The Limits of Reflexivity:
A Weberian Critique of the
Work of Pierre Bourdieu

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PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
This work has not been previously submitted in any form at this or any other University.

Jason Pudsey
Dedicated to Michael and Marie

- wonderful friends and wise mentors
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Abstract

This thesis contributes to discussion surrounding the importance of reflexivity in social theory and sociology by illustrating some of the paradoxes involved in the development of a reflexive social science. It does this by focusing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, arguably the main advocate of reflexive sociology. The thesis argues that Bourdieu's emphasis on a 'science of practices' limits his ability to be completely reflexive because it excludes moral reflexivity. This is ironic, given that Bourdieu believes that reflexivity increases scientificity. The thesis argues that Max Weber's work on religious rationalisation offers an insightful understanding of these paradoxes. His work reveals how and why Modernity witnessed a separation and tension between moral reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity. It also reveals, despite Weber's best efforts to do so, that such a paradoxical tension cannot be overcome. The thesis uses these insights to show the dilemmas and tensions facing any reflexive sociology.
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Introduction

Of all the oppositions that artificially divide social science, the most fundamental, and the most ruinous, is the one that is set up between subjectivism and objectivism (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 25)

The fate of an epoch which has eaten from the tree of knowledge ... is that it must know that it cannot learn the meaning of the world from the results of its analysis (Weber, 1949, p. 157)

Science and Reflexivity

Much of the enormous amount of intellectual work undertaken by Pierre Bourdieu has been dedicated to the attempt to make reflexivity an integral part of the sociological relation to the world. By ‘reflexivity’, Bourdieu means the constant unmasking of subjects’ (including intellectuals’) presuppositions and ‘unthought categories of thought’ (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 33). His understanding of reflexivity thus entails the conscious and active contemplation by a subject on the various objective structures, both material and mental, which she has internalised through her practice. Reflexivity for Bourdieu is thus the attempt to retrieve for the scrutiny of conscious thought, the unconscious which lies in the habitus and logic of practice.

This thesis starts from the position that Bourdieu’s attempt to make sociology more reflexive is valuable and worthwhile. It also defines reflexivity in much the same way as Bourdieu, that is, as the attempt to bring to conscious thought, for the purposes of greater self- and social understanding, the objective and intersubjective factors which unconsciously influence the practice of subjects.

The thesis breaks from Bourdieu, however, in its central argument: Bourdieu's attempt to provide a common 'habitus' for sociology based on reflexive sociology is caught in a paradox which inevitably arises when trying to be scientific and reflexive simultaneously. An understanding of this paradox can be gained from a particular interpretation of Max Weber's
analysis of rationalisation. The effect of this paradox is to create a tension between epistemological reflexivity and moral reflexivity. By 'epistemological reflexivity', I refer to the process of clarifying and understanding the relation between the scientist and the object they study, or what Bourdieu describes as objectifying the relation between the objectifier and the objectified (1990a, p. 19). Its goal is to improve the objectivity and scientifcity of science. By 'moral reflexivity', I mean the reflection upon the meaning and value of a way of life or practice, especially one's own. Such reflection attempts to understand how best to live, how to relate to other human beings, and which ethics and values provide the best means for achieving these aims. It is primarily the attempt to gain a meaningful framework through which life can be made sense of.

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1 By 'particular interpretation', I refer to the fact that my analysis of the works of both Weber and Bourdieu is 'ideal-typical'. Neither the section on Weber's work, nor that on Bourdieu's, should be seen as definitive or absolutely comprehensive, but instead as 'readings' stemming from a certain position in socio-cultural reality in the contemporary intellectual sphere. My definition of what constitutes the ideal-type 'Weber' and 'Bourdieu' in this thesis is shaped by their relation with one another, and accordingly, I have chosen to emphasise certain parts of the infinite complexity of their respective textual realities in order to clarify and understand the relation between the two.

2 On first appearances, this division between epistemological and moral reflexivities may seem to be akin to the two types of reflexivity, 'structural reflexivity' and 'self reflexivity', identified by Scott Lash in the 'Reflexive Modernisation' thesis of Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens. According to Lash (1994, pp. 115-116), '...there is structural reflexivity in which agency, set free from the constraints of social structure, then reflects on the "rules" and "resources" of such structure .. on agency's social conditions of existence. Second, there is self-reflexivity in which agency reflects on itself.' Yet appearances are often misleading, and the fundamental difference between epistemological and moral reflexivities on the one hand, and structural and self-reflexivities on the other, is that the former transcends the agency/structure dualism which is inherent in the latter. For example, epistemological reflexivity cannot be seen as structural reflexivity since epistemological reflexivity examines, not social structures, but social practices, in particular those practices which create classifications and theories for knowing the world. Epistemological reflexivity is not reflection upon the structures of society, but upon what we do in our practice which allows us to know about those structures. Nor can moral reflexivity be equated with self-reflexivity as it encompasses factors deeper than the model proposed by Beck and Giddens, and wider than the individual self, that is, communal and intersubjective factors. For example, Lash (1994, p. 116) points out that both structural and self reflexivity are based on the desire to minimise insecurity. Under my understanding of moral reflexivity, that is, the reflection upon values and meanings, such a desire would be open to scrutiny and reflected upon, as has been undertaken recently by Zygmunt Bauman (1991). Secondly, Lash (1994, p. 119) argues that reflexivity is about the 'progressive freeing of agency and structure.' Once again, moral reflexivity would involve a questioning of why this is the case and what is the meaning or value of such a project.

Thus, although Lash comes close to talking of moral reflexivity when discussing the weaknesses of Giddens' and Beck's approach and arguing for a reflection on 'shared meanings' (1994, p. 168), he
It is important to make clear at the outset that these differing reflexivities are 'ideal-types' in the Weberian sense.\(^3\) Obviously moral reflexivity should be a means of improving epistemological reflexivity, that is, of understanding the relation between the intellectual and the object of analysis. In order to highlight the limited nature of Bourdieu's reflexivity, however, I believe it is necessary to make an ideal-typical distinction between reflecting on the way in which the scientist observes the world (of which Bourdieu tells us a great deal), and reflecting upon the way in which morals and values shape practice (of which he tells us little). Only with such a distinction is it possible to gain a clear understanding of the limits within Bourdieu's reflexive sociology.

These limits are primarily caused by the tension between epistemological and moral reflexivity which lies at the heart of Bourdieu's work. His valuing of objective science on the one hand, and reflexivity on the other, places him in a contradictory situation - to be more reflexive would involve him revealing his subjective moral position, but to do so would be seen by himself and others as 'unscientific'. The limitations of Bourdieu's reflexivity are thus based on a clash of values within the moral realm. This thesis examines where these limitations emerge in Bourdieu's œuvre, and suggests possible reasons why they exist. By doing so, it hopes to contribute to a productive dialogue over the limits and possibilities of a reflexive sociology.

To undertake such a contribution, it is first necessary to contextualise Bourdieu's science of practices by examining the epistemological dualism which it sought to overcome.

**Agency versus Structure and Subjectivism versus Objectivism**

fails to fully elaborate or perhaps even consider, how such an approach must examine the values and moralities existing in practices and spheres/communities which give rise to a particular ontology and meaningful world. Ironically, it is perhaps his reliance on the work of Bourdieu (1994, pp. 153-168), which, as I shall argue throughout this thesis, can never be the basis of moral reflexivity, that prevents him from fully realising what the development of what he terms a 'hermeneutic reflexivity' (1994, p. 168) entails.

\(^3\) I shall discuss Weber's conception of 'ideal-types', their purpose, and usefulness, in greater detail below.
Do humans have agency within society, or are they constrained by the structures of society? Are the subjective perceptions of agents the determinant of social events, or do the objective relations between agents structure the course of history?

These questions have haunted social theory and sociology since its inception in the eighteenth century. The nature of how the individual and society co-exist and affect each other has been scrutinised by such social thinkers as Marx, Durkheim, Parsons, and Giddens. In its epistemological form (subjectivism versus objectivism) or in its ontological form (agency versus structure), this problem of free will versus determinism has continually vexed social analysts.⁴

Three main positions have emerged to solve this quandary. The first emphasises the role of the individual and their subjective perspective in the creation, reproduction, and transformation of society. This tradition emphasises the self-consciousness and ‘subjectivity’ of agents by examining the ways in which they perceive and make sense of the world, and from there, act within it. Included here are such sociological theories as Phenomenology, Methodological Individualism, and Ethnomethodology.

The second position is in stark contrast to the first, arguing that objective structural relations between individuals shape and determine their actions and thoughts. These structures are objective because they are beyond the subjective will or even perception, of individuals. Traditions such as Functionalism, French Structuralism, and Structural Marxism have advocated this position.

Since the mid 1960’s, a third position has emerged whereby some theorists have begun to reconcile objective structures and subjective agents to show how human creativity exists, but within limited conditions. The most notable exponents of this position have been Berger and Luckmann (1967), Anthony Giddens (1976, 1979, 1984), Roy Bhaskar (1979), and Pierre Bourdieu.

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⁴ See Dave (1970), Bernstein (1979), and Giddens (1979) for details on this debate and proposed solutions to it.
Bourdieu's 'Science of Practice'

Since the publication of ‘Outline of a Theory of Practice’ in 1977, Pierre Bourdieu’s work has become well known within Anglo-American sociology. Most notably, his attempt to transcend the dualism of subjectivism versus objectivism which he first proposed in that book, has gained both widespread acclaim and criticism. It has become increasingly clear that given the enormous breadth of his sociological investigations and prolific production of his work, it is now almost impossible to avoid confronting Bourdieu’s work in some way in contemporary sociological theory and practice.

The innovation of Bourdieu’s approach is his argument that the subjectivist/objectivist dualism is only an epistemological problem of intellectual abstraction produced by the synchronising and totalising worldview of intellectuals. His work attempts to show that at the level of everyday practice, such a problem is nonsensical and never arises. For Bourdieu, it is the position of the intellectual as ‘spectator’ rather than that of the ‘player’ in social life, which is at the bottom of these apparent dualisms. Bourdieu thus proposes the development of a 'science of practice' which avoids the pitfalls of both subjectivism and objectivism while simultaneously retaining their respective epistemological strengths. By concentrating on a diachronic analysis which examines the interplay of agency and structure, and combines objectivist and subjectivist epistemologies, within the unfolding of time, that is, empirical history, Bourdieu believes a more accurate and 'scientific' understanding of agents' practices can be reached.

