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**The Will to Act: An Analysis of
Max Weber's Sociology in the Light of Goethe's Fiction**

Isher-Paul Sahni

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Sociology & Anthropology

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ABSTRACT

The Will to Act: An Analysis of Max Weber's Sociology in the Light of Goethe's Fiction

Isher-Paul Sahni

Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic* and vocation essays are interpreted in the light of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, *Wilhelm Meister*, and *Faust*. Drawing on themes which frame the latter's novels, the importance of experience, renunciation, and a specialized vocation which underlie the 'will to act' will be developed. Following this, it will be shown these themes reemerge in Weber's sociology and his conceptualization self-conscious determination. This view argues that Goethe's notion of social action, which required devotion to a vocation which contributed to the growth and vitality of community, was the source of empowerment which framed Weber's sociology and understanding of meaningful social action.

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Table of Contents

1- Introduction	1
2- Goethe and Weber?: On the Status of the Metonym	13
3- Goethe's Novels: An Interpretation	21
3.1- The Paradox of Agency: Goethe's <i>Elective Affinities</i>	21
3.2- Renunciation and Specialization: Goethe's <i>Wilhelm Meister</i>	27
3.3- Beyond Good and Evil: Inner Conviction and the Deed in Goethe's <i>Faust</i>	33
4- Evil and 'Community': Goethe's Ontogenetic Philosophy	41
5- The Occidental City: Value-Rational Action in Weber's Concept of Community	47
6- The Fall From Grace: Weber's <i>Protestant Ethic</i>	53
6.1- Weber's Deed: The Calling and the Community	54
6.2- The Triumph of Evil: The Rationalization of Culture and Charisma	60
7- The Modern Vocation: The Realm of the Diabolical	66
7.1- Mephisto's Lair: <i>Politics as a Vocation</i>	66
7.2- 'Faust's Study': <i>Science as a Vocation</i>	70
8- Salvation Through Education: Enabling the 'Will to Strive'	75
9- Goethe Facing Weber: From Fiction to Sociology	83
- Conclusion	93
- Notes	95
- Bibliography	103

1- Introduction

As far as his art is concerned, even with a personality of Goethe's rank, it has been detrimental to take the liberty of trying to make his 'life' into a work of art. And even if one doubts this, one has to be Goethe in order to dare permit oneself such liberty. Everybody will admit at least this much: that even with a man like Goethe, who appears once in a thousand years, this liberty did not go unpaid for.

(Weber, 1958;137)

It is not difficult to argue that Goethe stands as Germany's greatest literary and poetic figure. Goethe himself embodied the essence of the last Renaissance man, who strove in the realms of literature, science, botany and governmental administration. While his profound influence on, and interaction with, the philosophical canons of Herder, Kant, and Hegel, have been well documented, his influence in the realm of sociological theory has remained virtually unexplored. The purpose of this inquiry therefore, is to unearth the profound influence that Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749-1832) work had on Max Weber's (1864-1920) conceptualization of the malaise and paradoxes of modern social action.

The present investigation involves an attempt to systematize the influence that Goethe's fiction, which is at once highly biographical, had on Weber's *Weltanschauung*. However, rather than focus on the biographical

affinities between the life of Goethe and that of Weber, or between that of the themes of Goethe's novels and Weber's life experiences, the focus of this investigation will be the theoretical and ethical themes which frame Goethe's novels and their subsequent reemergence in Weber's sociology. As we will see however, the unshakeable faith that Goethe held in the necessarily redemptive evolution of the human race was not shared by Weber.

Our analysis will begin with Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, in order to highlight the importance of choice in relation to Goethe's notion of action and the deed, which would subsequently frame the narrative of *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*. In interpreting *Elective Affinities*, it will be shown that the primary message of the novel lies in the individual's ability to *choose*. However, the paradox of choice, in the form of the recognition of one's *destiny* and the subsequent ability to *act* upon it, does not find resolution within the context of the novel. Rather, *Wahlverwandtschaften* leaves the reader with a highly ambiguous message as to how the contradiction inherent in the concept of elective affinity is resolved.

The notion of 'elective' implies on the one hand, the free-willed realm of ideas and choice, and thus election. While the notion of 'affinity', on the other hand, points to human compulsion, determinism, and therefore, interests. To be properly understood, the dialectic between these contradictory ontological spheres must be grounded in the coming to self-consciousness of *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*. For, it is in these works that

the ability of reflexive self-determined action, to mediate between the realms of knowledge and human interests, in addition to the active role which the individual played in the rebirth of the 'self' and the community are treated. Pivotal to Goethe's notion of self-determined action is the individual's continuous striving and eventual self-conscious renunciation of universal aspirations. This wisdom would provide meaning to Wilhelm Meister's travels, and serve as the foundation of Faust's redemption. Subsequently, the notions of striving and renunciation would in turn have considerable effect in shaping Weber's understanding of what it took to confront the demons of a disenchanted social order.

Goethe's unshakeable faith in the progress of humanity manifests itself symbolically in the actions and deeds of the characters of his novels. Without failure, Goethe's protagonists demonstrate the ability to harmonize the existing tension between 'absolute' and 'responsible' ethics, between their ideas and interests. This harmony moreover, is pivotal to Goethe's emphasis on individual redemption and empowerment through a 'will to act' and duty to renounce, and thus, to the intimate connection between the improvement of the individual and the betterment of the community.

The 'will to act' must be understood as central to the individual's desire and ability to find a sphere within modern society's differentiated social structure, for the expression of his being and potential. Therefore, while the notion of the 'will to act' bears an affinity to Nietzsche's 'will to power', insofar as it attempts to conceptually grasp the individual's will to

play an active part in the shaping of his destiny and fate. However, the 'will to act' does not entail the embrace of nihilism, nor the ubiquity of power implicit in Nietzsche's philosophy. Rather, a central element of the concept is the emphasis it places upon experience and the individual's eventual renunciation of universal aspirations. The idea of 'will' therefore, touches on the degree of reflexivity and self-consciousness demonstrated by the individual in her orientation towards social action. Thus, the self-discovery of one's being is pivotal to the individual's striving in an active and self-determined way, and not simply as the result of instrumental compulsion and materialist determination. The central element to the 'will to act' therefore, involves the individual's ability to ascribe *meaning* to her instrumental pursuits.

The catalyst of the striving demonstrated by Goethe's protagonists, centers on their desire to find a sphere within modern society in which to express their personal authenticity and thus harness their daemon.

Daemon

As stood the sun to the salute of planets
Upon the day that gave you to the earth
You grew forthwith, and prospered, in your growing
Heeded the law presiding at your birth.
Sibyls and prophets told it: You must be
None but yourself, from self you cannot flee.
No time there is, no power, can decompose
The minted form that lives and living grows.

(Goethe in Scaff, 1989:69 n82)

Goethe's notion of the daemon attempts to articulate the essence and primal

forces which are stamped upon the individual at birth. Anticipating Freud's conceptualization of the 'id', the daemon is understood as a potential source of human creativity and striving, as well as a potentially destructive power. If not eventually harnessed through the sense of meaning provided by active asceticism, the daemon could consume the individual, leading him to seek flight in the face of the 'disenchanted' instrumental demands of modern capitalism. For Goethe therefore, the key to modern social action lay in discovering the finitude of one's daemon and actualizing its creative power within the form and purpose of a specialized deed.

I'd like to unify myself,
But I seem to be always in two;
In everything I live to do
One of me's here, one there,
The first one praying hard for the rest,
The other all astrain!
Yet there's good council for a truce
Between the warring twain'
After the joy of knowledge
To the joy of deeds amain!'

(Goethe, 1933;100)

By way of coming into conflict and striving with the multiplicity of ethical and value-oriented dispositions towards social action which have emerged in modernity, this synthesis could be accomplished.

The experience which ensued from striving in and against the social world, manifests itself in a deeper understanding on the part of the individual about her daemon and subsequently her destiny. Therefore, striving in the various spheres of modern society and the ensuing

experience it provided, were *necessary* components in the individual's arrival at self-consciousness. Thus, Goethe's faith in human progress and the redemptive power of striving, ultimately finds resolution in the individual's eventual recognition of the need to renounce the worldly aspirations of mere experience, in favour of responsible social action. Therefore, the self-conscious determination of one's fate manifests itself in the individual's confinement and striving in the pursuit of a specialized vocation.

The notion of renunciation would be pivotal to the conclusion which Goethe gave to his *Elective Affinities*. However, it is in the adventures of *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust* that the primacy of a specialized calling, and its relationship to the individual's rejection of purely subjective and thus absolute goals emerges. The experience acquired through their striving would lead Goethe's protagonists to the realization that their deeds could only have meaning when realized within the sphere of material necessity. This type of active asceticism would in turn provide a link between individual pursuits and the community at large, insofar as the former assured the progression of the latter. The 'will to act' must, therefore, contain the elements of experience, self-discovery, and renunciation in the form of specialization. Thus, in the final analysis, the pivotal element of Goethe's notion of social action is the primacy of a specialized deed which attempts to transcend time by contributing to the material wealth of Western civilization. The sense of inner conviction and ultimate meaning

which accompany 'the deed' are linked to the transcendental nature of its contribution to the phylogenetic development of Occidental social structures. Once brought together, the totality of specialized deeds was the lynchpin of the community's fight against the realm of necessity. Therefore, the 'will to act' in the pursuit of a specialized vocation was fundamental to the species' subjective and objective redemption.

We know from the writings of Weber's wife that in his *Tertia*, the sociologist had read all forty volumes of the Cotta editions of Goethe's work (Marianne Weber, 1988;154-155). Weber would also come back to Goethe, as well as Gundolf's (1916) analysis of the famous poet/novelist, later in life during quiet moments with Marianne (1988;454). In her biography, Weber's wife would note that her husband had missed the heroism of Goethe (Marianne Weber, 1988;155). It is not however that Weber had missed the heroism of Goethe. Rather, the rationalization of culture and charisma which Weber witnessed was accompanied by a rise in the 'will to submit' to idle pursuits, and subsequently the desire to escape the responsible demands of modern social life of a nation.

Weber's 'overmen', who sought to give meaning to their world and actions through their isolated deeds, would manifest themselves for the first time in the Puritans' ascetic devotion to the demands of their calling. The striving and quest for authenticity which the Puritans demonstrated in their orientation towards social action points to the Goethean significance of their 'will to act'. This can be seen in Weber's sociological construction of

the Puritans' asceticism. The ability of the Puritan to mediate between value-rational and instrumental orientations towards the social world should be seen as paralleling the individual's ability to maintain a balance between his ideas and interests. This empowerment would be pivotal to the striving and sense of self developed by Goethe's protagonists.

Weber's frequent allusions to Goethe's *Elective Affinities* occupy a highly enigmatic place in the sociologist's writings. This fact led Thomas (1987) to categorize the status of Weber's allusions to the novelist as metonymic, and therefore resistant to any attempt to be systematically defined¹. This highly truncated, short hand form of reference assumes not only a high degree of intersubjectivity on the part of the reader, but in the end, can do no better than point the reader to an "etcetera clause" (Thomas, 1987;47). However, despite the disciplinary boundaries and highly ambiguous endings which Goethe gave to his novels, the importance of 'the deed' and responsible action should be seen as central to the interpretive framework and worldview through which Weber conceptualized his *Protestant Ethic* and vocation essays. It is in these works that Weber's allusions to *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust* predominate, and thus it is therein that we shall begin systematizing the metonym.

Weber's *Protestant Ethic* praised the modern individual who, following the decline of communitarianism in the Occidental city, and the dissolution of a unified religious worldview, was nonetheless able to give meaning to the world and her social action. Through continuous striving

and the submission to the demands of their callings, Weber's *Übermenschen* did not seek to make their lives into a work of art, but rather, to meet the demands and demons of modern capitalism and rationalized culture, through the renunciation of worldly aspirations and thus their self-chosen confinement to a specialized vocation.

The 'will to act' demonstrated by the Puritans points to Weber's twofold understanding of the source of their empowerment. On the one hand, the individualism and self-determination demonstrated by the Puritans allowed them to achieve inner authenticity and harmony insofar as their 'attitude of mind' would find its most suitable expression in the social structure of their age. On the other hand, the key which allowed the Puritans to ground their actions on deeply held convictions was their self-understanding as the active vehicles through which God worked. This in turn fuelled and served to inspire their isolated pursuits which, once brought together, would play a pivotal role in the renewal of God's community.

The golden age of bourgeois heroism, which formed the basis of Weber's praise would, in the final analysis, also chronicle the advent of a 'will to submit' and, therefore, the inability of the modern individual to achieve a harmonious balance between knowledge and human interests. This downfall, framed within the nomenclature of Goethe's novel, points to the death of the individual's elective ideas and the rise of mere affinity and compulsion. Therefore, the advent of modernity's 'iron cage' entailed the

triumph of evil in the shape of unreflexive, almost traditional acquiescence to the mechanistic, routinized demands of a rapidly industrializing German society.

The need to reawaken the individual's ability to mediate between 'absolute' and 'responsible' ethics would be pivotal to Weber's vocation essays and his understanding of the sociological themes of significance in Goethe's novels. Therefore, Weber's call for the political education and pedagogical reform of the nation should be seen as tantamount to a call for the rehabilitation of the 'will to act' in the modern individual.

The second chapter of the following inquiry will begin by concerning itself with a review of the existing literature detailing the relationship between Goethe and his fiction, and the sociology of Max Weber. Herein, it will be shown that the literature, while touching on many important themes, fails to provide us with a unified and thus coherent understanding of the intimate connection between both writers. The attempt to treat this issue begins with a critical review of Goethe's fiction in the third chapter. Thus, in reviewing Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels*, and *Faust*, the significant themes which will later reemerge in Weber's writings will be extracted. Therefore, the issues of choice, specialization, and inner conviction in social action will prove to be pivotal. In the fourth chapter, we will examine how the culmination of the themes dealt with in the previous section come to fruition when seen in the light of Goethe's ontogenetic

philosophy. Herein, the intimate connection between individual development and striving, and their implications for the renewal of community will guide the investigation. In the fifth chapter, will begin our analysis of Weber's sociology by highlighting the importance that the Occidental community played in the sociologist's understanding of the genesis of the modern individual's 'will to act'. Thus, the fifth chapter lays the foundation for the analysis of Weber's notion of 'the calling' as systematized in *The Protestant Ethic* in the following chapter. In the sixth chapter therefore, Weber's conceptualization of the Puritans' 'will to act' in their calling will be framed within Goethe's notion of 'the deed'. Subsequently, the transcendental nature of a specialized calling, so pivotal to the ending which Weber would give to his *Protestant Ethic* and its connection to the modern community, will frame the latter part of the analysis. In addition however, this chapter will also touch upon the demise of the modern 'will to act' at the hands of social and cultural rationalization as understood by Weber. In the seventh chapter we will pick up on the theme of cultural disenchantment and therefore, on the importance of the passionate pursuit of one's calling which frame Weber's vocation essays. In deconstructing these essays it will be shown that according to Weber, the sole means of achieving a 'state of grace' lay in the individual's inner conviction and pursuit of a specialized vocation. Subsequently, the eighth chapter will centre on the pivotal role that charismatic education would play in Goethe and Weber's conceptualization of the modern 'will to act'.

Thus, the focus of this section will be on the necessity of educational agendas to introduce the student to the multiplicity of competing value orientations which have emerged in rationalized communities. In this way, the individual should be encouraged to confront modernity's demons, and in the process come to a synthetic understanding of one's being and potential. Bringing the analysis to an end, the ninth and tenth chapters will conclude by reviewing the central features of Goethe's fiction, and their influence on Weber's sociology.

