relationships it has been necessary to take for granted the meaning of a range of concepts. In order to proceed any further, we need to confront the question: what is postmodernism? In this discussion I shall take the view that a postmodern sociology is impossible for the reasons outlined in Habermas's critique of postmodernity, namely that a postmodern critique of sociological reason is forced to depend on and presuppose the logical criteria of modernity (Habermas 1987). In short, to establish the credentials of a postmodern sociology would require a modernist criticism of the grounds of reason. By contrast, a sociology of postmodernity would seek to understand postmodernity (as a stage in the development of a modern system), postmodernism (as a particular form of culture) and postmodernist sensibility (as an aesthetic paradigm for contemporary experiential fragmentation) via an analysis of the development of modernization. Thus, a sociology of postmodernism would analyse postmodernity and postmodernism as the consequence of developments in production and consumerism in late capitalism (Featherstone 1990). I take this position to be present in Featherstone's analysis of social classes and postmodernism (Featherstone 1988), Jameson on late capitalism (1984) and Lash and Urry on the end of organized capitalism (1987).

Modernization may, within this approach, be treated very much from within a Weberian conceptualization of modern social change. Modernity is an effect of the processes of social rationalization which had their origins in the asceticism of the Protestant sects, in the ethic of world mastery of the seventeenth century, in the evolution of positivistic experimental sciences (especially in English and Dutch experimental medicine), in Enlightenment rationalism and in the slow and uneven formation of a general secular culture. This modernization process as rationalization involved:

- (i) the differentiation of social spheres into specialized and quasi-autonomous institutions;
- (ii) the growth of abstract conceptualizations of sovereignty and power, which in turn made possible the gradual development of the abstract citizen in the urban city cultures of western Europe;
- (iii) the extension of formal, abstract rationality to the creation of law, the formulation of theology as a science, the transformation of architecture into a utilitarian practice, and the conversion of medicine from a manual art into an abstract science of disease entities;
- (iv) the adoption of bureaucratic standards of procedure in all major public institutions;
- (v) the final separation of the private (emotional) and public (rational) world within which separate mentalities or characters were to develop; and
- (vi) the secularization and disenchantment of culture, producing, not a uniformity of values, but a polytheistic reality of competing perspectives without an integrating or unifying principle. In short, we can define modernity as an effect of modernization and we can define modernization *à la* Weber as rationalization.

The definition of postmodernity as contrasted with modernity (and such related concepts as postmodernity, poststructuralism and postFordism) creates many more problems. There is now a substantial literature which is helpful in tracing the origins of this debate (Lash 1990; Turner 1990a). Postmodernism has been used frequently in artistic and literary analysis. It became prevalent in the 1960s in American literary criticism, where it was used to condemn the complacency of the institutionalized art world of high culture and the pacification of modernism in the mainstream of art. It probably first emerged in social science in Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History* (8, 1954:338) as a description of the world created by rapid technological change, with the rise of an urban industrial working class and with the erosion of the civilization of the comfortable bourgeoisie. This age of postmodernism was ushered in by two acts within a single scenario, namely World War One and World War Two.

The essential features of the contemporary debate were eventually developed in Daniel Bell's concept of 'post-industrialism' in his *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973) and in the collection of essays *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976). For Bell, the new electronic technology placed a special emphasis on the importance of knowledge, and therefore the university, against work and industrial production, and therefore the factory. The new middle class was to replace the traditional working class as the revolutionary feature of the new order, and the decline of the working class and intensive mass production by Fordist means would unleash a new era of leisure. The implications for culture and politics were enormous. There would be a major contradiction between the ascetic norms of work, and the new norms of hedonistic consumption; the new personality type was definitely hedonistic and secular. In politics, the revolution in expectations would produce permanent political instability, because no democratic government would be able to solve the fiscal problems created by a revolution in entitlements. Bell's work, which was at the time roundly condemned, has not only been proved to be correct, but it directly anticipated contemporary notions of disorganized capitalism (Offe 1985) and the end of organized capitalism (Lash and Urry 1987), but Bell's idea of post-industrial society very quickly entered the postmodern debate, because his version of technological determinism was the sociological message behind Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1986).

From these original discussions various apocalyptic versions of postmodernism have been developed, most notably by Jean Baudrillard and by panic authors like Arthur Kroker and Marialouise Kroker (1989). Briefly, Baudrillard extends the analysis of media, language and culture to a theory of signs and simulations. In Baudrillard's general theory, the old systems of production of commodities for exchange have been replaced by the production of signs for communication. However, the new social orders based on cybernetics are characterized by simulations and by indeterminacy; in fact the speed and density of the systems of exchange of signs are such that reality has imploded on itself, leaving behind a hyper-reality of self-referential systems. The pure sign points to other signs, not to reality. Disneyland functions to

induce in us the belief that there is a 'real' world somewhere else, but in fact Disneyland is America. Disneyland is not unreal; it is the hyper-real. Baudrillard, like many other theorists of late or postmodern capitalism, points to the fact that the new social order can embrace and incorporate all forms of opposition, by turning them into spectacle. This swirling world of signs which merely point to other signs has created a black hole through which the social had disappeared. The result is that all existing social theories which are based on a modernist view of referentiality are obsolete. Marxism which presupposes the validity of the social, the economic, social classes and the state, no longer has any purchase on the end of the social.

Baudrillard developed this view of the postmodern through a number of influential studies. In each study, he has moved further and further away from conventional social science perspectives, especially from Marxism. However, one question appears to underline Baudrillard's work, just as it does that of Foucault and Derrida: in a world where God is dead how is transgression possible, because there is no Other (Boyne 1989)? If capitalism absorbs everything and mimics everything, how is opposition (from the Other Side) possible? Because nothing is refused, everything is available; therefore, everything is absorbed. In a world where sex exudes from every pore, even seduction loses its ancient powers, its power of real simulation. Thus Baudrillard writes:

When desire is entirely on the side of demand; when it is operationalized without restrictions, it loses its imaginary and, therefore, its reality; it appears everywhere, but in generalized simulation. It is the ghost of desire that haunts the defunct reality of sex. Sex is everywhere, except in sexuality (Barthes) (Baudrillard 1990b:5).

Even resistance through seduction is incorporated.

In summary, we can argue that there is a very general problem in these various accounts of postmodernism. What is the significance of the word 'post'? It can mean after modernism, but its use would not imply being in opposition to modernism or modernity. Indeed, postmodernism might be regarded as fundamentally part and parcel of the modern. Postmodernism as 'aftermodernism' could be

regarded as merely the logical conclusion of three hundred years of modernist, rational capitalism. Postmodernism is the logical outcome of technical changes in production, new means of distribution and storage, and finally of expanded consumption based on a credit revolution. Postmodernism as after modernism would be the tangible effect of an information revolution. This meaning of postmodernism would appear to be compatible with Bell's sociology of post-industrial society.

By contrast, postmodernism might mean against rather than beyond modernism. Postmodernism in this guise challenges modernist rationality as anti-humanism, regarding the underlying ethic of world mastery in modernization as the final threat to the survival of the planet. The logical outcome of modernization from this perspective is the holocaust; the gas chamber is the ultimate symbol of the triumph of instrumental rationality (Bauman 1989).

If these notes on modernism and postmodernism help to clarify the bare bones of the debate, we can now return to our original question, namely what is the relationship between Weber's analysis of rational capitalism and the contemporary struggle over reason?

Weber and the Limits of Reason

The heart of the issue appears to be Weber's ambiguities about modern capitalism and rationality (Lukács 1955). On the one hand, Weber's sociology can be read as a celebration of the underlying virtues of capitalist rationality. Like Marx, Weber believed that capitalism had swept away the rubbish of previous epochs. It had destroyed charismatic and traditional authority, clarifying the rational nature of modern systems of authority. In bureaucracy, rationalization produced a system of reliable, dependable decision-making for the realization of public goals. All of these changes in law, politics and production had removed the *ad hoc*, contingent and precarious systems of decision-making of traditional societies. Secularization had liberated human beings from the magical world of the ancients. The history of the city in the Western world had created a space within which the burgher-citizen could evolve as a rights-bearing agent. On the other hand, the very same processes of rationalization threaten to subordinate imagination and inspiration to the demands of standardized routines and technical procedures;

they threaten to produce a new characterology of soulless, machine-like robots. In this context it is worth quoting yet again the famous passage from Weber's address of September 1919:

The fate of our age, with its characteristic rationalization and intellectualization and above all the disenchantment of the world is that the ultimate, most sublime values have withdrawn from public life, either into the transcendental realm of mystical life or into the brotherhood of immediate personal relationships between individuals. It is no accident that our greatest art is intimate rather than monumental, nor is it fortuitous that today only in the smallest groups, between individuals, something pulsates *in pianissimo* which corresponds to the prophetic *pneuma* which formerly swept through great communities like fire and welded them together (Lassman and Velody 1989:30).

In the context of disenchantment, polytheistic values and the withdrawal of charismatic inspiration into the private and the intimate, where is a person to find a calling or a purpose which might be satisfactory and compatible with intellectual integrity? It is well known that Weber ruled out a number of options which were eagerly sought at the time. First, he disregarded Freudian psychoanalysis as a serious life-orientation, because this 'psychiatric ethic' generally 'makes only the demand that one should confess what one is and what wishes one has had... Freudian therapy is simply a revival of confession' (Runciman 1978:386). Weber also rejected a return to the open arms of the Church, because the intellectual sacrifice was too great; we know also that Weber who regarded himself as 'unmusical' in his relation to religion could not adopt such a strategy. We have also seen that Weber rejected what he regarded as the other-worldly romanticism of Stefan George and his Circle on the grounds that it could not offer a realistic and effective response to the great challenges of the time, which were the economic, political and military crises of Germany. Weber also finally rejected the communitarian solutions which were popular among many of his students, solutions which sought to rediscover the lost *pneuma* of the charismatics. It is well known, therefore, that Weber finally puts his bet on personal responsibility in a calling in science or politics.

This choice was compatible with the outlook of the *Bildungsbürgertum* tradition in which personality (that is a career based on ethical goals, education and discipline) was opposed to the indulgences of the aristocracy and the unreflecting 'natural' life of the peasantry. The choice which Weber offers himself—to face soberly the trials and tribulations of the day—is reminiscent of the picture painted by Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (1972), of Odysseus, who fills his ears with wax and ties his body to the mast to face the 'demands of the day' in a spirit of resignation, asceticism and denial.

It is here, also, that Weber departed from Nietzsche on three grounds. First, Nietzsche as the father of postmodernism celebrated precisely the polytheism of values which Weber feared and deplored; for Nietzsche, polytheism was necessary for pluralism, because monotheistic values were incompatible with Nietzsche's quest for individuality. Second, Nietzsche would have rejected Weber's highly rationalistic choice of the ethic of responsibility as an act of resentment, namely as Socratism. For Nietzsche, 'the passions' had to be cultivated in the service of personality, not denied and subordinated. Third, Nietzsche, rejecting the fatalism and nihilism of Schopenhauer, embraced the idea of the revaluation of all values as a way out of the negativity of his times, but he offered very little by way of a programme for realizing these values, apart from the example of art as an intrinsically creative act.

Nostalgia/Postmodernism

If you believe that modernism has come to an end but there is no viable form of politics as yet for a postmodern world, if, that is, you believe that the grand narratives of Christianity, Marxism and humanism have come to an end, then nostalgia is the flip-side of postmodernism. Postmodern prophets often appear to cling covertly to some idea of the real, or the moral, or the political. To put it naively, it does not appear to be possible to be happy and a consistent postmodernist. If this rather general claim does not appear to be correct, then we might argue that bad postmodernism (postmodernism which does not embrace its own argument that reality has imploded on itself) tends towards melancholy. Let me take two examples.

Postmodernism is allegedly playful; it converts the serious moods and practices of modernism into fun. And yet much postmodern writing appears to be deadly serious. It sees the world as a panic state. Thus, Kroker *et al.* in the *Panic Encyclopedia* argue that 'Panic is the key psychological mood of postmodern culture' (Kroker *et al.* 1989:13). Yet panic would appear to be a mood appropriate to people who have retained some psychic commitment to the modernist assumptions about order, stability or regularity. You have to have panic about something, and therefore panic suggests a personality or characterology which would be anxious about the proliferation of signs, messages and codes in postmodernism. A postmodern personality, one would expect, should celebrate the liberating potential of postmodern simulation, difference and fun, not experience panic about the disappearance of the real. In this light, the *Panic Encyclopedia* is in fact a modernist panic by authors who still remember the real, the social and the moral. Panic authors are people who, to misquote Weber, cannot face up to the demands of the postmodern.

Although Baudrillard consistently denies that he is a post-modernist, his work has been highly influential in the postmodern movement, at least within the social sciences. A nostalgic quest for the real appears to lie behind much of Baudrillard's work. His *America* (1988) has all the marks of a spiritual quest in the desert for security and the real. His objections to American mass culture indicate an aesthetic which is still committed to real experiences and inter-social standards of beauty. In *Cool Memories* (1990a), his 'diary' on American life, Baudrillard, against his own intentions, presents a nostalgic search for authenticity, a quest for real food, real women, and real culture. His complaint is fundamentally that America is a fake, a cardboard replica of itself. His study of *Seduction* (1990b) has a nostalgia for an epoch in which sexuality had not been undone by sex, for a period in which women had the power to seduce men through recognized rituals of exchange.

Conclusion

As we enter the final decade of the twentieth century, the world of Max Weber is in many respects remote. We are obviously separated

from the narrow, nationalistic, and authoritarian culture of the German mandarins by, for example, what Parsons (1971) called the expressive and educational revolutions, by the growth of mass consumption and intercontinental tourism, and by new social movements such as the green movement. However, we are also separated from Weber's world by AIDS, by an ecological crisis, and by the military capacity to destroy the planet. There is, however, also much that continues to connect us with the socio-political world of Weber.

It is evident that by the end of the century a united Germany, in terms of population, economic power and scientific leadership, will be once more the dominant core of Europe. While Weber's anxieties about a Russian invasion of Europe now appear to be remote, the problems of Germany in relation to Poland, Austria and the post-communist republics of eastern Europe are as significant now as when Weber published his work on the agricultural workers east of the river Elbe in 1892–3 (Tribe 1989). Weber's sociological analyses of German bureaucracy, state power and the erosion of liberal individualism are still relevant. Germany continues to be a society in which the culture of officialdom, the social dominance of the civil service and the respect for authority are an important legacy of the *Obrigkeitsstaat*. The racial issues which are not too far below the surface of Weber's texts (in for example his vicious comments on Polish 'animals' in his work on the Prussian agricultural issue) continue to be significant social dangers in Germany, as they do throughout Europe. Unfortunately, the unification of Germany has in the early 1990s reopened the whole question of the security of Polish borders.

In many detailed features of modern political life, Weber's sociology continues to be relevant seventy years after his death. One might simply refer to: his critical evaluation of the possibilities of socialism; the bureaucratization of political parties in relation to the difficulties of institutionalizing democracy; the limitations of the common law tradition; the problem of America as a super-power; or the threat to university autonomy from state regulation. However, in this volume it is the theme of modernization and rationalization, with special reference to religious cultures, which is given prominence, because it is the ambiguities and contradictions of modernist rationalization which form the bridge between the

world of Max Weber and the modern condition. Weber's uncertainties and fears which were dramatically outlined in the two public lectures on politics and science as vocations (Lassman and Velody 1989) about the consequences of modernization, have provided a rather precise framework for understanding *our fin-de-siècle* anxieties about the postmodern world.

2 *Max Weber's Historical Sociology: a Bibliographical Essay*

Introduction

Although a number of different theoretical traditions compete for intellectual dominance within what can be broadly called 'the historical sciences' (*Geschichtswissenschaften*), in this commentary it is argued that these traditions are still in fact divided between Marxist and Weberian legacies. Having made that claim, this chapter concentrates on recent developments in Weberian historiography to show that many of the conventional divisions between Marxist and Weberian perspectives have largely been eroded. The extent of this erosion can be judged by the symposium on Weber, which was edited by Gneuss and Kocka (1988), and by the exchange between Luciano Pellicani, Guy Oakes and Paul Piccone in *Telos*, in which it is claimed that the continuing relevance of Weber's historical sociology has to be understood in the context of both the 'collapse of Marxist paradigms and the steady decline in prestige of quantitative sociology' (Piccone 1988–9:96). Both Marxist and Weberian historiography may be eventually subjected to the same postmodernist critique, which will call into question the possibility of global metanarratives of modernization (Laclau 1988).

However, the paradox is that, while Weberian scholarship has made a major contribution to historical sociology of modernization and modernity, it is not clear what constitutes *the* Weberian approach. In fact, given the extent of the disagreements (Tenbruck

1975a; Hennis 1988; Käsler 1988; Tribe 1989a) which have surrounded the interpretation of Weber's sociology, it is probably necessary at the outset to abandon any quest for a unitary perspective on the Weber corpus. Although it is much disputed, the Marxist contribution is not only more obvious, but also well articulated and developed; Marxism is historical materialism. The fact that contemporary critics have claimed that historical materialism is either false or inadequate (Giddens 1981; Hall 1985) only serves to underline the fact that Marx's theory of history is a specific corpus of theorizing and research which can be either attacked or defended (Cohen 1978; Shaw 1978; Larrain 1986). With Weber, this theoretical terrain has yet to be identified, and therefore the singular idea of 'Max Weber's vision of history' (Roth and Schluchter 1979) is premature.

In contemporary social science, there are a number of important and influential paradigms in historical sociology. There have been a variety of major contributions within a broadly Marxist tradition, for example Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch within the *Annales* school, the British Marxist historians, and Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory (Skocpol 1984). There have been, as we shall see, equally far-reaching and significant contributions to Weberian analysis of macro-social change (Marshall 1982; Poggi 1983; Collins 1986a; Glassman 1986; Holton 1986; Mann 1986). The number of alternatives to these two paradigms is somewhat limited. Clearly the 'process-sociology' of Norbert Elias (1987a), as illustrated in the monumental contributions to the analysis of the origins and development of civilization (Elias 1978; 1982; 1983), represents a direct challenge to sociologists not to 'retreat to the present' (Elias 1987b). There is also a recognizable 'Amsterdam School' around Elias which produces distinctive and evocative historical analysis (Goudsblom 1977; Mennell 1985). Although there is no space here to demonstrate this claim, it can be plausibly argued that Elias' work bears a strong relationship to Weber's interest in the long-term emergence of rationalization (Turner 1985a) on the one hand, and to the Frankfurt School's critique of the historical development of control systems which are an important feature of instrumental rationality (Bogner 1989) on the other. These interpretations of Elias would suggest that, while process-sociology is a powerful analytical tool, it is not yet clear

whether or how Elias's work breaks out of the Marx-Weber paradigm.

Another alternative to the dominance of Marx and Weber would be structural-functionalism. Although functionalism is often criticized for its lack of sensitivity to historical change (Goudsblom 1987), functionalism is *a* theory of social change in terms of the increasing differentiation of social structures as the functional requirements of social systems become more complex (Parsons 1961). This increasing differentiation requires ever more far-reaching social integration of social systems through cultural values. Functionalism *has* been criticized for its dependence on the outmoded organic analogy of nineteenth-century Spencerian evolutionism (Peel 1969), but it is also the case that Talcott Parsons's contributions to the analysis of modern societies have been neglected (Parsons 1966; 1971). Conventional criticisms of Parsonian sociology can be challenged, partly because Parsons's contributions to economic theory and political sociology have either been ignored or misunderstood (Buxton 1985; Holton and Turner 1986). Moreover, the emergence of neofunctionalism (Alexander 1985) is based on the argument that the original limitations of the structural-functionalist framework can be transcended, as the work of Paul Colomy (1982) and Jeffrey Prager (1986) demonstrates. However, the potential contribution of the neofunctionalist school around Jeffrey Alexander (1988) to historical scholarship is at present more of a promise than an actuality.

Weber's Historical Sociology

These preliminary notes have attempted to establish that the historical sociology of Marx and Weber remains the principal set of orientations to the field of historical research in sociology. It is now possible to turn to the character of Weberian historical sociology. I shall commence with a number of observations on the peculiarities of Weberian scholarship and exegesis. Although Weber is probably one of the sociologists most frequently cited by historians, he nowhere outlined or defined 'historical sociology' in a systematic and self-consciously theoretical fashion. Weber entered into specific disputes with historians and historical analysis in 'Objective

Possibility and Adequate Causation in Historical Explanation' (Weber 1949) and contributed to disputes around figures like Karl Lamprecht (Whimster 1987), but he did not self-consciously see himself developing a system of historical analysis. However, it is clearly the case that in *Ancient Judaism* (1952), *General Economic History* (1981), *The City* (1958), *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930), and *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilisations* (1976) Weber was doing research which modern scholars would obviously regard as contributions to historical sociology, indeed as contributions to the theory and philosophy of history. To some extent, this contribution is taken for granted in the sense that, while Marx's work has been subjected to almost continuous assessment by historians and sociologists, Weber's work as a contribution to historical sociology has not been put under such close scrutiny. The Protestant Ethic argument has been a topic of endless and continuous evaluation (Green 1959; Eisenstadt 1968; MacKinnon 1988; Schluchter 1988), but the entire structure of Weber's historical sociology has rarely been approached comprehensively, apart possibly from the work of Randall Collins (1986a) and Wolfgang Schluchter (1981) on Weber's historical analyses of rationalization. Possibly because of this exegetical silence, there is a considerable amount of historical research which remains implicitly Weberian, without that relationship being adequately theorized. Marshall G.S.Hodgson's *The Venture of Islam* (1974) is a case in point. By contrast, a number of sociological figures, who contributed to the development of historical sociology within a specifically Weberian framework, have failed to receive the general recognition which they clearly deserve. One particularly important example would be Benjamin Nelson (Huff 1981). Nelson's classic *The Idea of Usury, from Tribal Brotherhood to Universal Otherhood* (1949) and his many contributions to the analysis of spiritual direction, conscience and the structures of consciousness, not only developed Weber's interest in the organization of spirituality, but anticipated some aspects of Michel Foucault's analysis of the 'technologies of the self' (Foucault 1988).

The consequence of this peculiar set of circumstances is that we do not possess a coherent and contemporary statement of the essential features of Weber's historical sociology. In practice, Weber's sociology is often defined negatively in relation to Marx,

namely how Weber's empirical-historical studies (especially the Protestant ethic thesis) differ from Marx's historical materialism. In this respect, three features of Weber's historical sociology are brought into prominence. First, Weber's methodological position gives special prominence to the specificity of contingent circumstances in historical change and, while Weber was clearly concerned to understand the general development of historical processes (such as the rationalization of legal systems, musical notation and modern means of auditing) he was equally impressed by the importance of local variations and differences (Holton and Turner 1989). In this respect, Weber's sociology was thoroughly historicist. Weber's overt commitment to methodological individualism and his scepticism about the possibility of making accurate large-scale generalizations or law-like statements precluded any confidence in the scientific, predictive character of the analysis of modes of production in historical materialism.

Weber sought to avoid what he called a 'one-sided materialistic interpretation' (Weber 1930:183). Furthermore, Weber's fatalism prevented any optimistic view of the Hegelian *Aufhebung* of historical unfolding in western civilizations; it was the unintended consequences of historical actions which haunted Weber's sociological imagination. Weber was inspired more by Nietzsche's notion that we are destroyed by our own virtues than by any revolutionary (Marxist or Tolstoyan) hope (Turner 1981). Part of the difficulty in deciding how Weber and Marx differed in terms of the analysis of historical causality depends on the complexities of and instabilities in Weber's use of ideal types, the hermeneutic implications of interpretive methods, the employment of the notoriously elusive and ultimately metaphorical notion of 'elective affinity' (*Wahlverwandschaft*), and his hostility to general law-like statements. These problems in the comparison of Marx and Weber have been particularly acute in the case of the Protestant ethic thesis (Lowy 1989).

The second much discussed difference is the prevalence given to superstructural elements (culture, law, religion and ideology) in Weber's analysis of the development of western capitalism. If Marx's most overt statement of the fundamental principles of historical materialism was to be found in the preface to *The Critique of Political Economy* in which he argued that:

The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness (Marx 1971:20)

then Weber summarized his work in a mechanistic metaphor:

Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest (Gerth and Mills 1948:280).

The 'elective affinity' between the needs of capitalist production and the discipline of the Calvinistic calling to master the world produced a social force which was sufficiently powerful to break the hold of traditional values over, not only economic, but political and legal relationships. It was this combination of asceticism, discipline and activism which Parsons identified, in his introduction to Weber's *The Sociology of Religion*, as the major factor in the modern breakthrough against traditionalism: 'Weber's *primary* interest is in religion as a source of dynamics of social change, not religion as a reinforcement of the stability of societies' (Parsons 1965: xxx). Rightly or wrongly, Weber thought that this historical interpenetration of economic and religious factors undermined the theoretical separation between base and superstructure in the metaphor of the *Preface*. Despite the many advances in contemporary Marxist theories of ideology, Weber's scepticism over any attempt to separate cultural and material factors via a variety of metaphors (base and superstructure, camera obscura, and fetishism) continues to be valid. In addition, Weber's general criticisms of the elasticity of 'the economic interpretation of history' (Weber 1949:69–72) continue to be relevant to any evaluation of Marxist perspectives on social change.

However, the general thrust of the Protestant ethic thesis can be put to more powerful sociological usage as an argument about the conversion of the traditional estate system into a dynamic (bourgeois) class formation; Weber's argument offers a sketch of

the rise of the western *Bürgertum* system. The Protestant ethic helped to undermine the cultural constraints on which the traditional stratification system depended (Poggi 1983:92–113). In this respect, Weber provided a more sophisticated version of the juridical arguments in Sir Henry Maine's *Ancient Law*, in which the history of 'the progressive societies' is a 'movement from status to contract' (Maine 1917:100); western history is, in ideal typical terms, a transition from closed *Gemeinschaft* to open *Gesellschaft* relationships (Turner 1988).

The third area of differentiation is the importance in Weber's work of power relations, political processes, violence and the state. It can be argued that the central theme of Weber's sociology is domination, and that his sociology is therefore essentially *Herrschaftssoziologie* (Freund, 1968:218). Weber's sociology involved the study of three forms of power, and their various mechanisms of institutionalization. These three forms are economic, political and spiritual. Class analysis, for Weber, is the study of how economic classes attempt to achieve a monopoly of various forms of material power. Weber's political sociology is the analysis of the state as an institutionalized form of legitimate violence. Finally, at least one aspect of the sociology of religion is the study of how certain groups or institutions (theologians, prophets, churches and sects) attempt to control spiritual power. In his recent *The Sources of Social Power* Michael Mann (1986) has given us a comprehensive history of power in which he elaborates this schema into a fourfold typology of power—economic, ideological, military, and political. Mann's emphasis on the military dimension is both interesting and important, given Weber's views on the historically significant differences between Occidental and Oriental cultures in terms of their organization of infantry and cavalry—an issue which he developed in terms of his theory of the origins of citizenship. It is curious, however, that while Mann acknowledges the contribution of Weber, he does not engage systematically with any real theoretical debate with the legacy of Weber (Lenski 1988).

While it is conventional to define Weber's historical sociology as a polemic in relation to historical materialism, it is equally important to maintain some grasp of the similarities between their perspectives. Again by way of simplification, it is convenient to consider three areas. First, although Weber's overt commitment to

a *verstehende Soziologie* appears to separate him from the idea of a Marxist science of modes of production (Hindess and Hirst 1975), in practice Weber can be said to have operated with a version of the mode-of-production thesis. In *The Agrarian Sociology*, which was published in 1909 in the *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, Weber provided a sociology of the slave mode of production in classical Greece and Rome, and in the concluding chapter on 'The Social Causes of the Decline of Ancient Civilization', which was given originally as a public lecture to the Akademische Gesellschaft of Freiburg in 1896, he traced the collapse of the slave labour market and the origins of medieval serfdom. Although Weber was not specifically concerned with primitive communism, he did provide a compelling picture of a nomadic-pastoral system in *Ancient Judaism* (Weber 1952). One of the interesting features of Ronald Glassman's study (1986) is that it enables us to see the relevance of Weber's historical sociology to primitive societies. If we add to this list Weber's analysis of the historical transition from German agrarian communism to modern capitalism in the *General Economic History*, his writings on the origins of Russian revolutionary socialism (Murvar, 1971; Scaff and Arnold 1985), and his critique of bureaucratic state-socialism, then it is possible to give further support to the idea that, while Marx and Weber disagreed about the precise mechanisms of change, Weber operated with an implicit understanding of the general stages of societal development through various modes of production.

The second area of similarity lies in the fact that both Marx and Weber shared a view of western capitalism as an historically revolutionary system which not only liquidated the traditionalism of occidental feudalism, but also—through imperialism and colonialism—undermined the stationary and stagnant features of oriental society. Although the presence of a theory of an Asiatic mode of production in Marx and Engels has been hotly disputed (Bailey and Llobera 1981), there does appear to be a clear view in Marxism of the stationary character of the traditionalism of the Asian empires, a view which Marxism shared with the utilitarians (Turner 1974a). In Weber, the analysis of Asian societies in terms of patrimonial systems which were resistant to internal change also underlies the fact that he ruled out the possibility of autonomous capitalist development outside feudal Europe, because the political

structures of patrimonialism and the traditionalist values associated with them prevented any breakthrough towards a more dynamic system. Weber's contributions to the study of Asian societies have given rise to an extensive secondary literature (Otsuka 1966; Eisenstadt 1971; Jacobs 1971; Alatas 1972; Buss 1985), but S.J. Tambiah's *World Conqueror and World Renouncer* (1976) remains one of the most provocative and skillful applications of Weber's political sociology to Thailand in terms of what Tambiah calls 'the galactic polity'.

It has been argued that both Marx and Weber worked, explicitly in the case of Marx and implicitly in the case of Weber, with a mode-of-production theory of history. This congruence is hardly surprising, given the fact that nineteenth-century historiography inherited the views of the Scottish Enlightenment in which human history had passed through four stages, namely the hunting, pasturing, farming and commercial stages. In 1767, Ferguson in his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1966) developed the idea of civil society as a specific stage of human evolution out of primitive barbarism; this concept was further developed by Hegel and Marx. However, in addition to viewing history in terms of this periodization, both Marx and Weber held clear developmental views. These notions included technological developments, industrialization and the commercialization of human relationships via the evolution of money as a precise measure of exchange. More importantly, it can be argued that Marx and Weber converged around the twin ideas of the alienation of humanity through the commodification of human relations and the rationalization of life through the refinement of discipline, surveillance and control which is made possible pre-eminently by bureaucracy (Löwith 1982; Brubaker 1984). Two related concepts—estrangement and disenchantment—gave a tragic dimension, and hence a moral perspective, to their positions on human history, which, at least in the case of Weber, warns us against any simplistic division between values and facts in the epistemological foundations of the theory of history. However, it is clear that Weber held a largely pessimistic and melancholic view of history, which he shared, but not entirely, with the German mandarins (the university élite of the educated upper-middle class), whose social world was being rapidly transformed by industrialization (Ringer 1969:180).

Weber as a Theorist of Modernity

Having provided an overview of how Weber's historiography has been typically defined in contradistinction to Marxism, I shall now provide a more positive perspective on Weberian historical sociology by attempting to identify some leading features of contemporary Weberian scholarship, or at least scholarship which has been profoundly moulded by an engagement with the legacy of Weber. The first and most striking characteristic is the growing sophistication of the contemporary interpretation of the nature and purpose of Weber's general sociology. There is not only a greater sensitivity to the context (Mommsen and Osterhammel 1987), the intellectual roots of his sociological perspectives, especially in the sociology of religion (Kuenzlen 1978) and thematic dimensions (Riesebrodt 1980; Tenbruck 1980) of Weber's *oeuvre*, but an awareness of its rich metaphorical qualities (Tiryakian 1981). The translation of Dirk Käsler's study of Weber (1988) has provided English readers with a precise and scholarly guide to the chronology of Weber's entire work, much of which remains untranslated.

More importantly, Wilhelm Hennis's argument in *Max Weber: Essays in Reconstruction* (1988) has proved particularly important in stimulating discussion of the broad integrating theme in Weber's work, namely the social conditions or life-orders which give rise to different and distinctive types of characterology; this position is significant in identifying the philosophical anthropology behind Weber's historical sociology of Protestantism, which permits us to see more clearly the linkage between Nietzsche's cultural critique of modern nihilism and Weber's sociology of the iron cage. There is, however, much work still to be done in understanding the connections between the conservative critique of modern society in the Symbolists (primarily Stefan George and Rainer Maria Rilke) and Weber's analysis of the iron cage, although Wolf Lepenies's *Die drei Kulturen* (1988) has already proved to be an influential contribution to this task.

One important consequence of this more mature view of the whole sociology of Weber has been to shift attention away from the somewhat narrow debate over the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism. This expansion of scholarly horizons

can be seen in recent evaluations of Weber's contributions to the study of ancient Judaism (Zeitlin 1984), Islam (Turner 1974b; Schluchter 1987), religious syncretism (Camara 1988), ancient Christianity (Schluchter 1985) and the history of the city (Holton 1986). Within a wider framework, it is now recognized that, by concentrating debate around Weber's views on capitalism, a more significant issue was neglected, namely Weber as a theorist of modernity (Holton and Turner 1989; Whimster and Lash 1987) and, following Hennis's interpretation of the modern characterology of the professional man of vocations, the heartless specialist and the Puritan ascetic.

History and Macro-sociology

In order to give a more detailed perspective on contemporary scholarship, I shall concentrate on two substantial contributions to Weberian historical sociology, namely Randall Collins's *Weberian Sociological Theory* (1986a) and Ronald Glassman's *Democracy and Despotism in Primitive Societies a Neo-Weberian Approach to Political Theory* (1986). Both studies reflect notable features of modern Weberian theory: a strong emphasis on macro-sociological process over whole social systems, which are set within large-scale historical periods. Both authors also self-consciously borrow extensively from both Marx and Weber, but their aim is to employ Weberian categories to write historical sociology rather than simply attempting to provide a parasitic commentary on Weber's sociological texts. Since there are strong grounds for believing that Weber's work as a whole is inconsistent (Alexander 1983), there is no self-evident virtue in merely providing an exegesis of the Weberian corpus.

Collins's approach is to be recommended for its breadth and its attempt to develop Weberian theory into new areas. For example, he demonstrates the analytic power of Weber's basic theoretical framework for the analysis of the historical organization of sexuality, the role of the family in the distribution of property, and the status of women in courtly politics. Collins's account here can be usefully compared with Leslie D. Blustone's *Max Weber's Theory of the Family* (1988). Collin's primary interest is, however, to show

that there have been a number of separate and earlier take-offs of rational capitalism before post-Reformation capitalism, namely the corporate religious capitalism of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages and in the Buddhist monasteries of medieval China. One of the impressive aspects of Collins's approach is to integrate Weberian social theory with a global geopolitics of state formation and international trade. In his chapter on 'Modern technology and geopolitics', it is also instructive to see Collins drawing our attention to the importance of a genuine sociology of militarism, not only for understanding Weber's sociology, but for developing a viable sociology of macro-change in the modern world. In this respect, there is an obvious convergence with the type of macro-sociological analysis being advocated by Anthony Giddens in *The Nation-State and Violence* (1985).

In theoretical terms, Collins (1986a; 1986b) is clearly aware of the tensions between an evolutionary interpretation of Weber (for example, over the long-term development of rationality) and a historicist position in which the specificity of contingent, peculiar and local conditions determine the character of capitalism and its emergence. He supports this second view by arguing that:

Weber saw the rise of large-scale capitalism, then, as the result of a series of combinations of conditions which had to occur together. This makes world history look like the result of configurations of events so rare as to appear accidental. Weber's position might well be characterized as historicist, in the sense of seeing history as a concatenation of unique events and unrepeatable complexities (Collins 1986a:35).

Thus, while in many respects Weber's views on the fatefulness of action would appear to distinguish his sociology from Marxist attempts either to establish the laws of the mode of production or to identify definite stages in the emergence of modes of production, Collins regards his own Weberian study as highly congruent with Marxism. Thus, he notes that the 'book begins and ends on Marxian themes' (Collins 1986a:37). A rather similar interpenetration of Marxist and Weberian perspectives provides the structure of Glassman's study.

As a preamble to Glassman's work, it is instructive to consider the analytical role of the concept of 'primitive society' in the foundation of modern social science (Kuper 1988). In Emile Durkheim's attempt to develop the sociology of religion (Lukes 1973), two accounts of 'primitiveness' were clearly very important: William Robertson Smith's *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889), and Spencer and Gillen's *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899). For Marx and Engels, it was Lewis Henry Morgan's work on *The League of the Iroquois* (1851) and *Ancient Society* (1877) which proved to be of seminal importance in their theory of primitive communalism, the origins of the family, and the relationship between private property and the state (Terray 1972). We should approach Glassman's study as a contribution to the contemporary analysis of primitive society as a model of what might be politically and socially possible (in terms of greater equality or freedom, for example) within a Weberian inquiry into the constraints imposed by the distribution of power in all known societies. While Glassman is very concerned to explore the potential of a Weberian theory of power in relation to 'primitiveness', it is curious that he makes relatively little use of Weber's own preoccupation with the religious and political implications of nomadic pastoralism, namely the confederacy of Jewish tribes in the ancient Near East in *Ancient Judaism*. Weber's study of Israelite prophecy was important, not simply as a contribution to the sociological understanding of ethical prophecy and primitive charisma, but in the development of Weber's views on how certain types of religio-cultural configurations 'anticipated' or 'promoted' the dynamic of modernity.

Glassman's interest in primitive societies lies elsewhere, namely in the elementary forms of democracy and despotism. Employing an ideal typical strategy, he distinguishes between primitive democracies (the hunting-gathering bands and the herding-hunting tribes) and primitive despotisms (horticultural village societies and herding-nomadic societies). In the democratic forms, there are structural and economic arrangements which make possible open discussion in order to reach a communal consensus. Because warfare is sporadic, individualistic and often playful, there is little opportunity for organized despotism. One measure of such primitive democracy is the fact that women typically participated in

such public debates. He argues that this 'campfire democracy' was the 'first unique political institution' which developed, not out of some Rousseau-like natural goodness, but 'out of the necessities of survival in a condition of economic scarcity and political danger' (Glassman 1986:105). Campfire democracy placed a significant restraint on the exercise of physical violence by powerful men, because collective norms and interests were sufficiently strong to protect weaker members. However, with the development of horticultural societies, the ancient band and clan structures began to break down, and the traditional roles of men as hunters were challenged by new economic requirements, especially by the increasing importance of female labour in agricultural production. In response to these challenges, gerontocratic and theocratic secret societies evolved which created mechanisms for the assertion of male dominance over boys and women; age stratification became an important part of social structure. Religion, involving the control of masks and shamanistic rituals, greatly enhanced the ideological power of patriarchy within the village social system. Warfare became organized as a more permanent, centralized and violent activity, which in turn required the direction of war chiefs. The sport-like practice of touching the enemy with a coup-stick among North American Plains Indians was no longer typical of societies involved in primitive forms of mass warfare. With growing social inequalities and authoritarian leadership, primitive societies also began to experience significant crises of legitimacy.

Although Glassman's thesis has been challenged on the grounds that the ethnographic data do not unambiguously support his view of campfire democracy, and that the ideal typical methodology is too rigid to illuminate complex empirical variations (Johnson and Earle 1988), it remains a powerful vindication of the Weberian perspective on the macro-societal development of stratification and its ideological legitimation through religious practices. His study is important for two additional reasons. First, he brings together very interesting historical data on the origins of scarification of the body and taboos in terms of a theory which is grounded in Freudian psychoanalytic views (for example, the berserk warrior syndrome) and Weberian political sociology. Secondly, he avoids the formalism of the ideal typical method by noting Weber's own insistence on the fact that different cultural starting points for the same economic or

political developments characteristically resulted in long-term civilization differences (Glassman 1986, 2:6).

In conclusion, in this bibliographical essay I have drawn attention to examples of contemporary Weberian scholarship in which macro-societal analyses are undertaken of the complex interaction between political, economic and ideological structures over long historical periods in such a manner as to bring about an important rapprochement between Marxist and Weberian historiography. One consequence is a welcome departure from the traditional 'Marx-versus-Weber paradigms' in which the Protestant ethic thesis is naively contrasted with historical materialism.

Conclusion: Weber and Modernity

Although these developments are important, there are two areas of research where one would like to see further elaboration of Weberian sociology. First, we need to maintain a broader view of Weber's general objective which was not a history of rational capitalism, but of modernity as such (Habermas 1987:2-5). Second, and directly related to this observation, Weber himself acknowledged that every serious scholar has to come to terms with Marx *and* Nietzsche (Baumgarten 1964:554-5). One way of rendering Nietzsche's critique of nihilism into a sociological question is via the research of Hennis, namely to see Weber's 'central question' in relation to the historical production of characterology through various forms of regulation and discipline. What is particularly characteristic of modernity is the development of a disciplined and rational life-conduct. Keith Tribe, in translating the expression 'rational *Lebensführung*' in Hennis's paper, quite appropriately renders this as 'rational conduct of life', but perhaps this suggests a rather passive personal adaptation to an existing pattern, whereas *führung* indicates a more vigorous activity, such as leadership, direction, command or domination. The image is more one of a man who imposes upon himself a leadership (an ethic of world mastery) which drives him in certain directions, which are self-planned. Expressing this notion in the terminology of an anthropological philosophy, Weber's historical sociology is focused around a set of questions (Weber's *Fragestellung*) or a problematic, namely the socio-cultural circumstances (the life-orders) which

produce different types of men or character. (The gendered pronouns have been retained here deliberately for the same reasons as expressed in the recent translation of Arnold Gehlen's *Man* (1988), namely that we cannot avoid the real sense of gender in Weber's sociology without fear of mistranslation.) Thus, Weber was particularly interested in the historical production of the specialist, the men who were driven by a calling in the world (the *Berufsmenschentum*). These issues, which have yet to be fully researched, show us how fundamentally Weber's *Fragestellung* was linked to Nietzsche's preoccupations with the soulless bureaucrats of the nationalistic universities, the Socratic men of reason (Stauth and Turner 1988), who were busy destroying the mandarin's world in the interests of national efficiency. Weber complained that these types were 'hedonists without a heart and experts without spirit' (*Genussmenschen ohne Hertz und Fachmenschen ohne Geist*); it was against these *Berufsmenschen* that Nietzsche proposed a new creation (in a sense, a new type of body)—the *Übermensch*. Weber's historical sociology in this context can be seen as a penetrating analysis of the cultural complexities of modernization as rationalization, an analysis which in many respects anticipated the current debate around modernism and postmodernism.

PART I

Religion and Tradition

3 *Islam, Capitalism and the Weber Theses*

Over the last half century a substantial tradition of Weberian scholarship has developed in Europe which is focused on elaborate analyses of Weber's exploration of the relationship between religion and capitalism. Naturally, this scholarship has involved examinations of Weber's basic contrast between the European tradition of Puritan asceticism and the mystical ethics of Asian religions. One consequence of this dominant sociological tradition has been a relative neglect of Weber's treatment of Islam. The exceptions include the work of Maxime Rodinson (1966), Ernest Gellner (1963), Sami Zubaida (1972) and Robert Boccock (1971). Although Weber died before completing his sociology of religion with a full study of Islam, his comments on early Islam and his more elaborate inquiry into Islamic law are sufficiently interesting to warrant more close inspection than they have hitherto received. As a prophetic, egalitarian, salvation religion with close derivation from Judaism and Christianity, Islam is a significant test of Weber's thesis on asceticism and rational economic activity. Before turning to Weber's argument that Islam was not a salvation religion, it will be useful to clarify the kaleidoscopic interpretations which exist concerning Weber's analysis of religion and capitalism.

In this study of Weber on Islam, there are three related arguments which need to be distinguished at the outset. The first line of argument is that one can detect at least four different Weberian theses about the connection between religious beliefs and capitalism; these four theses cannot be successfully reconciled in one coherent Weberian theory about the secular significance of religious doctrines. Hence any attempt to consider Islam as a test

case of Weber's sociology must be a complex process. My contention is that at least three of Weber's theses are either false or trivial. The fourth thesis, which examines the consequences of patrimonial domination, can be employed as a plausible explanation of some Islamic developments. My second argument is that, apart from factual mistakes about Islam, Weber stressed the wrong question about Islam. His main concern was to explain the absence of rational capitalism outside Europe, but the real sociological issue is to explain the transition of Islam from a monetary economy to an agricultural, military regime. Although Weber's analysis of Islam was not particularly successful, it is ironic that when Muslim reformers came to explain the decay of Islam, they employed implicitly Weberian arguments. It would, however, be naïve to accept this situation as proof of the validity of Weber's Protestant ethic thesis.

