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Rationality, Meaning and Modernity  
in the Work of Max Weber

Penny Pasdermajian

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Sociology

and

Anthropology

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts at  
Concordia University  
Montréal, Québec, Canada

May 1985

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ISBN 0-315-30681-5

## ABSTRACT

### Rationality, Meaning and Modernity in the Work of Max Weber

Penny Pasdermajian

The specific aim of this essay is to attempt to define Max Weber's problematic view of rationality and the decline of meaning in modernity.

The concept of rationality and the rationalization process are central to Weber's writings and to his critique of modernity. Although most writers concede this centrality when discussing Weber's work, they nevertheless limit their discussions to only one side of the process, for example that of increasing bureaucratization, or the disenchantment of the world. However, Weber repeatedly emphasizes the complex and multi-valent nature of this concept, as well as its perspectival character.

In order to gain greater understanding of the complexities of the concept of rationality, an attempt

is made to demonstrate first, what Weber means by rationality and how it is manifested in the spheres of economics, law, bureaucratic administration and religion. Second, it is necessary to consider what elements lend definitional unity to their various manifestations. An effort is made to explore the manner in which increasing rationalization gives rise to the problem of meaning in modernity, and finally, to demonstrate that Weber's ambivalent view of modernity is related to his theory of values and his will-centered conception of man.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Gerry Dewey, Dr. Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, and Dr. John Drysdale. They encouraged my interest in sociological theory in general, and inspired me to write about Max Weber in particular. But beyond that, their trust and confidence in me gave me confidence in myself. I will never forget their many kindnesses to me.

I would also like to thank my parents, Pauline and Yervant Pasdermajian, whose love and support has meant everything to me, not only during my years of graduate study, but throughout my whole life.

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## Introduction

### a) Intentions and Procedure Followed

The following exposition is divided into five chapters. Chapter one investigates Weber's view of social reality and the centrality of social action to Weber's theory.

Chapter two explores the elements which contribute definitional unity to the various types of rationality. In order to identify the common elements contained in the concept of rationality and the rationalization process, I will discuss rationality in the various spheres of activity and relate this to Weber's view of society as made up of discrepant realms or spheres.

My main interest here will be to delineate the specific rationality which is unique to each sphere of activity, and to stress the spheres which I consider to be most important for Weber's theory- economics, law, bureaucratic administration and religion.

Chapter three discusses the conflict of values within and between the spheres, particularly between the ethic of brotherliness and the values inherent in formal rationality.

Chapter four deals with the problem of meaning in modernity. The decline of religion and the rise of the scientific-secular outlook has forced man to create his own meaning in a disenchanted world. The search for meaning in modernity is related to Weber's theory of values and his will-centered conception of man.

Finally, in chapter five I will discuss Weber's ambivalent view of modernity, which I relate to his 'axiological dualism'.

## Introduction

### b) Discussion of the Secondary Literature

The fundamental importance of the concept of rationality and its many manifestations in rationalization processes is recognized by most Weber interpreters.

Hans Gerth comments that, "The principle of rationalization is the most general element in Weber's philosophy of history".<sup>1</sup> Guenther Roth acknowledges that, "tracing the historical lines of rationalization was certainly one of Weber's intentions".<sup>2</sup> According to Karl Loewith, Weber summed up the problematic expression of the modern world in the concept of rationality.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of the recognition of the importance of this concept, only a few writers have successfully clarified Weber's understanding of rationality and emphasized its multivalent nature within the different life-spheres. For example, in The Iron Cage Mitzman

4  
writes that, "A history of rationalization in political, religious, economic, and legal institutions of man is hidden in Economy and Society"<sup>4</sup> However; Mitzman fails to elaborate on this. Instead he discusses Weber's sociology of religion and politics in relation to rationalization and charisma.

According to this view, bureaucratic centralization, in response to population pressure, triumphs over aristocratic charisma in the political realm. In the religious realm, "mystical charisma is juxtaposed to ascetic rationalization."<sup>5</sup> Mitzman argues that Weber viewed such increasing rationalization as necessary, but at the same time saw it as a "prelude to human catastrophe".<sup>6</sup>

A similar view can be found in what Talcott Parsons terms "the law of increasing rationality", which he sees as "the most fundamental generalization that emerges from Weber's work."<sup>7</sup> Parsons argues that rationality occupies a logical position with respect to action systems, analogous to 'entropy' in physical systems. In this interpretation Parsons points to a parallel between Weber's process of rationalization and the second law of thermodynamics, in which the

original source of energy is dissipated over time.

The assumption here is that in Weber's terms, charismatic energy is consumed in the process of rationalization, leaving behind a 'dead mechanism' analogous to the 'running down' of the physical universe.<sup>8</sup>

While Weber did imply that the creative force of charisma was bound to run out in the long run under the pressure of routinization and rationalization, he does not view this as a unilinear evolutionary process, as Parsons appears to believe.

Examples of more relevant approaches to Weber's position on the nature of rationality and modernity can be found in the interpretations of recent writers.<sup>9</sup>

According to Friedrich Tenbruck's reading of Weber, religion is the determining factor in the rationalization of the economic, political and administrative spheres. Tenbruck argues that religion advances under the force of a problematic all its own. Man's need to develop and maintain a rational answer to the problem of theodicy is at the root of this problematic, and is the dynamic element of religious rationalization.<sup>10</sup> Each new solution to the problem transcends the previous answer in the degree to which

it justifies God's ways to man and explains man's suffering on earth.

According to Tenbruck, rationalization occurs in two stages. The first is religious 'disenchantment' which terminates in the Protestant ethic, where it provides the 'spirit' for capitalism. This heralds the beginning of the second stage of rationality, which is carried forward by the spheres of science, economics, and politics. Thus the rationalization process corresponds to the overall sequence, which embodies a period of 'disenchantment' and the crystallization of this period, which is manifested in modernity.<sup>11</sup>

With the coming of inner-worldly asceticism and the belief in predestination, which gave a rational answer to the problem of theodicy, the process of 'disenchantment' comes to an end. Thus, a new era of modernization is born. As Tenbruck explains, "The ethical unification of the mode of conduct which for millenia man had previously achieved by means of theodicy and above all through a supramundane God of creation, was dissolved" <sup>12</sup>

Tenbruck's thesis as interpreted here would appear to fit in with Weber's notion of the defining characteristics of modernity- the eclipse of a religio-cosmological world view by a scientific, secular one. However there are inconsistencies with Weber's theory. Tenbruck himself points out one of these when he notes that, "Weber, who throughout his life had upheld the uniqueness of history against the laws of progress, is now encountered in his work on religion in the opposing camp of evolutionism".<sup>13</sup>

A second, and even more important inconsistency, is inherent in Tenbruck's thesis itself. His reduction of rationalization to the religious sphere is contradicted by the multidimensional character of Weber's theory.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast to Tenbruck's argument, Stephen Kalberg offers a systematic and exhaustive analysis of the various types of rationality, and their related manifestations in the several spheres, as well as their complex interconnections.<sup>15</sup>

Kalberg argues that the discrete types of rationality constitute the 'cornerstones' for the

rationalization process, and thus an inventory of their defining features is a prerequisite for any reconstruction of Weber's vision of the "multiplicity that variously conflict and coalesce".<sup>16</sup>

Kalberg points out that according to Weber, qualitatively different rationalization processes advance at their own rates in the various life-spheres. This applies both to those which are important to the 'external organization' such as realms of law, politics, and economics, as well as to the 'internal' spheres of religion and ethics.<sup>17</sup>

Kalberg comments on Weber's view of the future, when the rise of a scientific-secular outlook and its opposition to all religious world views has fateful consequences:

With the unfolding of the major life-spheres along their particular and autonomous routes of rationalization: devoid of the personal dimension, the realms of the economy, law, and knowledge, as well as all bureaucratic structures of domination, now developed solely in relation to abstract rules, laws, regulations and external necessities. These areas thus remained outside of and unrestrained by all ethical claims. 18

Rogers Brubaker has a similar concern with the eclipse of ethical norms in modernity. He centers his



discussion around what he calls 'Weber's moral vision'.

In so doing, Brubaker considers the effects of the modern emphasis on rational, calculable action on the individual's struggle to develop an autonomous personality. Brubaker points out that the threat posed by the predominance of zweckrational action is an insidious one. The individual who rationally calculates the best means to achieve a given goal may appear to be free in the sense that he is unfettered by traditional concerns with ultimate values such as honour or brotherhood. Yet as Brubaker explains, "This individual is free only in a purely negative sense." <sup>19</sup> In fact, he is enslaved by an agenda of constantly shifting desires, rather than orienting his life around a personally chosen and consistently upheld set of values.

Brubaker points out that in the modern world, each individual must choose between the demands of zweckrational action, and those inherent in value-rational action. But this decision is inherently irrational, since it involves a choice between two irreconcilably opposed value-spheres, neither of which can, according to any objective criterion, be said to

be 'superior' to the other.

Steven Seidman explores Weber's concern with the problem of meaning in modernity and relates this to Weber's alleged 'cultural pessimism'. While Seidman admits that Weber's preoccupation with the dark side of growing rationality contains elements of this perspective, he contends that Weber's view of modernity is not wholly negative.

Weber differs from true cultural pessimists, for whom the modern world is "devoid of freedom and meaning", a state of chaos in which the individual is reduced to "a state of metaphysical anguish".<sup>20</sup> According to Seidman, Weber instead stresses that, "in modernity the conditions and nature of freedom and meaning are transformed not extinguished." <sup>21</sup>

# I

## DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT OF RATIONALITY

### a) Weber's View of Social Reality and Types of Social Action

Weber's view of social reality is fundamental to his notions of rationality and the rationalization process. The basic premise of the rationalization of action involves the ordering of this reality by individuals.

Weber perceives social reality as a fragmented chaos of incomprehensible and seemingly disconnected events and values, perpetually in conflict. Thus Weber tells us that life "presents an infinite multiplicity of successively and coexistently emerging and disappearing events, both 'within' and 'outside' ourselves." 22

In order to cope with the chaos surrounding him, the individual must order the infinite multitude of his perceptions. He is aided in his attempt to create order out of chaos by the prevailing values within his culture and the institutions which help to disseminate them. Thus, it is chiefly in reference to one's acceptance or rejection of cultural

values that "the vast chaotic stream of events, which flows away through time"<sup>23</sup> acquires a measure of stability and continuity. It is the individual's need to find 'meaning' in this ever-changing reality which is the common denominator underlying Weber's typology of action.