2- Goethe and Weber?: On the the Status of the Metonym

In 1973, Mitzman asserted that “Weber’s voluntarism is primarily of the more rational, Faustian variety” but that “the best studies of Weber’s thought have noted the similarities to Nietzsche” (Mitzman, 1973;7). Following Mitzman, in 1983 Kent reasserted the fact that “unlike Nietzsche’s influence on Weber, Goethe’s influence on him has received little attention. It seems most appropriate, therefore, to hope that someone will undertake a thorough study of Goethe’s impact on Weber”. (Kent, 1983;316-317). However, since Kent’s call for a more indepth inquiry into the relationship between the works of Goethe and Weber, the subject has still not received systematic treatment.

In 1978, Howe provided the English speaking intellectual community with the first inquiry into Weber’s use of Goethe’s notion of elective affinity. Howe argued that in order to discover what elective affinity meant for Weber, would necessitate discovering where it stood in the German order of discourse (Howe, 1978;367). Following this assertion, Howe goes on to trace systematically the allusions to Goethe’s novel as they appear in the corpus of Weber’s work. In the end, Howe concludes that Weber’s closest definition of elective affinity, as it appears in *Economy and Society*, presents the concept as the sole proposition that the social sciences could make about the nature of social phenomena². In the end, stressing the

Kantian bounds to this order of discourse, and asserting that it was “Heinrich Rickert who provided a starting point for Weber’s thought” (Howe, 1978;378), Howe concludes that Weber’s

actors are free in their choice of actual actions. Thus, history would be a logical chaos were it not for an order in the universe of the meanings to which those actors orient their actions. That order is to be found in the elective affinities of words, the greater or lesser extents to which they possess inner affinity through the intersections of their meanings.

(Howe, 1978;382)

Therefore, Howe reads Weber through the idealist lens of elective affinity³. This interpretation, combined with the former’s understanding of Weber as Rickert’s disciple, leads Howe to emphasize Weber’s focus on the social actor’s free willed orientation to formal systems of meaning. As a result of this interpretation, Howe undermines Weber’s emphasis on the importance of *social action* ⁴.

While Howe rightly acknowledges that a fundamental element of Weber’s notion of social action is that it must be meaningful to the individual (Howe, 1978;379: Weber, 1978;4), as we shall see, the contradiction inherent in Weber’s allusion to *Elective Affinities* should be understood as being transcended in the *act* of choosing one’s calling. The notions of choice and free-will are indeed central to Weber’s sociology and Goethe’s fiction. Both sought to ground the relationship between moral and social orders, and subsequently the potential unity of knowledge and human interests in the sense of empowerment which emerged from the act of

choosing one's calling, and submitting to its imperatives. Therefore, what should be seen as pivotal to Goethe and Weber's concern with the modern condition is how the individual's personality and daemon could find harmonious expression in a fragmented capitalist society.

Sharing Howe's concern for the German order of discourse which preceded and shaped Weber's *Weltanschauung* Kent (1983), in opposition to Tiryakian⁵, argues that Weber was led to interpret the asceticism of the Puritans through a Goethean and Nietzschean framework. Kent, therefore, understands Goethe to be the 'overman' who played a "surprising and inspiring" role in Weber's construction of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, and several other works (Kent, 1983;302). In addition to Goethe's status as the last 'universal man', Kent argues that *Faust* would remain a lifetime source of inspiration for Weber⁶ insofar as "the culminating message of *Faust*...is a song of praise to human action" (Kent, 1983;303). Coupled with the praise for human action echoed in *Faust*, Kent also acknowledges the importance of Weber's allusion to *Wilhelm Meister's Years of Travel* in *The Protestant Ethic*. *Wilhelm Meister*, along with *Faust*, stressed the importance of work and renunciation in the modern world (Kent, 1983;307). However, despite Kent's assertion that Goethe's fiction, like Nietzsche's philosophy was not a political narrative, which makes it very difficult to grasp the underlying imagery to their work in Weber's writings, he has unearthed a crucial piece of the puzzle by focusing on the themes which frame Goethe's novels.

In 1985, Kent pursued his inquiry into Goethe's impact on Weber, claiming that Goethe had such a profound influence on Weber that the former "apparently provided a model through which the famous sociologist interpreted his emotionally complex marriage with Marianne" (Kent, 1985;315). Kent, therefore, believes that Goethe's ascetic yet passionate relationship with Charlotte von Stein⁷ led Weber to "see his own relationship in this same light" (Kent, 1985;316). This fact was apparently not acknowledged by Marianne, who took an idealized conception of their marriage to the grave⁸.

In 1987, Thomas resumed the inquiry into Weber's use of elective affinity. Asserting that the latter had used the term to distance himself from both Marxist and functionalist positions (Thomas, 1987;39), Thomas goes on to argue that Weber's allusions to Goethe were symbolic of his belief that the realms of ideas and interests could not easily be distinguished (Thomas, 1987;40). In his article on *Ideology and Elective Affinity* (1987), Thomas provides a history of the various attempts to come to terms with Weber's enigmatic reference by dividing them into materialist and non-materialist accounts. Materialist accounts⁹, Thomas argues, while muting the importance of free-will and ideas, tend to interpret the dualism of elective affinity as operating either at i) different points in time, ii) at different levels of explanation or, and of particular importance here, that iii) these relationships are contingent.

Non-materialist accounts¹⁰, on the other hand, while acknowledging

the duality of Weber's reference, stress his disjuncture with Marx and thus the idealist horn of the conceptual dilemma (Thomas, 1987;44). In doing so, non-materialist accounts undermine the emphasis that Weber had placed on history and social structure and therefore, the role that interests play in shaping social action. Therefore, Thomas believes that in the final analysis, Weber's texts refute both materialist and non-materialist interpretations, leading him to propose that either the notion of elective affinity itself is hopelessly contradictory or, that both accounts share a presupposition which Weber does not. Thus, Thomas concludes that the reference to Goethe's novel is a metonymic one.

Thomas defines a metonym as a highly truncated analogy which demands a high degree of shared culture, making it difficult to grasp for those not steeped in the German tradition. However, the most difficult task of unearthing a metonymic reference lies in the fact that it "does not involve elaboration, it is alien to the process of extended and systematic comparison that can typify metaphoric reasoning. Indeed, the essence of metonymy is the opposite of elaboration" (Thomas, 1987;47).

The metonymic nature of Weber's allusion to Goethe's novel does not mean that its meaning will remain forever nebulous. Rather, Thomas makes the crucial attempt to arrive at an understanding of elective affinity by examining Goethe's concept of action. This in turn, leads him to focus on the *act of choosing*, as a means by which individuals come to discover themselves and begin expressing their inner nature. Thus, Thomas

understands Goethe, and subsequently Weber's notion of action, as attempting to synthesize the two ontologically different spheres which make up the dualism of elective affinity (Thomas, 1987;51). However, following Thomas' insightful inquiry, no systematic treatment of the issue and Thomas' approach have since appeared.

In 1989, the publication of Scaff's *Fleeing the Iron Cage* would turn the direction of scholarship towards Weber's appropriation of Goethe's 'daemon'. Goethe's notion of the daemon focused on the fate¹¹ and essence which are stamped upon every individual's personality and destiny. Following Greek tragedy, the notion of the daemon is seen as representing "both limitation and infinitude, actuality and possibility" (Scaff, 1989;69). Weber's allusion to Goethe's poem [1820] is understood by Scaff to be symptomatic of the former's experience of 'historical inevitability', which witnessed the "displacement of human action and meaning between infinite possibility and finite impossibility" (Scaff, 1989;70). This malaise of modernity would subsequently buttress Weber's belief in the necessity of the individual to renounce the 'absolute' aspirations of 'Faustian universality'. The adventures of Faust would see the middleaged doctor strive in the spheres of eroticism, science and economics. However, the diversity and *universalism* demonstrated by Faust, were no longer open to the modern individual.

Albrow's 1990 work on *Max Weber's Construction of Social Theory*, in the same vein as Scaff, also focused on the significance of

Goethe's daemon in Weber's writings. For Albrow, Goethe's poem referred to the necessary and limited aspect of the modern social identity which demanded that the potentially destructive and primitive power of passion, be held in check by the form of reason. For Weber then, the daemon "expressed the possibility to develop an *intellectual passion* through experience" (Albrow, 1990;70), a theme which is central to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and Weber's vocation essays. Therefore, Albrow argues that Weber drew on the creative synthesis of Goethe in an attempt to move beyond Nietzsche, and point to the synthesis of reason and passion, to the metaphysical connection (*Humanitätsideal*) by which all individuals were linked (Albrow, 1990;66).

The existing literature on Goethe's influence on Weber in addition to attempting to trace the synthetic influence of the former's 'will to act' in Weber's sociology, has focused on the problematic nature of elective affinity and the significance that Goethe's novels would have on Weber's worldview. Thomas (1987) has pointed us in the right direction by attempting to ground the enigma of elective affinity in Weber's Goethean conceptualization of action as touched upon by Kent (1983). Kent moreover, has gone a step further in highlighting the importance of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*, and thus the primacy of experience and renunciation which frame the novels. Finally, authors such as Scaff (1989) and Albrow (1990) have provided yet another piece of the puzzle by focusing on Goethe's notion of the daemon and thus the harmony that

must be achieved between the individual's creative potential and the constraints of a modern social structure.

What remains to be done is a systematic inquiry into the ethical themes that appear in Goethe's novels and the way in which they shape Weber's understanding of the nature of modern social order. Moreover, while Weber's Goethean conception of action has been touched upon, the ramifications of the ethical/communal responsibility tied to Goethe's notion of action remain to be fleshed out. Therefore, Goethe's notion of 'the deed', and the way it manifests itself in Weber's conceptualization of 'the calling', the dilemmas of modern social action, and community sociation have yet to be explored. An attempt will be made here to link these concepts, and therefore, to bring to fruition the intimate relationship between ascetic-individualism and the development of community in the Occidental world.

3- Goethe's Novels: An Interpretation

The following section will concern itself with a summary and critical analysis of three of Goethe's works of fiction¹². In analyzing Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*, an attempt will be made to extract their sociological themes in order to more clearly emphasize their reemergence in Weber's writings. While our point of departure begins with an analysis of Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, the importance of *choice*, and its relationship to the individual's destiny which frames the novel, will ultimately find resolution only when grounded in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*. For, it is in these works that the protagonists come to realize that the synthesis of choice, duty, and the recognition of one's destiny can only be realized in *responsible social action*.

3.1- The Paradox of Agency: Goethe's *Elective Affinities*

The term 'elective affinity' was in the eighteenth century, and is for the most part today a marginal word¹³. It entered the German order of discourse in 1779 through Wiegand's translation (*Wahlverwandtschaft*) of Torborn Bergman's notion of *attractio electiva*. Bergman's conceptualization dealt with the chemical process of elective affinity which involved laws of association and disassociation among elements in a

chemical compound. However, it is not through chemistry that the term entered the non-scientific realm of Germany's stock of knowledge. Rather, the philosophical and 'popular' use of elective affinity would enter the German order of discourse via the writings of Immanuel Kant and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Howe, 1978).

Goethe's *Elective Affinities* was initially meant to be a part of *Wilhelm Meister*, however, it eventually grew into an independent novel first published in 1809. The central issue of the novel has been framed by Winkelman as concerned with the question of whether matter is inert or possesses volition. In the end, following Winkelman's (1987) and Constantine's (1994) interpretation, it will be shown that the narrative of the novel does indeed point to the latter.

The chemical reaction of Goethe's *Elective Affinities* is framed within a tale of adultery. The by all appearances happy couple of Eduard and Charlotte, out of concern for his friend and her niece, invite the two guests to spend time with them on their estate. Almost immediately upon the arrival of Eduard's friend (the Captain) and Charlotte's niece (Otilie), the theme of mutual attraction and divorce, polarity and intensification, would come into play. The illicit affairs pursued between Eduard and Otilie, and the Captain and Charlotte, eventually leads to the separation of Eduard from his wife, as the latter feels compelled to leave both Charlotte (who is pregnant with his child) and Otilie behind as he joins the Captain on a military campaign. With the decoration and discharge of the Captain

(now a Major) from the campaign, he and Eduard discuss giving into their passions and consummating their respective affairs. However, Eduard's return would have him see the death of his child and find Otilie (contrary to Charlotte's disposition towards the major) unwilling to succumb to her desire and pursue their love. Thus, the novel ends with Otilie's self-inflicted starvation and death, followed by that of Eduard, who ends up buried at her side.

Authors such as Gray (1967) and Thomas (1985) assert that the notions of polarity and intensification form the basis of Goethe's *Elective Affinities*. Thomas notes that

Goethe had his own philosophy of nature, marked by the concepts of 'polarity' and 'intensification', the former implied a dialectical division, everything splits, opposes, conflicts and comes to attract again, the latter implied constant progression, the movement to ever higher levels

(Thomas, 1985;50)

Goethe's notion of progression and evolution would not only have a significant influence on Hegel, (Willoughby, 1969;11: Kaufmann, 1980;57) but would also provide the basis for Goethe's *Theory of Colours* ¹⁴ published in 1810. The notions of 'polarity', 'intensification', and thus individual and cultural *evolution* were pivotal to Goethe's optimistic and unified worldview. As we shall see however, these themes would dominate Goethe's fiction in the form of the protagonist's arrival at *self-consciousness determination*.

Regarding *Elective Affinities*, Thomas asserts that "[c]ritics

complained that Goethe failed to make clear the precise role of natural determinism and freedom of action in social life” (Thomas, 1985;50). Authors such as Barnes, in the same vein, note that the message of the novel is at best highly ambiguous (1967;201). However, as Willoughby has pointed out, despite three willing participants the expected chemical process does not occur. The key to this apparent twist of fate is to be found in the fourth chapter of Goethe’s novel, wherein one night the Captain explains the concept of elective affinity to Charlotte.

The first thing we notice about all the substances we encounter in Nature is that each is always drawn to itself. It may sound strange to say something so self-evident, but only once we have fully understood the things we are familiar with can we proceed together towards the things which we are not familiar.

(Goethe, 1994;30)

The introduction of the concept is further elaborated upon by Eduard, who goes on to assert that when concerned with the different natures of the objects involved,

[s]ometimes they will meet as friends and old acquaintances and come together quickly and be united without either altering the other at all, as wine for example mixes with water. But others will remain strangers side by side and will never unite even if mechanically ground and mixed. Thus oil and water shaken will immediately separate again.

(Goethe, 1994;31)

In the end however, the key to the equation is voiced by the Captain who, speaking of the chemical processes between substances such as limestone and sulphuric acid, and the resulting creation of gypsum, asserts that

[a] separation and new combination have come about and one feels justified in using the term “elective affinity”, because it really does seem as though one relationship were *preferred* to another and a *choice* made for one over the other.¹⁵

(Goethe, 1994;33)

Therefore, even while discussing the relationship between soulless and inert substances, the emphasis of the discourse appears to turn on the issue of volition and the *decision* to combine or not¹⁶. Thomas, drawing on Gundolf’s (1916) analysis¹⁷ of the dichotomy between fatalism and moral autonomy which frames the novel, asserts that

Goethe had attempted to overcome just such division, in that natural law, determinism expresses itself precisely in and through the free actions of beings acting in accord to their nature. Natural determinism, could be recognized only in its meaningful consequences, and each individual, each character does not so much create their fate as *be* it

(Thomas, 1985;50)

What emerges as the pivotal theme of the novel is the extent of the individual’s reflexivity and ability to recognize his fate, and subsequently to *act* upon it. Therefore, it was in the process of acting on the recognition of one’s fate that a balance could be achieved between the individual’s ideas and affinities. Eduard, despite the normative implications involved in divorcing Charlotte to pursue an affair with her niece, finds his calling after a period of self-imposed exile in a military campaign, and thereby contains his daemon through the realization his destiny. The ‘intensification’ and self-discovery which emerged from Eduard’s

separation would lead him to act on his love for Otilie. While the latter, for her part, came to understand that it is not in her daemon to succumb to the sway of her passion for Eduard. Rather, like Kafka's hunger artist, Otilie would be driven to self-inflicted starvation and death in the pursuit of her ascetic ideal.