The Weber Theses

Considerable differences of opinion have arisen among sociologists over the interpretation of Weber's Protestant ethic thesis. These disagreements could emerge either through gross misunderstanding of Weber's sociology or because Weber's sociology itself contains different theses which are not necessarily consistent. While there certainly has been misconception, it can also be shown that a number of distinct theories emerge from Weber's sociology (Hill 1973). The temptation is always to read consistency into a sociologist, particularly a great sociologist, when one is concerned with the history of ideas (Skinner 1969). There are a number of ways by which one could bring out the different arguments Weber entertained, often simultaneously. Here it will be fruitful to refer to Alasdair MacIntyre's argument in 'A Mistake about Causality in the Social Sciences' (1971) where he observed that, in attempting to demonstrate the relation between beliefs and actions, sociologists have often started with a strong thesis and ended with a compromise. The strong thesis is that beliefs are secondary (Marx and Pareto) or that beliefs are independent (Weber). Most sociologists finish by eating their own words; thus, in MacIntyre's view, Weber slips into 'facile interactionism' in which beliefs cause

actions and vice versa. This framework can be used to illustrate four different arguments in Weber's sociology of religion.

The first interpretation of the Protestant ethic thesis (PE) is that it entails an idealistic theory of values. The second thesis (PE²) is that it is an argument about the necessary and sufficient conditions for the emergence of capitalism. The Weber thesis (W) takes a wider view of Weber's sociology of civilizations, stressing the importance of the concept of 'understanding' in Weber's philosophy of science. Finally, the second Weber thesis (W²) underlines the continuity between Marx and Weber by showing that Weber continuously draws attention to the ways in which beliefs are shaped by their socio-economic contexts. Weber showed that Islamic institutions were incompatible with capitalism because they had been dominated by a long history of patrimonialism. Islamic beliefs were certainly influential but still secondary to patrimonial conditioning. Unfortunately, this thesis was also held alongside other interpretations of Islamic history which make Weber's theoretical position unstable.

Economic and social historians were probably the first to treat the Protestant ethic as a strong theory in which Calvinist beliefs caused modern capitalism. H.M. Robertson, for example, attempted to refute what he regarded as Weber's psychologism by showing that capitalism arose from 'material conditions', not from 'some religious impulse' (Robertson 1935:xiii). More recently, H.R. Trevor-Roper (1967:4) asserted that Weber and Werner Sombart had reversed Marx's materialism. In attempting to win support for this particular thesis (PE), Syed Alatas claimed that Talcott Parsons, Pitrim Sorokin and Reinhard Bendix have all treated the Protestant ethic thesis as an idealistic theory (Alatas 1963). Although one can show that Weber thought that ideas were often causally significant, the main problem with this interpretation (PE) is that Weber himself denied that he held such a theory about Calvinism. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, he insisted that the theory that capitalism was the creation of the Reformation would be 'a foolish and doctrinaire thesis' (Weber 1930:91). Evidence also comes from Weber's associates at Heidelberg that he was annoyed by 'idealistic' interpretations of the Protestant ethic thesis. (Honigsheim 1968:43).

Sociologists who wish to reject the PE interpretation have normally claimed that the first essay on the Protestant ethic was merely an early, trial monograph. In this perspective (PEⁱ), asceticism is a necessary and sufficient condition of rational capitalism, but asceticism needs to be placed with a number of other key variables (Hansen 1963). Hence, sociologists have turned, for example, to Weber's *General Economic History* in which we find that the prerequisites of modern capitalism include capitalist modes of ownership, free labour, rational law and free market movements. It is sometimes argued in addition that Weber had a general scheme to set up an experimental test of PEⁱ by cross-cultural comparison. Thus Parsons has noted that Weber, turning from the method of agreement to the method of difference, embarked on 'an ambitious series of comparative studies all directed to the question, why did modern rational bourgeois capitalism appear as a dominant phenomenon only in the modern West?' (Parsons 1949:512).

While this interpretation (PEⁱ) of Weber does more justice to Weber's sociology considered as a whole than with a simple 'idealist' perspective (PE), it contains at least two difficulties. Firstly, it tends to assume that Weber accepted J.S.Mill's methodology and consequently understates Weber's *verstehende* sociology. Secondly, it assumes that the Protestant ethic thesis is continuous and central in Weber's later sociology. The issues raised, however, in *Ancient Judaism*, *The Religion of China* and *The Religion of India* concerning bureaucracy, patrimonialism and village organization are far wider than the restricted theme of the Protestant ethic thesis. In some respects, the problem of asceticism as an aspect of radical social change is tangential to Weber's analysis of Asian society (Otsuka 1966).

Sociologists who hold that Weber's main concern was to explore historical connections of values and meaning have rejected the view that Weber attempted, by cross-cultural comparison, to demonstrate the causal primacy of values. Rather than seeking any over-simplified causal chain, Weber was concerned, according to this view (W), to elaborate complex 'affinities' or 'congruencies' between social meanings. For example, Peter Berger argued that Weber's first concern was with 'elective affinity' (*Wahlverwandtschaft*), namely with the ways in which 'certain

ideas and certain social processes “seek each other out” in history” (Berger 1963:950). Similarly, Ferdinand Kolehgar has criticized those commentators who treat Weber’s theory of capitalism and Protestantism as a simple causal account of economic development. For Kolehgar, Weber attempted to demonstrate the ‘mutual reinforcement’ between economic and religious ethics (Kolehgar 1964:362). Weber is said to hold not a positivist or Humean view of causality; rather Weber sought to explain actions by grasping their subjective meaning.

Clearly, this view (W) does give legitimate weight to Weber’s own methodological position but this emphasis on ‘elective affinity’ rather than ‘empirical cause’ does run into three problems. It assumes a very debatable issue, namely that Weber followed consistently his own methodological guidelines. Weber’s ‘interpretative explanation’ (*verstehende Erklärung*) involves the philological interpretation of actor’s concepts and terms. Yet Weber never faced the problem of whether a complex meaning system such as ‘Islam’ can be unambiguously treated as a ‘religion’. Uncovering the multiplicity of meanings encased in the term ‘Islam’ is part of the sociologist’s fundamental task (Smith 1964). A further difficulty with explanations in terms of subjective meaning is that they rarely get beyond plausible descriptions of subjective states without relating these meanings to their social structural settings (Rex 1971). Finally, by giving priority to meaningful causality over empirical causality, this interpretation (W) finds it difficult to rescue Weber from the charge of ‘facile interactionism’. It could be argued that Weber avoided these problems by showing, in specific examples, how social groups acted as carriers of values and beliefs and how ‘elective affinities’ developed between the socio-economic basis of carrier groups and particular constellations of beliefs. However, such an interpretation of ‘elective affinity’ comes very close to a Marxist view that beliefs are socially constructed in terms of dominant economic interests.

The fourth view of Weber (W¹) often starts by refuting the facile notion that Weber was arguing with ‘the ghost of Marx’. For example, Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills claimed that Weber’s task was partly to complement Marx’s economic materialism ‘by a political and military materialism’ (Gerth and Mills 1961:47). They also suggested that, as Weber became more embittered by German

politics, he gave increasing prominence to 'material' factors. A consideration of Weber's public lecture at Freiburg in 1895 on ancient civilization shows, however, a consistent Marxist undercurrent in Weber's sociology (Weber 1950). Similarly, Norman Birnbaum has argued that Weber contributed a sophisticated sociology of motives to Marx's analysis of interests and ideologies (Birnbaum 1953). While contemporary reappraisals of Marx's Paris manuscripts and *Grundrisse* have enormously complicated our conception of the relationship between Marx and Weber, Weber's view of motive remains an important issue (Giddens 1970). Paul Walton has suggested that Weber's sociology enables us to study 'the possession by particular actors or groups of vocabularies, phrases or outlooks, which, far from being rationalizations or mystifications of interests, act as motive forces for action itself (Walton 1971:391). Walton's statement follows C. Wright Mill's theory that groups exercise social control, linguistically, by imputing good or bad motives to actions (Mills 1940). Mills pointed out that his approach was compatible with Weber's definition of a motive as 'a complex of subjective meaning' (Weber 1966:98).

The theory of motive implicit in Weber and elaborated by Mills is not incompatible with a Marxist treatment of ideas and ideology. There is no contradiction in saying that vocabularies of motive determine social actions, but these vocabularies are locked within specific socio-economic contexts. Indeed, Mills was at pains to point out that certain social settings exclude certain types of motive. In secular settings, a religious vocabulary of motives is either inappropriate or unavailable. It would not be difficult to imagine a situation in which traditional religious languages for describing and influencing social activities became obsolete with the decline in social power of religious élites. Like Weber, Marx thought that the religious culture of feudalism was wholly irrelevant under capitalist conditions: new motives appropriate to capitalist social relations would evolve without an atheistic campaign (Lobkowitz 1964). It is not difficult to interpret Weber's analysis of ascetic motives in precisely these terms. Weber himself claimed that it was necessary to investigate how ascetic motives were shaped by 'the totality of social conditions, especially economic' (Weber 1966:183). The fourth Weber thesis (W⁴) thus

asserts that to explain actions we need to understand the subjective meaning of social actions, but the languages which are available for describing and explaining actions are determined by socio-economic settings.

Weber's Characterization of Islam

Weber started by recognizing that Meccan Islam was a monotheistic religion based on ethical prophecy which rejected magic. Given that Allah was all powerful and omniscient, and man predestined, asceticism could have emerged as a solution to a potential 'salvation anxiety'. Weber argued that asceticism was blocked by two important social groups: the warrior group which was the main social carrier of Islam and the Sufi brotherhoods which developed a mystical religiosity. In adapting Muhammad's monotheistic Qur'an to the socio-economic interests of a warrior lifestyle, the quest for salvation was reinterpreted through the notion of *jihad* (holy war) to the quest for land. Islam was turned into a 'national Arabic warrior religion'. The concept of inner salvation never fully developed, and adherence to the outward rituals of the community became more significant than inward conversion:

Ancient Islam contented itself with confessions of loyalty to god and to the prophet, together with a few practical and ritual primary commandments, as the basis of membership (Weber 1965:72).

Weber concluded that despite Islam's origins in Jewish-Christian monotheism, 'Islam was never really a religion of salvation' (Weber 1965:263).

The warrior group turned the religious quest into a territorial adventure and Islamic asceticism was basically the rigour and simplicity of a military caste. Islam did, however, develop a genuine salvation path with ultimately religious goals, but this quest was mystical and other-worldly. Weber regarded Sufism as a mass religiosity which enabled Islam to reach its conquered subjects through their indigenous symbolism and ritual. Sufi mysticism thus introduced magical, orgiastic elements into Islam and watered

down its monotheism. The combination of a warrior religiosity with mystical acceptance of the world produced all the

characteristics of a distinctively feudal spirit; the obviously unquestioned acceptance of slavery, serfdom and polygamy ...the great simplicity of religious requirements and the even greater simplicity of the modest ethical requirements (Weber 1965:264).

Given this religious ethic, Islam could not provide the social leverage whereby the Muslim Middle East could be lifted out of feudal stagnation. At this level of argument it would be all too easy to interpret Weber as postulating that Islam did not produce capitalism because it had a culture incompatible with the spirit of capitalism (PE thesis). Alternatively, one could conclude that Weber is claiming (W thesis) that there was an elective affinity between the needs of a warrior group and the militaristic values which developed from pristine Islam. Weber's argument was, in fact, far more complex, and when he turned to an analysis of Islamic law it appears that his argument was constructed in terms of a string of prerequisites which are necessary for capitalist development (PEⁱ thesis).

At the centre of Weber's sociology of law is a distinction between arbitrary, *ad hoc* law-making, and legal judgments which are derived logically from general laws. In the case of substantive, irrational law, law-makers do not follow general principles, but judge each case according to purely arbitrary factors. The paradigmatic case of such law, in Weber's view, was that of the *qadi* who judges each case on personal, particularistic grounds. The law resulting from *qadi* decisions lacks generality and stability. However, Islam did possess a universal legal code, despite different legal schools, in the form of the *Shari'a* (Holy Law) which Weber categorized as substantive, rational law. Law of this kind follows principles which are derived from sacred revelation, ideology or a belief system imposed by conquest. The norms of the *Shari'a* were 'extra-legal' in the sense of being derived ultimately from prophecy and divine revelation. Whereas *qadi* justice was unstable, sacred justice was inherently inflexible and could not be readily extended systematically to meet new cases and situations. After the first three

centuries of Islam, the *Shari'a* was treated as complete and hence there emerged a hiatus between theory and practice which was bridged by *hiyal* (legal devices):

Innovations had to be supported either by a fetwa, which could almost always be obtained in a particular case, sometimes in good faith and sometimes through trickery, or by the disputatious casuistry of the several competing orthodox schools (Rheinstein 1964:241).

Therefore, Islam lacked a necessary condition for capitalist development, namely a systematic formal law tradition (PEⁱ thesis).

The standard sociological interpretation of Weber on law is that he held a strong thesis (PEⁱ) that rational formal law is a necessary prerequisite of rational capitalism and, as a result, crude economic explanations of capitalism are inadequate. Despite the explicit strong thesis (PEⁱ), Weber admitted that, in the case of English judge-made law, the absence of a gapless system of law had not held back the progress of English capitalism. In England, the courts of justice of the peace resembled '*khadi-justice* to an extent unknown on the Continent'. Weber went on to observe that 'adjudication by honoratores' on continental lines

may thus well stand in the way of the interests of the bourgeois classes and it may indeed be said that England achieved capitalistic supremacy among the nations not because but rather in spite of its judicial system (Rheinstein 1964:230–1).

English capitalism did not suffer in this way for two reasons, in Weber's view. Lawyers and entrepreneurs were drawn from the same social class and shared common interests; as a professional body, lawyers enjoyed considerable political autonomy. Weber appears, therefore, to have argued that it was not the content of law but the social context and institutionalization of law which was crucial for capitalist contractual relations. Similarly, the instability of *qadi* justice and the inflexibility of the *Shari'a* are products of patrimonial rulership rather than irreducible facts about Islamic culture. A close reading of Weber suggests this final interpretation (Wⁱ thesis). While occidental bourgeois strata preferred formal

rational law, oriental patrimonial rulers 'are better served' by substantive *qadi* justice which represents 'the likelihood of absolute arbitrariness and subjective instability' (Rheinstein 1964:229).

Viewing Weber's treatment of law in this light takes us to a final interpretation of Weber's analysis of Islam. This final thesis (Wⁱ) seems to be that Islam did not generate capitalist industrialization because for centuries the Muslim homelands had been dominated by a system of patrimonial bureaucracy controlled by foreign troops. It is the patrimonial economic and political structure which explains the absence of a capitalist spirit, of rational law and of independent cities. Furthermore, while Weber's dominant theoretical problem seems to be that of explaining the absence of capitalism outside Europe, Weber does appreciate that one major issue in Islamic history is to explain the relative stagnation of the economy between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries. Weber attempted to suggest an explanation in terms of the problems of financing patrimonial troops:

The feudalization of the economy was facilitated when the Seljuk troops and Mamelukes were assigned the tax yield of land and subjects; eventually land was transferred to them as service holdings...The extraordinary legal insecurity of the taxpaying population *vis-à-vis* the arbitrariness of the troops to whom their tax capacity was mortgaged could paralyse commerce and hence the money economy; indeed, since the period of the Seljuks (c 1050–1150) the oriental market economy declined or stagnated (Weber 1968:3, 1016).

The decline of the money economy was accompanied by increasing arbitrariness in law, land rights, property and civic relations. Weber summarized these political conditions under the term 'sultanism' which described purely arbitrary decisions of a patrimonial ruler. Since property holding became uncertain, the urban merchants invested in *wakfs* (family trusts consecrated to pious works) which were comparatively safe from interference. These investments encouraged an extensive immobilization of capital which 'corresponded fully to the spirit of the ancient economy which used accumulated wealth as a source of rent, not as acquisitive capital' (Weber 1968:3, 1097).

Since towns were merely army camps for patrimonial troops and since patrimonial interference discouraged investments in trade and craft industry, a bourgeois lifestyle and ethic did not develop in Islam. Thus, Weber concluded that the prebendal feudalism of imperial Islam 'is inherently contemptuous of bourgeois-commercial utilitarianism and considers it as sordid greediness and as the life force specifically hostile to it' (Weber 1968:3, 1106).

According to this thesis (W¹), Islamic values and motives certainly influenced the way in which Muslims behaved in their economic, political and social activities, but we can only understand why these values and motives were present by studying the socio-economic conditions (patrimonial dominance and prebendal feudalism) which determined Islamic history.

Critique of Weber's Islam

Weber's theory that the 'feudal ethic' of Islam was the result of Islam being dependent on a warrior stratum as its social carrier (PE or W) is factually wrong. Islam was primarily urban, commercial and literate. Mecca was strategically placed on the trade routes between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean; Muhammad's own tribe, the Quraysh, had achieved a dominant political position based on their commercial strength in the region. The Prophet himself had been employed on the caravans which brought Byzantine commodities to the Meccan market. The Qur'an itself is steeped in a commercial terminology (Torrey 1892). There has been a continuous conflict in Islam between the dominant urban piety and the values of the desert, but this conflict was also economic. Desert tribes threatened the trade routes and extracted taxation from merchants. Islam provided a culture which was capable of uniting Bedouins and urban merchants within a single community. Islam was thus as much a triumph of town over desert as Arab over Persian and Christian.

Weber's description of Islamic law was far more valid and accurate. Most scholars have recognized that the *Shari'a* was an ideal law which allowed a gap to grow between ideal and practice (Schacht 1964; Coulson 1956; Coulson 1964). The gap could only be filled by the most complex institutions and legal devices. The problem, then, lies not so much with Weber's description of Islamic

law but with how that account will fit into his explanation of Islamic social backwardness. It is not easy to insert this view of Islamic law into a theory that rational law is a necessary condition for capitalist development (PEⁱ thesis). Weber has already shown that English capitalism developed despite its judge-made legal system so that formal rational law may help capitalist development, but it cannot be a necessary condition. Furthermore, a number of scholars have concluded that the rigidity of Islamic law and its prohibition of usury never really interfered with commerce (Schacht 1936:1148; Rodinson 1966). The main problem in commercial life was the threat that patrimonial rulers would seize property and goods to pay off their troops.

There does, therefore, seem to be empirical support for Weber's final thesis (Wⁱ) that the decline of Islam's money economy is to be explained in terms of its patrimonial structure. While there have been many different explanations of Islamic decline in terms of international trade, demographic crises and even climate, there is a widely-held theory that the failure of the ruling institutions of Islam was closely connected with problems of military finance (Gibb and Bowen 1960; Saunders 1963; Cahen 1970; Inalcik 1973). There is an old oriental maxim which says:

A ruler can have no power without soldiers, no soldiers without money, no money without the well-being of his subjects, and no popular well-being without justice (Inalcik 1964:43).

By 'justice', the Ottoman jurists meant that the sultanate should maintain a balance between the two halves of society, between *askeri* (military, civil service and *ulema*) and *reaya* (Muslim and non-Muslim tax-payers). It was the inability of the sultanate to insure that each social stratum fulfilled its special functions, the inability to satisfy justice, which weakened the fabric of Islamic society, particularly under Ottoman rule.

Ultimately justice was dependent on successful warfare and a powerful sultanate. Warfare provided booty and land by which the sultanate could reward and pay off retainers. Without new land, tax-farming and bribery became major means of political influence and reward. Without a powerful sultanate, the complex bureaucratic machinery of the Ottoman state lacked direction and

purpose. Failure to extend Islam, the withdrawal of the sultan from public life and the increasing inefficiency of the military were interrelated aspects of social decline. When the Ottoman empire reached its territorial limits in 1570, the state in search of revenue to pay off the standing army was forced to let imperial fiefs to tax-farmers. The *sipahi* (land-owning cavalry) went into decline because of the growing use of firearms, but also because when a *sipahi* died without heir, his lands were appropriated by the treasury and let out for tax-farming. With the decline of the *sipahi*, the peasantry were at the mercy of the growing class of avaricious *multezims* (tax-farmers). As the *sipahi*, peasantry and merchants declined with the failure of the ruling institutions, local magnates (*Ayan*) and small dynasts (*Derebeyis*) arose to terrorize the provinces. As a political entity, Islam was unable to prevent nationalist movements in the Balkans, unable to exclude European colonists and unable to develop its own industry and trade (Stoianovich 1960).

These developments in Islam were explained by Weber in terms of the contradictions and imbalances of ‘sultanism’ as a political system (W¹ thesis).

Protestant Ethic and Muslim Apologetic

There are a number of theses in Weber’s sociology which give different explanations of social, especially capitalist, development. I have suggested that only the final thesis which explains the decline of Islamic society in terms of certain military-economic contradictions (W¹) has the support of modern research. The other three theses (PE, PEⁱ and W) suffer from damaging theoretical ambiguity and circularity, or they are factually false. It is ironic, therefore, that when Muslim reformers came to explain for themselves the apparent failures of Islamic civilization, they used implicitly Weberian arguments, especially theories of individual ascetic motivation (thesis PE and PEⁱ) rather than structural explanations (W¹).

The colonial expansion of Europe created an acute problem of theodicy: if Islam is the true religion, how are infidels so successful in this world? The Muslim answer to this issue has been shared by the most diverse reformist movements, namely: ‘Christians are

strong because they are not really Christian; Muslims are weak because they are not really Muslim' (Hourani 1962:129). In order to become 'really Muslim', it is necessary to rid Islam of foreign accretions and to discover original, pure Islam, which is seen to be completely compatible with the modern, scientific world. Pure Islam is based on an ascetic, activist, this-worldly ethic. The enemy of both pure Islam and modern society is a set of attitudes—fatalism, passivity, mysticism—which was introduced into Islam by the Sufis, Berber marabouts and related groups. Criticism of Sufism has been, of course, a persistent aspect of orthodox Islam over the centuries, but there is a new emphasis in the contemporary rejection of Sufi mysticism, namely that it is a drain on economic resources and is incompatible with asceticism and activism. Expenditure on tombs and festivals has been widely criticized, particularly in North Africa. Active involvement in this world thus became a major theme of Islamic reform directed against Sufi quietism. A favourite Koranic text of the reformer Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–97) was 'Verily, God does not change the state of a people until they have changed themselves inwardly' (Keddi 1968). Similarly, Rashid Rida asserted that the first principle of Islam was 'positive effort'.

There are, therefore, certain interesting parallels between Weber's account of Protestantism (PE and PE¹) and basic themes of Islamic reform. Pure Islam and Puritanism sought in the basic scriptures of their religion an ethic which would be free from mystical, ritualistic accretions. The result was a set of norms prescribing asceticism, activism and responsibility. Yet, the connection between Puritan asceticism in Europe and Islamic modernism in the Middle East is superficial and derivative. Probably the most significant difference is the social context in which Islamic 'puritanism' is located. Islamic reform was a response, often apologetic, to an external military and cultural threat; it was an attempt to answer a feeling of inferiority and frustration resulting from western colonialism. Despite the existence of pre-colonial Islamic 'puritanism' (Wahhabism, Hanbalitism), Islamic reform in the modern period was not so much an autonomous development as an attempt to legitimate the social consequences of an exogenous capitalism. Basic Islamic terms were conveniently translated into European ones without much respect for etymology:

Ibn Khaldun's umran gradually turned into Guizot's 'civilization', the maslaha of the Maliki jurists and Ibn Taymiyya into the 'utility' of John Stuart Mill, the ijma of Islamic jurisprudence into the 'public opinion' of democratic theory (Hourani 1962:344).

The 'Protestant ethic' of Islam was second-hand and it was such because the leaders of Islamic modernism were either educated by Europeans or accepted European traditions. Weber's Protestant ethic theory (these PE and PE¹) came to fit Islamic modernization simply because Muslims came to accept a European view of how to achieve capitalist development. Reformers like al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida accepted the view, especially as expressed by M. Guizot (*General History of Civilization in Europe*), that social progress in Europe had followed the Protestant Reformation. It is no surprise that al-Afghani saw himself as the Luther of Islam.

Conclusion

In this inquiry into Weber's view of Islam, I have attempted to show that we can plausibly perceive four different theses in Weber's sociology of civilizations. On the basis of contemporary research and theoretical discussion, three theses can be dismissed as either false or theoretically weak. The fourth thesis is that Islam declined and was eventually forced into economic dependence on Europe because it could not solve an inherent weakness in what Weber called 'sultanism'. In this final perspective, Islamic beliefs are still treated as influential, but the presence of these beliefs rather than some other beliefs is explained by the social and economic structure of patrimonialism. When Muslim reformers came to understand their own economic decline, they often employed theories of ascetic motivation, but this fact cannot be taken as evidence that asceticism is a necessary aspect of capitalist development. The ideology of hard work in modern Islam was very largely a colonial importation.

4 *Origins and Traditions in Islam and Christianity*

Islam emerged in the interstices of the Byzantine and Sassanian empires and was institutionalized as a theocracy which came to have dominant power within its immediate geographical location. Christianity by contrast was precluded from political control by the hegemonic position of the Roman Empire at Jerusalem, Alexandria and Rome itself. Christianity was born into a social world that was already politically so organized so that:

Christianity for a time served in significant measure as the faith of the proletariat of the Roman Empire; whereas nascent Islam was the faith, and indeed the *raison d'être* of an entrepreneurial class (Smith 1975:37).

Whereas Islam after AD 630 had effectively silenced local opposition and, during the Umayyad dynasty, became a powerful state, Christianity during its decisive period remained a persecuted minority within an alien political system. From the early Christian point of view, the temporal power of Rome was both foreign and transitory; the problem was one of short-term religious survival in the interregnum between the fall of Jerusalem and the restoration of the kingdom of God. For Islam it was more a question of perfecting and consolidating a sacred community which was already in existence. While I wish to support this type of argument in part, I shall be more concerned with the question of ideological *interpretations* of the foundations of religion rather than with the empirical, historical problem itself. I shall be concerned with religious origins as normative criteria, not as empirical facts. It

seems sensible to develop this approach in terms of a running commentary on Max Weber's treatment of charisma, social carriers and social classes in relation to the general problems of salvation religions.

While in general Weber wants to assert that ideas are influential in social action, new beliefs only become important in social movements if a number of conditions are fulfilled. A charismatic leader as the bearer of new cultural interpretations has to demonstrate that his or her personal authority is genuine in the face of competing leaders, and this situation of competition involves an ideological contest in which new social leaders appeal to the specific needs of disciples. For a charismatic breakthrough to take place, a new leader must be able to recruit social groups on the basis of a convergence between their socio-economic interests and a new set of beliefs. These carriers transform the original message in the direction of their own status requirements, and this process is an important aspect of the routinization of charisma along traditional lines. There is a selective principle involved in the development of charismatic authority whereby certain features of an innovatory cultural interpretation are fitted into the social requirements of new recruits. For Weber, those social groups which become the bearers of new 'world-images' set their own peculiar stamp on charismatic movements. When Weber discusses the attempt made by intellectuals to systematize social thought, he notes that the basic, irrational presuppositions of religious modes of thought are

historically and socially determined, at least to a very large extent, through the peculiarity of those strata that have been the carriers of the ways of life during its formative and decisive period (Gerth and Mills 1961:281).

Weber's view of the importance of social carriers as both propagators of beliefs and transformers of pristine charisma is fundamentally connected with Weber's position on the relationship between beliefs and economic interests. In the same context, Weber makes the claim that:

Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently, the 'world-images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest (Gerth and Mills 1961:280).

Although 'interests' provide the dynamic of social change, charismatic leaders are important because they generate new ideas which, when systematized as 'world-images', determine the direction of social change. Weber complicates and modifies this position by noticing that only those charismatic ideas which attract an audience and which are propagated by social carriers become historically significant. It is in reality the 'peculiarity' of the social bearers rather than the original charismatic conception of ideas which is significant during 'the formative and decisive' epoch of a social movement. The social carriers of religious beliefs are crucial because they set a decisive mark on religious movements which becomes a normative standard for all later developments.

In order to understand the major ideological and institutional differences between world religions, it is consequently imperative for sociologists to study their primary social bearers. It is this blend, so to speak, of the 'material ideal interests' of social carriers of the major religions which came to provide the defining characteristics of world religions. Thus, when Weber is once more discussing intellectualism in relation to religion in *The Sociology of Religion*, he says that the types of representative of the various classes that propagated the world religions can be summarized in a 'formula', namely the bureaucrat in Confucianism, the magician in Hinduism, the mendicant monk in Buddhism. 'In Islam, the warrior seeking to conquer the world; in Judaism the wandering trader; and in Christianity, the itinerant journeyman' (Weber 1965:132).

Weber is not saying that major religious beliefs are simple reflections of class interests, but rather that these carriers were exponents of salvation doctrines, which 'most readily conformed to their social position'. Weber's approach to the relationship between beliefs and interests can be suitably illustrated by his account of the origins and carriers of Islam.

Weber's treatment of Islam begins with the observation that the initial koranic message was one of asceticism, monotheism and

ethical prophecy, but this initial cluster of beliefs was transformed by bedouin warriors in terms of their own status needs and military style of life. The pristine quest for personal salvation was transformed during the adoption of the prophetic message into the military quest for land. This social carrier group simplified all of the ethical demands of Muhammad's prophecy, especially those bearing directly upon personal life and sexual ethics. Thus the asceticism of Islam was military rather than bourgeois. Even the Islamic heaven became a 'soldier's sensual paradise' (Weber 1965:264). This routinization of the original prophetic ethic produced a set of essentially feudal beliefs and attitudes, such as the acceptance of slavery *and* polygamy. By way of criticism, it can be argued that Islam does possess some of these feudal-military characteristics, but not for the reasons put forward by Weber. At one level Weber's factual assertions about the social carriers of both Islam and Christianity are highly dubious. In the Islamic case, the main social carriers in the first century were Meccan merchants. It was for this reason that there was a continuous struggle between the values and lifestyles of traders and warriors which found its ideological expression in the confrontation between 'tribal humanism' (*muruwwa*) and personal, urban piety (*din*). The impact of an urban trading culture on early Islam is partly borne out by the abundance of commercial terms in the Qur'an itself (Torrey 1892).

While Weber's analysis of the carriers of major religions is theoretically seminal, the crucial issue is not so much the particular occupational structure of the ideological bearers of new beliefs, but the total relationship between religious movements and their social environment at the point of inception and early formulation. Weber fails to give adequate attention to the fact that, in one sense, Christianity started life as a 'religion of the dispossessed', whereas the early Islamic community enjoyed important political and economic assets, such as virtual control of the Arabian trade routes. The other oddity of Weber's approach is that, while Weber treats the first century of Islam as the decisive period in which Islam was propagated by a warrior stratum, the formative period of Christianity stretches from the Roman period to the Middle Ages. It was in that period that Christianity as an urban, congregational religion was carried by artisans (Weber 1965:82-5). Hence, Weber

does not appear to regard the Jewish origins of Christianity, the fall of Jerusalem and the political oppression of Christianity under imperial Roman control as contributing to a distinctive ethos to Christianity in its later development. Against Weber's emphasis on occupational strata as religious carriers, it is important to concentrate on the total socio-political setting of religions at their point of origination. Christianity developed under an alien political control, and this situation gave a decisive emphasis to its whole conception of suffering and power. Islam developed in a context where it was largely free from external military spoliation. These contrasted political origins have given rise to a range of very different theological themes and religious institutions.

Obviously, the situation was far more complex than this simple contrast would suggest. It can be argued, as Brandon does, that the Jerusalemite Christians were closely associated with the Zealots and that the apolitical orientation of Christian belief was developed much later, outside the Jewish context (Brandon 1971). Alternatively, the Christian separation of the religious and the political could be claimed to derive from, or at least be foreshadowed by, the Essene Teacher of Righteousness (Wilson 1971). The details of these debates within the history of religions need not detain us since—regardless of the immediate background context—what cannot seriously be questioned is the fact that Christianity developed as a messianic religious movement, fostered by the millenarian expectations of persecuted minorities under Roman imperial power. Islam during its first century, despite Shi'ite controversies, was not messianic, not significantly millenarian and not successfully persecuted. The crucial factor here is not the occupational structure of the ideological carriers but the location of the religious movement in its total political and social context.

So far Weber has been criticized for certain empirical mistakes about the nature of early Islam and for restricting attention to the occupational structure of ideological carriers rather than elaborating the total context of the foundation point of a religious movement. There is, however, a further question to be considered: why should the original social context of a religion or the peculiar needs of its social carriers have a decisive long-term impact on the beliefs and institutions of a religion? Unfortunately, Weber appears to have no clear conception of the problem of the stability and

continuity of traditional religious interpretations. It could be argued that, from a sociological perspective, one would want to pay more attention to the ways in which any particular religion is transformed by the processes of mission, acceptance and institutionalization. It is well known for example, that Islam changed in many important ways during its adaptation to the social and cultural environment of the Indian continent. Furthermore, the diffusion of Islam in India was a long, gradual and essentially uneven process for a variety of different occupational and caste groups (Eaton 1974). The claim that central and orthodox beliefs and institutions of a religion are formed decisively by either its original carriers or by its original context would have to cope with the empirical facts of the heterogeneity of beliefs and practices. A similar objection would be that, while the early community might lay the basis for the distinctively orthodox beliefs of a religion, these beliefs come to characterize the religious élite rather than the great mass of the laity. For example, if the Islamic commitment to the doctrine of the omnipotence of God is the product of the early political success of Islam, then it could be claimed that this belief was never fully accepted in practice by converts to Islam. The use of amulets in African Islam has been frequently conjoined with the doctrine of omnipotence (Sanneh 1974). Indeed, as Ernest Gellner suggests, there may be in Islam a regular oscillation between an orthodox syndrome of monotheism, egalitarianism and scripturalism, and a heterodox syndrome of ritualism, mysticism and hierarchy (Gellner 1968). The orthodox centre is preserved by the urban, literate *ulema*, while the periphery is the location of both religious and political dissent (Shils 1971). It would appear difficult to maintain the claim that the social origin of a religion provides the prominent and durable characteristics of that religion.

Weber appears to acknowledge this sort of transformation and adaptation of a charismatic, salvational religious message in three different but related areas. The institutionalization of charisma as a response to the problems of continuity, recruitment and organization, brings about a subtle but inevitable routinization of charisma. The creation of religious offices (the priesthood), regular criteria of admission to the movement, and the standardization of doctrine, definitely alter the nature of the religion over time. Furthermore, Weber also recognizes that different social classes,

because of their relationship to the market and because of their special status requirements, have different 'religious needs', which are satisfied in different ways by the 'same' religion. Weber illustrates this point in his study of the religious proclivities of various social classes—peasants, urban artisans, nobility, and merchants.

Finally, Weber notes that in every religion there is a group of religious virtuosi who fulfill the ethical and ritual commandments to their full, while the mass can only satisfy certain minimal religious requirements (Hill 1973). Weber appears to hold both that the social carriers of a religion provide a distinctive role in defining the central characteristics of a religion, and that every religion will be progressively modified in terms of the routinization of charisma, the religious 'needs' of social classes and by the problems of the religiously 'unmusical' mass.

Weber's treatment of this problem of the unity and diversity of religion is only partly satisfactory. As we have seen, the major religions have been modified by mission, by recruiting new groups and by accommodation to new cultural environments. My argument is that, precisely because religions evolve in diverse patterns, certain epochs come to be regarded as normative principles of selection, as having given a definitive statement and example of the religion in its most pure form. It is not the 'foundation event' as factual history which is important, but the interpretation of historical origins which impinges upon contemporary practice. The teachings of Jesus, the letters of Paul and the acts of the Apostles have a status and ideological authority over and above all subsequent events, epochs and teachers. The credentials of a Calvin, a Luther or an Augustine are parasitic upon the normative authority of 'the foundation event' as the basis of later selectivity. Similarly, Muslim theology and practice is parasitic upon the *sunna* (literally, 'the beaten path') of the Prophet. The view of the foundation of the religion as an 'ideal type' prior to the development of diversity and syncretism places certain restrictions and limitations on contemporary ideological positions. As Marx observes:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by

themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past (Marx [1859] 1971:141).

There may be some sociological point, therefore, to the traditional theological distinction between *traditio*, that which is transmitted and the institutions which transmit. While the channels through which charisma is acquired might be highly routinized, the charismatic content is subjectively uncontaminated, because it is claimed to be inextricably bound into 'pure origins'.

As support for the view that 'the foundation event' provides the key principle by which later religious change and evolution are evaluated, one can cite the fact that so-called reformist movements in religions are almost invariably attempts to reinstate or resurrect the values and practices of the early community, the primitive church or the standards of the founding fathers. The Hausa *jihad*, the Wahhabi and Salafiyya movements were specifically attempts to root out innovations which were thought to be incompatible with 'true'—that is 'original'—Islam (Rentz 1969). Of course, many Muslim reformers of the nineteenth century defined 'original Islam' in terms and concepts which they borrowed from the modern context of European colonialism so that reform 'led to a gradual reinterpretation of Islamic concepts so as to make them equivalent to the guiding principles of European thought of the time' (Hourani 1962:344).

The special problems and conditions of the present obviously influence a group's conception of what will count as the pure and original practices of the early community. While this is clearly the case, it is still important to recognize that contemporary practices are evaluated and legitimated by an appeal to historical standards which are formulated in terms of a conception of the 'foundation event'. There is consequently considerable internal diversity within religions in terms of beliefs and practices, but there is also a certain ideological inelasticity which is brought about by a commitment to the earliest forms of a religion as the normative criterion.

While a religious group may attempt to legitimate practices in terms of this sort of principle, some aspects of a religious culture will be regarded as more important than others. To bring out this point it will be useful to refer to Raymond Williams' account (1973) of the notion of 'the selective tradition'. Williams starts with

the idea that not all elements of a culture are immediately relevant for the legitimation of basic social activities, especially economic production. Thus some aspects of a received tradition might be continuously required for social legitimation, and such aspects penetrate the society at every level of activity and awareness. By contrast with these dominant beliefs, some elements of culture may be of only residual importance, being as it were remnants of previous activities of social construction. Finally, Williams refers to emergent beliefs which are counter-points within a society and act as a challenge to dominant values. It follows from this perspective that 'tradition' must be understood sociologically as a selection from a diversity of beliefs and practices which have different connections with the fundamental social activities of a social group.

In order to illuminate these basic distinctions, it is useful to make an analogy between culture and wardrobes. Social groups legitimate their contemporary activities by clothing themselves in traditional dress which is selected from a range of items within a cultural wardrobe. All contemporary practice is a creative activity of interpretation and selection, but the activity is partly limited by the nature and availability of costumes. The term 'selection' implies a continuous intellectual evaluation of alternative forms of belief so that the model of cultural change implied does not allow for the fact that much of the work of selection might be performed unconsciously, habitually or numerically. Although this analogy might have a built-in rationalist bias, it does not render invalid the point that social activity entails a selection from, and interpretation of, available systems of belief and practice. ('Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please.') My argument is that at least one of the central criteria of selection within a culture is the 'foundation event' which acts as an ideal type of practice by means of which corruptions and developments can be evaluated. Contemporary activities and additions to basic beliefs are evaluated in terms of historical origins, since these origins are held to be pure and uncontaminated by later developments. It is for this reason that origins become a forum of ideological conflict. Comparisons between contemporary practice and tradition can lead either to the legitimation of the cultural status quo or to reformation in terms of pristine beliefs. Such a standard is clearly

not static, but itself a process of evaluation, since the origins of a tradition are themselves matters of dispute and interpretation.

The nature of these 'foundation events' in Islam and Christianity differs, and each entails different problematics. Both Christianity and Islam emphasize the fact that their foundation is to be located in human history rather than in the activities of a mythical ancestor in sacred time. Of course, in both cases these dimensions of time, sacred and profane, intersect (hence the distinction between history and *Heilsgeschichte*). This emphasis on historicity in the empirical world is very significant. Religions which have a distinctive awareness of a 'foundation event' need to differentiate between religious time and religious pre-history. This temporal sequence from darkness to light in one way justifies their existence as religions, indeed as *the* religion. In Pauline Christianity, the new faith is a New Covenant which breaks with its legalistic Jewish pre-history, so that Christianity regards itself theologically as an escape into grace. Despite this sense of historical rupture, there is also the notion of continuity in the sense that religious pre-history prepares the way for a new covenant. For example, Christ fulfils the religion of the prophets. In Islam the foundation is conceived as a distinctive break with its historical background (the 'age of error') but at the same time Islam completes the monotheism of Moses and Jesus. The similarity seems to end here, since for Muslims Islam is a systematic religion which is founded and named by Allah as an historical event. In the Qur'an Allah says 'This day I have perfected your religion for you, and completed my favour unto you; and have chosen for you as a religion Islam' (Qur'an, 5:3). As Smith (1964:97) notes in this connection:

Jesus was not interested in Christianity, but in God and man, He could not have conceptualized 'Christianity'. Muhammad, on the other hand, seems to have known what he was about when he talked of Islam.

Islam arose in a world where there already existed conceptual models of systematized religion and it is partly for this reason that Islam is a highly reified form of religion from its inception in its historical awareness of itself as a religion.

These interpretations of contrasted macro-political contexts in which Islam and Christianity were founded give rise to distinctive themes in culture and institutions which act as selective principles for later communities. The dominant themes of these two religions revolve around the notions of righteous suffering and temporal power. The symbolic focus of Christianity is the cross and the crucifixion, through which Christ is presented as both Messiah and victim. The sufferings of Christ are viewed as not merely accidental to his ministry but as a central and significant part. Christ's sufferings do not diminish but confirm his religious status. The opposite is true of Muhammad and Islam, since the Prophet's secular failures brought into question his role as prophet of God. Similarly, the content of Christ's earthly ministry was importantly concerned with healing and the relief of suffering, whereas Muhammad's activities centred on such issues as the framing of a social constitution for Medina and reconciling the social conflicts of competing tribal groups. Muhammad is treated as neither a worker of miracles nor a figure through whom one might intercede with God. In so far as Muslims do refer to Muhammad performing a miracle, they point to Muhammad's ability to give human utterance to God's word.

Islam and Christianity have taken very different approaches to the question of human suffering. A typical form of Christian pastoral advice is that personal suffering is not ultimately an alien, destructive experience but a trial through which the individual can come to a deeper appreciation of personality. The Christian attitude is one of personal, patient acceptance. Marx, who regarded Christianity as the essence of religion in general, gave classical expression to this attitude when he epigrammatically noted that religion is 'the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation' (Marx and Engels 1957:42).

The Islamic attitude to suffering is notably at variance with the Christian tradition. While the Qur'an gives lengthy consideration to human suffering, in Bowker's view (1970:101) suffering is 'almost dissolved as a problem', because in Islam there is an overriding emphasis on God's omnipotence. Thus the Qur'an requires that

suffering should be contested and as far as possible alleviated. This is the foundation of the very detailed and specific requirements in the Qur'an for a truly Muslim society, that particular instances of suffering should be removed (Bowker 1970:116–17).

Because of this crucial difference, the characteristic theological dilemmas of the two religions have taken distinctive courses. In Christianity one of the central theological controversies has focused on the contradiction between the fact of human suffering and God's goodness. The problem of theodicy, as Berger points out, continuously threatens to disrupt the very foundations of the Christian 'world-image'. The main contradiction in Islam centres on God's omnipotence and human free will. If God is all powerful He must also be the author of the sin for which men are eternally damned. The problem for Muslim theologians has been to resolve the difficulty of God being omnipotent and just. The various attempts to solve these dilemmas need not detain us; we may simply note that Muslims and Christians have developed different doctrines of God in which suffering and power have been important issues. In Islam it is the power of God which has normative salience; God reveals Himself through the koranic revelation which descends to man. Christianity gives prominence to God's grace and His redemptive activity. It follows that the counterpart of Christ in the Islamic system of theology is not Muhammad but the Qur'an itself (Smith 1964).

These basic theological standpoints are fundamentally related to the 'foundation events' of the two religions. The suffering of the early Christian community as an oppressed sect gives a normative warrant for subsequent teachings on the value of deprivation as the result of worldly exploitation. The triumph of early Islam guarantees the efficacy of Allah in the world for later interpretations. Given these theological components which are tied into the 'origins' of these religions, we can expect that the themes of suffering and power will be echoed in contrasted religious experiences and attitudes. Since salvation and suffering are not central to Islamic beliefs, it is not surprising that Islam has no real doctrine of redemption. Lazarus-Yafeh, who argues that 'the idea of redemption is certainly not a central one in islam' (Lazarus-Yafeh

1970:168) suggests two reasons for this situation. First, the Islamic community in the Sunni tradition was itself a charismatic one in which membership conferred automatically a redemptive status for Muslims (Watt 1960). There are grounds for saying that in Islam redemption was sociological rather than specifically personal and religious. Second, the doctrine of *fitra* (an inherent ability to know and worship God) made redemption almost irrelevant. The Christian doctrine of Original Sin implies that the main spiritual danger is a fall from grace, a loss of good health. In Islam, it is straying into error which is the primary danger, so that, while Christians pray for God's grace, Muslims pray for guidance. These characteristic differences can be summarized in the following terms:

The type of religious experience most favoured in Christianity is the personal acceptance of redemptive grace which is to transform the inward springs of life.... The type of religious experience favoured in Islam is, then, the active personal acceptance of prophetic truth, which is to discipline and orient one's total life (Hodgson 1960:54, 59).