This typology orders reality by classifying the self-conscious actions of individuals in response to others in terms of their motivations. It is important to note that Weber's typology of action is an ideal-typical construct which is not meant to provide an accurate representation of reality, but rather is intended to highlight those features of it which are important for the investigator at a particular time. Weber admits that "a description of even the smallest slice of reality can never be exhaustive".<sup>24</sup> However, he explains that the ideal-type is "...like a utopia which has been arrived at by the analytical accentuation of certain elements of reality." <sup>25</sup>

The advantage of the use of ideal-type constructs lies in their precision and clarity. If

the researcher formulates these constructs carefully, he will be able to determine how far empirical reality deviates from this hypothetical 'utopia'.<sup>26</sup>

Weber's typology distinguishes between four types of action. Affectual action is dictated by the individual's emotional state, rather than by the rational calculation of means and ends. Traditional action has no conscious goal, but is dictated by deeply-entrenched custom or habit. Value-rational (wertrational) action is centered around the belief in a particular form of action for its own sake. This action is rational not because it seeks to attain an external goal, but because it is faithful to a value such as honour or integrity. Finally, purposive-rational (zweckrational) action is carried out in relation to a goal. It is distinguished by the fact that the individual clearly perceives his goal, and after weighing the alternatives, has rationally chosen the best means to attain it. Thus this type is purely instrumental in motivation.<sup>27</sup>

Weber believes that the potential for the aforementioned types of action is not socially

conditioned, but rather is an innate part of all human beings, regardless of the culture or epoch in which they live. Purposive-rational (zweckrational) action, in particular, should not be viewed as the culmination of man's development as a species, which reaches its apex in modernity. 28

According to Weber, such action is a universal trait, which is not identical with the rationalization process. He points out that even the seemingly irrational actions of primitive man (the performance of religious rituals for example) are in fact an instrumentally rational way of receiving favours from the gods. Thus, Weber explains that such behaviour:

...follows rules of experience, though it is not necessarily in accordance with a means-end schema. Rubbing will elicit sparks from pieces of wood, and in like fashion the mimetical actions of a magician will evoke rain from the heavens. 29

Furthermore, such ritualistic behaviour is not necessarily distinct from mundane instrumental actions, particularly if the goals served by such ceremonies are primarily economic ones. 30

b) Types of Rationality and Weber's Radical  
Perspectivism

Weber is mainly interested in the regularities and patterns of action within different levels of socio-cultural processes- that is, within organizations, institutions, social strata and classes, rather than in discontinuous action orientations. Therefore he introduces a further conceptual scheme which he utilizes to examine these patterns. This last scheme consists of formal, theoretical, practical and substantive types of rationality.

These types of rationality, (with the exception of theoretical, which is only indirectly related to action) are related to means-end and value-rational action. These social processes involve the self-conscious orientation of action by individuals. This follows from Weber's belief that the individual is the basic unit of social analysis, and from the notion that institutions (such as the state, for example) are the collective expressions of individual action.

Formal rationality differs from practical,

theoretical, and substantive types which are not confined to a particular culture or historical period. In contrast, formal rationality is characteristic of modern, bureaucratic, industrialized societies, particularly within the areas of law, science, and the economy. Although both practical and formal rationality employ calculable, instrumental action in the solution of problems, formal rationality achieves this through the universal, unvarying application of rules and regulations. <sup>31</sup>

Thus, formally rational law is applied to all citizens in a uniform and consistent fashion. Only the characteristics of the case under consideration are taken into account, and decisions are rendered in accordance with the letter, rather than the spirit, of the law. This differs from ethical substantive rationality, which is based on the belief in the value of ethical imperatives.

Within the economic realm, formally rational decisions are carried out with the goal of maximizing profits, regardless of the consequences for individuals, or the way in which such actions may conflict with ethical substantive rationalities. The conflict



between formal and substantive rationality in the spheres of economics, law, bureaucratic administration and religion will be discussed at greater length in chapter two.

Weber describes theoretical rationality as the attempt to master reality based on the formulation of increasingly precise and abstract concepts.<sup>32</sup> An example of such thinking would be the revisionists who attempt to systematically refine Marxist doctrines. Similarly, the theologian who organizes a religious ethic into a unified set of values, does so in an effort to give meaning to random and incoherent human suffering.<sup>33</sup>

Practical rationality is related to the type of instrumental action employed in the solution of everyday problems. One example of this would be the worshipper who offers up prayers or sacrifices not as a form of atonement, but merely in a calculated effort to ward off evil and safeguard his pragmatic interests. In the secular realm, the self-interested businessman or politician is the best example of the practical, rational approach to problem-solving. As Weber points out, "The tendency towards a practical rationalism is

common to all civic strata; it is conditioned by their way of life...their whole existence has been based upon technological or economic calculations and upon the mastery of nature and of man." 34

Thus it is obvious that a logical opposition exists between pragmatic 'practical' rationality, which emphasizes problem-solving, and that of 'theoretical' or intellectual rationality. Substantive rationality also aids in ordering action into patterns. However, instead of the instrumental orientation typical of practical rationality, action is directed on the basis of a 'value-postulate' or 'value-constellation'. Substantive rationality is an expression of man's capacity for value-rational action, which may extend to all spheres of activity, or may be limited to a narrower focus. 35

A value-constellation is thus a cluster of values (rather than a single one) which can vary in terms of content and degree of consistency. In Iran, for example, the value-constellation associated with Islam has far-reaching effects on every aspect of life. But in the modern western world, the value-postulate typical of Protestantism or Catholicism not only differs

in content from that of Islam, but also has far less capacity to organize action. However, all social organizations, institutions, and political bodies (such as the state) in whatever culture or epoch, are ordered in terms of specific value-constellations, although this may not be obvious to either observers or participants. <sup>36</sup>

The multiplicity of value-postulates underlines the radical perspectivism which Weber stresses is central to the notion of substantive rationality. According to Weber, rationality and the rationalization process on which it is based are always oriented towards specific viewpoints or 'directions'. There is no rigidly defined set of values, fixed for all time, which is necessary for the rationalization process to take place. Rather, it is the individual who (consciously or unconsciously) chooses certain values and orients his actions in relation to them. These values are 'rational' simply because they have been ordered into a unified constellation. <sup>37</sup> The conflict between opposing 'value-constellations' or 'value-orientations' will be discussed at greater length in chapter three.

Weber emphasizes that it is just as misleading to speak of 'irrationality' in an absolute sense. A value-postulate is inherently neither 'rational' nor 'irrational', but can only be judged as such in relation to another, competing set of values. Thus, according to Weber:

A thing is never irrational in itself, but only from a particular rational point of view. For the unbeliever every religious way of life is irrational, for the hedonist every ascetic standard, no matter whether, measured with respect to its particular basic values, that opposing asceticism is a rationalization. 38

These irreconcilable value-postulates exist within every sphere of life, and the proponents of each tend to label all others as 'irrational'. For example, within the economic and political realms, the capitalist perceives the communist as irrational, while the communist just as tenaciously believes the opposite. Similarly, the scientist, who doubts the validity of all but empirically verifiable knowledge, cannot accept the faith of the 'true believer', and vice-versa.

Substantively rational viewpoints may also compete within a single sphere, such as religion. Here a plethora of world views all claim a monopoly on

rationality. The Hindu is an enigma to the Buddhist monk who seeks wisdom through contemplation, while the logic of Buddhism remains impenetrable to the Ascetic. The realm of ethics presents similar contradictions. The proponent of the ethic of conviction sees the advocate of the ethic of responsibility as fundamentally irrational. The opposite is also true in this case, as in every other conflict of values. <sup>39</sup>

#### c) Weber's Concept of Value-Neutrality

It is clear that Weber's radical perspectivism is of vital importance to his discussion of the types of rationality. Value-perspectivism is also closely linked with value-neutrality. Weber takes pains to distinguish between a researcher's own values and his attempt to investigate a given phenomenon in a scientific manner. Thus, the reader must be aware that Weber uses the term 'rational' in a non-evaluative sense. This simply means that he abstains from value-judgements on the 'rightness' of the modern social order.

But having said this, it is important to emphasize that Weber's perspective on modern life is nonetheless organized in relation to values. These

values determine which elements of a chaotic social reality are deemed relevant for his analysis (and therefore are to be included) and those which are to be ignored. As Weber explains it, "Only a small portion of existing concrete reality is coloured by our value-conditioned interest and it alone is significant to us. It is significant because it reveals relationships which are important to us due to their connection with our values".<sup>40</sup>

Thus, it is inevitable that the selection process be made on the basis of a given set of values, for according to Weber, no other method is possible. But the elements selected as relevant may or may not be consistent with the personal values of the investigator. Therefore it is clear that Weber's emphasis on aspects of modern life which enhance the rationality and calculability of action should not be taken as a personal comment on their desirability.

For Weber, the growing formal rationality of western civilization is a matter of facts rather than values. It cannot be ignored, but whether it can be considered 'rational' or 'irrational' is dependent on

the values adhered to by the observer. Thus Weber's conception of the growth of formal rationality is value-neutral, because it cannot be seen as the outgrowth of his arbitrary emphasis on certain elements consistent with his own personal values. His inquiry into the nature of rationality and the rationalization process is instead linked with general cultural values pervasive in late nineteenth-century western civilization.

As Weber expresses it, "Only certain sides of the infinitely complex concrete phenomenon, namely those to which we attribute a general cultural significance- are therefore worthwhile knowing. They alone are objects of causal explanation." <sup>41</sup> In this sense, therefore,

Weber's notion of value-neutrality can co-exist quite peacefully with the value-relevance of his vision of modern civilization.

## THE SPHERES OF RATIONALITY

### a) Weber's View of Society as Discrepant Realms or Spheres

The terms 'rational', 'rationality' and 'rationalization' appear frequently in the writings of Max Weber. However, it is necessary to take account of the ambiguity inherent in the use of these terms. To ignore the multiple (although admittedly interrelated) meanings contained therein would result in an oversimplification (if not an outright distortion) of Weber's thought.