Underlying the importance placed on the individual's arrival at self-discovery was Goethe's unshakeable faith in the metaphysical connection between all individuals. This fact is demonstrated in the profound symbolic complexity of Goethe's novel. The characters of *Elective Affinities* all share the same handwriting, the child, before its death, comes to resemble all four actors who, we later discover, all share the same name¹⁸. Therefore, Thomas' (1987) emphasis on the novel's themes of polarity and intensification, and their eventual resolution through re-attraction, can also be understood as a process rooted in the individual's quest for self-consciousness. The turning point and unity of this process occurs in self-determined social action, wherein the individual is able to bring the dialectic between her ideas and interests into harmony.

The primacy of the issues of passion, fate, and free-will as expressed in *Elective Affinities*, while highlighting the importance of the individual decision, lacks the systematic treatment of action and the part that the individual plays in creating her fate. Therefore, Goethe's notion of 'the deed' and subsequently active asceticism, finds its most poignant expression and systematic elaboration in the sagas of *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*. The

emphasis on personal development and the importance of specialized deeds which transcend time underlie these works, and their protagonists' adventures. The ability to arrive at an authentic personality and understanding of self through experience and asceticism find their most systematic treatment¹⁹ in these two these novels. Consequently, it is to the importance of Goethe's emphasis on 'the deed' to which we must turn our attention, in order to ground and come to terms with the dualism and paradoxes which haunt *Elective Affinities*.

3.2- Renunciation and Specialization: Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*

Goethe began working on *Wilhelm Meister* in 1776. After undergoing many transformations, the novel would first be published in 1796 in the form of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. In 1821, and a later enlarged edition published in 1829, Goethe would bring a conclusion to Wilhelm's adventures with the publication of *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*.

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship centres on the protagonist's quest for a life of inner cultivation and escape from the purely instrumental demands of modern social life, within the intersubjective unity of a utopian community. Wilhelm's rapture with puppet shows at an early age in the first book of *The Apprenticeship* would lead to his eventual participation in an acting troop, and the creation of a national theatre²⁰. Schiller noted that

it was at this point that Goethe's novel became the prototype of the *Bildungsroman*, insofar as the emphasis of the novel was not on the "external object of Wilhelm's life, but on his own personal self-fulfilment: that is on 'Bildung', the formation of personality" (Pascal, 1956;7). However, Goethe's narration in the fifth book, like the opinion held by Wilhelm's father and the more rationalistic Werner, expresses skepticism about such purely inner quests.

Thus Wilhelm, striving to become consistent with himself, was deviating farther and farther from wholesome consistency; and this confusion made it easier for his passions to employ their whole artillery against him, and thus still farther to perplex his views of duty.

(Goethe, 1839 vol.1;314)

In the end, despite a letter from Werner urging Wilhelm to partake in the market of civic life²¹, the latter had "convinced himself that, except on the stage, he could nowhere find that mental culture which he longed to give himself" (Goethe, 1839 vol.1;318). The ending of fifth and sixth books²² however, would see Wilhelm begin his translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*²³ for the acting troop, in addition to receiving well heeded advice from the Physician who would assert that

[t]o be active is the primary vocation of man; all the intervals in which he is obliged to rest, he should employ in gaining clearer knowledge of external things, for this will in its turn facilitate activity.

(Goethe, 1839 vol.1;442)

Wilhelm's recognition and acquiescence to the message echoed by Werner, the Physician, and the Abbé²⁴ becomes objectified in the eighth book. The

arrival of Wilhelm's son Felix leads the former to the realization that human action must in all circumstances, attempt to transcend time.

Everything that he proposed commencing was to be completed for his boy; everything that he erected was to last for generations. In this sense his apprenticeship was ended..."O needless strictness of morality," exclaimed he, "while Nature in her own kindly manner trains us to all that we require to be! O strange demands of civil society, which first perplexes and misleads us, then asks of us more than Nature herself! Woe to every sort of culture which destroys the most effectual means of all true culture, and directs us to the end, instead of rendering us happy on the way!"

(Goethe, 1839 vol.2;70)

Wilhelm Meister's Travels would see its protagonist abandon his quest for cultural capital in the form of *Bildung*, by renouncing his purely inner aesthetic quest and confronting the external demands of a disenchanted modern society. As in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, pure inwardness is condemned as hollow and abstract, leading Lukács to assert that the theme of "overcoming sterile romanticism fills the whole novel" (Lukács, 1969;58).

In limiting his strivings to a specialized vocation, Wilhelm's adventures in the *Wanderjahren* end with his decision to become a surgeon, in addition to travelling with Lenardo's acting troop. Therefore, synthesizing his aesthetic delight in the theatre with a specialized vocation which served the demands of civil life, Wilhelm's 'self' arrives at state of inner harmony insofar as his daemon would find suitable expression in the social structure of his time²⁵.

One of the primary themes which frames Goethe's novel is indicated in the alternative subtitle to *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, viz. 'The Renunciants'. In addition to picking up on the struggle between the poet and bourgeois life so painfully expressed in *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Lukács contends that Wilhelm's quest to synthesize his inner life with the outer world demonstrates the extent to which individuals are continually threatened by a potential loss of self. For want of a cohesive centre formed by activity, and which originates in the core of each individual's personality, the malaise of modernity demanded inner conviction as a means of centering the self (Lukács, 1968;55: Lukács, 1971;132). Thus, Lukács interprets Wilhelm as coming to the realization that the development of the individual lies in his renunciation of purely inner, subjective pursuits and ideals, in favour of active involvement in the external world (Lukács, 1971;135). Social action in a post-classic era required renouncing universal and absolute²⁶ aspirations, and confining one's self to a particular and specialized sphere of social activity.

In contrast to Lukács, Reiss noted that the first plot of *Wilhelm Meister*²⁷ shows no hint of the emphasis on renunciation and specialization which underscore its final edition (Reiss, 1969;226). In pursuing his analysis of *Wilhelm Meister*, Reiss touches upon the transcendental experience of facing death as having had a pivotal effect on Wilhelm's striving. Thus, the "bag of instruments which the surgeon produces when Wilhelm lies wounded becomes a pointer to his inclination to heal others.

Outward experience confirms a natural disposition.” (Reiss, 1969;241). Reiss therefore, focuses on the experience that Wilhelm undergoes prior to his renunciation, and the way in which his daemon finds expression in the social structure of his time. According to Lukács however, the lynchpin lies in the novel’s emphasis on specialization and social utility. These themes find their most vivid symbolic expression in *The Travels*, wherein Wilhelm’s surgical knowledge²⁸ would enable him to save his son’s life following a riding accident.

The pressure to pursue one’s striving in the external sphere of material necessity²⁹ and confine activity to a specialized sphere, is pivotal insofar as it helps one’s fellow man and thus contributes to the development of the community. This would be a central theme which runs throughout Wilhelm’s adventures. A quintessential example of this prompting and *reasoning* is voiced by Jarno, who announces to Wilhelm that

a man, when he first enters upon life, should think highly of himself, should determine to attain many eminent distinctions, should endeavour to make all things possible; but when his education has proceeded to a certain pitch, it is advantageous for him that he learn to lose himself among a mass of men, that he learn to live for the sake of others, and to forget himself in an activity prescribed by duty. It is then that he first becomes acquainted with himself; for it is conduct alone that compares us with others. You shall soon see what a curious little world is at your very hand, and how well you are known to it.

(Goethe, 1839 vol.2;69)

In the end, Wilhelm would do just this. His desire to give back to the community in the form of his aesthetic contributions to a national theatre

and his translation of Shakespeare are suppressed and incorporated³⁰ in his scientific vocation. Therefore, the educational and communal ideal represented in *Wilhelm Meister* is one of

the discovery of those methods with whose help the dormant forces in each individual human being might be aroused to fruitful activity, to the kind of understanding of, and grappling with reality which the development of the personality requires.

(Lukács, 1968:61)

In striving to define and find a niche for the expression for his personality in the social structure of his time, Wilhelm arrives at the self-conscious recognition of what he must do in order to actualize his authenticity. The wisdom of his chosen deed would see Wilhelm achieve a balance between his ideas and interests, between 'absolute' and 'responsible' imperatives through the confinement of his strivings to a scientific vocation which gave back to future generations. However, it is perhaps in Goethe's *Faust* wherein the catalyst for human renunciation and specialization receives its most lucid expression. The ubiquity of evil in the form a 'disenchanted' cosmos is what underlies Faust's *Angst*, and is therefore what leads to his striving, 'will to act', and eventual desire to overcome the transitoriness of his mortal existence.

3.3- Beyond Good and Evil: Inner Conviction and The Deed in Goethe's *Faust*

Goethe's most famous work, *Faust*, provided a project which occupied its author for the whole period of his mature life. *Faust Part One* was published in 1806, with the second part being published, at Goethe's request, posthumously in 1833. While debates exist as to whether *Faust* should be read as one saga, or two distinct narratives with separate themes³¹, following Wayne³², the adventures of the middle aged doctor will be treated as an integrated narrative which addresses amongst many things the 'disenchantment' of modern culture.

Faust, to do great injustice to Goethe, and put it briefly, chronicles the adventures of a middleaged doctor searching for a moment of such sheer rapture that he would wish to cease his worldly striving. Disenchanted in the face of a meaningless world, and armed with empirical/analytical tools which, in the end, undermine his ability to ground any belief on the conviction of deeply held faith, the image of Faust developed by Goethe in 'Faust's Study (i)' can be seen as bearing a resemblance if not to Weber the man, then to the modern individual coming to grips with the loss of meaning³³ which pervaded rationalized societies.

Faust: Philosophy I have digested,
The whole of Law and Medicine,
From each its secrets I have wrested,
Theology, alas, thrown in.

Poor fool, with all this I sweated lore,
I stand no wiser than I was before.

.....

I have, I grant, outdistanced all others,
Doctors, clergy and lay-brothers;
All plague of doubts and scruples I can quell,
I have no fear of devil or of hell,
And in return am destitute of pleasure,
Knowing that knowledge tricks us beyond measure,
That man's conversion is beyond my reach,
Knowing the emptiness of what I teach.

(Goethe, 1949;43)

While the focus of *Faust Part One* is largely on the inability of Mephistopheles to bring an end to Faust's striving³⁴ through a failed love affair with Gretchen, the narrative nonetheless points to the importance of responsible social action in the form of the deed. In perhaps the most crucial scene of the play, 'Faust's Study (ii)' would see the middle aged doctor begin his translation of the gospel of St-John with the utterance

'Tis writ, 'In the beginning was the Word.'
I pause, to wonder what is here inferred.
The Word I cannot set supremely high:
A new translation I will try.
I read, if by the spirits I am taught,
This sense: 'In the beginning was the Thought'
This opening I need to weigh again,
Or sense may suffer from a hasty pen.
Does Thought create, and work, and rule the hour?
'Twere best: 'In the beginning was Power.'
Yet, while the pen is surged with willing fingers,
A sense of doubt and hesitancy lingers.
The spirit comes to guide me in my need,
I write, 'In the beginning was the Deed'.

(Goethe, 1949;71)

Faust's dissatisfaction with the biblical emphasis on the subjective world,

echoes the disenchantment that Wilhelm would come to realize in his pursuit of purely inner cultivation. Doubting the creative power of pure thought in 'The Word', Faust feels compelled to assert the priority of the deed as the 'will to act' which ultimately redeems human beings.

Faust Part Two, would by most accounts, see the salvation of the much erring and striving Faust³⁵. Faust's summoning of Helen of Troy³⁶, his stint as a court minister, general, and economist³⁷, ends with his securing of 'dominion' and loss of sight. However, despite Faust's inability to recognize that the apparent sound of construction that he hears is actually his grave being dug, as we will see, the strength of Faust's *inner conviction* empowers him until the end.

Binswanger feels that the reason for Faust's salvation is twofold. On the one hand, Mephistopheles' deal with God in the 'Prologue in Heaven' implies that in erring and striving, Faust creates the precondition for his redemption (Kaufmann, 1980;68: Binswanger, 1994;48: Goethe, 1949; 41-42). On the other hand, Binswanger also notes that Faust in fact does not wager his soul, but rather, wagers that which was most important to Benjamin Franklin and the modern individual, time.

If I be quieted with a bed of ease,
Then let that *moment* be the end of me!
If ever flattering lies of yours can please
And soothe my soul to self-sufficiency,
And make me one of pleasure's devotees,
Then take my soul, for I desire to die:
And that's a wager!³⁸

(Goethe, 1949;87)

Faust pledges “time’s infinity in the sense of unlimited progress and the unlimited growth of the economy. He pledges humanity’s *time*.” (Binswanger, 1949;50), a wager that Binswanger believes he ultimately loses. The importance of Binswanger’s analysis however, is that it serves to highlight Goethe’s emphasis on the fact that the soul was a meaningless entity for the modern individual. Subsequently, Faust “sees his whole happiness in technological progress and the *infinite* growth of prosperity” (Binswanger, 1994;49). In the end, Faust’s happiness would be realized and eternalized through modern alchemy, in the form of social action and an economic deed which transcended time.

In opposition to Binswanger, Heller questions the extent to which Faust’s striving assured his salvation, claiming that in the end he is smuggled into heaven (Heller, 1968;134). However, if one looks closely, the redemptive nature of continuous striving introduced in ‘Prologue in Heaven’ is repeated in the fifth and final act of *Faust Part Two*, as Heaven’s angels would reassert that

‘For he whose strivings never cease
Is ours for the redeeming’

(Goethe, 1959;282)

Following Lukács’ claim that in practical activity Faust fulfils his desire to join theory and practice (Lukács, 1968;215), these debates no longer become pivotal. Rather, what should be seen as central to Goethe’s *Faust*, like Weber’s *Protestant Ethic*, is what their respective protagonists *believed* in the end to be their fate. The strength of Faust’s conviction lies

in his assertion

So realm and rule to me will fall;
The glory's nought, the deed is all.

(Goethe, 1959;220)

The pivotal element of 'the deed' which ultimately redeems Faust, is his struggle and striving for inner and outer mastery within the modern world. Therefore, before committing to their respective deeds, Faust and Wilhelm's 'disenchantment' with the modern world would lead first to their quest for self-consciousness and then to their transcendental deeds. In the final act of *Faust Part Two*, we find that the elderly doctor has accumulated a considerable amount of wealth, land, and property, and therefore, secured a hold on the forces of nature through *dominium*³⁹. However, Faust remains distressed about a final segment of land which he cannot acquire to complete his dominion. The elderly couple of Philemon and Baucis, allegories for the persistence of traditionalism, refuse to part with their land. Unable to persuade them, Faust eventually summons Mephistopheles' help who, no more successful than his predecessor, returns to announce that after threatening and forcibly moving the couple they had died of fright (Goethe, 1959;261-262). Although distressed with Mephistopheles' tactics, Faust demonstrates no sign of remorse. In the end, he is content to have "carried out wisdom's plan, [a]nd added living-space for man" (Goethe, 1959;258). The 'Midnight' scene of act five confirms Faust's apparent peace of mind insofar as the angel Guilt discovers that she is unable to burden him. Ultimately it is the angel Care, who, passing

through the key-hole, asserts her ability to pester the modern individual⁴⁰.

Care:

Faced with bliss or faced with sorrow,
he defers it to the morrow,
Always on the future waiting,
Never anything consummating.

(Goethe, 1959;266)

However, the *Angst* which pursued the modern burgher would also have no effect on Faust, who sought “to escape by advancing into the alchemical world of value creation which he has created himself and from which Care is excluded” (Binswanger, 1994;53). Realizing that ultimately she has no power over Faust, Care blinds him. Faust, however, remains unfazed, exclaiming

Deep falls the night, in gloom precipitate;
What then? Clear light within my mind shine still;
Only the master’s word gives action weight,
And what I framed in thought I will fulfil.

(Goethe, 1959;267)

The inner light which Faust perceives is ultimately the light of his inner conviction in the deed, in his ability to transcend time by giving to following generations through an economic act. His harbour, worked land, and creation of jobs⁴¹ leads the now blinded Faust to assert:

What joy the clash of spades now brings to me!
Thus toil my people for me without cease;

.....