Christianity is, normatively speaking, a redemptive fellowship held together by sacraments, viewed as institutionalized means of grace, which separates the religious community from the wider society. By contrast, Islam treats the social and religious fellowship as normatively continuous and coterminous.

The most obvious institutional contrasts between Islam and Christianity which derive ultimately from their contrasted 'foundation events' would centre on the following issues. First, since Islam was a theocratic empire which precluded any radical distinction between religion and politics, Islam did not develop in principle any separation of the religious and the secular in the field of law. The Shari'a is ideally, although not always in practice, a total compendium of ethics, religious duties, etiquette, legal and political responsibilities, which covers all aspects of private and public life. Second, Islam has no sacerdotal priesthood; the *ulema* is a collectivity of legal scholars, koranic experts and administrators controlled by the state. Third, Islam attempted to institutionalize the political and religious leadership of the community under the one umbrella of the caliphate-sultanate. These differences between

the two religions are obvious and well known. It seems therefore, more valuable to look at more subtle institutional contrasts in order to find further comparisons between Islam and Christianity. Such a comparison is offered by the relationship between martyrdom and saintship.

Saintship in Christianity developed out of martyrdom, on the one hand, and out of the Jewish institution of sacrifice, on the other. Since Christianity originated as a persecuted group with strong chiliastic expectations, martyrdom represented a religiously valued, honorific passage into the next world. When the political situation of Christianity was transformed in 313 by Constantine's recognition and tolerance of Christianity, the martyr role became gradually obsolete and there followed a reinterpretation of the nature of saintship. Islamic saints could not, by contrast, develop out of martyrdom. In general, the saint-martyr virtues of Christianity—humility, patient suffering, charity and forgiveness—have not been central to the lifestyle of Islamic Sufism. The martyrs of Islam, insofar as they exist at all, were believers who died for the sake of empire, not because of the existence of alien political powers. This situation was closely connected with the fact that Islam was an independent political force and not a minority encapsulated within a hostile empire. The main contrast within Islam in terms of its orientation to the world is not so much a distinction between the religious and the secular, but between the household of faith (*dar-al Islam*) and the world of dissidence (*dar-al Harb*), whereas religion for Christians and Manicheans is a sacred community working in and upon an alien environment, for Jews, Muslims and Zoroastrians it is a body of 'universal law and a community which is bound thereto and which is the world at its best' (Hodgson 1960:68).

Another subtle difference between Islam and Christianity can be discovered by considering the question of sin, confession and absolution. In *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt*, Gilsenan notes that, while the institution of confession is generally absent in Islam, a limited form of confessional practice (*itiraf*) is employed in the *Hamidiya* brotherhood (Gilsenan 1973). In this group the confession is voluntary but much encouraged. While the confession may have important functions for the brotherhood, the Sheik cannot promise any forgiveness and absolution. The absence of a comprehensive confessional apparatus in Islam

is linked with the notion of the Absolute Transcendence of the Omnipotent God, and with the nature of Islam.... Certainly, the sense of sin, of the fall from grace, of spiritual guilt and the whole theodicy of suffering are virtually absent from Islam by comparison with most of the Christian Churches (Gilsenan 1973:107).

One can point to a range of cases in Islam, such a *itiraf*, acts of contrition (Austin 1973), and acts of repentance (Birge 1965), which resemble the Christian institution of confession, but in general the confessional and its supporting theology are not present in Islamic culture for the reasons suggested by Gilsenan. In turn, the concepts of guilt, suffering and grace are to be explained by reference to certain normatively accepted interpretations of foundation events. To illustrate this extension of Gilsenan's position, I wish to give a brief account of the development of the confessional in Christianity.

In theory, the passion of Christ had destroyed the powers of evil through an act of atonement; the task of the early community was simply to survive between the First and Second Coming. In practice the early Church was faced by the difficult theological problem that its baptized members were not consistently free from sinning. The continuation of sin among the apparently saved called into question Christ's expiation of human sin, or at least the efficacy of the ritual of baptism. In response to this problem, the early Church began to allow acts of penance and confession whereby sinners could be cleansed of sins and restored to the community. Furthermore, there were certain major sins—for example homicide and idolatry—which could not be absolved. As the Church began to settle down to a life on earth, so to speak, with the non-appearance of the millenium, the theology and institutions of confession began to change. The sacrament of penance in the confession became obligatory and frequent; it also became private and the priest was bound to secrecy under the 'seal of confession'. By the beginning of the Middle Ages, the confessional came increasingly under the control of parish priests rather than under the bishops. As practical guides for parish priests, Penitential Books began to circulate which gave advice on the length and type of penance according to the nature of the crime. Once the bishops had lost centralized control

of penance and confession, a wide variety of practices, interpretations and abuses developed in Christendom. Eventually penance became highly commercialized. It was against these forms of abuse and laxity that the Protestant reformers preached a new conception of sin and grace. It is important to bear in mind, however, the institution and importance of confession did not simply disappear after the Reformation. Confession obviously survived in Catholicism and was indeed given a new lease of life by the Jesuits, but it also continued in most other branches of Christianity. Anglicanism developed a particularly strong system of casuistical thought and practice, while we can also find the institutional equivalent of confession in such practices as the Methodist class meeting. Christianity can hardly avoid some sort of confessional or penitential practice, because of the conceptual contradiction between Christ's redemptive ministry and the continuation of sin in the Church itself. Such a contradiction is hardly possible in Islam because Muhammad was essentially a messenger of God, not a redeemer, but this contrast is also bound up with the differences in the social origins of Islam and Christianity.

The need for a confessional-penitential system arose in a context where the Christian community regarded itself as a chosen remnant but did not possess political power. There was an important sociological need to maintain a high degree of internal group solidarity against external threats. Confession is a more efficient mechanism than excommunication or expulsion for reaffirming beliefs. The Christian tradition has consistently regarded confession as a socially therapeutic and remedial institution for coping with various forms of deviance within the community. Through confession, the penitent not only acknowledges his or her own responsibility for sins, but reaffirms beliefs about sin and guilt and accepts the authority of the community to bestow absolution. Some sort of remedial institution can be expected wherever a gap is perceived between the actual practice of members of a saved community and expectations about proper behaviour. It is obviously the case that this sort of problem emerged in early Islam when those who had confessed 'There is no god but God' seemed to behave in ways inconsistent with submission to the will of God. The Kharijites, for example, could be cited as a sectarian movement

in Islam to establish a rigorous, puritanical definition of membership which would expel deviant members. Early Sufism itself could be regarded as an ascetic reaction against laxity within the Islamic community. While there is clearly a tension in Islam between the continuation of deviation from community norms and the definition of membership in terms of a submission to God, Islam does not seem to have developed a widespread, systematic confessional institution.

It may be that Islam was able to tolerate a wider range of norms and practices among its members precisely because in the classical period Islam was not politically threatened, because it was not a persecuted group. Provided the basic monotheism of Islam was not in question, other beliefs and practices did not have to come up for systematic inspection. The hadith certainly gave this picture. One relates a meeting between the Prophet and Abu Dharr:

When I sat down near him, he said to me: Whosoever sayeth: There is no God but God and dieth in this belief, will enter Paradise. I replied: Even if he should have fornicated and stolen. (The question and answer are repeated three times.) The fourth time Muhammad added: Even though Abu Dharr should turn up his nose (Wensinck 1938:46).

It may also be that Islam was more able than Christianity to rely upon the binding power of the Holy Law in addition to political control as a method of containing deviation. While the situation of Islam might present unresolved sociological issues, confession in Christianity seems to develop out of a situation in which the expectations of a righteous minority without political power about a Second Coming proved illusory, or at least uncertain.

In conclusion, the problem of integration and diversity within religious cultures has a clear bearing on the whole question of the relationship between beliefs and social structures. Sociological interpretations of this relationship have occupied various points along the materialist-idealist continuum; religious beliefs are either simple reflections of more basic social structures or they are directly and causally influential in shaping social interaction. In this chapter, I have attempted to complicate this continuum by pointing

to a certain inelasticity in patterns of belief, specifically to the internal limitations and constraints on continuous ideological changes of traditions, particularly sacred traditions. While selection can be made from a diversity of beliefs within a single system of tradition, this selection is ideologically constrained by selective principles which in turn are normatively fixed by interpretations of historical foundations. It is because of the normative importance of these interpretations that the original socio-economic context of world religions is of such interest to sociology. Or at least it ought to be. In order to explain why one set of beliefs rather than some other set comes to have central significance in a religion it will not be enough merely to study the general functional relevance of religious doctrines. The functional analysis of religion might provide an explanation of the continuity of religion as such (as in Durkheim's *Elementary Forms*), but it will not provide a very satisfactory analysis of the specific content of religion in terms of dominant themes.

In this chapter I have attempted to suggest some ways in which the origins of a religion can come to have a perennial significance as interpretive schema. Following Marx, one might observe that when men

appear to be engaged in the revolutionary transformation of themselves and their material surroundings, in the creation of something which does not yet exist, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they timidly conjure up the spirits of the past to help them; they borrow their names, slogans and costumes so as to stage the new world-historical scene in this venerable disguise and borrowed language. Luther put on the mask of the apostle Paul (Marx 1973:146).

While we have been solely concerned with the problem of 'borrowed language' in Islam and Christianity, the argument about the importance of origins would have to be developed in a number of different directions for different religions. It may well be that, from a comparative perspective, the commitment to the notion of a *single* foundation event is somewhat rare in religious development. This commitment in Islam and Christianity to a unique foundation

may have produced a certain institutional and ideological inflexibility which would be a sociological disadvantage in adaptation to rapidly changing social environments. In a modern pluralistic world, an exclusive view of a single foundation would appear to be something of an ideological encumbrance.

5 *State, Science and Economy in Traditional Societies: Some Problems in Weberian Sociology of Science*

Introduction

In Weberian sociology, the social conditions which promoted the growth of rational capitalism (free cities, an autonomous merchant class, rational law and an ethic of world mastery) are typically associated with the emergence of modern science. Protestantism, capitalism and rational science are assumed to require an open discursive space, free from arbitrary restraint on conscience and consciousness. This 'uniqueness of the west' argument encounters the following difficulties. Technology and science flourished in Chinese and Islamic cultures in which the political system was patrimonial and bureaucratic. In these societies, innovative science was often associated with oppositional, magical beliefs. Furthermore, in Weber's interpretation of Protestantism, it was the irrationality of the salvational drive which led to the rationality of a calling as an unintended consequence of action. Although this sceptical viewpoint suggests that no general theory of scientific accumulation is possible, this chapter employs Weber's economic sociology to identify the close historical relationship between economic change, state regulation and the patronage of intellectuals in the development of science. Scientific rationalism is the outcome of contingent features (such as the requirements of navigation), structural arrangements between the economy and the

state, the presence of rational technologies (in mathematics, writing and experimentation) and finally the teleological impact of rationalization. The sociology of science, like the sociology of knowledge, is concerned to analyse the relationship between scientific thought and social existence. At one level, scientific innovation and changes in scientific paradigms may be regarded as relatively independent of the social organization of science and the scientific community. In this case, the logic of scientific development is seen to be largely self-contained and determined by intellectual problems which are internal to science. Alternatively, sociologists of science have regarded scientific thought and scientific change as shaped by the nature of scientific organization, research networks and professional organization. Scientific change is the result of processes of competition for scarce resources between scientists in sub-disciplines which periodically become over-worked, over-populated and less rewarding (Mulkay and Turner 1971; Mulkay 1972). This chapter argues for a very close relationship between scientific advance and the acquisition of an economic surplus. It has often been claimed that science, technology and economic development stand in an intimate and interdependent relationship. Weber asserted that

the mechanizing process has always and everywhere been introduced to the definite end of releasing labour; every new invention signifies the extensive displacement of hand workers by a relatively small man power for machine supervision (Weber 1927:306).

Advances in technology produce increases in per capita output and reduce the average cost of basic commodities thereby stimulating further investment in labour-saving technology. Economic development comes to depend on technological innovation, but this technology presupposes the basic science and economic resources which make technological change possible. It is possible, however, to break into this circular argument by making an analogy between material and intellectual accumulation, or between the mode of production and the mode of cognition. All systematic and sustained intellectual activity requires a stratum of intellectuals which is relatively independent of manual work. Their training and

maintenance, especially when intellectuals begin to form specialized schools, academic communities or other formal collectivities, require external economic support. The general argument is that sustained scientific activity requires an economic surplus through which mental workers can be funded under various forms of patronage. Advances in cognitive accumulation tend, therefore, to correlate directly with advances in material accumulation because an economic surplus is necessary for the reproduction of an intellectual stratum of mental workers.

Within this general relationship between science and economy, there can be considerable variation and divergence. The variation is primarily an effect of the conflict between intellectuals and patrons to determine the nature of service and payment. The precise manner in which science is determined by economic changes is mediated by the system of patronage in which intellectuals, patrons and clients struggle for the control of mental production. In this argument, I shall draw upon an analogy between the class struggle over the means of material production and the cognitive struggle between patrons and intellectuals over the means of mental production. Intellectual change may be conceptualized in terms of a struggle of discourses.

It is important to notice at the outset that any question as to the origins of systematic scientific practices leads conceptually and empirically to the problem of the historical origins of the capitalist mode of production. The connection between science and capitalism has been formulated in the most diverse conceptual frameworks. For Marx and Engels, the profitability of capitalist production is secured by the mechanization of the labour process which requires the systematic application of science in the technical division of labour. In a similar fashion, although Weber did not believe that capitalist interests were the direct cause of scientific development, he observed that the rational calculation of technical factors in industrial production 'is dependent on the peculiarities of modern science, especially the natural sciences based on mathematics and exact and rational experimentation' (Weber 1930:24). It appears, therefore, that the social conditions which stimulate and foster the institutionalization of science are also the conditions which were congenial to the eruption of capitalist enterprises out of the envelope of feudal relations. In the *General*

Economic History, Weber gave an emphasis to the occidental city and the Protestant sects as factors in the rise of rational, scientific procedures. This problematical connection has been presented in the form of a theoretical challenge by J. Needham in the Chinese case since 'whoever would explain the failure of Chinese society to develop modern science had better begin by explaining the failure of Chinese society to develop mercantile and then industrial capitalism' (Needham 1969:40).

If the rise of modern science is associated with the origins of capitalism in the seventeenth century, then science is typically held to be intimately related to the growth of citizenship and democratic politics. Citizenship and science both require an open social space in which free discourse and uninhibited experimentation can take place without authoritarian and arbitrary limitations. The formulations of this relationship have been presented in diverse theoretical traditions. For example, Popper's falsification principle requires an open society in which conjectures can be scrutinised and eliminated by unrestricted criticism and experiment (Popper 1945). Problem-solving both in science and politics requires an open, tolerant social environment which thereby institutionalizes criticisms. From an entirely different perspective, Habermas has argued that the achievement of the rational understanding of a situation presupposes the existence of free communication which is not distorted by arbitrary, hidden constraints. Hence, the search for valid knowledge must accompany the radical critique of existing social arrangements which inhibit human discourse (Habermas 1970). In the perspective of history of science, the conjunction of capitalism, citizenship and natural science is embodied in certain 'heroic' social roles—the artist-engineer of fifteenth-century Italy and the engineer-industrialist of early nineteenth-century Britain. This mode of analysis implies a strong analogy between the independent individual capitalist who accumulates wealth in an open political environment and the individual scientist who accumulates knowledge by experiment in a contest of free discourse. The principle of *laissez-faire* in science and capitalism is allegedly promoted by institutional differentiation of state, education and economy.

The supposition that the differentiation and autonomy of medieval corporations—urban political associations, guilds,

academies, universities, religious and legal institutions—were congenial to both capitalism and natural science leads inexorably to certain assumptions about the ‘uniqueness of the west’. Despite major achievements in science and technology in oriental societies, a systematic programme uniting natural science and industry was allegedly peculiar to western civilization. By contrast with the exponential growth of science and technology in the west, the societies which arose east of Athens were characterized by what Mill termed ‘Chinese stationariness’ (Mason 1962; Turner 1974b). One central explanation of oriental stagnation has been that these societies were constituted by centralized states—Marx’s Asiatic mode of production, Weber’s patrimonial bureaucracy, Needham’s bureaucratic feudalism—and by the institution of slavery. Arbitrary state interference which inhibited the free play of ideas and trade also mitigated against the emergence of a bourgeois class and a stratum of scientists. At the same time, slavery was not conducive to the application of labour-saving technology. Slave-labour did not promote technological innovation because there was no competition between capitalists to reduce the wage-bill by mechanization and there was no market for the consumption of standardized commodities. The argument about western uniqueness provides the basis for the conventional claim that the technology of antiquity was neither advanced nor altered in the centuries immediately following the Arabic expansion. In this perspective, the Greek city-states occupy, both conceptually and geographically, a pivotal position in the rise of western democracy and science. Greek culture has persistently provided a yard-stick for political and intellectual progress in the western imagination. The model of direct political participation in the small Greek states was central to the political thought of Rousseau, Kant and Hegel. The rise of rhetoric and logic as organized disciplines was connected with the political structure of Greek citizenship where politics were conducted in terms of open public argument. Successful politics necessitated an effective rhetoric. The conjunction of logical reasoning and democratic politics is thus seen to lie at the very roots of western civilization.

The origins of natural science in the west are consequently seen in terms of closely interconnected institutions, values and motives. Free enterprise and free inquiry require, as it were, a discursive

traffic inside a social space created by democratic politics. The presence of autonomous urban institutions created a legacy of political immunity from constraint which was conducive to capitalism and science. The absence of these institutions in the Orient has been associated with political constraint and scientific stagnation. In short, the conception of ‘the uniqueness of the west’ also involves an orientalist perspective (Said 1974; Turner 1974b; Turner 1983a). Oriental society is characterized by a series of absent features—the city, private property, democratic rights, rational law, natural science and social revolutions. There is, of course, a *prima facie* reason for assuming that this intellectual charge could hardly apply in the case of Islam, given the well-known dependence of the European Middle Ages on the legacy of Averroes, Avicenna, al-Kindi and al-Razi (Watt 1962; Corbin 1964). However, the orientalist solution to this historical difficulty has been to argue that Islam was merely a medium between Hellenism and the Occident; Islam neither contributed to nor improved upon the Greek heritage which eventually found its ‘true’ home in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century European science and technology (O’Leary 1949).

Western Capitalism and Science—Some Counter-Proposals

Weberian theory suggests the following features as necessary conditions for rational capitalism:

- (1) a free labour market in which wage-labourers, separated from the means of production, sell their labour-power to capitalist employers;
- (2) a system of autocephalous urban corporations providing uninhibited space for exchange;
- (3) a money economy providing exact calculation for commodity exchange;
- (4) a rational legal system to guarantee stability of commercial and administrative arrangements;
- (5) the existence of science-based technology for the mechanization of production in a factory-system; and
- (6) a culture of world-mastery—the Protestant ethic—which creates anti-traditional conceptions of the business calling and renders money ethically clean.

To this theory of capitalist origins, it has been claimed that natural science was stimulated by the anti-magical force of Protestant theology and by the conception of the universe as a non-arbitrary system of dependable laws. In the history of cosmology, God the creator eventually gave way to the Divine Mechanic.

This basic Weberian framework has been elaborated in a number of ways. R.K.Merton (1949, 1970, 1984) in particular, has emphasized the fact that the roots of modern science lay, not in utilitarian economic interests, but in Protestant religious values which, in forming a scientific calling, positively encouraged men to find God in the immutable laws of Nature. Indeed, the 'ethos of science'—universalism, communalism, disinterestedness and organized scepticism—is at certain points in conflict with the individualistic, self-interest of the spirit of capitalism. To the list of Protestant values which Merton treated as congenial to science, others have argued that Protestantism contributed 'affective neutrality' as an element of capitalist production and scientific innovation (Thorner 1952–3). In general, the fact that the Protestant sects did not enjoy a religious or political monopoly of authority further underlined their emphasis on individual enlightenment and contributed to the religious acceptance of scientific activity. It has been claimed that a Protestant 'scientific policy' became part of a general struggle against Catholicism (Ben-David 1965).

As a general theory of the institutional development of European industry, politics and science, the Mertonian perspective provides an ethically satisfying marriage of rationalism, grounded in a religious conception of an orderly universe, open discourse conducted in terms of the scientific ethic and liberal democracy which established the institutional framework for disinterested communication. This perspective on democracy and science was clearly illustrated by Merton's analysis of Nazi Germany where the state impinged on the norms of universalism and scepticism. A parallel interpretation of the problem of German politics was adopted by Parsons (1954).

In order to begin a critique of this theoretical union between reason, capitalism and democracy, we can not one particular problem of exegesis, namely the difference between Weber and

Merton over the rationality of Protestantism and its contribution to science. In Merton's sociology of science, Protestantism provided an early cultural support for scientific advance, but modern science no longer requires any religious legitimation since it provides its own rationale and its own rationalism. By contrast, Weber's sociology is shot-through with pessimism and with a sense of the precariousness of the scientific outlook. It was not religious confidence in the rationality of the world that drove Protestants to world-mastery in economic and scientific behaviour, but on the contrary it was lack of confidence in and anxiety about personal salvation that created this calling. It was the irrationality of the quest for salvation from an omnipotent God which lay at the root of the rational calling in this world. The rational discipline of capitalism was paradoxically irrational in the sense that 'incessant work, discipline and dedication with no regard to tangible gratifications cannot be logically derived from any ends which naturally come to men' (Tenbruck 1974). Just as capitalism requires people to go beyond a natural inclination of self-sufficiency and simple reproduction, so science requires an 'unnatural' pursuit of knowledge which is beyond immediate, utilitarian concerns. The problem for Weber was that science cannot be prescriptive and cannot itself lend support to a value which advocates the pursuit of pure knowledge. To some extent, Weber followed Nietzsche in believing that intellectualism has its psychological roots in resentment as a denial of affective gratifications.

The problem with the conventional view is that it is forced to deal with too many outstanding exceptions and counter-cases. These empirical counter-instances are not to be viewed as simply empirical qualifications or restrictions on the general theory that natural science necessarily requires particular supports (of urban city institutions, rational thought, the differentiation of politics and economics, and so forth). The empirical problems which are to be raised here point to fundamental *theoretical* difficulties in the existing framework. It is convenient to start with the question concerning the importance of a rational cosmology (such as Merton's Puritanism) as a condition of *any* scientific endeavour. I have already pointed to Tenbruck's interpretation of Weber which showed that the 'calling' was an unnatural response to an irrational

drive. In a broader perspective, we can see that science, under specific circumstances, has often been stimulated by social movements which, in Weber's terms, were mystical, other-worldly and irrational.

Needham (1954; 1979) makes the point that magic, divination and science were historically always closely interconnected (Unschuld 1986). Taoist temples in China were early centres for the observation of nature and the Taoist emphasis on feminine receptivity, passivity and mysticism encouraged a form of empiricism towards natural phenomena. Taoists opposed the conventional and formal rationalism of the court scholars—the Confucian literati whose sense of literary superiority discouraged both manual work and experimentation. A similar parallel can be discovered in the Ilkhwan al-Safa (the Brethren of Purity) who operated from Basra from around AD 950. Like the Taoist secret societies, the Brethren were an oppositional social movement drawing on an electric range of religious and philosophical trends against the court philosophy of the Buwayhid emirs. The Brethren published fifty-two epistles and a famous summary (*Risalat'al-jami'ah*) of their analysis of the arts and sciences. The clarity of expression in these epistles made them very popular and greatly influenced Islamic attitudes towards mathematics, music, astronomy, geology and mineralogy. In alliance with Sufi groups in Baghdad and Basra, the Brethren penetrated the guild system of craftsmen and artisans and their mystical doctrines thereby had an impact on the development of technology. Whereas Weber, from the perspective of the ethic of responsibility, treated rationalism and science as progressive forces in European civilization, there may well be socio-political circumstances where mystical doctrines can play a liberating and dynamic role. In particular, when a system of rationalist thought becomes the legitimizing ideology of a rigid social structure, mysticism can play a radical, oppositional role. When orthodox rationalism becomes closed to the value of manual work and sympathetic observation of nature because of the dominant role of court intellectuals, mystical and oppositional societies can become the vehicle for an empiricist form of scientific activity and technological experimentation.

There are, however, more serious and damaging problems for the conventional, Mertonian view of the social conditions for

scientific practice. We have noted the standard viewpoint that political citizenship and scientific enterprise are empirically and theoretically associated so that the Greek city-state provides the paradigm for open discourse stimulating the growth of logic, rhetoric and natural science. Needham has suggested that the absence of large-scale slavery in China provided a social framework which was congenial to science, while Marx and others (Bernal 1969; Fanington 1961) have argued that slavery in oriental societies was an important factor in maintaining a stationary social system. Although the question of slavery in Islam is an obviously controversial one, it is important to point out that the Greek civilization which has been taken as the model of small-scale democracy by writers like Rousseau was based on slavery. Slavery was not an accidental feature of Greek society, but the fundamental basis of Greek civilization which penetrated every sphere, including drama and philosophy, family organization and personal status, political organization and political beliefs. Although the majority of slaves were 'barbarians' (that is, not Greek), the institution of slavery created a profound social unease because it was also true that Greeks enslaved Greeks. Loss of liberty threatened every citizen with ignoble status. For Plato, slavery was part of the hierarchy of society and cosmos; slavery was equated with irrationality and disorder so that the slave required an external authority in the same way that the natural world depended on external divine control. Aristotle was perturbed by the problem of the social origins of slaves, but, in treating slavery as a necessary aspect of the domestic economy, he did not call into question the institution itself. The Greek legacy has not, therefore, been an unambiguous blessing in western culture since it was based on a largely unquestioned system of patriarchal regulation and rigid social stratification.

One consequence of the Greek origins of western science was an enduring divorce, institutionally and normatively, between mental and manual labour, and hence between theoretical science and technology. While Greeks provided the philosophical basis for mathematics and logical proof, they were notably backward in technology. The moral and social inferiority of manual activities is connected with the fact that Greek science did not develop experimental and observational techniques. By comparison with medieval Europe and, as we shall see with tenth-and

eleventh century Islam, classical antiquity was underdeveloped in basic technology. Islamic scholars, therefore, did more than merely translate Greek philosophy; they added, especially in ophthalmic optics and chemistry, a significant technical and experimental component. Indeed, it is possible to go further in suggesting that the Galenic and Aristotelian legacy in medicine had major theoretical limitations, especially in the area of experimental medicine, anatomy and gynaecology (Castiglione 1941; Edelstein 1935; Farrington 1932). To understand this intellectual blockage, we need to refer back to Aristotle's social ethics, particularly in relation to the status of women.

In Aristotle's philosophy, woman is inferior to man. This view is perhaps not surprising since the majority of Greek slaves were female. By nature and individual psychology, women were destined to social subordination and to a servile role within the home. For these reasons, women could not enter the arena of public discourse which was the moral universe of free-born men. In the Middle Ages, this Aristotelian world-view combined with the Christian doctrine of women as a 'monstrous creation' to produce a series of dichotomies: male/female, hot/cold, reasonable/ unreasonable, dominant/submissive. Within this conceptual framework of Aristotelian scholasticism, it was difficult for any advances in the understanding of anatomy and gynaecology to take place. It was not until basic observation and experimentation in anatomy had taken place in the sixteenth century, particularly by Andreas Vesalius and Gabriele Fallopio, that there was a shift away from the clean/unclean paradigm. Even in Rembrandt's painting of the anatomy lesson of 1631 which combined the symbols of Protestant spirituality, bourgeois nationalism and observational science, the conventional sign of the anatomical atlas still enjoyed a certain dominance and priority over the naked corpse (Heckscher 1958; Barker 1984). By contrast, medical advances in Islam were achieved by an empiricist and experimental orientation which was less cluttered by such rigid scholasticism.

Bureaucracy and Science in China and Islam

There are difficulties in the attempt to provide a general sociological linkage between the rational philosophy of the Greek

city-states and the conditions for *any* natural science enterprise. The basis of this view of science is the analogy between the free, enterprising, urban merchant and the independent scholarscientist. It provides a *laissez-faire* model of innovation. One crucial difficulty for this analogy is the advanced technological and scientific inventiveness of Chinese and Islamic civilizations under systems of patrimonial bureaucracy. Of course, the major example in favour of the conventional view of the growth of natural science is provided by the scientific revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which was brought about by the application of science to production by private capitalists who were typically nonconformists in religion and liberals in politics. However, if this combination was the great strength of British science, it was also, in the longer term, its major weakness. It is well known that the revolution in the British textile industry with the inventions of Arkwright, Hargreaves, Wood and Crompton was not science-based, but represented a series of brilliant *ad hoc* responses to certain empirical needs of production (Cardwell 1963; Hills 1969; Cardwell 1972). While Britain had not been a great centre of theoretical science, the rapid growth of textiles and mechanized transport brought Britain to the forefront of the industrial revolution before the middle of the nineteenth century.

British predominance in technology, however, gradually slipped away after the Great Exhibition of 1851. The causes of this decline are to be found primarily in the absence of a coherent, statesupported system of scientific education. British educational institutions fell behind in quantity and quality to the lead established by German research laboratories, the continental science associations, the French universities and the American academies. By 1914, for example, almost every professor of chemistry in British universities held German doctorates and, without a 'brain-drain' from the Continent in such figures as Ferranti, Marconi, Beyer, Siemens and Leinstein, the scientific and technological decline of Britain would have been even more pronounced. If amateur science and private interest were adequate bases for early British capitalism, it became obvious that continued industrial expansion both required massive state support for research and development, and for a national system of education in technology and theoretical science. The liberal view of the

history of science which glorifies the eccentric inventiveness of British amateur gentlemen ignores

the argument that precisely *because* Britain advanced so rapidly in its industrial organization, whilst at the same time acquiring maritime supremacy and an increasing number of colonies, the need for technological innovation was less marked for a long time. Colonies provided essentially soft, politically protected markets for British goods (Rose and Rose 1969:24).

If the 'dark side' of the great achievement of Greek philosophy was the institution of slavery, the background to British amateur science was imperial power.

Most conventional historical accounts of science have a strong orientalist component by assuming 'the uniqueness of the west'. Through illustrations from Chinese and Islamic civilizations, it has been shown that there are major theoretical and empirical difficulties with this conventional position. Theoretical objections to this model can be organized in terms of arguments about particular scientific developments and about scientific development in general. In terms of the first set of arguments certain social arrangements may be conducive to limited forms of scientific or technological advance while being indifferent to, or indeed limiting, other forms of scientific development. To take one example, maritime and trading interests stimulated Henry the Navigator to establish a college of navigation in the fifteenth century. Similar practical and theoretical issues concerning the finding of the longitude in order to determine a ship's position at sea led to the founding of the Observatoire Royal (1672) and the Royal Observatory (1675). These practical needs of navigation not only stimulated major technical developments—such as the ship's chronometer—but also crucial developments in theoretical mathematics. However, it is conceptually illegitimate to treat specific examples involving particular combinations of circumstances as the basis for a general theory for the conditions of scientific advances as such.

Different social and political circumstances in other cultures gave rise to different, but equally important, developments in science and technology. Again, the Chinese case is particularly

instructive. Ancient China was an agrarian, centralized and bureaucratic society. In cultural terms, the ideographic language and organic, rather than mechanistic, world-view are typically regarded as not conducive to a scientific, experimental approach to nature. Yet the Chinese legacy in science and technology is massive, including the invention of gun-powder, the water clock, the horse stirrup and breast-harness, paper-making, the wheel-barrow and the stern-post rudder (Needham 1959; Needham *et al.* 1970). China's contribution to science was not, however, limited to mere techniques, but extended into mathematics, astronomy and medicine. While Chinese bureaucratism might have inhibited certain scientific advances, it stimulated others such as the seismograph, hydraulic engineering, the segmental arch-bridge, on the one hand, and astronomy and mathematics, on the other. In a comparative framework,

Chinese bureaucratic feudalism was much more effective in the useful application of natural knowledge than the slaveowning classical cultures or the serf-based military aristocratic feudal system of Europe....Indeed the bureaucratic ethos seems to have helped applied science in many ways (Needham 1969:117).

Indeed, by acknowledging the importance of merchants in the rise of European science, Needham tends to underestimate the role of the state bureaucracy as an environment for specific scientific advances. In presenting this argument, that particular social circumstance may stimulate particular scientific advances while inhibiting others, the Chinese case has been considered because much of Needham's argument about the precocity of Chinese science may also apply to the Golden Age of Islam. These centralized, patrimonial societies were both, in the history of science, 'wise before their time'.

Karl Wittfogel's *Oriental Despotism* is now largely discredited as a theory of oriental political structure and social stagnation. However, Wittfogel's commentary on the effect of political organization in hydraulic societies on the nature and development of science is pertinent to Islamic advances in mathematics and astronomy. The political and economic requirements of large-scale irrigation works also stimulated developments in time-keeping, the

making of exact measurements, the keeping of accounts, and geography. Thus,

Time-keeping and calendar-making are essential for the success of all hydraulic economies; and under special conditions special operations of measuring and calculating may be urgently needed The need for reallocating the periodically flooded fields and determining the dimension and bulk of hydraulic and other structures provide continual stimulation for developments in geometry and arithmetic (Wittfogel 1963:29).

The particular requirements of state control of irrigation in Middle East societies may be one condition for the growth of astronomy and mathematics, but in Islam, unlike bureaucratic China, the merchant class was very powerful politically and socially. With the expansion of trade under *pax Islamica* from the eighth to the eleventh century in textiles, agricultural produce, medical goods, luxury commodities and other exports, the merchant class accumulated wealth which became the basis for their patronage of the arts and sciences (Hodgson 1974). Because merchants had special needs relating to book-keeping, accounting and pricedetermination, they were also associated with the patronage of arithmetic. Alongside the growth of banking and credit techniques, we find Muslim merchants acquiring the culture of scholars and scribes as they became familiar with the scientific treatises on natural science and mathematics. It is interesting, for example, that the tenth-century writer Ibn 'Abd Rabbih observed that, while princes should be familiar with history, warriors with biography, the special concern of merchants was mathematics.

If the needs of irrigation and trade stimulated particular developments in mathematics and astronomy, it was also the case that the ritual requirements of Islam for daily prayer were also associated with theoretical and technical developments in measurement and time-keeping. The development of the clock in Islam is, therefore, of particular interest. Although the clock had been invented in China and various technical aspects of clocks had been transmitted to the west through Greek civilization, clocks became popular in Islamic culture and significant improvements had been achieved by Muslim horologists, such as the use of gear-

wheels. Important contributions were made by al-Biruni (c. 1000) to the volvelle and astrolabe. While sundials are found in many different cultures, the suspended column dial was an important Islamic invention. By the thirteenth century with the publication of al-Jazari's *Book of the Knowledge of Mechanical Devices*, Islam had achieved supremacy in the field of time-keeping (Cipolla 1967; Gimpel 1977). One major symbol of this technological ascendancy was the clock and planetarium presented by the Sultan of Egypt to Emperor Frederick II in 1232. The history of clocks in Islam, however, provides an illustration of the correlation between economic advance and scientific development. With the rise of European economic and political power, clocks from Islamic countries could no longer compete with European imports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when a new watch-manufacturing industry was established in Turkey, it was faced by major disadvantages:

The watchmakers there (Turkey) worked for the local market. How could they compete with European industry in the age of mercantilism, and a veritable export drive by which the Western countries tried constantly to establish new markets in all continents (Kurz 1975:76).

Whereas from the ninth to the thirteenth century clocks travelled, so to speak, from east to west, from the seventeenth century they made the return trip.

In these examples, it has been suggested that one alternative argument to the 'uniqueness of the west' is to point out that certain specific conditions in the pre-modern world encouraged various developments in science of a particular nature. Instead of thinking in terms of one traumatic 'Scientific Revolution', we might think in terms of many discrete, particular advances in technology and science. However, this line of argument could suggest that no comparative, general sociology of science is possible, since each case is unique and can only be analysed in its own right. This interpretation would lead to an infinite regress of particular, discrete empirical studies of given developments in each branch of natural science. It can be claimed, however, that one general requirement for the development of any sustained, especially

institutionalized, scientific activity is the presence of an economic surplus in the hands of the state, merchants or nobles which can be distributed to patronize a scientific or intellectual stratum.

State, Science and Economy in Islam

Whereas the industrial bourgeoisie stimulated the development of applied science in early British capitalism, in pre-capitalist society it was the state or merchants that provided the social conditions for bureaucratic personnel, literati or schools of intellectuals to fulfil state requirements in engineering, astronomy, hydraulic technology and geography, or for intellectuals to serve directly the practical and status needs of merchant-patrons. On these assumptions, we would expect that pre-modern advances in science would correlate with extensions of the state's fiscal control over various sub-units of society—tribes, villages, the family, peripheral regions and so forth. Pre-modern advances in science occur when the state apparatus is strong and effective, not necessarily when 'middle classes' enjoy privileges and immunity from patrimonial states. The conventional assumption about the absence of a middle class and the weakness of the oriental economy and scientific development needs, therefore, to be critically scrutinized (Saunders 1963). The important advances in science in China and Islam under patrimonial or bureaucratic feudal conditions provide an obvious difficulty for this conventional assumption. Under the protective umbrella of the centralized Chinese bureaucracy, a powerful stratum of scholar-gentlemen was created and the literati came to dominate the cultural and political life of the empire to the exclusion of land-owning feudal lords and urban merchants. In Islam, an intellectual stratum flourished under the dual patronage of the caliphal courts and cosmopolitan merchants.

Although patrimonial empires can, through the creation of an economic surplus, provide the necessary financial basis for an intellectual stratum, there are certain perennial limitations on patrimonial political and economic structure which have long-term implications for pre-modern scientific development. Before the development of modern means of communication, administration and information-storage systems, patrimonial dynasties were faced

with critical problems of bureaucracy, social control, military protection and tax collection. The dynastic families of such polities attempted to balance the interests of land-owning families which provided the back-bone of the traditional cavalry and the interests of subordinate classes by the intervening medium of families with prebendal rights to land and the official bureaucracy. This patrimonial structure produces a political see-saw between the political centre represented by the royal family and the bureaucracy, on the one hand, and noble families and dissident tribes, on the other. This constant conflict between centre and periphery, which was typically focused on attempts to convert prebendal into feudal land rights, gave rise to a phenomenon which Weber described as 'Sultanism'. In principle, the bureaucracy was dependent on the imperial household because the state official had no legal title to land, no regional or parochial commitment because their promotion took them away from any regional attachment and no interest in family or, in the case of eunuchs, in reproduction and inheritance. To support this bureaucracy, a patrimonial system required either an efficient taxation system or an expanding frontier, or both. It was difficult, however, to secure an effective system of taxation in a pre-modern state. Without modern systems of record-keeping, surveillance, accountancy, legal provision in tax law and a national, literate salaried officialdom, large-scale patrimonial empires were faced with permanent fiscal crises. In patrimonialism, at each stage of the tax-gathering exercise and at each level of the bureaucracy, the tax-yield was progressively creamed-off by the bureaucracy. There was, therefore, an incremental diminution of the fiscal basis of the state as tax-collection moved from the periphery to the centre. The effect was to put severe limits on the fiscal basis of the state and force patrimonial powers to seek various drastic solutions—withholding of payments to bureaucrats and traders, money-clipping, increases in peasant taxation, and seizure of inherited property. These responses to the financial burden of the state resulted in the alienation of the bureaucracy, a depressed and impoverished peasantry and rebellious landlords. This social disintegration could be avoided if a powerful slave army could successfully and constantly expand the frontiers of the existing society. Where a patrimonial empire had the good fortune to be adjacent to weak

neighbours, it could systematically extend its tax base. However, this external solution to the crisis of patrimonialism often produced another round of internal financial problems as military and surveillance costs increased.

In pre-modern societies, there were structural limits or brakes on the power and effectiveness of the state which constantly threatened its survival without necessarily replacing patrimonialism as a model of social arrangements. In China, the brake on the dominance of the state was the countervailing power of the local sib-group and kinship structure which dominated the villages. In Islam, in addition to the internal limitations on the apparatus of the state, there was the structural limit represented by tribalism and nomadic invasion. In the west, the urban city arose eventually without the internal limits which are common to a tribalized society and developed without the periodic devastation of nomadic invasion. In Islamdom, these two factors placed a decisive limitation on the development of what Weber regarded as the rationality of urban life. While Islam in its first four centuries was largely immune from external aggression and enjoyed a prosperous and flourishing civilization, it underwent a series of devastating invasions which undermined this urban mercantile culture: the collapse of the Umayyad dynasty in Spain in 1031, the Banu-Hilal conquest of North Africa, the Seljuk invasion, the Crusades and the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century. The effects of these external brakes on Islamic development were particularly severe. These crushing interventions into Islamic societies further intensified the fiscal crises of patrimonialism, undermined the taxes which were extracted from international trade and created a system of minor kingdoms and petty regimes. External threat not only strengthened peripheral regimes in relation to the patrimonial centre but set in motion a defensive, conservative reaction among the orthodox religious authorities which contrasts sharply with the openness and receptivity of Islam in its period of formation.

In addition to traditional sources of land and poll taxes, Islamic states had, in principle, access to tax revenue from intercontinental and internal trade. In practice, since the state treasury often found itself in an impecunious position, the state raised liquid capital in the form of loans from merchants. These loans took the form of an advanced payment in return for the right of tax-farming in a

designated region over a fixed period of time. While this exchange of liquid capital for tax-farming rights involved a high-risk investment, tax-farming represented an important additional income for merchants. While the state treasury could meet its short-term needs from merchant loans, it meant that day-to-day and long-term control of regional and rural taxation was gradually transferred from the state to merchants. This situation was simply one indicator of the general weakness of medieval Islamic commercial and financial institutions which never evolved into a formal banking system. Islamic banking arrangements depended on personal and status relationships rather than on informal organizations:

Given the slowness and unpredictability of communications between geographically distant locations, and given the sheer physical and psychological limitations on individual social intercourse the scale of economic activities was necessarily restricted to small, even intimate, circles. The possibility of expansion into a larger, more cohesive structure was precluded by the comparatively narrow social basis on which economic life was conducted (Udovitch 1968:273).

There were, therefore, not only limitations on state revenue, but also limitations on the productivity of merchant capital.

When Islam first burst out of the Arabian peninsula and established a new political order in the Middle East, it initially left the socio-economic and cultural organization of its new territories unchanged. Taxes raised on subordinate populations served to maintain a new élite in power. At first, the Umayyads were content to leave the administration of their newly-acquired territories in the hands of Greek officials, but this policy of minimal control changed rapidly as the imperial structure became more permanent. One consequence of Islamic expansion was the creation of a stable, international framework for trade. The old cities of the classical world received a powerful economic stimulus and new cities also arose as major entrepôts in this global commercial network. On the basis of this new wealth, political stability and religious unification, there was a rapid growth in manufactures—paper, porcelain, steel and silk—and in science under the patronage of the Umayyads (661–750) and Abbasids (750–1258). This economic surplus

created by trade, taxation and expansion provided the economic basis for the great age of Islamic science:

It was this courtly and wealthy patronage that enabled the doctors and astronomers of Islam to carry out their experiments and make their observations. It also protected them, while it lasted, from the active disapproval of religious bigots who suspected that all this philosophy would shake the beliefs of the faithful This association of science with kings, wealthy merchants and nobles was immediately the source of its strength and ultimately of its weakness, since science became, as time went on, completely cut off from the people.... As long as the cities and trade flourished there was a sufficiently large, cultivated middle class interested in science to ensure discussion and progress. As this broke down, however, the scientists became more and more wandering scholars, dependent on the varying fortunes of local dynasties (Bernal 1969:197–8).

There were two general characteristics of Islamic science which remained dominant. The first was a notable inclination to observations, experimentation and practicality. We have seen that this tendency towards empirical science and technology was evidenced by improvements in water-wheels, clocks and astrolabes. The second characteristic was an all-pervasive conception of the unity of knowledge. The great philosophers of Islam such as al-Kindi, al-Razi and Ibn Sina were also mathematicians, alchemists, physicians, botanists and philologists. However, at the centre of this unity of science lay medicine, and the representative court intellectual was the physician. The court physician/astrologer became the influential adviser of successive caliphs and embodied the traditions of *falsafah* which included both speculative metaphysics and natural science. The *adab* culture of the courts which embraced poetry, philosophy and natural science developed under the influence of educated administrators, rich merchants and physicians and came eventually to be clearly distinguished from what Marshall Hodgson referred to as the Shari'ah-minded members of the *ulema* and the mystical orders of Sufism.

