

Weber, Art, and Social Theory

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ABSTRACT

Max Weber's contribution to cultural sociology has received insufficient attention, due to the unfinished character of his work and its reception. This paper investigates aspects of his contribution in relation to the field of art, broadly conceived, and in terms of the uses of his ideas by historians of art and design, such as T. J. Clark. Weber's social theory considers art from two perspectives: the relative autonomy of cultural and artistic forms and modes of expression, and the social construction of works of art and culture. From the latter point of view techniques and the technical become important factors in a double sense: The technologies of modern civilization external to art shape the "spirit" of art and its contents, and development in art proceeds as an effort to solve technical problems internal to the art form itself. Examples from painting, architecture and music illustrate the relationships. It is these perspectives that characterize the Weberian approach to art and invite further investigation as contributions to cultural sociology and social theory.

1. Introduction

Max Weber is not known primarily for his cultural sociology or sociology of culture and art. When scholars think of his contributions to sociology as a science or to the "Weberian paradigm" in the social sciences, using the terms of one recent collection (Albert et al. 2003), what comes to mind is the seminal work in the sociology of religion, comparative historical sociology, the sociology of law, political sociology, the study of institutions and organizations, social stratification, and the philosophy of science or the methodology of the social sciences. Today we should also add Weber's long-overlooked contributions to economic sociology, revived through the work of Richard Swedberg (1998; Weber 1999). But cultural sociology appears to have remained in the shadows, even characterized surprisingly in a recent work by Jeffrey Alexander as a "mysterious" gap in Weber's thinking (2003, p. 8).

There are obvious exceptions to such a generalization. What is *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism*, after all, if not a brilliant essay in cultural sociology? A careful reader might reasonably conclude that the entire manuscript bristles with the data and perspectives of a cultural analysis (for examples, see Swatos and

Kaelber 2005). Then there are the partial sociologies of the cultural field: the investigation of music, for instance, where Weber's unfinished manuscript has increasingly attracted attention (Weber 1958, Braun 1992, Schießl 1998; de la Fuente 2004); or the example of Weber's interest in literature and literary modernism (Weiller 1994; Kiesel 1994; Whimster 1999). With respect to the former, Weber's essay on music is to be sure still a fragment, a limited historical and comparative sociological study of one aspect of culture that defies ready-made categories and facile systematization. But it signals a preoccupation of Weber's that finds expression in central aspects of his work. Concerning the latter, there is ample basis in his writings for investigating a range of engaging topics, an undertaking that has barely begun. One might say the true mystery is that there should be any mystery at all about Weber's contributions to a cultural sociology or a science of culture. (1)

In one sense the perception of an alleged "gap" or absence might be considered an artifact of a particular kind of reception-history that emphasized the *Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion* (especially Talcott Parsons' translation of *The Protestant Ethic*) and the first part of *Economy and Society*. It is true that as he took up the tasks of editing the *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik* after 1909, of which *Economy and Society* was a small section, Weber increasingly turned away from the terminology of what he referred to as "cultural science" (*Kulturwissenschaft*) to a different kind of language emphasizing the interpretive understanding of social action and processes of sociation or *Vergesellschaftung* in different social orders. This is already apparent in the key transitional text, "Some Categories of Interpretive Sociology" (Weber 1913b, 1981), where the notion of a cultural science is reformulated through a concern with *verstehende* sociology and its basic categories (e.g., social action, exchange, conflict, association, institution, organization, legitimate domination), its relationship to other sciences such as psychology; and its distinctive methodological problems (e.g., the ideal type, adequate causation, conceptions of "rationality"). This turn of thought is a preview for *Economy and Society*, in which the topics of the partial (and unfinished) sociologies of religion, law, bureaucracy, domination, and the like are treated in detail. Thus, a skeptic might conclude that while "culture" remains important, from the standpoint of a such a division of subject matter, a "cultural sociology" or a sociology *of culture as such* would appear to be far too general to provide much clarity or direction. The sociology of religion itself would have to be a sub-category of such an all-encompassing abstraction.

We should remember, however, that the emphasis Weber placed on social science as a "cultural science" or *Kulturwissenschaft* was central to his reflections on scientific knowledge and method in his programmatic essay, "The 'Objectivity' of Knowledge in Social Science and Social Policy" (1904b). Working through the problem of the "economic interpretation of history" and the base/superstructure model of explanation drawn from Marx's work, that essay was an effort to spell out

the presuppositions for a cultural science that must take into account the intended meanings of actor-subjects, the cultural significance of problems, and the culturally conditioned perspectives of the observer. The concept of “culture” itself was subjected to careful scrutiny, as I have suggested previously (Scaff 1994), as were the methodological underpinnings for any cultural science. These views then carried over to major parts of Weber’s best-known work, such as the problematic of *The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism* (1904-05) and the important synthetic “Introduction” to the *Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion*, the three-volume *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* published in 1920.

It is important to note too that Weber’s mature sociology was centrally concerned with adjudicating the issue of what has been called “cultural meaning” as related to “structural forces,” appropriately illustrated by the famous metaphor in his chapter on the economic ethics of the world religions: «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» (Weber 1946, p. 280).

Pursuing the problem of the relationship between cultural meaning and socio-economic structure, to stay with our example from modern sociology, it is noteworthy that when Alexander outlines the criteria for his preferred “strong program” in cultural sociology, the three general principles he puts forward to define the program are already found embedded Weber’s work: first, the claim for cultural autonomy or the relative autonomy of culture, so central to the thematic of *The Protestant Ethic*; second, the affirmation of a hermeneutic or “interpretive” reconstruction of social texts; and third, the insistence on focusing not so much on collective abstractions, such as “society” generally considered, but on particular social actors and the “meaning” attached to their actions by themselves and others (Alexander 2003, pp. 13-14).