Bourdieu's 'science of practice', or 'social praxeology' as he also terms it, is not so much theory, as an epistemological investigation into the application of his concepts to various areas of social life. This investigation reveals that all areas of social life contain an 'economy of practice' which is often unseen by its participants. Bourdieu's 'science of practices' reveals that the logics of the economic sphere are not confined to that sphere alone, since they also operate within such areas as culture, religion, and science.
At the root of this science of practice is the constant attempt to reflexively apply this science to the practice of the observer - the scientist or intellectual. Only by developing a reflexive sociology, Bourdieu argues, can one avoid the one-sidedness of objectivism while simultaneously maintaining a scientific and objective understanding of social life.

Rogers Brubaker (1993, p. 216) has argued that Bourdieu's notion of reflexivity, along with his analytical concepts of 'habitus', 'capital', and 'field', needs to be incorporated into the contemporary practice of sociologists. If this was to be the case, Bourdieu's reflexive science of practices would offer the possibility of a shared sociological 'habitus' - reflexive sociology.

This thesis starts from Brubaker's call. Like him, I believe reflexivity is fundamentally important in sociological practice and theory. Unlike him, I do not believe that Bourdieu's science of practices provides an adequate basis for such a reflexive sociology.

The Reflexive Limitations of a Science of Practice

Bourdieu's science of practices contains a number of problems which limits its reflexivity. Firstly, its attempt to construct a universally applicable epistemological framework which orders social reality into a series of systems, or 'fields', which operate by the law of supply and demand runs the danger of 'economising' social life. Since each 'field' contains an object, or 'capital' as Bourdieu terms it, the scarcity of which makes it valuable and therefore sought after by agents, two problems arise: on the one hand, it loses from reflexive analysis aspects of social life which are not rare, but nevertheless valued by agents. On the other hand, it reduces human beings to a form of competitive Homo Potestas (and its various sub-species, such as Homo Potestas Aestheticus and Homo Potestas Theologica), a Hobbesian creature motivated solely by the accumulation of capital. The result of both of these effects is that what we might call 'moral' goods such as
care, friendship, compassion, or 'brotherliness', are lost to sociological understanding. This, I believe, is a limited and morally problematic view of practice.

A second problem with Bourdieu's science of practices which limits its reflexivity is its inability to examine Bourdieu's own values and moral position. Such a science explains Bourdieu's scientific practice as the result of his attempt to accumulate 'scientific capital' in the intellectual field, an explanation which cannot account for the obvious ethical and moral motivations that lay behind it.

A third major problem which limits the reflexivity of Bourdieu's work is its inability to scientifically show why a science of practices is valuable, that is, the meaning of such a science. The only way such a meaning can be reflexively supplied is subjectively and morally, both of which exclude such an answer 'scientific' status.

These three problems limit the reflexivity in Bourdieu's science of practice, and stem from the fact that this science reduces the definition of reflexivity to a form of epistemological reflexivity by excluding moral reflexivity.

**Rationalisation and Reflexivity in the Work of Weber**

Like Bourdieu, Max Weber, in his work on the paradoxes of Western rationalisation, as developed in his sociology of religion, his works on methodology, and his lectures 'Science as a Vocation' and 'Politics as a Vocation', stresses the problems of intellectual abstraction separate from the empirical analysis of historical formations. Weber's work on rationalisation can be used to show how the dualism between agency and structure becomes an insoluble dilemma at the level of intellectual abstraction immediately the question of how they interact is raised. That is, Weber shows that the seduction of rationalisation which intellectuals fall prey to, denies an answer to this question at the moment it is rationally made a problem for analysis. To look for a rational answer to whether agency or structure move society and history is to lose, through abstraction, the very phenomena attempting to be grasped.
Unlike Bourdieu, however, the work of Weber on the paradoxes of religious rationalisation explains why a science of practices which exclude moral reflexivity cannot be fully reflexive. It does this in a number of ways. Firstly, Weber's writings on the world religions contain a much broader and wider historical vision, especially of the intellectual field than Bourdieu's work. Secondly, it examines, in an attempt to understand the meaning of science, the moral costs and paradoxical limitations of modern scientific rationalisation of which Bourdieu's own work is a part. Weber's analysis of rationalisation therefore provides a reflexive understanding of the limitations and possibilities of an objective 'science' of practices. Specifically, his work can be used to analyse how Bourdieu's attempt to gain a scientific understanding of practice is caught in the separation undertaken in the modern Western intellectual sphere between 'theoretical rationalism', 'practical rationalism', and 'ethical rationalism'. In the case of Bourdieu, this separation results in the loss of analysis of that area of life Weber termed 'ethical rationalism', the attempt to understand the meaning of suffering and mortality, in favour of a universalised ontology which sees the meaning of human life merely as the accumulation of symbolic capital. The paradoxical result is that the means (science) which Bourdieu employs to achieve his valued end (a total understanding of practice) denies this end.

Just as importantly, Weber's work on the Janus-faced nature of rationalisation illustrates how reflexivity, when pushed to its reflexive limits, actually denies the possibility of the objective, moral science envisaged by Durkheim and which still resonates within Bourdieu's work. Weber shows how 'rational' science ultimately rests on 'irrational' presuppositions which mean the question which drove on religious rationalisation - why do human beings suffer and die - is lost in the modern intellectual sphere, a situation which makes the whole value of science dubious. As I will show, this dubiousness applies also to a science of practices.

This thesis does not see Weber's work as a solution to this tension. Weber was also often caught in the paradox between, on the one hand, reflecting on values and the
problem of meaning, and on the other, the intellectual desire for an ordered and epistemologically reflexive framework through which social life could be understood. This thesis argues, however, that Weber's empirical works provide the best means of understanding the limitations to reflexivity which have emerged with the separation between moral and epistemological reflexivity in the modern intellectual sphere.

In order to support this argument, it is necessary to engage in a particularly detailed analysis of Weber's empirical works on the world religions. This is not an attempt to summarise these texts, but to develop a particular reading of them in order to illustrate four main points. Firstly, a detailed analysis of Weber's empirical works is necessary in order to understand the relationship between Weber's and Bourdieu's works, their affinities and differences. Secondly, these works are almost completely overlooked by Bourdieu in his critique of Weber's sociology of religion, a critique which centers on 'Economy and Society', and thus pauperises Weber's work. A detailed analysis of them therefore provides the best means of rejecting Bourdieu's critique. Thirdly, Weber's writings on religion cannot be understood by concentrating on one text in isolation, as the debate surrounding the 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' (the 'Weber thesis') shows. The links and continuities within Weber's work can only be seen by examining the entire corpus in substantial detail. Finally, a wide and detailed reading of Weber's empirical works on religion alerts us to many of the misleading translations which have arisen in Anglo-American sociology. By examining the texts in toto, we are able to see the contradictions which exist between them as a result of translation. A fuller understanding of Weber's aims can thus be achieved by examining the relation between the works, a point supported by the fact that German scholars of Weber's work, such as Tenbruck and Schluchter, were the first to highlight the centrality of religious rationalisation in his oeuvre.

**Chapter Outline**
In confronting Bourdieu’s science of practices, I aim to examine in substantial detail, firstly, his proposed solution to the subject/object dualism with the concepts of ‘habitus’, ‘field’, ‘capital’, and the like, and secondly, the main areas of social life he has investigated with these concepts. I intend to show that, though not a Weberian, Bourdieu’s work shares a number of crucial similarities and epistemological presuppositions with that of Weber. This is not completely surprising given that Bourdieu’s reading and critique of Weber’s work in the sociology of religion was crucial in the development of a number of Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts.

Chapter One outlines Bourdieu’s science of practice which attempts to solve the dualisms of agency/structure and subjectivism/objectivism with the concepts of ‘habitus’, ‘field’, and ‘practice’. Tracing his work in Algeria, through to his discovery of the difference between ‘practical logic’ and ‘logical logic’, up to and including his development of ‘reflexive sociology’, this chapter examines the main epistemological and ontological arguments and presuppositions of Bourdieu’s work.

Chapter Two examines how Bourdieu has employed his concepts to study different social ‘fields’. Covering his work on education, culture, universities, and politics, I demonstrate how Bourdieu has attempted to flush out the ‘misrecognised’ workings of ‘symbolic violence’ (violence which is not recognised as such) through the pursuit of ‘distinction’, and how the interaction of habitus and field affect the mental and corporeal actions of agents.

Chapter Three begins a comparison, which will be conducted throughout the thesis, of the work of Bourdieu and Weber. It does this by investigating Bourdieu’s critique of Weber’s sociology of religion as subjectivist and idealist. This critique, I argue, is a pauperised interpretation of Weber’s work, reducing it to a form of subjectivism centering on the ‘ideology of charisma’. This reductionist interpretation actually blurs the similarities between Weber’s and Bourdieu’s understanding of the workings of religion.
Chapter Four begins my analysis of Weber's empirical works on the world religions by examining in detail the concepts and epistemological presuppositions he employed in his investigation of the various processes of religious rationalisation which took place in different world religions. I argue in this chapter that the most important of these concepts is 'ethical rationalism'. This chapter details its central place in Weber's view of humans as meaning-seeking beings engaged in reflection upon moral and existential issues.

Chapter Five begins to show the enormous breadth and detail of Weber's historical vision by examining Weber's work on the religious rationalisation that occurred in Western cultural history. It traces the complexity of factors, both material and ideational, involved in the unique development of ancient Judaism, and its influence on Christianity, especially Protestant asceticism. It traces how the ethical rationalism developed by the Hebrew prophets, along with other elements, began the process of de-magicalisation which reached its fateful conclusion under the ethic of world transformation of the Puritans. This process not only gave birth to modern understandings of agency and social structure, but also indirectly profoundly shapes Bourdieu's understanding of social life.

In Chapter Six, I outline Weber's analysis of the religions of Asia and the various rationalisation processes they helped bring into being. I examine his writings on Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, showing how Weber believed these religions and their worldviews affected life-conduct and the historical development of Asian societies in directions different, but not inferior, to that of the West. This chapter examines the complex interaction of material and ideational factors which shaped Chinese and Indian rationalisations, and the particular values and knowledges these rationalisations produced. It also examines the different understandings of human agency and social change that were produced in these cultures.