In a footnote to The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Weber himself declares that, "If this essay makes any contribution at all, may it be to bring out the complexity of the only superficially simple concept of the rational".<sup>42</sup>

Thus, if we are to understand what Weber calls the "specific and peculiar"<sup>43</sup> rationalism of modern western civilization, we must specify how- that is, at what rate, in what direction, and with respect to what ultimate points of view- social life is rationalized. Weber explains it in the following way:



There is, for example, rationalization of mystical contemplation, that is, of an attitude which, viewed from other departments of life, is specifically irrational, just as much as there are rationalizations of economic life, of technique, of scientific research, of military training, of law and administration. <sup>44</sup>

Weber's discussion of rationality thus reaches beyond a single sphere to encompass nearly every aspect of social life. However, such a detailed examination is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I have selected four spheres of life which I believe best represent Weber's insights on the problem of rationality: 1) the economic sphere 2) the legal sphere 3) bureaucratic administration 4) the religious sphere. The first three spheres relate to what Weber calls the "external organization of the world".<sup>45</sup> The sphere of religion, on the other hand, is internal, relating to man's 'inner dispositions.' More will be said on this later.

Weber emphasizes the discrete and multifaceted nature of the rationalization process, and the fact that within each sphere, this process unfolds in a unique manner. However, these processes do share certain common elements which lend them definitional unity.

As Weber says, "These types of rationality are very different, in spite of the fact that ultimately they belong inseparably together."<sup>46</sup> These common characteristics may be designated as: 1) Increased knowledge<sup>47</sup> 2) growing impersonality<sup>48</sup> and 3) enhanced control.<sup>49</sup> Here Weber's well-known distinction between substantive and formal rationality comes into play, since what is rational from the formal viewpoint is usually substantively irrational, and vice-versa.<sup>50</sup>

b) The Economic Sphere

Weber explains that the term 'formal rationality of economic action' will be used to designate the extent of possible and applied calculability. Formal rationality of the economic sphere, then, is rooted in the notion of calculability.<sup>51</sup>

Weber stresses that the negative rationality of the market economy lies in its freedom from the constraints of the past. It proceeds purely on the basis of self-interest, unhampered by emotional considerations of tradition or brotherhood. It is rational in the positive sense, however, in its instrumental orientation to possibilities for exchange.<sup>52</sup>

Weber expresses it in this way:

The market community as such is the most impersonal relationship of practical life into which humans can enter with one another... The reason for the impersonality of the market is its matter-of-factness, its orientation to the commodity and only to that... There are no obligations of brotherliness or reverence... They would all just obstruct the free development of the bare market relationship. 53

Weber here as always uses the term 'rational' in a value-free sense. It implies neither approval nor disapproval of the impersonal relationships engendered by the development of the free market economy. This is not to say, however, that Weber has no deeply-held moral convictions on the rise of self-interest and calculability. It is simply that he does not use the term 'rational' in the same evaluative way as is customary in everyday usage.

But it is worth noting that (intentionally or not) Weber uses value-laden language to describe his feelings on the absence of ethical norms within the free market, which, "with its exploitation of constellations of interests... is an abomination to every system of fraternal ethics." 54 It seems obvious that the word 'abomination' cannot possibly be used in a neutral way.

Thus, the rationality of the modern economic sphere rests on the successful exploitation of exchange opportunities. But just as important, according to Weber, is the use of money accounting in economic calculation.<sup>55</sup> Just as the structure of the market compels its participants to behave in a manner freed of ethical or emotional constraints (and in this sense influences their inner dispositions) so too does the use of money, on an objective level, provide the best means for putting these subjective orientations into practice.

Money is an external realization of the goals of the free market economy- an efficient and unambiguous method of calculating the 'most desirable' (read 'most profitable') course of action. It is this very exactness which forms the basis of its rationality, enabling the user to determine the value of every possible factor which might enter into his quantitative equation. Thus, as Weber puts it, "From a purely technical point of view, money is the most 'perfect' means of economic calculation." <sup>56</sup>

Here again we must note Weber's distinction between substantive and formal rationality. Both the

market economy and money accounting may be considered formally rational; in the value-free sense of the term which Weber employs. Yet economic action may also be substantively rational in its orientation to ultimate ends which extend beyond the purely calculable.

Weber admits that these ends cannot be defined unambiguously, but (in socialist and communist societies, for example) they cohere around notions of social justice. That is, how well does the economic system serve the needs of its participants? <sup>57</sup> However, lest we become fixated on idealistic concerns for equality as the ultimate end of an economic system, Weber reminds us that the criteria of ultimate ends may be "ethical, political, utilitarian, hedonistic, feudal, (standisch) egalitarian, or whatever..." <sup>58</sup>

Weber uncovers further ambiguities when he notes that economic activity may be considered substantively rational not only on the basis of its outcome, but also from the perspective of its spirit (that is, its ethical, ascetic, or aesthetic character) and the instruments it employs in the realization of

its goals.<sup>59</sup> The formally rational emphasis on strict calculation may not work in tandem with substantively rational ends, and in fact may be in conflict with them. For example, the emphasis on efficiency and calculability demanded by formal economic rationality often leads to a disregard for the needs of workers. The entrepreneur is aware that profits will be maximized if wages are kept low. Yet the type of substantive rationality which centers around the aforementioned notions of 'justice' calls for decent living conditions and fair wages for all.<sup>60</sup>

Formal rationality requires not only the economic oppression of workers, but their submission to so-called 'scientific' methods of control and management as well. According to Weber, "No special proof is necessary to show that military discipline is the ideal model for the modern capitalist factory, as it was for the ancient plantation."<sup>61</sup> Although this system is ideal or 'rational' from the perspective of the entrepreneur, it is substantively irrational when judged according to man's psychic and physical needs. Weber explores this conflict

in the following passage:

The psycho-physical apparatus of man is completely adjusted to the demands of the outer world, the tools, the machines- in short, it is functionalized, and the individual is shorn of his natural rhythm as determined by his organism... he is attuned to a new rhythm... through the creation of an optimal economy of physical effort. 62

There are echoes of Marx in Weber's assertion that the application of technical knowledge to the productive process will ultimately result in the negation of self. Weber's recurring theme- that of the irreconcilable conflict between substantive and formal rationality- is expressed on both the abstract and the practical level.

Formal rationality, on the abstract level, is a value-neutral concept, but in practice it is anything but neutral where the interests of specific social groups are concerned. Maximum formal rationality clearly favours those who are economically privileged, while those who are victims of the market economy would hope for an increase in the substantive rationality of both economic and legal spheres. As Weber explains:

The propertyless masses are not served by the formal 'equality before the law' and the 'calculable' adjudication and administration demanded by bourgeois interests. Naturally, in their eyes justice and administration should serve to equalize their social and economic opportunities in the face of the propertied classes. Justice and administration can fulfill this function only if they assume a character that is informal because 'ethical' with respect to substantive content (kadi-justice).<sup>\* 63</sup>

Here Weber links the formal rationality of the economic sphere with certain legal prerequisites which, although allegedly based on considerations of 'justice', actually serve the interests of the dominant group. More will be said on this in the following section.

Thus, Weber shows an awareness of the practical consequences of the tension between formal and substantive rationality. However, on an abstract level, at any rate, he seeks to avoid value-judgements on the 'rightness' of either type of rationality. His aim is simply to distinguish the 'formal' from the 'substantive'. But Weber is quick to point out that, "In this context, the concept 'substantive' is in a certain sense 'formal'; that is, it is an abstract, generic concept."<sup>64</sup>

\*N.B. This term is sometimes spelled as 'khadi-justice'.



### c) The Legal Sphere

Just as the modern capitalist system is rooted in strict economic calculability, so too the modern legal system is rooted in formalism. But as is always the case when dealing with the complexities of Weber's thought, the concept of formal legal rationality cannot be reduced to a single dimension.

Weber in fact discusses the notion of legal formalism in four distinct, but closely related ways.. Weber often speaks of formal legal rationality as simply that which is governed by general rules and principles. In this sense, legal rationality specifies the rights and obligations of individuals within a given society in a universalistic way- that is, without regard to specific persons or circumstances.<sup>65</sup> The legal system is thus able to proceed efficiently, according to an identifiable set of written rules which is capable of subsuming every possible case.

Here Weber introduces a second prerequisite of legal formalism- its systematic character. Not only is formal legal rationality rule-governed, but it also:

...Represents an integration of all analytically derived legal propositions.

in such a way that they constitute a logically clear, internally consistent, and at least in theory, gapless system of rules, under which it is implied, all conceivable fact situations must be capable of being logically subsumed lest their order lack an effective guaranty. 66

Weber admits that this systematic and gapless legal framework is a relatively late development which has not yet attained the highest degree of coherence and abstraction.<sup>67</sup> It is not always possible to cite an abstract legal rule for any given situation. If this were so, every conceivable action of human beings could be judged as either within the law or outside the law.

Such a system can only be constructed if we adhere to Weber's third principle, which stipulates that juristic propositions must be based on what he calls the "logical interpretation of meaning".<sup>68</sup>

Weber here focuses on the distinction between what he calls the "external characteristics of the facts"<sup>69</sup> and abstract, non-sense data such as the inner dispositions of the parties involved. As Weber explains, such an interpretation introduces a substantive element into legal formalism:

This kind of interpretation seeks to construct the relations of the parties to one another from the point of view

of the 'inner' kernels of their behaviour, from the point of view of their mental 'attitudes' (such as good faith or malice). Thus it relates legal consequences to informal elements of the situation... 70

It is clear that the 'logical interpretation' of meaning' is a necessary prerequisite to the formulation of an all-encompassing legal system which must take account of both the intent and the consequences of action. For example, the establishment of intent or 'premeditation' in a case of murder is a vital factor in deciding the guilt or innocence of the accused.