Infecting all that we have gained;
Our gain would reach its greatest pride
I work that millions may possess this space,
If not secure, a free and active race.
Here man and beast, in green and fertile fields,
Will know joys that new-won region yields,

Will settle on the firm slopes of a hill
Raised by a bold and zealous peoples skill.

(Goethe, 1959;268-269)

The sense of conviction and subsequent lack of moral remorse concerning the fate of Philemon and Baucis expressed by Faust, also comes with his realization that these “struggles go much deeper and bear on the *total context*, on the social and human *bases* of his whole way of acting, of his whole situation from which the destruction of Philemon and Baucis necessarily resulted.” (Lukács, 1968;210). Therefore, the modern capitalist world was a realm of evil; differentiated, ethically vacuous, and lacking in the intersubjective unity of pre-modern times. The modern individual was condemned to strive against evil so that good, and the species might prevail. This fact was ultimately *recognized* by Faust who, through a transcendental deed, found inner conviction through responsible social action. In giving back to the community, Faust effectively overcame the transitoriness of mortal existence. While Faust’s arrival at self-conscious determination allowed him to assure himself of ‘salvation’, Goethe’s unshakeable faith in human development is demonstrated in the ‘Prologue’ wherein the Lord assures Mephistopheles that the striving Faust’s redemption is inevitable.

Central to Goethe’s ontogenetic philosophy is the idea that the development of the individual, which culminates in the ‘will to act’ and transcendental deed, must contribute to the community’s fight against the realm of necessity. In this way, the individual’s actions could transcend the

finitude of her own existence by contributing to the infinitude of the species phylogenetic development.

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4- Evil and 'Community': Goethe's Ontogenetic Philosophy

Central to *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*, is the dialectical relationship between the individual's striving and ethical formation, and the ramifications that they entailed for the good of the community. Goethe's conceptualization of the ethical basis of an economy stressed that private property "should not be abolished, but managed by the owner in such a way that it also benefits the community as a whole" (Binswanger, 1994;104). This sentiment would be echoed in *Wilhelm Meister's Years of Travel*.

Let each endeavor to appreciate, maintain and increase property that has been granted to him by nature and fate, let him use all his skills to extend as far around as his grasp will reach; but while this is happening let him always be mindful as to how he will let others participate in it: for the wealthy are esteemed insofar as they enable others to benefit.

(Goethe, 1980;63-64)

Therefore, as Kaufmann notes, Goethe's attitude "harks back to Socrates' confident agnosticism in Plato's *Apology*: a man should do his work with courage and intensity, serving others by making the most of his unique gifts and by encouraging others to develop theirs" (Kaufmann, 1980;69). The glory and sense of accomplishment that such activity could bring would begin to dawn on Wilhelm in the fourth book of *The Apprenticeship*. In this section, Goethe's narration would point to

Wilhelm's growing appreciation of the sense of beauty and construction that Werner felt in participating in trade.

He now, for the first time, felt how pleasant and how useful it might be to become participator (sic) in so many trades and requisitions, and take a hand in diffusing activity and life into the deepest nooks of the mountains and forests of Europe.

(Goethe, 1839;304)

Unlike the romantics of his time⁴², Goethe came to realize that within the fragmented social order of modernity, there could be no return to the unity of the Greek and Norse communities. Rather, for Goethe

[t]he poetically comprehending creature is again beset by apprehension, the idyllic order threatened by a multitude of demons demanding to be placated in their wildness, revered in their incalculable dominion, and conquered no longer by pretty fancies but only through more energetic activity of the spirit.

(Heller, 1975;92)

In order to overcome the apprehension and melancholy which arose in a meaningless cosmos wherein the death of one's inner voice and the inability to find answers in the external world prevailed, the perfection of self through transcendental worldly activity was the only means of salvation.

Prior to the willing of transcendental deeds which give back to the community, Goethe's ontogenetic theory stressed that the individual must first struggle against the evil of a multiplicity of ethical orientations and social strata which have emerged in contemporary society. Confronting modernity's demons therefore, is a prerequisite for the individual's ability

to placate his own daemon through self-discovery and the active creation of his own, and subsequently the community's fate. "The struggle between good and evil engenders the forward direction of evolution; even evil can be a vehicle of objective progress." (Lukács, 1968;197). Therefore, following the ruse of Hegel, evil is seen as containing a kernel of good, so long as the individual had the strength to strive against it.

Cottrell argues that Goethe's *Faust* focused on the problem of evil as a modern one, and thus concerned itself primarily with the struggles of the maturing self (Cottrell, 1982;66). As a result, Mephistopheles' presence should be seen as a powerful force in the evolution of individual and collective consciousnesses. In tempting Faust with love, wealth, and the idle pleasures of vain rapture Mephisto in the end functions in the service of Eros. The latter therefore, is pivotal to Faust's emergence in *Part Two* as a man of social action, who synthesized the imbalance in his soul between thought and feeling through willing. The 'fallen state' of the individual echoed in *Meister* and *Faust's* quest for salvation, eventually leads to their respective redemption with their arrival at ethically *self-conscious determination*; the key to maintaining a balance between knowledge and human interests.

Goethe's concern with the development of personality must be seen as coupled with that of a concern for the community, for the progression of the individual is ultimately tied to the development of the species. Therefore, the perfection of the individual, and the higher idea the she

represents, would be a central concern of Goethe's conceptualization of the individual's ontogenetic development. The key to this perfection, and subsequently happiness, was renunciation and asceticism in the form of the deed, a sentiment realized by Faust with blinding clarity, and voiced by Jarno in the eighth book of *The Travels*.

A man is never happy till his vague striving has itself marked out its proper limitation. It is not to me that you must look, but to the Abbé: it is not of yourself that you must think, but of what surrounds you. Thus, for instance, learn to understand Lothario's superiority; how his quick and comprehensive vision is inseparably united with activity; how he constantly advances; how he expands his influence, and carries every one along with him.

(Goethe, 1839 vol.2;127)

While the deed is the means to self-discovery and self-affirmation, the 'categorical imperative', which demanded an intimate connection between the 'will to act' and betterment of the community is what ultimately empowers and underlies the individual's *faith*, and redeems the species. Therefore, "man becomes a collaborator in the spiritual renewal of the earth itself...the renewal of community is thus complemented by that of the spiritual *renewal of the earth*." (Cottrell, 1982;272).

For Goethe, fate and determinism demanded the recognition and active fulfilment of one's being within the confines of a rationalized, stratified social structure. The importance of social action for Goethe therefore, is that in committing to 'the deed' individuals come to recognize their own authenticity and infuse their existence and the cosmos with

meaning. For, in the final analysis, the 'will to act' of Goethe's protagonists is coupled with the fact that their actions serve to perpetuate the development of the community and the species.

A good man in his dark, bewildered course
Will not forget the way of righteousness.

(Goethe, 1949;41-42)

Goethe's belief in the metaphysical connection between all beings, and his ultimate faith⁴³ in the striving and socially responsible actions of the modern individual would lead him to ignore the question of the contingent nature of the 'will to act'. For Weber however, the historical particularities which gave rise to this modern 'will' and asceticism was a question which would weigh heavily on his mind.

We began the third chapter with an analysis of Goethe's novels. In interpreting the central theme of *Elective Affinities*, it was shown that the emphasis on individual choice was pivotal. While the novel touches upon the nature of choice in relation to the individual's personality, the harmony that must be achieved between the individual's daemon and social structure, and thus the significance of *social action*, would only come to fruition in the sagas of Wilhelm Meister and Faust. Therefore, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels* would center on the protagonist's experience, self-discovery, and synthetic renunciation. Moreover, the lesson learnt by Wilhelm would lay the foundations for the primacy of transcendental action in the form of a specialized vocation. Turning to Goethe's *Faust*, we ended our analysis by rounding out the notion of the 'will to act' with the

sense of inner conviction and empowerment which accompany 'the deed'. However, in the final analysis, it was shown the sense of redemption and empowerment which accompany 'the deed' were intimately linked to the transcendental nature of a specialized vocation, and thus to its contribution to the development and vitality of the community.

Turning to Weber's formulation of the malaise of modernity it will be shown that Goethe's conceptualization of action, renunciation, and the transcendental nature of specialized deeds comes to fruition in the sociologist's interpretation of the Puritans' active asceticism in the pursuit of their callings. However, before turning to Weber's argument of how the modern community comes to depend on the isolated pursuits of its constituents, we will examine his conceptualization of the peculiarity of the Occidental city. In doing so, it will be shown that the fraternity and intersubjective bonds which emerged out of these communities would be pivotal to the emergence of the modern personality and therefore, to the development of a 'will to act'.

5- The Occidental City: Value-Rational Action in Weber's Concept of Community

In order to better elucidate the communitarian foundation in Weber's formulation of the 'will to act', we must begin by reexamining the sociologist's typology of social action and the ontological presuppositions which shape them. In examining the importance that value-rational and instrumental orientations towards the social world play in Weber's sociology, it will be shown that individual's ability to synthesize these orientations is the crux of 'the will to act', and lays the foundation for the emergence of the modern 'overman'.

It is in the first volume of his *Economy and Society* that we find Weber's now famous elaboration on the types of social action. Weber's typology divides action in terms of its i) instrumental, ii) value-rational, iii) affectual and iv) traditional orientations towards the social world. For our purposes however, we shall concern ourselves with types i) and ii) insofar as they represent the foundations of the modern consciousness and therefore, 'the will to act'. In opposition to instrumental and value-rational action, traditionally oriented and affectual action should be understood as lacking an essential degree of reflexivity on the part of the individual.

Speaking of strictly traditional behaviour Weber asserts that, like reactive and imitative behaviour, this orientation towards social action

lies very close to the borderline of what can justifiably be called meaningfully oriented action, and indeed often on the other side. For it is very often a matter of almost

automatic reaction to habitual stimuli which guide behaviour in a course which has been repeatedly followed.

(Weber, 1978:25)

Weber's definition of purely traditionally oriented action can be seen as anticipating the formulations of behaviourist psychology, insofar as critical self-consciousness plays no part in individual agency. Weber does go on to note that traditionally oriented action can persist "with varying degrees of self-consciousness and in a variety of senses." In this case however, "the type may shade over into value rationality" (Weber, 1978:25). According to Weber, purely affectual behaviour also "stands on the borderline of what can be considered 'meaningfully' oriented action" (Weber, 1978: 25). It too however, can pass over this line into the realm of reactive behaviour when the actor begins to sublimate uncontrolled reactions. In this instance, action is "on the road to rationalization" (Weber, 1978.25). Therefore, our concern with value-rational and instrumentally rational action is related to a concern with the degree of reflexivity expressed on the part of the individual. Moreover, insofar as individuals are understood as reflexive, they are to be seen as empowered through an awareness of their identities and the role they play in giving meaning to the world.

The importance of value-oriented action in the sociology of Max Weber must be understood as operating on two levels. In one respect, and most importantly, value-oriented action should be seen as empowering the modern individual in the face of a disenchanting social order. On another level, Weber would note that the foundation and renewal of value-oriented

action lay initially in the bonds which sprang from charismatic processes and community settings.

Weber argued that the Occidental city, despite some obvious infighting, was the first social structure to promote the “cultic community of citizens” (Weber, 1958;403) in the form of the common meal of the *Prytanes* and the fraternity of guilds⁴⁴ and drinking halls. In *Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions*, Weber would go on to argue that

[t]he principle that constituted the communal relations among salvation prophecies was the suffering common to all believers...The more imperatives that issued from the ethic of reciprocity among neighbours were raised, the more rational the conception of salvation became, and the more it was sublimated into an ethic of absolute ends.

(Weber, 1958;330)

Therefore, an important catalyst to the formation of empowered selves was a foundation based on the mutual recognition and intersubjective bonds of the community. Weber, however, knew full well that the substantive reason and ethic of brotherliness which grew out of the Occidental city and religious communities⁴⁵, clashed with the values of the modern world.

As economic and rational political action follow laws of their own, so every other rational action within the world remains inescapably bound to worldly conditions. These conditions are remote from brotherliness and must serve as means or as ends of rational action. Hence all rational action somehow comes to stand in tension with the ethic of brotherliness, and carries within itself a profound tension.

(Weber, 1958;339)

Weber, despite grounding fraternal ethics in pre-rationalized communities, was no romantic. A return to the intimate bonds of a community setting which first gave rise to value-oriented action, was no longer an option open to the modern individual. Rather, the notion of in-group morality and reciprocity became “broken down by universalization, and simple reciprocity by abstractions” (Schluchter, 1981:48).

The religiosity of the congregation transferred this ancient economic ethic of neighbourliness to the relations among brethren of the faith. What had previously been the obligations of the noble and wealthy became the fundamental imperatives of all ethically rationalized religions of the world

(Weber, 1958:329)

The destruction of community-based morality would thus see the transformation of community sociation transferred to an individualized ethic of fraternity. In the final analysis, this process must be understood within the larger context of Weber’s formulation of the progression of Occidental rationalism, and therefore, the subsequent demise of cosmological worldviews that this cognitive and structural transformation engendered. As Habermas notes,

[t]he religious background is indeed present, but it lingers only as a metaphor for an innerworldly scene, robbed of all transcendence...the profane equivalents twist the meaning of religious justification into the desire to be recognized before the forum of all fellow human beings as the one who one is and who one wants be.

(Habermas,1992:166)

Weber conceptualized value-rational action as distinguished from

'non-reflexive' orientations to social action insofar as the former involved the "clearly self-conscious formulation of ultimate values governing the action and the consistently planned orientation of its detailed course to these values" (Weber, 1978;25). Moreover, the self-definition and self-appointment of an ultimate value orientation on the part of the individual, as Weber argues in *The Protestant Ethic*, provided the key means by which the Puritans were able to confront and strive against evil in the form of a community's cultural disenchantment. In *Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions*, Weber asserted that religious modes of behaviour, "once developed into a methodical way of life, formed the nucleus of asceticism" (Weber, 1958;327). Therefore, as Schluchter notes, the transition from an ethic of conviction to one of emancipation, would lead not only to the genesis of an ethic of responsibility, but also to the self-conscious choice of one's own fate based on 'ultimate decisions' (Schluchter, 1981;52). The peculiarity to the Occidental city in Weber's sociology, was rooted the community's ability to promote genuine 'personalities' in the form of critically self-conscious individuals. These modern individuals in turn, developed a 'will to act' in specialized vocations based on a deeply felt sense of inner conviction. Moreover, once brought together, the sum total of their isolated strivings would contribute to the development of the modern of Occidental communities.

In order to understand the modern dilemma which saw the renewal of community rely on the isolated deeds of its members, we must turn to

the rise of individual self-consciousness and striving chronicled in Weber's *Protestant Ethic*. For, it is in this treatise that we will come to understand how the Puritan ethic, "which amounts to an objectification of man's duties as a creature of God caused the Puritan to appraise all human relations- including those naturally nearest in life- as mere means and expression of a mentality reaching beyond the organic relations of life" (Weber, 1951:236).

6- The Fall From Grace: Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit*

The notion of elective affinity⁴⁶, makes its reappearance⁴⁷ in the introduction to Weber's *Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*. In this crucial introductory statement, the voice of Goethe can be heard echoing in the background.

It is hence our first concern to work out and to explain genetically the special peculiarity of Occidental rationalism, and within this field that of the modern Occidental form. Every such attempt at explanation must, recognizing the fundamental importance of the economic factor, above all take account of the economic conditions. But at the same time the opposite correlation must not be left out of consideration. For though the development of economic rationalism is partly dependent on rational technique and law, it is at the same time determined by the *ability* and *disposition* of men to adopt certain types of practical conduct.⁴⁸

(Weber, 1930:26)

Weber's use of elective affinity points to the fact that a balance between the two realms requires that there be a harmony between the individual's *will*, and the *ability of the social structure to enable the self-consciously determined action of its members*. For Weber, this form of 'ethical life' would manifest itself for the first time in history following the Protestant reformation. This assertion was "justified by the historical fact that that attitude of mind has on the one hand found its most suitable expression in capitalistic enterprise" (Weber, 1930:65).