Chapter Seven draws from Weber's empirical works outlined in Chapters 5 and 6 to detail the similarities which exist between Bourdieu's and Weber's empirical works and epistemological concepts. These similarities include their common emphasis upon the
combination of subjective and objective factors in shaping historical development, and the importance of the pursuit of status and distinction in social life.

Despite these similarities, Bourdieu's work contains a number of insights which are useful to a reflexive sociology and which move beyond that of Weber. Chapter Eight details these insights, including the way in which his concept of habitus is an elaboration of Weber's concept of traditional social action. This is not to say that Bourdieu's work is not without problems. Chapter Eight also examines the critiques of Bourdieu's work raised by a number of commentators.

In Chapter Nine, I illustrate the ways in which Weber's work avoids many of these problems. I argue in this chapter that the most important reason for the superiority of Weber's work over that of Bourdieu lays in its understanding of the centrality of meaning in agents' lives, and the paradoxical outcomes which often emerge out of agents' pursuit for this meaning. In Chapter Nine, I therefore show the manner in which these paradoxes are the outcome of the moral reflexivity of agents, and I show how Weber's own work must be seen as an exercise in moral reflexivity, not a scientific investigation of social life. As part of this, I argue for the re-analysis of a much underplayed Weberian investigation of rationalisation and its paradoxical outcomes - his investigation of Ancient Greece and Rome. I argue that the 'Agrarian Sociology of the Ancient Civilisations' contains an analysis of the paradoxical outcomes of the rationalisation of the military worldview of the hoplite foot-soldier and its effects on the polis and the agency of the hoplite. This work contains an understanding of the historical interplay of agency and structure which shows, much like the fate of the Puritan under Protestantism, the way that rationalised agency can often unintentionally create a world in which it has no place. Also within this chapter, I highlight the paradoxical outcomes of the search by religious intellectuals for the objective meaning of suffering and death, including the rise of science, the disenchantment of the world, and the loss of an ethic of 'brotherliness' as a basis of human relations. It is within
these consequences that Weber indirectly identified the separation between moral and epistemological reflexivity.

Chapter Ten details how this separation affects Bourdieu's work. It shows the ways in which Bourdieu's science of practice is limited in moral reflexivity and the question this raises over the meaning and value of such a science. It shows how this science fails to examine the values which Bourdieu holds in his scientific practice, as well as its limited understanding of the values operating in the contemporary intellectual sphere. It shows how Weber's examination of the paradoxes of rationalisation can be employed to understand why Bourdieu's science is limited in reflexivity, and why Bourdieu's choice of science as a means of gaining an understanding of practice is another example of self-defeating subjectivity.

My Conclusion recaps these arguments, and attempts to outline why an attempt to establish a reflexive science, even one as sophisticated and admirable as that of Bourdieu, is seduced by rationalisation and ends up as an artificial ontology which evaporates the importance of meaning and morality in human life. It suggests that there is no way out of this paradox, and that only by seeing the struggle between values which lies at the heart of the separation between moral and epistemological reflexivity can a realistic understanding of the limits and potentials of a reflexive sociology be reached.

A final note on presentation. Instead of including extensive quotations in the text, I have provided textual justification for my interpretations of Bourdieu's and Weber's works in footnotes. The reading of such notes is not seminal to the main text, or to the flow of its arguments, and is therefore optional. Through this technique, I hope the needs of all readers will be met.
Part I

Pierre Bourdieu's Science of Practice

In order to show the limitations to reflexivity which exist in what Bourdieu's calls the 'science of practice', it is first necessary to present this science. In this, Part I of the thesis, I outline the main concepts that Bourdieu has developed in his bid to create a science of practice, including 'habitus', 'field', and 'capital'. I present the framework in which these concepts are interconnected, and show how he has argued that this science of practice provides the basis for a viable reflexive sociology. I then illustrate how such a science is applied in his studies of education, culture, science, and the state. The final chapter in this part of the thesis, begins to show the relationship between Bourdieu's and Max Weber's work by examining Bourdieu's critique of the latter's sociology of religion.
1

Practical Logic, the Habitus, and Reflexivity

Introduction

By its very existence, sociology presupposes the overcoming of the false opposition arbitrarily erected by subjectivists and objectivists (Bourdieu, 1990c, p. 2).

It is this double truth, objective and subjective, which constitutes the whole truth of the social world (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 255).

Pierre Bourdieu's work is comprised of more than twenty-five books and 260 articles (Wacquant, 1992a, p. 2). A central theme of this enormous quantity of scholarship is the attempt to overcome the opposition between agency and structure, individual and society, objectivism and subjectivism.¹ These dualisms arose in social science with the collapse of a consensual approach to sociology which was, according to him, a 'false paradigm' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 36). Based on the 'Capitoline Triumvirate' of Parsons, Merton, and Lazarsfeld, this 'illusion of a unified social science' has collapsed, Bourdieu believes, for the benefit of sociology (1990b, p. 38). It was Bourdieu's dissatisfaction with the epistemological cul-de-sac which arose from the apparent mutual exclusiveness of one of these dualisms, subjectivism/objectivism, which led him to develop the concept of 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 10). It was with this concept, and the related concepts of 'field', 'practice' and 'capital', that he rejected the antinomy between these two epistemologies and replaced them with 'a science of practice', a 'social praxeology' which he believed incorporated the strengths of each, yet transcended their respective weaknesses.²

¹ Today's sociology is full of false oppositions, which my work often leads me to transcend - even if I don't set out deliberately to do so ... All these oppositions (and there are many others) seem to me to be completely fictitious and at the same time dangerous, because they lead to mutilations' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 34). One explanation Bourdieu gives for the proliferation of these dualisms in social science is the attempt by various agents, through cultural capital, to impose a definition on what 'true' sociology is, that is, the version of sociology which is closest to their interest and which they therefore have an interest in advocating (p. 35).

² Bourdieu also often terms his work 'constructivist structuralism' or 'structural constructivism': 'by structuralism or structuralist, I mean that there exist, in the social world itself, and not merely in symbolic systems, language, myth, etc., objective structures which are independent of the consciousness and desires of agents and are capable of guiding or constraining their practices or their
Bourdieu's work in many ways is an elaboration of the concept of habitus by using it as a theoretical tool with which to analyse a number of areas of social life. These areas he labels 'fields', and he has striven within his works to marry theory and practice, abstraction and empirical content.

Bourdieu's understanding of 'habitus' is also at the basis of his epistemological reflexivity. This reflexivity he has constantly used upon himself to analyse his own life, habitus, and 'social trajectory', as well as the position of the intellectual and sociologist generally.³

In this chapter, I outline these concepts and how they form a coherent epistemological position which attempts to transcend the dualism of subjectivism and objectivism. By detailing how 'habitus', 'field', and 'capital' fit together in a science of practice, I show the sophistication of Bourdieu's work, but also begin to scrutinise its limitations. Any such detailing must start with the dualism between subjectivism and objectivism which Bourdieu's science of practices was developed to transcend.

The Limits of Subjectivism and Objectivism

Bourdieu undertook his undergraduate studies in philosophy and social science at the Ecole Normale Superieure in Paris during the early 1950s, a period when existentialism and phenomenology were at their peak of influence (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 3).⁴ This was to be the time of the great confrontation in the French intellectual field between the subjectivism of Sartre and the objectivism of Levi-Strauss.⁵

³ If I can say what I do say, today, it's probably because I have not stopped using sociology against my determinations and my social limits' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 25). As such, Bourdieu has never ceased taking himself as an object of analysis, 'not in a narcissistic sense but as one representative of a category ... I can be objectivised like anybody else and, like anybody else, I have the taste and preferences, the likes and the dislikes that correspond roughly to my position in social space. I am socially classified' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 203).

⁴ His undergraduate studies included philosophy, mathematics and the history of science (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 4). Ironically, at the time he rejected sociology as it was '.. mediocre and empirical, without any theoretical or indeed empirical inspiration behind it' (p. 5). Being an exception to the traditional intake of the Ecole Normale was important in Bourdieu's intellectual development as it gave him a
It was his extensive ethnographic research in Algeria from 1957 to 1960, a period coinciding with the Algerian War of Independence (a situation which was to shape much of his reflection on the position and privilege of the intellectual) which first began to undermine Bourdieu's faith in structuralism. This disillusionment continued after his research in France on his native community in Bearn around 1959.

distance from the 'sovereign view' of academia, a distance which allowed him to be more critical of the university and intellectual life: throughout my studies at the Ecole Normale, I felt formidable ill-at-ease... In France, to come from a distant province, to be born south of the Loire, endows you with a number of properties that are not without parallel in the colonial situation. It gives you a sort of objective and subjective externality and puts you in a particular relation to the central institutions of French society and therefore to the intellectual institution... being constantly reminded of your otherness stimulates a sort of permanent sociological vigilance. It helps you perceive things that others cannot see or feel' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 209). Here we have a firm reminder of Weber's point that it is most often those on the peripheries of empires that see clearest the inadequacies of the centre (Weber, 1952, p. 207).

5 It is not easy to communicate the social effects that the work of Claude Levi-Strauss produced on the French intellectual field, or the concrete mediations through which a whole generation was led to adopt a new way of conceiving intellectual activity that was opposed in a thoroughly dialectical way to the figure of the politically committed "total" intellectual represented by Jean-Paul Sartre (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 1). Most importantly the work of Levi-Strauss and Structuralism fired Bourdieu's sociological imagination, as '...for the first time, a social science imposed itself as a respectable, indeed dominant discipline' (1990b, p. 6). As we shall see below, however, Bourdieu was not to be a full convert (or in terms more familiar to Bourdieu's oeuvre, an 'oblate') to the new movement. As he himself states, '...although I made an attempt in my work to put into operation the structural or relational way of thinking in sociology, I resisted with all my might the merely fashionable forms of structuralism' (1990b, p. 6). It is thus no accident that Bourdieu chose the dualism between subjectivism and objectivism (as embodied by Sartre and Levi-Strauss respectively) to attack in his mature works. Indeed, as we shall see, given the nature of the 'field', Bourdieu had very little option if he wanted to accumulate 'intellectual capital'. For further details on Levi-Strauss' impact on the French intellectual field and the resultant resuscitation of social science, see Bourdieu (1967).