Important aspects of Weber’s thought should be placed in precisely such an intellectual and scientific context. In this essay I propose to pursue this “cultural” dimension of Weber’s science of society, exploring some of the possibilities for developing his thinking as a contribution to cultural sociology, filling in the alleged “gap,” so to speak. Within the larger domain of cultural sociology, I propose to focus attention particularly on selected aspects of art (the term *Kunst* in Weber’s usage) or the fine arts, as one could say in English, an amorphous notion that includes the painting and the visual arts, sculpture and the plastic arts, design, applied art (that is, *angewandte Kunst*) and architecture or the art of building. I shall do so by considering as a starting point the uses of Weber’s ideas in a location where we might not expect to find them at all, namely, among contemporary historians of art and design. In tracing their concerns in Weber’s writings and experience, I shall suggest that he approached the questions about “culture” in two different ways, one quite familiar to us and the other less well known. The first had

to do with the relative “autonomy” of culture, using today’s terminology, and the second dealt with the reverse hypothesis, so to speak: the social forces that determined or contributed to the development of what Weber referred to as the “contents of culture.” Weber probably devoted more pages of his writings to the former notion, and yet the latter and less familiar perspective holds at least equal promise for setting forth a comprehensive and vital cultural sociology. Exploring both of these thematics and perspectives illuminates the entire terrain appropriate to a Weberian cultural sociology.

2. Weber in Art Criticism

It seems curious that having been consigned to the mysterious in one current version of cultural sociology, Weber’s ideas have attracted attention or have been appropriated and reworked in the writings of contemporary historians of art and design. One illustrative example is Michael Podro’s important study of the “critical” historians of art, as he calls the group of visionaries that includes Alois Riegl, Heinrich Wölfflin and Erwin Panofsky, who laid the foundations for modern art history as an “empirical science.” Podro acknowledges that it actually was Weber who first made this case when he credited Burckhardt’s student and successor at Basel, Heinrich Wölfflin, with demonstrating the accomplishments of an analytic approach to cultural objects.

As Weber noted in the essay on “value freedom” from 1917, in a passage substantially modified from his initial formulation in the “Gutachten zur Werturteilsdiskussion” delivered at the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (Weber 1913a, p. 129): «In the field of painting, the elegant unpretentiousness of the formulation of the problem [*Fragestellung*] in Wölfflin’s *Klassische Kunst* is a quite outstanding example of the possibilities of empirical work».

This sentence is cited by Podro, and it is then followed in Weber’s text by the elaboration of an essential methodological clarification: «The complete distinction between the evaluative sphere and the empirical sphere emerges characteristically in the fact that the application of a certain particularly “progressive” *technique* [“fortgeschrittenen” *Technik*] tells us nothing at all about the *aesthetic* value of a work of art. Works of art with an ever so “primitive” technique – for example, paintings made in ignorance of perspective – may aesthetically be absolutely equal to those created completely by means of a rational technique, assuming of course that the artist confined himself to tasks to which “primitive” technique was adequate. The creation of new techniques signifies primarily increasing differentiation and merely offers the *possibility* of increasing the “richness” of a work of art in the sense of an intensification of value [*Wertsteigerung*]. Actually it has often had the reverse effect of “impoverishing” the feeling for form [*Formgefühl*]. For the empirical-*causal* study of art, however, changes in

“technique” (in the highest sense of the word) are indeed the most important generally specifiable factors in the development of art (Weber 1949, p. 32; 1968a, p. 523; Podro 1982, p. 179; translation corrected according to the original).»

The problem-orientation at issue was methodological in two senses: it involved the interpretation of “technical progress” in the arts independent from *aesthetic* judgment of the value or worth of a work of art; and it raised the question of the importance of “technics” – the innovations in technique or the “technologies” of artistic production – as a material determinant of the work or the product of art. With respect to the former, Podro realizes, Weber’s comments (and his own) are directed toward the old problem of subjectivity in aesthetic judgment, already present in Kant’s and Hegel’s writings on aesthetics, and addressed by Wölfflin through his paired formal concepts for understanding the development of style in art: linear/painterly (*malerisch*), plane/recession, closed/open form, multiplicity/unity, and absolute/relative clarity. (2) Concerning that latter, Weber’s brief remarks point to the issues associated with Marx’s “so-called historical materialism” (using Weber’s phrase) and the concept of *Technik* as a particular instrumentality or procedure for producing material goods, including the “goods” of art.

For Podro as an art historian, building upon Weber’s observations, the point is to show that a merely causal account of development in art becomes insufficient in modern criticism, as is any claim to have found the “absolute” standpoint, such as the development of “technique,” from which to determine “progress.” From his point of view the challenge of clarifying the rational basis for critical judgment of the work of art, as encountered in Weber’s formulation, is still the task for modern art criticism. That task cannot be carried forward through simple observation and accumulation of raw empirical data; it is a matter for methodological clarification of the conditions for “objective” critical judgment.

But the problem of the sociological *explanation* of the work of art remains. The work of art exists, we might say, and our question then takes a Kantian form: *How is that possible?* Let us bear this question in mind, and as one possible approach to an answer keep in view the reference to the “most important generally specifiable factors in the development of art,” a topic to which I shall return.

A somewhat different route to the same set of issues is taken in my second example: the work of Frederic Schwartz on the problems of art and design in the Werkbund, the great fin-de-siècle experimental site, and one of many movements in thought and practice aimed at reconciling art, design and the hegemonic “commodification” of life advanced by modern capitalism. Schwartz retrieves the literature of social theory and its historical twin, political economy, to note that even in their own time Werkbund adherents could draw upon fruitful critical commentary in social theory. One apt instance is the introductory note Weber penned in 1904 for the inaugural issue of the new *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, a succinct statement that deserves more attention than it has received. For in these comments Weber

points out that under its previous editor, the socialist Heinrich Braun, the *Archiv* had been distinctively oriented toward addressing the question of the “cultural significance” of capitalism in its larger context. But under new editorial direction that context would be expanded even further. It would include “the fundamental process of transformation experienced by our economic life and thus by our cultural existence as a whole through the advance of capitalism.” “Today our journal,” Weber added, “will have to consider historical and theoretical knowledge of the *general significance of capitalist development* as the scientific problem whose understanding it serves.” Furthermore, the journal “must depart from a quite specific viewpoint, namely the economic conditioning of the manifestations of culture [Kulturerscheinungen]” (Weber 1904a, pp. i, ii, v; Schwartz 1996, p. 78; Scaff 1989, p. 84). These manifestations or phenomena of culture can include everything from the general and abstract to the particular and concrete, from the social movements of the time to the historical problems of capitalist development, as in Weber’s own “Protestant Ethic” essays. It is the continuities, innovations and practical effects on the “conduct of life” across such a wide range of apparently unconnected aspects of society that the new orientation reveals – an orientation alert to the problem of the “economic conditioning” of social life.