The golden age of bourgeois 'active asceticism' and, therefore, the

modern individual's brief resolution of the contradiction between the his ideas and interests would quickly dissolve insofar as Weber argued that the "bourgeois classes as such have seldom before and never since displayed heroism. It was "the last of our heroisms", as Carlyle, not without reason, has said" (Weber, 1930;37). Following Goethe's belief that the struggle against evil redeemed humanity through the individual's striving for great deeds, Weber would argue that in striving to master the world, rationally active asceticism sought "to tame what is creatural and wicked through work in a worldly 'vocation'" (Weber, 1958;325). However, as we will see in the second section, the value-oriented action which initially empowered the Puritan in his fight against the "creatural and wicked" would come into the hands of "specialists without spirit" and "sensualists without heart".

6.1- Weber's Deed: The Calling and the Community

In coming to terms with the fact that the capitalist economy is a disenchanted cosmos into which the individual is born and must live, Weber argued that there have been two avenues taken to deal with the tension between a newly emerging fraternal ethic and the demands of a capitalist economy. The avenues available involved either escape through mysticism, or the 'will to act' of the Puritan ethic. Weber contends that the pursuit of "one's duty in a calling is what is most characteristic of the social ethic of capitalist culture, and is in a sense the fundamental basis of it." (Weber, 1930;54). Following Goethe's condemnation of abstract idealism,

mirrored in Faust's failed relationship with Gretchen and Helen of Troy, as well as Wilhelm's disenchantment with the theatre⁴⁹, Weber warned that before the 'true prophecy' (Weber, 1951;235) of striving to mould the world in one's image could emerge, a "supreme and sacred value must not be of a contemplative nature". "For these ways lie apart from everyday life and beyond the real world and lead away from it."⁵⁰ (Weber, 1958;290).

In his discussion of the modern 'overmen', Weber asserts that they were "men who had grown up in the hard school of life, calculating and daring at the same time, above all temperate and reliable, shrewd and completely devoted to their business" (Weber, 1930;69). However, despite the 'measure' demonstrated by these modern warriors, Weber understood the central element of their 'will to act' as situated in the fact that

along with clarity of vision and ability to act, it is only by virtue of very definite and highly developed ethical qualities that it has been possible for him to command the absolutely indispensable confidence of his customers and workmen. Nothing else could have given him the strength to overcome the innumerable obstacles, above all the infinitely more intensive work which is demanded of the modern entrepreneur.

(Weber, 1930;69)

Therefore, the key to the empowerment of the Protestant entrepreneur's Faustian clarity of vision, was his ability to confront the modern world, and *undertake instrumental pursuits in a value-rational way*. This fact was pivotal to Weber's formulation of the Puritan calling, insofar as their religious conviction is what ultimately "gave a direction to practical

conduct and held the individual to it.” (Weber, 1930;97).

While it was the writings of Martin Luther which first allowed for the religiously sanctioned pursuit of secular callings, Weber would go on to note that the light heartedness of knowing that one is destined for salvation among Lutherans, destroyed every possibility of recognizing that this overpowering gift of grace could owe anything to their own actions (Weber, 1930;102). Rather, it would be the *Angst* of Calvin’s notion of predestination which brought forth the “unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual” (Weber, 1930;104) and thus served as the catalyst for the formation of empowered personalities. The inability to ever divine one’s state of grace, combined with the subsequent pastoral advice which ensued, would lead to the Puritan’s active asceticism and self-understanding as the vehicle through which God worked⁵¹. Through the at once ascetic and value-oriented devotion to his calling, the Puritan was able to overcome the fragmented and disenchanting nature of modern social structures. By choosing an ‘absolute’ value orientation and submitting to its demands, the ensuing sense of duty would once again make the transitoriness of mortal life meaningful.

Kent has argued that “in Goethe’s creation, Faust, Weber saw a figure who had realized that a person gains the highest wisdom, freedom, and fullness of life itself only through continuous human activity” (Kent, 1983,303). Goethe does indeed seem to be on Weber’s mind, and therefore, to have shaped the latter’s notion of the calling insofar as the sociologist

would assert that it was

[t]his fundamentally ascetic trait of middle-class life, if it attempts to be a way of life at all, and not simply the absence of any, was what Goethe wanted to teach, at the height of his wisdom, in the *Wanderjahren*, and in the end which he gave to the life of his *Faust*. For him, the realization meant a renunciation, a departure from an age of full and beautiful humanity, which could no more be repeated in the course of our cultural development than can the flower of the Athenian culture of antiquity.

(Weber, 1930;180-181)

It was through the active striving in the pursuit of one's calling articulated by Goethe, and acted upon by the Puritans, that an internal and external harmony with one's self and the modern world was achieved. Weber's emphasis on the ability of the Calvinist to create "his own salvation, or, as would be more correct, the conviction of it" (Weber, 1930;115) would once again see the sociologist draw on the inspiration of the novelist. Thus, Weber's assertion is immediately followed by an end note which once again brings the reader back to the insight of Goethe.

One is reminded of a saying of Goethe with essentially the same meaning: "How can a man know himself? Never by observation, but through action. Try to do your duty and you will know what is in you. And what is your duty? Your daily task."

(Weber, 1930;232 n.64)

The sense of conviction which sprang from an ethic that 'God helps those who help themselves' is therefore the first redemptive feature which enabled the Calvinist to become an "empowered warrior on the battlefield of rationalization" (Goldman, 1992;71). However, the process of

who help themselves' is therefore the first redemptive feature which enabled the Calvinist to become an "empowered warrior on the battlefield of rationalization" (Goldman, 1992;71). However, the process of discovering one's authentic self and destiny, Weber would note, also entailed a potentially high degree of social atomism as an antithesis to the spread of a highly individualized ideology and self-centred pursuits.

Weber understood that the relationship between the 'isolated' Calvinist and the community is paradoxical insofar as it "seems at first a mystery how the undoubted superiority of Calvinism in social organization can be connected with this tendency to tear the individual away from the closed ties with which he is bound to this world" (Weber, 1930;108). Weber therefore, would point to the emergence of the Independent movement and the sectarianism of the seventeenth century as representative of the potentially divisive nature of Calvinist individualism.

This consciousness of divine grace of the elect and holy was accompanied by an attitude toward the sin of one's neighbour, not of sympathetic understanding based on consciousness of one's own weakness, but of hatred and contempt for him as an enemy of God bearing the signs of eternal damnation.

(Weber, 1930;122)

There was therefore a more ominous side to the Puritan ethic's emphasis on the calling than its triumphant ability to provide meaning and conviction to social action. In addition to the subjective sense of redemption which it provided to its adherents, the ethic also contained a potentially explosive form of Hobbesian individualism, which could lead the Puritan to view her

neighbour as the Devil incarnate. In the final analysis however, Weber, following Adam Smith, understands the resolution of this paradox as rooted in the fact that

[t]he specialization of occupations leads, since it makes the development of skill possible, to a quantitative and qualitative improvement in production, and thus serves the common good, which is identical with the good of the greatest possible number.

(Weber, 1930;161)

The preceding remark points to the objective, and thus second redemptive element of the specialized calling as formulated by Weber. In the final analysis, the atomism and differentiated nature in modern societies contributed the material growth of Western civilization, and therefore to the greater good of the community. Weber's interpretation of the specialized calling points to the affinity in his formulation between the ideology of individualism and the reality of the *division* of labour, and their intimate connection to the community at large. For Weber, once brought together, the sum total of the pursuits of specialized vocations in a passionate and ascetic manner, assured the vitality and development of Occidental social structures. Following Faust and Meister's realization, the importance of giving back to the community of one's nation would be stressed by Weber as early as 1895. In his inaugural address at the university of Freiburg Weber asserted that if "our work is to have any meaning, it lies, and can only lie, in providing for the *future*, for our *descendants*." (Weber, 1994;14).

The message that Goethe's *Faust*, and subsequently Weber's *Protestant Ethic* sought to teach was, that as long as individuals demonstrated a 'will to act', their soul and community would be redeemed. However, Weber's age would witness the routinization of social action, the advent of a 'will to escape' through mysticism and idealism, and therefore an aversion to capitalism's *demand* that the individual strive incessantly. Subsequently, Weber's Germany would also witness the inability of its youth to keep at bay modernity's demons.

6.2- The Triumph of Evil: The Routinization of Culture and Charisma

The infamous conclusion which Weber gave to his *Protestant Ethic* introduced the bleak notion of 'the iron cage' as a means of capturing the completely routinized and instrumental action which colonized the individual's orientation to the outer, objective world, as well as that of the inner, subjective world. The 'will to nothing' had come to triumph in Wilhelmine Germany, and thus, following the golden age of bourgeois individualism,

the quest for the Kingdom of God commenced gradually to pass over into sober economic virtue; the religious roots died out slowly, giving way to utilitarian worldliness.

(Weber, 1930;176)

What Weber is describing can be understood not only within the nomenclature of his conceptualization of social action, but also within the

context of elective affinity. As we have seen, Weber believed that the key to the Puritans' 'will to act' was to be found in their 'absolute', value-rational pursuit of instrumental objectives. Understood within the context of elective affinity, the synthesis of value-rational and instrumental orientations towards social action is tantamount to the individual's ability to mediate between knowledge and human interests, and thus bring into harmony two ontologically different spheres. However, the one-dimensional nature of the modern Occidental world would see the triumph of instrumental, non-reflexive thought over the "clearly self-conscious formulation of ultimate values". This would be particularly true in the realm of modern politics wherein

with every leader's machine, one condition for success is the depersonalization and routinization, in short the psychic proletarianization, in the interest of the discipline.

(Weber, 1958;125)

Despite Weber's at times Orwellian description of bureaucratic structures, he nonetheless saw them as inevitable entities which were necessary for the rational ordering of social action in contemporary societies. For Weber then, bureaucracies represented the most technically efficient means of social adaptation and integration, in addition to being soulless forms of impersonal rule⁵².

When the tide that lifted a charismatically led group out of everyday life flows back into the channels of workday routines, at least the "pure" form of charismatic domination will wane and turn into an "institution"

(Weber, 1978;1121)

For Weber then, the encroachment of the 'iron cage' of bureaucratic institutions served to routinize once charismatic action and therefore, to promote the perpetuation of the "mundane, materialistic values derived from the mechanistic foundations of modern society" (Kent, 1983;309). In this respect, the ability of bureaucratic political parties to legitimate their positions of prestige by means of their institutionalization of 'formal' justifications (Weber, 1978;1146) should be seen as coinciding with a decline in the critical reflexivity of the individual and of the ruled.

To criticize the stagnation and routinization characteristic of the modern age Weber incorporated from Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* the notion of the 'last men' (*die Letzten Menschen*)⁵³, likening them to "specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart" (Weber, 1930;182). Weber's polemic pointed to the fact that modern individuals suffered from a decline in critical and spontaneous self-reflexivity, insofar as they began, ever more frequently, to define subjective ideals in term of an instrumental *telos*. Therefore, domination at the hands of the specialists without spirit, who ruled by virtue of their monopoly of specialized knowledge, was buttressed by the progression of a popular 'herd' mentality. This uncritical orientation towards social action was concerned primarily with the compliance to formal principles, and therefore, would see individuals seek escape from its purely instrumental demands, through the pursuit of *Bildung* and abstract idealism.

Action is instrumentally rational (*zweckrational*) when
the end, the means, and the secondary results are all

rationally taken into account and weighed. This involves rational consideration of alternative means to the end, of the relations of the end to the secondary consequences, and finally of the relative importance of different possible ends.

(Weber, 1978;26)

What Weber noted was, that purely instrumental reason denied a forum of debate for the 'affectual' issues of substantive reason⁵⁴. Instead, political as well as ethical and subjective issues became decided simply according to the criteria of marginal success.

Weber drew on Schiller's notion of 'disenchantment' to characterize an age in which the progression of scientific-analytical knowledge and mastery of the world had increasingly stripped this very world of its essence and meaning. This malaise of modernity, Weber felt, led to a feeling of powerlessness and a desire for flight from the demands of contemporary social life (Goldman, 1992;83). Weber, asserting that we "are placed into various life-spheres, each of which is governed by different laws" (Weber, 1958;123), argues in effect that social evolution has seen the differentiation of cultural spheres into the realms of science, politics, art, eroticism, and economics. The specialization and differentiation of these various spheres was subsequently conceptualized by Weber as leading to a tremendous increase in society's integrative and adaptive steering mechanisms. However, it had done so at the expense of substantive reason and conviction of cosmological worldviews.

What we find is a *chaos* of different evaluative criteria, some eudaemonistic, some ethical; often both are present

together in an obscure identification of one with the other. One finds value judgments being made everywhere without compunction.

(Weber, 1994;18)

According to Weber the genesis of ethical and personal values remained tied to religious worldviews, insofar as they were derived from a cosmological worldview which was central to the individual's ability to ground her action on a mode of life, on deeply held principles (Habermas, 1984;170). The progression of cultural rationalization had destroyed the ability of the modern individual to understand the world as a meaningful entity. Through progressive decline, the cosmological and thus value-rational conviction which had provided the Puritans with the ultimate legitimation for ascetic self-mastery in the form of a specialized calling, became colonized by the imperatives of mere behaviour and affinity.

Value-rational action may thus have various different relations to the instrumentally rational action. From the latter point of view, however, value-rationality is always irrational. Indeed, the more the value more to which action is oriented is elevated to the status of an absolute value, the more "irrational" in this sense the corresponding action is. For, the more unconditionally the actor devotes himself to this value for its own sake, to pure sentiment or beauty, to absolute goodness or devotion to duty, the less is he influenced by considerations of the consequences of his action.

(Weber, 1978;26)

The 'tensions' which existed between value-rational and instrumental action were nonetheless pivotal to Weber's understanding of the personal empowerment which typified the Puritans. In the end however, despite

Weber's claim that a "rational achievement of ends without relation to fundamental values is, to be sure, essentially only a limiting case." (Weber, 1978;26) it would nonetheless come to define the modern condition.

For Weber, the process of cultural rationalization implied the increasing inability of the individual to overcome the fragmentation and disempowerment which were encroaching on the modern self. This pessimistic worldview, as we will see in the seventh chapter, would have important ramifications in Weber's political writings insofar as it would lead him to reject an ethics of ends, for one of responsibility (Cohen, 1972;89). This call would come in the shape of Weber's emphasis on the need for self-appointed devotion to the object of one's calling as a means of empowering the people, and politicians alike. In the end therefore, Weber felt that it was the pursuit of scientific knowledge and charismatic education which could provide the sole means for redemption and thus the rebirth of 'personality' in the modern world. For the meantime however, it would seem that evil has triumphed insofar as "material goods have gained an increasing and finally an inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous moment in history" (Weber, 1930;181). The decline of value-rational action was, therefore, the final blow for the victory capitalism which came to rest on mechanical foundations alone, and thus "needs its support no longer." (Weber, 1930;182). In the end therefore, the *idea* of duty and redemption in one's calling, was left to prowl 'about our lives like the ghosts of dead religious beliefs'

7- The Modern Vocation: The Realm of the Diabolical

Weber understood Goethe as having resigned himself to the modern state of specialization, individualism, and disenchantment which typified the Occidental world. Subsequently, Weber would concern himself with two of the more important steering mechanisms of modern society and make them the central themes of his vocation essays. However, while both callings were necessary to the maintenance of modern societies, it was only in the pursuit of scientific vocations which were tied to the course of social progress, that allowed for the redemption of the individual and the community. Nonetheless, Weber's essay on the demands of the political vocation would also stress the importance of inner conviction and the need for the individual to achieve a balance between 'absolute' and 'responsible' orientations to social action. Therefore, the themes which framed Goethe's *Faust* should be seen as pivotal to the mood and dilemmas later articulated in Weber's vocation essays.