6 In 1956 he was conscripted into the army and served for two years in Algeria (Jenkins, 1992, p. 14). During this time, Bourdieu analysed three villages and a clan in Kabylie, attempting to understand the socio-economic position of the indigenous people in relation to European culture and capitalism. His first book, 'Sociologie de l'Algerie', published in 1958 and substantially revised in 1961, was based on this research. The 1962 English version, 'The Algerians', was different again. What this work on Algeria traced was the way in which the social system was maintained by sustained conscious human effort and vigilance. Robbins (1991, p. 170) has noted that Bourdieu seems to have a romantic attachment to the Kabyle social order, where society is regulated by the subject, rather than objective laws and codes. This early work on Algeria is important and relevant here for two reasons:

1. it emphasises human agency. It appears that the primary aim of the tribes' social interaction was to maintain internal stability. In each tribe, based on their relationship with the physical environment, agents constructed social structures to meet the demands of the environment, but also to maintain certain power relations. As Robbins (1991, p. 20) puts it, '...the emphasis of the text is that the social structures are the product of sophisticated human creation';

2. it contains a number of important Weberian themes. For example, his analysis of the Mozabites centres on how religious practice is shaped by doctrine. Once again, Robbins (1991, p. 19) notes, 'it is quite clear that Bourdieu's reflections on the Mozabites have the Weberian analysis of puritanism and capitalism very much in mind'.

He also published a number of works on the changes Algeria was experiencing during the war and during colonial occupation, including 'Travail et travailleurs en Algerie' (1963) and 'Le Deracinement' (1964). These works were attempts to understand the position of the Algerian masses caught between traditional and modern society. Only 'The Algerian attitude towards time' (1964) and
After a number of works on the sociology of education\textsuperscript{8} and sociology of art\textsuperscript{9}, Bourdieu began to tackle the fundamental epistemological problem which had emerged out of researching these areas - the dualism between subjectivism and objectivism. 'Outline of a Theory of Practice' (1977)\textsuperscript{10} and 'Le Sen pratique' (1980)\textsuperscript{11} contain the most systematic attempts by Bourdieu to come to terms with, and transcend, this dualism. In these works, he examines what he perceives to be the respective weaknesses of the subjectivist and objectivist epistemologies, and the problems of theoretical knowledge itself. To transcend these weaknesses, he argues, a new understanding of the practice of agents is necessary, one which retains the strengths of each epistemology. What must be taken into account to achieve this new understanding, Bourdieu argues, is the different relations to action that the agent and

\textsuperscript{7} See 'Celibat et condition paysanne' in \textit{Etudes rurales} 5/6 (1962) and 'Les relations entre les sexes dans la societe paysanne' in \textit{Les temps modernes} 195 (1962). The central theme of these studies was the phenomena of celibacy in Bearn. They showed how changing economic conditions had made traditional values and practices problematic, as seen in the organisation of the matrimonial market. The formerly fixed market of organised marriages was replaced by an open competitive market, leaving those raised in accordance with the former lacking the ability, or 'capital' as Bourdieu terms it, to compete effectively in the open marriage market. This was to be a crucial study for Bourdieu since it was to be the crossover point between ethnology and sociology (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 59). The analysis of a familiar environment with the techniques of ethnology allowed him to objectify the objectifying subject and this observing of the observer was to have a profound affect on his understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. It also contributed to the undermining of his faith in structuralism, since this research made clear that structuralism was unable to give an account of how actors restructure their realities.


\textsuperscript{9} In 1965 he published 'Un Art moyen' (translated as 'Photography: A Middle Brow Art', 1990 by Shaun Whiteside) based on his analysis of the role of photography in Bearn. 'L'amour de l'art' was published in 1966 (translated as 'The Love of Art', by Caroline Beattie and Nick Merriman, 1991).

\textsuperscript{10} In 1972, Bourdieu revisited his work in Algeria in order to come to terms with the problematic dualism between objectivist and subjectivist epistemologies, the result of which was 'Equisse d'une theorie de la pratique'. This book was substantially rewritten in 1977 for English publication as 'Outline of a Theory of Practice'. Robbins (1991, pp. 103-106) has suggested that the problem with 'Equisse' and the reason for the major changes made to it, was that it was too anthropological and did not seem to be related to the Western and modern worlds.

\textsuperscript{11} Translated as 'The Logic of Practice' (1990) by Richard Nice, Polity Press.
intellectual observer have: the former has a 'practical' relation, the latter a 'theoretical' relation. He argues that a true scientific understanding of social agents and social structures can only come about by understanding the limits of the theoretical relation without relying solely on the agent's subjective view. Only then can a true 'science of practices' exist.

The Limits of the Theoretical Relation to the Object

The theoretical relation to the object of analysis has been traditionally accomplished in social science through one of two opposing epistemologies: the subjectivist (or phenomenological), which tries to understand the subject's primary experience of the world, and thus centres on familiarity with the world (for example, ethnomethodology); and the objectivist, which constructs the objective relations between agents which structure and shape practice, such as economic or linguistic structures. This is based on breaking with the subject's experiences of the world and challenging what Bourdieu calls the 'doxic' or 'commonsense' view of the world by examining the structures which make the doxic view possible (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 126). The best example of such a break is French Structuralism.

Bourdieu saw serious limitations in each of these modes of knowledge.

The limits of subjectivism for Bourdieu, were based on its reliance on the primary experience of the agent, a reliance which meant it missed the wider, objective relations between agents, as well as the fact that the viewpoints of agents will vary based on their position in social space. Bourdieu attacks Sartre's work as a clear example of how subjectivism sees an ahistorical confrontation between the subject and the world (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 42-7).\(^{12}\) According to Bourdieu, for Sartre, the world of action is an 'imaginary' universe of changeable positions depending on the

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\(^{12}\) Another example of this 'ultra-subjectivism' attacked by Bourdieu is 'Rational Action Theory', especially that proposed by Jon Elster (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 46-51), which reduces rationality to an 'economistic' model and thus makes it 'impossible to understand the logic of all the actions that are reasonable without being the product of a reasoned design, still less of a rational calculation' (p. 50).
consciousness that decrees it. It is a universe completely devoid of objectivity. What the subject wills, occurs.

Sartre's work, according to Bourdieu, shows that subjectivism universalises the experience that the subject has of themself as a subject (1990a, pp. 45-6). The subject endows all the subjects they chooses to identify with (in Sartre's case, 'the people') with their own experience, that is, as a free floating subject.\textsuperscript{13}

Rejecting this subjectivism, Bourdieu gives epistemological priority to the objective over the subjective because it avoids this mistaken 'projection', and provides a solid basis for a scientific understanding of practice (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 11). Objectivism had a number of problems of its own, however, which, along with his studies in Kabylia, ended Bourdieu's days as a 'blissful structuralist' (1990a, p. 9). His attempt to understand Kabyle cosmologies (as shown in his attempt to draw up a model of their agrarian calendar) along with his realisation during the Algerian War of the privileged position of the intellectual who 'withdraws' from the world in order to study it, and the moral and political problems involved with this withdrawal, led him to an analysis of the researcher and their practice (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 60). His criticism of objectivism which comes out of this analysis is extensive, and is vital for understanding his development of a science of practices. As such, I want to examine these criticisms in some detail.

The Paradox of Objectivism

Bourdieu sees objectivism as involving a break from the commonsense view of the world, the view of the agent and the view given priority by subjectivism (Bourdieu, 1968, p. 682). For Bourdieu this is a necessary break if one is to have a scientific understanding of society (Bourdieu, 1968, p. 691). Yet it gives rise to a difficulty: the objectivist anthropologist does not analyse, that is objectify, their relation to the object of study. As such, this brings about distortion:

\textsuperscript{13} Bourdieu is also highly critical of the work of Alain Touraine which attempts to solve the agency-structure debate. For him, Touraine's thesis is similar to Sartre's and ends in a metaphysical construction of human agency and freedom (see Bourdieu, 1974c).
Hence it is not sufficient for anthropology to break with native experience and the native representation of that experience: it has to make a second break and question the presuppositions inherent in the position of an outside observer, who, in his preoccupation with interpreting practices, is inclined to introduce into the object the principles of his relation to the object (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 2).

Because the anthropologist is excluded from the 'playing' of social relations, that is, they are not within them and have no place in the social system they are observing, they have what Bourdieu calls a 'sovereign view' of the world (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 96).\textsuperscript{14} This means that the 'distance secured by externality' turns the anthropologist into an impartial spectator, condemned to see all practice merely as spectacle (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 14). It also makes them unaware of the limits of that external position.

Bourdieu uses the analogy of a map to explain this process. The outsider, not knowing the terrain of a foreign world, and lacking the practical skills to move around in it, must make a model to cover all possible routes to understand the environment. It is in the creation of this model that all of objectivism's problems lay.

Firstly, because objectivism separates itself from the social world and the practical knowledge that works within it, it loses a theory of practical knowledge. Bourdieu tries to show how this loss of practical knowledge occurs with the example of the gift-exchange. He targets Levi-Strauss' criticism of Mauss' 'phenomenological' understanding of gift-exchange and his attempt to replace it with mechanical laws based on 'rules' of exchange (Bourdieu, 1977a, pp. 4-6).

Bourdieu criticises this move because the outside observer (Levi-Strauss) constructs a model which is not the experience of the practical agent involved in the gift-exchange. The model is synchronic and abstract and sees the act as reversible, yet from the point of view of the agent it is irreversible. This objectivist truth is thus not the whole truth because the practice could not exist as it does if it were perceived in

\textsuperscript{14}This sovereign view often gives the observer a feeling of superiority over the observed. Bourdieu notes that he rejected this 'cavalier' position of superiority when studying the Kabyle peasants because he had grown up with very similar peasants and this sensitised him to its artificiality (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 21).
the same way as the model perceives it. Crucially, the model loses the agent's perspective.