This is not to say, however, that the formulation of what Weber calls " a logically consistent and gapless complex of 'norms' waiting to be applied" 71 is without dangers. Weber explains that the bureaucratization of the law, if taken to its logical conclusion, might result in the transformation "of the modern judge into a vending machine into which the pleadings are inserted together with the fee and which then disgorges the judgement together with its reasons mechanically derived from the code." 72

According to Weber, an awareness of this has led some legislators to encourage 'individualized' verdicts based on the particular circumstances of a given case. In a similar way, abstract legal norms

are seen by some legislators as no more than a negative check on the incalculable impulses of the judge, or a guide for consultation in doubtful cases. This does not imply a return to personally-motivated decision-making typical of pre-bureaucratic law, but is in fact a recognition that the adherence to rational, calculable norms remains obligatory, despite the measure of latitude they allow.<sup>73</sup>

Finally, Weber introduces a fourth meaning of formal legal rationality- that it be subject to the control of the intellect. Weber contrasts this with primitive law which is formally irrational. He explains that although primitive law adheres to a meticulously observed system of rules (which accounts for its formal character) decisions are not rendered on "logical or rational grounds"<sup>74</sup> but are arrived at through the use of magic or oracles.<sup>75</sup>

Thus, for Weber, legal decision-making is formally rational (in the sense of being subject to the control of the intellect) when it demands objective proof of the validity of the claims presented by the parties involved. Weber stresses that primitive law requires no such proof. Instead it relies on the wisdom of sages who render their judgements on the

basis of divine inspiration.<sup>76</sup>

The law may be considered rational or irrational in the substantive sense as well. Substantively irrational law-making is exemplified by what Weber calls 'kadi-justice'. Decisions are rendered not according to abstract and calculable principles, but on a case-by-case basis, according to an unpredictable mixture of political, legal, and emotional considerations. These are substantive in nature, but because the decisions are arrived at in an arbitrary fashion, kadi-justice must be considered irrational. Weber notes that, "Pure kadi-justice is represented in every prophetic dictum which follows the pattern: It is written...but I say unto you".<sup>77</sup>

Substantively rational law is based on the teachings contained in a sacred book or collection of sacred laws. Such teachings would typically be employed in seminaries for the priesthood or law schools run by such seminaries.<sup>78</sup>

Their substantive character lies in the fact that, according to such teachings, the law is a realization of ethical and moral ideals. Thus no distinction is made between legal and non-legal norms- ethics and law are perceived as one. Yet although the sacred

teachings are rational in their adherence to fixed rules, this does not result in the construction of a formal legal system. Substantively rational law thus serves theoretical rather than practical needs. As Weber expresses it, these are "the needs of the uninhibited intellectualism of scholars".<sup>79</sup>

Weber speaks of the tension between formal and substantive rationality which exists in the economic sphere. Such tensions are at work within the legal sphere as well. It is true (in theory, at any rate) that "formal justice guarantees the maximum freedom for the interested parties to represent their formal legal interests".<sup>80</sup> However, because legal formalism consolidates an unequally balanced structure, it is doubtful that economically deprived groups would be able to enjoy the advantages of formal justice, since they lack the power to control their own destiny.<sup>81</sup> In this sense, legal formalism, especially as it is expressed in the modern legal contract, is at variance with substantive demands for justice and autonomy.<sup>82</sup>

But the growth of legal formalism results in a loss of autonomy in yet another sense. Weber observes that, "the law is drawn into antiformal directions by

the demand of the 'laity' for a system of justice which would be intelligible to them".<sup>83</sup> Such intelligibility can only be achieved if the law is perceived as a human creation designed to serve human ends. In short, it must be 'rationalized'-stripped of its mysterious and 'incalculable' elements. As Weber explains:

Inevitably the notion must expand that the law is a rational technical apparatus, which is continually transformable in the light of expediential considerations and devoid of all sacredness of content. 84

The modern legal system is thus seen as, increasingly subject to intellectual control and manipulation. However, this presupposes the creation of a group of 'specialists' who alone are capable of comprehending this man-made legal apparatus. The layman is forced to surrender his autonomy to such specialists, because although the law is intelligible in principle, in fact its subtleties are beyond the grasp of the average person. The layman is thus increasingly compelled to look to legal experts for advice on many aspects of his financial and personal life. In this sense, he allows a significant part of his fate to be controlled by others. Weber is aware that this tendency "cannot really be stayed" and is

"promoted by the ideologically rooted power aspirations of the legal profession itself".<sup>85</sup>

However, this growing lack of autonomy is not restricted to the legal sphere. Everywhere, man has erected structures which threaten to rise up and dominate him. In the realm of the market economy, and that of bureaucratic administration, there exists what Weber describes as "a shell of bondage...which men will be forced to inhabit someday, as powerless as the fellahs of ancient Egypt".<sup>86</sup>

#### d) Bureaucratic Administration

Weber appears to have used the term 'bureaucracy' in two separate, although interrelated ways. The specific, particular sense denotes the political administration of the modern state. The more general sense, on the other hand, refers not only to the state, but also to a rational type of bureaucratic administration which has permeated all spheres of society. A discussion of state bureaucracy would focus on political issues of the power it engenders and the control of that power. An examination of bureaucratic administration, however, would deal with its social and cultural repercussions. That is, what kind of individual does this system produce, and what effect



does its accompanying ethos have on society as a whole? It is this second, more general sense of the term which I will be concerned with here. <sup>87</sup>

Weber notes that bureaucratic administration is an indispensable part of modern life: "It would be sheer illusion to think for a moment that continuous administrative work can be carried out in any field except by means of officials working in offices. The whole pattern of everyday life is cut to fit this framework". <sup>88</sup>

Modern bureaucratic administration is distinguished by its rationality. It is superior to traditional forms because of its reliance on technical knowledge, which is vital to the continuation of the modern market economy. The efficient production and distribution of goods is dependent on such knowledge. This inevitably leads to the domination of the 'technician' and fosters a general rationalization of all areas of life. Weber observes that it favours "the development of a 'rational matter-of-factness' and the personality type of the professional expert. <sup>89</sup>

The dominance of the technology has other social consequences. The possession of specialized

knowledge confers extraordinary power on this elite class of experts. But they are able to consolidate their power to an even greater degree through their access to what Weber calls "official secrets".<sup>90</sup>

Admittedly, such secrets are not exclusive to bureaucratic administration. But Weber notes that they are a typical "product of the striving for power".<sup>91</sup>

The growth of technical expertise and 'secret' knowledge is a result of what Weber describes as the 'levelling' tendency. In contrast to more traditional, patrimonial forms of administration, bureaucracy stresses achievement over ascription as a means of obtaining social and economic advantages.<sup>92</sup> Yet, because of the long-term training required to attain such technical knowledge, which "often lasts up to the age of thirty"<sup>93</sup> such opportunities are closed to those who do not already possess a measure of economic security. Education has simply replaced 'proof of ancestry' as a prerequisite to high office.<sup>94</sup> Technical expertise creates its own elite, which ultimately fosters inequality. There is no place within the bureaucratic structure for those who lack such skills.

Thus, bureaucratic administration is rational in its dependence on specialized technical knowledge. Its

formalism lies in its universalistic adherence to abstract rules- as is true within the modern legal sphere. These rules explicitly spell out how authority is to be delegated, the specific duties associated with each position in the hierarchy, and how these duties are to be carried out.<sup>95</sup> According to Weber, "This stands in extreme contrast to the regulation of all relationships through individual privileges and bestowals of favor, which...is absolutely dominant in patrimonialism".<sup>96</sup>

The universal, unvarying application of rules and regulations carries with it a distinctive ethos of impersonality. Individual personality differences and emotional considerations of loyalty and friendship are not brought to bear within the bureaucratic decision-making process. As Weber explains, "Bureaucracy develops the more perfectly the more it is 'dehumanized', the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business all purely personal irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation. This is appraised as its special virtue by capitalism".<sup>97</sup>

In this sense the impersonality of modern bureaucratic administration mirrors the impersonality of the economic and legal spheres. As we have seen,

legal formal rationality is 'dehumanized' in that the law is applied 'without regard to persons' in a uniform and consistent fashion. Similarly, market transactions are carried out with the goal of 'maximizing profits, regardless of the way in which such actions may conflict with ethically substantive rationalities'.<sup>98</sup>

Bureaucratic administration is also formally rational in its emphasis on technical efficiency. In fact, Weber compares its operation to that of a well-oiled machine:

The fully developed bureaucratic apparatus compares with other organizations exactly as does the machine with other non-mechanical modes of production. Precision, speed, unambiguity...continuity...unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs- these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration. 99

This efficiency, however, is achieved at great cost to the individuals within the organization, who suffer a loss of personal and intellectual freedom and spontaneity. The bureaucrat has highly developed technical skills, but his creativity has atrophied from lack of use. He is nothing more than a "small cog in a ceaselessly moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route of march".<sup>100</sup> The

bureaucratic ethic of 'adaptation' undermines the individual's desire to strive for something beyond it. In so doing it conflicts with the ultimate substantive rationality- that which centers around personal and moral autonomy.<sup>101</sup>

e) The Religious Sphere

Weber is well aware of the importance of economic factors in the rationalization of western culture. However, he stresses that a recognition of the role of economic factors must not blind us to the fact that it is the inner dispositions of men which compel them to embrace certain forms of rational conduct. If these inner dispositions are absent, the growth of modern rational capitalism will be blocked.<sup>102</sup>

According to Weber, it was the Reformation which provided the psychological impetus necessary for the growth of rational conduct. Several aspects of Reformation thought were especially crucial to its development. The first was the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, which generated great anxiety within the mind of the believer. For the Calvinist, salvation was regarded as an 'inexplicable gift of grace' from an omniscient and unreachable God, immune to all human entreaties.<sup>103</sup> Nothing the individual could do

would in any way influence his fate. In this sense, as Weber writes, "A religion of predestination obliterates the goodness of God, for he becomes a hard, majestic king".<sup>104</sup> It would therefore seem obvious, as Weber comments, that "Fatalism is... the only logical consequence of predestination. But on account of the idea of proof the psychological result was entirely the opposite".<sup>105</sup>

Weber speaks of the "feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness"<sup>106</sup> which is a result of the belief in the doctrine of predestination. The believer was thus "forced to follow his path alone to meet a destiny which had been decreed for him from eternity".<sup>107</sup> The Calvinist could not live with the terrible burden of uncertainty and loneliness aroused by his belief in predestination, so rather than accept the inevitable, he searched for proof that he was indeed one of the elect.