While an interest in pathology, especially eye and skin disease, was no doubt motivated by the presence of certain persistent

diseases in the Muslim population, it was also motivated by philosophical movements in *kalam* and *falsafah* which aimed in their different ways to give a coherent account of matter in relation to the Creator. In their search for a solution to the apparent contradiction or gap between revelation and reason, the true scholar combined existing knowledge in astronomy, astrology, logic, and medicine. From this trend towards universalistic rational knowledge, there emerged, on the one hand, a speculative interest in the atomic structure of matter, which centred on the philosophical issue of 'essence' and 'attribute' and, on the other, a practical concern with pharmacology, botany, ophthalmology, and chemistry:

Extensive use and knowledge of chemistry and pharmacology in the practice of Arabic medieval accelerated the development of botany, the cultivation of plants, and other relevant areas of study. In a way, the more elaborate pharmacological practice became, the further and faster other sciences were forced to move to keep up with this phenomenon (Levy 1973:53).

In chemistry, the Arab intellectuals not only built up a detailed knowledge of chemical properties, they also greatly improved various practical activities such as distillation, evaporation, and filtration.

The growth of Islamic science, philosophy, and technology was made possible by court and mercantile patronage, which in turn was financed out of inter-continental trade, territorial expansion and taxation. The patronage system failed ultimately because patrimonial states did not possess an adequate internal system of administration and taxation. As classical Islam began to break-up into smaller, petty kingdoms of a feudal nature, and as it was subjected to powerful external forces of invasion, science was retarded by the loss of financial support for libraries, research institutions, hospitals and schools. In response to social decay and intellectual threat, orthodox opinion hardened against philosophical speculation and scientific experimentation.

With the decline of the eastern caliphate, new centres of learning briefly flourished in the Cordoban caliphate in the tenth and eleventh centuries. With this newly acquired political power and

independence, a new scientific spurt was patronized by the court, which established libraries, observatories and schools at Cordoba and Toledo. Intellectual and scientific advances were due to

the prosperity of Andalusia under Abd al-Rahman III (912–61), the more frequent travels of scholars to and from the Arab East, and the desire of the monarch and his learned son al-Hakam to be patrons of the arts and sciences on a grand scale (Hourani 1972:99).

Spain was one of the most densely populated and wealthy areas of the west. The financial resources of the state were enhanced by taxation of imports and exports. One major item in this intercontinental trading system was tanned and embossed leather, but Islamic Spain also became a centre for wool, silk, sericulture, glassware, pottery and precious metals. Seville became a great entrepôt of the western Mediterranean through which the trade in basic and luxury goods passed. Islamic Spain also emerged as a great centre for agricultural development and experimentation. The Islamic occupation of Spain brought with it an increase in population and demand for land. The result was an intensification of cultivation, incorporation of marginal land and an increase in agricultural productivity. The Muslims replaced Aristotelian agronomics, which had been based on formal distinctions between heat and humidity, with a new experimental empiricism which, by controlled observation and experimentation, sought to solve problems of salination, evaporation, and erosion. The need for increased agricultural output thus stimulated advances in agricultural chemistry, botany and the management of the land. This increased industrial and agricultural power provided the economic resources for impressive investment in new universities (at Cordoba, for example) schools and libraries. Islamic Spain rapidly became the intellectual centre, not only of Islamdom, but of Europe as a whole and it was in this prosperous and enlightened environment that Islamic, Jewish and Christian philosophers created a corpus of knowledge which provided the basis for the European Renaissance.

The growth of a dynamic urban culture based on extensive irrigation in Al-Andalus has given rise to a familiar debate as to the

originality or sterility of Islamic culture as a whole. Wittfogel saw the impact of Islam on Spain in terms of the imposition of

a genuine hydraulic society, ruled despotically by appointed officials and taxed by agromanagement methods of acquisition.... A protoscientific system of irrigation and gardening was supplemented by an extraordinary advance in the typically hydraulic science of astronomy and mathematics.... The *reconquista* which in the thirteenth century re-established Christian control over the greater part of Spain, transformed a great hydraulic civilization into a late feudal society (Wittfogel 1963:215–16).

Contemporary scholarship shows that Islamic Spain was in fact a predominantly decentralized structure, and that there was a significant administrative continuity between Islamic and Christian organization of irrigation. By their nature, irrigation systems can only be built up over many generations so that, while the Arabs inherited a classical system of public water-works, they also brought knowledge and techniques from Syria and Egypt (Glick 1970). That Al-Andalus

experienced a considerable importation of eastern agricultural techniques and irrigation practices is clear from a variety of evidence. There is, for instance, within Spanish irrigation terminology a preponderance of terms and words of unmistakably Arabic origin. Then again, there is the evidence of irrigation machinery. The whole repertoire of Middle Eastern devices—the *noria*, the *shaduf*, the *saqiya*—was massively exploited in Moslem Spain (Smith 1975:20).

Arab engineers contributed significantly to improvements in the performance of horizontal and undershot water wheels to enhance the velocity and control of water flows from hydro-power dams, especially in the Guadalquivir region.

The collapse of the Cordoban caliphate very largely mirrored the collapse of the eastern caliphate. The Islamic state was subject to the external limitations of Christian armies in the north and to certain fissiparous pressures internally. The court was weakened by the

prevalent problems of succession in patrimonial polities and Andalusian society was stratified into competing social groups—Arabs, Mozarabs and Christians—which sought advancement and power. Periodic civil disturbances gradually undermined the authority of the caliphate. In the eleventh century, the Umayyad caliphate was replaced by a series of petty dynasties, of which the two most important were the Berber dynasties of the Almoravides and Almohads (Watt 1964–5). The replacement of the powerful urban caliphate of the Umayyads by Berber frontiersmen provides an obvious illustration of Ibn Khaldun's theory of the circulation of tribal élites. The followers of Ibn-Tumart (the *almuwabbidun*, the 'asserters of unity' of God) condemned what they regarded as the moral laxity, softness, and heterodoxy of city-dwellers of Spain. While the doctrines of the Almohads had an appeal to those sections of the community which demanded a rational Unitarian religion, they failed to win mass support among the subordinate population. Internal dynastic disputes and economic decline eventually prepared the way for a number of crucial military victories by Christian armies against Islamic Spain in the first half of the thirteenth century.

The western Umayyad and eastern Abbasid caliphates represent two illustrations of my argument that any sustained scientific advance presupposes a sustained economic advance or economic surplus. More technically, there are certain necessary connections between developments in the mode of production and science. Although the early patrimonial empires in their period of expansion provided an economic surplus which, through the vehicle of court and merchant patronage, supported research institutes, universities and individual scholars, patrimonial empires are limited by certain critical external and internal crises. The internal problems relate to taxation and social control; the external, to the nomadic, tribal brake. The same pattern of economic and scientific rise and fall could also be documented for subsequent Islamic patrimonial states (Safavi, Timuri and Ottoman) and for non-Islamic polities of south-east Asia.

Conclusion

Conventional accounts of Weber's concept of rationalization are typically one-sided in giving a prominence to rational *beliefs* in the

process of modernization. For Weber, rationalization also had a distinctively institutional, structural and economic dimension. For example, an aspect of the rationality of capitalism involved the separation of the worker from the means of production which permitted the exercise of discipline over the worker and a basis for the rational calculation of wages. Similarly, the separation of the mental worker from the ownership of the laboratory was an important feature of the rationalization of science in the modern university. Thus Weber, in his lecture on science as a vocation, saw the rise of the scientific bureaucracy under the ultimate management of the modern state as an illustration of the 'quasiproletarianization' of the intellectual who was transformed into the 'specialist' (Gerth and Mills 1961:129–56). Weber's commentaries on the origins and development of the natural sciences are typically dominated by analyses of contrasted social structures rather than by contrasted belief systems.

The account of the absence of natural science development in China (or rather the thwarting of science in ancient China) is a particularly telling example. Weber argued that the crucial feature of occidental development was the transfer of the empirical skills of artists into craftsmanship and technical experimentation on the foundations of rational thought, especially mathematics. It was the needs of the mining industry which contributed to the transfer of the craftsmanship of art into the experiment of the natural sciences in the service of industrial production. In China, the rationalism of the intellectuals failed to break out of the court circles and the official bureaucracy. The simplistic notion that Protestant rationalism was the great lever of scientific advance is thus very far from Weber's actual comparative sociology of science which treated scientific rationalism as the outcome of contingent features (the peculiar requirements of navigation and mining), structural arrangements (the form of the state and its relationship to dominant classes), and finally the presence of intellectual technologies (arithmetic, algebra, abstract writing and experimental designs). When Weber did create an explanatory space for rational beliefs, his argument was that the irrational quest for salvation in Calvinistic Protestantism had the unintended consequence of fostering rational practices. Weber also saw the rationalism of modern science as technical and thus limited, since

science could never specify what ends of action *ought* to be pursued.

It can also be noted that Weber did not see the emergence of modern science as a sudden transformation which was conjoined with the emergence of capitalism. Although capitalism may have acted as a spur, the condition for rational science and technology took centuries to congeal. The transfer of Leonardo's artistic skills to the creation of technology related to warfare and mining was a typical step in the development of modern science, but these experiments presupposed the availability of sciences like mathematics which had evolved in Indian and Arabic civilizations. Weber's account of the origins of science and its service to capital accumulation presents us with an explanation which is characteristically Weberian—the combination of highly contingent historical circumstances with an over-arching sociological development of rationalization. Teleological rationality is spurred on by contingency in the shape of Protestantism, the urban city, technical requirements in navigation, mining and banking, and the bureaucratic state which may drive scientific ambition in the direction of industrial application.

6 *Religion and State-Formation*

The theme of secularization haunts both sociology and classical Marxism. Nineteenth-century social theorists as far removed as Friedrich Engels and Ferdinand Tönnies shared a common perspective in which it was confidently assumed that the development of capitalism would necessarily undermine the social and cultural bases of traditional religion. The whole ethos of capitalist culture (with its emphasis on rapid social and technical change, the prominence of exchange relations, and the emerging personal anonymity of the metropolis) was thought to be inimicable to the very roots of Christianity. Max Weber, for whom the rationalization of the life-world remained a central question (Hennis 1987), assumed that the destruction of both traditional and charismatic elements in social relations would lead eventually to the privatization of all religious practice and belief; religion would have to be played *pianissimo* within the private subjectivity of everyday relations. For Weber's colleague Ernst Troeltsch (1931) the historic contradiction between the sect and the Church which has characterized the institutional history of Christendom since its foundations would be eroded by the development of capitalism, creating a context in which a universal Church simply could not exist. The future for Troeltsch therefore would be one in which personal forms of mysticism were the only possible religious life style. For Georg Simmel (1968), the cultural and personal modernism which was an essential feature of urban life in capitalism would also undermine the historic framework within which religious institutions had flourished (Frisby 1984).

Within the Marxist tradition of historical sociology, perspectives on the negative relationship between capitalism and Christianity were developed initially in the work of Marx and Engels (n.d.). In

Marxism, the primary historical role of organized religion has been to legitimize social power by masking the real character of class relations and economic exploitation. However, Engels (1974) in the *Peasant War in Germany* noted the fact that religious millenarianism could play a radical role in situations where oppositional social classes lacked an alternative secular vocabulary (Turner 1983b). In a somewhat similar argument, Karl Kautsky (1908) in his study *The Foundations of Christianity* attempted to identify early Christianity as the radical protest movement of subordinate classes (Stark 1986). While there are differences between the sociology of religion and Marxist analysis, there is nevertheless a convergence on the idea that the economic character of capitalism brings about eventually the erosion, if not collapse, of traditional Christianity. In the contemporary literature, E.P.Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), E.J.Hobsbawn's *Primitive Rebels* (1959) and Peter Worsley's *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (1957) remain classic illustrations of a Marxist perspective on religious, class and social movements.

There are three basic problems with the secularization thesis (Dobbelaire 1987). First, there is a conflation in these arguments of faith, religion and Christianity, which prevents these theories from perceiving the important and historically significant tensions and contradictions between religion as the sacral culture of the common people, and institutionalized forms of religion, requiring all the elaboration of doctrine and belief by an intellectual stratum of priests. By secularization, therefore, writers in practice often mean the de-Christianization of European society and culture. For example, Louis Althusser (Althusser and Balibar 1968; Althusser 1971) simply equates religion with the Church, and argues, following a distinction in Marx's *Capital* between the notions of economic dominance and determinism, that the dominant structure of the social formations of the Middle Ages was the Church, whereas in capitalism the economic would be both dominant and determinant (Laclau 1977:51ff). In capitalism, the family replaces the Church as the leading element within the ideological state apparatus. The problem with these positions is to explain the continuity of Christianity in the twentieth century, the growing predominance of fundamentalism not only in Christianity but in the other great Abrahamic faiths, and indeed the resurgence of

religion as a leading ideology not only in the post-colonial but in the core states of capitalism.

The second problem with the secularization thesis is that it assumes implicitly or explicitly a 'golden age' of religion (Martin 1978) or more precisely a 'golden age' of the Church in which organized religion was dominant at all levels of society. This assumption is necessary in order to claim that the development of capitalism brought about an erosion of the historical dominance of Christianity (MacIntyre 1967). But the idea that the culture of the Church was the dominant ideology of the medieval period is highly dubious (Abercrombie *et al* 1980) because, even where the Church had a political inclination to dominate through mission, it simply lacked the institutional apparatus which would be necessary to transmit its ideology. There is ample historical evidence that the religion of the common people was only partially influenced by the Christian orthodoxy of the Church, that many pre-Christian and magical beliefs and practices survived the arrival of Christianity, and that there was considerable opposition and resistance to Christianization. The absence of Christian hegemony is well illustrated by such studies as Ladurie's *Montaillou* (1980) and Ginzburg's analyses of heterodoxy (1966; 1976), Gurevich's *Categories of Medieval Culture* (1984) and Hepworth and Turner's *Confession* (1982). It is historically more accurate to see the position of the Church and Christianity as confined to an urban literary élite, since the cultural hold of the Church over the countryside remained insecure precisely because human settlements in medieval times have to be seen as oases stranded and isolated within a politically turbulent hinterland. The persistence of witchcraft, sorcery and magic would be yet a further illustration of this argument (Trevor-Roper 1972; Anglo, 1977). While Christianity within the dominant classes played a critical and crucial role, for example in providing an ideology to buttress the emergence of nobility as a caste-like structure (Bush 1983; Keen 1984), the impact of institutionalized orthodox Christianity was always limited by the continuity of local practices and popular opposition. While medieval feudal society may be described as religious, it is inappropriate to regard Christianity as the dominant ideological structure in the sense intended by Althusserian Marxism or by conventional sociologies of religion.

Third, by focusing on the relationship between economic change and religion within the conventional view of secularization, sociologists have failed to perceive a more important relationship between organized religion and the state. The thesis which I wish to examine here is that Christianity came to play a crucial part in the emergence of the nation-state system in Europe, that the Church and state became necessarily conjoined and that, whatever the contradictory relationships between a capitalist economy and organized religion, Christianity came to provide a crucial basis of legitimacy for emerging nation-states. The changes which made possible the growth of the state apparatus in Europe also made possible the growth of the Church as a national institution. An effective state system required adequate means of communication, a new financial basis and a system of military power to impose its dominance over traditional societies. There is a profound sociological argument which shows the grave limitations on state effectiveness which followed from the military limitations of pre-modern armies (Mann 1986). The development of the political and economic infrastructure of the nation-state thereby provided precisely those means of communication (including increases in literacy) by which the Church could for the first time Christianize the common people. In this perspective, we may perceive the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation as social movements which involved a new and intensive Christianization of Europe. We may also develop this argument comparatively by bringing out some interesting parallels between the contemporary Islamization of Africa and Asia which was made possible by a global transport system bringing Mecca and Medina within the reach, at least in principle, of all members of the Household of Faith. Since the Pilgrimage is one of the essential elements of Islamic religion, Islam now has the apparatus by which both in theory and practice it can be a world religion. The emergence of a world system and a global culture therefore have very profound implications for religious change, not necessarily leading to secularization but on the contrary to the fundamentalization of world systems (Robertson 1984).

Weber in *The Sociology of Religion* (1965) clearly recognized the essential tensions between Christianity as a religion of 'brotherly love' and the state, which for Weber was that institution which monopolizes violence within a given territory. Weber

explored historically how various compromises and accommodations were achieved between the Church which has a monopoly of grace and the state which has a monopoly of military violence. While this tension clearly exists, Weber failed to recognize that the Doctrine of the Fall (especially as it developed in Calvinistic Protestantism) provided ironically a crucial justification for state violence. The Doctrine of the Essential Sinfulness of Man provided a perfect justification for the state, since the corruption of the mass required a sovereign power to subordinate the sinful natures of the people. The Fall justified not only the absolute powers of the state but also the subordination of women, the continuity of social inequalities and the existence of private property (Hill 1985). More importantly, the development of nationalism in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was closely associated with a monarchical principle of state power, in which the King became the symbol of the state. It was the Reformation which provided the Prince with a Godly character and it was Martin Luther who in *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* gave particular importance to the religious responsibilities of earthly rulers. Expressions such as 'un foi, un roi, une loi' and 'cujus regio ejus religio' and 'no bishops, no king' expressed the essential political alliances between the Church and the emerging nation-state (Mullett 1980). The importance of the relationship between Protestantism and the state can be further emphasized by considering the development of nationalist movements in relationship to the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The social conditions which made possible the spread of Protestantism in the sixteenth century have presented a number of interesting theoretical and empirical issues for historical sociology. For example, there is the influential work of Guy Swanson (1967; 1986) who attempted to discover the historical connections between certain forms of theology, the development of Protestantism and the political environment within which the Protestant sects emerged. Whereas Catholic theology places a particular emphasis on the notion of God's immanence, Protestant theology has a greater commitment to the idea of divine transcendence. Swanson attempted to show that these different aspects of Christian theology were related to prior political

conditions, namely where the societies were organized more as associations or as social systems. Personal experiences of the deity as an imminent being are more characteristic of societies which were already organized as social systems rather than as associations. Swanson's theory, which derives explicitly from Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1926), can be criticized for the formalistic structuralism which typifies the Durkheimian tradition, but more specifically the basic distinction between association and social system is often difficult to sustain.

In Swanson's work we do not get the complexity of the details of the relationship between economic and political change with the emergence of Protestantism. If we regard the Reformation in England in the words of Christopher Hill (echoing Sir Maurice Powick) as 'an act of state' (1956:32), then one of its significant effects was 'a huge boost to the instruments of state through which it was effected' (Corrigan and Sayer 1985:45). In England, the dissolution of the monasteries generated an enormous increase in state wealth, while also transferring wealth into the hands of the gentry which in turn was an important condition for the growth of capitalist agriculture in England. It was this creation of a state Church which was particularly important for the subsequent 'fusion of Protestantism and Nationalism' (Corrigan and Sayer 1985:45). It has been argued that in fact the 'contribution' of Calvinism was not the development of the ethical requirements of capitalist enterprise but rather a 'Godly discipline' as the necessary perspective of a subservient citizenry. Calvin's *Institutes* precluded any discussion of political reform or of the substantive content of positive law. The result was that

secular repression was only the foundation start of a Christian polity; it provided the very minimum of social control and consolation; it revealed only the most rudimentary achievement of God's sovereign power and man's brute force (Walzer 1965:44–46).

These religious developments had particular significance in Germany for the emergence of a dominant, bureaucratic state. In Germany the development of Roman constitutional law was an important aspect in the political control of German princes through

professional law and the university trained legalists over their subjects (Strauss 1986). On the basis of this legal power of the centralized state, Lutheranism made a special contribution by rejecting the right of Christians to oppose princes. The result was that 'the anti-authoritarian impulse and social egalitarianism introduced by ascetic Protestantism were not to be found in Lutheranism' (Kalberg 1987:155). Given the failure of bourgeois political revolution in Germany in the nineteenth century (Kocka 1981), the stratum of public servants (*Beamten*) achieved a dominance both within the bureaucracy but also in German values, which intensified the Lutheran ideal of respect for state power. The implications of these conditions for Weber's sociology of domination are well known (Beetham 1974).

Having considered the various arguments relating Lutheran authoritarianism to state power, it is appropriate to return to historical illustrations of Protestant opposition to traditional Catholic, hierarchical political systems. Here again, the connection between the rise of Protestantism and the rise of nationalism is particularly clear. The analysis of the Dutch republic which emerged out of the Eighty Years War (1568–1648) has been a topic of extensive economic and political analysis (Wallerstein 1980; Tumin 1982). This struggle against Hapsburg dynasticism produced a republic which was 'a distinctively new polity, not a medieval remnant, but as modern and efficient in many ways as any of the larger centralizing, militarized monarchies with which it competed for some two hundred years' (Te Brake 1985:201). While the Dutch Revolution was followed by a religious opposition to Habsburg Catholicism, resulting in an iconoclastic destruction of Catholic symbolism, the social and economic bases of the new Dutch republic were clearly more complex than merely religious revivalism. While the religious background to Dutch capitalism was clearly influential (Riemersma 1967), the evolution of Dutch capitalism depended upon some interesting and innovative fiscal changes. One criterion of the modern state is the ability to manage long-term debts which may be greater than its yearly income; the imperial structures of the ancient world and the states of the Middle Ages were not able to command such fiscal resources. One aspect of the enormous expansion of the economy in the United Provinces was a 'financial revolution' in the methods by which

long-term debt was secured against the revenue of the entire Provinces (Tracy 1985). In addition to these fiscal changes, the Revolution also stimulated the rural sector as a consequence of the state's confiscation of monastic lands and reorganization of religious revenues (de Vries 1974). In summary, the Dutch Revolution was at the same time a religious reform of the Church, a national movement of protest against Habsburg authoritarianism and an economic revolution in production and fiscal organization. The resulting tolerance and pluralism of Amsterdam was the consequence both of the necessities of exchange and of the peculiar political settlement necessary to amalgamate Catholic and Protestant colonies within a single nation-state (Smith 1973).

In this commentary on the historical sociology of religious movements in Europe, I have drawn attention, by an examination of some contemporary literature, to the complex interaction between state formation and nationalism as an ideology. Of course, the emergence of nation-states with predominantly Protestant ideologies brought about an intense reaction within the Catholic monarchies in the seventeenth century. In this chapter, it is not possible to consider the different and complex development of political culture under Catholic absolutism and the legacy of the divine-right principle for later political revolutions (Baker 1987). In this context, it will suffice to turn briefly to the rise of baroque culture in the crisis of the seventeenth century. If we regard the absolutist state as not the precursor of capitalism, but rather 'a re-deployed and re-charged apparatus of feudal domination, designed to clamp the peasant masses into their traditional social position' (Anderson 1974:18), then we can regard baroque culture as the creation of a whole system of values, beliefs and sentiments designed to incorporate the masses by the stimulation of senses:

The seventeenth century was an epoch of masses, undoubtedly the first culture to make use of expedients to produce mass effects. This is attested to by the character of the theater, in its texts and scenario procedures; by the mechanized and external piety of post-Tridentine religion; by the politics of attraction and repression that the states began to use; by innovations in the warring arts (Maravall 1986:102).

The great crises in the evolution of modernism—the baroque crises of the seventeenth century, the literary world of Baudelaire in the nineteenth century and the avant-garde literature of the twentieth century—resulted in what has been called a ‘theaterization’ (*une theatralisation*) of society (Buci-Glucksmann 1984). Here, however, we may note some critical differences. The great baroque churches of southern Europe harnessed the artistic revolution of baroque culture to entrap the masses through the (erotic) stimulation of religious sensibilities. This early fusion of the aesthetic, the spiritual and the ethical is nowhere better illustrated than in Giovanni Bernini’s sculpture of the mystical union of St Theresa of Avila (1646–52), or in his altar piece in the Cathedral of St Peter (1656–66) in Rome (Hubala 1984). By contrast Benjamin argued that the baroque theaterization of modern society would be effected by distinctively oppositional and non-Christian symbolism (since in his terms we live in a world without aura), in which the artistic response to the political crises of the twentieth century is located in a culture where political symbolism is pluralistic rather than monologic (Benjamin 1985).

By way of a conclusion, this review of the historical sociology literature on religion and the state has mainly by implication taken notice of the strange neglect of religious culture by historians of the formation of modern states. There are occasional exceptions, like Christina Lamer, who argues that Christianity served between the Reformation and the industrial revolution as ‘the world’s first political ideology’, and ‘the evangelization of the population coincided with the development of what can loosely be called nation states’ (Larner 1982). But, for example, while Norbert Elias (1987) has done more than most sociologists to bring a crucial sense of history into sociological analysis in his magisterial study of the civilizing process (1978; 1982), he largely ignores the relationship between state formation, civilization and religious change (Turner 1985). Marxists and sociologists who have addressed the question of the role of Christianity in the development of the west have typically assumed the negative relationship between capitalist economies and Christian cultural dominance; that is, the spread of capitalism brings about a contraction in the significance of the Church.

I have attempted to point to an alternative interpretation which is that the strength of Christianity in the modern period is directly

related to its important connections with the growth of the nation-state and nationalism as a theory or sentiment. The Church expanded along with the expansion of the state's institutional apparatus, including the apparatus of violence and fiscal regulation (Mann 1980). Some sociologists have of course seen this intimate relationship between religion and political development in the west in explicitly optimistic terms. For example Talcott Parsons (1963) argued that many of the essential features of Christianity (its emphasis on the individual, the separation of religion and politics, the stress on literary skills and intellectual enquiry) anticipated and indeed laid the foundation for liberal democratic institutions which in turn presupposed for example the separation of religious orthodoxy and political stability. In a similar fashion John Hall has argued:

The Church played a very notable role in making a secular empire impossible. Most obviously it welcomed the rise of the states which were able to give more secure protection to its own property...the Church refused to serve as second fiddle in an empire equivalent to those of China and Byzantine, and thus did not create a Caesaropapist doctrine in which a single Emperor was elevated to semi-divine status (1986:134-5).

By contrast I have pursued certain themes in Weber's sociology of religion, and more broadly within his sociology of domination. Weber approached society as a diversified, fragmented and competitive collection of semi-independent institutions, sectors and social groups which fought with each other for the monopolization of social resources (Kalberg 1985). In Weber's sociology, there was a certain parallel between the state as that sector with a monopoly of physical violence and the Church as that sector with the monopoly of sacral violence. The precise relationship between these two institutions, he left open to historical and empirical enquiry; however, we can see certain necessary linkages between these two systems. The Church offered the state the disciplined citizen, the canopy of divine legitimacy, the construction of the Godly prince and in feudalism the legitimization of a militarized nobility. The ontologically corrupt nature of humanity required, however, the disciplinary apparatus of the state. Therefore, the state offered the

Church the possibility of precluding peacefully where possible, by force if necessary, the ever present threat of heresy, unorthodox practice and witchcraft. The construction of nation-states in north-western Europe therefore typically coincided with a religio-nationalist revolution of independence, creating various nation-states within which the minister of religion characteristically appeared as the civil servant. The result has been that even in the English case social minorities are characteristically religious minorities, as in the continuing isolation from the core of the so-called Celtic fringe (Hechter 1975). Finally, it would not be an injustice to historical evidence to suggest, at least in the period of European nation formation, the value of a new concept, namely the nation-church-state.

PART II

Rational Bodies

7 *The Rationalization of the Body: Reflections on Modernity and Discipline*

Introduction

Although the thematic unity of the works of Max Weber has been much disputed (Tenbruck 1980) there is at least some agreement that the process of rationalization is central to an understanding of Weber's project (Löwith 1982). The nature of rationalization arises as a crucial issue in Weber's sociology of modern societies at every point of his sociological investigation. While there is broad agreement as to the centrality of rationality and rationalization in the thought of Weber, it is curious that this feature of his work has not received extensive and systematic scrutiny (Schluchter 1981; Brubaker 1984). Existing studies of Weber's treatment of rationality typically draw attention to the paradoxical nature of rationalization in human societies, especially in capitalism. There are a number of dimensions to this paradoxical quality of rationality. The process of western rationality has to some extent a major origin in the irrationality of the Protestant quest for salvation. There is furthermore a contradictory relationship between formal and substantive rationality where substantive questions of value are subordinated to formal questions of logic. There is the further paradox that the outcome of rationalization is a world that is essentially meaningless, lacking in moral direction and dominated by a bureaucratic structure. These contradictions were summarized in Weber's metaphor of the iron cage, and the contradictory relationship between formal reason and substantive

irrationality was well captured in Herbert Marcuse's famous essay 'Industrialisation and Capitalism in Max Weber' (Marcuse 1968).

While Weber's analysis of the relationship between Protestant asceticism and capitalism has received an extensive and possible excessive commentary, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* contains the essential core of Weber's view of the origins, nature and effects of rationalization. The Calvinistic quest for salvational security gives rise by a process of unintended consequences to a culture that emphasized reason, stability, coherence, discipline and world-mastery. Protestantism broke the umbilical cord that had traditionally united the individual to the institutions of the church and thus generated a new form of possessive individualism, which had the effect of legitimating money and creating a culture dedicated to work and the transformation of the human environment. Protestantism undermined the particularistic relations of the family and the kin group by generating a new conception of the political system. Having isolated the individual and purified the relationship with the deity, Protestantism denied the magical efficacy of the sacraments and created a culture sympathetic to natural science and intellectual inquiry. Furthermore Protestant doctrine relating to the household undermined the traditional authority of the priest as confessor and placed greater obligations on parents as educators of sinful children (Hepworth and Turner 1982).

The Reformation was thus a major catalyst in the transformation of western urban culture that stimulated a new form of rationality characteristic of the urban bourgeoisie, a rational culture spreading ultimately to all classes and groups within western civilization. Although there is considerable disagreement with Weber's view of this process and the place of religion in the transformation of the west, there is overlap between the work of Marxist historians and Weberian sociologists. Illustrations could be found in the work of such disparate writers as Groethuysen (1968) Lucian Goldmann (1973) and Benjamin Nelson (Huff 1981).

Max Weber's studies of the Protestant sects can be seen in fact as a history of 'mentalities', that is, the history of the emergence of a modern form of consciousness that is set within a rational tradition. However, what I shall argue is that, alongside this history of

mentalities, there is the history of the rationalization of the body (see Turner 1982a; 1982b). I shall suggest that Weber's discussion of rationalization as an historical process can be seen as a discussion of both the emergence of a particular form of consciousness and as the analysis of the emergence of new forms of discipline that regulated and organized the energies of the human body.

One major feature of traditional asceticism was the restraint and regulation of the passions, which were seen to have their seat in the inner body. In both Christianity and Galenic medicine, the moral stability of the individual was bound inextricably to the equilibrium of the body. Weber's comparative soteriology of the great religions can be seen as a contribution to the historical analysis of these regulations of the passions through various systems of ritual and rite. In Protestantism, and ultimately Freudianism, this regulation and discipline involve an imposition of consciousness over physiology, where the body is conceived as an energy field. This reconceptualization of the mind/body relations is an important aspect of Weber's contribution to the cultural analysis of secularization.

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Weber argued that people do not 'by nature' want to earn more and more, but seek instead to reproduce the conventional conditions of existence in order to survive without surplus production. Under such circumstances it would be irrational to produce a surplus where no market or demand existed for such additional commodities. Weber's Protestant ethic thesis sought to understand the two central conditions whereby this natural reproduction was extended. These two conditions were the separation of the peasantry from the means of production by various forms of enclosure and the development of an ascetic calling in the world to dominate and master the environment. These two conditions made labour both necessary and honorific. These changes in the means of production and values had the effect of subordinating and regulating instinctual gratification.

My argument is that there is an implicit philosophical anthropology in Weber's account of rationalization, and this anthropology is not entirely unlike the anthropology that we know to be significant in the work of Karl Marx (Schmidt 1971; Markus 1978). Weber saw history in a way similar to Marx who viewed the

development of capitalism as tearing mankind out of the natural communal environment. In this natural environment human beings are naïve in the sense that their self-consciousness of reality is not reflexive and is largely underdeveloped. Their needs are somewhat restricted to immediate gratification and production. There is so to speak a natural relationship between need and the economy where both are kept at a minimum. There is therefore a form of distinction in Weber between use-values in this natural economy and exchange-values in a capitalist system. The rationalization of the body in terms of a disciplining of energies and an amplification of needs is thus an underlying theme of Weber's narrative of capitalist development.

In general terms we can see this secularization and rationalization of the body as a process from internal religious restraints on the passions to external secular amplifications and displays of desire. That is, bodies in pre-capitalist societies are enveloped in a religious system of meaning and ritual where the main target of control was the internal structure of emotion. In modern societies the order of control and significance is lodged on the outer surfaces of the body conceived in a secular framework as the sources of desirable feeling and personal significance. For Weber, modern disciplines had their origins in two separate institutional orders; these were the monastery and the army. It was in the monastic orders of medieval Europe that the initial diets and regularities emerged to subordinate passion to the will and to liberate the soul from the cloying significance of the body as flesh. As Goffman (1961) has noted, the monastery provided a total environment of control and a culture of restraint that was devoted to the regularization of human sexual emotion. Weber's Protestant ethic thesis suggested that this discourse of restraint within the monastic environment was transferred to the everyday life of the household via the Protestant concept of the calling to dominate reality. The Reformation transferred the monk from the monastic cell to the intimate chambers of the modern household in early capitalism. There is also the theme in Weber's military sociology that the army was the original focus of social discipline whereby large bodies of men were moulded into a disciplined unit by personal discipline and bureaucratic demand systems. When religion and militarism were combined in a single context, the consequences for the

development of discipline were intensified. Thus Weber claimed that 'belief in predestination often produced ethical rigorism, legalism and rationally planned procedures for the patterning of life. Discipline acquired during wars of religion was the source of the invincibility of both the Islamic and Cromwellian cavalries' (Weber 1978:1, 573).

In both religion and war, human bodies need to be trained, restrained and disciplined by diet, drill, exercise and grooming. Entry into both realms requires initiation, fire, and rituals of degradation whereby bodies are cleaned, hair is cut and individual marks of identity are obliterated (Garfinkel 1956). In these Weberian accounts of the organization of bodily functions, we find the presence of a debate about the relationship between Apollonian form and Dionysian energy, a contrast that is dear to social theorists from Gouldner (1967) to modern poststructuralists. Weber's discussion of this contradiction was taken directly from Nietzsche in the debate Weber conducted over the role of resentment in the explanation of religious belief and practice (Turner 1981). We can thus see the growth of Protestant discipline at least by analogy as a version of the imposition of Apollonian disciplines on Dionysian forces.

Weber's sociology of capitalism provides a general and systematic framework for the analysis of rationalization processes in modern society and a framework for specifically understanding the transformation of the position of the human body in society from feudalism to capitalism. Weber provided much of the detailed analysis of knowledge, power and discipline that is necessary as a perspective on the transformation of European society under the impact of modern capitalism. He was primarily concerned with changes in knowledge and consciousness, but his perspective can be extended and adapted to the analysis of the regulation of the body and of populations. There appears to be a general process whereby the body ceases to be a feature of religious culture and is incorporated via medicalization into a topic within a scientific discourse. Furthermore, the internal restraints on the body as a system of controlling the mind appear to shift to the outside of the body, which becomes the symbol of worth and prestige in contemporary societies. Briefly, to look good is to be good. Hence there is an increasing role for cosmetics and body management in a

society given to overt displays of personal status within a competitive society where narcissism is a predominant feature.

From Ritual to Discipline

We can consider the secularization of the body as a feature of rationalization from a number of vantage-points and in terms of a variety of illustrations. For example, there is the transformation of dance and gesture towards a science of exercise with the growth of gymnastics and the science of sport. In his historical account of the emergence of physical education, Broekhoff (1972) provided a stimulating account of the reification of the human body with the impact of Swedish techniques of exercise on European views of body training. He correctly notes that this history involves the conversion of the body from a ritual context of communal dance as a social expression to a reified phenomenon that can be drilled by scientific practices and modern assumptions. Gymnastics are admired not as expressing fundamental religious values relating society to nature, but as illustrations of human drive and efficiency in the context of individualized sport and achievement. Whereas Puritans had condemned dance as a provocation of sexual appetite, they recognized the educational value for young people in mild forms of exercise and exertion. The Puritanical acceptance of exercise as a suitable component of education may have created the framework for an acceptance of sport and training as valuable aspects of character-formation. Dance in the twentieth century has once more assumed an oppositional form as the youthful expression of sexuality, under the impact of modern music from the jive and the jitterbug to rock and reggae.

Further illustrations of these rationalizing and secularizing processes with respect to the human body could be illustrated in some depth from the histories of art with special reference to the representation of the body. Unlike Islamic cultures, Christianity had no objection in principle to the representation of the human form in art provided that representation was aimed at devotional and educational goals. However, it was also the case that there was considerable conflict between art and Christianity, as Weber fully recognized in his sociology of religion. He recognized an intimate

relationship between religion and art where art gave expression to religious values. However, where art became institutionally separated from religion and developed values of its own, as an autonomous form of salvation, there was inevitably a strong conflict between religion and artistic values. Thus Weber noted that all

ethical religions as well as true mysticisms regarded with hostility any such salvation from the ethical irrationalities of the world. The climax of this conflict between art and religion is reached in authentic asceticism, which views any surrender to aesthetic values as a serious breach in the rational systematization of the conduct of life (Weber 1979:1, 608).

In Weber's view this tension was increased with the growth of intellectualism, that is, with the growth of rationalization. There is an intimate connection between the historical emergence of the nude as a feature of art, the growth of individualism and the secularization of western culture. The increasing individualization of people as represented through their distinctive bodies was a feature of the emergence of capitalist society and the growth of a bourgeois market for representational art, especially with the medium of oil paint (Berger 1972). The emergence of the personal portrait representing distinctive human beings was thus a movement parallel to the growth of the novel and the autobiography as literary forms (Watt 1957).

This process of secularization is pre-eminently illustrated in the transformation of diet from a religious practice to a form of moral medicine in a secular garb in the twentieth century (Turner 1984). The word 'diet' comes from the Greek *diata*, which means a total mode of life. In Greek medicine the diet was an important aspect of medical therapeutics in which the body was seen as a natural system of equilibrium governed by four humours; here diet was a method of balancing humours that were maladjusted. Diet in this sense also included moral prescriptions about exercise, sexuality, sleeping and social relationships. There is a second feature of diet, connected to the Latin word *dies* or 'day', where political diets met on certain days; in this way political life was regulated by a calendar. Combining these two features of diet, we can define

dietary regimen as a total regulation of the individual body and a government of the body politic. Diet has historically been a central feature of the medical regimen of the sick in a moral economy where illness is a disorder of the political system, just as disease represents literally the absence of ease in the human body. This interpenetration of medical and political metaphors is incorporated once more in the very notion of a medical regimen. The term 'regimen' is from Latin *regere*, or 'rule', and as a medical notion indicates any system of therapy prescribed by a physician including, especially, a regulated diet. However, regimen also carries another meaning, namely, a system of government, which permits us naturally to speak about 'a government of the body' (Turner 1982a). We might also note that an important element of diet was the ration in which food was distributed according to a rational system of prescriptions. Thus a ration involves both the limitation of an activity and the reckoning of elements of a diet so that rations entail knowledge and power over bodies, thus representing a crucial feature of disciplines (Aronson 1984).

In Christianity, diet was a feature of monastic practice that sought to regulate the soul through the discipline of the body. In traditional Christianity there was in fact relatively little separation of spirituality and the body. Thus the central metaphors of Christianity are focused on body functions, a set of metaphors organized essentially around the crucifixion of Christ. Although Christianity specifically rejected the body as flesh, we find numerous occasions where the notion of religious truth is bound up crucially with pain; the relationship between physical pain and truthfulness was part of the sacrament of penance especially in the institution of the confession (Hepworth and Turner 1982; Asad 1983). Before the Reformation these religious dietary schemes had begun to penetrate the court and secular aristocracy of Italian and French society. For example, Luigi Cornaro's *Discourses on a Sober and Temperate Life* (translated in 1776 into English) and Leonard Lessius' *Hygiasticon* (translated in 1634 into English) were influential in Italian society, where diet came to be associated with religious orthodoxy, moral virtue and citizenship. Cornaro felt it was appropriate for men of good manners to adhere to a regular diet in order to avoid melancholy and other violent passions. These European works came eventually to influence writers like George

Herbert, George Cheyne and John Wesley (Turner 1982b). Thus the growth of a methodical way of life in dietary matters was a development that was parallel to the spread of the Methodist sects of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Whereas these early dietary schemes were typically associated with religious and moral values, in the nineteenth century there was an increasing scientific literature of diet with the emergence of nutritional sciences and the application of scientific diets to such subordinate populations as prisoners and army recruits. Nutritional sciences began to measure the potential energy of food in relationship to human labour outputs in terms of calories, which were the same unit that thermodynamic students were employing in the measurement of mechanical work (Aronson 1984). At the same time nutritional criteria were being employed by social reformers like Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree as measurements of poverty levels in the larger British cities; these surveys came eventually to provide the basis of British social policy in the early years of the twentieth century.

There appeared to be three important causes for the development of these scientific schemes of diet:

- (1) the need to mobilize large numbers of men in the mass wars of the late nineteenth century;
- (2) an increasing awareness of the dangers of poor sanitation and water supply for general health (these anxieties were combined with a new reforming movement in the schools, where there was an attempt to improve the diet of the working class); and
- (3) economic pressures to reduce the costs of supporting large numbers of long-term inmates in the army, the prisons and the asylums.

This long-term transformation of the place of diet in social relations provides a strong illustration of the general process of secularization in European societies. It should be noted, however, that medical practices in the twentieth century often retain a moral and religious content. The stigmatization of obesity, for example, underscores how contemporary notions of purity continue to

colour a world that is allegedly largely secular (Kallen and Sussman 1984).

The Rationalization of the Body and the Individuation of Persons

There is an underlying assumption in much recent social analysis that feelings and passions in pre-modern societies were more exuberant, naïve, direct, intense and communal. There is the assumption that people expressed their emotions more directly and in a collective way without the restraints of modern individualistic and bourgeois culture. Passions in pre-modern times were untrained, untrammelled and unkempt, because they were not disciplined by the requirements of a modern individualistic culture. The strength and vitality of peasant culture were dominated by the metaphors of the body, especially those connected with eating. The festival in peasant culture expressed these communal emotional sentiments, so that individual bodies were as it were submerged within the collective body in a process reminiscent of Durkheimian ritual. This collective expression of embodiment was eventually replaced by an individualistic culture organized more around bourgeois and mercantile consumption.

There is a strong connection between these developments in peasant culture and the transformation of court society, as Norbert Elias has shown in his studies of the civilizing process (Elias 1978; 1982). While this ceremonial ritual of etiquette was being formulated there was also a transformation of emotion and affect, so that the individual was expected to control his or her bodily behaviour through courtly norms that implied a new consciousness. We might express this in words uncharacteristic of Elias himself by suggesting that the civilization process involves a transformation of violent bodies into restrained bodies, and a process of individualization allowing private emotions and refined feeling to emerge within the court setting. At the court people no longer ate from a communal bowl with their hands but rather received their food on separate plates, and they consumed this privatized meal with the individual implements of the knife, fork and spoon. The growth of restrictions on spitting at the table and blowing one's nose was indicative of this new individualized ethic of good conduct,

which was calculated not to bring offence to one's companion in a public arena. This process involved a taming of emotion and a reduction of collective excitement in the interests of a centralized court; here new moral standards emerged, giving emphasis to individual distinction and sophisticated physical actions, which were condensed into a ritual of trained bodies. The civilizing process was crucially about forms of bodily activity in a social setting where feudal knights had been disarmed and organization was focused around the centralized court of the French kings. As Elias indicates, this transformation of manners corresponded to a new architectural dispersion of bodies within the central court itself; outside the court there began to emerge a new culture organized around the bourgeois home, where new manners of physical conduct and conformity were developing along parallel lines.

The rationalization of the body develops alongside the cultivation of consciousness and the emergence of an individualistic culture that regarded strong emotion as indicative of an absence of culture and education. Rationalization involves a channelling of emotion into acceptable public expression, the ritualization of meeting in public places, the diminution of strong passions as insignia of moral worth and the emergence of a culture of detailed movement and individualized behaviour. The expression of strong passions and the collective experience of emotion were downgraded in favour of a restrained urban culture that took its lead from the aristocratic manners of the centralized absolutist courts. In short, the rationalization of culture involved the control of Dionysus by Apollo, through the mechanism of the etiquette of the table and the ceremony of the court. While these developments were originally confined to the court, they spread outward ultimately through the bourgeoisie into a wider community of capitalist urban culture.

Another feature of European society was the long-term emergence of a series of natural sciences—whose object was the human body and human population—that expressed a more detailed and differentiated treatment of the body as one component of a process of cultural rationalization. As Foucault has noted, 'man' emerged as the product of a new set of discourses of the body and populations, the latter themselves a consequence of the French Revolution and the urbanization of western societies towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries.