The reason for this is the fact that by totalising social life into a system of 'rules', the model misses the crucial aspect of time which shapes and affects practice. For example, the counter-gift in a gift exchange must be different, and deferred. The return of a counter-gift has to be given at the right moment, as it has different meanings at different times. For this reason, time is central. It is a matter of strategy when the time is best to give a counter-gift, and for Bourdieu, 'to abolish the interval is also to abolish strategy' (1977a, p. 6). The importance of strategies comes from the fact that agents remain in command of the time-intervals between socially obligatory moments (called 'rules' in objectivism) and thus control the tempo of exchange and interaction (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 81). Time is used and employed by the agent. It is not an abstract, empty part of social life as in the objectivist's model. There are numerous strategies through which agents use time to gain advantage or avoid humiliation, but these are lost to objectivism and its models.

There is thus, according to Bourdieu, an 'art of living', not based on the mechanical following of 'rules', but on agents' strategies and manipulation of time. It is therefore practice, with all its strategic intricacies and its occurrence within and through time, which is lost by the imposition of an objective model on social reality. Practice contradicts the absolutism of the model:

Objectivism constructs a theory of practice (as execution) but only as a negative by-product or, one might say, waste product, immediately discarded, of the construction of the systems of objective relations (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 24).

By seeing practice only in this negative light, objectivism ignores the question of how regularities (which it records in its statistics and models) are produced. Too often it sees such regularities as 'rules'. It also tends to reify the concepts it uses (for example, 'culture', 'structures'), and then impose them on the social world as if they were acting agents with social efficacy. These rules and concepts are not acceptable to Bourdieu because they miss the 'practical mastery' of social interaction that agents
have.\textsuperscript{15} This practical mastery is based on a continual process of decoding what is perceived, but not consciously noted. The true nature of this practical mastery is that it is 'learned ignorance', that is, practical knowledge lacking knowledge of its main principles (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 19).\textsuperscript{16} For Bourdieu, most customs and rules act to 'orient' practice, not produce it. Yet this is lost by seeing the 'rule' as the cause of action.\textsuperscript{17} Bourdieu agrees with Max Weber that the concentration on the rule forgets that the agent has an interest in obeying or disobeying it (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 76).

\textsuperscript{15} Bourdieu argues that such practical mastery can be seen in the 'sense of honour' of the Kabyle (1977a, pp. 10-15). He argues that there are many strategies and moves the agents can make to gain advantage in the struggle to maximise honour in social life. Every challenge to honour is both an honourable compliment and an insult. Each riposte is a new challenge and so the game goes. Escalation, with new challenges answering other challenges, signifies the playing of the game. The ambiguities and uncertainties are what allows strategies to develop. The longer a riposte is brought against the challenger, the greater the dishonour. Thus time plays its part. What a diagram or model would lose here is that it is not some abstract principle (honour) which drives the interaction on, nor is it rules, but it is the sense of the game, the sense of honour. This sense has been inculcated from the earliest years of life and reinforced by the group of people who share the same dispositions. The sense of honour is internalised and is part of the body, demonstrated in the way the agent walks, looks, and the like. It is thus a 'cultivated disposition', inscribed in the body and in schemes of thought, which allows agents to enact practices consistent with the logic of challenge and riposte.

\textsuperscript{16} Thus it is not fully comprehended by the agent. Bourdieu shows this in relation to the misleading discourses that come about when the anthropologist asks the agent to reflect on their practice. Native experience does not apprehend the objective relations of society and the native's answer produces two problems:

1. a discourse of familiarity: it leaves unsaid all that goes without saying, taken for granted presuppositions - they cannot think the unthinkable.
2. outsider-orientated discourse: it excludes references to particular cases and people.

This occurs because the native's informing is only semi-theoretical, and because it stands still, that is, it is based on rational reflection, not on doing, and so it confirms the atemporal formalism of the anthropologist: 'the relationship between informant and anthropologist is somewhat analogous to a pedagogical relationship, in which the master must bring the state of explicitness, for the purposes of transmission, the unconscious schemes of his practice' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 18). The informant tries to give the best appearance of their mastery of their practice and so they emphasise those moves which are most spectacular, thus missing the implicit principles which guide action.

\textsuperscript{17} A prime example of this for Bourdieu in the anthropological understanding of parallel-cousin marriage. Levi-Strauss saw patrilateral parallel cousin marriage (son marries father's brother's daughter) as a scandal. It did not make sense as it did not bring a new woman into the lineage and thus contract new alliances. He saw it as an exception which proved the rule.

For Bourdieu, this interpretation misses the practical nature of kinship relations. He argues that the parallel cousin marriage enjoys such respect in native accounts because it is most ideally fitted to the mythological view of the sexual division of labour. The children from such marriages have the same blood - they are 'pure'. A wife from outside the family is a stranger until she produces a male heir. This is part of the mythology which sees women as evil and impure. The most favoured situation is a woman from within the family who provides the lesser of two evils. She is thus the 'male-female' and women from outside the family are 'female-female', that is, evil. The patrilateral woman has a position of strength within the family because she is a part of it, and she can use this to challenge the power of the 'old woman', that is, her new mother-in-law, who was a woman from outside the family and thus female-female. Parallel-cousin marriages are not a genealogical rule, but often a necessity, a forced choice. The idea of 'rule' found in objectivism hides the complex reality of
This academicism of the social "art" of living which, having extracted from the *opus operatum* the supposed principles of its production, sets them up as norms explicitly governing practices ... takes way understanding of the logic of practice in the very moment it tries to offer it (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 19).

To see regularities as corresponding to and produced by rules '... is to slip from the model of reality to the reality of the model' (1977a, p. 29). To overcome this, '...it is necessary to pass from the *opus operatum* to the *modus operandi*' (1977a, p. 72).

Objectivism's emphasis on the *opus operatum*, on the end result of practice rather than practice itself, occurs because the anthropologist has a different relation to practice than the practicing agent, that is, they ask non-practical questions, theoretical questions based on their intellectualist disposition (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 43). The intellectual has the social privilege, and time, to accumulate information which cannot be known by one single agent engaged in practice, and thus gains 'the privilege of totalisation' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 106). Bourdieu often calls this the 'scholastic fallacy':

this fallacy, encouraged by the situation of the *schola*, leisure and school, induces them to think that agents involved in action, in practice, in life, think, know and see as someone who has the leisure to think thinks, knows and sees' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 112).

For example, the agrarian calendar of the Kabyle turns from a series of guide- marks for practical use, to an object of thought (Bourdieu, 1977a, pp. 105-106).

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the situation. A boy does not have a 'right' to his cousin, but a duty. There is an obligation to marry a
girl unmarried in the family.

In reality, therefore, the parallel-cousin marriage is not as ideal as the official accounts of the men give it. It is a necessity arising when there are threats to the family from an outside male marrying into the family. The need for honour shapes this whole process.

For Bourdieu, the problem with Levi-Strauss' objectivist interpretation lies in the fact that the
genealogy is a tool drawn up by the anthropologist but never questioned by them. It is not the reality
of the native. This diagram is in fact only a representation of the 'official' view of kinship structures.
Bourdieu thus draws a difference between 'official kinship' and 'practical kinship'. Official kinship is reserved for official situations and for ordering the social world. It is practical kin which make marriages and official kin which celebrate them. Official kinship is public and involves high ranking members of the group. Practical kinship is private and aimed at meeting the practical needs of the group. Anthropologists are in a poor position to pick up the differences between practical and official kinship because they deal with kinship at the cognitive level and therefore accept the official discourse on kinship. They have no way of seeing that they are allowing the official version of reality to be imposed on them by the informant. They thus miss the practical uses and functions of kinship.

In other words, Bourdieu once again criticises the synoptic view of the objectivist analyst who takes time out of the native's reality and constructs a model which can only be arrived at after the event. Because it is after the event, and abstracted from history, it looks as though the action has been in accordance with rules. Bourdieu is thus criticising the lack of objective awareness of the objectivist's position, that is, the analyst has not analysed how they have arrived at this model.
The importance of the model and *opus operatum* in objectivist epistemologies is based on that fact that:

this makes it possible to apprehend at a glance, *uno intuitu et tota simul*, as Descartes said monothetically, as Husserl put it, meanings which are produced and used polythetically, that is to say, not only one after another, but one by one, step by step (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 107).

Bourdieu thus pinpoints here a dualism between, on the one hand, theoretical logic (or what he often terms 'logical logic'), based on consistency and monothetic thinking, and on the other, practical logic, based on contradictions and polythetic thinking. The importance of this dualism is that it explains why the theoretical logic of the observer misses the ambiguities and uncertainties of social life which exist from the point of view of practice. The observer constructs models which are consistent, but artificial. Their theoretical logic misses the 'fuzziness' of practice and social life:

One thus has to acknowledge that practice has a logic which is not that of logic, if one is to avoid asking of it more logic than it can give, thereby condemning oneself either to wring incoherences out of it or to thrust upon it a forced coherence (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 109).

The 'economy of practical logic' is based on a loss of rigour for the sake of the simplicity and generality needed for the practical accomplishment of varied interests in varied situations (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 261-62). This loss of rigour has no practical consequences and so passes unnoticed by the practising agent, but is precisely what the theoretical logic of the intellectual attempts to overcome. In doing so, however, the intellectual unwittingly constructs an object which exists only through this unconscious construction and which excludes the practice and practical interest of the agent (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 11). In other words, the intellectual's abstraction loses the practical view of the agent.

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18 Bourdieu discovered 'practical logic' strangely enough in the 'modern world' when analysing opinion polls in France in 1975 (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 20). He believes the 'intellectualocentrism' of the Western academic tradition since the time of Plato has seen the logic of practice as negative and 'common', and thus missed its existence and the limits to scientific knowledge based on this privileged position (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 27-8).

19 In a bid to combat this tendency, Bourdieu argues that social scientists should begin every statement about social reality with 'everything happens as if... ' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 203).

20 With this idea, as I shall show below, Bourdieu comes close to a Weberian understanding of the paradoxes of rationalisation, yet, as I shall also show, fails to deal with the full ramifications of this.
Thus, to see practices as products, as *opus operatum*, is to see them at the theoretical level only. Practices and actions have to be seen as the product (*opus operatum*) of a practical mastery (*modus operandi*) not as conforming to reified rules or models.\(^{21}\) For Bourdieu, there is a 'universe of practice' as opposed to a 'universe of discourse', inhabited by different species of logic. This means that:

... one has quite simply to bring into scientific work and into the theory of practices that it seeks to produce, a theory - which cannot be found through theoretical experience alone - of what it is to be 'native', that is, to be in that relationship of 'learned ignorance', of immediate but unselfconscious understanding which defines the practical relationship to the world (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 19).