This need for reassurance as to his ultimate fate could only be alleviated by what Weber calls 'worldly asceticism'. Herein lies the second prerequisite for the development of rational conduct. The Calvinist came to believe that certainty of salvation could only be achieved through intense methodical

labour in a worldly calling.<sup>108</sup>

This is in contrast to the monastic emphasis on contemplation and flight from the material world. The Calvinist was exhorted to practice the asceticism and self-denial of the monk, but to do so in the worldly setting of the marketplace. Calvinism thus stresses the importance of objective results which give proof that the believer is a "tool of the divine will" <sup>109</sup> This relentless worldly activity serves to increase the glory of God. The other-worldly ascetic, on the other hand, feels himself to be a passive vessel of God's will. He becomes one with God not through labour, but through a transcendent emotional experience which can only be achieved through prayer.<sup>110</sup>

Finally, it was the Calvinist's repudiation of sensual pleasure in all its forms which gave impetus to the personality type so compatible with the rise of rational capitalism. Although Calvinism stressed the value of hard, continuous labour and taught that worldly success (measured in the accumulation of wealth) was a sign of election, believers were warned against any type of self-indulgence.<sup>111</sup>

Pleasure, whether it takes the form of love of possessions or love of one's fellow beings, is "of no use tow-

ard salvation and promotes sentimental illusions and idolatrous superstitions." 112

Thus, the Calvinist had organized his whole life around a systematic, rational mode of conduct designed not only to serve the greater glory of God, but also to suppress his own natural (but irrational) impulses.<sup>113</sup> The ethic of self-control he had erected guaranteed his success, but ironically, it prevented him from enjoying the fruits of his labour. This meant that the Calvinist had no option but to save his earnings. Surplus capital was thus continually reinvested in the business.

Here again we see a sharp contrast with traditional attitudes towards labour and consumption. It was true, as Weber points out, that the structure of the traditional industry "was in every respect capitalistic; the entrepreneur's activity was of a purely business character; the use of capital, turned over in the business, was indispensable, and finally, the objective aspect of the economic process, the book-keeping, was rational".<sup>114</sup> But the ethos of the traditional business enterprise was consistent with a leisurely and congenial way of life which soon collapsed under the weight of a new ethos which stressed competition rather



than consumption. Those who could not or would not conform to the demands of the new marketplace were forced out.<sup>115</sup>

The rise of ascetic Protestantism thus led to a restructuring of personality necessary for the overthrow of traditional attitudes towards work. The constant struggle for renewed profit, which in the past had been "considered ethically unjustifiable, or at best to be tolerated...now gave the life of the entrepreneur its ethical foundation and justification".<sup>116</sup> The 'inner dispositions' of the sober, methodical Calvinist were a perfect counterpoint to the increasingly rational and calculable external world. This growing rationality was especially apparent in the spheres of economics, law and bureaucratic administration which were previously discussed.

As time passed, the drive to accumulate and reinvest profit lost its religious foundation and became identical with the pure spirit of capitalism.

Thus, success in business was no longer oriented towards the goal of achieving certainty of salvation. Instead it became an end in itself, best exemplified in the pragmatism typical of such writers as Benjamin Franklin.<sup>117</sup>

The legacy of ascetic Protestantism is evident not only in the utilitarianism of Franklin, for whom, to paraphrase Weber, "virtues are virtues only insofar as they are useful to the individual".<sup>118</sup> It is also apparent in the orientation of what Weber calls the 'vocationalist' or 'professionalist'. He went so far as to declare that The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism is really concerned with "Protestant asceticism as the foundation of modern vocational civilization- a sort of 'spiritualist' construction of the modern economy".<sup>119</sup>

Here Weber refers to the increasing dehumanization of all relationships of power and authority, which he believes "has but one psychological equivalent: the vocational ethic taught by asceticism".<sup>120</sup> Weber explains that in traditional societies, power relationships are based on shared feelings of love, respect and trust. The parties involved react to each other as more than mere representatives of their respective status groupings. They are aware of each other as individuals, and thus take account of all the idiosyncracies and virtues which are uniquely their own. In this sense, as Weber writes, their relation-

ship is:

...dominated by caprice and grace, indignation and love, and most of all by the mutual piety and devotion of masters and subalterns, after the fashion of the family. Thus, these relationships of domination have a character to which one may apply ethical requirements in the same way that one applies them to every other purely personal relationship. 121

The ethic of vocation destroys this 'mutual piety and devotion' by demanding that rational man perform his duty in a detached manner, "without hate and without love, without personal predilection and therefore without grace, but sheerly in accordance with the impersonal duty imposed by his calling". 122

Such detachment is a legacy of the Calvinist's mistrust of all intimate relationships, which can only serve to turn man's thoughts away from God, and (as previously noted) are "of no use toward salvation". 123

But just as the Calvinist's religious zeal to constantly accumulate and reinvest profit was transformed into an ethic of pure pragmatism, so too has the impersonal ethic of vocation lost its religious foundation. It has simply become the only possible way of life in a world dominated by the need for rationality and calculability. If modern man entered into all relationships with the same intensity typical of his

predecessors, his carefully constructed economic, legal and bureaucratic spheres would collapse. As Weber observes:

A person can practice caritas and brotherhood only outside his vocational life... the rise of capitalism makes these ideas just as meaningless as the implicit pacifist ideals of early Christianity have always been in the political realm, where all domination ultimately rests on force.<sup>124</sup>

Thus it is clear that the values represented by substantive and formal rationality are once again locked in what Weber calls "an irreconcilable death-struggle, like that between 'God' and the 'Devil'".<sup>125</sup> Modern man must sacrifice the values of love and friendship in order to serve the goals of the 'rational' society he himself has created. Yet these goals are irrational from the point of view of his own happiness. It was the 'worldly asceticism' of the Puritans which provided the subjective orientations so vital to the development of the modern, 'rational' economic, legal, and bureaucratic orders.

### III

#### THE CONFLICT BETWEEN VALUE-SPHERES

##### a) The Difference Between Subjective and Objective Value-Conflict

From the preceding analysis of the various spheres of activity within modern social life, there emerges a picture of the 'specific and peculiar' rationalism of western culture, which is characterized by purely formal rationality. All of the elements (calculability, specialized knowledge and impersonality) take different forms in the various spheres and are present in each in varying degrees. They stand in opposition to traditional values of caritas and brotherhood. The tension between formal and substantive rationality is thus an 'irreconcilable death-struggle' between conflicting values.

Weber appears to define value-conflict in two ways, which emanate from his two distinct conceptions of values. In one sense, 'values' may be expressed as the subjective value-orientations of individuals. Yet values also exist on the objective level of value-spheres, which have an independent existence, apart from the subjective value-orientations of specific

individuals. Thus, value-conflict may emerge on the subjective level, as a result of the clash between individual value-orientations, or it may express itself as an objective conflict on the level of value-spheres.

It should be noted that Weber does not explicitly employ the term 'value-orientation'. But he does speak of "a systematization of practical conduct resulting from an orientation to certain integral values".<sup>126</sup> He goes on to say that such conduct "may remain altogether oriented to this world, or it may focus on the world beyond, at least in part".<sup>127</sup> For purposes of clarity and economy, it seems useful to designate this notion as a 'value-orientation'.<sup>128</sup> More will be said on this later.

I will now focus on the clash of value-spheres which occurs on an objective level. In "Science As a Vocation", Weber declares that the "value-spheres of the world stand in irreconcilable conflict with each other".<sup>129</sup> However, this is not to be construed in the same sense as a clash of value-orientations. A value-orientation is relatively easy to define as a set of ethical norms, adhered to by the individual, which guide action.<sup>130</sup>

However, Weber's conception of 'value-spheres' is more obscure and thus resists categorization. A value-sphere is a discrete realm of activity which operates according to its own immanent values, rules, and norms. Weber clarifies this notion in his discussion of "Politics as a Vocation", which will be explored further in the following section.

b) The Ethic of Conviction and the Ethic of Responsibility

In "Politics as a Vocation", Weber explains that whatever the personal value-orientation of a politician may be, he must adhere to the 'ethic of responsibility'. This is not to be confused with a world-view consistent with a set of subjectively-held ethical norms. Rather, it is a universalistic doctrine which demands that the politician follow two rules of conduct. First, as Weber explains, "One has to give an account of the foreseeable results of one's action".<sup>131</sup> The politician must therefore be aware that good intentions do not guarantee good results, and must take responsibility for the outcome of his actions, whatever it may be.

This is in sharp contrast to the religious ethic of ultimate ends, which insists that the believer act strictly in accordance with his conscience, regardless

of the consequences for himself or for others. As Weber puts it, "The Christian does rightly and leaves the results with the Lord."<sup>132</sup> The politician, on the other hand, cannot afford to ignore the fact that actions have consequences.

Therefore, the politician must be prepared to use means which from the perspective of other value-spheres, are ethically indefensible. The tension between ends and means is exemplified in the use of violence, the ultimate evil. Here we are confronted with what Weber calls an "ethical paradox".<sup>133</sup> It is possible that violent means may be necessary to achieve praiseworthy ends- in the case of a revolution waged to overthrow a corrupt and decadent regime, for example. Under these circumstances, "it is not true that good can follow only from good and evil only from evil, but that often the opposite is true. Anyone who fails to see this is, indeed, a political infant".<sup>134</sup>

Yet there is no final arbiter who will decide if the politician's use of force is justified, or if it is simply "an ethical legitimization of cravings for revenge, power, booty and spoils".<sup>135</sup> The politician who follows the ethic of responsibility may have to use means which endanger 'the salvation of his soul',



but if he adheres solely to the ethic of ultimate ends, his disregard for the consequences of his actions may prove equally disastrous.<sup>136</sup>

However, Weber does not mean to imply that the two ethics are by definition irreconcilable. If the politician sincerely feels the obligations engendered by the ethic of responsibility, if he is truly concerned about the outcome of his actions, there will come a time when he says, "Here I stand, I can do no other".<sup>137</sup> In this sense the two ethics converge into one which combines the head and the heart, both "warm passion and cool perspective". Only insofar as a man combines both these qualities can he be said to have a genuine "calling for politics".<sup>138</sup>

Weber's assertion that the 'genuine man' possesses both 'passion and perspective' hints that the attitude necessary to life in the disenchanted world lies somewhere between the two ethics. The ethic of conviction implies an 'irrational' rejection of the material world, whereas the ethic of responsibility stresses rational world mastery and adjustment. Yet it is difficult to see how the two ethics could be reconciled, since this would necessitate a combination of 'rational' and 'irrational' behaviour which is logically

impossible.<sup>139</sup>

Here we are reminded of Weber's distinction between facts and values. The ethic of responsibility confronts the world 'as it is', while the ethic of conviction rejects the world as it is in favour of the world as it 'ought to be'. The religious ascetic need not adjust himself to the imperfect material world if he does not intend to live in it. Weber advises "the person who cannot bear the fate of the times like a man...to return silently...the arms of the old churches are opened widely and compassionately for him".<sup>140</sup> But for the rest of us, perhaps adherence to the ethic of responsibility is the only alternative, for it alone enables man to exert some degree of control over the imperfect world he has created. As Weber declares, "We shall set to work and meet the 'demands of the day', in human relations as well as in our vocation".<sup>141</sup>