These human sciences were features of an expanding knowledge of man that focused on problems of labour, language and exchange (Foucault 1970). The clearest expression of these disciplines was in panopticism, which sought a total control of the human environment through the new forms of knowledge made possible by penology, criminology, demography and social medicine (Foucault 1975). The centre-piece of such new institutions was the scientifically managed penitentiary based upon notions of total surveillance, efficiency and the utility of the correctly managed human body. These systems of corporal control were also the instruments of mental re-education via the total discipline of the body in a scientifically managed architectural space. We could argue that these principles of institutional development and reform sought a re-education of the mind via the discipline and organization of bodies in a regime that sought to maximize efficiency and surveillance through the application of new forms of knowledge and belief.

The new stage in this science of 'man' has been reached in the twentieth century with radical developments in biochemistry, genetic engineering and microbiology. Now the science of the body promises to deliver life itself into the hands of today's technology of the gene, whereby societies could achieve total mastery of production and reproduction through the creation of sperm and plasma banks under the centralized surveillance and control of the state. Such an achievement would be the logical outcome of Weber's view of rationalization, since people would achieve dominance over life at precisely that point where life became trivial and meaningless. It is also the end-product of Foucault's new discourse of man whereby the bio-politics of life come to occupy the central feature of the political stage (Foucault 1979a). This eventuality would conform perfectly to the narrative structure of Weber's sociology, in which the hero in search of excellence must unwittingly undermine the conditions that make heroism possible. Thus the Protestant in search of salvation produces an iron cage incompatible with moral discourse and personal religious status. In Foucault's archaeology, liberal knowledge in search of objective truths produces a world where power ultimately obliterates the capitalist subject himself as the author of scientific history. Both of these narrative themes in fact give perfect evidence to an argument

proposed by Nietzsche in *The Genealogy of Morals*, namely, that 'all great things perish by their own agency, by an act of self-cancellation'. The contradictory relationship between intention in science and outcome is at the same time a perfect illustration of the overriding fatalistic theme in Weber's sociology (Turner 1981).

The Convergence between Weber and Foucault

A number of commentators have drawn attention to a relationship between Weber's view on rationalization and bureaucracy, and Foucault's emphasis on disciplines and panopticism. Both Foucault and Weber see modern rational practices emerging from the monastery and the army and spreading outwards towards the factory, the hospital and the home. At least superficially, Weber and Foucault appear to share a common interest in the impact of religious practices on long-term secular arrangements. At a more fundamental level Weber was, as is well known, influenced by Nietzsche in important respects (Eden 1983); and Foucault too has acknowledged, although briefly, the profound influence of Nietzsche on his own development (Foucault 1977). The two theorists, further, share a common pessimism about the alleged benefits of rational reform and scientific development that underlies the theme of rationalization in both bodies of social theory. Foucault and Weber have rejected the idea of a mono-causal explanation of historical development, favouring instead a contingent view of historical outcomes as the consequence of struggles and resistance. There is also the underlying opposition, at least thematically, between the principle of emotion and sexuality under the general heading of Dionysianism versus the form-shaping rationality of the Apollonian. While this dependence on Nietzsche is significant, the relationship between Nietzsche and Weber has been inadequately explored (Fleischmann 1964; Turner 1982c); in general the impact of Nietzsche on contemporary literary analysis and social theory has also been somewhat neglected (Lash 1984). To summarize these comments, we could say that Weber's notion of the iron cage as the metaphor of contemporary bureaucratic capitalism anticipates, on the one hand, the notion of the 'administered society' in the social theories of Theodor Adorno

and, on the other, Foucault's concern for the impact of rational practices and discourse on the organization of the body and populations in modern societies. It was only towards the end of his life that Foucault acknowledged the parallel between his study of the carceral society of modern capitalism and Adorno's views on the 'administered world' (Jay 1984:22).

The relationship between Weber and Foucault has been addressed directly by Barry Smart (1983); here the author recognizes the similarities between the discussion of the carceral society and Weber's notions on the bureaucratic iron cage, but denies that there is a fundamental relationship underneath this apparent convergence. Smart notices that Weber's view of rationalization is a global theory that implies an inevitable development of rational culture and further implies that no resistance to these processes is possible; therefore the appropriate orientation to the regime of rationality is one of fatalistic resignation. By contrast he suggests that Foucault is talking about rationalities in the plural rather than about a singular process of rational discourse; that Foucault sees the history of disciplines as an open-ended, contingent possibility; and that Foucault insists upon the ever-present feature of resistance in society. While Smart's characterization of Weber is justified, we should note that Weber consistently denied that it was possible to talk about general laws of social development. Thus in so far as he saw rationalization as an inevitable evolutionary development in society, Weber's position lacked internal consistency.

By contrast it can be argued that while Foucault constantly refers to resistance, he fails to provide an adequate theory of such practices and forms of knowledge. In addition, most of his illustrations of resistance tend to be the struggles of weak individuals who are, in practice, dominated by the discourses that produce them. For example, there is the anti-hero Pierre Rivière who, having slaughtered his mother, sister and brother, resists authority by presenting his own interpretation of events against the official discourse of madness and legal incompetence (Foucault 1978). There is a similar anti-hero in Foucault's study of nineteenth-century French hermaphrodites where Herculine Barbin finds his/her sexuality determined by a bureaucratic discourse of sexual classification (Foucault 1980). Further, throughout

Foucault's analysis of the prison, the medical clinic and the asylum he provides relatively little or no substantial evidence of resistance to discourse; and nowhere does he provide an analytically coherent approach to resistance. Thus in practice Foucault's position is very similar to that adopted by structuralism generally; namely, that it is the discourse which produces human experience and belief rather than human experience producing the discourse. It is the language that speaks the subject just as it is the book that reads the audience. Two related criticisms are possible in this context. The first is that Foucault, despite protest, appears to be firmly within a deterministic structuralist position whereby the knowledgeability and agency of individuals are firmly denied and systematically precluded. Secondly, there is the problem that Foucault has never satisfactorily sorted out the relationship between discursive and non-discursive practices and institutions. The weaknesses of Foucault's position are in fact an exact parallel to the weaknesses present in Max Weber's interpretive sociology.

Towards a Critique of Weber and Foucault

For Weber the roots of rationality and the process of rationalization lie deep in western cultural history. For example, Weber gave a special emphasis to the role of the city in western society in undermining the particularistic ties of kinship and allowing the emergence of a universalistic category of political membership within the urban community. He also attributed an important aspect of western rationality to the fact that patrimonial and prebendal institutions never fully developed in western cultures, which early on were dominated by feudal forms of property and authority. Weber felt that Roman legal theory enabled the formation of a formal legal system in the west, whose universality in principle renounced arbitrary forms of decision-making. Furthermore, the emphasis in Christianity on the separation of the secular and sacred enabled the development of political and intellectual forces to emerge outside the control of the church. These features of western rationality existed centuries before the emergence of industrial capitalism; thus Weber appears to be committed to the idea that rationalization is a long-term

teleological and irreversible process in western culture. That is, Weber's is largely an 'orientalist discourse' on the uniqueness of the west, which creates an unbridgeable dichotomy between oriental and occidental civilizations (Turner 1978).

Although Weber presents what appears to be a long-term argument about the emergence of rationalization, he also adheres to a short-term argument in which it is a combination of capitalism and Protestantism that gives the rationalization process a new boost in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He argues that Protestantism contributed to the decline of magic and superstition by eliminating the efficacy of sacramental institutions; that Protestantism also stimulated the emergence of individualism by demoting the authority of priests and ecclesiastical authority in favour of personal consciousness, which communicates directly with God through the Bible. Such a set of propositions is tantamount to suggesting that capitalism arose contingently, as an outcome of the Reformation, in combination with a series of rather specific circumstances in Europe connected with the final collapse of feudalism and the dismantling of absolutism. There is in fact a more general ambiguity in Weber's causal explanation of rationalization. It is not clear whether rationalization is an immanent process with its own unfolding and irresistible logic; or whether it is the outcome of quite specific contingent struggles between religious, secular, political and other social groups. Such problems are of course not specific to Weberian sociology, but endemic in social science because they raise questions of the possibility of strict causal explanations as opposed to analysis in terms of contingent and particular circumstances. The matter, however, is crucial in Weber since it points towards the yet more fundamental issue of whether rationalization is inevitable and determinant; or whether the process could be reversed as a consequence of specific struggles of resistance.

These drawbacks are equally implicit in Foucault's analysis of discipline where the same ambiguity with respect to agency and structure is prominent. First, Foucault's views on explanation and methodology in the social sciences rule out formally any attempt to provide a determinant explanation of beliefs and practices along the lines suggested by theories like historical materialism. These arguments were crucial in *The Order of Things* and in *The*

Archaeology of Knowledge (Foucault 1970; 1972). Foucault rejects traditional historical and sociological explanations that seek causal determinacy and argues instead for notions of archaeology and genealogy in historical method. Foucault has objected that these traditional modes of explanation familiarize history in ways that are illegitimate and impose a questionable Cartesian framework of rationality on history. Furthermore, Foucault rejects most of the rationalistic and positivist assumptions underlying that form of history. Foucault affirms the role of accident and contingency and rejects evolutionary models of social change just as Nietzsche rejected Darwinism as a framework for historical investigation. Second, Foucault has rejected the progressive and evolutionary implications of much of official history, which sees the development of modern knowledge as a triumph over repression and superstition. Foucault instead sees history as a struggle of discourses which make possible such modes of interpretation but do not provide grounds for accepting them as in some way authoritative or legitimate.

Despite these methodological disclaimers, we should note that there is in Foucault's own work an implicit evolutionary history of disciplines. For example, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Foucault's disciplines and surveillance become increasingly and in an evolutionary manner more detailed, more complex, more efficacious and more determinant. Discourses seem to unfold and develop in ways that are not explicable other than in terms of an immanent logic. Furthermore, Foucault has not provided an adequate explanation of how there are ruptures in dominant modes of discourse. A close examination of Foucault's discussions of the emergence of prisons, social reforms and modern legislation points to an underlying causal explanation that is largely in terms of demography; that is, these new systems of control appear to be a response to the urban demographic explosion in European society, especially in the aftermath of the reconstruction of France through the revolutionary period. The growth of penology, criminology, urban sanitation and social medicine is a response to crowding on the part of the urban middle class, which sought a greater social control and surveillance over the 'dangerous classes'. Foucault's discussion of 'the accumulation of men' also suggests such a demographic determinism (Turner 1984). Here crowded urban

conditions gave rise to the need for increasing bureaucratic surveillance of populations, and resulted in an individuation of population into separate citizens whose behaviour and beliefs could be monitored and controlled. Foucault himself argued that sociology had its origins in social medicine as an attempt to measure, to know and thereby to have power over these complex urban populations in France (Gordon 1980). Recent histories of the growth of prisons that have developed Foucault's own set of assumptions about this history have tended to focus upon the problem of the urban labouring class and the pressure of populations, seeing the prison as an instrument of political surveillance (Ignatieff 1978; O'Brien 1982).

Contemporary studies suggest that Foucault's account of the growth of the prison can be incorporated relatively easily within a fairly conventional historical explanatory framework, which would attempt to see these institutions as responsive to demographic changes in the city, the growth of the working class and the response of the middle class to both medical and political problems in the urban environment of the nineteenth century. Foucault's own account of the asylum and the prison is in practice not far removed from these forms of analysis, but he overtly refused to attempt an approach that would resemble such a sociology of knowledge. He tended to reject reductionism but failed to elucidate and develop the implicit explanatory framework that he employed. Consequently he was not able to provide an account of the relationship between discursive and non-discursive practices. In turn these problems in Foucault are indicative of a failure to provide a systematic account of resistance to the new disciplines of the carceral society.

Against Nostalgic Social Theory

Nostalgia is a disease of particular interest to the historian of ideas and to the sociologist of knowledge. Nostalgia begins its western history as the moral and medical problem of monks who suffered from a form of melancholy variously described as 'tristitia' or 'acedia' (McNeill 1932; Jackson 1981). Nostalgia as a form of melancholy became associated in particular with intellectuals who suffered from dryness and withdrawal from activity. The most

prominent representative in literature of nostalgic melancholy is Hamlet; and there is some evidence that Shakespeare modelled the character of Hamlet on a medical work by Timothy Bright, whose *A Treatise of Melancholie* appeared in 1586 (Wilson 1935). Since Hamlet embodies the oedipal complex, nostalgic incapacity for coming to terms with the present and an anxiety about the reality of the world in which he lives, he is also a representative of the crisis of modernity. In particular Hamlet's uncertainty about the relationship between language and reality anticipates much of the modernist predicament following Nietzsche's representation of the collapse of values as an outcome of the crisis of language.

There is a conventional argument that sociology emerged as an intellectual response to the French and Industrial Revolutions via three separate doctrines, namely, conservatism, liberalism and radicalism (Nisbet 1967). Sociology came to be structured theoretically around a series of contrasts that identified pre-modern aspects of social order; these contrasts were the classic divisions between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, status and contract, mechanical and organic solidarity, military and industrial society, and traditional and modern associations. These contrasts typically indicated a critical or at least ambivalent attitude towards modern society by identifying a pre-modern source of authority, authenticity, or stability as the point for a critique of contemporary development. Sociology, then, could be said to be a nostalgic science of society, since implicitly it is forced to identify with the past as a source of values for the critique of the present. In Marxism this takes the form of a contrast between societies based upon use-values and those based on exchange-values, and in Marxist philosophical anthropology there is a contrast between some form of authenticity that was possible before the division of labour and inauthentic existence of the modern world. In Durkheim there is a lurking commitment to medievalism in his overt appreciation of the guild system and his use of the notion of the *conscience collective* as a desirable form of social solidarity. In Simmel there is the nostalgic notion that somehow a system of barter avoids the fleeting instability of modern society based upon abstract forms of money. The pre-eminent expression of this nostalgic conservatism lay in the fundamental distinction between community and association in the work of Tönnies and other German sociologists, who presented

individualism as an artificial and mechanical form of life negating the true organic source of German culture (Freund 1979).

Weber's narrative structure of fatalism and his dependence upon biblical, or at least religious, metaphors were also classical representations of nineteenth-century nostalgic sociology as a critique of the modern. In the narrative structure of Weber's sociological studies we find the theme that intentionality and effects are always in a negative relationship (Jameson 1973). Weber was fatalistic because he perceived in history the constant negation of human ethical activity. The pessimistic paradox of Weberian history is that all that is virtuous (reason, imagination and moral altruism) results in a world that stands in opposition to human creativity, because rationality lays the foundation of the iron cage. Some recent interpretations of Weber have attempted to minimize or deny this pessimistic and debilitating theme in Weber's backward-looking glance at pre-modernism (Roth and Schluchter 1979; Scaff 1984; Thomas 1984). These interpretations require a rejection of Weber's fatalism in favour of an ethical programme that, while realistic, creates some space for engagement in reality. The genuine source of Weber's world-view, however, seems to lie more in the 'inner loneliness' of Calvinism than in Stoicism. The parable of self-cancellation is the parable of the Tree of Knowledge; our wisdom and our transgression disqualify us from the paradise of *naïveté* and block our entry into the modern world without nostalgia and anxiety. To this Old Testament picture of our condition, Weber adds the more modern parable of Nietzsche's madman who claimed that he could smell the carcass of the dead divinity. The world in which we are imprisoned as a consequence of eating the rational apple is also utterly devoid of significance. We cannot return to paradise because we see the world through rational spectacles and cannot apprehend it without presuppositions; thus we are no longer capable of direct naïve experience free of rationalizing scepticism. Like Hamlet we are forced to say of the world that it is mere 'words, words, words'.

Towards an Evaluation of Modernity

Critical theory, Weberian sociology and the structuralism of Foucault share much in common with such nostalgic positions. We

can identify four components here. First they are uni-dimensional in failing to provide a perspective on the contradictory dynamic of the modernizing process, which is simultaneously one of incorporation and liberation. Specifically they fail to grasp the positive and emancipating element of contemporary culture. Second, there is a puritanical streak within the anti-modernist critique which tends to see all leisure pursuits, mass culture and modern conveniences as forms of human subordination via a new hedonistic ethic. They fail to theorize the element of liberation involved in consumer culture; thus the critique of exchange-values, and the fetishism of commodities often looks like an updated version of the puritanical critique of all pleasure. Third, there is as a consequence of an élitist element in nostalgic social theory which elevates high culture to a position of absolute privilege, denigrating all forms of popular culture. Fourth, there is a perspective on working-class culture that is predominantly incorporationist because it sees the whole consequence of modern consumerism as one of political subordination bringing about the stability of capitalism through either a dominant ideology or a dominant form of lifestyle.

These components of the critique of modernity have a special relationship to the problem of the body in modern society; here closer examination reveals an altogether more complex state of affairs. Although the joint development of capitalism and rationalization brought about a greater surveillance and control of urban populations (in particular the urban working class), the growth of social medicine and improvements in the urban environment were also significant factors in the improvement of health, the decline of infantile mortality, the elimination of infectious diseases and the increase in life expectancy. These improvements in the physical condition of the working class were not only consequences of greater control, but also outcomes of popular struggles, and especially of trade-union politics, to achieve more substantial rights of social and economic citizenship. There is a contradictory and paradoxical relationship between, on the one hand, the growth of a state bureaucracy to survey and control populations and, on the other, the enhancement of health and physique as a consequence of popular politics for a greater distribution of wealth. Thus in the area of health reform there

should be at least some recognition of the role of popular movements for better health, education and styles of living. To deny these developments is to ignore the need for bureaucracy to provide an egalitarian distribution of resources. The long-term improvement in infantile mortality rates in European societies is one rather obvious indicator of social advancement, that is difficult to reconcile with such pessimistic analyses of the history of bodies and populations.

Second, the critique of modernity is equally puritanical and élitist in adopting an aristocratic or at least high-bourgeois attitude towards mass culture, mass society and mass consumption. The dilemmas of this position were well illustrated in Herbert Marcuse's analysis of sexuality in modern American capitalist society (Marcuse 1955). While Marcuse wished to welcome sexuality as an oppositional force against the traditional asceticism of competitive capitalism, he could not ultimately incorporate sexual deviance and pornography within his own aesthetic ethic of cultivated man. As Douglas Kellner has noted, these neo-Marxist theories of commodity tend to be global in assuming uniform effects of all commodities on all recipients so that

the commodities are alluring sirens whose symbolic qualities and exchange values seduce the consumer into purchase and consumption. There is both a Manichaeism and Puritanism in this perspective. Commodities are pictured as evil tools of class domination and a covert distinction is made between (bad) exchange values and (good) use value (Kellner 1983:71).

Whereas critical theory has typically seen the growth of mass media, mass culture and the new society of leisure as subtle means of incorporation, it is important to have a perspective on the contradictory effects of such social developments. While jogging and cosmetic surgery may be regarded as part of the superficial culture of modern industrial communities, there are important benefits for the majority of the population as a consequence of the transformations of diet, fashion and sport (Featherstone 1982). Sport may be the modern version of the Roman circus in pacifying the population, but it also dramatically represents on occasions communal excitement and popular protest against contemporary

conditions. Sport functions as a modern form of collective religious ritual in societies largely devoid of public spectacle (Dunning 1983).

Most of these theories assert some close relationship between a component of modern culture and the continuity of capitalism. The nature of this component varies considerably but it is commonly assumed that some version of individualism, consumerism, private property, or the values of liberalism as portrayed in the mass media, is a necessary feature for the continuity of capitalism. Whereas asceticism was originally felt to be a necessary component of capitalism in the discipline of labour, it is now argued commonly that some version of calculating hedonism, leisure, or consumerism is necessary in late capitalism to lull the bodies of workers or rather the unemployed into an acceptance of capitalist accumulation. It is difficult to demonstrate any general and necessary relationship between components of culture (such as individualism) and the economic and political requirements of capitalism, although it is possible to demonstrate the existence of certain empirical and contingent connections between culture and the capitalistic mode of production (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner 1980). Expressing this in a rather different framework, there seems to be in late capitalism a disjuncture between the logic of the cultural system and the requirements of the capitalistic economic substructure (Bell 1976). Modern capitalism appears to survive with a variety of rather different forms of belief and practice, ranging in political terms from fascism to the welfare state and in cultural terms from a permissive sexual ideology to a sexually punitive and conservative moral environment. In general, however, it seems to be the case that modern capitalism develops alongside a plurality of systems of belief and practice rather than with reference to one dominant ideology or, in Foucault's terms, a dominant 'episteme'. Within this framework popular culture is often the focus of opposition and protest against capitalism rather than an illustration of working-class or popular incorporation.

Third, nostalgic sociology tends to be uni-dimensional and incorporationist in its view of modern culture, failing to grasp the paradoxical and dynamic processes of modern civilization where consumerism may have at least in principle an emancipatory impact. These negative and nostalgic perspectives fail to provide a

positive evaluation of such elementary developments as sanitation, improvements in communication, the development of modern medical therapeutics and the availability of pain-killing drugs. These negative theories see the body as merely the effect of discourses and thereby fail to recognize that a theory of embodiment is a necessary precondition for the development of a notion of effective agency. Sociology is still to some extent stuck with a Cartesian separation of mind and body where mind is seen to be the causal knowledgeable agent and the body is relegated to an object or an environment that is subtly manipulated by consumerism or regulated by disciplines. Despite constant talk about resistance, Foucauldian bodies are merely objects of medical and political discourses. Neither Weber nor Foucault provided a phenomenology of the active body as an essential component of human knowledgeable agency. The development of sociological theory will have to incorporate an entirely new perspective on the nature of human embodiment in order to achieve a more dialectical grasp of the character of modernity.

8

The Body Politic: The Secularization of Sovereign Bodies

Introduction

In this chapter the body is examined historically as a metaphor of political space and governmental authority, in order to throw more theoretical light on the development of contemporary conceptions of citizenship. The analytical intention is to achieve a conceptual blend between a political anthropology of the body and a sociology of the body politic. The theme is provided by Max Weber's rationalization paradigm: with the modernization of politics, sovereignty is transferred from the sacred body of the king to the abstract body of the state. In the process, sovereign powers are, in principle, secularized, but for various contingent reasons this process of political rationalization is both uneven and incomplete. In particular, the survival of monarchical bodies can be regarded as an important, if anachronistic, institution in the political history of modern states. In both democracies and totalitarian regimes, the body of the leader (whether Ronald Reagan or Saddam Hussein) is the sign of social power. To consider yet another embodiment of power, the Virgin Mary continues in many rural communities to symbolize oppositional force. These forms of the embodiment of power raise questions about the nature and extent of the rationalization of charisma and, although much has been written about Weber's notion of charismatic routinization, this treatment of political bodies contributes to an original understanding of Weber's political sociology.

The idea that the human body has provided an enduring metaphor of political activity is now a commonplace, but any attempt to conceptualize politics in terms of the human body has to be seen in the context of a long historical transformation of the idea of power and sovereignty. In the western world, there has been in democratic systems a symbolic transfer of power from the body of the king to the body of the people. In this process power became less concrete and less specific as it was dispersed into more abstract regions and collectivities, being symbolized in regalia and emblems such as the crown and the sceptre. Power was inserted into a complex, anonymous collection of positions and institutions, which lack symbolic force. The rationalization of power involves an impersonalization of force, because administrative bureaucracies are by definition collectivities of legally-defined roles rather than charismatic communities. This process of dispersal therefore also involves a secularization of sovereignty in which the sacred authority of the king's body is eventually replaced by the secular authority of the state as an abstract instrument of power. Of course, this process of secularization was extremely variable and clearly some secular powers still retain both a sovereign and a religious connotation, especially where monarchy has come to represent the continuity of the people. Here again the continuity of monarchy (in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain and Belgium to mention a number of significant cases) is an important counter-case to any unidimensional view of secular powers. Furthermore, in many European societies, general social power has been divided between, or shared with, the Church; in many Catholic societies, for in example in Mexico and the Irish Republic, the rituals surrounding saints and the Virgin Mary are still a vehicle of charismatic political force and national identity.

These processes of secularization—albeit uneven, uncertain and incomplete—made possible the eventual emergence of constitutionalism, which in turn prepared the way for the ultimate emergence of contemporary notions of citizenship. The secularization of the authority of the monarch and the Church permitted the development of more democratic forms of representation from below as an oppositional movement against patriarchal and hierarchical forms of personal power from above. Again it is important to emphasize the very variable history of

constitutionalism in both Europe and North America. In this treatment of citizenship, unitary notions of citizenship, which are part of the conventional literature, are criticized. There are in fact a number of distinctive forms of political and social citizenship. This commentary concludes therefore with an examination of possibilities for an expansion of citizenship and of the constraints upon such a development within contemporary forms of democratic politics.

From the Polis to the People

From the philosophers of the ancient world through to the theologians of Christendom, the human body has provided a field of metaphors which elaborated a view of coherence, balance and stability:

Every political community has to find a symbolic expression of its beliefs concerning the sources, sustenance and potential threats to the orderly conduct of its members. Thus the image of the *body politic* resumes our reflections on the nature of order and disorder in the human community (O'Neill 1985:67).

The balance of the human body provided a metaphor for the balance of political life, while disturbances in political institutions were also thought to produce disease in the human body. It is perhaps for this reason that we can regard dietetics as the first political science in western history; as Michel Foucault observed:

The author of the treatise on *Ancient Medicine*, far from considering regimen as an adjacent practice associated with the medical art—one of its applications or extensions—attributes the birth of medicine to a primordial and essential preoccupation with regimen. According to him, mankind set itself apart from animal life by means of a sort of dietary disjunction (Foucault 1987:99).

A regimen is merely a regime or government of the body designed to preserve and enhance the stable order of the human organism, but within a wider framework dietetics in fact referred to an entire

regime of life (that is, a way of life) (Turner 1982; 1984; 1985). The principal practice of medical regulation was the diet; it had a simultaneous political and medical significance, being derived from the idea of a regular meeting of congress or government, as in the notion of a 'diet of empire'. Similar ideas were common in oriental medical systems. Acupuncture grew out the idea that the health of the state was a model for the health of the body. Congestion of traffic in the transport system of the despotic (hydraulic) state lead to political instability just as the congestion of matter in the flow of blood produced sickness in the body; acupuncture was to help this flow of material in the human body just as wise political intervention in the state restored the health of the body politic.

In western history, medicine never lost its close association with the art of government. The doctrine of the four humours in galenic medicine provided a rich source of political theorizing about the intimate connection between the dietary management of the body and the political regulation of the body politic, along with a related set of theories about the necessity for personal government, if the government of the entire community were to be preserved. The desert monks of early Christianity recognized the close relationship between diet, sexual asceticism and social order. The regulation of desire was a precondition of an orderly community (Rouselle 1988).

This perspective remained a fundamental feature of Christian teaching. For example, one of the greatest reflections on the social and political disturbances of the first half of the seventeenth century was Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, first published in 1621 and constantly revised until its posthumous sixth edition in 1651. The *Anatomy* can itself be regarded as a metaphor of social disorders, because its tangled argument portrays the complexities of the changing order of Elizabethan and Jacobean society (Lyons 1971; Fox 1976). Burton's ruminations on diet and exercise are in this perspective of considerable interest. Burton warns us against almost every type of meat, fish, vegetable and herb, their combinations, their weights and conditions, their seasons and their production by country, by author, by every kind of authority known to men. He turns eventually to the question of exercise as part of the regimen of the body and, as we might expect, he criticizes the idleness of the rich:

Idleness is an appendix to nobility; they count it a disgrace to work, and spend all their days in sports, recreations and pastimes, and will therefore take no pains; be of no vocation; they feed liberally, fare well, want exercise, employment (for to work, I say, they may not abide), and company to their desires, and thence their bodies, become full of gross humours, wind, crudities; their minds disquieted, dull, heavy etc. care, jealousy, fear of some diseases, fits, weeping fits seize too familiarly on them (Burton [1621] 1927:160).

In the next century medical men like George Cheyne in his *The English Malady* (1733) came to argue that the new diet associated with the discovery of the West Indies would bring about the destruction of the state, because the bodies and minds of the aristocracy were being destroyed by a diet which was too hot, spicy and rich.

While the body has played a major part in the formation of ancient and early modern theories of government, the body metaphor was also crucial to the development of theological opinion about the relationship between the Church and God. In Christian doctrine, the people are connected to Christ through a system of sacraments which unite them through the body of the Church with the mystical body of Christ. In the theology of the Christian fathers, membership of an earthly community was at best merely a preparation for entry into the city of God. This notion that, in the words of Tertullian, we are merely aliens in this world and citizens of the city of Jerusalem which lies above, created a radical Christian political theory which separated the believer from the earthly power of secular rulers. The Christian community was ultimately founded on the profound mystery of the Corpus Christi, which was itself further symbolized in the sacrificial meal of the Eucharist. These themes in Christian theology found their most articulate expression in Augustine's concept of *Civitas Dei*, in which Christian society appeared as orderly, coherent and integrated, whereas political society appeared as divided, temporary and conflictual.

The idea that the ancient rituals of the Christian Church provided an archaic model of public festivals of political membership was eventually embraced by western philosophy. In

the historical development of social philosophy, the question of the unity of religious bodies such as the Church resulted eventually in a theory of ritual practices as the ultimate grounding of social solidarity.

Sociology came itself to embrace and develop this tradition of political analysis. Thus in the work of Fustel de Coulanges, especially *The Ancient City*, in William Robertson Smith's *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* and Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (Turner 1971), we discover the foundations of a theory that the conditions of social coherence are to be found in public rituals. It was Fustel de Coulanges who came to realize that the religious sacrifice involved in public festivals, especially in public meals, was an essential functional requirement for the reproduction of city life, since it was the common meal which provided a bonding for social and political life:

The principal ceremony of the city worship was also a repast of this nature; it was partaken of in common by all the citizens, in honor of the protecting divinities. The celebrating of these public repasts was universal in Greece; and men believed that the safety of the city depended on their accomplishment (Fustel de Coulanges n.d.: 155).

Max Weber in his analysis of the ancient city took a rather different direction in suggesting that the revolutionary quality of the Christian notion of political membership lay, not in a set of sacraments, but in the idea that the bond of political life lies in a common religious faith rather than in blood, ethnicity or ritual practice. Weber argued that

the city church, city saint, participation of the burghers in the Lord's Supper and official church celebrations by the city were all typical of the Occidental cities. Within them Christianity deprived the clan of its last ritualistic importance, for by its very nature the Christian community was a confessional association of believing individuals rather than a ritualistic association of clans. From the beginning, thus, the Jews remained outside the burgher association (Weber 1958:102–3).

For Weber, therefore, the Christian idea of social membership as a community of the faithful provided an important precondition for the long-term emergence of the modern concept of the citizen as a socio-political actor, liberated from the constraints of local kinship communities.

The legacy of the Christian idea of the body politic and *civitas dei* appears to be the following: a division between secular and mystical power (or between concrete and abstract sovereignty); the problematization of the idea of social membership; and the notion of differential functions within the body politic corresponding to the different functions of the human body. Thus O'Neill in *Five Bodies* claims that the Christian concept of the body politic paved the way to the medieval idea of the king's two bodies, namely a division between the body natural and the body political. This Christian doctrine provided medieval society with a model of kingship which enabled the court to distinguish between the king's personal body and his abstract sovereign power. This notion was the basis of Ernest Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies* (1957). While the king had an earthly and corruptible body, he also had a mystical and sacred body which was continuous and incorruptible. This division between the sacred and the profane permitted the fiction to be established that sovereign power could not be destroyed and was incorruptible, regardless of the life and death of the actual king.

Of course, this attempt to appropriate the language of religion in order to glorify the power of the king was always resisted, or at least there were always alternative theories of power. For example, Walter Ullmann in *Medieval Political Thought* (1975) has argued that in the Middle Ages there were basically two competing theories of power. The descending theory of power argued that the authority of the king came downwards from God and sacred powers, and that the sovereignty of the king was not therefore dependent on any support or acceptance by the lower orders. From the seventh and eighth century, kings attempted to detach themselves from the people and asserted a theocratic right to rule as God's representative, being above and not directly responsible to the community.

The success of this theory varied within and between societies. In England, the theocratic power of the king was limited by the

assertion of feudal rights of immunity, and parliament continued to place a constraint on the absolutist power of the king. In France and Germany by contrast, theocratic principles of power were far more successful; in France the king was through his body able to claim thaumaturgical powers of miracle-working and healing, such that the idea of the king's mystical body continued to exercise considerable influence.

The ascending theory of power can be traced back to Aristotle's theory of politics, but it came to prominence in the second half of the thirteenth century as a challenge to theocratic-descending ideas of government. In northern Italy the ascending principle was eventually combined with the idea that citizens of free cities were not subordinated to the mystical power of the king, but could claim rights of their own. As Ullmann points out, the emergence of the concept of citizenship had a crucial role to play in establishing the norm that the people as a community had important rights, not merely as favours from the king but as genuine claims upon the body politic:

The *populo* as the aggregate of the citizens had succeeded in establishing its sovereignty. But the rest of Europe was not unfamiliar with the concept, since the inhabitants of every city were called *cives*, to whom the king addressed his charters. It is well to bear in mind that a perfectly harmless term, such as 'the citizen', greatly assisted the process by which this term could become the core of a significantly new theory: the linguistic usage of a term proved itself an important bridge between the medieval and indifferent meaning and the later pregnant substance of the citizen as the bearer of rights (and no longer the mere recipient of favours) (Ullmann 1975:1.64).

Thus, while the king typically claimed divine status or quasi-divine status in order to buttress his claim to undivided power, there was always an element of resistance to the theocratic principle. In addition to parliaments and the theory of ascending power, there was always popular resistance through carnivals, peasant revolts, and popular violence against undivided sovereign powers exerted over the people (Ladurie 1981).

However, the notion that the king had a theocratic right to rule was given a new lease of life in the seventeenth century with the growth of absolutist states which attempted to reassert the power of the old system against the emergence of new mercantile and capitalist elements in the nascent system of capitalist agrarian production. Both James I in England and Louis XIV in France attempted to make full use of the idea of the divine right to rule which would establish the despotism of monarchy on principles guaranteed in the Old Testament. However, we should see this principle of a divine hereditary right as a defensive theory against the growth of social contract ideas, which asserted the rights of representation of citizens—or at least the wealthy—against the king's absolute power. Thus in England Sir Robert Filmer wrote his *Patriarcha, a defence of the natural power of kings against the unnatural liberty of the people* around 1640, in order to provide a philosophical backing for royal absolutism and patriarchal authority against the new political ideas of contract and individualism which were the basis of contractualist theories of governmental power. In France, the principles of royal absolutism were expressed through a defence of Catholic orthodoxy by writers like Jacques Benigne Bossuet (1627–1704) who, in his *Politique tiree de propre parole de l'Ecriture sainte*, attempted to defend the idea of royal power against the doctrine of social contract (Hazard 1964).

The notion that the king had a definite authority to rule, rather like the father has a patriarchal authority over the household, came to be challenged by individualistic and utilitarian political theories, especially in the work of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Spinoza's *Tractatus Politicus* (Wernham 1958) and John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* in 1690. Seventeenth-century absolutism was therefore important, because in the changing rituals which surrounded the king and the creation of the court at Versailles, we can trace the decline of the 'king imagined' from feudal ecclesiastical rituals to a new court etiquette. Just as we can see the emergence of social contract theory as an individualistic critique of royal absolutism, so we can see the changing formation of the court society as an important transition in royal power, which in turn anticipated the demise of monarchical sovereignty. The conflicts of the seventeenth century were structured by a baroque view of absolute authority in which religion and art were deployed to win

the hearts of the people, and by a bourgeois view of rights which reside in individuals, who have a merely contractual relationship to the authority of the state.

The failure of seventeenth-century absolutism paved the way through the revolutionary struggles of the eighteenth century to more impersonal notions of power, to the development of the idea of representation, and finally to a modern conception of citizenship. We can express this transition by once more referring to the question of the king's body as the singular representation of social power. In the *ancien regime*

the king represents the whole, not in the sense that he is authorized by the body of the nation to act on its behalf, but precisely because the nation exists as a body only in the individual person of the monarch, which constitutes the source and principle of its unity. The king is sovereign because the state resides nowhere but in his individual person; his will is the only public will because, as a public person, he alone among his subjects can see the whole and can take council for the whole (Baker 1987:470).

It was this idea of the public person of the king representing the sovereignty of society in his singular body which Bossuet had attempted to express in his defence of patriarchal power and the old regime. The struggle for representation which dominated eighteenth-century French history was therefore a struggle against this idea of the king's monopolistic embodiment of power. Revolutionary French social theory was an attack on an idea that had become increasingly archaic, namely that the king could represent the diversity and complexity of French society.

Against the idea of monarchical sovereignty power, Rousseau in *Contract Social* (1973) developed a notion of a body of citizens living under a common law whose general will in fact was the embodiment of collective power. For Rousseau, the social contract produced a new type of political body:

At once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of association creates a corporate and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly

contains voters, and receiving from this act its unity, its common identity, its life, and its will. This public person, so formed by the union of all other persons, formally took the name of *city*, and now takes that of *republic* or *body politic*; it is called by its members *state* when passive, *sovereign* when active, and power when compared with others like itself. Those who are associated in it take collectively the name of *people*, and severally are called *citizens*, as sharing in the sovereign authority, and *subjects*, as being under the laws of the state (Rousseau 1973:175).

In an interesting footnote to this passage, Rousseau complains that the French do not really understand the notion of citizen, since they regularly confuse the notion of townsman for citizen. He argues that, while a town is made up of houses, a city is composed of citizens who are the bearers of rights. The social contract theory of Rousseau was therefore a crucial turning point in the history of modern political theory, since Rousseau clearly recognized that what had occurred was a transition from the power of the body of the king to the power of the body of citizens, that is a transfer from one body to the body of nobody. The social contract for Rousseau involved a process in which 'each man, in giving himself to all gives himself to nobody' (Rousseau 1973:174). It is this idea of the secular body politic which has exercised the political philosophy of Claude Lefort in his attempt to analyse the relationship between terror and democracy (Lefort 1983; 1986; 1988).

From de Tocqueville to Lefort

Although Lefort was primarily concerned with a problem of totalitarianism within contemporary societies dominated by Marxist ideology and communist institutions, his starting point was the problem of democratic society in the writing of Alexis de Tocqueville. The problems of Tocquevillian democracy provide the, as it were, ideal-typical case of the problem of totalitarianism. While de Tocqueville was in many respects enthusiastic about the society which he explored in North America, he was also constantly exercised by the problems of totalitarian public opinion in such mass democracies. De Tocqueville regarded America as the first great democratic revolution in modern times, and he was

concerned to understand the limitations and potentialities of such democratic commitment to the idea of equality of condition. In *Democracy in America*, de Tocqueville had argued that, where there are no limitations on the dominance of public opinion then there is no possibility for individual freedom, for dissent or for opposition to majority rule. In his discussion of the unlimited power of the majority, de Tocqueville had asserted:

I know no country in which there is so little true independence of mind and freedom of discussion as in America. In any constitutional state in Europe every sort of religious and political theory may be advocated and propagated abroad; for there is no country in Europe so subdued by any single authority as not to contain citizens who are ready to protect the man who raises his voice in the cause of truth from the consequences of his hardihood (de Tocqueville 1946:192).

The central issue, as de Tocqueville saw it, was the creation of institutions to protect liberty of opinion against the tyranny of a majority. He expressed this opinion with striking clarity in his *Journey to America*, where he observed:

A completely democratic government is so dangerous an instrument that, *even in America*, men have been obliged to take a host of precautions against the areas and passions of Democracy. The establishment of two chambers, the governor's veto, and above all the establishment of the judges (de Tocqueville 1959:149).

It was this vision of the dominance of public opinion which had so disturbed J.S.Mill, who came to argue that just as Chinese society had been brought to a condition of despotic stationariness, so British democracy would come to stagnate under the dead hand of unenlightened public opinion (Turner 1974). For Lefort, of course, the problems of modern politics are ushered in by the French revolution and the democratic revolution of American society, because these two events gave rise to the foundations of mass society, ideology and modern forms of tyranny. In the American case, individualism fragments people into separate items within a

mass society whose leading criterion is equality rather than freedom. For de Tocqueville, democratic despotism is based upon the fact that the public becomes an undifferentiated mass which can be led by an authoritarian ruler. This was also the fear which haunted Weber's view of the bureaucratic domination of the mass party, giving rise to a plebiscitary form of democracy. In the French Revolution, power

becomes detached from the body of the king, which housed society's leading organs, and moves into the impalpable, universal and essentially public element of speech. This fundamental change marks the birth of ideology (Lefort 1988:110).

Lefort's reflections on the French and American revolutions are in fact a pretext for his analysis of terror in modern communist societies (Thompson 1984). Following Marx, Lefort argued that all social systems produce an image of their own social unity which functions to mask and disguise the essential and necessary divisions, conflicts and discontinuities within real societies; this is what he means by the imaginary (*l'imaginaire social*). Here again the metaphor of the body comes to play a crucial role in the establishment of a totalitarian imaginary. Lefort claimed that totalitarianism is the product of democratic processes:

The foundation of totalitarianism lies in the representation of the People-as-One. It is denied that division is constitutive of society. In the so called socialist world, there can be no other division than that between the people and its enemies: a division between inside and outside, no internal division (Lefort 1986:297).

The maintenance of the unity (the People-as-One) necessarily requires the production of enemies, of fantastic adversaries, of evil outsiders. The campaign of persecution thereby assumes a therapeutic process a sort of social prophylaxis:

What is at stake is always the integrity of the body. It is as if the body had to assure itself of its own identity by expelling its waste

matter, or as if it had to close in upon itself by withdrawing from the outside, by averting the threat of an intrusion by alien elements (Lefort 1986:298).

From the totalitarian need to exclude enemies, there arises the need for an Egocrat whose body will symbolize the virtues, the heroism, the internal unity of the body politic itself; hence the emergence of Stalin, Mao or Fidel. Loyalty to the leader becomes the main symbolic method of establishing loyalty to the social whole, to the body politic. In many respects therefore, modern forms of totalitarianism have merely resurrected much of the old rhetoric of patriarchal authorities, of sacred bodies, and thus of charismatic leadership. Although the emergence of citizenship presupposes a certain secularization of the idea of sacred powers, we can also argue that modern politics has simply transcribed and transposed the old rhetoric of sacral powers into the new domain of contemporary interest politics. Furthermore, if, as was suggested earlier, the essential question of citizenship is the problem of social membership, then in societies which are, as is were, striving to become nation-states, secular ritual (Moore and Myerhoff 1977) comes to have an even more profoundly political role to play in the actual constitution of a social unity.

Citizenship: Revolutionary Practice or Ruling-class Strategy?

It is widely argued that the concept of equality is the dominant theme of contemporary political ideology. The expansion of equality of condition and equality of opportunity can be seen as a leading political idea of both liberal and radical ideology. Thus:

Totalitarian and democratic democracy each represent a distinctively modern adaptation to the mandate to the people, a particular response to the emergence of a public sphere whose members view themselves as the ultimate authority in the political order (Prager 1985:183).

Whereas the traditional mythology of the body politic was often based upon some hierarchical principle (such as the division between head and hand), contemporary views on the body politic

tend to emphasize equality of individuals within a mass political structure. In order to analyse these modern visions of power, we must turn to the conception of citizenship in contemporary political discourse.

The debate over citizenship in contemporary societies owes a great deal to the sociological work of T.H. Marshall (1963). Marshall identified three dimensions of citizenship, namely civil, political and social rights, which he saw evolving over three or four centuries, and maturing as the contemporary welfare state. Thus the civil rights of the seventeenth century were associated with the development of a democratic legal system, the political rights of the nineteenth century were manifest in parliament, and the social rights of the twentieth century were institutionalized in the welfare state. This evolution of citizenship can also be seen in terms of the emergence of a secular body politic which replaces the social rights of the king's body. The emergence of legal rights to individual property put a brake on the absolutist claims of the monarchy to the whole kingdom. The emergence of legal rights required a secularization of legal sovereignty. Thus citizenship requires a new set of rituals to celebrate collective bodies, such as parliamentary democracy.

Marshall has been criticized on various grounds (Turner 1986; Barbalet 1988). The two major criticisms of Marshall are that his scheme is evolutionary and cannot account for the possibility of a reversal of the welfare system; and that he failed to perceive that the development of economic citizenship may be the most crucial limitation on modern social rights.

One of the most trenchant criticisms of Marshall's account has been recently presented by Michael Mann in 'Ruling Class Strategies and Citizenship' (Mann 1987). Although Mann takes account of the traditional criticisms of Marshall, he also criticizes the original theory for its Anglocentric character, namely that, while the theory applies to the British case reasonably correctly, it fails to provide a more general analysis of citizenship. The essence of Mann's argument is that Britain is in fact a special case, and that one can identify five varieties of the institutionalization of class conflict, namely the liberal reformist, authoritarian monarchist, fascist and authoritarian socialist strategy. Thus Mann perceives citizenship as a strategy adopted by the ruling class to manage the

disruptive and potentially revolutionary features of emergent class relations with the development of modern industrial capitalism. The liberal reformist solution, which may be associated with the history of the United States, Britain and other countries such as Switzerland, is consequently merely one solution to the problem of class relationships. Within a pluralistic and liberal political framework, class relations are typically expressed through interest groups which compete in the political market place for rights and benefits, but which do not cohere as an organized opposition to the ruling class and the state. The success of the liberal solution in the United States and Switzerland also depends heavily on the economic strength of these national forms of capitalism.