In summary, for Bourdieu, objectivism had two main weaknesses. Firstly, it neglected time and its importance in social life and thus fell victim to the 'finalist illusion', changing the status of practice from *modus operandi* to *opus operatum*. Secondly, by taking the synoptic view and falling for the 'theorisation effect', objectivism lost the 'fuzziness' of the logic of practice because it operated with logical logic. As a result, objectivism has a 'fetishism for social laws ... which subjugates mankind to dead laws of natural history' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 84) and, most importantly, it has a limited theory of practice because it grasps practices from the outside (Bourdieu, 1992a, pp. 69-70).\(^{22}\)

As a result of these weaknesses, Bourdieu argues that scientific analysis must always be conscious of the limits of theoretical knowledge/rationality, and understand that it must objectify itself and its own relation to the object under analysis (1992a, p.

\(^{21}\) Bourdieu points out that the objectivist error of objectivising that which is not objective, creates huge problems for the understanding of the pre-modern world where social reproduction depends on habitus rather than on institutions which select and maintain the dominant habitus (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 239). For example, by not seeing in mythical worldviews the work of practical logic, which must be seen under its own terms and not in comparison to logical logic, anthropology has created a dualism between the 'savage' and the 'modern' mind. Bourdieu rejects this dualism, noting that mythological culture can contain extremely complex strategies (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 230).

\(^{22}\) Another target of his critique of rule-based objectivism (or 'legalism') is the work of Saussure (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 30-33). Saussure revealed the structure of language, but did this from the position of the 'impartial spectator'. As spectator, Saussure wanted to understand language for the sake of understanding, which is different to the interest of the agent using language in practice. Saussure thus asked questions about language and reality that the agent would never ask. As such, he turns language from *praxis* into *logos*. Saussure's work leads to the position that mastery of the code means mastery of appropriate usage and for Bourdieu, this is as if it had been forgotten that language is made to be spoken and used. See Bourdieu (1977c and 1991a) for details of his analysis of language.
70). What has to be overcome within objectivism, according to Bourdieu, is the refusal by the objectivist to take their self, and their relation to the object, as objects of analysis (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 19).

Bourdieu argues that in order to transcend the limits of objectivism and subjectivism while simultaneously maintaining their strengths, a reflexive science of practice is required. This science is:

...a science of the dialectical relations between the objective structures to which the objectivist mode of knowledge gives access and the structured dispositions within which those structures are actualised and which tend to reproduce them (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 3).

This science involves an 'objectification of objectivism' which shows the limits of objectivist knowledge without relapsing into subjectivism (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 13). This 'third-order knowledge' does not cancel out the gains of objectivist knowledge, but transcends the limits of it by incorporating practical experience and practical knowledge. In order to transcend the either/or dualism of subjectivism and objectivism plaguing social science, the latter must take into account the objective reality of objects but also the subjective reality, the representation, of objects (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 130). It must restore the agents that were lost in objectivism:

To move beyond the antagonism between these two modes of knowledge, while preserving the gains from each of them ... it is necessary to make explicit the presuppositions that they have in common as theoretical modes of knowledge, both equally opposed to the practical mode of knowledge which is the basis of ordinary experience of the world (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 25) ... one must therefore draw up a theory of this non-theoretical, partial, somewhat down-to-earth relationship with the social world that is the relation of ordinary experience (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 20) ... to do this, one has to situate oneself within "real activity as such", that is, in the practical relation to the world, the preoccupied, active presence in the world through which the world imposes its presence, with its urgencies, its things to be said and done, things made to be said, which directly govern words and deeds without ever unfolding as a spectacle. One has to escape from the realism of the structure ... without falling back into subjectivism (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 52).

For a truly scientific understanding of the social world, a 'social physics' of objective reality and a 'social phenomenology' of subjective representations is therefore necessary (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 135).

Where does this practical mastery and practical knowledge which is to be incorporated in Bourdieu's science of dialectical relations between subject and object come from? What is the source of the *modus operandi*, of the logic of practice, that
agents put to use in pursuit of their interests? How do agents know which strategy to employ at any given time? Bourdieu's answer to all these questions is the 'habitus'.

**Habitus - Bourdieu's solution to the subject/object dualism**

The habitus contains the solution to the paradoxes of objective meaning without subjective intent (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 62).

The structures of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce *habitus*, a system of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 72).

In rejecting the determinism of rules and models that objectivism proposes, Bourdieu is faced with a dilemma in that social life is also often regulative and predictable.

I can say that all my thinking started from this point: how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules? (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 65).

To solve this problem, Bourdieu developed the concept of 'habitus'.

The notion of habitus had been used in various ways by thinkers like Hegel, Durkheim, Mauss and Weber (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 12). Influenced by the work of Erwin Panofsky, Bourdieu's use is different from all of these, and emphasises the habitus as a structuring mechanism which operates within agents. Yet it is not completely individual or completely determining. Habitus is a strategy-generating...

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23 Bourdieu has noted that he believes all these uses were similar to his and inspired by the same move (although unconsciously) to avoid the philosophy of the subject without doing away with the agent (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 121).
24 Panofsky's work on Gothic art and Scholasticism had a profound effect on the development of Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Because the architects and builders of Gothic architecture were under the constant influence of Scholasticism, which became a 'habit-forming force' through its domination of education in and around Paris during the Twelfth century, Panofsky argues that developed a 'mental-habit' to this work (see Bourdieu, 1971a, p. 184). This idea of a 'mental habit-forming' inculcation became the basis of the concept of habitus: 'as a "habit-forming force" the [Scholastic] school provides those who have undergone its direct or indirect influence not so much with particular and particularised schemes of thought as with that general disposition which engenders particular schemes, which may then be applied in different domains of thought and action, a disposition that one could call the cultivated *habitus*'.
25 A number of commentators have pointed out that Bourdieu's use and conception of habitus has changed during his work. Wacquant (1992b, p. 120) has argued that it has moved from being a mentalist conception to one with a more corporeal emphasis.
principle based on past experiences and gives agents a certain disposition or propensity, which in turn gives them the ability to deal with changing situations and fulfil varied tasks.

Habitus, unlike 'habit' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 122), is the 'feel for the game' and the source of practical logic (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 63). Just as a great tennis player can 'instinctively' judge the moves of his opponents and seems to react without thinking, so the habitus is a skilled collection of practical responses (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 11). It is the source of 'creativity within limits' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 55). Within the habitus, the past, present and future meet. It is the means whereby the present sees the possible future through actions or strategies. In many ways, the habitus is the 'social constitution of instinct' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 161). As such, Bourdieu rejects criticisms, made for example, by Honneth (1986), that it is a form of utilitarian action theory or Rational Action Theory.\(^{25}\)

The habitus acts 'as the organising principle of their actions' within agents (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 18). This *modus operandi* which shapes all thought and action only shows itself in *opus operatum* which objectivism detects in its statistical analysis and models. It provides practice with different strategies to deal with different situations. It produces agents' 'moves' by organising them as strategies without them being a conscious strategic intention (Bourdieu, 1990b, pp. 62-3). It is a tendency to react in a certain way based on experience and means the agent will usually act in a

\(^{25}\) 'Action guided by a "feel for the game" has all the appearances of the rational action that an impartial observer, endowed with all the necessary information and capable of mastering it rationally, would deduce. And yet it is not based on reason. You need only think of the impulsive decision of the tennis player who runs up to the net, to understand that it has nothing in common with the learned construction that the coach, after analysis draws up in order to explain it and deduce communicable lessons from it' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 11).
coherent way.\textsuperscript{27} It is a 'practical rationality' based on a practical understanding of the system of social relations and social structures (Bo\-r\-d\-ie\-u, 1988b, p. 783). As such, the habitus is made up of historical relations internalised within individuals in mental and bodily schemes of perception and action. It is the process whereby objective relations become interpreted and based in subjective experience. The habitus works as a 'socialised subjectivity' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 126) which avoids falling back into substantialist subjectivism (Bourdieu, 1968, p. 705).

The habitus emerges from the internalisation of external social structures. The conditions of existence in any one environment or social formation produce the habitus, which in turn shapes practice.\textsuperscript{28} For Bourdieu, practices, as shaped by the habitus, reproduce the objective structures through which they were produced (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 140).\textsuperscript{29} Practices are determined by the past conditions which have shaped a habitus and thus reproduce such conditions (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 78). Practices are thus produced by the dispositions/habitus, which is in turn produced by the internalisation of objective structures of existence.\textsuperscript{30}

\begin{quote}
It is their present and past positions in the social structure that biological individuals constantly carry with them, at all times and in all places, in the form of dispositions which are so many marks of social position and hence of the social distance between objective positions (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 82).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{27} That being said, it is important to remember that: 'the habitus goes hand in glove with vagueness and indeterminacy' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 77).

\textsuperscript{28} According to Bourdieu (1977a, p. 78), the economic and social conditions of reality affect and shape family relations and thus produce the habitus which in turn becomes the basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experience.

\textsuperscript{29} As such, 'the tendency toward self-reproduction of the structure is realised only when it enrols the collaboration of agents who have internalised its specific necessity in the form of habitus and who are active producers even when they consciously or unconsciously contribute to reproduction. Having internalised the immanent law of the structure in the form of the habitus, they realise its necessity in the very spontaneous movement of their existence. But what is necessary to reproduce the structure is still a historical action, accomplished by true agents' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 140).

\textsuperscript{30} It is important not to see in this some form of causal determinism by the habitus. The habitus works only in relation to a field, and changes in the field can cause the habitus to react in different ways (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 116).
The objective conditions lead to certain dispositions (habitus) which in turn shape aspirations and practices compatible with the objective situation. In this way, the most improbable practices which are in conflict with objective conditions become 'unthinkable'.31 There is often a 'fit' between objective probabilities (as constructed by objective science) and subjective aspirations (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 55-56). This is the habitus at work. It thus allows creativity and inventiveness, but within the limits of the social structures it has internalised (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 87).

Thus, according to Bourdieu, there is a dialectical relation between the objective structures and the dispositions which they produce and which reproduce them. These objective structures are themselves the product of historical practices and are reproduced by them. Thus the habitus is 'history turned into nature'. In all agents there is 'yesterday's man' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 78). For Bourdieu,

The "unconscious" is never anything other than the forgetting of history which history itself produces by incorporating structures it produces in the second natures of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 78-9).