Schwartz’s thesis is that the Werkbund participants sought not only a way out of the crisis in art and the impasse of capitalist commodification, but also a new mode of thought and action for determining, in his words, “the very nature of the cultural field under conditions of modern capitalism” (1996, p. 17). To grasp those conditions required coming to terms with the “iron cage” of a “specialized humanity” and the “disenchanted” world that Weber analyzed. It is noteworthy that pointing to this relationship between the Werkbund program and Weber’s social theory, Schwartz recaptures (though he is unaware of the connection) an important way Weber was also read by his contemporaries, such as the first secretary of the Werkbund, Wolf Dohrn. (3) Thus, at the level of applied art, the design of familiar everyday objects, and the construction of the built environment, the Werkbund sought a practical “solution” to the rationalization process Weber had described – a response, that is, to a world of narrowly specialized humanity populated by those “specialists with spirit” and “hedonists without heart” described in the closing pages of *The Protestant Ethic*.

The rationalization and disenchantment theme is taken a step further, becoming a framing problematic in T. J. Clark’s far-ranging investigation of modernism in painting. Consider the key statement of the problem that he places at the beginning of his book, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*: «“Modernity” means contingency. It points to a social order which has turned from the worship of ancestors and past authorities to the pursuit of a projected future – of goods, pleasures, freedoms, forms of control over nature, or infinities of information. This process goes along with a great emptying and sanitizing of the imagination. Without ancestor-worship, meaning is in short supply – “meaning”

here meaning agreed-on and instituted forms of value and understanding, implicit order, stories and images in which a culture crystallizes its sense of the struggle with the realm of necessity and the realm of pain and death. The phrase Max Weber borrowed from Schiller, “the disenchantment of the world,” still seems to me to sum up this side of modernity best.... And of course it is no argument against Weber’s thesis to say the “we live in the middle of a religious revival,” that Marxism became a grisly secular messianism in the twentieth century, that everyday life is still permeated by the leftovers of magic, and so on. The disenchantment of the world is horrible, intolerable. Any mass movement or cult figure that promises a way out of it will be clung to like grim death» (1999, p. 7).

It may seem unusual for Clark to identify the problem of his investigation of modern painting with the well-known phrase from Weberian social theory – the *Entzauberung der Welt* – that is normally used to evoke the mechanization of life or the “iron cage” created by the capitalist economy and bureaucratic rationalism. (Parenthetically, the language seems to be Weber’s own, with the echoes of a Schiller poem introduced into these discussions by the imagination of Hans Gerth as a translator.) (4) But whatever its sources, the idea gives Clark his main theme – the disenchantment of modern life and its questionable reenchantment through art – and it allows him to formulate a conclusion about modernism. The function of modernism in art, he suggests, is to make the “endlessness” of the ending of art bearable, to show that “art will eternally hold us with its glittering eye,” as he puts it: «Not only will it forego its role in the disenchantment of the world, but it will accept the role that has constantly been foisted upon it by its false friends: it will become one of the forms, maybe *the* form, in which the world is re-enchanted. With a magic no more and no less powerful (here is my real fear) than that of the general conjuror of depth and desirability back into the world we presently inhabit – that is, the commodity form» (1999, p. 374).

To see modernism as a “way out” of the impasse created by the culture of capitalism is indeed to connect with one of the most potent themes in Weber’s cultural science. Moreover, Clark is surely correct both to grasp the critical theme of capitalism (that is, art as “commodity”) animating Weber’s purposes and to perceive the attempted flights into reenchantment as one of the most fascinating subjects, one that emerges repeatedly in Weber’s observations about the aesthetic culture and social movements of his own *fin de siècle*.

What emerges from these three discussions in art history and criticism is a sense of the usefulness of Weber’s thought for framing a series of timely questions – methodological and substantive, theoretical and practical – about three major issues: the cultural consequences of capitalism, the role of “material” factors in the creation of art, and the modern responses in art to our “disenchanted” world. In the last analysis these discussions are about aspects of modern experience, that is, about the problem of expression in an age of subjectivity, the tensions and contradictions associated with the march of capitalist civilization, the problem of

understanding the possibility of art in an artless and purely functional world, and the ways to escape from the “great emptying and sanitizing of the imagination” that so troubles Clark.

It may be that those critics who are most immersed in thinking about art are also most alert to the modern situation and to the possibilities that can be found in social theory for analysis, diagnosis, and guidance concerning the condition of aesthetics and artistic expression. These writers point in any case to aspects of Weber’s thought that are alive to the modern situation and open to useful reinterpretation.

3. *The Theme of Art*

The dialogue between Weber and the practitioners and observers of art is actually much older than the commentaries by Podro, Schwartz and Clark suggest. Starting with *Max Weber: Ein Lebensbild* (1926), Marianne Weber’s account of her husband’s early education emphasizes his omnivorous appetite for history, politics, the classics, and the popular novelists of his time. She offers a substantial menu of sources extending from Homer and Cicero to Mommsen, Treitschke and Sir Walter Scott. As she notes, “books were the most important thing in his rich boyhood” (1988, p. 45), recapitulating Max’s own declaration at age fifteen: “I don’t fall into raptures or write poetry, so what should I do except read” (22 June 1879, in Weber 1936, p. 25). Among this reading was also not only the usual fare of history and literature, but also an illustrated collection of works from the history of art – painting, sculpture, and architecture – that the young Max received for Christmas at age fourteen, the second such installment in his possession, as he wrote his cousin, Fritz Baumgarten (29 December 1878, in Weber 1936, p. 17). It is the first indication we have of Max Weber’s knowledge of art and his interest in the subject, a theme in the biography of his work that deserves more attention than it has received.

Marianne Weber was of course alert to the theme herself, introducing it in her biographical account with the amusing story of the Max Klinger nude etchings the newly weds used to decorate their Freiburg apartment and declare their *avant garde* allegiance, alarming her mother-in-law’s sense of decorum: “Was it really possible to sit down on the sofa under a little Eve meditating by a dusky forest pond? Or could one take an unembarrassed look at the nude figure of a male stretching toward the light from a dark ground, which the artist had called *Und dennoch* [And yet]” (1988, p. 203; Chalcraft 1999). She never loses sight of the theme of “art” in the context of Weber’s expanding interest in *Kulturwissenschaft* and the various spheres of “culture,” from religion to music and literature. But she does not develop the cultural theme in relation to art in depth or detail.