The authoritarian monarchist solution by contrast was characteristic of such societies as Germany, Austria, Russia and Japan. These societies have a history in which the welfare state is developed from above by powerful political leaders who were able to mobilize a strong bureaucracy against a weak middle class and a disorganized working class. The bourgeoisie and proletariat were brought within the orbit of the state by what Mann calls a 'sham political citizenship' (Mann 1987:345) which represents a system of negative incorporation (Roth 1963). Fascism and authoritarian socialism represent alternative ruling-class strategies. In these cases, neither civil nor political rights were fully developed but there was some development of social citizenship. The Soviet regime has at least formally developed a programme of social citizenship, while in reality depending extensively on private markets and a shadow economy. German fascism also had a programme of public works and full employment, but depended for its power on massive subordination of all forms of opposition. Thus Mann interprets Marshall's general thesis as an argument that industrial capitalism institutionalized class conflict through the institutional development of various types of mass citizenship.

In general it is clear that there is considerable historical and theoretical support for Mann's interpretation and development of Marshall. It cannot be denied that Marshall's view of citizenship was essentially Anglocentric, and indeed we can argue that Marshall did not seriously consider the problem of the Celtic fringe within the British Isles as a complication within his model. While Mann has been criticized for his treatment of class state and ruling

strategies (Barbalet 1988) in this argument I wish simply to make a comment on Mann's general approach, and then present a critical objection to his idea that citizenship can only be a matter of ruling-class strategies. First, there are strong grounds for accepting the thrust of Mann's argument, namely that we have to break out of the claustrophobic character of much of English social theory, but were we to do this then Mann's five strategies themselves look somewhat globally restrictive. For example, it can be argued (Turner 1986) that the process of nation building in the white-settler societies of the southern hemisphere represents an entirely different process of citizenship development, which depended significantly on massive European migration. In Mann's scheme of things, ethnic diversity, multiculturalism and migration apparently play no role in the constitution of citizenship rights, but this is clearly inadequate as a perspective on societies such as the United States or Canada or Australia. The second substantive limitation in Mann's account of the conditions for citizenship as a strategy for social integration is the lack of any recognition of the impact of the church or organized religion on the structure of the public sector and the body politic. The state, the ruling class and political interest groups were not the only actors within the public arena and the history of European societies cannot be understood without an analysis of how the church and state struggled with each other to structure the public arena. In Italy, Spain and Portugal, church corporatist institutions were fundamental to the articulation of interests (Crouch 1986). Mann ignores the historically significant fact that the idea of the public arena as a place of legitimate action has often assumed a negative status in Christian theology (both Catholic and Calvinistic), and that the private-public division is crucial in understanding the development of citizenship.

However, my principal criticism of Mann's refurbishing of Marshall is that by definition he has precluded the possibility that citizenship may be something other than a ruling-class strategy, namely he has ruled out in advance the idea that citizenship could evolve as a radical or revolutionary struggle for rights against authoritarian political systems. In particular, it rules out the possibility of citizenship as a struggle of bodies, the monarchy's body versus the body of the people. Thus Mann rules out the possibility of regarding the French Revolution, the American

democratic revolution, the protest of the gentry against English monarchical absolutism, the contemporary struggle for black rights in South Africa, the pressure for ethnic social rights in the Soviet Union, the demand from women's groups for full employment, or any of the other new social movements which protest in the name of some form of citizenship participation, as radical social movements; these cannot be explained simply in terms of ruling-class strategies. In short, looking back to the terminology developed by Walter Ullman to analyse medieval political theory, Mann can only see citizenship as a set of rights handed down from above as a strategy for the management of conflict in the interests of ruling groups. His scheme does not, even by theoretical or historical investigation, permit the possibility that there could be a social movement from below for citizenship rights. To put this matter quite specifically therefore, Mann always sees the citizen as a subject of an authority rather than being an autonomous agent as the bearer of rights. In Mann's theory the body politic is an organism regulated by the head.

As an alternative to Mann's position therefore, I wish to elaborate a typology of citizenship which includes the notion of revolutionary and radical citizenship as opposed to passive and submissive citizenship. An alternative view of citizenship would also pay more attention to the cultural dimension of citizenship, especially to religion and symbolism of the body. In order to present this argument, it is important briefly to consider the historical development of the concept of citizen, because this helps us to understand the different institutional contexts within which it has developed.

The Notion of the Citizen

In this argument we are specifically concerned with the historical development of the idea of a public space as a place within which free citizens can debate and determine aspects of public life. Historically the notion of citizenship was directly connected with the development of the city state in the classical world of Greece and Rome. In the classical world the body politic was divided in such a way that the private was equated with deprivation, whereas the public sphere was a sphere of rational, active participation for

free citizens. Because the city state was the urban and rational context for debate and contest, we discover the etymological roots of citizenship in the notion of the *civis civitas*. Eventually in the romance languages, we find the idea of the *citoyen* inextricably located in the *cite* as the arena in which citizens enjoyed limited constitutional rights against external interference. There was as a result a parallel between the idea of ‘to civilize’ and ‘to citizenize’ that is to create a socio-cultural environment in which rational discourse could take place over the proper ends of political power.

This was the classical background to the medieval and early modern notion of citizenship as *bürgertum*, because urban social rights developed in the context of the emergence of free cities or bearers with legal status and political rights. The body politic became a juridical political concept for property owners within the autonomous space created by the modern city. The rise of modern citizenship presupposes overtly a secularization of the body power of the king, and the emergence of autonomous urban areas in association with markets, as the place where free action and free thought had their origins. Although the legacy of the classical world pointed to the image which Rousseau developed of public space—that is, an open competition between private wills which results in general will—the legacy of Christendom suggested a very different picture of citizenship in which the private arena was eventually held to be morally superior to the public, because it was in the public arena that man is most likely to become corrupted.

These reflections on the development of modern political space and contemporary citizenship allow us to establish two crucial dimensions of citizenship as socio-political participation: whether citizenship is developed from above in terms of the state’s distribution of rights and obligations to its subjects, or whether citizenship develops from below as a revolutionary struggle against regulation and exclusion from political spaces. The second dimension is a division between a private and public morality, in which a privatized morality leads to subjective individualism which is incompatible with a notion of the public arena as a place of ethical involvement. By combining these two dimensions we can produce four types of citizenship: revolutionary citizenship which attacks the private arena, while creating an active sense of political participation; liberal citizenship, which emphasizes private

consciousness and free liberties as in the tradition of J.S.Mill; plebiscitary democracy which denies the citizen the right to public involvement by emphasizing the private and perceives citizenship as part of an obligation to the state; and finally there is a passive democratic form of citizenship which perceives the citizen merely as a subject.

Conclusion

We can conceptualize the historical development of political power in terms of an oscillation between the sacred body of the sovereign and the sovereign body of the citizens. Weber's rationalization thesis suggests that political modernization involves a desacralization of politics with the development of secular democracies. Weber's own relationship to this thesis was ambiguous. In the specific case of Germany, Weber feared that the legacy of Bismarck would be the triumph of the iron cage of bureaucracy, the growing dominance of the party machine in the age of mass democracies, the decline of innovative leadership with the iron law of oligarchy, and the demise of Germany as a world power in the scramble for colonial possessions. Given his anxieties about Germany's political stagnation, Weber advocated a limited form of popular government, namely plebiscitary democracy which would have little control over the political process. The direction of the political apparatus would, therefore, still depend heavily on the charismatic authority of a leader. While Weber recognized that modernization involved some degree of secularization, his theory of political organization required the intervention of charismatic authority in order to avoid the dangers of political stagnation. However, Weber did not conceptualize this charismatic power in terms of the symbolic force of the body.

This continuity in political history of the authority of the body requires an explanation. The answer which I shall propose here is that, while political modernization at the level of public institutions like the state has involved the expansion of *gesellschaft*, or association, as the principle of organization, motivation to support the state has remained a matter of *gemeinschaft*, or community membership. Commitment to social organization, if it is to have significant power, appears to require the continuity of communal

bonds. This communal commitment in part explains the continuing importance of ethnic, religious and national bonds. More importantly, the pervasive and enduring emotions which are required for communal life require rituals and symbols. In this respect, the metaphor of the body politic and the analogies between the body of the ruler and the health of society continue to dominate popular imagination and public sentiment.

PART III

Modernization and Capitalism

9 *Simmel, Rationalization and the Sociology of Money*

Simmel was born in 1858. Raised in the centre of the Jewish business culture of Berlin, Simmel studied history and philosophy, becoming a *Privatdozent* in 1885. Although he published numerous books and articles, Simmel was excluded from influential university positions as a result of the pervasive anti-Semitism of the period, and it was not until 1914 that he was finally promoted to a full professorship at the University of Strasbourg. Like Durkheim, Simmel was both the object of anti-Semitic prejudice and a fervent supporter of the nationalist cause in the First World War. Simmel died in 1918 of cancer of the liver (Coser 1971).

This basic and naïve factual biography of Simmel in many respects provides many of the themes in Simmel's sociology. First, his sociology is held to be the brilliant reflection of the glittering, cosmopolitan world of pre-war Berlin, and his commentary on that world to take the form of impressionism; his sociological essays are 'snapshots *sub specie aeternitatis*' (Frisby 1981). Simmel's perspective has been regarded as an example of the nature of modern society as contained in Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*, that is, a social existence without roots, commitments or purpose (Luft 1980). Second, Simmel was and remained a social outsider, despite his good connections with Berlin's cultural élite. His writing has been as a result characterized as perspectivism and an aestheticization of reality. As an indication of this, Simmel's influence has in the past often rested on such minor contributions as 'The Stranger' (Wolff 1950). Third, because Simmel failed to secure an influential location within the German university system, there was no development of a Simmelian school of sociology at all comparable to Durkheimian sociology. Decades of sociological

interpretation of Simmel's work have still left Simmel as a theoretical enigma on the ambitus of sociological tradition. His sociology has been categorized as interactionist, formal and conflict sociology (Tenbruck 1959; Spykman 1973; Levine 1981). In more recent years, there has been a renewal of interest in Simmel which has begun to show a greater appreciation of the unity and stature of his sociology. This renewal has been brought about by the commentaries of Levine (1971), Robertson (1978), Robertson and Holzner (1980) and Frisby (1981). More importantly, the translation of Simmel's *The Philosophy of Money* (1978) by Bottomore and Frisby provides a new opportunity for a systematic evaluation of Simmel's sociology of modern culture. The main burden of this chapter is that existing commentaries have failed to focus on the central theme of 'alienation' and 'rationalization' in *The Philosophy of Money* which provided the major theoretical backing for, on the one hand, Weber's analysis of capitalism as 'the iron cage' and, on the other, Lukács so-called rediscovery of the alienation theme in the young Marx.

Despite his structural isolation from the core of the university system, Simmel was, in his own lifetime, regarded as brilliant. Even Weber, who in many respects fundamentally disagreed with Simmel, wrote in an incomplete manuscript of 1908 that Simmel 'deserves his reputation as one of the foremost thinkers, a first-rate stimulator of academic youth and academic colleagues' (Weber 1972:158). Certainly, his lectures at Berlin brought him enormous attention from both colleagues and undergraduates. In the late 1890s, Simmel was lecturing on sociology in the largest lecture theatre in the university, and his courses continued until 1908 when he turned his attention more definitely towards problems in philosophy, especially Kant, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. His principal publications in this early period included *Über soziale Differenzierung*, *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie* and *Soziologie*. *The Philosophy of Money* was published in 1900, although its contents were anticipated by a series of articles which appeared between 1896 and 1899 (Heberle 1958; Maus 1962; Freund 1978).

The importance of Simmel's involvement in sociology in the 1890s was that it preceded Weber's turn to sociology from law and history; furthermore, Simmel's lectures and intellectual salon

provided a massive impact on a group of intellectuals which in many respects came to dominate German social thought for many decades. For example, Lukács attended Simmel's lectures in 1909–10 and participated in his private seminars, becoming one of Simmel's favourite pupils (Meszaros 1972). Simmel's approach to sociology was influential in the development of Ernst Bloch, Max Scheler, Martin Buber, Karl Mannheim, Bernard Gorethuisen and Leopold von Wiese. Simmel was also a member of the informal discussion group which assembled regularly in the Weber household. The relationship between Simmel, Weber and Lukács was the most significant of this network of German scholars.

Simmel's Sociology

In order to understand the argument of *The Philosophy of Money*, it is important to provide a general interpretation of Simmel's social theory. Three themes can be said to embrace the core of Simmel's perspective, namely relationalism, sociation and social forms (Davis 1973; Hübner-Funk 1982). For Simmel, no item of society can be understood in isolation, but only in terms of its interrelatedness with the totality. Thus, money as a social institution cannot be understood separately from the total social framework within which it is embedded. Money provides us with an insight into the total workings of a society, and the structure of a society provides the context within which we can grasp the importance and nature of money as a social phenomenon. The implication of this argument, which is actually borne out by Simmel's very diverse empirical interests, is that any item of culture can be the starting point for sociological research into the nature of the totality. Fashion, the rules of chess, the use of knives at table, all would be as appropriate as money for understanding this totality. Nothing is trivial, because everything is related.

The second crucial feature of Simmelian sociology is the emphasis on what Simmel called 'sociation'. Simmel wanted to avoid both methodological individualism, which ontologically claims that only individuals exist, and sociological holism, in which collective entities like the 'state' or the 'church' are reified and treated as

autonomous social personalities. By contrast, Simmel argued that we can neither understand the individual nor society without grasping that social structures are forged out of the process of sociation. Thus, commenting on the nature of exchange relations, Simmel observed that:

The exchange of the products of labour or of any other possessions, is obviously one of the purest and most primitive forms of human socialization; not in the sense that 'society' already existed and then brought about acts of exchange, but on the contrary, that exchange is one of the functions that creates an inner bond between men—a society, in place of a mere collection of individuals. Society is not an absolute entity which must first exist so that all the individual relations of its members ...can develop within its framework or be represented by it; it is only the synthesis of the totality of these interactions (Simmel 1978:175).

The third basic aspect of Simmel's position is that the forms of social life—groups, families, networks, exchange relations and so forth—which emerge out of the endless sociation of individuals, assume a logic of their own which over time becomes separated from the content of human interaction. Culture becomes reified as structures which are congealed. The 'tragedy of culture' lies in the fact that humanly created forms of life assume an autonomy and independence from the human beings who initially created them in the process of sociation. Money is, for Simmel, the classic illustration of this congealing of content into reified form; money is

the reification of the pure relationship between things as expressed in their economic motion.... The activity of exchange among individuals is represented by money in a concrete, independent, and as it were, congealed form in the same sense as government represents the reciprocal self-regulation of the members of a community, as the palladium or the ark of the covenant represents its self-defence.... This feature then assumes a structure of its own and the process of abstraction is brought to a conclusion when it crystalizes in a concrete formation.... The dual nature of money, as a concrete and valued substance

and at the same time, as something that owes its significance to the complete dissolution of substance into motion and function, derives from the fact that money is the reification of exchange among people the embodiment of a pure function (Simmel 1978:176).

The Philosophy of Money is thus to be seen as the study of how the form of exchange is detached from its content, of how money becomes a determining, autonomous feature of social relationships (Altmann 1903–4). The reification of exchange in money thus becomes one illustration of reification in general in a modern society based upon the money market, given the interrelatedness of all social phenomena.

The Philosophy of Money

In many respects *The Philosophy of Money* is a curious book. Ostensibly a critique of Marx's political economy, one aim of the analysis of money is

to construct a new storey beneath historical materialism such that the explanatory value of the incorporation of economic life into the causes of intellectual culture is preserved, while these economic forms themselves are recognized as the result of more profound valuations and currents of psychological or even metaphysical preconditions (Simmel 1978:56).

Yet there is almost no reference to Marx's discussion of money in *Capital* and, of course, the chapter in the *Grundrisse* remained unknown to Simmel. One can only surmise as to the intellectual influences that went into the making of *The Philosophy of Money*. Certainly, Simmel refers frequently to Kant and the book as a whole can be taken as representative of neo-Kantian epistemology, which was so dominant in social science at the end of the nineteenth century. In economic theory, Simmel was probably influenced by Carl Menger's *Principles of Economics* (1871) and *The Problems of Economics and Sociology* (1882). It has also been suggested that Simmel followed David Hume in his account of

inflation (Laider and Rowe 1980). While Simmel came in later life to embrace a variety of philosophical views which were predominantly anti-rationalist, the main force behind his study of money was Kant, especially in so far as Simmel attempted a 'geometry of social life, a purely formal sociology' out of the flux of incoherent sociation.

While *The Philosophy of Money* is a complex book, full of digressions, asides and minor tributaries, the central argument of the book is relatively easy to state. This argument has three components:

- (1) the historical transition from simple barter to a complex monetary system corresponds to a transition in society from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft*;
- (2) the dominance of money is a reflection or representation of the prominence of impersonal, abstract social relationships; abstract money is the symbol of abstract social relations; and
- (3) money creates greater interpersonal freedom through impersonal exchange relations, but at the same time makes human life more subject to bureaucratic, quantitative regulation.

Money is thus consistent both with individuality and individuation. In terms of Simmel's historical argument, a simple system of barter or exchange gradually gives way to a situation in which some third element of measurement enters into the exchange of commodities. The value of two commodities in exchange is measured in terms of some other commodity which is held to be precious, such as shells, cloth or metals. Money, as a measurement of value, develops from precious metals, to coins of silver or gold, to leather money and finally to paper money. In this development, money ceases to have a face value and also becomes increasingly detached from a bullion backing; that is, money increasingly assumes a pure function as the mere symbol of value rather than itself being of value. This development is made possible by the changing nature of society and in particular by the growth of trust. The essentials of the argument are contained in the following quotation:

A certain comprehensiveness and intensity of social relations is required for money to become effective...and a further intensification of social relations is needed in order to intellectualize its effects. These conspicuous phenomena illustrate clearly that the inner nature of money is only loosely tied to its material basis; since money is entirely a sociological phenomenon, a form of human interaction, its character stands out all the more clearly, the more concentrated, dependable and agreeable social relations are. Indeed, the general stability and reliability of cultural interaction influences all the external aspects of money. Only in a stable and closely organized society that assures mutual protection and provides safeguards against a variety of elemental dangers, both external and psychological, is it possible for such a delicate and easily destroyed material as paper to become the representative of the highest money value (Simmel 1978:172).

The expansion of the society, backed up by the state, law and custom, in association with an expanded social division of labour, are the necessary preconditions for money to lose its intrinsic value and to acquire a purely functional significance. Above all, money presupposes intersocial trust, which in turn requires social stability. Without these conditions, money could not become a depersonalized phenomenon detached from its intrinsic value. For Simmel, the centralization of social power in the institution of the state and the individuation of citizens are symbolically represented by the growing abstraction and impersonality of paper money.

The existence of a stable monetary system means that exchange can take place between persons or groups not related or connected socially or physically. Money makes exchange at a distance possible. It also means that every minute detail of human endeavour can have a price fixed upon it. Because of the divisibility of money into small change, there is in principle no limit to the quantification of human activity. Money is, therefore, a fundamental aspect of what Weber regarded as the process of rationalization in modern societies. The existence of money is a necessary basis for intellectualization of existence. A society based upon the representation of value by money

presupposes a remarkable expansion of mental processes... but also their intensification, a fundamental reorientation of culture towards intellectuality. The idea that life is essentially based on intellect, and that intellect is accepted in practical life as the most valuable of our mental energies, goes hand in hand with the growth of a money economy.... The growth of intellectual abilities and of abstract thought characterizes the age in which money becomes more and more a mere symbol, neutral as regards its intrinsic value (Simmel 1978:152).

The intellectualization of life and the quantification of human performance are thus linked with a process of secularization; money as the symbol of value replaces natural law as the metaphysical basis of conduct.

By making interpersonal relations more abstract, money also undermines the traditional world in which power was manifest in terms of overt interpersonal dependency. Just as exchange becomes more abstract, so the dependency on personalities recedes. In an argument which closely resembled Durkheim's analysis of the reciprocity brought about by the increasing social division of labour, Simmel observed:

The dependency of human beings upon each other has not yet become wholly objectified, and personal elements have not yet become completely excluded. The general tendency, however, undoubtedly moves in the direction of making the individual more and more dependent upon the achievement of people, but less and less dependent upon the personalities that lie behind them. Both phenomena have the same root and form the opposing sides of one and the same process: the modern division of labour permits the number of dependencies to increase just as it causes personalities to disappear behind their functions (Simmel 1978:296).

While money increases the range of economic dependencies through its infinite divisibility, flexibility, exchangeability, social interaction on the basis of money exchanges removes the personal element in social relations as a result of the abstractness and indifference of money. Although money liberates people from

personal dependencies, it also makes the quantitative regimentation of individuals more precise and reliable as an aspect of social control. In this account of the negative consequences of money, we begin to detect in Simmel's sociology a definite perspective on the three dimensions of estrangement: reification, alienation and objectification (Berger and Luckmann 1967). For example, money ceases to be a means and is transferred into an end itself:

Never has an object that owes its value exclusively to its quality as a means, to its convertibility into more definite values, so thoroughly and unreservedly developed into a psychological absolute value, into a completely engrossing final purpose governing our practical consciousness (Simmel 1978:198).

Furthermore, in passages which are reminiscent of Marx on fetishism, Simmel employs religious analogies to come to terms with the nature of money. For example, the separation of money from any intrinsic value and its conversion into pure function represents 'the growing spiritualization of money' (Simmel 1978:198). In general terms, we have seen that Simmel treated money as belonging to the 'category of reified social functions' (Simmel 1978:175) and it is possible to suggest, therefore, that just as Marx treated religion as the fantastic representation of human alienation, so Simmel regarded money as the reified representation of impersonal capitalism.

Marx, Lukács, Weber

It is often suggested that the extraordinary achievement of Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* was to have rediscovered the themes of alienation and reification in the early Marx prior to the publication of the Paris Manuscripts (Lukács 1971; MacIntyre 1971; Meszaros 1971). A close reading of *The Philosophy of Money* and a knowledge of Lukács' dependence on Simmel's perspective on the 'tragedy of culture' suggest that, not only was Lukács' analysis of reified consciousness in bourgeois society mediated by Simmel's analysis of money as a reified social relationship, but Lukács' perspective depended in large measure

upon Simmelian sociology. Lukács' borrowings from Simmel include the following:

- (1) the emphasis on society as, to use Althusserian terminology, an expressive totality in which the existence and meaning of any one element rests upon its interrelatedness with the whole;
- (2) the analysis of forms of bourgeois thought which have been separated from their real content and which assume a life of their own; and
- (3) the recognition that while capitalism elevates the individual to major ideological importance in the doctrine of individualism as the justificatory basis of economics, law and politics, capitalism also undermines the autonomous individual by various processes of standardization, regulation and quantification.

As one example, we can consider Lukács' employment of the content/form distinction in his criticism of what he calls the 'economic theory of capitalism'. The failure of such a theory consists in its failure to penetrate the phenomenal forms of capitalist relations and to grasp 'the real life-process of capitalism':

They [economic theorists] divorce these empty manifestations from their real capitalist foundation and make them independent and permanent by regarding them as the timeless model of human relations in general. (This can be seen most clearly in Simmel's book, *The Philosophy of Money*, a very interesting and perceptive book in matters of detail.) (Lukács 1971:95).

Lukács' acknowledgement of Simmel's book as 'interesting and perceptive' hardly gives adequate recognition to Simmel's achievement. In addition, it should be noted that elsewhere Lukács was far more generous in his appreciation of Simmel's contribution to the sociology of culture generally. For Lukács, it was Tönnies' analysis of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* and Simmel's philosophical investigation into the development of money which had brought about, more than any other sociological studies, a clarification of cultural analysis.

In approaching the relationship between these theorists, I wish to advance the stronger claim that Simmel, not Lukács, ‘rediscovered’ the alienation theme in Marx’s treatment of money in the capitalist economy. A number of crucial features of Simmel’s argument are explicitly prefigured in Marx’s manuscripts of 1844. For Marx, money represents the abstract relationships of private property which have become detached from the underlying human relations of exchange:

The reflexive existence of this relationship, money, is thus the externalization of private property, an abstraction from its *specific* and personal nature (Marx 1967:267).

Like Simmel, Marx perceived an evolutionary development of money from simple barter through to promissory notes as an abstraction of social relations:

Paper money and *paper substitutes for money* such as bills of exchange, checks, promissory notes, etc., constitute the more *complete* existence of *money as money* and a necessary phase in the progressive development of the monetary system (Marx 1967:268–9).

Marx argued that the growth of trust and economic credit came to replace morality, since a person’s worth was judged entirely in terms of their capacity to pay. Like religion, money is an expression of a world turned upside down:

Money transforms the real essential powers of man and nature into what are merely abstract conceits and therefore imperfections—into tormenting chimeras—just as it transforms real imperfections into chimeras—essential powers which are really impotent, which exist only in the imagination of the individual—into real powers and faculties (Marx 1970:168–9).

While Marx’s analysis of money became progressively more sophisticated and complex, his later commentaries on money retained the basic notion that money reflects but also reifies exchange relationships. For example, in the *Grundrisse* of 1857–8, we find

Marx arguing that money becomes increasingly detached from the underlying social relations which initially give rise to money:

The need for exchange and for the transformation of the product into a pure exchange value progresses in step with the division of labour, i.e., with the increasing social character of production. But as the latter grows, so grows the power of money, i.e. the exchange relation establishes itself as a power external to and independent of the producers.... Money does not create these antitheses and contradictions; it is, rather, the development of these contradictions and antitheses which creates the seemingly transcendental power of money (Marx 1973:146).

It is also interesting that Marx emphasized in the *Grundrisse* the contradictory and alienating nature of money which is a means that is converted into an end; the following passage anticipated much of what Simmel was to assert some four decades later:

It is an inherent property of money to fulfil its purposes by simultaneously negating them; to achieve independence for commodities; to be a means which becomes an end; to realize the exchange value of commodities by separating them from it; to facilitate exchange by splitting it...to make exchange independent of the producers in the same measure as the producers become dependent on exchange (Marx 1973:151).

While Marx's analysis of money in *Capital* became more detailed and while much of the early Hegelian language is stripped from the text, there is also an important continuity of attitude and purpose. For example, Marx quotes in *Capital* the same passage from Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* (IV, iii) which originally appeared in the notes on 'the power of money in bourgeois society' in the 1844 manuscripts (Meszaros 1970). In *Timon of Athens* we find the argument that money is an unnatural power which converts the morally bad into the morally good, the anti-social into the social, and the ugly into the beautiful. Marx adopted this poetic theme and converted it into the thesis that money assumes an autonomy and power over social relations so that money becomes the incarnation of social power:

Just as every qualitative difference between commodities is extinguished in money, so money, on its side, like the radical leveller that it is, does away with all distinctions. But money itself is a commodity, an external object, capable of becoming the private property of an individual. Thus social power becomes the private power of private persons. The ancients therefore denounced money as subversive of the economic and moral order of things. Modern society...greeted gold as its Holy Grail, as the glittering incarnation of the very principle of its own life (Marx 1974, Vol. 1, 132–3).

One feature of this passage which links Marx to Simmel—as with the sections on the fetishism of commodities—is the prevalence of religious metaphors. By way of digression, one problem with the fetishism argument is that, strictly speaking, a fetish is typically a concrete object which represents an abstraction. The point about money however, is that it is an abstraction used to represent concrete relations, that is real social relations of exchange. In both Marx and Simmel, the metaphors become very mixed because both want to argue that money as an abstraction becomes reified (that is, turned into a thing), while also arguing that money as a thing (a fetiched commodity) is converted into the abstract representation of society as a whole.

The point of this exegetical exercise has been to suggest that it is not Lukács but Simmel who, so to speak, unwittingly reconstructed Marx's analysis of money from the 1844 manuscripts. Despite very different starting points in epistemology, Marx and Simmel produced analyses which overlapped in many important respects. It also follows from this dependency of Lukács on Simmel that much of the influence accredited to Lukács in, for example, the field of literature, belongs covertly to Simmel. In the sociology of literature, Goldmann is typically seen to be the main exponent of Lukács' position (Evans 1981). Goldmann, following Lukács, took the notion of totality as his principal methodological starting-point, accepted the distinction between form and content as a useful device of literary criticism, and finally regarded the problem of 'the tragic vision' as central to modern society. All three components are, of course essentially Simmelian, since Lukács' Marxism was parasitic on neo-Kantian sociology. While much of Goldmann's

analysis of the philosophy of the Enlightenment (Goldmann 1973) is focused on the consequences of exchange relationships—such as the autonomy of the individual and universalism in social relations—for bourgeois culture, Goldmann does not refer to Simmel's study of money. He does, however, refer to the historian Groethuysen and to the philosopher Heidegger, both of whom were significantly influenced by Simmel. The point of these comments is not to detract from the intellectual stature of Goldmann; the point is to suggest that the contemporary enthusiasm for forcing a sharp separation between Marxism and sociology is historically naïve and analytically invalid.

While Simmel was thus important for several developments in twentieth-century Marxism, his principal impact on modern social theory was via Weber's sociology. Weber, for example, depended on Simmel's account of the interpretative method as the principal means of understanding the meaning of actions, although Weber also wanted to criticize some of the confusion in Simmel's treatment of subjective and objective meaning (Weber 1975). It has also been suggested that Weber's discussion of 'economic ethics' in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* relied partly on Simmel's discussion of 'money in the sequence of purposes' in Chapter 3 of *The Philosophy of Money*: it has been suggested that in *The Philosophy of Money* Weber discovered a method of transcending the ahistorical construction of ideal types, because Simmel's approach permitted the historical construction of meaning complexes as dynamic formed of cultural development (Levine 1971; Marshall 1982; Frisby 1984). Of course, Weber sought to criticize Simmel on a number of issues. For example, Weber objected to Simmel's failure to make an adequate distinction between the notion of 'the money economy' and 'capitalism' as a socio-economic system (Weber 1965:185). These observations on the Simmel-Weber relationship do not really get to the essential point: Simmel's philosophical inquiry into the development of an abstract and universal system of money as the measure of all human activity provided a fundamental model of the cultural manifestations of an underlying process of rationalization in modern societies. Weber's account of rationalization in modern societies (especially as that process is manifest in the growth of the money economy, economics as a science, intersocietal exchange

relations, detailed calculations for the measurement of human effort and economic predictions by systematic means) is an elaboration and extension of Simmers account of money.

The concept of 'rationalization' in Weber's sociology has a variety of meanings, and this variety in itself is evidence of the centrality of the concept to Weber's total corpus. There are thus a number of dimensions to the rationalization process (Schulchter 1981; Brubaker 1984). Rationalization involves the separation of mental and manual workers from the means of production. In *Economy and Society*, Weber was explicit in his argument that the expropriation of the workers made rational calculation of capitalist activities possible, increased managerial rationality and created 'the most favourable conditions for discipline' (Weber 1978:1, 138). In short, rationalization included alienation as the basis of calculation and discipline. Rationalization also involves intellectualization. This process involves the subordination of all areas of life to systematic scientific inquiry and management, at least in principle. In turn, this means the dominance of the expert over traditional authorities in the sphere of morality, social relations and interpersonal behaviour. Rationalization is manifest in the progressive dominance of bureaucratic models of social organization, the dominance of bureaucratic personnel, and the surveillance of the individual by the state. Rationalization results in 'the iron cage' whereby individuality is swamped by individuation. These aspects of rationalization finally produce secularization. Absolute values, whether those of religion or natural law, collapse in front of the wave of relativism generated by modern society, in front of the ethic of calculation and as a result of the prevalence of instrumental rationality.

For Weber, rationalism ends in irrationalism, because values can no longer be secured or anchored in transcendentalism or in any notion of universal interests. The differentiation of society brought about by bureaucratically administered reality means that any quest for purpose in universal human interests is Utopian whistling in the dark. These four dimensions of rationalization presuppose the existence of a money economy. In fact we have to state this situation somewhat paradoxically: money as both the effect and a condition of existence of rationalization. Money makes exact calculation possible and is the basis of all systems of rationed

accountancy. Money is a necessary requirement for bureaucratization since it makes possible the existence of salaried, white-collar employees, who can be hired and fired in fulfillment of exact functions. More generally, the development of free waged labour as the essential feature of the capitalist economy could not take place without a money economy. The importance of money in Weber's economic sociology is illustrated by the discussion of money, credit and exchange in *Economy and Society*.

Unlike Simmel, Weber was fairly explicit about the sources of his analysis of money. He followed, for example, the approach of Ludwig von Mises' *Theory of Money and Credit* (1912) and G.F.Knapp's *The State Theory of Money* (1924). At this distance, it is all too easy to forget that the division between the social sciences, especially economics and sociology, had not been transformed into a system of exclusive property rights. Economists, as much as sociologists, were caught up in the so-called *Methodenstreit* (von Mises 1981). Weber was, of course, primarily interested in the social consequences of money. These consequences are widespread and varied: the expansion of exchange relationships through indirect exchange; the growth of delayed obligations in the form of debt relationships; the transformation of economic advantages into control over money; the individuation of consumption. But these consequences are all dependent on

the most important fact of all, the possibility of monetary calculation; that is the possibility of assigning money values to all goods and services which in any way might enter into transactions of purchase and sale (Weber 1978:1, 81).

Because a money system is so important for the development of calculation, discipline and exchange, Weber characteristically argued that the absence of a rational money system inhibited the development of modern capitalism. It is interesting for example, that Weber started *The Religion of China* (1951), with an account of China's failure to develop a stable currency. This theme also played a part in the Protestant ethic thesis where Weber argued that, at the level of culture, Protestantism made money clean, or at least religiously neutral, by freeing it from the traditional ethical system that had frowned upon usury:

What the great religious epoch of the seventeenth century bequeathed to its utilitarian successor was, however, above all an amazingly good, we may even say a pharisaically good, conscience in the acquisition of money, so long as it took place legally (Weber 1965:176).

The conditions for capitalist development, therefore, include the growth of exchange based on a monetary system, the development of banking and a set of attitudes which treats money as neutral from a moral point of view. In addition, a money economy is crucial for the emergence of bureaucratic administration, and this in turn provides capitalism with a reliable, stable administrative framework. Indeed, Weber claimed that the money economy was the precondition for 'the unchanged and continued existence, if not for the establishment, of pure bureaucratic administration' (Gerth and Mills 1969:205). For Weber, then, the development of money, especially paper money, was deeply associated with the origins, the development and the character of modern capitalism. In particular, money was the basis of rational calculation in capitalism and thus intimately related to rationalization, which brought about impersonality in social relations.

Weber was interested in a sociological problem—the relationship between rationalization and capitalism—not in the morality of a monetary system. He did, however, share with Simmel a metaphysics of modernity which was in essence the submergence of individuality within the administered society. Like Marx and Simmel, Weber's sociology was focused on the metaphysical pathos of means over ends or, as Alan Dawe expressed this paradox, 'the transformation of human agency into human bondage' (Dawe 1971:47). The penetration of abstract money relations into all sectors of society was a necessary precondition of human alienation, but it was also the principal illustration of the reification of social relationships in a capitalist system. The difference between Weber and Simmel on the one side and Marx on the other was that, for Weber and Simmel, socialism was not the termination of reification, but the logical outcome of that process of bureaucratic rationalization which was inextricably linked with abstract relationships.

Conclusion

In this discussion of Simmel's philosophy of money, the similarities between Simmel, Marx, Weber and Lukács have been stressed in order to underline the common theme of money as alienation and rationalization (Löwith 1982). The emphasis on convergence and overlap may seem somewhat perverse in the current theoretical conjuncture, where priority is typically given to difference and divergence. It is certainly clear that these 'sociologists' (in so far as they share that designation) started out from very different epistemological positions. Simmel's sociology is often seen as a social version of the Kantian *a priori* categorization, and his sociology as a whole is interpreted within the neo-Kantian paradigm. In his analysis of value-problems, Simmel came close to the neo-Kantian Baden School, which was associated with Windelband and Rickert (Outhwaite 1975). However, we should also note the significant influence of Nietzsche on Simmel in the idea of cultural forms negating the will, where the will represents untrammelled energy or content in opposition to Apollonian form. The impact of Nietzsche's problem of devaluation of values in a nihilistic culture had a significant set of common theoretical consequences for both Simmel and Weber, which have yet to be systematically assessed (Fleischmann 1964; Robertson 1978; Turner 1981; Turner 1982).

Marx's engagement with the analysis of money in the context of capitalist expansion was shaped by very different intellectual and social forces (de Brunoff 1976). In Marx's economics, money had diverse social functions: a measure of value, a medium of circulation, a means of payment, a medium of universal exchange and a means of hoarding wealth. Behind these various social functions, Marx attempted to show that as a commodity money embodied abstract labour, and that the value of money was determined by the conditions of production rather than by market conditions of demand and supply. Marx's treatment of money was meant to be a critique of bourgeois political economy which was content to analyse the phenomenal forms of money. Although Marx's treatment of value, money and prices has been subject to an extended criticism, we can readily appreciate the sociological merit of Marx's perspective, which was to uncover the manner in

which money was in fact a mediation of social relations (Sweezy 1975; Sohn-Rethel 1978; Carchedi 1984). Marx's analysis of the circuits of money-capital was never simply a formal exercise in economic sociology as an ideal-type conceptualization. One contrast between Marx and Simmel would be in terms of Simmel's neo-Kantian formalism as opposed to Marx's attempt to locate the character of money in real economic processes. In other aspects of their orientation to social analysis, it is difficult to equate Marx with Simmel. In their treatment of conflict, it is highly misleading to draw a parallel between Simmel's sociology of conflict and Marx's class analysis, since Simmel's approach to human conflict was inspired primarily by Nietzsche (J.H. Turner 1975). Whereas Marx's theory of money in terms of the labour theory of value was intended as a sustained critique of classical economics, Simmel was often content to appropriate existing economic assumptions about money and exchange. Similarly, Lukács sought to transcend the 'antinomies of bourgeois thought', of which the essentialist distinction between form and content would be a leading example.

Weber's sociology has also on occasion been criticized for its formalism, abstraction and conservatism (Poulantzas 1973; Turner 1977). This interpretation of Weber fails, however, to examine the fatalistic theme of Weberian sociology, where intentions are always subverted by consequences. In the case of Weber's treatment of money, we can again detect this fatalistic theme—which he shares with Simmel—whereby means dominate ends. However, Weber was not content merely to trace out the unfolding logic of exchange through history as a teleological progression from concrete barter to abstract exchange through universalistic money. The development of money was closely tied to the extension of bureaucratic social relations, which were in turn an expression of economic requirements for stability and predictability. Weber was not concerned with any human attributes (such as 'greed') in the explanation of money; indeed he specifically denied that economic sociology required any such assumptions. Money develops either because it makes 'budgetary management' (*Haushalten*) more rational, or because it facilitates the exact calculation of profit, and consequently stimulates entrepreneurship. Weber's economic sociology was not grounded in notions of human 'need', but rather

sought to understand the structural conditions that favoured the growth of a rational money system (Parsons 1947). By contrast, Simmel's approach was primarily concerned to develop a phenomenology of money as a medium of human experience of social reality.

Although money is a major institution within modern societies and a necessary feature of the social expression and distribution of prestige, it is peculiar that we do not possess a fully developed sociology of money. In Marxism, there are a number of classic texts on money which have built critically on the legacy of Marx; the principal illustration would be Rudolf Hilferding's *Finance Capital*, which was published in 1910 (Hilferding 1981). In sociology it is important to realize that one of the few significant contributions to theory in economic sociology, and specifically to an understanding of money, came from Talcott Parsons and Neil Smelser (1956). Given the importance of the problem of economic rationality in Parsons' sociology, it is an odd feature of Parsons' intellectual development that Simmel was virtually ignored in *The Structure of Social Action* (Parsons 1949) and *Economy and Society* (Parsons and Smelser 1956). Similarly, the strong argument for an economic sociology in Neil Smelser's *The Sociology of Economic Life* recognizes Durkheim and Weber as precursors, but entirely neglects Simmel (Smelser 1963). Finally, despite the influential view that Simmel provided a major basis for the development of symbolic interactionism, studies of the ritual role of money in symbolic exchanges in the everyday world by symbolic interactionists typically ignore *The Philosophy of Money* (Truzzi 1968; Birenbaum and Sagarin 1973).

The recent revival of interest in the sociology of Georg Simmel has yet to provide a fully developed evaluation of his contribution to economic sociology. This neglect is unfortunate, since the great merit of Simmel's study was that it elaborated a genuinely social view of the role of money as an institution. The absence of a systematic sociology of money means that social-science approaches to money and exchange are commonly dominated by a narrow and inadequate economic framework. The originality of Simmel was to have perceived money as a central feature of the development of a culture which is dominated by the process of rationalization. Like the Protestant ethic thesis, *The Philosophy of*

Money is a classic study of the roots of modernity and modern consciousness. To dismiss Simmelian sociology as formalistic is to miss the importance of Simmel's contribution to a sociology of modernism, and, more specifically, it is to ignore Simmel as a major founder of economic sociology.

10 *Nietzsche, Weber and the Devaluation of Politics: the Problem of State Legitimacy*

Introduction: Social Order

The so-called problem of social order, specifically the Hobbesian problem of order, has often been regarded as the formative issue of classical sociology. The search for the ultimate roots of social consensus and societal integration has dominated many branches of sociological theory, particularly functionalism, since the publication of Talcott Parsons' *The Structure of Social Action* (1949). The nature of social order is, of course, not an issue which is peculiar to sociology, since the question of obligation has provided a perennial focus of political philosophy in the long history of rejoinders to Hobbes' theory of social contract (Shea 1968). In sociology, however, the analysis of the grounds of social and political order often appears to be constitutive of the discipline itself. Again, following the intellectual dominance which Parsons has enjoyed within this field, the history of sociology is characteristically written as the history of theoretical solutions to the question of how society is possible. The founding fathers have been routinely pressed into providing solutions which, in Parsonian terminology, 'converge' on the crucial role of common values, internalized beliefs and social approval (Parsons 1951).

The philosophical dilemma of the individual versus society is thus resolved sociologically by the presence of shared values, institutions of cultural transmission, and internalized norms. The functionalist solution to the integration of social systems was

'anticipated' by Durkheim's concept of the *conscience collective* (Parsons 1960), in the theoretical failure of Pareto's 'residues' and 'derivations', and above all, in Weber's notions of legitimacy and 'legal order'. While objections to the 'over-socialized concept of man' (Wrong 1961) and to Parsons' version of the history of sociological theory (Dahrendorf 1958; Butts 1977) are well founded, the emphasis on the centrality of normative consensus is remarkably persistent throughout the sociological spectrum. Furthermore, while Marxists have tirelessly produced criticisms of the notion of functional integration, Marxism is itself not entirely immune from such normative perspectives. The concept of 'the dominant ideology' in Marxism often has a parallel analytical place to that of 'common culture' in sociology (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner 1980). In this regard, both critical theorists (Habermas 1976) and political sociologists have appealed to Weber's theory of legitimation as a perspective on the normative basis of the state in capitalist society. Against such conventional interpretations of Weber on the part of Marxists and sociologists it can be argued that in Weber's sociology of law and in his political writings, the disenchantment of capitalist society precludes the possibility of any normative legitimation of the state. In the absence of legal legitimacy, loyalty to the state comes to rest on coercive practices and on certain irrational commitments (Lukács 1955) in the national citizenry, which are necessarily unpredictable and unstable. The point of this argument is, however, not to produce yet another exegesis of Weber's political views, but to provide the basis for a coercive theory of political order in late capitalist societies.

Marx and Nietzsche

To understand Weber's sociology as a whole, and his political sociology in particular, it is important to establish Weber's theoretical relationship to Marx and Nietzsche. Weber once said that we can judge 'the honesty of a contemporary scholar' by his intellectual 'posture towards Nietzsche and Marx' (Weber 1926; Baumgarten 1964:504–5). The debate about the relationship between Marx and Weber promises to be endless (Turner 1981),

but the essence of the problem can be seen in the connection between Marx's notion of alienation and Weber's treatment of rationalization (Löwith 1932). For Marx, the principal feature of the 'dull compulsion' of economic relations in capitalism was the separation of the worker from the means of production, which forced the worker to sell his labour power on the market in order to exist. Weber extended this argument to show that the characteristic feature of rationalization in capitalism was the separation of human agents from the means of production, administration and knowledge. In other words, the achievement of 'exact calculation' in capitalist enterprise required a series of such social separations. For example, one of the central themes of 'science as a vocation' is that through the process of administrative rationalization the intellectual worker is separated from the means of mental production, just as the soldier no longer owns the means of violence in a modern army. While Weber's relationship to Nietzsche has frequently been noted (Fleischmann 1964; MacRae 1974:52), the relevance of Nietzsche's ethical relativism for an understanding of Weber's political views has not been fully appreciated.