7.1- Mephisto's Lair: Politics as a Vocation

As Scaff has noted, the realm of the political for Weber was not an arena in which one created human happiness⁵⁵ (Scaff, 1989;71). Rather, the political arena was a den of iniquity, wherein only those who

recognized in it their duty should enter.

Only he has the calling for politics who is sure that he shall not crumble when the world from his point of view is too stupid or too base for what he wants to offer. Only he who in the face of all this can say 'In spite of all!' has the calling for politics.

(Weber, 1958;128)

Weber's discussion of politics as a vocation while stressing passion, renunciation, and the primacy of 'the calling', is steeped in the theme of the battle of good against evil. Weber's call for a "passionate devotion to a 'cause', to the god or demon who is its overlord" (Weber, 1958;115) is presented as a means of overcoming the ethical contradictions that political action necessarily entailed. The political realm therefore, was pervaded by demons insofar as the chaos of evaluative criteria could find no absolute or objective resolution.

Whoever wants to engage in politics at all, and especially in politics as a vocation, has to realize these ethical paradoxes. He must know that he is responsible for what may become of himself under the impact of these paradoxes. I repeat, he lets himself in for the diabolical forces lurking in all violence.

(Weber, 1958;125-126)

The only resolution that could be found by the politician lay in the strength of inner resolution and personal conviction. Warning idealists, Weber would assert that

[h]e who seeks the salvation of the soul, of his own and of others, should not seek it along the avenue of politics, for the quite different tasks of politics can only be solved by violence.

(Weber, 1958;126)

Following his assertion about the 'irreconcilable conflict' which pervaded the political realm, Weber goes on to draw on a telling quotation from Goethe's *Faust*, viz. 'The devil is old; grow old to understand him'.

The impact of Goethe's *Faust*, as noted in the second and fifth sections, would have a profound effect on Weber. In a letter written by Weber in 1887, he asserted that

in general people's conception of life is not that the only thing that matters is for them to have a sense of well-being and to find a side of life that they can enjoy. Nor do people *only* face only the question as to the road on which they can or cannot find happiness and inner satisfaction. But if one looks at things soberly and closely, this question is the deepest that one can derive from Goethe's works, including *Faust*, and everything, even the knottiest ethical problems, is illuminated from this standpoint.

(Marianne Weber, 1988;155-156)

The ethical dilemma that Faust faced with the reallocation of Philemon and Baucis serves as a powerful allegory to Weber's notion of politics. As noted earlier, the end of *Faust Part Two* would see the elderly doctor's inner conviction and faith in his deed render him oblivious to Care's power and subsequent misdeed. Therefore, Faust's ability to overcome the ethical paradoxes which stood in the way of his absolute goal and responsible deed, is grounded in his submission to the object of his devotion. Faust's desire to bequeath living space and dominion to future generations would guide him unwaveringly until the end, and thus enables him to find meaning in his economic actions.

In *Politics as a Vocation*, Weber, following Faust's experience,

would assert that we must

be clear about the fact that all ethically oriented conduct may be guided by one of two fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed maxims: conduct can be oriented to an 'ethic of ultimate ends' or to an 'ethic of responsibility'.

(Weber, 1958;120)

Weber stressed the importance of an 'ethic of responsibility' by arguing that if one simply follows "an ethic of absolute ends, then the goals may be damaged and discredited for generations, because responsibility for *consequences* is lacking, and two diabolical forces which enter the play remain unknown to the actor." (Weber, 1958;126). Weber's call for a balance between 'absolute' and 'responsible' ethics, falls in line with his call for self-consciously determined action. This 'will to act' allowed the individual to mediate between an absolute, value-rational ethic of conviction and the responsible instrumental pursuits demanded of specialized vocations. A lack of self-reflexivity and awareness of vocational imperatives however, could lead the mere 'power politician' to become a simple actor on stage⁵⁶. The importance of responsible social action, and thus, Weber's belief in its redemptive ability is clearly articulated his conception of contemporary politics.

I am under the impression that in nine out of ten cases I deal windbags who do not fully realize what they take upon themselves but who intoxicate themselves with romantic actions. From a human point of view this is not very interesting to me, nor does it move me profoundly. However, it is immensely moving when a *mature* man- no matter how old or young in years- is aware of a responsibility for the consequences of his conduct and really feels such responsibility with heart and soul. He then acts by following an ethic of

responsibility and somewhere he reaches the point where he says: 'Here i stand; I can do no other.' That is something genuinely human and moving.

(Weber, 1958;127)

In the final analysis, Weber understood politics as a dirty deed that had to be done. The part that it played in the progress of the community and species was in the end, negligible. Ultimately, one of the most important 'fractions' of social progress was that of the scientific vocation. Although this realm was also subject to its own pressures and demons, it nonetheless allowed for redemption through progress.

7.2- Faust's Study: *Science as a Vocation*.

Echoing the loss of meaning and disenchantment⁵⁷ which would lead Faust to his wager with Mephistopheles, it is in *Science as a Vocation* wherein Weber asserts that the "fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all the 'disenchantment of the world.'" (Weber, 1958;155). However, while Weber's second vocation essay would, as the first, warn against what might become of one's soul, science was nonetheless understood by Weber as a means of redemption and empowerment.

The scientific vocation, like the political vocation argued Weber, also demanded a 'will to act' and human passion in the face of the paradoxes that it presented. Scientists were to pursue their vocations despite the

knowledge that their work and deeds would soon be outdated, despite the fact that their life would forever be plagued with the *Angst* that an 'idea' might never occur. The demon of science therefore, much like Calvin's God, held a destiny which was ultimately unforeseeable to the scientist (Weber, 1958;136). Scientists, *having self-consciously chosen this vocation*, must, if they wished to triumph, submit to the demands and laws of their calling. Therefore, through the transformation of one's vocational pursuits into teleologically guided action, the modern individual might come to give a purpose to his existence and a disenchanted world, and thus once again become the active vessel of a higher cause.

The realm of science, like that of education, was not an arena in which to "take a stand is one's damned duty" (Weber, 1958;145). Rather, what ultimately redeemed the individual and the species was the fact that in serving the laws of science one was serving a cause which was chained to the course of progress, and therefore, to the rational mastery of the world. However, it was this very fact which Weber felt the students of his time had failed to understand, insofar as they felt that science simply "constituted an unreal realm of artificial abstraction, which with their bony hands seek to grasp the blood-and-the-sap of true life without ever catching up with it." (Weber, 1958;141). The mastery and clarity that the scientific method brought to the modern consciousness was lost on a 'disenchanted' generation seeking escape through 'experience'⁵⁸.

The weariness expressed towards analytical reason and active

asceticism in favour of experience, which Weber felt to be characteristic of German youth, was also central to 'Faust's Study (ii)'. In this scene from *Faust Part One*, the weakness and quest for guidance of Germany's youth, so polemicized by Weber⁵⁹, is sardonically given life by Goethe.

Student. I seek good counsel, and I beg for yours.
I come with strength of heart and courage, please,
And well provided with professors' fees.
My mother pleaded hard against my going;
But now I hope for something worth knowing.

Mephistopheles.

Well done, you're now on learning's very track.

Student. And yet, I've half a mind, Sir to go back:
The walled-in close, and gloomy college hall,
Don't suit my mind or temperament at all.
Here we are crowded, cramped for space,
No trees or greenery in the place:
I sit in halls of sapience
Devoid of hearing, sight or sense.

(Goethe, 1949:93)

Despite Mephistopheles' words of encouragement, which sought to reassure the student that each day will bring him a greater zest for knowledge, the latter is still left pleading "Show me, Sir, the way" (Goethe, 1949:94). In the end, as we will see in the following chapter, Mephisto's erudite recital, like Weber's, would point to the virtues of specialization and the scientific method.

The theme of vocational specialization, self-reflexivity and the transcendental function of the 'will to act', so central to Goethe's novels and Weber's *Protestant Ethic*, would once again find succinct expression in the latter's *Science as a Vocation*.

Only by strict specialization can the scientific worker become fully conscious, for once and perhaps never again in his lifetime, that he has achieved something that will endure. A really definitive and *good* accomplishment is today always a specialized accomplishment.⁶⁰

(Weber, 1958;135)

The importance of Goethean *praxis*, Faustian striving, and specialization can also be placed within Weber's understanding of the dangers faced by the intellectual's academic pursuits and the educational culture of his time. This would be profoundly exposed in Weber's "Objectivity" essay, and is worth quoting at length.

All research in the cultural sciences in an age of specialization, once it is oriented towards a given subject matter through particular settings of problems and has established its methodological principles, will consider the analysis of the data as an end itself. It will discontinue assessing the value of the individual facts in terms of their relationships to ultimate value-ideas. Indeed, it will lose its awareness of its ultimate rootedness in the value-ideas in general. And it is well that should be so. But there comes a moment when the atmosphere changes. The significance of the unreflectively utilized view points becomes uncertain and the road is lost in the twilight. The light of the great cultural problems moves on. Then science too prepares to change its standpoint and its analytical apparatus and to view the streams of events from the heights of thought. It follows those stars which alone are able to give meaning and direction to labors:

"The newborn impulse fires my mind,
I hasten on, his beams eternal drinking,
The Day before me and the Night behind,
Above me Heaven unfurled, the floor of waves
beneath me."⁶¹

(Weber, 1949;112)

The intellectual, like the politician and the scientist, had to be prepared to deal with the resulting 'soft relativism' inherent in analytical reasoning, and therefore, of what might become of one's soul in a realm of constantly shifting horizons. The importance of *value-freedom* therefore, lay in its paving the ground for the academic assertion of fundamental value-ideas and the guiding light of a deeply held belief and the striving it engendered.

Weber's *Science as a Vocation* would once again come to an end with his allusion to Goethe's *Faust*: "Mind you, the devil is old; grow old to understand him". Weber reminds the reader that he is not referring to years, but rather, it "means that if one wishes to settle with this devil, one must not take flight before him *like so many do today*"⁶² (Weber, 1958;152). It is the necessity and courage to strive, so profoundly echoed in *Faust*, to which Weber alludes. Therefore, age "is not decisive; what is decisive is the trained relentlessness in viewing the realities of life, and the ability to face such realities and measure up to them inwardly." (Weber, 1958;127). It was this very ability which Weber in particular would find lacking in his age, and therefore, it is in the educational 'rebirth' of personality that he placed his faith that the individual might once again come to recognize the "demon who holds the fibers of his very life" (Weber, 1958;156).

8- Salvation Through Education: Enabling the 'Will to Strive'

For Goethe and Weber, education played a pivotal role insofar as it served as the foundation for the cultivation of spontaneous qualities *based on experience* within the individual. This notion would be of particular importance to Weber, because it was the key means by which individuals could once again be empowered, and therefore, come to master the process of intellectualization and cultural rationalization. Both Goethe and Weber believed that the individual must be made aware, as well as come to accept, the plurality of values which have reemerged in the modern world. This in turn, was understood as leading to a rebirth of the individual's ability to once again define his own gods. This hope would be most clearly expressed in Weber's *Science as a Vocation*. However, Weber's vocation essays would also address the new form of empowerment required in the political arena, and therefore, stress the political education of the nation, a realm that as we will see, had for the most part been neglected by Goethe.

Goethe's conception of education must not only be understood within the context of his theory of nature and action. We must, in addition, place Goethe's notion of individuality within the context of the *Humanitätsideal*. The promotion of human ideals advocated by this school of thought sought to modify the doctrines of historicism in Germany (Iggers, 1969;37). As a proponent of the *Humanitätsideal*, Goethe found himself in the company of

such prominent scholars as Herder, Winckelman, and Humboldt. As a whole however, these theorists, while proponents of the Enlightenment, stressed nonetheless the diversity of individual essence and the synthesis of the rational and irrational within a harmonious whole. Moreover, Goethe, following Humboldt, would go on to stress that it was the individual person who “constitutes the prime unit of which humanity is composed” (Iggers, 1969;38). As a result, the cultivation of the whole individual and the fulfilment of the higher idea that she as an individual represented, would remain the central theme of Goethe’s notion of education.

Lukács argued that Goethe was a consistent continuator of the Enlightenment insofar as he attributed “remarkable importance to the conscious guidance of human development, to *education*” (Lukács, 1969;57), a theme which was pivotal to the sixth book of *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*. Goethe’s notion of education should be seen as consistent with his novels insofar as it emphasized the primacy of choice and experience, erring and striving. This worldview is voiced in the seventh book by the Abbé, who Lukács believed, was a direct spokesman for the voice of Goethe (Lukács, 1969;57).

To guard from error, is not the instructor’s duty; but to lead the erring pupil; nay, to let him quaff his error in deep satiating draughts, this is the instructor’s wisdom. He who only tastes his error, will long dwell with it, will take delight in it as a singular felicity: while he who drains it to the dregs will, if he be not crazy, find it out.

(Goethe, 1839 vol.2;71)

There is however, as Lukács asserts, no utopian socialism in Goethe, and all attempts to infer such in his work have but led to its distortions (Lukács, 1969;63). This fact introduces us to the early romantic Goethe of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. In this vein, Iggers has argued that Goethe's association with the other advocates of the *Humanitätsideal* brought with it a notion that freedom was "first of all, an inner, spiritual matter rather than a political concept, as it was for much of the Enlightenment thought" (Iggers, 1969;38). Iggers' statement brings us to the fact that, despite the later Goethe's endorsement of specialization, on a political level he remains best known as a proponent of *Bildung*. This belief was also voiced by Scaff who argues that in "this regard Goethe proved to be the supreme symbol-an Olympian figure above the battle, politically uncommitted and unidentifiable," (Scaff, 1991;166). It would therefore be up to Weber to bridge this gap.

Weber's emphasis on specialization and renunciation must also be understood within the educational dilemma of his time. Weber noted that the educational system was an important element of class and cultural division in Germany, insofar as it reflected class structure, and served to perpetuate the one-sided acquisition of 'cultural capital' (Goldman, 1992;25-50). More specifically however, Weber's polemic focused on the notion of *Bildung*, a program which had been institutionalized as an educational agenda by Humboldt during the Prussian reform period⁶³. Weber was critical of *Bildung's* emphasis on the 'inner state' of the

individual, an emphasis which he believed also served to promote a ‘will to powerlessness’.

Behind all the present discussions about the foundations of the educational system [*Bildungswesen*], there is involved in every decisive place the struggle of the type of the “specialist man” against the old “cultured humanity”, subject to the incessant spreading of the bureaucratization of all public and private relations of domination and to the steadily increasing significance of specialized knowledge, entering into all the most intimate questions of culture.

(Goldman trans. Goldman, 1992;52)

Weber, in the face of self-formative versus specialized training agendas of the educational system of his time, was a pragmatic advocate of the latter. Weber argued that this educational agenda, in addition to being a necessity for an industrial state, and in opposition to *Bildung*, served to prevent the ideological indoctrination of individuals insofar as it worked against the formation and dissemination of worldviews⁶⁴. In the final analysis, Weber’s position on the imperative of *Bildung* was that it was not enough to empower individuals in the face of an increasingly rationalized, fragmented, and specialized world.

Weber’s pressing concerns for the overhaul of Germany’s educational agenda were focused on the need to supply the country’s rapidly expanding institutional structures with passionate, vocational specialists. In addition, Weber would also articulate the need to awaken the charismatic, creative potential of the individual. However,

genuine charismatic education is the radical opposite of specialized professional training as it is espoused by bureaucracy. Between these two forms of education we find

all those kinds that are concerned with “cultivation”

(Weber, 1978; 1144)

The German educational structure tended to ignore the dichotomy between bureaucratic and charismatic education, focusing instead on the dichotomy between specialized knowledge and the need for inner cultivation in the form of *Bildung*. The ‘will to powerlessness’ which seemed to typify the German *Geist*, according to Weber, had its roots in a particular religious ethic and educational agenda. However, there was in addition to these factors, the legacy of Bismarck’s absolutist reign, which had left Germany’s ‘world ascendant’ bourgeoisie weak, and politically immature⁶⁵.