The habitus is the product of history and it in turn produces individual and collective practices, and therefore history. Habitus is the way the past survives in the present and survives into the future by making itself present in practices (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 64).

It is this habitus, this 'sense of the game', which is lost in objectivism's models. This sense has been inculcated from the earliest years of life and reinforced by the group of people who share the same dispositions. Scientific thinking corrects itself with rational calculation, but practical thinking emphasises early experiences,32 it emphasises the past, but it simultaneously allows an understanding of the future (Bourdieu, 1992a, pp. 129-30). Such an understanding can often see agents become aware of the realistic possibilities for action in the future, and thus exclude themselves

31 'As an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted, the habitus engenders all the thoughts, all the perceptions, and all the actions consistent with those conditions, and no others' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 95).
32 Bourdieu believes the earliest experiences, especially the earliest oppositions (most notably that between male and female), have a disproportionate weight in the makeup of the habitus.
subjectively from objective conditions to which they are ill-suited (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 112).  

The 'sense of the game' is internalised in the body, in what Bourdieu calls the 'body hexis' - the way agents walk, look, speak, and the like (1977a, p. 94). Thus for Bourdieu, 'the body is in the social world but the social world is also in the body' (1990b, p. 190). The body is a memory and by being em-bodied, the habitus is beyond the immediate grasp of consciousness. The body is not, therefore, a separate object to society, but is a socialised entity containing the creative capacity to generate action. The subject (individual agent) and the object (society) are thus not separate, but have 'mutual possession', based in the habitus.

Inculcation of the structures is never so perfect, however, that there is no need for explicit statements. Codification differentiates between different domains of practice. There are areas where action/practice seems 'free' because habitus regulates them, as opposed to areas which are strictly regulated by codified customs. Codification is related to discipline and rationalisation because it brings about

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33 The clearest example of this attitude for Bourdieu is those working class students who eliminate themselves from higher education. The importance of education in the work of Bourdieu can thus partly be explained by the fact that in modern society education is a very potent influence on the post-familial development of the habitus. When education is not institutionalised as an autonomous practice (as in Kabylia), then practical mastery is transmitted through practice in its practical state, that is, without a discourse and unconsciously. In such situation, the child gains a habitus through imitating other peoples' actions (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 87).

34 Bourdieu notes that every society trusts its most basic principles to the body. In societies lacking recording instruments, inherited knowledge can only survive through the body (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 94). Wacquant (1992a, p. 20) has highlighted the links between Bourdieu's conceptions of the body and those of Merleau-Ponty, and has suggested that Bourdieu should be considered the latter's 'sociological heir'.

35 Thus Bourdieu criticises psychoanalysis for missing the fact that one's body and other people's bodies are perceived only through social categories, not naive sexual ones. Sexuality and gender are constructed symbolically and socially, not biologically, by what the child learns through the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 93).

36 Bourdieu notes that the relations between habitus and rules can only be brought to light with the emergence of attempts to have an explicit action of inculcation. For example, the pedagogy of the Sophists developed rules of grammar etc. so as to put into practice various techniques (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 20). He also argues that in societies where codification is not very advanced, the habitus is the principle means of determining practice (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 65).
clarification, homogenization and formalisation (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 80).37
'Secondary explanations' (for example, proverbs and sayings) are the product of the
same structures and habitus of the practices they support and thus they reinforce these
structures by providing them with a rationalisation. These can act as supports when
the link between structures and the habitus breaks down.38 Though habitus is the most
prevalent influence on action, it is not the only one and conscious calculation and
strategies are also important (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 131).

One of the effects of the habitus is the production of a commonsense world
where the meaning of practices is objectively secured by consensus. Agents inculcated
within the same habitus can anticipate the moves and actions of each other precisely
because of the 'feel for the game' their common habitus has given them (Bourdieu,
1990b, p. 131). The habitus makes practices intelligible and predictable, and thus
taken for granted (Bourdieu, 1990b, pp. 130-31). Even though, through the habitus,
everyday practices are automatic and impersonal, they express an objective intention
which can be deciphered by other agents with the same habitus. This occurs
unconsciously, that is, through the habitus. This homogeneity of a habitus (for
example, class habitus) arises from the homogeneity of conditions of existence. This
homogenous habitus is what makes practices harmonise with conditions without a
conscious, explicit strategy or a rule (a fact neglected by objectivism).

In this sense, the habitus works as a 'conductorless orchestration' (Bourdieu,
1977a, p. 80) of the practices of a group or class. All relations, even love, are shaped

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37 This has obvious connections to the rationalisation thesis put forward by Weber and the increase in
formal rationality he outlines. Like Weber, Bourdieu sees that codification and formalisation brings
about calculability and predictability (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 83).
38 Practice runs into problems when the conditions which it confronts are distant to the ones it was
originally produced in. Like Marx, Bourdieu sees this as the 'Don Quixote' effect (Bourdieu, 1990b,
p. 90). His examination of this 'hysteresis effect' is also seen in his work on the Algerian
subproletariat (see Bourdieu, 1973) and on education (see Bourdieu, 1988a).
through the habitus - the harmony of group ethos and taste, as seen in body *hexis*, with objective social structures.

It is obviously impossible for all members of the same class to have the same dispositions. In this sense the biological individual is still important in sociological analysis because it is the basis of perception, has a social identity, and is defined by a social trajectory (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 196). Yet it is the fact that an individual is more likely to have had the same experiences and been faced with similar conditions as someone of another class which is important (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 91). There is 'diversity within homogeneity' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 86) as each individual's position is a structural variation of the group habitus; it is a slight deviation from the ethos.

The habitus is therefore the 'unifying principle of practices' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 83). As such, it is at the basis of Bourdieu's attempt to transcend objectivism and subjectivism, since it contains the subjective *perspective* of the agent, but also the objective *position* of the agent.

Yet the habitus does not work alone. Continuing the relational theme in Bourdieu's work, it is important to understand that the concept of habitus only functions with, and must be integrated with, his concepts of 'field', 'capital', and 'doxa'. It is to those concepts we now turn.

**Fields, Capital, Doxa**

**Fields**

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39 It is important to note that Bourdieu sees 'class' only as an explanatory concept: these "classes on paper", these "theoretical classes", constructed for explanatory purposes, are not "realities", groups which would exist as such in reality. Inasmuch as they correspond to classes of material conditions of living, and thus to classes of similar conditionings, they bring together agents who have in common dispositional properties (habitus), hence a certain propensity to come together in reality, to constitute themselves into real groups' (Bourdieu, 1990b, pp. 117-18).
In short, with the notion of field, one gives oneself the means of grasping
particularly in generality, and generality in particularity (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 141)

Bourdieu rejects the concept of 'society' and replaces it with the concepts of 'field'
(champ) and 'social space'.\textsuperscript{40} A field is a set of objective, historically conditioned
relations between agents (Bourdieu, 1992a, pp. 96-7). As such it acts almost as an
invisible force affecting the relations between individuals.\textsuperscript{41} It is a space in which
agents exist and struggle, with success in this struggle depending upon their position
within that space. The field is really a battlefield or game where 'players' try to get
control of the object, or 'capital', valued in that field, such as, for example, scientific
'truth' in the intellectual sphere.\textsuperscript{42} This struggle means that the shape of the field
changes over time (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 104). Every field is thus a 'structure of
possibilities'.

Examples of fields in Bourdieu's work include the political field, the religious
field, and the cultural field. Most importantly, there is the overall 'field of power'
which is a 'metafield' encompassing the other fields and having its own logic (Bourdieu,
1992a, p. 76).

The more differentiated a society is, the more fields it contains (Bourdieu,
1992a, p. 97). Because of this differentiation, there are a 'plurality of logics' existing in
social life, with different types of thought, different kinds of 'commonsense', operating
in different fields (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 21).

\textbf{Interests}

\textsuperscript{40} The first systematic development of the concept of 'field' occurs in 'Champ intellectuel et project
createur' in 1966 (translated as 'Intellectual Field and Creative Project', 1971) and is first applied to
the religious field in relation to Weber's sociology of religion. I will examine Bourdieu's use of the
concept of religious field in relation to Weber's work in a later chapter.

\textsuperscript{41} ... the notion of the field presupposes that one break away from the realist representation which
leads one to reduce the effect of the milieu to the effect of the direct reaction that takes place in any
interaction. It is the structure of the constitutive relations of the space of the field which determines
the forms that can be assumed by the visible relations of interaction and the very content of the
experience that agents may have of them' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 192).

\textsuperscript{42} As such, Bourdieu rejects that there is ever total domination in a field as there is always resistance
and struggle. For him, this means he avoids the pitfalls of functionalism and systems theory.
In order for an agent to become engaged in a field, they have to have an 'interest' in doing so. For Bourdieu, interests (what he also terms illusio or libido) refer to the way in which certain things within a field are valued, thus motivating practice within that field. Each field values different objects, and the agent must be socialised within that field to give them value (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 194). The habitus thus has to become sensitive to these objects, and then pursue them. It is thus an 'interest' which is the basis of the game played out within a field (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 98). In other words, the agent must believe in the game or that what is at stake in the game is valuable (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 17). Not only is this interest fought over in the field, but the criteria which decide it are also a source of contestation (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 89).

There is a struggle to transform or maintain them. As such, interests are further specified by the position in the game occupied by a player. The interest of a player leads them to invest in the game, investing time and effort (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 118).

These notions of interest and investment, despite the remarks of critics (for example, Jenkins: 1982, Fiske: 1991, Joppke: 1986, Honneth: 1986) were developed against economism and to investigate areas which materialism and economism neglected (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 106).\footnote{In fact, Bourdieu rejects economism as a crude form of ethnocentrism and states: 'economism recognises no other form of interest than that which capitalism has produced, through a kind of real operation of abstraction, by setting up a universe of relations between man and man based, as Marx says, on "callous cash payment" .... But above all it can make nothing of universes that have not performed such a dissociation and so have, as it were, an economy in itself and not for itself' (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 112-13). He claims that it was Weber's materialist analysis of religion, which revealed the interests of religious 'players', that was decisive in the development of his theory of interests (Bourdieu, 1990b, pp. 106-7). I shall return to the influence of Weber's work on Bourdieu in a later chapter.}

As Wacquant has argued, this charge of economism misses 'the analytical movement that Bourdieu effects by means of the conceptual triad of habitus, capital, and field, which consist in expanding the sphere of interest while reducing that of utility and consciousness' (1992a, p. 25). Bourdieu thus rejects the conception of interests as transhistorical and universal that utilitarian theory proposes, arguing instead that interests are historically constructed (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 116).