Today we know considerably more than we used to know about Weber’s engagement with the art and artistic movements of his time, thanks in part to the

work of the *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* and its continuing publication of his correspondence, and in part to improved access to archive sources. We have known for some time that Weber followed the cultural movements of the time with intense interest, especially starting around 1902/03 after his partial recovery from illness. But we have not fully appreciated the extent and quality of his aesthetic education, especially during his prolonged residence and wanderings in Italy. For instance, his correspondence from Florence in April and May 1908 offers a remarkable window into his immersion in the painting and architecture of the Italian renaissance, a three-week sojourn with Helene Weber that repeated his earlier extended stay in the city with Marianne in the spring of 1902 (Weber 1990, pp. 532-63). These years were Weber's version of the Goethean "Italian journey," and the periods of reading and observation would have been an occasion for his continuing encounter with the works of Burckhardt and Wölfflin. (5)

For this aesthetic education Weber's other important source and guide was his colleague, Carl Neumann, the art historian. Already years earlier Neumann had sent him an essay on Burckhardt, eliciting Weber's revealing comment: "For me right now the necessary bridge to your area of studies is still missing – not objectively, but in terms of the 'spirit of my discipline' – since my specialization condemns me to bury myself first in the *conditions* of antiquity, and only in this difficult, substantive roundabout way to reach the *human beings* of antiquity" (14 March 1898; Max Weber Papers, 30/4). (6) The sense of frustration and envy is unmistakable in this kind of comment, one that is typical of the mature Weber. The remark points toward the route to understanding that he in fact began to follow in an effort to grasp not merely the external "orders" of life, but also the inner personality, the total conduct of life or *Lebensführung*, the individual's *habitus* and its conditioning by those social orders and powers – a direction that also led to a deeper understanding of the aesthetic realm.

Glimpses into Weber's developing interest appear in other ways as well. His trip to Holland in the summer of 1903, for example, is consumed by a fascination with Rembrandt, the artist and the man. The accompanying text for this intensive tour of museums, galleries and even Rembrandt's home, is again Carl Neumann, whose book on the great painter had just appeared in its first edition. Weber found the work "a fabulous achievement, with a poetic richness [Farbenpoesie] that only he could surpass himself" (15 June 1903; Max Weber Papers, 30/1; Neumann 1902). Importantly, the episode finds its way into the pages of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, where the effect of the Puritan ideals and asceticism on Rembrandt's art is the theme, supported by Neumann's study of the subject which had approached the works of art through the cultural and religious problems of Dutch life: «Anyone contemplating Rembrandt's marvelous *Saul and David* (in the Hague) can directly experience the powerful effect of that Puritan ideal [the rejection of idolatry]. The perceptive analysis of Dutch cultural influences in Carl Neumann's *Rembrandt* probably tells us as much as one *can* know today on the

question of how far *positive* effects that can be fruitful for art are attributable to ascetic Protestantism» (Weber 2002a, p.192; also pp.114-5, 271).

Among the more fruitful consequences were what Weber referred to as the “spiritualization” of the personality and a sense for the “timelessly great” in art. The experience was interpreted, sociologically, as a lesson in the relative autonomy of cultural ideas in the production of the work of art and the shaping of the personality, the *habitus* of the individual.

But this episode stood only at the beginning of more than a decade of engagement with cultural topics, brought into sharper focus in Weber’s proposals for a sociology of the press, voluntary associations and the professions, and by his comments on art at the first meeting of the German Sociological Society in 1910. It was then amplified through his work as editor for the massive revision of the *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik*. Wrestling with the scope and subject matter of the *Grundriss* project, for instance, he came to realize that the cultural science topics and themes that he wanted to cover in the contributions included much more than could be accommodated in the space and time allotted to the volumes. Thus, at the end of 1913 we find him suggesting to Paul Siebeck, his publisher, following an outline of the text he had written to date: «*Later* I hope to provide you with a sociology of the *contents* of culture (art, literature, *Weltanschauung*), outside of *this* work or as an independent supplementary volume» (30 December 1913; Weber 2000). (7)

This hope remained unfulfilled, and stated in such a brief and general way it can barely hint at what a Weberian cultural sociology and sociology of art might have looked like. Coming on the heels of his efforts in the German Sociological Society, we might assume he intended to pursue the directions announced in that context: an investigation of the external social conditions that produce certain cultural forms, combined with the “inner workings” of such forms on the “personality,” as he put it (Weber 2002b, p. 202). But did Weber have in mind an application of his sociological perspective to different spheres of cultural expression, from painting and lyric poetry to sports and the media? Could his planned study of Tolstoy, never begun, have been part of this effort? Or was he interested in following through on his earlier ideas from 1904 about a “cultural science?” By mentioning *Weltanschauungen* as part of the subject-matter, did he mean to suggest an investigation of practical life-orientations (*Lebensführung*), or a critique of ideologies? Or were all these avenues and varied combinations present in Weber’s thinking?

Whatever the case, the intention suggests intriguing possibilities. Had he completed this work, we might have a fully developed cultural sociology equivalent to his writings in comparative-historical, political or economic sociology. Instead we have only scattered hints, including toward the end of his writings the kind mentioned in the 1915 “Intermediate Reflection” and the 1920 “Introduction” to the *Collected Essays on the Sociology of Religion*. Those hints, however, suggest two main lines of reasoning for a Weberian cultural sociology: one dealing with cultural

forces and expressions as an “autonomous” agent of social change and a guarantor of social organization, and the other concerned with the social determinants of cultural forms and processes. It is noteworthy, furthermore, that each contrasting perspective brings out the relationship between the external general social order and the internal particular meaning of that order for the individual.

4. *The Problem of Cultural Autonomy*

Considering Weber’s published work as a whole, the argument for the relative autonomy of cultural factors is usually drawn from his “‘spiritualist’ construction of the modern economy,” as he once called it, formulated in the pages of *The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism*. (8) As I have suggested above, Weber saw the essay as a contribution to cultural history, an effort to trace the “ideal interests” expressed in ascetic religion that stood at the beginning of a series of sweeping changes in the material social and economic world. The historical relationship between ascetic Protestantism and the capitalist “spirit” could best be seen in Weber’s vocabulary as an “elective affinity” between a particular religious *ethos* and the preconditions for a certain kind of market-centered economic order. His thesis linking the moral order with the material world thus proposed “causality” in the weakest of senses, though with the proviso that religious or moral consciousness could hypothetically play an independent role in mediating historical development.