There are specific aspects of Weber's political sociology which depend directly on Nietzsche's view of the central moral significance of individual development. There are important parallels between Weber's defence of the individual against the encroachment of the state, his attachment to charismatic politics and his commitment to a 'decisionist' ethical posture, and Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch*, his early adherence to Schopenhauer's individualism, and above all in his denunciation of the state as an impediment to self-realization. Weber read the works of Nietzsche and also interested himself in the secondary literature, such as Simmel's *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche*; the result was to reinforce Weber's *Kulturkritik* of capitalist society in general and German politics in particular (Merquior 1980:191). It is not surprising that Nietzsche's critique of the state as the institutionalization of mediocrity in the chapter 'Of the New Idol' in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* should bear a close resemblance to Weber's diatribes against the effects of bureaucracy on individual freedom. Weber's imagery of the 'iron cage' of capitalism and of bureaucrats as 'mere cogs' within the modern economic order where the lives of individuals are determined 'with irresistible

force' (Weber 1930:181) has been frequently noted. Thus, the problem of maintaining individual autonomy and culture in the midst of 'an army camp such as our state is inevitably becoming' (Weber 1958:60) was a persistent theme in his political commentaries on the state. The administrative routinization, specialization of tasks and calculation of behaviour required by advanced capitalism were seen to be incompatible with freedom and democracy unless people resolutely refused 'to be ruled like sheep' (Gerth and Mills 1948:7).

Against such trends, Weber sought to discover the social conditions which would make it possible to cultivate 'the best which is in men, those physical and emotional qualities that we would like to maintain for the nation' (Bendix 1966:44). Weber's attitude towards the contradictory relationship between the dominance of an administrative caste and the cultivation of individuality closely parallels those expressed by Nietzsche in the first and third *Untimely Meditations* of 1873–4. Given this correspondence of attitudes towards individuality, it is not surprising that Weber often appears to be quoting almost verbatim from Nietzsche:

Only master races have a vocation to climb the ladder of world development. If peoples who do not possess this profound quality try to do it, not only the sure instinct of nations will oppose them, but they will also come internally to grief in the attempt. By 'master-race' we do not understand that ugly 'parvenu' mask made out of it by people whose feeling of national dignity allows them to be told what 'Deutschtum' is by an English turncoat like Houston Stewart Chamberlain The will to impotence at home, which scholars preach has nothing to do with the 'will to power' in the world, which has been so noisily proclaimed (Weber 1958c:259).

It has been argued (Merquior 1980:208) that some of the theoretical limitations of Weber's sociology of legitimacy have to be located in his dependence on Nietzsche's *Kulturpessimismus*. Since Weber's theory of legitimacy is rooted in the nature of normative commands and claims on political resources, his construction of the legitimacy problem was skewed towards the ruler rather than the

ruled. Weber was more concerned with the problem of how authoritative commands were produced than with the conditions which made them socially acceptable. One aspect of this focus on legitimate commands was the exclusion of democratic expressions of political consent from his typology of authority. For Weber, plebiscitary democracy functioned to provide a reliable and efficient selection of rulers, not legitimate political power. Another dimension to Weber's bias towards rulers was that the importance of the performance criterion in the legitimation of capitalism through the provision of welfare was neglected in favour of the significance of charismatic personality and the stability of administrative procedures. This particular approach to 'ruler-centred' legitimacy of commands was part of a more general issue, namely the role of charisma as the basis of cultural freedom within an administered social order. The question of individual cultural freedom emerged in Weber's philosophy of history under the direct influence of Nietzsche's pessimistic analysis of the situation of cultural virtuosi in relation to the state. While the mass simply accommodates to prevailing circumstances, the virtuoso is involved in a personal struggle against everyday reality—a struggle which either takes the direction of mystical flight or ascetic mastery. These typologies of virtuosity and salvational struggles illustrate two further aspects of Weber's dependence on Nietzsche with respect to the role of asceticism in bourgeois culture (Nietzsche, 1974), and to the connection between the collapse of values and the crisis of politics (Heidegger 1981).

While it is possible to pick out quotations from Weber to suggest a relationship with Nietzsche's ethical position on the value of individuality, the significant dependence of Weber's general sociology on Nietzsche is founded on two essential points. The first relates to the process of secularization which has rendered human existence meaningless and threatened to undermine the legitimacy of social institutions; the second is a conception of history as the endless struggle of groups for social dominance as an expression of the 'will to power' and 'ressentiment'. Nietzsche's proclamation of 'the news that God is dead' runs throughout his work, from the third book of *The Gay Science* (1882) to the epigrams of the posthumous *The Will to Power*. For Nietzsche, the death of God

was the major event of modern history, the consequence of which is not simply that all conventional morality is now moribund, but that human existence is devoid of any significance (Hollingdale 1973; Stern 1979). Nietzsche saw his philosophical task experimentally, that is, to live without any assumptions about value and significance and thereby to experience 'the terrible news' of God's death which produces an 'unbearable loneliness'. Nietzsche's commitment to a philosophy without assumptions and his 'perspectival' approach to existing morality led him to acknowledge the devaluation of reality, and to a 'revaluation of all values'. The thought which Nietzsche forced himself to consider 'in its most terrible form' was this: 'existence as it is, without meaning and goal yet inexorably returning, without a finale issuing in nothingness' (Nietzsche 1967: section 55). The result is that we live in a world where 'everything is false, everything is permitted' (Nietzsche 1967:602). Unlike fashionable atheists, however, Nietzsche felt that, while the death of God was a precondition for moral authenticity, there were no grounds for seeing human history in terms of moral progress. While Weber shared Nietzsche's critique of modern culture, the important difference between them was that Weber turned his personal experience of social and political crisis

into an object of empirical historical research. He objectified his experience in the thesis of disenchantment. From it follows a situational diagnosis that is bound up with two ways of gaining distance: from faith in the possibility of ultimate certainty, and the ultimate feasibility of human happiness (Roth and Schluchter 1979:59).

In attempting to show how Weber's sociology of legitimacy cannot be separated from his pessimistic philosophy of history, it has been necessary to establish a continuity between Nietzsche's critique of bourgeois morality and Weber's sociology of charismatic virtuosity. Given this élitist cultural perspective, both Nietzsche and Weber have been charged with a commitment to irrationalism which ultimately contributed to the emergence of German fascism (Lukács, 1955). In order to defend Nietzsche's general philosophy against this charge of fascism, it has become conventional to see

Nietzsche as consistently anti-political in outlook. While it is true that the phrase 'will to power' does not specifically refer to political power, and while Nietzsche did not produce an overtly political text, his analysis of Greek society, his views on German nationalism and his contempt for modern politics as meaningless do constitute a political position.

Nietzsche, like many other nineteenth-century philosophers, took the Greek *polis* as the starting point of his critique of German political life. While historical change ruled out any Utopian return to Greek democracy, the forms of Greek political discourse provided criteria of a genealogical analysis of political decay in German society. The excellence of the Greek state was that it created a political space within which men could compete in argument just as they competed physically in the game. The contest thus provided a healthy (Pasley 1978) means by which the will to power could be institutionalized to provide a viable culture and to produce the best human specimens. The conflict of individuals within political space was thus externalized in games and warfare which provided the conditions for internal political stability. Nietzsche was thus able to outline a set of processes and circumstances which eventually destroyed the state as a communal institution (Strong 1975). For example, the democratization of the populace undermined the conflict between individuals, so that the state came to depend increasingly on a slave morality and thereby undermined the contest between antagonistic men. Furthermore, the division of labour destroyed the complete individual who subsequently became merely a specialized part within the social whole. The original unity of private life and public affairs is eventually destroyed by these processes of fragmentation and specialization; the destruction of the political was simply reinforced by Christianity as a slave morality which separated God and Caesar. In the modern world, the decay of the state is masked by nationalism which provides an artificial meaning for political activity; the nationalist state is not an arena within which citizens can develop fully, but merely an instrument of domination without public legitimacy. With the death of god, the nationalist state becomes the new idol in which the people are merely a herd.

Weber's Political Sociology

On the basis of this sketch of Nietzsche's political views, we can begin to see how Weber approached the problem of social conflict and state legitimacy in a society where traditional frameworks of normative justification had simply collapsed. Both Nietzsche and Weber started with the premise that violence is the ineradicable substratum of all political life. Weber formally defined the state in *Economy and Society* as that institution which enjoyed a monopoly of force within a given territory, while Nietzsche simply referred to politics as 'organised violence' (Nietzsche 1970:339). In claiming that Weber regarded politics as organized conflict, we do have to bear one important issue in mind. There may be important differences between Weber's development of the conceptual basis for a sociology of the state in *Economy and Society* and his political writings from the end of his life, which were concerned with practical politics and specific issues in the German crisis in the aftermath of the First World War. In other words, whereas *Economy and Society* is characterized by its formalism and abstraction, Weber's political writings cannot be understood outside the immediate political context within which they were produced. It can be argued, therefore, that in his formal sociology of domination Weber was primarily concerned with the issue of legitimacy, whereas his political writings were focused on questions of coercion and conflict between classes with irreconcilable interests. Thus, it has been suggested that Weber's political writings

were concerned with power and the striving for power in particular societies. Only class analysis was adequate to elucidate this. In his sociological work Weber was concerned rather with the broadest historical types of administration and authority, and the concept of legitimacy was more suited to distinguishing these (Beetham 1974:259).

While there is ample textual evidence to support such a view, there are at least three reservations which might be entertained against this interpretation of the dualistic nature of Weber's political sociology. First, Beetham's thesis neglects the permanent influence

of Nietzsche on Weber's metasociology of the world as determined by an evil fate, and specifically on Weber's view of the role of conflict in society. Thus the concept of capitalism as an iron cage which precludes creative individuality is not peculiar to Weber's later political writings but makes its presence felt in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Second, it seems important, as with all political analysis, to make a distinction between internal politics (the international conflict of groups within the nation-state) and external politics (the international conflict of states within a global setting). The problem of legitimacy in these two circumstances is very different. Third, the difficulty of state legitimacy within Weber's formal sociology in *Economy and Society* is clearly elaborated by Weber in his sociology of law which, given the secularization of society, shows that any justification of political power by reference to substantive rationality is precluded by the nature of capitalist society. These final reservations can be combined to examine Weber's theory of the internal and external problems of social order in capitalist society as a disenchanting political space.

In *Economy and Society*, Weber defines the state as

a compulsory organization with a territorial basis.... The claim of the modern state to monopolize the use of force is as essential to it as its character of compulsory jurisdiction and of continuous operation (Weber 1978:56).

The issue of political legitimacy, namely how the claim to the monopolization of force is to be justified, is undeniably central to Weber's famous tripartite division of authority into rational, traditional and charismatic domination in *Economy and Society*. The modern state, with its spheres of jurisdiction, bureaucratic administration, continuity of operations, and hierarchies of officials, is said to rest ultimately on rational grounds, that is, on 'a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands (legal authority)' (Weber 1978:1, 215).

Whereas charismatic authority rests on claims of extraordinary personal grace and traditional authority on hallowed customs,

legal-rational authority depends on correct adherence to decisionmaking procedures. If law-making rules have been correctly followed, then a legal pronouncement can be accepted as legitimate. Thus the legitimacy of the state is grounded in the belief that its form of legal domination is constructed by the appropriate procedures. There is, however, a certain circularity to Weber's conception of legal authority (Bendix 1966:419). A law is legitimate if it is regarded as legitimate, and it can be so regarded if its enactment follows legitimate procedures. Weber's discussion of legal legitimacy can be taken as a clear illustration of his adherence to methodological neutrality in *Economy and Society*, because in his definition of state legitimacy he rejects the possibility that the modern state could be grounded in substantive legitimacy. In particular, he believes that the question of the substantive legitimacy of the state cannot be formulated in neutral criteria of rational law. It has to be remembered in this connection that Weber adheres to legal positivism in that law is command and that the state is lawful if, as a matter of fact, it can enforce its commandments. The issue of legal truth and justice cannot be part of a sociology of law which is concerned with empirical regularities rather than with normative significance. Law is imperative command, supported by the threat of political violence, and not a system of normative guidelines based on substantive values; this, at least, was the substance of Weber's reply to Rudolf Stammler's *Wirtschaft und Recht* (Albrow, 1975; 1976).

Weber's Sociology of Law

Weber's attempt to separate questions of fact from those of value in his sociology of law results in an almost Machiavellian view of the state (Gilbert 1956; Sahay 1977). A state which has its origins in conquest or revolutionary violence, and which acts against any 'emotional sense' of justice, could still, on Weber's criterion of value-neutrality, be regarded as 'legitimate' in so far as its political subjects overtly follow its commandments; the constitution of a state created by conquest could enjoy legal and administrative regularity and stability without being from the point of view of substantive justice, 'legal'. In Weber, *de facto* justice is *de jure* justice. There is evidence, however, that Weber regards such

procedural criteria of legal and political legitimacy as inadequate, particularly from the point of view of securing political commitment to the state. He recognized, for example, that the growth of secularization, the effects of legal scepticism and the development of socialist critiques of law had made it increasingly difficult to legitimate the state in terms of natural law and substantive justice. The idea that the law of the land is the law of God does provide a more solid basis for state legitimacy than the purely technical criteria of legal process in formal-rational legality, but the possibility of legitimating the state by natural law has been removed by legal relativism:

Compared with firm beliefs in the positive religiously revealed character of a legal norm or in the inviolable sacredness of an age-old tradition, even the most convincing of norms arrived at by abstraction seem to be too subtle to serve as the bases of a legal system. Consequently, legal positivism has, at least for the time being, advanced irresistibly. The disappearance of the old natural law conceptions has destroyed all possibility of providing the law with a metaphysical dignity by virtue of its imminent qualities. In the great majority of its most important provisions, it has been unmasked all too visibly, indeed, as the product or the technical means of a compromise between conflicting interests (Weber 1978; 2, 874–5).

In the absence of a system of absolute values of natural law, legal professionals find themselves squeezed between demands for social justice from the organized working class and demands for social order from the capitalist class. This struggle is represented ideologically by a clash between two conceptions of law, either as social regulation or as a fountain of political rights. In the German context, Weber somewhat cynically noted that:

If the legal profession of the present day manifests at all typical ideological affinities to various power groups, its members are inclined to stand on the side of 'order' which in practice means that they will take the side of the 'legitimate' authoritarian political power that happens to predominate at the given moment (Weber 1978:2, 886).

Weber came, therefore, to see rational law based on technical, procedural criteria as battered by the contradictory interests of contending classes in capitalist society. Class demands founded on such 'emotionally colored ethical postulates' as 'justice and dignity' could not be expressed in the technical language of rational law because they were rooted in 'substantive justice rather than formal legality' (Weber 1978:2, 886). While the law may be influenced by sectional claims of interest-groups whose struggle takes place within the anarchy of the market-place, Weber felt that the law in capitalist society would become increasingly technical and formal; its rational form would thereby be rather remote from the ideological struggles of social classes and particularly from the emotive notions of 'social justice'. While modern theorists like Habermas have analysed the problem of the state in capitalist society in terms of 'legitimation deficit', the problem of political legitimacy in *Economy and Society* was approached more in terms of the inappropriateness of the procedures of rational law to the needs of the masses, who were motivated either by substantively rational claims or by irrational instincts. The gap between administrative rationality and popular claims on the state was closely connected, in Weber's sociology of law, with the collapse of natural rights (Winckelmann 1952; Strauss 1953). Furthermore, if intra-state relations are subject to such uncertainties in ideological legitimation, the inter-state relations constitute an area of pure *Machtpolitik*.

The problem of 'legal order' in *Economy and Society* becomes far more explicit in Weber's political writings where the Nietzschean themes of struggle and the death of God are paramount. In these writings, the legitimacy deficit of the state is compensated by the existence of emotional commitments to the nation, which are to be channelled through the political institutions of plebiscitary leadership. For example, the Freiburg Address of 1895 was written in the context of Weber's anxieties about the consequences of the agrarian structure of Junker estates of eastern Germany and the itinerant Polish workers (Giddens 1972). The political views of the Freiburg inaugural address are thus firmly located within the issue of international struggles, and Weber clearly reminded his audience

that 'the deadly seriousness of the population problem' in eastern Germany

prevents us from believing that elbowroom in this earthly existence can be won in any other way than through the hard struggle of human beings with each other (Weber 1980:436).

While the sociology of law adheres, at least in principle, to criteria of value-neutrality, Weber argued in his political commentaries that the economic policy of the German state had to be founded overtly on a 'German standard' and its political legacy had to be an 'eternal struggle for the maintenance and improvement by careful cultivation of our national character' (Weber 1980:428). Contrary to the doctrine of ethical neutrality which provided the explicit basis of Weber's philosophy of the social sciences in, for example, his criticisms of Roscher's political economy (Weber 1975), Weber asserted that it would be an illusion to assume that, in the area of national policies, we could do without 'conscious value-judgements'. Reliable political judgements are, of course, uncertain, especially when the analyst is confronted by a 'chaotic mass of standards of value'. The crucial problem of practical politics and the 'only standard value' in politics is that of the political maturity of the national leadership, that is, the ability of the national leadership to judge the 'lasting economic and political interests of the nation's power' (Weber 1980:442). It becomes clear that in a situation of crisis, such as that faced by Germany in the absence of a politically mature middle class,

the national state rests on deep and elemental psychological foundations within the broad economically subordinate strata of the nation.... It is just that in normal times this political instinct sinks below the level of consciousness of the masses (Weber 1980:442).

In short, while the collapse of natural law as a foundation for the legitimacy of the state suggests that there is merely 'pragmatic acceptance' (Wolin 1961; Mann 1970) of coercive politics, Weber is, so to speak, able to prop up the state by an appeal to certain irrational political instincts in the masses towards the nation state.

Bureaucracy and Politics

In his speeches on German politics towards the end of the First World War, the specific problem of Polish migrant labour was replaced by the more profound questions of German survival in a global context of British and American dominance, the issue of Bismarck's legacy and the formation of a political constitution that would provide Germany with strong leadership. The peculiar problem of German politics was that the disappearance of Bismarck's leadership and the absence of a politically mature bourgeoisie had left no social or political counterweight to the growth of the bureaucracy and officialdom of the state. At times, Weber's solution to this problem, which involved—amongst other things, the development of a strong parliamentary system—appears to offer a liberal interpretation of democratic politics. The importance of parliamentary institutions in a mass democracy was not, however, directly to oppose the effects of bureaucratization, but to provide a training ground for political leaders. Parliament was for Weber, simply an apparatus for manifesting consent:

Modern parliaments are primarily representative bodies of those ruled with bureaucratic means. After all, a certain minimum of consent on the part of the ruled, at least of the socially important strata, is a precondition of the durability of every, even the best organized, domination (Weber 1978:2, 1407–8).

Weber thought that parliamentary committees should play an important role in the detailed supervision of budgetary arrangements, but parliament itself was principally a selection mechanism for a strong leader: mass demagoguery, caesarist selection and plebiscitary affirmation were the main characteristics of Weber's reconstructed Germany. While the leader's political power depends on whether he has 'the confidence of the masses' (Weber 1921:212), Marianne Weber recorded a famous conversation between Weber and Ludendorff on the nature of democracy in which Weber commented:

In democracy the people elect a leader in whom they have confidence. Then the elected leader says: 'Now shut up and obey

me'. People and parties may no longer meddle in what he does (Weber 1926:664).

It follows that the principal check on the stultifying consequences of bureaucracy is the charismatic figure of the demagogue, whose legitimacy is periodically ratified by a plebiscite. There is here further evidence of the continuity between Weber's sociological and political writings, since it was in *Economy and Society* that Weber discussed plebiscitary leadership as the 'transformation of charisma in a democratic direction'. The plebiscite is the 'specified means of deriving the legitimacy of authority from the confidence of the ruled' (Weber 1978:1, 267). As in the case of nationalist sources of state legitimacy, this 'confidence' in the ability of the leader has highly irrational and unstable roots in the populace. Indeed, Weber claimed that it was wholly typical of *Führer-Demokratie* that political legitimacy should rest on 'a highly emotional type of devotion' (Weber 1978:1, 269).

The principal components of Weber's political views—politics as conflict, plebiscitary leadership, legal legitimacy versus charismatic domination—were finally summarized in the famous speech on 'politics as a vocation' in 1918, which reiterated the familiar themes of violence and legitimacy. Following Tolstoy's view that every state rests finally on force, Weber defined the state as a social community 'that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' (Gerth and Mills 1948:78). The definition is immediately followed by a brief résumé of the sources of legitimacy in tradition, charisma, and legality. The political leader in mass democracy was once more clearly located within the category of charismatic domination, but Weber also noted:

It is understood that, in reality, obedience is determined by highly robust motives of fear and hope—fear of the vengeance of magical powers of the power-holder, hope for reward in this world or in the beyond—and besides this, by interests of the most varied sort (Gerth and Mills 1948:79).

The plebiscitary leader will also have to consolidate the loyalty of his followers by success in external politics, and by 'promoting their material welfare' (Weber 1978:1, 269). The political legitimacy of capitalism will also depend, therefore, on the level of welfare payoffs available for redistribution to the working class in capitalist society. Legitimacy is tied to the cycle of capitalist production and to the availability of external markets for capitalist goods. The economic and political crises of German wartime capitalism would, in Weber's view, result not in genuine revolutionary politics but in 'putsch, sabotage and similar politically sterile outbreaks' (Weber 1978:2, 1461). The precariousness of state legitimacy in capitalist society under conditions of *Führer-Demokratie* is a function, not only of a legitimation deficit in terms of substantive legality, but of the economic crises of production (O'Connor 1973; Habermas 1976; Goldthorpe 1978; Holloway and Picciotto 1978; Parkin 1979).

In this exposition of Weber's political sociology, it has been argued that, against Parsons' normative interpretation of Weber, the legitimacy of politics in Weber's study of the state has a theoretically problematic status. In the absence of secure legal legitimacy, plebiscitary democracy depends on irrational nationalist commitments, unstable charismatic authority, welfare inducements, and finally coercion. Furthermore, international politics is determined by naked power struggles. While Weber did not advocate imperial annexations, he did accept the importance of a strong German state with secure economic markets as axiomatic and, as his attitude to Alsace showed, his discussion of international politics was characterized by the 'almost total absence of ideological justification' (Aron 1971:89). If internal politics is constituted simply by the conflict between social groups in pursuit of their interests in the distributive market, then external politics is the untrammelled conflict of national states. While the centrality of legitimacy in *Economy and Society* has been constantly emphasized by conventional interpretations of Weber, the emphasis on coercive dimensions of social relationships in Weber's formal definition of sociological concepts is in fact very marked. One example would be his exposition of competition as regulated conflict (Hill 1981). As a further illustration, it is interesting to compare Weber's definition

of the church with that of Durkheim. Whereas the latter defined the church as a moral community, Weber defined the church as a parallel to the state, namely a 'hierocratic organization' which, as a matter of compulsion, enforces its order through psychic coercion by distributing or denying religious benefits' (Weber 1978:1, 54).

The basis for Parsons' interpretation of Weber, and that of radical critics like Paul Q. Hirst (1976), is, of course, the indisputable fact that Weber does constantly refer to subjective dispositions and beliefs in his exposition of basic sociological categories. In *Economy and Society*, the most common basis of legitimacy is 'the belief in legality' (Weber 1978:1, 37) and compliance always implies belief in legitimate authority rather than simply fear or expediency. More generally, the whole notion of interpretative sociology is focused on meaningful action and subjective orientations. However, as we have seen, Weber has great difficulties in pinning legal legitimacy down to beliefs and normative compliance, partly because procedural regularities in legal decision-making do not provide a satisfactory alternative to substantive justice and natural law. This problem is not restricted to what Beetham calls his 'political writing'; it is fundamental to his sociology of law, his analysis of charisma and to his 'formal sociology' of basic sociological concepts. As a conclusion to this commentary on Weber, it is argued that Weber located the basis of social order in capitalism in a set of coercive arrangements rather than in legitimating beliefs; in referring to these coercive arrangements as 'practices', I want to bring out a relationship between Weber's discussion of rationality and recent developments in the exposition of 'ideological practices'.

Marx and Weber

If Weber's emphasis on power conflicts and social struggle in a context of polytheistic values was part of the Nietzschean legacy, then Weber's conception of social control was closely related to Marx's discussion of the control of the worker by economic arrangements, specifically by the social division of labour (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner 1980:158-69). Weber took it for granted that one of the central features of any capitalist society was

the separation of the worker from the means of production, which consequently forced the 'free' labourer to sell his labour-power in the market. This theme constantly recurred in Weber's sociological and political writings. In his essay on the spirit of capitalism, for example, Weber argued:

A man does not 'by nature' wish to earn more and more money, but simply to live as he is accustomed to live and to earn as much as is necessary for that purpose. Wherever modern capitalism has begun its work of increasing the productivity of human labour by increasing its intensity, it has encountered the immensely stubborn resistance of this leading trait of precapitalist labour (Weber 1930:60).

This resistance of traditional labour is broken by the 'rational capitalistic organization of (formally) free labour' (Weber 1930:21), by low wages, and by the development of a religious vocation in secular activity. It is the organization of formally free labour for the purpose of discipline and rational calculation which Weber treated as the essential character of rational capitalism. This theme was repeated as emphatically in the section on 'sociological categories of economic action' in *Economy and Society*, where Weber discussed at length the social consequences of expropriation. The subordination of the worker to the capitalist by expropriation was a necessary condition of rational calculation and

a further economic reason for this expropriation is that free labor and the complete appropriation of the means of production create the most favourable conditions for discipline (Weber 1978:2, 138).

Weber consequently saw the effects of the 'dull compulsion of economic relations' in a manner which was similar to that of Marx, namely that the formal freedom of labour in the market resulted in factory discipline, managerial surveillance and social regulation. Weber thought, however, that expropriation as the basis of discipline and calculation was extended in capitalism beyond simple economic expropriation. Just as the soldier is forced into the

trench because he does not control the ‘means of destruction and maintenance’, so

The capitalist owner of the means of production forces the workers into the factories and mines. This all-important economic fact: the ‘separation’ of the worker from the material means of production, destruction, administration, academic research, and finance in general is the common basis of the modern state, in its political, cultural and military sphere, and of the private capitalist economy (Weber 1978:2, 1394).

The bureaucratic organization of the state apparatus and the capitalist enterprise as the basis of stability of operations and calculation requires the expropriation of the worker from the means of mental and manual production. Without this ‘common basis’, discipline would be uncertain and difficult to secure, because the worker has a natural preference for ‘leisureliness’ (Weber 1930:67).

It could be argued that this separation of the worker has, to employ terminology associated with debates about the concept of ‘the mode of production’ (Hindess and Hirst 1975) and legal ‘conditions of existence’. If compliance with legal norms rests on belief in their legitimacy, then criticisms of Weber’s subjectivist and individualist ‘interpretative sociology’, which liquidates the objective constraints of social relationships in certain probabilities of social action, would appear to be valid (Turner 1977). There is exegetical evidence from Weber’s formal definitions of law to support such criticism. Weber does, however, want to avoid Stammler’s notion of law as normative compliance in favour of ‘empirical regularities’, because he believed that a scientific definition of law could not entertain the notion that the validity of law depended on the value-position of substantive justice. Hence, an order will be called ‘law’ if

it is externally guaranteed by the probability that physical coercion will be applied by a staff of people in order to bring about compliance or avenge violation (Weber, 1978:1, 34).

Given the collapse of natural law, the possibility that legal compliance could be grounded in a system of absolute values had disappeared, with the result that Weber regarded law as command supported by regulated violence. Organized domination required simply that 'human conduct be conditioned by obedience' (Gerth and Mills 1948:807). Law as a regular system of commands provides the capitalist with stability of exchange, continuous administration, and legal supports for the separation of the worker from the means of production. It can be suggested, therefore, that Weber locates the sources of domination in three factors: coercive power, constellations of mutual interest, and in 'the sense of legitimacy' (McIntosh 1970). For reasons which have been discussed, Weber found it extremely difficult to anchor 'the sense of legitimacy' in legal procedure, in a sense of justice, in natural right, or in legal precedent. The legal order of the state had, in the last resort, to be founded in the charismatic claims of a plebiscitary leader, in welfare, or in irrational psychological commitments to the nation.

Order and Discipline

In replying to the Parsonian version of Hobbes' problem of order, we can claim that Weber approached the problem of capitalist cohesion by considering a specific question: how can discipline be secured in the absence of supernaturalist presuppositions? This question of disciplinary practice is essentially Nietzschean rather than Hobbesian. For Nietzsche, at least part of the answer to the perennial confrontation of Apollo and Dionysus lay in the evolution of restrictive disciplines from religious asceticism, especially in the form of Christian monasticism. For Weber, the disciplines of the monastery provided the model for discipline in the factory. The network of disciplinary practices was greatly expanded by the growth of administrative rationality in the army, the scientific establishment, and above all in the state. These practices which regulate conduct provided the basis for the spirit of capitalism which is 'exact calculation' (Weber 1930:22). The measurement of human performance, as illustrated for example by double-entry book-keeping, capital accounting, legal codification and bureaucratic examination systems, became a necessary feature

of the rational administration of society. In suggesting that we can approach Weber's sociology of rational conduct in terms of a history disciplinary practices which regulate the body within the factory, the office, the school and the battlefield, my argument attempts to indicate certain connections with the analysis of power/knowledge by Michel Foucault (Foucault 1980). In his studies of the asylum, the prison, and the clinic, Foucault attempts to show that the growth of systematic knowledge is always conjoined with an extension of power relations which have the effect of disciplining the body. There is a parallel between Weber on rational disciplines and Foucault on 'practices' in the latter's study of the 'birth of the prison', where the timetable of monastic discipline provides an anticipation of the regularities of behaviour which become the defining characteristic of such secular institutions as the hospital, the classroom and the workshop (Foucault 1979). The collective title for these techniques of control is 'panopticism', the principle of which is the surveillance and control of docile, but useful, bodies.

While Foucauldian philosophy has often been treated as primarily a poststructuralist contribution to epistemology and history of ideas, this concentration on the problem of discourse in Foucault's early studies of the 'archaeology' of knowledge tends to neglect his contribution to the sociology of surveillance and institutional disciplines. Foucault conceives the social sciences and such controlling institutions as the asylum, prison and school as responses to

the accumulation of men. The great eighteenth-century demographic upswing in western Europe, the necessity for coordinating and integrating it into the apparatus of production and the urgency of controlling it with finer and more adequate power mechanisms cause 'population', with its numerous variables of space and chronology, longevity and health, to emerge not only as a problem but as an object of surveillance, analysis, intervention, modification, etc. (Foucault 1980:171).

The rise of the 'total institution' and the discipline of inmate administrations were not, of course, a discovery on the part of Foucault: the parallels with Goffman on asylums and Weber on

bureaucracies are reasonably obvious (Kurzweil 1980:217). Any form of systematic control of large numbers of people will require rational organization and stability of administration. As Weber noted: 'Every domination both expresses itself and functions through administration' (Weber 1978:2, 948). Panoptic administration depends on centralization, bureaucratic lines of command and regularity of observation, but it also depends on classification and measurement. The surveillance of bodies accumulating within the narrow boundaries of urban space depends on scientific techniques for classification, quantification and measurement. One important theme of Foucault's various historical studies is, therefore, the rise of quantitative representation such as the timetable, the examination, the taxonomy and the dressage:

These methods, which have made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, might be called 'disciplines'. Many disciplinary methods had long been in existence—in monasteries, armies, workshops. But in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the disciplines became general formulae of domination (Foucault 1979:137).

In Weber's sociology of domination, the principles of panopticism were primarily embodied in the emergence of bureaucratic disciplines, by which a large administrative staff could be routinely coordinated with the precision of a machine. Michel Foucault's analysis of 'disciplines' can thus be regarded as a contemporary version of Weber's analysis of the iron cage. The Weberian principles of rational action which lie at the heart of the 'rational, functional and specialized bureaucratic organization of all forms of domination' (Weber 1978:2, 400), and the Foucauldian disciplines of institutional regulation, have at least two basic assumptions in common. First, these disciplines do not depend for their operation and effects on the beliefs or personalities of the individuals who perform or operationalize them. The degree of legitimation required by these methods is minimal; bureaucracy can survive on mere behavioural and procedural regularities without extensive

ideological underpinning. This fact partly explains why bureaucracy has provided a stubborn feature of the structure of capitalist society, despite massive changes in political regimes. Second, these practices control social actors by a process of detailed individuation. The administrative, fiscal and repressive apparatus of the modern state functions on the basis of a complex division of labour and a precise individuation of staff. Within the general population, the documentation of social membership in the form of birth certificates, passports, driving licences, educational qualifications, insurance certificates and national insurance numbers ensure that each citizen can be unambiguously identified and registered for the purpose of control and surveillance. As both Nietzsche and Weber recognized, through the division of labour, individuation destroys individuality, since in a society governed by principles of rational calculation, the performance of each individual worker is mathematically measured, each man becomes a little cog in a machine (Mayer 1956:127).

Similar issues of normalization and standardization through the measurement of differences occupy the philosophy of Foucault, but the metaphor of cog and machine is replaced by those of geography. The body (both social and individual) is mapped out within the coordinates of an urban space, and surveyed from innumerable points of inspection:

Like surveillance, and with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical age. For the marks that once indicated status, privilege and affiliation were increasingly replaced—or at least supplemented—by a whole range of degrees of normality indicating membership of a homogeneous social body but also playing a part in classification, hierarchization and the distribution of rank (Foucault 1979:184).

Like the Weberian model of bureaucracy, with its hierarchy of offices, chains of command and specialization of functions, Foucauldian society operating in terms of panopticism exercises control over its subjects by disciplines of classification. At least one basis of social cohesion in capitalist society is, therefore, the

network of practices which secure exact calculation and precise classification (Poulantzas 1978:65–9).

Within the German context, Weber's sociology of power-politics has for some decades been the centre of a political storm—his apparently cynical endorsement of blind political struggle in such aphoristic statements as 'politics means conflict', his contempt for consultative democracy and his insistence on authoritative leadership have supported the Marxist critique that Weber belonged to that stream of irrationalism that led eventually to fascism. In the Anglo-Saxon context, Weber's political writings were neglected until the early 1970s. Hence the Parsonian interpretation of Weber as the great theorist of political legitimacy remained largely unquestioned. Recent translations of Weber's political speeches and renewed interest in Weber's sociology of law (Trubek 1972; Hunt 1978; Turner 1981) have brought the role of coercion, compulsion and conflict in Weberian sociology into the foreground in modern exegesis. The problem of coercion in social relations was not, however, simply an issue which was as specific to his political writings, since the fragility of the legal order without a doctrine of natural rights was clearly spelt out in *Economy and Society*. By drawing attention to the influence of Nietzsche throughout Weber's political and sociological writing, this argument has outlined a Weberian theory of cohesion in class society in which legitimation plays a limited, marginal role.

The discipline of the worker, and more generally, the obedience of the citizen, are secured by their separation from the means of intellectual and manual production, by subjection to legal commands which are backed up by the coercive apparatus of the state, and by various regulative practices which control and classify the population. These three features ensure social control, but they are also fundamental to exact calculation. In addition, Weber discussed a variety of conditions which might help to secure the loyalty of a population to the state; these conditions included nationalist sentiments, commitment through welfare rewards, and allegiance to a charismatic leader under conditions of plebiscitary democracy. Weber's discussion of these forms of political loyalty was in part a product of a specific set of circumstances in wartime Germany, and may as a result be regarded as political solutions

relevant to the German state rather than to capitalism as a whole. They do, however, have one specifically interesting feature, namely that nationalistic and charismatic loyalties are unstable, irrational sources of legitimacy. In short, the question of the legitimacy of the capitalist state in Weberian sociology remains uncertain and problematic. The cohesion of capitalist society may be secured on the basis of formal rationality through the separation, legal subordination and classification of citizens, but the state cannot be legitimated in terms of substantive justice or by reference to supernaturalist values.

Conclusion

11 *Sociology and the Science of 'Man'*

Interpreting Max Weber

Over the last decade, there has been a quiet revolution in the interpretation of the sociology of Max Weber. The key to these changes has been the disappearance of the obsession with the theme of Marx versus Weber. Paradoxically, the issue of an apparent contradiction between Marxist and Weberian historical sociology was most dominant in English-speaking sociology where the legacy of Althusserian structuralist Marxism was dominant. The gradual erosion in the importance of French Marxism over English social science paved the way for more interesting and more relevant interpretations of Weber. There is now a greater appreciation of the range and depth of Weberian sociology. These intellectual changes have been further enhanced by the political erosion of organized Communism in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. Weber's critique of the problems of socialism as an approach to the management of the economy looks increasingly relevant and insightful (Holton and Turner 1989).

Two intellectual results have followed from these changes. First, there is a tendency to see Marx and Weber as complementary rather than as alternative social theorists; the second development has been to see Weber's scientific interests on a far broader plane. When these two interpretive changes coalesce, Marx and Weber are seen as complementary theorists of the cultural processes of modernization (Sayer 1991). Thus, the Protestant ethic thesis is seen as a major contribution to the sociological study of the socio-cultural forces which have produced the modern world. As I have

indicated in Chapter 1 because Weber was so profoundly ambivalent about the rational character of the modern world, his ambiguities anticipated some aspects of the confrontation between modernity and post-modernity (Holton and Turner 1989). These issues are now seen to be at the centre rather than the periphery of Weber's historical sociology, which should be treated as a global inquiry into the cultural conditions and consequences of the processes of modernization. It is, of course, not entirely legitimate to use the term 'modernization' to describe Weber's interests, but we can regard his discussion of the processes of rationalization, disenchantment, bureaucratization and regulation as broadly standing for an analysis of modernization. Weber's historical sociology attempted to expose the roots of modernization in the life-orders, cultural traditions and ethics, which were the consequences of the rationalization of the ethical systems of the world religions. These issues have been examined specifically in Chapters 3, 4 and 7.

Of course, within the context of these contemporary interpretations, the attempt to develop a sharp opposition between Marx and Weber looks in retrospect especially artificial and inappropriate. Weber was quite obviously and openly influenced by Marx's sociology. Sympathetic interpretations of Marx and Weber have in any case established a certain theoretical parallel between the theme of alienation in Marx and the concept of rationalization in Weber. Löwith's analysis of this relationship, which was first published in Germany in 1960, paved the way for this perspective (Löwith 1982). Indeed, it now seems possible to see alienation as merely a special case of a broader and more general process of social rationalization. The recent revival of interest in Georg Simmel and the translation of *The Philosophy of Money* (Simmel 1978), which I explored in Chapter 9, allows us to see this relationship quite clearly, because we can regard alienation under capitalist conditions as merely a special case of the rationalization of exchange relations through the development of money as a symbol of exchange.

Another development which has influenced the ways in which contemporary sociologists perceive the relationship between Marx's historical materialism and Weber's historical sociology has been a new emphasis on the early writings of Weber. An

examination of Weber's early work, on economic organization in the Middle Ages, the importance of Roman agricultural organization for legal relations, and the economic organization of East Elbian Germany and its political implications for the state, forces us to a number of important conclusions. First, there is the issue of treating Weber as a 'founding father' of sociology, because his research was profoundly shaped by interdisciplinary issues, but especially by economic questions (Tribe 1989a). Second, the early Weber approached social science problems with the conceptual apparatus of Marx, especially the emphasis on class struggle and relations of production. Finally, these works show that Weber operated within a historical scheme in which transitions from the traditional economy to capitalism were seen to be the key features of world history.

Although there are important convergences between Marx and Weber, it is important not to overlook the critical issues which separate these two legacies in historical sociology. There are broadly three areas where we can still find major cleavages. In terms of values, Weber was profoundly influenced by the philosophy of Nietzsche, whom he interpreted as a negative critic of modern values. While Nietzsche can be read as a philosopher who sought to combat nihilism with a new philosophy which emphasized the importance of a revaluation of values, Weber appears to have embraced Nietzsche as a philosopher of negativity. With the death of God, all values are relativized by a cultural perspectivism which destroys traditional certainties. History is no longer characterized by a grand design; as an antidote, Weber attempted to develop a modest ethical code around the idea of a vocation in science, whereby some form of intellectual honesty might be developed (Lassman and Velody 1989). Weber rejected the idea that it was still possible to embrace traditional religious codes, but he also rejected the prophetic romanticism of Stefan George, the eroticism of Otto Gross, and the psychoanalytical solutions of Freudianism. Although Weber embraced the idea of either politics or science as a realistic vocation in a post-Christian Europe, his attitude towards 'the world' remained highly conditional and pessimistic. His lifeorientation was part of a broad movement of *Kulturpessimismus* (Kalberg 1987). This fatalism in Weberian sociology (Turner 1981) is rather far removed from

Marx's revolutionary optimism that socialism would be a consequence of the structural contradictions of capitalism, and that socialism could generate a new set of values and institutions which will finally destroy the alienation of man. We are very familiar with Weber's negative critique of socialist planning as a system which would reinforce rather than remove alienation; socialist rationality was merely yet another version of a more general process of rationalization. The result was that Weber was hostile to any notion of historical teleology; he developed instead a developmental history of major social change (Roth and Schluchter 1979).

The second area of irreducible difference lies in the fields of epistemology and methodology. For Weber, scientific concepts were at best approximations to real social processes which we attempt to understand by an inevitable simplification through abstraction. The creation of Weber's famous 'ideal types' in sociological theory represented his idea that sociological theory develops by attempting to elaborate more general and sophisticated typologies of social relationships. Weber was overtly committed to what is occasionally referred to as 'methodological individualism', because he was critical of any reification of concepts such as 'Society' or 'Economy'. The holistic concepts of social science referred ultimately to social actions and social relationships. In principle, although not always in practice (Turner 1977), Weber adhered to a view of human knowledge in which theory building is crucial to the development of human understanding of social relations; the methods of the natural sciences were not immediately or exclusively relevant to the social sciences, which by contrast had to adopt an interpretive methodology for understanding the meaning of social actions. These philosophical principles led Weber to be very sceptical about the scientific value of such notions as 'laws' of historical change, inevitable processes in history, and about the objective status of ideas like 'capitalism' or 'feudalism'. These concepts and theories were at best heuristic devices which permitted tentative frameworks of interpretation. Hence, in his historical writings, Weber was concerned to understand contingent tendencies, developmental possibilities and historical phases. These concepts are far removed from the idea of inevitable stages in history from slavery to feudalism to capitalism (Scaff 1984).

The third area of divergence which remains is that of substantive social theory. Although much ink has been spilt over what constitutes the core of either Marx or Weber (Birnbaum 1953; Mayer 1956; Fleischmann 1964; Freund 1968; Honigsheim 1968; Giddens 1970; Löwith 1982; Poggi 1983; Collins 1986a; Sica 1988; Mommsen 1989), it is difficult to approach Weber's sociology without giving significance to the themes of power, domination and authority in his work as a whole. In broad terms, Weber was concerned to understand how power is constituted and organized in human societies (Giddens 1972; Parkin 1979; Collins 1986a; Collins 1986b; Glassman 1986; Mann 1986). These issues of domination, social conflict and power struggles were an important feature of his historical sociology, which treated all political formations as formations of violence. By violence, I do not mean necessarily that Weber saw human relations as always involving some form of physical confrontation; there are also types of spiritual and cultural relations which involve violent struggles over values, institutions and regulations of everyday life. In part, this emphasis on power as violence was a feature of the Nietzsche legacy (Stauth and Turner 1988). Various aspects of this debate were examined in Chapters 6 and 10.

Weber conceptualized power in terms of a number of key dimensions: military, economic, political and symbolic. It was thus possible for Weber to ask of any social group or society: who controls the means of violence; who enjoys a monopoly over economic resources; who controls the legitimate means of political power; and finally who has control over symbolic force? Because these dimensions are relatively autonomous, the history of any given society is a complex and unstable struggle between various classes or strata to dominate these fields of power, and where possible to combine and to consolidate these dimensions into a single ensemble of power relations. To take some examples, Weber thought that the 'democratization' of military force through the development of an urban militia and the challenge of an organized infantry equipped with gunpowder were major turning points in western history in terms of the decline of traditional feudal armies. Similarly, Weber thought that control over the state was not necessarily or inevitably secured by the economically dominant class; part of the peculiar history of Prussian Germany was the

continuing political power of the Junker class over the economically powerful bourgeoisie. Finally, Weber gave great attention to the monopolization of symbolic power in its various manifestations: the church's monopoly of spiritual violence through its control over sacraments as a consequence of the routinization of charisma; the Chinese literati's control of educational capital through its monopoly over the official text; the control over services by professional monopolies; or the challenge of prophetic charisma to all forms of 'domesticated' spirituality. A central feature of Weber's sociology was consequently concerned with the study of the social processes by which social groups exercise social closure in the quest for monopolies of power (Parkin 1979). This centrality of the sociology of domination in Weber's sociology as a whole resulted in a theoretical strategy and an analytical framework which were very different to Marxism as a theory of society. It resulted in a view of history as the contingent outcome of struggles to secure monopolies of power between various social classes and strata; it produced a more complex view of social stratification in terms of economic classes, social status groups and political blocs (Turner 1988); it gave a central importance in Weber's sociology to the struggle for what we might call spiritual authority in society; and it precluded any teleological historical paradigm, because the struggle for domination is without limit and its consequences cannot be known fully in advance.