Finally, then, Weber stresses the need for each individual to make his own choice between conflicting value-spheres and the constraints they impose upon him. There is no 'ultimate' or 'universal' value-sphere to which he can turn for guidance. How can we possibly determine whether the value of 'brotherly love' supercedes that of the politician's 'ethic of

responsibility'? Weber notes that, "Fate, and certainly not 'science', holds sway over these gods and their struggles".<sup>142</sup> He goes on to imply that only a fool would "take upon himself the attempt to 'refute scientifically' the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount".<sup>143</sup>

Weber reminds us that because each value-sphere contains its own immanent laws and obligations, the search for universal norms is fruitless. Confronted with this dilemma, the individual must make a choice which is thus 'irrational' in its subjectivity. Therefore, "according to an ultimate standpoint, the one is the devil and the other the God, and the individual has to decide which is God for him and which is the devil".<sup>144</sup>

From Weber's discussion of "Politics As a Vocation", it is clear that value-spheres operate according to their own laws which exist independently of the value-orientations of specific individuals. The fact that individuals must make a subjective choice between the 'gods' represented by conflicting value-spheres, does not imply that the conflict itself is subjective. The value-sphere of politics demands adherence to the ethic of responsibility, regardless of whether this is at variance with the personal value-orientation of a

given politician. Individuals did not create the laws which govern these spheres, and therefore can do nothing to change them, although a gradual transformation in the laws may occur over time. They must simply adapt themselves to the codes of behaviour required by a particular sphere. Each sphere has its own internal dynamic, and the more perfectly its laws are realized, the more likely it is to conflict with the demands of opposing value-spheres. Thus, the more the political realm (and in fact all realms of activity in modernity) insists on conformity to an increasingly refined and rationalized ethic of responsibility, the more likely it will clash with the ethic of conviction and brotherliness demanded by the religious sphere.<sup>145</sup>

#### IV

##### THE PROBLEM OF MEANING AND MODERNITY.

##### (a) The Decline of Religion and the Rise of, the Scientific-Secular Outlook

Weber observes that the tension between the ethic of brotherliness and the imperatives of a formally rational society reaches its peak within the economic sphere.<sup>146</sup> This conflict arises because of the impersonal nature of the market economy, which is dominated by the necessity of money calculation. The market thus operates according to its own laws, and as it becomes increasingly depersonalized and rationalized in its operations, it inevitably detaches itself from the religious ethic of brotherliness.

As has been noted, within traditional societies the relationship between master and slave was bound by ethical norms because of its very intimacy. But such norms have no relevance in a society dominated by pure market transactions, where personal bonds between participants would disrupt the smooth functioning of the economic apparatus. As Weber explains, "In the midst of a culture which is rationally organized for a vocational workaday life, there is hardly any room for the cultivation of a cosmic brotherliness."<sup>147</sup>

The decline of the ethic of brotherliness is but one manifestation of the growing devaluation of religion itself within the intellectualized modern world. Weber insists that, "The tension between the value-spheres of 'science' and the sphere of 'the holy' is unbridgeable".<sup>148</sup> Religion has traditionally addressed itself to the search for meaning in the face of a pervasive sense of futility which is common to all men. But its ability to fulfill this role has declined dramatically as faith increasingly comes into conflict with the weight of scientific logic.

Because faith demands what Weber calls the "sacrifice of the intellect", it is forced to retreat from the realm of 'vocational workaday life' into a private mystical sphere which is seen as increasingly irrational.<sup>149</sup> Religion thus becomes an intensely personal experience which is alien to the demands of worldly activity. Yet according to Weber, even those who react to the hegemony of the rational by a retreat into pure mysticism are powerless against the dominance of the scientific-secular outlook. Inevitably, "the specific intellectual and mystical attempts at salvation in the face of these tensions succumb in the end to the world dominion of unbrotherliness".<sup>150</sup> Only the 'religious

virtuosos' (and these are rare indeed) are capable of such devotion, because "under the technical and social conditions of rational culture, an imitation of the life of Buddha, Jesus or Francis seems condemned to failure for purely external reasons".<sup>151</sup>

In "Science as a Vocation", Weber writes scornfully of the feeble attempts of "some modern intellectuals" to compensate for their loss of faith with the pretense that so-called 'psychic experiences' offer a true religiosity.<sup>152</sup> This is nothing more than pathetic self-delusion, typical of those who are too weak to "measure up to workaday existence", and who are unable to "countenance the stern seriousness of our fateful times".<sup>153</sup>

Thus, for Weber, modern life is characterized by the dual processes of intellectualization and what he calls the "disenchantment of the world".<sup>154</sup> The old religious ethics of salvation have been superseded by a reliance on science and logic. This works against any belief that the course of human events has a transcendent meaning, since every occurrence is open to scientific explanation. Man has an inherent need to find meaning in the events which occur both within and around him, particularly the incoherent experiences of random

suffering and death. He seeks confirmation "of the ethical postulate that the world is a God-ordained, and hence somehow meaningfully and ethically-oriented, cosmos."<sup>155</sup>

But science has stripped away the notion of a 'world behind the world' with its attendant mystical elements, and in so doing, has dismissed God from the scene as well. Science can explain how things work, and provide us with information necessary to determine whether the 'cost' of a given course of action outweighs its advantages, but it cannot tell us how we are to live.<sup>156</sup> Science tells us what we can do, but not what we should do. It offers no moral guidelines.<sup>157</sup>

The most science can do, according to Weber, is to provide the individual with the insight and autonomy needed to function in a rational man-made world- what Weber calls "self-clarification and a sense of responsibility".<sup>158</sup> The realization that all things are (in principle at any rate) open to intellectual understanding and control offers man a measure of freedom from the ignorance which had enslaved his predecessors. But the decline of religion and the rise of science has robbed modern man of something precious and irretrievable- the sense of moral certitude. As



Weber writes wistfully, "The fate of an epoch which has eaten of the tree of knowledge is that it must know that we cannot learn the meaning of the world from the results of its analysis, be it ever so perfect; it must rather be in a position to ~~create~~ this meaning itself".<sup>159</sup> Rational man is thus forced to confront the problem of the loss of meaning in modernity.

#### b) Meaning and its Relation to Weber's Theory of Values

The notion of 'meaning' is closely connected with Weber's theory of values. As has been indicated, Weber uses the concept of meaning as it applies to man's need for a theodicy of inequality and suffering. But he also speaks of the 'meaning of life' or its ultimate purpose for the individual. According to Weber, it is the individual's value-orientation which gives meaning to his life in this sense. Furthermore, it is the only form of meaning open to man in a secular, intellectualized culture. Without a set of deeply-held beliefs and ethical norms to guide action, man's life would "run on as an event in nature".<sup>160</sup> It is this adherence to a world-view or value-orientation which makes us uniquely human, which guides us in "a series of ultimate decisions through which the soul...chooses its own fate".<sup>161</sup> Weber defines values in this way:

In contrast to mere 'feelings', we ascribe 'value' to an item if and only if it can be the content of a commitment: that is, a consciously articulated positive or negative 'judgement', something that appears to 'demand validity'. The 'validity' of a judgement is a 'value' 'for' us. Accordingly, it is accepted or rejected 'by' us. 162

It is necessary to distinguish between form and content in Weber's theory of values. Weber emphasizes that in order to live a truly human life, one must be committed to a value or set of values. This is the unvarying form of the autonomous personality. The content, however, need not be fixed- the individual may orient his life around any value-orientation he so chooses. According to Weber, these might be found "exclusively within the sphere of the person's 'individuality'." 163 But the individual may also orient himself to values which exist 'outside' himself- in the intellectual, religious, or political realms, for example.

Each of these spheres presents us with multiple and often conflicting value-complexes. Moreover, we are often confronted with irreconcilable value-conflicts within each sphere as well. The politician must therefore decide whether to adhere to the values represented by the ethic of responsibility or the ethic of conviction. Because our commitment to a set of values is a matter of personal choice, no one can prescribe its

content for us, or evaluate the 'rightness' of our decision according to any objective criterion. Thus, as Weber puts it, "to judge the validity of such values is a matter of faith".<sup>164</sup> What is important, in Weber's view, is not the values we choose, but our degree of commitment to them.

It is clear that Weber's theory of values centers around the notion of man as an active, choosing subject. But the ability to choose is not contingent solely on the possession of knowledge. According to Weber, even an awareness of the difference between right and wrong in a given situation does not guarantee that the individual will select the 'right' course of action. Whether he "should adhere to these ultimate standards is his personal affair; it involves will and conscience, not empirical knowledge".<sup>165</sup>

This is not to say that such knowledge cannot guide us in our selection of values, but rather that our final decision is based on our inherent ability to confirm or deny these values, often in spite of knowledge. It is man's will which is the final arbiter in the choice between conflicting value-orientations. Thus, in a rational world, man 'creates' his own meaning.<sup>166</sup>

Weber's will-centered conception of man does

not imply that individuals choose their values without constraints of any kind. Every act of choice is to some degree influenced by historical, economic or personal factors which impinge upon it. Here Weber's well-known distinction between 'facts' and 'values' comes into play. In an alternative 'ideal' universe, man might have the luxury of 'freely' choosing between sets of competing values, regardless of possible negative consequences. But for Weber, man acts within the "domain of the empirical".<sup>167</sup> He must therefore concern himself with what 'is', rather than what 'ought to be'.

Weber thus observes that:

The belief in 'freedom of the will' is of precious little value to the manufacturer in the competitive struggle or to the broker on the stock exchange. He has the choice between economic destruction and the pursuit of very specific maxims of economic conduct. Suppose, to his obvious disadvantage, he does not follow these maxims. Then, by way of explanation- among other possible hypotheses- we will eventually consider the possibility that he does not have 'freedom of the will'.<sup>168</sup>

Weber is aware that 'freedom of the will' is possible to only a limited extent within the 'real' or 'empirical' world. Nevertheless it does exist, and a course of action only achieves the status of a value to the extent that it can be seen as an outgrowth of such an act of choice.<sup>169</sup>

In traditional societies, man experienced the security which comes from adherence to a universalistic and as if 'ordained' set of religiously-oriented values and beliefs. But in modern secular culture, values are no longer experienced as all-encompassing. The individual is thus forced to create his own meaning through labour in his chosen sphere of activity.