But Weber’s essay on ascetic rationalism was, to be sure, concerned with only one side of the “causal chain,” as he warned in the final sentences that are too often overlooked: «It cannot, of course, be our purpose to replace a one-sided “materialist” causal interpretation of culture and history with an equally one-sided spiritual one. Both are equally possible, but neither will serve historical truth if they claim to be the conclusion of the investigation rather than merely the preliminary work for it (Weber 1920, pp. 205-6; 1930, p. 183; 2002a, p. 122)».

(9)

The priority or alleged “autonomy” of cultural factors, in other words, is to be treated as an hypothesis that should be put to an empirical test in any particular historical situation, not one that had to be defended dogmatically as a proven theoretical generalization. We might call this Weberian methodological position the *postulate of reciprocal causality* to distinguish it from the unqualified assertion of “culture” as either “cause” or “effect” in relation to the noncultural material forces, economic characteristics or technological factors operative in social life.

In view of this clear postulate, it is instructive that Weber’s later synthetic treatment of the sociology of religion in *Economy and Society* opens with a discussion of primitive religion and its developmental history. Though the context has changed, the theme is a reminder of Weber’s appropriation of Carl Neumann’s work on

Rembrandt: in both cases the theme has to do with the socio-religious foundations of artistic expression. With respect to primitive religion, the anthropological evidence for relatively undifferentiated human communities with a simplified division of labor points toward a development from religious “naturalism,” such as a belief in the efficacy of spirits and magical powers, to the emergence of symbolic representations of religiosity. Magic, as Weber points out, “is transformed from a direct manipulation of forces into a *symbolic activity*” that sets off a widespread “proliferation of symbolic acts” (1968b, pp. 403, 404). The development has far-reaching consequences for culture – for art, music, dance, even medical treatments and therapies: «The religious stereotyping of the products of pictorial art, the oldest form of stylization, was directly determined [bedingt] by magical conceptions and indirectly determined by the fact that these artifacts came to be produced professionally for their magical significance; professional production tended automatically to favor the creation of art objects based upon design rather than upon representational reproduction of the natural object. The full extent of the influence exerted by the religious factor in art is exemplified in Egypt, where the devaluation of the traditional religion by the monotheistic campaign of Amenhotep IV (Ihknaton) immediately stimulated naturalism. Other examples of the religious stylization of art may be found in the magical uses of alphabetical symbols; the development of mimicry and dance as homeopathic, apotropaic, exorcistic, or magically coercive symbolism; and the stereotyping of admissible musical scales, or at least admissible musical keynotes (*râga* in India), in contrast to the chromatic scale. Another manifestation of such religious influence is found in the widespread substitutions of therapy based upon exorcism or upon symbolic homeopathy for the earlier empirical methods of medical treatment, which frequently were considerably developed but seemed only a cure of the symptoms, from the point of view of symbolism and the animistic doctrine of possession by spirits» (1968b, pp. 405-6). With respect to artistic representations, stylization means not only that art emerges as a symbolic activity, but that its practice can be defined, preserved and transmitted by specialized training and the cultivation of expert knowledge. In the religious sources of art and style we thus also find the beginnings of specialization and a sociology of the professions.

Such patterns of conditioning through religion are only the starting point of an extended development, of course, for the close relationship between religion and art also exists alongside sharp tensions and contradictions between the two. These tensions are a feature of social and religious life that play a conspicuous role in *The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism*, emerging for example in inner-worldly asceticism’s stance vis-à-vis sport, dress, speech, entertainment, or sexuality. They return in the later essays on the sociology of religion and in passages in *Economy and Society*. Thus, we can say on the one hand that religion has inspired varied forms of artistic expression and style, amply evident in the construction of temples, basilica and churches; in the production of totems,

kachinas, icons, altars, paintings and craft objects of all kinds; and in the composition of chants, chorales, instrumental music and so forth, in seemingly endless variety. In this positive sense, then, religion is “conducive to community formation and conducive to the compatibility of art with the religious will to salvation” (Weber 1968b, p. 608). Appropriate illustrations of the connection are not difficult to find in the history of art. Consider, for example, Michelangelo’s famous David in Florence, or Duccio’s Maestà, the magnificent multiple-paneled Marian altar commissioned by the Siena commune, both enduring works of art with Biblical references that performed a specific social function, embodying not only aesthetic ideals, but also serving simultaneously as self-conscious expressions and symbols of civic identity.

On the other hand, however, as is well-known, at one time or another religion has also assaulted and devalued art in all its forms, visual and audible. In Weber’s work this line of argument is stated most forcefully in the “Intermediate Reflection” that ends the first volume of the *Sociology of Religion* – or as it is identified in the Gerth and Mills’ translation, “Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions.” The reason for the opposition has to do with the irreconcilable conflict between religion as an authentic means of salvation and art as its direct competitor, a conflict that becomes especially evident in a modern era that unleashes the forces of rationalization, disenchantment and “intellectualism” that occupy Clark’s attention in his “history of modernism” in painting. In these circumstances, unlike those characteristic of the medieval and early modern commune, citing Weber’s words, «Art takes over the function of a this-worldly salvation, no matter how this may be interpreted. It provides a *salvation* from the routines of everyday life, and especially from the increasing pressures of theoretical and practical rationalism....Art becomes an ‘idolatry,’ a competing power, and a deceptive bedazzlement; and the images and the allegory of religious subjects appear as blasphemy» (Weber 1920, pp. 555-56; 1946, pp. 342-43).

For the secular cultural movements of the modern era it is not so much the charges of irreverence and profanity that determine their course, though such accusations are heard often enough, but rather the bedazzling inspiration of the aesthetic itself, the search for compensation through art for loss of organic connections which then promises a way out of the cul-de-sac of disenchantment. For Clark, as we have seen, such an end-point is an alluring and dangerous deception: a return of the magical in the commodified form adapted to capitalist culture.

In Weber’s own commentary the conflict and the search for a route of escape can be heightened especially with music because it is the most “inward” of the art forms, and thus it can threaten to become “an irresponsible *Ersatz* for primary religious experience.” This is the substitute path pursued by Richard Wagner and numerous Wagnerians in Weber’s own time, and as a generalized devotion to aestheticism subjected to withering attack by Tolstoy in his manifesto, *What is Art?* In the case of the Wagnerians and other similar phenomena, the aesthetic sphere of

value and order of life has become the province of a particular kind of social movement, one that negates through substitution the established and religiously-sanctioned ethical order. In their purest expressions there is no room for mediation between the two. They are alternative and opposed cultural forms.