Following the Abbé’s advice to Wilhelm Meister, Weber would also point to the importance of introducing students to the multiplicity of conflicting ethical and active orientations towards social action which have emerged. This type of charismatic education was understood by Weber as being the sole means of enabling individuals to confront the demands of the modern world, thereby reawakening their ‘will to act’.

The task of the teacher is to serve the students with his knowledge and scientific experience and not imprint upon them his personal political views...The primary task of a useful teacher is to teach his students to recognize ‘inconvenient’ facts.

(Weber, 1958; 146-147)

The introduction of ‘inconvenient facts’ into the student’s worldview would hopefully awaken the daemon inside which sought active expression and

authenticity in each individual. However, if the moment is not seized, the individual's quest for self-discovery could find itself seduced by the demons of 'experience' and thus the other-worldly realm of mystical striving.

The end of 'Faust's Study (ii)', would see Mephistopheles point to the virtues of science and the individual's active involvement in the social world. This interlude should be seen as particularly important to Weber's subsequent framing of *Science as a Vocation*.

Student. My mind is set to know the worth
Of Nature's laws in heaven and earth,
investigating each resource
Of science to my satisfaction.

Mephistopheles. A very right and proper course,
But guard yourself against distraction.⁶⁶

(Goethe, 1949;94)

However, Mephisto's sympathetic and encouraging stance towards the scientific method, would also come with ominous words of advice, insofar as he warns the student that

Waste not your time: time's flight is fabulous;
Yet method teaches you to save it; thus
I counsel first the depths you plumb
Of our Collegium Logicum.
Its rigour will confine your mind
Like inquisition boots, you'll find,
And teach it hence to walk with reason,
Smoothly trained to thoughts in season,

(Goethe, 1949;94)

Following the lesson learnt by Wilhelm Meister, and Goethe's belief that

one's daemon must be harnessed by the rigour and form of reason, the student would finally come to inquire about the virtues of a medical vocation. For this deed, and the active involvement in 'mortal life' that it demanded, Mephistopheles would sing praise, asserting that

To scour around for sciences is vain,
Since mortals only learn what mortals can;
but he who turns the moment to his gain,
He is a proper man.

(Goethe, 1949;97-98)

Having stressed the importance of action over idealism, *praxis* over *lexis*, and thus the primacy of active involvement in social life, Mephistopheles' tutelage would come to an end with his assertion that

All theory, my friend, is grey,
But green is life's glad golden tree.

(Goethe, 1949;98)

While theory could not grasp the essence of lived experiences, for Goethe and Weber, the importance of education lay in its ability to introduce the student to the various rationalized spheres which have emerged in modern society. This worldview would lead the sociologist to assert that

[m]any old gods ascend from their graves; they are disenchanted and hence take the form of impersonal forces. They strive to gain power over our lives and again they resume their eternal struggles with one another. What is hard for the modern man, and especially for the younger generation, is to measure up to *workday* existence. the ubiquitous chase for 'experience' stems from this weakness, for it is weakness not to be able to countenance the stern seriousness of our fateful times.

(Weber, 1958;149)

The introduction of the student to the chaos of evaluative criteria which haunt the modern world was proposed as a means of having the self-consciousness of individuals, freed from the fetters of mythical and religious worldviews, come once again to define, assert, and submit to the god or demon of their choice⁶⁷. Subsequently, shading students from the gods and demons of modern culture was tantamount to disabling their 'will to act', and in the process the self-discovery⁶⁸ so critical to the formation of 'responsible' citizens and the progress of Occidental social structures.

9- Goethe Facing Weber: From Fiction to Sociology

We began our investigation with an analysis of Goethe's *Elective Affinities*. In doing so, the emphasis of the third chapter pointed to primacy of choice and individual *will*. Thus, the notion of elective affinity is treated as the central component of the individual's dialectical struggle to maintain an equilibrium between his ideas and interests. In this way, and framed within a Weberian nomenclature, Goethe's concept demands that the individual maintain a balance between value-rational and instrumental orientations towards the social world. However, while the notions of free will and self-discovery were indeed central to Goethe's novel and his protagonists' 'will to act', it is in his *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust* that the themes of experience, renunciation, specialization, and transcendence are most profoundly articulated.

In the fourth chapter, an analysis of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* highlighted the importance of striving and self-discovery in a fragmented social order, and thus pointed to difficulties of actualizing one's daemon in the rationalized realm of capitalist culture. The displacement of the poetic and aesthetic sphere in bourgeois society, would lead Wilhelm Meister to flee the purely instrumental demands civil society. In striving for *Bildung*, *The Apprenticeship* centers on the protagonist's quest for *absolute* knowledge, an object which Wilhelm appears to find within the

intersubjective unity of a theatrical community. However, with the publication of *The Travels*, Wilhelm's self-discovery leads him to strive in the realm of material necessity, and thus to renounce the purely subjective pursuits of inner cultivation in favour of a specialized vocation. In the final analysis therefore, Goethe's narrative points not only to Wilhelm's ability to actualize his daemon, but also to the latter's ability to do so within the confines and potential of the social structure of his time.

It is in Goethe's *Faust* that the social world's loss of meaning in the face of a purely instrumental culture is most profoundly articulated. Turning to the theme of intellectualization and rationalization, Faust's quest nonetheless mirrors that of Wilhelm Meister, insofar as the latter, after much striving, finds salvation in the sense of purpose provided by the pursuit of a transcendental deed. Thus, Goethe's *Faust*, while focusing on the individual's contribution to the phylogenetic development of his community, also emphasized the sense of inner conviction which ultimately empowers the modern individual's 'will to act'.

In attempting to ground the notion of choice, as formulated in *Elective Affinities*, we were led to deconstruct Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust* in order to properly understand the complexities of the novelist's notion of social action. This in turn, served to unearth the categorical imperative which underlies the redemptive nature of 'the deed'. In the final analysis therefore, the fourth chapter demonstrated that the salvation of Goethe's protagonists ultimately depends on their objective contributions to

the vitality and development of their community.

We began the fifth chapter with an analysis of the peculiar nature of the Occidental city and community sociation as providing the foundation for Weber's genealogy of the empowered individual. Combined with the larger processes of cultural rationalization and the advent of the Protestant ethic, it was the Occidental social structure which, for the first time in history, enabled the individual's instrumental pursuit of ultimate values. Therefore, the 'will to act' ensured that in the Occidental world, experience and asceticism formed the nucleus of a methodical way of life.

The sixth chapter began with an analysis of Weber's *Protestant Ethic*, and therefore, chronicled the sense meaning and purpose which the Puritans ascribed to the pursuit of their callings. However, this modern *will* would soon give way to the disenchantment of the Occidental realms of the sacred and profane. The colonization of inner life, in conjunction with the routinization of culture and charisma, promoted the disengaged reason of worldly utilitarianism, and thus gave birth to an 'iron cage' and desire for mere experience of a generation. In the end however, Weber's frequent allusions to Goethe emphasized that only the duty of committing to one's "daily task" could redeem the modern individual.

Addressing the desire for flight and disempowerment which characterized Germany's turn of the century bourgeoisie and youth, Weber called for the rebirth of the 'will to act' in the modern vocation. Concerning himself with civil society's primary steering mechanisms,

Weber's vocation essays would frame Goethe's notion of elective affinity and the recognition of one's daemon within the modern individual's ability to mediate between 'absolute' and 'responsible' ethics. Moreover, Weber's telling allusions to *Faust* demonstrate the extent to which the struggle between good and evil, and the 'maturity' that it provided, were fundamental to the shaping of Weber's *Weltanschauung*. Thus, in analysing Weber's vocation essays, the seventh chapter pointed not only to their Faustian undercurrents, but to the pivotal nature of the sociologist's emphasis on pedagogical reform.

The eighth chapter brought us to perhaps Goethe's most political statement with the introduction of his conceptualization of education. Subsequently, the conceptual affinity between the novelist's and Weber's emphasis on charismatic education can be seen as consistent with the 'will to act' and the necessity to introduce the individual to all that gods and demons which have once again reared their heads

In surveying the current literature, we saw that Thomas (1987) argued that Goethe's *Elective Affinities* revolved around the themes of 'polarity' and 'intensification', concepts which were pivotal to Goethe's worldview. Indeed, the author's ultimate faith in the progression of the species was central to the plot of his novels. As we saw however, the issues of 'polarity' and 'intensification' can best be understood in the coming to self-consciousness which emerged from the 'experience' and 'asceticism' undergone by Goethe's protagonists. Of pivotal importance to Goethe's

science and fiction is the idea that 'mind' must become conscious of its own processes. The significance of reflexivity, and the recognition and taming of the passions and diversity which make up the individual personality are thus intimately connected to the individual's ability to act and seize the moment. In the final analysis, Goethe's characters do seize the moment, and always, within the certainty of their mind's eye, find redemption insofar their moral behaviour becomes "an expression of a nature which is single and harmonious" (Thomas, 1987;50).

Goethe's protagonists inevitably arrive at a harmonious and synthetic inner sense of self through their ability to *will* the chemical equilibrium between their ideas and interests. Thus, the quest to infuse meaning once again into a disenchanted world through responsible social action, so pivotal to Faust's striving, lies at the apex of this process insofar as "necessity and law come together as willing, knowing, obligation and fate" (Thomas, 1985;50). It is only through striving, and the worldly experience that ensued that individuals could recognize wherein their destiny lay. Striving against evil in the form of vain and idyllic pursuits, the individual's self-discovery and eventual renunciation of worldly aspirations in favour of a specialized vocation were pivotal to the perpetuation of the community. Wilhelm Meister's surgical vocation and Faust's economic deed would transcend the purely subjective ideals and goals of *Bildung*, aestheticism and love, and would give back to the community in an *objective* way. Therefore, the idea of transcendence as being realized in a

specialized deed, and thus Weber's references to Goethe's novels, should be seen as pivotal to the interpretive lens through which the former framed the 'will to act' which empowered and redeemed the Puritans, and hopefully the politicians and scientists alike.

According to Goethe, the individual's being was only definable through continuous worldly striving. Therefore, the 'fallen state' of the individual is at once an attempt on his part to become self-conscious. As Kaufmann has argued, Goethe lacked the pathos of Heidegger and thus the self-pity that is "so fashionable today" (Kaufmann, 1980:63). This indeed was true and, as we have seen, is tied to Goethe's faith in the metaphysical unity which linked all individuals to each other and nature. However, more pertinent to the issue is the lesson learnt by Faust, viz. that to strive was to be redeemed. Goethe's personal faith in the ultimate redemption of the individual is voiced in a letter to Eckerman dated February 4, 1829 in which he asserts that "if I work indefatigably until my end, then nature is obligated to offer me another form of existence when the present one can no longer endure my spirit" (Kaufmann, 1980:68). For Goethe therefore, striving in the realm of social life was a deed which demanded of *nature* salvation in return.

For Goethe, striving inevitably led to the individual's self-conscious determination in 'the deed' as a means of objectifying her 'will to act'. Therefore, Goethe's unshakeable faith in the 'will to act' of the modern individual is at the same time an assertion of his belief in the creative and

transformative power of the individuals who are able to harness their daemon.

Although this demoniacal element can manifest itself in all corporeal and incorporeal things, and even expresses itself most distinctly in animals, yet with man especially has it a most wonderful connection, forming in him a power, which, if it be not opposed to the moral order of the world, nevertheless does often so cross it that one may be regarded as the warp and the other as the woof.

(Goethe, 1974;425)

The key to the notion of elective affinity, therefore, lies not so much in its significance as a methodological tool, but as end to be pursued by the individual which would see her daemon find its most harmonious expression in the 'system of needs' which made up contemporary civil society.

Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust* point to the structural and cognitive rationalization that had emerged in the modern world. Class structure and cultural fragmentation were catalysts for Wilhelm's quest to find a sphere within which he could find harmony and synthesis. For Faust, on the other hand, it would be the intellectualization of the world which would lead him to crave a deeper sense of meaning and purpose to his existence. In the end, both acquire the 'will to act' which sees them realize their talents and *duty* in a specialized vocation. Therefore, Goethe's protagonists understood that the sole means of inner salvation in the face of the transitoriness of mortal life lay in their action and duty to 'add living space for man'.

Understood as a formula, 'the will to act' is what ultimately enabled Goethe's protagonists, and Weber's 'overmen' to rise above the disenchanted and fragmented nature of modern society. Therefore, tied to the 'will to act' was the individual's duty to renounce her desire to simply experience the world, in favour of playing an active part in furthering the development of community. The 'will to act' therefore, culminates with the realization of the sphere in which one wishes to express his daemon. However, before acquiring the ability to 'will' and maintain deeply held principles in the pursuit of a responsible and thus instrumental deed, Goethe stressed the primacy of striving and experience which preceded it. Therefore, without having recourse to Habermas, Goethe would nonetheless conceptualize modernity's structural and cognitive differentiation as a pedagogical element of the de-centered self. The rationalization of a community's value-spheres is conceptualized as providing a multiplicity of arenas within which the individual can strive for authenticity and experience. The tools acquired in striving were subsequently pivotal to the individual's self-discovery and renunciation. The self-awareness of one's daemon provided the individual with the 'ultimate value' and conviction that took to confront a social structure which could not, in-itself, provide it.

The unquestioned faith in the progression and 'will to act' of the individual does not find a similar expression in writings of Max Weber. While the notion of a 'will to act', the duty to renounce, and the primacy of

a specialized vocation are indeed central to Weber's understanding of what it took to become empowered in the face of a rationalized culture, the sociologist's faith in the ability the youth of his day to meet the challenge was shaken. Instead, Weber would witness the advent of a generation which sought experience and not the renunciation and asceticism which are pivotal elements of the 'will to act'. The quest for experience in-itself was, therefore, seen as a form of weakness in the modern individual, who was no longer empowered with the conviction of 'absolute' beliefs and the ability to pursue 'responsible' instrumental goals in a value-rational way.

Weber's analysis of the Protestant ethic would point to the rise of modern *personalities*, who, despite the vacuousness of a disenchanted cosmos convinced themselves of their duty to strive in a calling. In doing so, the Puritans saw themselves as an *active* part of a larger process embodied in God's community, thus and were able to ascribe meaning to the purely mechanistic imperatives of modern capitalism. However, under the weight and ubiquity of instrumental imperatives, the "quest for the Kingdom of God" would give way to a mechanistic 'will to accumulate'. Therefore, while the modern Occidental social structure provided a potentially creative field of battle wherein the individual could *act*, the modern 'overman' did not appear to be up to the task.

Weber's vocation essays, as treatises of the modern condition, pointed to the pitfalls and triumphs which await all those who enter its lair. The individual's daemon may not find harmony in these realms, certainly

not in politics, and therefore might perish in the face of its demands. Nonetheless, if the individual had passion, a 'will to act', and thus inner conviction, the realm of science and the pursuit of a specialized vocation could once again provide a path to the Kingdom of God through the deeds of responsible action.

Goethe's and especially Weber's Germany, witnessed the radical disenchantment of *absolute* aspirations. Consequently, the importance of education resided in its function as the primary catalyst which might once again set off the reaction of elective affinity, and thus give rise to the striving, self-discovery, and responsible social action that it demanded. In this way, individuals could once again come to discover their personal values and social duty.

Conclusion

In the introduction I asserted that this project would not concern itself with the biographical affinities between Goethe's fiction and Weber's life experiences. However, the path for future research must inevitably confront this issue. Goethe's notion of the daemon, as it manifests itself in Weber's sociology, political theory, and understanding of charisma in the modern world demands closer attention. Thus, the creative power of this life-force should be seen as particularly important in the light of Weber's ability to harness his own daemon following the events of 1897. The sociologist's sublimation of his daemonic passions would lead to an intellectual and creative rebirth, which began with the publication of Weber's work on the logical problems of historical economics in Roscher and Knies in 1903, and would conclude over a decade later, with the publication of his vocation essays. This biographical note points us to another underdeveloped area in Weberian sociology, viz. the pivotal role that Goethe's *Faust* occupies in shaping the former's conceptualization of the ethical dilemmas of contemporary politics and *Wissenschaft*. These essays call not only for a careful reinterpretation in the light of Faust's struggle and lesson, but also to Gundolf's 1916 metaphysical interpretation of the poet's fiction.