Here we are reminded of the ascetic Protestant, whose quest for the certainty of salvation demanded that he subject himself to continuous methodical labour in a worldly calling. For the Calvinist, such efforts had a transcendent significance, since they were inextricably linked with his religious beliefs. But in modern society, the collapse of faith has made it impossible to sustain such a linkage. Yet ironically enough, "the idea of duty in one's calling prowls about in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs".<sup>170</sup> We continue to believe that confirmation of our self-worth depends on our success in a specialized vocational sphere. Here alone is it possible for the individual to truly demonstrate his commitment to a personal set of values. Thus, as Weber declares, "Limitation to specialized work, with a renunciation of the Faustian universality of man which it involves, is a condition of any valuable work in the

modern world".<sup>171</sup> This is equally true of both politician and scientist, of both businessman and bureaucrat.

It is clear that within secular culture the search for meaning is a uniquely personal one. Man can no longer depend on external forces, such as the dictates of religion, to direct his life. He is alienated as well from both the rhythms of nature and the security and structure provided by the traditional feudal order. Weber expresses it in this way:

The peasant, like Abraham, could die 'satiated with life'. The feudal landlord and warrior could do likewise. For both fulfilled a cycle of their existence beyond which they did not reach. Each in his way could attain an inner-worldly perfection as a result of the naive unambiguity of the substance of his life. 172

#### c) The Distinction Between 'Heroic' and 'Average' Ethics

It is the loss of this unambiguous set of values which results in modern man's pervasive sense of uncertainty. While the Calvinist could never attain absolute certainty of his ultimate fate, he was not tormented by the question of how he should live. His religion provided him with the necessary answers- hard work and self-denial would best serve to glorify God. The Puritan thus had no room for self-doubt or ambivalence,

since this would indicate a lack of faith. In modernity, however, values are no longer 'given', but contingent, since they are created from within.

Weber is aware that this imposes a heavy burden on the individual, who may not have the moral fortitude (or the freedom) to adhere to a demanding set of ethical imperatives. Without such inner strength (which is given to very few) compromise is inevitable. In this sense, Weber's theory of values is tied to a 'virtuoso' or 'heroic' ethic which few men can hope to approximate. Weber clarifies the distinction between 'heroic' and 'average' ethics in the following passage:

All systems of ethics, no matter what their substantive content, can be divided into two main groups. There is the 'heroic' ethic, which imposes on men demands of principle to which they are generally not able to do justice, except at the high points of their lives, but which serve as signposts pointing the way for man's endless striving. Or there is the 'ethic of the mean', which is content to accept man's everyday 'nature' as setting a maximum for the demands which can be made.

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'Man's endless striving', as Weber puts it, centers around the attempt to unify his personality in the fulfillment of an ultimate value. But such unity can only be achieved through ceaseless effort, which extends

far beyond the surface to the very core of one's being. The dignity and integrity of the personality is not an intrinsic part of man's nature, but must be constantly created and re-created. At no point in his life can man complacently assert that this task is complete. Such discipline is beyond the grasp of the 'average' person, who can never hope to rise above the mundane necessities of everyday life. Weber's conception of personality, then, is uncompromising in its insistence on dedication to values. Those who cannot endure such self-mortification are to be pitied (for they will never achieve a true humanity) but not forgiven.

Despite Weber's generally pessimistic view of the nature of the 'average' man, the decline of meaning in modernity should not be viewed as wholly negative. There is hope that some of us will create new meaning, if only at the 'high points' in our lives. Furthermore, the enhancement of personal freedom and self-determination demands a concomitant sacrifice of certainty. Yet Weber's theory of values contains its own paradox. The way of life demanded by a 'rational' society is founded on the choice between conflicting sets of values. But- and this is the irony- no 'rational' criterion exists to guide us



in this choice. Competing values cannot be objectively judged according to their validity or superiority.

'Rational' man is thus forced to make an arbitrary and ultimately 'irrational' choice as to the values which will guide his life.<sup>174</sup>

## WEBER'S AMBIVALENT VIEW OF MODERNITY

From the preceding analysis of the growth of rationality in the spheres of economics, law, bureaucratic administration, and religion, it seems clear that Weber views the rational apparatus which man has created as a necessary part of modern life. Its efficiency and ability to produce and reproduce wealth- through the use of formally free labour, rational accounting procedures, and the rational structure of law and bureaucratic administration- is of vital importance in the continuance of modern industrialized society.

But Weber also recognized the negative effects of this growing emphasis on calculability, impersonality, and increased knowledge. The decisive point in his analysis is the realization that rationality itself engenders irrationalities. Bureaucratic and legal structures originally intended to help man cope with the demands of the modern world have assumed a life of their own, and now threaten to rise up and dominate him.

Weber noted the reversal of the usual means-end relationship in the economic sphere as well. For the ascetic Protestant, success in business was considered

a sign of election, and was therefore sought with this aim in mind. Moreover, the earning of money in order to provide for one's needs is understandable and 'rational'. But for modern man, the pursuit of wealth is seen as an end in itself, rather than a means to an end. Thus, in modernity, this relationship has been reversed and distorted, so that the individual's whole life is oriented to "the earning of more and more money", which is now seen as a legitimate end, as the "ultimate purpose... of life".<sup>175</sup>

Thus, this fundamental irrationality, what Weber describes as the "reversal of what we should call the natural relationship... is definitely a leading principle of capitalism".<sup>176</sup> Despite Baxter's decree that such worldly matters should lie on the shoulders "...like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment", Weber regretfully concludes that "fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage".<sup>177</sup>

Weber's vision of the future often includes such images of entrapment and despair. In his essay, "Politics as a Vocation", he declares that, "Not summer's bloom lies ahead of us, but rather a polar night of icy darkness and hardness..."<sup>178</sup> Man the master has become the servant of his own creation. Weber cautions that it is

useless to look to science for a way out of this irony, for science is merely a tool by which we can measure the possibilities of achieving a given end. It cannot provide us with any moral guidelines for judging whether or not we should achieve it. Furthermore, science offers us the apex of rationality and knowledge, but this knowledge is closed to all but the technical expert.

As Weber asks, does the growth of science "mean that we, today...have a greater knowledge of the conditions of life under which we exist than the American Indian or Hottentot? Hardly...the savage knows incomparably more about his tools." <sup>179</sup> The process of intellectualization simply means that such knowledge is, in theory, available to us. "Hence, it means that principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted". <sup>180</sup>

The disenchanted world is characterized by a multiplicity of antagonistic values, which confront the individual. Within a secularized society, religion has lost its power as an organizing principle of life. Science is fundamentally amoral and thus can provide no ethical norms to guide action. Modern man is thus thrown

back upon his own resources- his own internal guidelines- in his attempt to choose between conflicting values. No external criterion is available to determine if the values represented by the 'ethic of responsibility', for example, are 'superior' to those embodied by the 'ethic of conviction'.

Implicit in Weber's discussion of "Science as a Vocation", however, is the suggestion that the values represented by the realm of the spiritual and the sacred transcend those exemplified by the rational or utilitarian sphere. The following passage expresses Weber's wistful regret for a way of life which he knows can never be recaptured:

Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations. It is not accidental...that today only within the smallest and intimate circles, in personal human situations, in pianissimo, that something is pulsating that corresponds to the prophetic pneuma, which in former times swept through the great communities like a firebrand, welding them together.

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Weber realizes that any attempt to imitate traditional ways of life, with their spiritual comfort and serenity, is nothing but romantic self-delusion. For Weber, this bygone era represents "an age of full and

beautiful humanity which can no more be repeated in the course of our cultural development than can the flower of the Athenian culture of antiquity."<sup>182</sup> Yet he is at odds as well with the naive optimism of the positivists, who believe that scientific knowledge is the pathway towards human betterment.

Thus it seems that Weber's perspective on modernity is distinguished by its ambivalence. Despite his awareness that the modern rational world is one of man's proudest achievements, he is constantly alert to the insidious dangers it represents. The nature of this contradiction will become clearer if we take account of Weber's 'axiological dualism',<sup>183</sup> which is evident in his assertion that "The tension between the value-sphere of 'science' and the sphere of 'the holy' is unbridgeable".<sup>184</sup>

This statement deserves further clarification. Rationality successfully allows man to exert control over his environment, and in this respect at least, is useful and necessary. But when rationality takes on its own autonomous existence- when means become ends- it runs rampant, extending its reach to encompass all spheres of life. In so doing, it effectively curtails the influence of 'the sphere of the holy'.

Weber's dualism thus rests on the antagonism between the two opposing value-spheres. It seems that an advance in one sphere can only be made at the expense of the other. The tension between civilization and culture is a theme which has been elaborated by many of Weber's contemporaries, particularly Toennies, whose Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft typology contained an implicit bias against modernity, and Simmel, for whom the dichotomy of ends and means was a "tragedy of culture".<sup>185</sup> For these theorists, therefore, the process of rationalization is inextricably linked with the retrogression of culture.

A similar theme is developed by Alfred Weber in his dichotomy of civilization and culture. The civilizational process (the spheres of science and technology for example) is concerned with mastery of the external world. This process is viewed by Weber as irreversible and is virtually synonymous with Max Weber's concept of 'rationalization'. Culture, in opposition to this, consists of the creative products (art, literature, philosophy, etc.) of a particular historical period, and therefore is not transferable.<sup>186</sup>

At first glance, Weber's dualism appears to have much in common with the cultural pessimism of

his contemporaries. But it seems that Weber is not a cultural pessimist, at least not in the manner in which this term is usually understood. According to Steven Seidman, cultural pessimism is a unique and specific outlook which includes the following characteristics. First, it rests on the notion that freedom and meaning are based on an all-encompassing world-view which creates an organic social unity. Second, it assumes that in modernity, this unity collapses, and that under such conditions, any hope for freedom and meaning is lost. Finally, cultural pessimism emphasizes that if meaning is to be restored, this can only be achieved through a return to the traditional organic order.<sup>187</sup>

Weber breaks with this position in two decisive ways: First, as has been noted, is his realization that a return to the pre-modern organic order is impossible. Second, and perhaps most important, is Weber's insistence that (as Seidman puts it on page 264) in modernity the nature of meaning is "transformed not extinguished". Weber points to the value-pluralism which is characteristic of the modern epoch. Values are no longer anchored within a religious or sacred world-view, but the predominance of a variety of secular values is not identical with amorality or nihilism. Rather, this plurality leads



us to the realization that:

...something can be sacred not only in spite of its not being beautiful, but rather because and in so far as it is not beautiful...And, since Nietzsche, we realize that something can be beautiful, not only in spite of the aspect in which it is not good, but rather in that very aspect...It is commonplace to observe that something may be true although it is not beautiful and not holy and not good..