Taking stock of these points of view, we should note that the shifting verbs of relationship or “causal” connection – to determine, to influence, to condition – suggest the difficulty and ambiguity in formulating a precise relation between the “ideal” and the “material,” so to speak. Moreover, the varied and manifold character of Weber’s accounts illustrates the ambivalence of claims about “cultural autonomy.” What does the claim actually mean?

The Weberian response appears to be two-fold: according to the postulate of reciprocal causality, “autonomy” must entail the notion that aspects of culture can be distinguished and set apart as agents of social change, as factors in the formation of collective identity or the shaping of personality and the *habitus* of the individual. But the complex sphere of “culture” must itself be disaggregated, its components identified in relation to each other, distinguished in terms of their reciprocal relationships. Otherwise the concept of “culture” becomes either an all-encompassing and overdetermined abstraction, or an empty and meaningless label, with the consequence that the notion of “autonomy” becomes merely the vaguest of assertions. Of these two responses, the latter appears more interesting and challenging. Let us consider its implications as we turn to the other line of thinking in Weber’s work, beginning with “technique” as a factor in the development of art.

5. *The Social Construction of Art*

I have noted previously that Weber and contemporary critics, such as Michael Podro, have been aware of the problem of changes in “technique” and the effect of such changes on the development of art. To grasp the logic of Weber’s perspective, referenced by Podro, requires considering its earliest statement, namely, the one occasion in which some of his ideas on the topic were expressed at length, though in a somewhat jumbled, off-the-cuff format, as he later admitted: the 1910 meeting of the German Sociological Society, where the problem of technics and civilization was the subject of debate. In his initial report to his colleagues at this meeting, Weber made it clear in outlining the possibilities for studying social phenomena, such as the press or the voluntary association, that he was most interested in the way which such phenomena contributed to the formation and specific peculiarities of the modern person (see Weber 1911a, 1976, 1998, 2002b). Then responding to a presentation by Werner Sombart on “*Technik* and Culture,” he plotted a line of inquiry into various cultural forms – painting, poetry, literature, music, architecture, science itself – from the standpoint of their *social* determinants.

Provoked by the cultural and political crisis of the time, the initial question

dominating these discussions appeared to be quite straightforward: could there be a distinctive, unique “socialist” art and set of aesthetic values? Viewing the socialist movements as a *cultural* movement, as he preferred to do, Weber framed the problem in a way that seemed most interesting, urging that socialism « offered the emotional hope of generating from within itself completely new values in *all* spheres [of culture] to set against those of the bourgeois world. I ask, then, have *any sort* of formal values [Formwerte] emerged from this movement in the artistic or literary sphere?»

The notion of “formal values” alluded to the possibilities for a qualitatively different kind of art or kind of artistic criteria and aesthetic sensibility. At this level of questioning Weber thought the evidence yielded only negative results: class position, class membership or class consciousness as such could not produce new aesthetic *forms* or *formal* values.

However, this negative conclusion still begged the central question for a cultural sociology in search of social determinants and explanations. Weber took up that challenge in a lengthy comment, whose translation and wider dissemination is long overdue: «But if we ask» he proposed, «whether that which in the usual meaning of the word one calls modern *Technik* stands nevertheless in a relationship with formal-aesthetic values, then in my opinion one should without a doubt answer *affirmatively*, in so far as definite formal values in our modern artistic culture could only be created through the existence of the *modern metropolis*. This means the modern metropolis with its streetcars, subways, electrical and other street lighting, window displays, concert halls, restaurants, cafés, smoke stacks, monumental stone buildings, and all the wild dance of impressions in sound and color – this metropolis works its effects on the sexual fantasies and the first-hand experience of variations in the soul’s constitution in the mass of humanity starved and searching for the apparently inexhaustible possibilities for the conduct of one’s life and one’s happiness. Art appears partly as a protest, as a specific means of escape from this [mechanized] reality – that is, escape through the highest aesthetic abstractions or the deepest dream-states or more intense forms of excitation – and partly as a means of adaptation, an apology for its own fantastic and intoxicating rhythmic. Gentlemen, I believe that lyric poetry like Stefan George’s – that is, poetry characterized by such intense consciousness of the last impregnable fortress of purely artistic form, yet aware of the frenzy produced by the *technique* of our lives – could not be written at all without the poet allowing the experience of the modern metropolis to flow through himself, even though these impressions devour him, shatter and parcel out his soul, and even though he may condemn them to the abyss. Certainly a lyric poetry could not be written like that of [Emile] Verhaeren, who embraces the experience of the modern metropolis emphatically and looks for its immanent and adequate forms and unities. I believe as well that certain definite formal values of modern painting could not be seen at all, that their achievement would not have been possible ... without the remarkable impressions offered to the

human eye, as never before in history, that the modern metropolis produces during the day, but especially in an overpowering way at night. And because the *visible* (and that is the only matter at issue here) has significance for the peculiar character of every modern metropolis in its finest detail *primarily* not because of property relations and social constellations, but because of modern Technik – that is a point in which Technik purely as such has very far-reaching meaning for artistic culture» (1911b, pp. 98-99; 1924, pp. 453-54).

The concept of “Technik,” derived from *tekne* (literally, art or craft), is notoriously ambiguous, as the confusing and multi-layered terminology in English demonstrates: technics, technique, technical, technology. Weber actually defines the concept as a particular method or procedure (“Verfahrensweise” is his term), generally used for producing material things or “goods” (1911b, p. 96; 1924, p. 450). These efforts at clarification emerge directly out of an engagement with Marx’s well-known encomium for technological determinism in *The Poverty of Philosophy*: «the handmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist». Though Marx surely disavowed any literal interpretation of his enigmatic declaration, the sentence has stood the test of time and served nevertheless as a convenient target, then and now, providing Weber with an opportunity to inveigh against the notion that there is any kind of “ultimate” or “final” cause that will account for social and historical development.

Notwithstanding such a qualification, in Weber’s commentary the technical basis for modern life in the visually-oriented world of the metropolis is interpreted as having overshadowed the old relations of production, at least with respect to understanding modern art-forms, their “spirit” and content, and the artists who create them. The point of view about the technical conditioning of culture is paradoxical: art can be seen as both a reflection of the urban environment, its rhythms and pace, as well as an effort to criticize, overcome and escape from its impersonal domination of the self. The same is true of the modern artist: a mirror of the times, yet a rebellious figure; a defender of *l’art pour l’art*, but a proponent of art in the service of personal redemption and social revolt. “Ecstatic” symbolist poetry exhibits the pattern, as does the painting of the *Fauves* and Weber’s contemporary German expressionists in *Die Brücke* and *Der blaue Reiter*. For a cultural sociology these artistic circles demonstrate the possibility of successfully creating, for a time, a separate protected zone of authenticity, but typically only by adopting the most basic of all Weberian forms of sociation: the sect-like association. Surely the Circle around Stefan George, with its special rituals, codes, gestures and sacred icons represents the most perfect example of such an outcome.