For the moment however, the connection between Goethe's faith in

the *telos* of the universe and cultural evolution, so central to Herder and Hegel, is perhaps best understood not only as a sign of intellectual influence and collaboration, but also a sign of the times. A century later, despite the intellectual predominance of neo-Kantianism in German academia, the writings of Max Weber would pick up on many of Goethe's themes. However, in a rapidly industrializing age of cultural rationalization and power politics, his sociology, while highlighting the rise of autonomous subjectivity and social evolution, would stress the inability of the modern individual to maintain the *idealism* of eighteenth century Germany. Thus, while the writings of Weber lacked Goethe's faith, the sociologist's faith in Goethe's writings, would remain pivotal.

Notes

- 1) See chapter two for a more in depth summary of Thomas' argument.
- 2) Weber notes that "something universal can, however, be asserted concerning the degree of elective affinity of concrete structural forms of social action with concrete economic forms, that is, concerning whether and how strongly they mutually favour one another's continuance or, conversely, hinder or exclude one another" (Weber, 1978;341).
- 3) For a discussion of idealist interpretations of Weber's use of elective affinity, in which Howe's reading is presented as 'pure idealism', see Thomas (1987).
- 4) Recently, Drysdale has reaffirmed the extent to which Weber's sociology and particularly his notion of concept formation while sharing a 'terminological affinity' with Rickert, demonstrates no "theoretical dependence" (Drysdale, 1996;73).
- 5) In 1981, Tiryakian argued that Weber's understanding of modern asceticism came from Puritan material itself, particularly John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1981;30)
- 6) In the same vein, Sica refers to Weber's quotations of *Faust* as ritualistic (Sica, 1988;157)
- 7) Marianne would also highlight the importance of this relationship, noting that Weber often used Goethe's letter's to Charlotte von Stein in order "to show the many and extraordinarily different points of view from which one and the same cultural phenomenon may be "historically significant"" (Marianne Weber, 1988;308).
- 8) In this respect, Marianne's biography of Max Weber (1988) presents a rather idealized image of their marriage, one which omits the significance of Else Jaffe in Max's life. See Mitzman (1970) and Kent (1985).
- 9) Thomas places authors such as Gerth and Mills (1958), Hill (1973), Parkin (1982) and Giddens (1971) in the materialist camp.
- 10) Included in Thomas' non-materialist camp are authors such as Bendix (1966), Howe (1978) and Stark (1958).

11) Scaff notes that Weber's first use of Goethe's notion of 'fateful' development appears in relation to the development of the nation (Inaugural address, 1895). The second reference to the poem appears in Weber's memorial speech for Georg Jellinek, who died at the wedding of his daughter Dora on March 21, 1911.

12) Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther* has not been included in the analysis. The novel, which was written by Goethe at the age of 25, is representative of the romanticism and Greek classicism which the older Goethe would come to renounce in his autobiography (Goethe, 1974) and subsequent novels. Therefore, it is the Prosaic Goethe, marked by the emergence of *Wilhelm Meister*, which would influence Weber insofar as the transition from *Werther* to *Wilhelm Meister* would see function replace "value as a measure of human fulfilment" (Muenzer, 1984;44) in Goethe's epistemology.

13) It is most often associated with a marginal order of discourse among the humanistic elite in Germany. See Ringer (1969)

14) Goethe's work on optics and chromatics was, and in the end, never has been accepted by the scientific community. In the lengthy debate in which he engaged with Newton, Goethe refused to accept the mathematical basis of Newtonian physics. Goethe's attack on Newton was therefore an assertion of his pantheism and his belief that analytical models threaten the individual's being (Heller, 1975;99). A similar discourse also ensued between Kant and Goethe (Cassirer, 1963;61-62) Therefore, Goethe's interests can be seen as anticipating *Gestalt* psychology's concern with the active role that the mind played in perception Willoughby (1969), Heller (1975) and Fink (1991), as well as falling in line with Hegel's phenomenology insofar as his work on the morphology of plants stressed that scientists must also make their souls the object of investigation (Cottrell, 1982;245).

15) My Italics.

16) Constantine notes that it is consciousness which raises the individual above the natural realm and therefore, that "the ability to choose a better course over a worse, is uniquely what characterizes human beings" and subsequently the novel's characters (Goethe, 1994;xii).

17) This work had been read and admired by Weber who used to read out excerpts of Gundolf's analysis to Marianne (Weber, 1958;22: Marianne Weber, 1988;595).

18) We come to discover that both men, as well as the child, are named Otto (it being the etymological root of Eduard). In addition, Goethe's female protagonists are named Ottilie, and a name of the same phoneme, Charlotte.

19) Muenzer has touched on the importance of balancing between the realm of ideas and interests, and has subsequently also pointed to the connection between the paradoxes of *Elective Affinities*, and their relationship to Goethe's notion of action. Therefore, authentic self-understanding "will occur only when human action is equally determined by egotistical and ascetic attitudes" (Muenzer, 1984;134).

20) Pointing to the dilemma of the burgher intellectual in eighteenth century Germany, who is denied the prestige of cultivation ascribed and available to the nobility, Ringer would argue that "Goethe's hero is not a noble man; but he has a profound longing for full personal self-development. He realizes that the traditional organization of society will prevent him from achieving his aim, and his only possible escape is to go on the stage." (Ringer, 1969;19).

21) In this respect, Werner can be seen as anticipating Nietzsche's 'last men' insofar as the former proclaims: "This then is my confession of faith: to do business, make money, amuse yourself with your own people and have no further care for the rest of the world, except insofar as you can make use of it." (Goethe, 1977;77).

22) Lukács has asserted that *Wilhelm Meister* and particularly the 'Confession of a Fair Saint' of the sixth book represent an implicit polemic against Kantian moral theory insofar as human beings "should not slavishly obey a moral code imposed upon them; they should become sociable by virtue of free, organic (sic) spontaneity and bring the manifold development of their individuality into agreement with the happiness and interests of their fellow men." (Lukács, 1968;57). Goethe, for his part, remarked that the inspiration for this scene was his encounters with the mystic Frau von Klettenberg (Goethe, 1974 vol.1;367).

23) For Goethe, as well as his protagonist, Shakespeare's emphasis on the historical development and social structure of England, had understood the way to true humanism by acknowledging the "fact that the theatre, drama and even poetry in general are only one side, one part of the great, comprehensive network of problems- culture, personality development and humanity" (Lukács, 1968;52)

24) See section 7 for a discussion of the Abbé's conception of education.

25) Heberle points to Goethe's unshakeable faith in humanity noting that "Goethe was well aware of the limitations which social order imposes on man's use of inborn talents and capacities, but at the same time he was convinced that such obstacles should be, not a source of despair, but a challenge to persistent effort" (Heberle, 1969;69). This theme would be pivotal to *Faust* and his antagonistic yet redemptive struggles with Mephistopheles.

26) A mischievous and skeptical allusion to the philosophy of Hegel and Schelling is uttered in *Faust Part Two* by Mephistopheles who exclaims:
"A look of bold resolute you show,
But, be not *absolute* when home you go." (Goethe, 1959;96).

27) Titled *Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Mission* [1785], the edition was recovered by a stroke of luck in 1910.

28) Reiss notes that this choice of profession implies considerable renunciation insofar as surgeons at the time enjoyed little, to no social prestige in Germany (Reiss, 1969;245).

29) In the fourth book, the reality of modern existence intrudes on Wilhelm's 'utopia' as the community of Serlo's actors begin asking, much to his dismay, for raises (Goethe, 1839;303)

30) A more appropriate word for this transition might be Hegel's use of *Aufhebung*.

31) Goethe himself had been slightly reluctant about publishing the novel in two separate parts (Kaufmann, 1980;66).

32) While acknowledging that *Faust Part Two* indeed introduces a philosophical activity which 'interrupts' the epic of Faust's soul in *Faust Part One*, Wayne nonetheless feels that years of close work on the text have led him not only to a better understanding of "Goethe's wish that the two should be read as one, but of the majestic and sometimes wilful energy with which he engaged upon divagation that now afford a mine of thought for the contemplative reader." (Goethe, 1959;7).

33) Epitomized most succinctly by Faust's proclamation "I hear, but lack the faith" (Goethe, 1949;56).

34) In a 'Prologue in Heaven' Mephistopheles and the Lord wager Faust's soul. In the process, the Lord demonstrates considerable foresight in warning Mephistopheles that "man must strive, and in striving must err." The wager is therefore concluded with the assertion:

"Let it be so: to you [Mephistopheles] is given the power

That may seduce this soul from true source,

If you can wholly bend him to your force.

but stand ashamed when called on to confess:

A good man in his dark, bewildered course

Will not forget the way of righteousness (Goethe, 1949;41-42).

35) It is worth noting that optimistic interpretations of the legendary sixteenth century doctor's life begin in the mid-eighteenth century wherein the legend of Faust became interpreted in the light of a 'wager contract'. Binswanger notes that it was Lessing who first made this first brake, which in turn enabled a 'good' ending to the saga . Lessing's interpretation was made available to Goethe by Herder (Binswanger, 1994;46).

36) Faust's attempt to unite with Helen provides an allegory for the unison of German romantic medievalism and the classicism of the Greeks (Goethe, 1959;12).

37) Goethe's model for Faust as a creator of quick wealth was John Law who, in 1715, gained permission from the prince of Orleans, to found an issuing bank in France (Binswanger, 1994;30).

38) My Italics.

39) For an analysis of the complexities involved in Faust's appropriation of *dominium* as opposed to *patrimonium* see Binswanger (1994;19).

40) As Binswanger (1994) has noted, a central theme of *Faust* is the individual's attempt to overcome the transitoriness of mortal existence. The attempt to reduce phenomena to the universal, causal laws of science is represented in Wagner's artificial creation of life in *Homonunclus* (act two). While the inability of art to deal with dilemmas of a modern age dominated by 'ends' fails with Faust's attempt to arrive at aesthetic unity with Helen of Troy. In the end, the economy while incessantly gearing the individual's concern towards the future, coupled with science, is presented as the way to mastery of the modern world, its people, and things.

41) Which in the final analysis could keep away the angel of Necessity.

42) Kaufmann notes that Goethe felt a powerful aversion to the otherworldliness and preoccupation with death that rendered the German romantics so morbid (Kaufmann, 1980;70). Their fatalism fundamentally opposed Goethe's faith that nature was not arbitrary insofar as all contradictions eventually resolve themselves (Willoughby, 1968;163).

43) Goethe's discovery of the intermaxillary bone in human beings in 1784 would serve as a powerful reinforcement of his belief that the individual was a part of nature and not a higher order. The individual therefore was simply one facet of the great totality (Gray, 1967;114: Fink, 1991;22: Boyle, 1992;349).

44) Weber argued that the Occidental guilds were based on choice (in opposition to the caste system). Moreover, the warring between towns that the West would experience, also served to strengthen the fraternity between craftsmen in the Occidental city (Weber, 1958;335).

45) In *The Religion of China*, Weber notes that in opposition to the trust and fraternity between the Puritans sects, the Chinese shared a high degree of distrust for one another. In the end, the excess of external conventions in China would lead to the absence of a unified way of life, flowing from an autonomous value orientation (Weber, 1951;232).

46) It should be noted that in Parsons' translation of *The Protestant Ethic*, the term 'elective affinity' appears as 'correlation'.

47) Weber's first use of the term appears in 1904, in his essay on "'Objectivity' in the Social Sciences' .

48) My Italics.

49) It is interesting to note that Weber pointed to the Puritans condemnation of the theatre as "obnoxious" insofar as they were manifestations of "idle talk, superfluities, and of vain ostentation, all designations as irrational attitude without objective purpose" (Weber, 1930;169).

50) This theme would also be central to Weber's critique of Lutheranism and Pietism, which he argued took away from 'this worldly activity'. Moreover, Lutheranism tended to sanctify a submissive attitude towards the state, whereas Pietism, while rooted in Calvinism, served to promote a weaker, more submissive form of asceticism (Weber,1930;137).

51) Thus, while Weber would assert the that moral justification of worldly activity was one of the most important results of Luther's Reformation (Weber, 1930;81), he would nonetheless conclude that Luther's "concept of the calling remained traditionalistic. His calling is something which man has to accept as a divine ordinance, to which he must adapt himself." (Weber, 1930;85).

52) Weber argued that the modern state was characterized by impersonality. "Unlike the patriarchal system Weber studied in the East Elbian territories, where the "estate" existed to ensure personal rule carried out on the basis of personalized authority relationships, the modern state apparatus functions "in a matter-of-fact manner, 'without regard to the person,' *sine ira et studio*, without hate and therefore without love" (Scaff, 1989;167).

53) This would be translated by Parsons in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of*

Capitalism as "the last stage" thereby overshadowing the Nietzschean allusion. See Weber, 1930;182.

54) The notion of the 'cognitive content' of instrumental reason would also be of central importance to Habermas' understanding of modern political culture of rationalized societies. In *Towards a Rational Society*, Habermas would argue that it "is only recently that bureaucrats, the military and politicians have been orienting themselves to strictly scientific recommendations in the exercise of their political functions- indeed, this practice has only existed on a large scale since World War II. This marks a new or second stage of that "rationalization" which Max Weber had already comprehended as the basis for the development of bureaucratic domination." (Habermas, 1971;62).

55) This sentiment was first expounded in Weber 's inaugural address insofar as he felt that there could be "no work in political economy on the basis of optimistic hopes of happiness." (Weber, 1994;14).

56) Weber contended that the politician is "constantly in danger of becoming an actor as well as taking lightly the responsibility for the outcome of his actions and of being concerned merely with the 'impression' he makes." (Weber, 1958;116).

57) Heller argues that this is the central theme of Faust's reallocation of Philemon and Baucis and thus, "the most poetic dramatization of the defeat of the holy at the hands of prosaic engineering" (Heller, 1975;95).

58) Weber argued that the German youth of his time craved "not only religious experience but experience as such." (Weber, 1958;143).

59) Weber would warn: "Fellow students! You come to our lectures and demand from us the qualities of leadership, and you fail to realize in advance that of a hundred professors at least ninety-nine do not and must not claim to be football masters in the vital problems of life, or even to be 'leaders' in matters of conduct." (Weber, 1958;150).

60) My Italics.

61) *Faust* Act I, scene II, Bayard-Taylor's translation.

62) My Italics.

63) See Ringer, Fritz K. 1969, *The Decline of the German Mandarins*. Cambridge: Harvard.

64) Weber felt that this was particularly true of the United States, where specialized education meant that “no young American would think of having a teacher sell him a *Weltanschauung*” (Weber, 1958;150).

65) Bismarck's 'Caesarist' reign and dismantling of any power bases which might stand in his way led Weber to assert that he had “left behind a nation *entirely lacking in any kind of political education...And above all a nation entirely without political will*, accustomed to assume that the great statesman at the head of the nation would take care of political matters for them.” (Weber, 1994;144).

66) Mephistopheles would not only voice the rigours and reification of science, but would also warn against distractions such as theology and metaphysics, noting that as “weavers they do not amount to much” (Goethe, 1949;95).

67) The rationalization of society's cultural spheres was conceptualized by Weber as once again filling the world with gods. As in the pre-Christian, Greek tradition, modernity was characterized by a multiplicity of gods each battling for supremacy and demanding respect (Goldman, 1992;76).

68) In the sixth book of *The Travels* Wilhelm would assert that there was a peculiarity among instructors of which he would never approve insofar as they sought “to seclude the children from whatever might awaken them to an acquaintance with themselves and with the invisible, sole, faithful Friend.” (Goethe, 1836;445).

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