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Thus, because the confirmation of values in the modern world has been transformed into a personal struggle, rather than that which is 'given', the individual faces a loss of security and certainty. But in spite of Weber's 'axiological dualism'- his realization that to a great extent the values represented by the 'rational' and those embodied by the sphere of 'the holy' are irreconcilable- Weber avoids the one-sided negativism typical of the cultural pessimists. Value-pluralism enhances both freedom and responsibility by liberating the individual from the constraints of a rigidly defined, all-encompassing moral order, and at the same time forces him to choose between conflicting values.

Weber admits that the burden of choice is too heavy for many of us. Few among us have the fortitude needed for a passionate and sustained commitment to

values. In the vocational sphere, where values must constantly be legitimized, the individual often abandons the effort, and thus "...the pursuit of wealth, stripped of its ethical and religious meaning, tends to become associated with purely mundane passions, which often actually give it the character of sport".<sup>189</sup>

But for those of us who are able to dedicate ourselves to the struggle, it seems that adherence to a personally chosen and consistently reaffirmed set of values offers our last, best hope for meaning in modernity. Thus, for Weber, the disenchanted world is Janus-faced. The decline in moral certitude is at least partially offset by opportunities for autonomy and responsibility. This is not to deny that Weber has an almost obsessive concern with the negative effects of rationality, but simply to recognize that his view of modernity is a subtle mingling of both despair and hope.

## Endnotes:

1. H.H.Gerth and C.Wright Mills. "Introduction", in From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. Translated and edited by H.H.Gerth and C.Wright Mills. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958) p.51.
2. Guenther Roth. "Introduction" in Economy and Society, Vol.1. Translated by Guenther Roth et. al., edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) p.lxiv.
3. Karl Loewith. Max Weber and Karl Marx. Translated by Hans Fantel. Edited with an introduction by T.Bottomore and W.Outhwaite. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982) p.41.
4. Arthur Mitzman. The Iron Cage. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970) p.180.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p.187.
7. Talcott Parsons. The Structure of Social Action, Vol.2. (New York: The Free Press, 1968) p.752.
8. Ibid.
9. Friedrich H.Tenbruck. "The Problem of Thematic Unity in the Works of Max Weber". British Journal of Sociology, Vol.51, no.3 (1980) 313-351.  
 Stephen Kalberg. "Max Weber's Types of Rationality: Cornerstones for the Analysis of Rationalization Processes in History". American Journal of Sociology, Vol.85, no.5 (1980) 1145-1179.  
 Rogers Brubaker. The Limits of Rationality (London: Allen and Unwin, 1984)  
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10. Tenbruck. "The Problem of Thematic Unity in the Works of Max Weber". p.334.

11. Tenbruck. "The Problem of Thematic Unity in the Works of Max Weber." p.322.
12. Ibid., p.345.
13. Ibid., p.333.
14. Critiques of Tenbruck's important article are offered by Wolfgang Schluchter. The Rise of Western Rationalism: Max Weber's Developmental History Translated with an introduction by Guenther Roth. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) Stephen Kalberg. "The Search for Thematic Orientation in a Fragmented Oeuvre: The Discussion of Max Weber in Recent German Sociological Literature" Sociology, Vol.13 (1979) 127-139. Steven Seidman. Liberalism and the Origins of European Social Theory. pp.252-255.
15. Kalberg discusses this at length in "Max Weber's Types of Rationality: Cornerstones for the Analysis of Rationalization Processes in History. Cf. also Donald Levine. "Rationality and Freedom: Weber and Beyond". Sociological Inquiry, Vol.51, no.1 (1981) 5-25.
16. Kalberg. "Max Weber's Types of Rationality: Cornerstones for the Analysis of Rationalization Processes in History". p. 1147. 7
17. Ibid., p. 1150.
18. Ibid., p. 1176.
19. Rogers Brubaker. The Limits of Rationality. p. 105.
20. Steven Seidman. Liberalism and the Origins of European Social Theory. p. 264.
21. Ibid.
22. Max Weber. "Objectivity in Social Science", in The Methodology of the Social Sciences. Translated and edited by Edward Shils and Henry Finch, with a forward by Edward Shils. (New York: Free Press, 1949) p. 72.

23. Max Weber. "Objectivity in Social Science" in The Methodology of the Social Sciences p. 111.
24. Ibid., p. 78.
25. Ibid., p. 90.
26. Ibid.
27. Max Weber. Economy and Society. Vol. 1. Translated by E. Fischhoff et. al. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Introduction by Guenther Roth. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) pp. 24-25.
28. Stephen Kalberg discusses this point in his essay, "Max Weber's Types of Rationality: Cornerstones for the Analysis of Rationalization Processes in History". p. 1148.
29. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol. 1, p. 400.
30. Ibid.
31. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol. 2, p. 975.
32. Weber. "The Social Psychology of the World Religions" in Gerth and Mills (eds.) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. p. 293.
33. Ibid., p. 275.
34. Ibid., p. 284.
35. Weber. Economy and Society Vol. 1, p. 85.
36. Weber. "The Social Psychology of the World Religions" in Gerth and Mills (eds.) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. p. 294.
37. Ibid., p. 293.
38. Max Weber. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Translated by Talcott Parsons and with an introduction by Anthony Giddens. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976.) Footnote #9, Chapter two, p. 194.

39. In his essay, "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions", in Gerth and Mills (eds.) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology pp. 323-359, Weber provides an array of examples to illustrate his radical perspectivism, and the value-conflict inherent in every sphere of life. Cf. also Stephen Kalberg, "Max Weber's Types of Rationality: Corner-Stones for the Analysis of Rationalization Processes in History", especially pp. 1155-1158, for an excellent discussion of this issue. Rogers Brubaker also includes a lengthy and illuminating explanation of value-perspectivism in his book The Limits of Rationality, see especially chapter three, "The Ethical Irrationality of the World", pp. 61-90.
40. Weber. "Objectivity in Social Science" in The Methodology of the Social Sciences p. 76.
41. Ibid., p. 78
42. Weber. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Footnote #9, chapter two, p. 194.
43. Weber. "Author's Introduction" in Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. p. 26.
44. Ibid.
45. Weber. "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions" in Gerth and Mills (eds.) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology p. 357.
46. Weber. "The Social Psychology of the World Religions" in Gerth and Mills (eds.) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology p. 293.
47. See Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1, pp.85-86. Also Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2, p.1095. Cf. also Weber. "Science as a Vocation" in Gerth and Mills (eds.) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology pp.138-139.
48. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1 pp.635-636.
49. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.1156, p.1402.

50. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol. 1 p.85.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p.82.
53. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1 p.636.
54. Ibid., p.637. Weber here laments the depersonalization of human relationships in the marketplace, which because of their purely economic, 'pragmatic' nature are incompatible with ethical regulations.
55. Ibid., pp.86-87. A similar point of view is offered by Georg Simmel in The Philosophy of Money. Translated by T.Bottomore and D.Frisby. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). Simmel argues that the use of money plays an important role in the increasing abstraction of modern culture, and the tendency to quantify (and thus diminish) all personal relationships. See especially pp. 150-152, and pp. 277-280.
56. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1 p.86.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., p.85.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., p.108-109.
61. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.1156.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid. p.980.
64. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1 p.86.
65. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 pp.656-657.
66. Ibid., p.656.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., p.657.
69. Ibid.

70. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.884.
71. Weber. Max Weber on Law in Economy and Society. Translation from Max Weber. Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, second edition, 1925, by Edward Shils and Max Rheinstein. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954) p.277.
72. Ibid., p.354.
73. Ibid., p.355.
74. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.672.
75. Ibid., p.656.
76. Ibid., p.672.
77. Ibid., p.978.
78. Ibid., p.789.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., p.812.
81. Ibid.
82. Anthony Kronman provides an informative discussion of Weber's ideas on legal rationality in his book Max Weber. (London: Arnold, 1983). See especially chapter four, "Formal Legal Rationality", pp.72-95.
83. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.894.
84. Ibid., p.895.
85. Ibid., pp.894-895.
86. Ibid., p.1402.
87. David Beetham clarifies this point in his book, Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974). See chapter three, "The Limits of Bureaucratic Rationality", especially pp.64-67.
88. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1 p.223.
89. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.998.



50. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol. 1 p.85.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p.82.
53. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1 p.636.
54. Ibid., p.637. Weber here laments the depersonalization of human relationships in the marketplace, which because of their purely economic, 'pragmatic' nature are incompatible with ethical regulations.
55. Ibid., pp.86-87. A similar point of view is offered by Georg Simmel in The Philosophy of Money. Translated by T.Bottomore and D.Frisby. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; 1978). Simmel argues that the use of money plays an important role in the increasing abstraction of modern culture, and the tendency to quantify (and thus diminish) all personal relationships. See especially pp. 150-152, and pp. 277-280.
56. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1 p.86.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., p.85.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., p.108-109.
61. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.1156.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid. p.980.
64. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1 p.86.
65. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 pp.656-657.
66. Ibid., p.656.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., p.657.
69. Ibid.

70. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.884.
71. Weber. Max Weber on Law in Economy and Society.  
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72. Ibid., p.354.
73. Ibid., p.355.
74. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.672.
75. Ibid., p.656.
76. Ibid., p.672.
77. Ibid., p.978.
78. Ibid., p.789.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., p.812.
81. Ibid.
82. Anthony Kronman provides an informative discussion of Weber's ideas on legal rationality in his book Max Weber. (London: Arnold, 1983). See especially chapter four, "Formal Legal Rationality", pp.72-95.
83. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.894.
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85. Ibid., pp.894-895.
86. Ibid., p.1402.
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90. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1 p.225.
91. Ibid.
92. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.1000.
93. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1 p.225.
94. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.2 p.1000.
95. Ibid., pp.956-967.
96. Ibid., p.958.
97. Ibid.
98. Weber. Economy and Society. Vol.1 p.85.
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100. Ibid., p. 988.
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