Technics, however, must be viewed from a double perspective. The first perspective involves the external relations between the “spirit” of an art-form and its contents on the one side, and the technologies of everyday life and civilization on the other. It is a matter of the dependence of the development of art on extra-artistic conditions. But the alternative second aspect of “Technik” has to do with

the internal relations *within a form of artist expression itself* as it struggles to solve “technical” problems particular to the art-form. It is concerned with the dependence of artistic development on its own internal technical means of expression and production of the work of art.

Weber also initially introduced this second problem in his 1910 remarks to the German Sociological Society on the history of music and architecture. Beginning with music, he suggested «Probably in no other sphere of culture have changes in style been motivated by such *purely* technical factors. I know of no other case where this can be said, at least according to our current state of knowledge. But technics [Technik] has its own immanent law-like character [immanente Gesetzmäßigkeit], even when it serves artistic purposes. In the history of architecture the transition to the gothic style was not a “discovery” of the pointed arch, which was already known, but a “solution” to a quite specific structural problem of the vaulted dome.... in this case a purely *technical* factor in building became decisive for the creative process» (1911b, p. 99; 1924, p. 454).

The notion of an internally consistent “lawfulness” found in technics is of course another way for articulating the hypothesis of the relative autonomy of technology or the technical. The hypothesis actually becomes the theme that Weber explores in his well-known 1920 introductory remarks added to the *Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion*, where it took the form of a commentary on “the specific and peculiar rationalism of Western culture” (Weber 1930, p. 26; 2002a, p. 365).

With respect to music, Weber proposed tracing the inner logic of tonal relationships and the paths of rationalization inherent in the tonal material. For the western musical aesthetic harmonic rationalization begins with the solution to the two fundamental problems of musical composition: symmetrical division of the octave, and the closed circle of fifths. Both solutions come about through the imposition in a system of notation or tempered intonation, thereby eliminating the acoustically correct, but “irrational” properties of the Pythagorean scale. The result for the trained ear, among other things, is creation of a point of “rest” in the tonic, and hence the introduction of a musical language of “tension” and “resolution,” with the contrasting interest provided by factors like major and minor keys, modulation, and chromatics. Instrumentation and the evolution and social significance of particular instruments, especially the organ and piano, contribute to the process. Possibilities for invention begin to emerge: the rationalism of harmonic composition is set against the “irrationality” of the melodic line. This dissolution of key (chromaticism) can release latent possibilities of expression, as in *Tristan and Isolde*. The scale can be redefined with whole tones and open fifths, as with Debussy’s “impressionism.” Tonality itself can be dissolved in “free atonality” and dissonance, as explored by Webern, Schönberg and Paul von Klenau in Weber’s own time. Instrumentation can be questioned: Stockhausen’s electronic adaptations can challenge the principles of harmonic composition. Or the quest for “absolute music” can end in John Cage’s homage to silence. Thus, like the other

arts, music's development can be understood from the perspective of the rationalization of technique that pervades western culture as a whole.

As with music, so also with architecture. In the 1920 introduction, among numerous examples one set of comparisons stands out in particular: «There have been Gothic arches as decorative features elsewhere, in the ancient world and in Asia; apparently even Gothic cross-vaulting was not unknown in the East. But what is lacking elsewhere is the rational use of the Gothic vault as a means of distribution of thrust, as a means of roofing differently shaped spaces, and, especially, as a construction principle of great monumental buildings. It also serves as the basis of a *style* embracing sculpture and painting, like that created in the Middle Ages. Also, although the technical foundations were derived from the East, only the West has solved the problem of the dome, and achieved the kind of “classical” rationalization of the whole of art that the Renaissance created here. In painting this was attained through the rational use of linear and aerial perspective» (1930, p. 15; 2002a, p. 356).

The remark could be read as a summation of Weber's encounter with the culture of the Renaissance in Italy, conceived in this instance from the standpoint of the effort to solve a problem of technical rationalism in the construction of space, and the implications of that solution for “style” in architecture as well as in painting and sculpture. One of its most important effects, as he noted elsewhere, was to use technical rationalism “as a means for fulfilling artistic tasks which had until then been scarcely suspected” and to convey a new sense of the “feeling for the human body” (1968a, pp. 520-1; 1949, p. 30). The vague notion of an “artistic impulse” or *Kunstwollen* postulated by Alois Riegl, so familiar to historians of art, was thus deftly chained to the task of solving essentially technical problems, which then contributed to the formation of new styles.

Consider a final example drawn from Italian Renaissance painting, where a perfect illustration of the role performed by “technique” can be found in the quattrocento work of Piero della Francesca. Though not mentioned by Weber, Piero's efforts as a mathematician in his theoretical treatise, *De prospectiva pingendi*, to solve the geometrical problems of *commensuratio* or perspective contributed directly to his accomplishments as an innovative artist. The solution he proposed to the technical problem of proportionality was constitutive of the art-form, as is especially evident in the well-documented *The Flagellation of Christ* (sometimes also referred to as *The Dream of St. Jerome*). In this small scene for an altarpiece, the scientific proof of perspective becomes the basis for Piero's unusual asymmetrical format and perspectival structure, a radical departure from traditional representations of the familiar biblical scene (see Elkins 1987). The split scene in the *Flagellation*, a foreground of three figures conversing in the piazza on the right, the flagellation proper of three figures and two observers retreating within the praetorium on the left, permits a complex treatment of light, which geometric reconstruction (aided today by computerized models) shows coming from opposite directions. One

authority concludes that “Piero has employed an entirely rational construction to create an effect that appears irrational.” But of course there is a “rational” point to the method: “By doing so, he marks the Praetorium [where the flagellation occurs] as a divine sanctuary and the biblical event taking place within it as a miraculous apparition” (Lavin 1992, pp. 21-22). Piero’s carefully calculated asymmetries have also opened the doors through the centuries to widely divergent levels of interpretation of the painting’s subject and meaning, from the view that it is really an allegory of Christian persecution to the proposition that it is a premonition of the nightmare of invasion from the East! For Piero’s scientific mind, of course, the *Flagellation* represented a small-scale study from the draftsman’s table demonstrating how to apply in art his own scientific proof of perspective. It is another instance, borrowing Weber’s comment on Leonardo, of “raising art to the level of ‘science’” (1951, p. 151).