In this conclusion, I have so far concentrated on debates around Marx and Weber which, in the post-war period, have been influential in mainstream American and English sociology (Marcuse 1971; Turner 1974b; Hindess and Hirst 1975; Marshall 1982; Collins 1986a). It is perhaps only appropriate, however, that contemporary transformations of the reception of Weber have been dominated by German scholars. We may usefully concentrate on three recent contributions to the exegesis of Weber's sociology by Wilhelm Hennis (1988), Wolfgang J. Mommsen (1974; 1984; 1989) and Friedrich H. Tenbruck (1980). In addition to these major analysts of Weber's sociology, we might add that Dirk Käsler's *Max Weber* (1988) is one of the best general introductions to Weber's sociology, while Wolfgang Schluchter and Günter Roth have also played a major role in both defending Weberian sociology and in editing the Weber *oeuvre*. Although Hennis, Mommsen and

Tenbruck offer very different interpretations of Weber, the combined effect of their exegesis is to take Weberian sociology completely outside the Marxist legacy.

Weber and Plebiscitary Democracy

Mommsen's interpretation of Weber has proved to be both controversial and influential, because, in locating Weber within the context of German politics between 1890 and 1920, Mommsen raised important questions about the relationship between science and politics in Weberian sociology. In particular, Mommsen's work was the target of much dispute and debate (Marcuse 1971; Hennis 1987) because he clearly recognized Weber's own commitment to a strong German state, a powerful German economy and by implication Germany's involvement in imperial struggle. These interpretations of Weber clearly raised questions about any naive acceptance of the notion of value-neutrality and value-freedom in Weberian sociology. It is clearly important to understand Weber's arguments about values and sociological methods (Weber 1949) in the context of the changing character of academic life in Germany in the late nineteenth century (Ringer 1969). It is equally important to understand Weber's views about science and politics in the context of his own political ambitions and perspectives. In order to grasp the implications of Mommsen's treatment of Weber, we need to rehearse briefly some salient features of Germany's social, political and economic development in the nineteenth century.

It has often been noted that Germany was rather late to develop as a capitalist system, at least by comparison with Britain and the United States (Poulantzas 1973). Whereas the development of capitalism in Britain had taken many centuries to evolve through various stages of agrarian and commercial capitalism, in Germany capitalism developed rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century on the basis of the chemical and steel industries. The second critical feature of German capitalism was that it developed 'from above' via considerable state intervention and involvement (Lash and Urry 1987). Germany did not have a *laissez-faire* or competitive stage of capitalism, but it developed instead a clear form of organized monopoly capitalism in which state direction played an important part. Hence, as Weber constantly observed,

the state bureaucracy played a major role in the general direction of German society and economy. In particular, the German polity came to depend on the political skill and leadership of Bismarck who successfully managed the various contending social classes during Germany's rapid capitalist development. Under Bismarck's leadership, German economic expansion was dramatic. Its population increased from 49 million in 1890 to 66 million in 1913. By 1914, Germany's steel production was greater than that of Russia, France and Britain combined. Through its giant electrical firms like Siemens and AEG, Germany had come to dominate the European electrical market. Its dominance in the chemical industry, especially industrial dyes, was equally complete. It is perhaps not surprising that, alongside Germany's growing industrial strength, there was a demand for an equivalent growth in naval and military power, which would permit Germany to enter the global race for colonial possessions. For example, under Admiral Tirpitz the German navy was rapidly expanded after 1898, and could compete successfully with the British navy by the beginning of World War One.

However, Weber's anxiety was that, with the departure of Bismarck in 1890, a political vacuum was left which could not be adequately filled by a new leader. It was this notion that Germany, surrounded by the powerful states of Britain and America, would fall far behind in the imperial struggle for global dominance which influenced Weber's political analyses (Weber 1958c). Why was this the case? Given the late development of capitalism and the failure of the 1848 revolutions, it is often argued that Germany did not possess a mature, established and politically experienced middle class. Instead there was a large, educated, state-bourgeoisie (the *Bildungsbürgertum*) which was recruited from a broad spectrum of civil-servant bureaucrats. Weber feared that this faction within the middle classes would not provide adequate leadership, because, as a stratum of bureaucrats, they were trained to follow rules and official procedures. They did not have a mentality of forceful leadership. In fact, they could be dominated by any leader who successfully seized power. The *Bildungsbürgertum* developed a distinctive culture or mentality of cultured superiority against both the vulgar working class and the aristocracy, which was still militarized, and whose leisure activities included blood-sports,

hunting and shooting. This combination of factors—the weakness of the middle class, the absence of a radical tradition of middle-class liberalism, the legacy of Bismarck's authoritarian leadership and the political dominance of the Junkers—meant that in Germany social rights were enshrined in the state and the constitution rather than in popular political institutions or voluntary associations. Citizenship developed as a passive form of political membership (Turner 1986). These features of political development in Germany convinced Weber that a version of English liberalism and parliamentary democracy would prove to be an improbable solution to Germany's leadership problem.

It was also the case that Weber was sceptical about the possibility of socialist leadership from the German working class. In Germany, the proletariat was insignificant in both relative and absolute terms, but more importantly the working class did not have the ideology, experience or political institutions which could provide significant political leadership. Marxism had retained much of the revolutionary language of the young Marx, but in reality it had been domesticated in the revisionist doctrines of the Social Democratic Party. Weber, however, had even stronger reasons for rejecting a mass socialist working-class party. First, socialist planning of the economy would bring about further rationalization of society, and thus for Weber the socialist Utopia of an orderly world was not a genuine alternative to capitalism. Second, a mass working-class party would suffer from 'the iron law of oligarchy' whereby a small élite within the party would inevitably secure absolute power over the party bureaucracy. For Weber, direct democracy was ruled out in a modern society by the sheer problem of size and bureaucracy.

In summary, Weber thought that the post-Bismarckian German state would lack effective leadership, because no social class or stratum had developed which could successfully challenge the continuing political influence of the Junkers or the negative consequences of the state bureaucracy. This absence of successful leadership meant that Germany could not, in the international field, offer any organized opposition to the imperial power of Britain, America or France. We should add to this picture Weber's Russophobia and his anxiety about the cultural and social consequences of an influx of Polish agricultural labourers in the

eastern provinces of Germany (Mayer 1956). Weber's study of east Elbian agriculture led him to the conclusion that, for the foreseeable future, Germany would be dependent on foreign provision of basic food supplies, and hence Germany would be drawn inevitably into an international competition for resources (Mommsen 1984:68). Therefore, a strong German state was a necessary requirement for German survival in the context of a global struggle for power.

Weber's views on the importance of a strong German state and an effective German economy were developed in some detail in his Freiburg inaugural address of 1895 (Tribe 1989a), where he criticized the cosmopolitanism of Manchester economics and argued that political economy had to be German political economy. Furthermore, economic expansion required political imperialism, and thus Weber's 'Freiburg address was the impetus for the rise of liberal imperialism in Wilhelmine Germany' (Mommsen 1984:71). Because Weber believed that political and economic space was limited, competition would become more violent and general as capitalism developed. Political economy suggested not a beneficial hidden hand of the economy producing more wealth, but what Weber called an 'eternal struggle' for elbow room. Weber therefore saw Germany faced with a stark choice between either a world capitalist power which would have to be based on nationalism and imperialism, or a reactionary alliance between the Junkers in the rural estates of the east, the Army and the *Grossbürgertum*, to produce a stagnant socio-economic system. It was in the context of these difficult options that, according to Mommsen's interpretation, Weber came to embrace the idea of 'plebiscitary democracy' as the best political option for German leadership.

As we have seen, Weber's political programme was to destroy the hold of the conservatives over the Bismarckian legacy by providing the middle classes with a concrete political goal, namely a strong German state, an effective economy and an imperial policy. These conditions were essential for protecting the achievements of the Bismarckian era, that is securing the German Reich. The destruction of the aristocratic conservative tradition of the Junkers, however, required the democratization of German politics and the formation of effective parliamentary institutions. Yet, Weber also believed that the conventional views of direct

democracy were mere fictions under modern social conditions, because the development of mass parties meant inevitably rule by an oligarchy. Plebiscitary democracy would guarantee that the population was involved in the selection of leaders, who would then be free to rule forcefully, and it would place a limit on the political role of bureaucrats. The plebiscite gave a (minimal) legitimacy to power politics and created the conditions whereby an able ruler could pursue a strong foreign policy; these technical means would solve the problem of the political vacuum which had been created by Bismarck's anti-parliamentary rulership. This view of leadership depended, finally, on Weber's formal typology of authority (Mommsen 1974; 1989), because it offered the possibility that charismatic qualities of genuine leadership might periodically triumph over both traditionalism (as represented by the legacy of the Junkers) and instrumental rationalism (as represented by the civil servants of the state bureaucracy).

The value of Mommsen's interpretation is to place Weber's sociology within the specific context of German social structure from 1890 to 1920. However, one central problem in Weber's political sociology, which Mommsen does not address adequately, is the nature of legitimacy. I have argued (see Chapter 10) that, although Weber's formal political sociology rests on the notion of legitimacy, his actual analysis of politics suggests that modern political life is de-legitimized. There are a number of reasons for this situation. As Weber himself recognized, ideas about natural law, human rights and divine order were outmoded and inadequate as sources of legitimacy, because the process of secularization had undermined these discourses. These 'grand narratives' of legitimacy were undermined by the processes which had been identified by Nietzsche with 'the death of God'. Second, as we have seen, Weber was convinced that the traditional version of liberalism as a basis for the constitutional state was no longer adequate in a modern industrial society. Traditional liberalism had depended on some notion of inalienable individual rights, but these rights were difficult to sustain in a system of rational law. In addition, in so far as individual rights had been used to defend individual inequality, they offended the modern notion of substantive justice. Weber, therefore, assumed that plebiscitary democracy would provide some formal and minimal means of registering the consent of the

ruled. In *Economy and Society*, this minimalist legitimacy appears to be built into the definition. Thus, Weber (1978:267) commented:

Regardless of how its real value as an expression of the popular will may be regarded, the plebiscite has been the specific means of deriving the legitimacy of authority from the confidence of the ruled, even though the voluntary nature of such confidence is only formal or fictitious.

He went on to define plebiscitary democracy as a form of *FührerDemokratie* (leader-democracy) as ‘a variant of charismatic authority, which hides behind a legitimacy that is *formally* derived from the will of the governed’ (Weber 1978:268), but the real authority of the ruler depends on trust and commitment of his—Weber did not appear to have in mind the possibility of female charisma in the contemporary world of politics—political followers.

There is much that could be said about these definitions, but there are specific problems with charismatic authority which derive from Weber’s own theory of charismatic domination. Many of these problems were discussed in Chapter 10. First, ‘pure’ charisma is difficult to maintain, because followers tend to ask: what is there in it for me? A successful charismatic leader needs to provide his followers with substantial material rewards, as evidence of his charismatic abilities. The orientation of followers tends to be utilitarian rather than idealistic. Second, there is always the problem of charismatic succession, and thus charisma tends to be limited, whereas the advantage of bureaucracy is stability and continuity. Third, there is the difficulty of belief in the validity of charisma in an age of secularity. Finally, there is the possibility that charismatic leadership, if it is successful, will become charismatic despotism; there is a tension in Weber’s political sociology between his belief that Germany had to become more democratic (in order to have a strong political and economic programme) and that this democracy had to be *Führer-Demokratie* rather than leaderless democracy. Because ultimately Weber believed that democracy was a technical means for securing leadership rather than a means for securing popular sovereignty, it left Weber open to the accusation from critical theorists, Marxists and liberals that his sociology

provided a justification for the charismatic authority of Hitler. Although this specific charge is difficult to sustain, Mommsen's emphasis on Weber's nationalism and his commitment to a strong German state is an important corrective to those commentators who have categorized Weber as a liberal individualist. In reality, Weber's relationship to liberalism, Kantian individualism and post-Protestant morality was extremely complex (Holton and Turner 1989:1–102). Mommsen's emphasis on the analysis of power in Weber's political sociology clearly raises an important question about the role of religion in Weber's sociology as a whole, because, as I have suggested in Chapter 6, religious values had been fundamental in the legitimization of the pre-modern state.

Weber's Comparative Sociology of Religion

Although Mommsen's analysis is important in clarifying the relationship between science and politics in Weber's career, it is difficult to avoid the impression, on approaching Weber's complete *oeuvre*, that his work was in fact dominated—at least substantively—by the comparative analysis of religious *weltanschauungen*. Although there has been considerable interest in recent years in Weber's early economic studies, it is obvious that his mature work was a comparative exploration of the implications of religious cultures for economic practices. More generally, Weber was concerned to understand the implications of different salvational doctrines for social development.

In recent debates about Weber, it has been a common theme to condemn the reception of Weber into North American sociology via the channel of Talcott Parsons, on the alleged grounds that Parsons converted Weber into a theorist of social consensus. Such an interpretation neglects, for example the great merits of Parsons' 'Introduction' (1965) to Weber's *The Sociology of Religion*, where Parsons saw clearly that a central theme of his sociology of religion was the comparative study of institutionalized attempts to rationalize the salvational drive (namely the problem of theodicy) into a series of religious codes or ethics. Calvinism was thus simply one radical version of this very general process of rationalization whereby radical charisma is translated into a system of life-orders

or ethical schema. These issues have been considered in this volume in Chapters 3 and 4. Conventional criticisms of Parsons also overlook the fact that Parsons clearly realized that *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, which was first published as two essays in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* in 1904–5, was merely an introduction to a general comparative study of religion and economics, which was the backbone of the series *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. This series included a study of Protestant sects (*Die protestantischen Sekten und der Geist des Kapitalismus*), research on Confucianism and Taoism (translated as *The Religion of China*), Hinduism and Buddhism (translated as *The Religion of India*) and a study of Judaism (translated as *Ancient Judaism*). There were also two important introductory comments on his sociology of religion. There is the (enlarged) ‘Author’s Introduction’ (*Vorbemerkung*) to his sociology of religion as a whole, which was included by Parsons in his translation of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 1930:13–31). Weber also wrote an additional introduction in 1913 which was published in 1915 with the title ‘Intermediate Reflections’ (*Zwischenbetrachtung*), which was conceived after the ‘Author’s Introduction’ was already in print. The *Zwischenbetrachtung* was translated by Gerth and Mills in *From Max Weber* (1948:323–62) as ‘Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions’. Finally, it is evident that Weber had also been preparing to publish parallel studies of early Christianity, Talmudic Judaism and Islam, but these were incomplete at the time of his death in 1920 (Turner 1974a). It is essential to refer to these details, because an important interpretation of ‘the problem of the thematic unity in the works of Max Weber’ by Friedrich Tenbruck (1975a) depends on the argument that the analysis of the economic ethic of the world religions (*Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen*), which dominated Weber’s intellectual activities from 1904 to 1920, is crucial to understanding Weber’s central theme, namely the disenchantment of religion and the rationalization of the occidental world.

There are three important aspects to Tenbruck’s quest for the thematic unity of Weber’s sociology. First, at a textual level, he argues that *Economy and Society* was not in reality Weber’s principal work (*Hauptwerk*), because *Economy and Society* is more

a collection of quite separate sociological inquiries (into bureaucracy, politics, law and so forth) which have no thematic unity. By contrast, the sociology of religion (and specifically the studies of the relationship between religious world views and economic ethics) dominated Weber's endeavours from his 'recovery' in 1903 until his untimely death in 1920. The Protestant ethic thesis was merely an opening commentary which resulted eventually in an entire series on religion. In textual terms, Tenbruck's views place the *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* in a central location, while *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* is somewhat marginalized. Unlike the interpretations of Scaff (1984) and Tribe (1989a; 1989b), the early works of Weber are virtually ignored within this exegesis. Although Tenbruck's treatment of Weber's analysis of religion is important in significance to this feature of Weber's work, in my view Tenbruck goes too far in questioning the place of *Economy and Society*, and more importantly he ignores Weber's studies of technology, money, economic organization, military structures and urban history as conditions of capitalism. Gordon Marshall (1982:161) is quite correct in noting that this interpretation of Weber ignores *General Economic History* (Weber 1927) and comes close to viewing Weberian sociology as idealism, because rationalization is the effect of the inner logic of religious ethics. I have explored some aspects of these issues in Chapters 2, 3 and 5.

Second, Tenbruck believes that this theme (the economic ethics of the five world religions) is held together by the study of two interrelated processes: the disenchantment of religious reality by the process of secularization; and the rationalization of life-orders in the occidental world. In this process, the legacy of the Judaeo-Christian world (ethical prophecy and monotheism) was crucial to the profound radicalization of the traditional problem of theodicy in western soteriology. The intellectual rationalism of Protestant Christianity was critical in driving European civilization towards the detailed personal surveillance which was required by what Weber called the 'life-regulation' of the modern world. I have suggested that in my view much of this interpretation of Weber was already present in Parsons' introduction to the English translation of Weber's *The Sociology of Religion* (1965). However, Tenbruck's argument is that Weber did not adhere to a unidimensional or

teleological view of rationalization as an inevitable and global process. Although there are universal-historical problems arising from theodicy which face all human societies, the solutions to these cultural problems are unique—occidental rationalism is simply one option among many to the organization of life-worlds. Furthermore, Weber treated rationalization as an ideal-typical process, and he attempted to avoid reification of this concept.

In this collection, I have taken a rather different position, for example in Chapter 3, because Weber's sociology appears to be part of a more general orientalism (Turner 1978) in which western rationalism and Calvinistic piety are given a privileged position. I have concentrated on the issue of Islam, because Islamic rationalism, monotheism and asceticism provide a strong test of Weber's general views of the significance of this-worldly asceticism as a radical solution to the salvational drive. I have explored these issues in Chapters 3 and 4. Weber's very negative views of Islamic rationalism (Turner 1974a) are clear evidence of his orientalism, and of the fact that rationalization was treated as a uniform, global process. I have also argued in Chapter 5 that, given China's leadership in scientific discoveries in the pre-modern world, Weber's treatment of Confucianism and Taoism was not really adequate.

The third important aspect of Tenbruck's approach lies in the identification of Weber's underlying philosophical anthropology. Although there has been a great deal of research into Marx's ontology, philosophical anthropology and analysis of 'nature' (Markus 1978), until recently the anthropological underpinnings of Weber's view of history have been somewhat neglected. Tenbruck has performed an important service to Weberian exegesis by showing that Weber's interest in religious ethics was closely related to his view of anthropology. The problem of theodicy grows out of the universal sense or experience of the world as problematic because there is a gap between experience and what we might call moral expectations (Turner 1981:142–76).

Wherever there is an elementary expectation about how life ought to be, there is a problem of theodicy because everyday reality conflicts with our sense of fairness, justice and correctness. Death, disease and disaster challenge any idea of divine purpose (Turner 1983b). Weber thus developed the contrast between fortune and

suffering to describe how human moral assumptions conflict with the sheer actuality of things (*Dinge in ihrer schieren Tatsachlichkeit*). No purposive-rational solution to the disorder of the everyday world is entirely satisfactory, because rationality cannot ultimately provide a meaningful solution to the problem of theodicy. The anthropological significance of religion is to provide powerful solutions at the level of symbol, ritual and doctrine to the senseless character of the mundane world. Here is the real location of charisma in Weber's sociology, namely as a spiritual force which, in going beyond our experiences of the mundane world, offers hope that there is a meaningful reality behind everyday reality. Religion is thus related to this universal anthropological quest for meaning. Organized religion—and especially the institutions, practices and beliefs of what Weber called 'world religions'—provides an articulate and systematic set of answers to theodicy, but its very institutionalization exposes these routinized forms of religion to the perennial threat of unrestrained charisma. These sociological and anthropological strains between charisma and church produced an endless cycle of sectarian struggles against the domestication of the spirit (Troeltsch 1931). Weber's treatment of religion, in many ways unlike the search in Emile Durkheim's sociology for elementary forms (Durkheim 1926), was thus set within a specifically historical view of religious change in which the rationalization of primitive responses to theodicy eventually produced the inner loneliness of the Calvinist:

In its extreme inhumanity this doctrine must above all have had one consequence for the life of a generation which surrendered to its magnificent consistency. That was a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness (Weber 1930:104).

Calvinism, by rejecting the sacraments and the priesthood, forced the believer to confront an unknowable God with no human or social supports. In this sense, Calvinism stripped the salvational quest of any ritualistic framework to confront the believer with the pure force ('the magnificent consistency') of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. Only a Calvinist with a special character could survive such an 'inner loneliness'.

Weber's Comparative Characterology

This discussion of Weber's treatment of the different social consequences of the various salvational drives of the world's religions provides further evidence for Weber's dependence on Nietzsche (Stauth and Turner 1988). It is around these issues of Weber's relationship to Nietzsche, the development of Weber's analysis of 'life-orders' and the anthropological dimensions of Weberian sociology that Wilhem Hennis' *Essays in Reconstruction* (1988) have been so significant in shifting the framework of modern interpretations of Weber. In particular, Hennis has flatly rejected the idea that the 'central question' in Weber's historical sociology was a causal hypothesis, which could be empirically tested, about the relationship between the Protestant sects and the capitalist economy. Hennis follows the path of a number of modern commentators in suggesting that the question of the origins of capitalism was too narrow as an interpretation of Weber, who was in fact consistently concerned with the genesis of the 'rational *Lebensführung* ('rational life-management' or 'rational life-conduct') and 'ethical *Lebensstil*' ('ethical life-style') out of the spirit of modern culture. Furthermore, Weber's inquiry or problematic concerned the characterological effects of certain types of piety. Weber's 'central interest' now appears as the cultural sociology of the consequences of rational life-conduct on the formation of character, especially the rational man of calling (the *Berufsmenschentum*).

This interest in the cultural history of personality and lifeorders or life-spheres (*Lebensordnungen*) cannot be dissociated or uncoupled from Weber's ethical concern in the question: can man survive the life-management which is required by bureaucratic capitalism? It was in this connection that Weber complained, as I noted in Chapter 2, that the rational world of modern capitalism was producing a new type of man: 'hedonists without a heart and experts without spirit' (*Genussmenschen ohne Hertz und Fachmenschen ohne Geist*). Although Weber did not specifically follow Nietzsche in all aspects of this moral critique, it is worth repeating that Nietzsche also responded with horror against the dominance of the soulless man of reason, 'the herd', and the state bureaucrat with the call for a new type of man, namely the *Übermensch* who was not the Superman but the Overman.

The implications of this approach to Weberian sociology are clearly radical. By giving proper weight to the impact of Nietzsche on Weber, Hennis has raised serious questions about the description of Weber as a 'sociologist' who was committed to the separation of values and science in the quest for an objective science of social action. Hennis' reading of Weber's 'central question' has important implications for how we approach Weber's sociology as a whole, even when Weber appears to be writing as a 'conventional' economic sociologist. Let us take, once more, Weber's Freiburg Inaugural Address of 1895. For Hennis, when Weber refers to economics as a 'science of man', he was not talking about economic theory in its modern, technical sense, as the study, for example, of marginal utilities. For Weber, economics as a science of man involved the study of the relationship between social 'conditions of existence' and the quality or 'virtue' of man. Weber's 'universal history' was thus the study of human action. However, Weber's views on ethics here were thoroughly grounded in Nietzsche. They were organized around the question: how can spiritual values survive the onslaught of modernization in the shape of capitalism and state bureaucracy? Hennis, therefore, argues that, even when Weber appears to be writing about issues which are far removed from the question of the ethical development of *Menschentum*, he was in fact addressing his 'central question', which involved an 'anthropological' analysis of the relationship between 'personality and life-orders'.

Hennis' analysis of Weber is certainly convincing, partly because his textual command of Weber's opus is comprehensive. It is not my intention to argue with Hennis' emphasis on Nietzsche, which in any case runs parallel to work which I have undertaken somewhat separately (Stauth and Turner 1988; Turner 1981; Turner 1982c; Turner 1983b) and which reinforces commentaries by other theorists on Nietzsche's impact on modern social theory (Robertson 1978; Eden 1983). I also approve of the attempt in both Tenbruck and Hennis to uncover the underlying philosophical anthropology which informed Weber's general sociological interest; it is also evident that this anthropological interest was connected with Weber's version of the traditional theological problem of theodicy. Rather than attempting a direct commentary on Hennis' treatment of Weber, I want to come at the issue of exegesis indirectly by

noting that most contemporary reevaluations of Weber involve an attack on the legacy of Talcott Parsons, and in particular an assault on Parsons' understanding of Weber. Keith Tribe's introduction to the English translation of Hennis' study (Hennis 1988) can be taken as representative. The problem of understanding Weber today is seen first in terms of clearing away the debris left by Parsonian readings of Weber, and secondarily in terms of identifying the central question or unity of the Weberian *oeuvre*.

There are allegedly a number of problems with the Parsonian legacy. First, because Parsons gave no emphasis to either Marx or Nietzsche, he failed to give sufficient attention to questions relating to the will to power, violence, ethical struggle, nihilism and pessimism in Weber. Second, Parsons treated the Protestant ethic thesis as a causal analysis of the origins of capitalism which was based on J.S. Mill's methodology of difference. Third, Parsons has been held responsible for, as it were, colonizing Weber by converting him into a sociologist of voluntaristic action theory, which 'anticipated' Parsons' own attempt to formulate a general sociology. Parsons 'americanized' Weber as a strategy for legitimizing sociology in the context of Parsons' career at Harvard. Parsons' presentation of Weber to the English-speaking sociological community involved treating Part 1 of *Economy and Society* (Weber 1978), where Weber provided a series of basic definitions of sociology, social action and sociological methodology, as a summary of Weberian sociology. By contrast, as we have seen, Mommsen, Tenbruck, Scaff and Tribe have looked outside *Economy and Society* for Weber's central question, on the grounds that *Economy and Society* is in fact a collection of incomplete fragments which fail to present the core of Weber's theory.

Much of this criticism of Parsons is perfectly valid, but, as I have indicated already, this criticism of Parsons' work on Weber—originally published in 1937—in *The Structure of Social Action* (Parsons 1949) is not exactly generous. Parsons was, after all, responsible for translating *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, for bringing to general attention the importance of Weber's *The Sociology of Religion*, and for defending Weber against one-sided criticisms, such that Weber was an idealist. The real issue, however, was that Parsons followed Durkheim more than he did Weber in concentrating on the issue of cultural

integration. However, because I believe that one should begin an analysis of Parsons' sociology on the assumption that it was primarily a contribution to economic sociology, there is still much in common between Weber and Parsons as general social theorists (Holton and Turner 1986; Holton and Turner 1989). I shall return to this question shortly.

The issue is not, however, primarily to defend Parsons' interpretation of Weber, but to take notice of the fact that recent interpretations of Weber, by criticizing Parsons, have been attacking the idea that Weber was a sociologist, or at least that Weber was a founding father of sociology; they have also involved the assertion of German authority over the Weber legacy. The attack on Parsons conveniently serves both objectives admirably. What is at issue ultimately is not the exegesis of Weber, or the critique of Parsons; what is at issue is the nature of sociology itself. Indeed what is at issue is the very possibility of sociology. We should start, however, with the nature of the attack.

In the 1970s, the critique of Weber as a subjectivist or bourgeois sociologist was inspired and led by a defence of Marx as the scientist of social formations (Turner 1977). The reinterpretation of Weber in the 1980s has been entirely different, but it still has the consequence of attacking sociology. We have already seen that Keith Tribe (1989a) and Lawrence Scaff (1984), by placing a special emphasis on the early economic writings of Weber, have challenged the idea of Weber as a founder of sociology. The rejection of *Economy and Society*, which Gunther Roth in his 'Introduction' has described as 'the sum of Max Weber's scholarly vision of society' (Roth 1978:xxxiii), is a major interpretive strategy, because it has the effect of virtually discounting Weber's analytical contribution to sociological theory in advance. In his *Reading Weber*, Tribe, having noted the alleged 'serious disarray' of sociology, offers the opinion that:

Far from being a 'founding father' of sociology, Weber has been shown to be a figure whose work belongs as much to classical political theory as to a more modern consideration of social and economic structures and processes (Tribe 1989a:l).

Similarly, Scaff's seminal article on 'Weber before Weberian sociology' argues that the work of the early Weber was dominated by a specific economic question, namely how are societies able to sustain agricultural production, which is labour-intensive, in the context of unstable and unpredictable fluctuations in the seasonal requirements for labour? Hennis' revaluation of Weber has similar consequences in removing Weber from the pantheon of heroic sociology. As we have seen, Hennis' argument firstly shows that Weber's normative conception of economics as 'a science of man' makes Weber the heir of a tradition of economic reasoning which has its roots in Aristotle's analysis of virtue; secondly, by associating Weber with Nietzsche, he argues that the concepts of personality, life-orders and life-regulation cannot be assimilated to the conceptual framework of empirical sociology; and thirdly, Hennis treats Weber as a political theorist in line with Machiavelli, Rousseau, and de Tocqueville. In a similar fashion, while Mommsen is not overtly critical of the notion of Weber as sociologist, his Cambridge lectures from 1985 refer to Weber's 'political and social theory' (Mommsen 1989) rather than to Weber's sociology. Tenbruck clearly treats Weber's work as a foundational contribution to sociology, but this 'sociology' is far removed from the professional sociology and its survey-research methodologies which has dominated much post-war sociology. Weber, for Tenbruck, was predominantly concerned to understand men and women as 'cultural beings' and the basis of Weber's 'culturology' was in fact a philosophical anthropology of the human problem of meaning.

These interpretations of Weber thus question the idea that he was a founding father of sociology or that he was a 'master' of sociological thought (Coser 1971), but they also, in ways which are implicit and covert, suggest that we should regard Weber as a *German* thinker whose work can only be textually understood by native speakers of German. This second assumption has the consequence of challenging North American (and to some extent British) interpretations of Weber. Mommsen, for example, notes that the celebration of the hundredth year of Weber's birth at the Heidelberg conference in 1964 provided the opportunity for an important encounter between North American and German scholarship. This commemoration 'signified a revitalized interest in

the Federal Republic in Max Weber's work and a willingness to take up the running where American scholarship had left off' (Mommson 1989:185). Hennis has been far more explicit in this exegetical reappropriation of the German Weber. First of all, 'Weber was a *German* thinker, from the land of "Dr Faustus"' (Hennis 1988:195), and the novels of Thomas Mann are the best literary introduction to the lost intellectual world of Weber. Second, the misunderstanding of 'the Weber-thesis', so common among followers of Parsons, 'no longer happens among German scholars' (Hennis 1988:26), with the one exception of Jürgen Habermas, who places Weber's 'leading interest' in the theory of communicative action 'on its head' (Hennis 1988:201). Outside Germany, sociologists like Gordon Marshall (1982) mistakenly continue to debate the thesis about the origins of capitalism, and to devise empirical tests of the relationship between religious belief and economic activity, and they continue to misunderstand basic concepts in Weber such as *Herrschaft* and *Handeln*, which are naively rendered as 'leadership' and 'action'. English translations of Weber do not even do justice to *Beruf*; by employing either 'vocation' or 'calling' without discrimination, English translations have failed to connect the debate about *Beruf* in the 'Politics as a Vocation' with the debate about religious callings and the culture of the *Berufsmenschentum*. For Hennis, therefore, Weber can only be understood as a German political theorist, whose central question was about the ethical character of human existence, and whose intellectual ancestors were in classical political thought.

Weber and the Science of 'Man'

If Nietzsche was the intellectual inspiration of Weber's generation, in contemporary social theory Nietzsche is also regarded by many as the key figure in the emergence of postmodernism (Lash 1984; Lyotard 1986; Habermas 1987; Stauth and Turner 1988; Holton and Turner 1989; Turner 1990a). Nietzsche's treatment of grammar in relation to meaning can be seen as one starting point for modern theories of deconstruction in the philosophy of Derrida (Norris 1987). More significantly, the perspectivism in Nietzsche's approach to values and commitment has become one of the central

planks in the postmodernist critique of 'grand narratives' of history, which assume some form of unity, coherence and universalism in Truth and Morals. Finally, the contrast which Nietzsche made between Dionysus (as the god of ecstasy, violence and sexuality) and Apollo (as the god of order, form and structure) has been crucial, not simply to Weber's discussion of asceticism, but to the whole problem of the body in postmodern cultures (Turner 1984).

Modern interpretations of Weber, which use Nietzsche to redefine him as a cultural theorist of life-orders, or more conventionally to redefine Weber as a theorist of the will to power in order either directly or indirectly to show that he was not a sociologist, have not grasped the full implications of the challenge to modern social sciences of Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche obviously had very profound implications for the many ways in which we might read the Frankfurt School, or Sigmund Freud, or Michel Foucault (Stauth and Turner 1988). It is not simply sociology which comes under scrutiny, but the whole idea of the sciences of 'Man', the humanities, and the natural sciences as a consequence of Nietzsche's critique.

Nietzsche as a critic is an equally profound challenge to the idea of economics or political theory as a coherent discourse, an ancient tradition or an object of analysis. Perhaps only Habermas, who apparently has got Weber wrong, has fully understood the depth of the question posed by Nietzsche against conventional conceptions of the sciences, their divisions, privileges, audiences and self-legitimizing symbols (Habermas 1987), but Habermas may also have identified the central problem of postmodern criticisms of conventional or rational versions of truth. For Habermas, writers like Foucault are caught in the paradox of a 'performative contradiction', that is they are forced to use the tools of reason to mount an attack on reason itself. The same problem in general confronts postmodernism in social theory. Most postmodern accounts of the grand narratives of western reason, such as the account by Lyotard (1986), are forced to depend on modernist versions of history to show how modernity is, for example, an effect of capitalist imperialism and economic development (Turner 1990a). The question is: is it possible to have a postmodern account of the character of postmodernism? Although the postmodern critique of the Habermasian notion of consensus is clearly

profound, Habermas' logical criticism of the assumptions of postmodernism is equally damaging. The consequence is that the full implications of the Nietzsche legacy for the very possibility of a social science are unclear, and therefore open to debate. What is clear is that if the Nietzschean Weber can be used as an attack on sociology, then perspectivism and postmodern deconstructionism are equally problematic for political theory and economics. Basically nobody is safe.

There might, however, be a modest, eleventh-hour defence of sociology which could be undertaken through an ironic defence of Talcott Parsons. I have already suggested that, since Parsons' original writing on Weber is now over half a century old, it would be surprising if Parsons' interpretation of Weber had not been surpassed by contemporary scholarship. More importantly, I believe that contemporary criticism of Parsons exaggerates the problems in Parsons' exegesis of Weber. They also exaggerate the influence of Parsons over mainstream North American sociology, which is hardly noted for its intellectual commitment to classical European sociology. By the end of his career, Parsons had in any case been subject to a number of fundamental criticisms from conflict theory, ethnomethodology, and symbolic interactionism (Alexander 1985; 1988). Turning to more specific issues, we might note first that in *The Structure of Social Action*, Parsons, in criticizing the positivistic basis of utilitarian economic theory, did not assimilate Weberian sociology to an empiricist tradition in American sociology. On the contrary, Parsons himself remained committed to a theoretical explication of the fundamental problems in sociology. Second as I have suggested, Parsons gave full prominence to Weber's contribution to the foundation of the sociology of religion, and recognized the importance of Weber's treatment of the various 'solutions' to the salvational drive in theodicy. Third, because Parsons was also fully committed to an understanding of the 'human condition' in his later sociology where he came to an analysis of death, life as an exchange or gift, and the contemporary problems of religion in providing meaning in a secular world, there may be a convergence between Weber's understanding of 'the conditions of existence' of ethical life and Parsons' final analysis of action and the human condition (Holton and Turner 1986). When Parsons attempted to analyse the complex

relationships between culture, social relations and personality, and in particular when he examined how different patterns of socialization produced different types of personality, was this activity in any way essentially different from Weber's analysis of personality and life-orders? In short, the sociological interpretation of Parsons' work is in need of as much renewal as we have seen in contemporary approaches to Weber's work.

One crucial problem for the nature of sociology in relation to other social science disciplines is a contradiction between treating sociology as a special discipline with its own topic (such as the analysis of 'the social') and regarding sociology as a synthesis of social sciences (especially politics, economics and anthropology). This dilemma was never resolved in the work of Parsons. On the one hand, because Parsons was involved in creating a viable department of interdisciplinary research and teaching on social relations, he was inclined to see sociology as a synthesis of research on the social system which had economic, political, cultural and psychological sub-systems or dimensions. The task of sociology is to provide a general understanding of the various prerequisites (specifically the allocative and integrative requirements) of the social system, which involve exchanges between various sub-systems. On the other hand, Parsons felt the need to create, protect and defend the 'new' discipline of sociology in the context of interdisciplinarity. In this latter respect, sociology was regarded as merely a special case of theories of action, where the special domain of sociology was the analysis of the cultural integration of the social system through such processes as integration and socialization. To put this in another perspective, we can either approach Parsons as a social theorist whose original attempt to rewrite economic theory brought him, via an analysis of sociology, to an interdisciplinary analysis of social systems, or we can regard Parsons as a theoretical sociologist whose commitment to a general theory of social action forced him to take full cognizance of the contributions of political theory, psychoanalysis, economic science, cybernetics and anthropology. In both cases, however, it is impossible to think about Parsons as offering a narrow defence of sociology which excluded an openness to other disciplines. In addition, Parsons' scientific interest was not even limited to the social sciences, since he retained an active interest in biology, medical science, theology,

cybernetics and psychoanalysis; these broader interests became part of his general orientation to scientific work. In this perspective, our inability to place Weber within any single discipline is matched by our inability to place Parsons squarely either in sociology or interdisciplinary social sciences.

Of course, there is a well-known objection to any attempt to draw parallels between Weber and Parsons which falls into two related arguments. There is the well-known argument that Parsons was, as a structural-functionalist, unable to explain, or possibly even to understand, social change (Goudsblom 1987), because he had no adequate appreciation of social conflict (Dahrendorf 1958). There is the additional objection to Parsons that he had a naively optimistic view of the possibilities of social stability in advanced industrial societies, partly because his view of human psychology was based on an 'oversocialized concept of man' (Wrong 1961). Both of these objections are related to the fact that, while Weber drew his intellectual and moral inspiration from Marx and Freud, Parsons was more influenced by Durkheim, Kroeber, Malinowski and Kant. Where Parsons did incorporate Freud, it is alleged that he converted Freud's cultural critique of the discontents of modern civilization into a bland, conformist theory of socialization.

It is not possible in a study of Weber to explain why this critique of Parsons is either inadequate or incorrect (Holton and Turner 1986; Alexander 1988). I shall be forced to concentrate on a narrow range of issues. The counter argument in essence is that Parsons' view of history was in fact shaped by his reading of Weber and deliberately incorporated Weber's analysis of rationalization. Most interpretations of Weber agree that the statement of his view of 'universal history' in the 'Author's Introduction' concerning the 'uniqueness' of the west in terms of the development of a specific form of rationality is crucial in any appreciation of Weber's 'central question'. This famous passage is as follows:

A product of modern European civilization, studying any problem of universal history, is bound to ask himself to what combination of circumstances the fact should be attributed that in western civilization, and in western civilization only, cultural phenomena have appeared which (as we like to think) lie in a

line of development having *universal* significance (Weber 1930:13).

Towards the end of this introduction, Weber also asserted that:

In a universal history of culture the central problem for us is not, in the last analysis, even from a purely economic viewpoint, the development of capitalist activity as such, differing in different cultures only in form.... It is rather the origin of this sober bourgeois capitalism with its rational organization of free-labour (Weber 1930:23–4).

The rational organization of labour is a critical feature of the requirement that all factors of production, and ultimately all conditions of life, should be subject to exact calculation. The universal history of modernity is the subordination of all spheres of life to the overarching dominance of rational calculability.

Parsons also embraced a version of this universal history, although, as we shall see, its underlying values were very different. Parsons' 'central question' was to understand the historical evolution and conditions of modernity, which Parsons (1951) originally defined in terms of the famous 'pattern variables' which, combining the theories of Tönnies, Durkheim and Weber, defined modernity in terms of a set of cultural patterns: achievement, universalism, specificity, and neutrality. These pattern variables contrasted, for example, traditional village life, which is based on ascription, particularism, diffuseness, and affectivity, with the anonymous life of a modern city, dominated by modern conditions of exchange. Modern life-orders are thus structured by a distinctive and unique combination of cultural patterns which shape, not simply roles and role-behaviour, but also the fundamental personalities of the contemporary world. What were the historical origins of this structure of cultural relations? For Parsons (1966; 1971), this unique configuration could be historically examined through the development of Christian individualism and asceticism, Greek political values, the structure of the medieval city, the emergence of the Protestant denominations, and the Protestant emphasis on the individual and rational understanding of the Word (Parsons 1963).

Although Parsons' version of this 'universal history' has its origins, in part at least, in Weber's Protestant ethic thesis, Parsons' sociology of social change differs from Weber's historical sociology in a number of crucial respects. In the first place, Parsons thought that the high-water mark of this process of modernization was in fact the United States of America, where denominational pluralism, the secularization of the Protestant ethic, the disenchantment of reality, and the rational orientation to economics had become socially dominant. Parsons' American triumphalism may thus be suitably compared with Weber's own version of nationalism. Second, Parsons came to see the modernization process as involving not only a special type of culture, but the differentiation of the social system into specialized autonomous institutions which were addressed to quite specific tasks. Modernization involved both value pluralism, as the traditional cultural system became increasingly diversified, and institutional specialization (such as the separation of the household and the economy, or the separation of the church and the state). Third, Parsons was essentially optimistic about the possibility of continuous social change, and he was as a consequence committed to the idea that, just as the free economy was the most efficient mechanism for the production and distribution of commodities, a democratic polity was the most effective and efficient method of testing political preferences and for securing normative commitment to the state. Parsons saw modernization in terms of the emergence of a specific type of culture, in terms of the differentiation of social and cultural systems, and by reference to the possibility of an expansion of citizenship.

We can legitimately interpret Weber and Parsons as social theorists whose central problem was to understand the genesis of modernity and its moral consequences. They differed fundamentally in terms of their evaluation of the consequences and requirements of modernity. Weber's view of world history was shot through with foreboding, uncertainty and anxiety. The consequences of the process of rationalization were to make the world more predictable through exact calculation, but rationalization and secularization also created a world of cultural 'polytheism'—as Weber described this situation in 'Science as a vocation' (Lassman and Velody 1989:22). Weber's pessimism about

social developments under capitalism, his anxiety about the future consequences of political struggle in Europe, and his personal sense of tragedy, were part of a general *Kulturpessimismus* in German intellectual life which had its roots in Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Simmel. Weber's ambiguity about the possibility of democracy in a society dominated by mass politics and the party machine was also part of the Nietzsche legacy in which a morals of distinction looked for real values outside 'the herd'. Parsons' world view, and hence his approach to history, were very different, being grounded in an optimistic version of American, secularized Protestantism, a commitment to modern citizenship—which he derived from T.H.Marshall—and a belief that ultimately, dictatorship, whether in Hitler's Germany or Stalin's Russia, could not survive the gradual evolution of a global democratic ethos. Although I find Parsons' moral world sympathetic, I would also be forced to accept Weber's version of Nietzsche that, in choosing between two moral views of history, we have no secure values which would enable us to choose confidently. This conclusion, which was described by Weber as the ethic of responsibility, was the lesson of the two lectures on science and politics as vocations.

In conclusion, I have argued that there has been a profound reorientation in the exegesis of Weber's sociology, which has involved an examination of the relationship between Nietzsche and Weber. These contemporary interpretations have often involved a rejection of the Parsonian analysis of Weber as an interpretive sociologist of social action, and occasionally they have gone further to suggest that Weber was not a sociologist at all. While these strategies in my view illegitimately downgrade the status of *Economy and Society*, they also involve a serious misunderstanding of Parsons' sociology. More importantly, they neglect the implications of Nietzsche for their own interpretive standpoint. Perspectivism is a two-edged sword, because it may be that the whole of social science, and not just sociology, is brought into question by Nietzsche's prophetic and ecstatic 'joyous science'. We can either go down the path of deconstruction, but we have no idea what the consequences might be, or we can attempt some modest defence of traditional social science disciplines and their divisions. As part of that modest defence, I have concluded by arguing that both Weber and Parsons might be properly regarded as historical

sociologists of modernity, who were concerned to understand the peculiar uniqueness of the Occident in terms of rationalization, differentiation, secularization and cultural pluralism. While Parsons was a modernist *tout court* (Robertson and Turner 1991), Weber's perception of the ambiguities and contradictions of modernization anticipated the contrast between modernity and postmodernity, precisely because his moral sociology of life-orders was grounded in the inescapable 'fact' of modern life: God is dead.

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