6. Conclusion

I began this essay with a reference to the allegation of a “mysterious” gap in Max Weber’s thinking about cultural sociology. I would like to end it with the suggestion that enough has been said to bridge that gap and disperse the fog of mystery with the clarifying breeze of understanding. Of course, as my discussion and the observations of the historians of art and design have shown, Weber’s own fragmentary reflections on cultural sociology and art occur within a larger field of concepts, ideal types, hypotheses, methodological prescriptions, and historical problematics. But it is not necessary to master the complexity in all these topics for informed and insightful investigation to proceed. The advantage of the Weberian approach is not that it is theoretically driven or methodologically constrained, but rather that it is open to the formulation of *problems* which address the possibility – social, economic, technical, intellectual, spiritual, religious – of the production, consumption and subjective meaning of the work of art.

We could say, then, that a concentrated dose of “theorizing” the work of art can go a long way, and that “method” has its limits. In this respect the growth of our knowledge is not so much a matter of staking a methodological claim to “strong” or “weak” programs in cultural sociology, but of identifying engaging substantive problematics. Only when we investigate the problems posed by art, as illustrated briefly in these pages, will we have begun to trace the contours of a Weberian cultural sociology and give it significant intellectual content.

Notes

(1) For work that agrees with my assertion see Peukert 1989, Schroeder 1992, Gephart 1999, Kim 2002.

(2) Weber would have been familiar with Wölfflin's ideas not only from *Classic Art* (1st ed. 1898) and *Principles of Art History* (1st ed., 1915), but also from Wölfflin's synoptic statement, "Ueber den Begriff des Malerischen [On the Concept of the Painterly]" (1913), published as the lead article in the same number of *Logos* as Weber's own essay, "On Some Categories Interpretive Sociology" (1913b).

(3) The evidence in the case of Dohrn comes from a letter of Marianne Weber's to Max Weber, 28 April 1908 (Max Weber Papers, Berlin, 30/1), reporting on a day spent with Dohrn and Karl Schmidt, owner of the Dresdner Werkstätten, conversing about "democracy" and the new garden city development at Hellerau, where Dohrn became director. Dohrn, she reported, "reads your methodological writings with ardor." Dohrn was also a follower of Friedrich Naumann, then a member of the Reichstag and the Webers' close personal friend, who wrote numerous articles on the new directions in art and design.

(4) The suggestion that Weber "liked to quote" Schiller's phrase is made by Hans Gerth in the "Introduction" to Weber 1946, p. 51. But Schiller never used the *Entzauberung der Welt* phrase, instead commenting on the *Entgötterung der Natur* in one of his famous poems, "The Gods of Greece," which begins with the line, "Beautiful world, where have you gone? Return again... [Schöne Welt, wo bist du? – Kehre wieder...]" This "dis-godding" or depriving of deities and divine nature is at the center of Schiller's lament for the passing of an age in which divinity dwelled in the world, inhabiting souls and objects in polytheistic delight. Schiller also viewed our post-classical world as so deeply and fundamentally secularized and rationalized as to make a return to these origins impossible. Nevertheless, the poem announces that humanity would not be able to resist the longing for a return to mythic and archaic origins, for a condition of de-differentiation, for a life in the imaginary "other world" of divine or "pure" presence and transcendent meaning. A possible moment of reconciliation between our rationalized world and our deepest longings is expressed in the last lines: "All that is to live in endless song/ Must in lifetime first be drowned [Was unsterblich im Gesang soll leben/ Muss im Leben untergehen]" (revised second version). Notwithstanding the linguistic differences, it can be said that in a general sense Weber's commentary is congruent with Schiller's message. As an example of the association, when Marianne Weber first introduced the idea of disenchantment in the biography of her husband, she chose the following words: "...religious feelings and experiences are treated intellectually, the process of *rationalization* dissolves the magical notions and increasingly 'disenchants' the world and renders it godless ['entzaubert' und entgöttert zunehmend die Welt]" (1988, p. 333; 1926, p. 348), a revealing juxtaposition of Weberian and Schillerian language.

(5) In 1908 Weber mentions using the two volume Florence guide by Paul Schubring (1903, 1908).

(6) Probably the essay, “Das Werk und der Künstler,” first published in 1898 in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, and reprinted in Neumann 1927, ch. 7. The original letter reads, “Da mein Fach mich verdammt, mich zunächst in die *Zustände* des Altertums zu vergraben und nur über diesen zäh-materiellen Umweg an den *Menschen* des Altertums gelangen zu können, so fehlt für mich vorerst noch die – nicht objektiv, aber nach dem “Geist meines Ressorts” – notwendige Brücke zu dem Gebiet Ihrer Studien.”

(7) Because of ambiguities in the terminology, Weber’s original bears quoting: “*Später* hoffe ich Ihnen einmal eine Soziologie der *Cultur-Inhalte* (Kunst, Litteratur, Weltanschauung) zu liefern, außerhalb *dieses* Werkes oder als selbständigen Ergänzungsband.”

(8) The phrase appears in Weber’s letter to Heinrich Rickert, 2 April 1905, in which he announces the completion of the second part of *The Protestant Ethic*: “Im Juni/Juli erhalten Sie einen Sie vielleicht interessierenden culturgeschichtlichen Aufsatz (Askese des Protestantismus als Grundlage der modernen *Berufscultur*, eine Art ‘spiritualistischer’ Konstruktion der modernen Wirtschaft” (Max Weber Papers , 25).

(9) I quote the Baehr and Wells translation, based on the original 1904/1905 essays. Parsons’ published translation, based on the revised 1920 text, reads: “But it is, of course, not my aim to substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and history. Each is equally possible, but each, if it does not serve as the preparation, but as the conclusion of an investigation, accomplishes equally little in the interest of historical truth” (1930, p. 183). The publisher deleted the italics and inverted commas from Parsons’ actual original version, thus diminishing the force of the passage, a regrettable editorial “correction” that obscured Weber’s meaning, as I have shown in detail elsewhere (Scaff 2006 [forthcoming]).

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