Unlike the natural, ahistorical or generic interest referred to by economists, interest, in my view, is an investment in a game, any game, an investment which is the condition
of entry into this game and which is simultaneously created and reinforced by the game. There are as many forms of interest as there are fields (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 48).44

Capital

Behind the interests in the game, and the struggles within the field those interests produce, is 'capital'. Capital is that object or thing at stake in the struggle within a field (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 724). Ownership of capital is the precondition of playing the game and the precondition for greater ownership of capital. For Bourdieu, capital breeds capital. Capital is what the interested agents in the game are interested in, in itself, but also because of the advantages and privileges ownership and accumulation of it brings. It is what structures the social field and the relations between agents (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242).

Bourdieu defines capital as,

accumulated labour (in its materialised form or its "incorporated", embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour (1986, p. 241).

The capital accumulated by social groups is thus the 'energy of social physics' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 182).

Bourdieu's use of the concept of capital (or 'power' as he often calls it) takes a number of forms, namely, economic, cultural, social and symbolic (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 128). Economic capital refers to those resources which can be converted into money and property. Cultural capital (or what Bourdieu also calls 'informational capital') refers to forms of knowledge and skills, which can be embodied in the agent, or objectified in the form of books and artistic objects, or in the institutionalised state, in the form of educational qualifications, which can be brought into play to benefit the agent in the symbolic as well as temporal orders. They are accumulated through comprehension of their meaning, and this is possible only within the schemes of

44 Despite these disclaimers, I believe there are problems with Bourdieu's conception of interests and the particular philosophical anthropology it produces. I shall detail these problems in a later chapter.
perception and appreciation with which they are linked to. Economic and cultural capital are linked through the time needed to acquire cultural capital, that is, in who can afford, in money and time, the luxury of self-improvement.

Social capital is the total number of resources which agents accrue through a durable network of relationships and acquaintances (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 119). In ordinary language, it is the 'connections' that someone has.

All three forms, economic, cultural, and social capitals, can take on the role of symbolic capital. Symbolic capital refers to the process whereby agents recognise, through particular categories of perception, a form of capital as valuable, but do not see it as a form of capital. Symbolic capital is the state that a form of capital takes when it is misrecognised, that is not seen as capital, but as an innate property of an agent.

It is the amount of capital, along with the structure (the distribution of the different types of capital they possess) over time, that affects the position and moves of an agent within a field (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 128). As such, the amount of capital they hold, and have held, and their perception of the current play in the field, all based on their position in it, affect their strategy (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 101).

The Interaction of the Habitus, Capital, and the Field

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45 This concept was developed by Bourdieu in his sociology of education to explain the differences in academic success between children from different socio-economic backgrounds and to challenge the conventional explanation based on individual merit (see Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243).
46 For a critical use of this concept, in relation to Chinese entrepreneurs, see Smart (1993).
47 Symbolic capital is meant to be used as a concept that avoids the capitalist reductionism of economism. Bourdieu developed this concept in trying to understand how the 'archaic' economy of the Kabyle operated without capitalist self-interest, but in terms of honour and honesty: 'in an economy which is defined by the refusal to recognise the "objective" truth of "economic" practices, that is, the law of "naked self-interest" and egoistic calculation, even "economic" capital cannot act unless it succeeds in being recognised through a conversion that can render unrecognisable the true principle of its efficacy. Symbolic capital is this denied capital, recognised as legitimate, that is, misrecognised as capital' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 118). This does not mean that symbolic capital and the pursuit of it, does not have a logical development: 'even when they give every appearance of disinterestedness because they escape the logic of "economic" interest (in the narrow sense) and are oriented towards non-material stakes that are not easily quantified, as in "pre-capital" societies or in the cultural sphere of capitalist societies, practices never cease to comply with an economic logic' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 122). For Bourdieu this means social science should abandon the economic/non-economic dualism as is shown by Weber's work in religion.
The amount of capital an agent possesses thus places them in a particular position in the field, and the internalisation of the structures of the field from this position produce the habitus. The habitus in turn develops strategies which can gain or lose capital, which then places the agent in a new position within the field, a position which reorients the habitus. For Bourdieu (1984, p. 101) then, practice is determined according to the following formula: \[(\text{habitus}) (\text{capital}) + \text{field} = \text{practice}.\]

It is this relationship between field, habitus, and capital, which turns biological individuals into agents, beings endowed with the necessary properties and skills to produce effects on, and be effected by, the relations within the field (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 107).

We need to escape the mechanist vision which would reduce the agents to simple particles swept up in a magnetic field, by reintroducing not rational subjects working to fulfil their preferences as far as circumstances permit, but socialised agents who, although biologically individuated, are endowed with transindividual dispositions, and therefore tend to generate practices which are objectively orchestrated and more or less adapted to objective requirements, that is, irreducible either to the structural forces of the field or to individual dispositions (Bourdieu, 1988a, pp. 149-50).

Or, to put it another way,

*social agents are determined only to the extent that they determine themselves.* But the categories of perception and appreciation which provide the principle of this (self-) determination are themselves largely determined by the social and economic conditions of their constitution (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 136).

For Bourdieu, mental structures develop through the internalisation of social structures. Constant exposure to particular social conditions of a field instills in individuals certain dispositions. Schemes of perception, dispositions, and so on, are determined by specific conditions of existence and are acquired by agents through practice. The state of play in the field, its balance of forces and distribution of 'capital' are apprehended by the agent, not as a conscious subject, but as mediated by the internalisation of their position or posture within the field, that is, their habitus

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\(^{48}\) I do not want to enter into what seems to be an intractable debate over whether or not the concept of habitus is overly deterministic. See Joppke (1986), Jenkins (1982), and Giroux (1982) for criticisms of this sort, in contrast to the view of habitus as a mediation of freedom and determinism by Miller and Branson (1987), Brubaker (1985), and Wacquant (1987).
(Bourdieu, 1981a, p. 315). The habitus, as the field embodied and as perception of the field turned into practice, shapes strategies. In other words, practical taxonomies are structured but also structure the world (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 73). As such, social reality exists in a twofold sense, 'in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 127). Agents create the social world, but they do so based on their knowledge and 'practical sense' of the conditions and workings of the social world, which, in turn, is based on the position they occupy within it. Thus, for those agents occupying a dominant position in the field, various forms of conservation strategies are open to them and are most likely to be adopted by them. For newer players, succession strategies, based on following the rules of the game through a predictable career so that eventually they reach a dominant position, or subversion strategies, based on challenging and disrupting the rules of the game, are strategic options. In this way, certain logics of the field, based on position and habitus, operate through agents. Fields are usually the sites of 'partial revolutions', minor adjustments in positioning and distribution of capital, but they can also disrupt into major crises which bring about a breakdown in the game.

The boundaries of a field, the points at which the effects of the field cease, need to be determined empirically, and this is often a hard task as the boundaries are themselves at stake in the struggle (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 100). That being said, however, each field has various properties in common with all other fields: each is a site of struggle between agents; agents agree over what is at stake within the field by the very fact of agreeing to play the game; and agents possess unequal amounts of

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49 One example of how these classifications/taxonomies orient practice differently for different agents is in the 'reversed world' of the Kabyle household, site of the separation between male and female worlds: 'one or the other of the two systems of oppositions that define the house, either in its internal organisation or in its relationship with the external world, is brought to the forefront depending on whether the house is considered from the male or the female point of view. Whereas for the man the house is not so much a place he goes into as a place he comes out of, the woman is bound to give opposite importance and meaning to these movements ... The house is a world within a world, but one that always remains subordinate, because, even when it displays all the properties and relationships that define the archetypal world, it remains an inverted region, a world in reverse' (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 280-82).

50 There is a strong affinity here with Weber's understanding of the inner logic of life-spheres and rationalisation which I shall return to in a later chapter.
capital based on their position within the field (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 111). This does not mean for Bourdieu, however, that the theory of fields should be seen as grand theory or 'theoretician theory' which solves all ontological and epistemological problems, but as a tool to guide empirical research by raising important questions about the object under investigation (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 110).

Mapping out a field is a three-step process (Bourdieu, 1992a, pp. 104-5): firstly, the field under question must be positioned in relation to the overall metafield of power; secondly, the objective structures that exist between positions within the field must be mapped out; and thirdly, the habitus of the agents playing in the field must be analysed.

Every field is a constantly shifting arrangement of positions. The state of play must be seen over a substantial period of time for an adequate understanding of its current makeup to be reached. As such, history and the temporal dimension are constantly shaping the field and are very important in social life. As Bourdieu puts it, 'the permanent struggle within the field is the motor of the field' (1993b, p. 135). History, through the struggles of agents, shapes, and is shaped by, positions and dispositions (Bourdieu, 1981a, p. 305). For Bourdieu, therefore, the disciplines of history and sociology are intimately linked. To understand the structural constitution of a society at any given moment, it is necessary to understand the history of those social structures, and to understand history, we must have a structural view (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 42). This does not mean, however, that there are teleological laws moving through history.51

Each field oscillates from two theoretical, but not empirical, limits: on the one extreme, there is the complete monopoly of capital by one agent or group of agents; and on the other, an equal distribution of capital among the competitors. Though all positions depend to some extent, on other positions in the field, not all positions are

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51 'I have a deep-seated suspicion of the great tendential laws that have flourished in Marxism and its macroscopic rivals (structural-functionalism, developmentalism, historicism, etc.' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 92).
dependent to the same degree.\footnote{In chess the future of the queen may depend on the insignificant pawn, but the queen nevertheless continues to be much more powerful than any other piece (Bourdieu, 1971a, p. 174).} In other words, some positions are more powerful than others.

Thus, through the concepts of habitus and field and their 'ontological complicity' (Bourdieu, 1981a, p. 306), Bourdieu establishes a methodology based on relationalism, which tries to overcome the intellectualcentric view of theoretical logic, while at the same time reject the overdeterministic models of objectivism by restoring a historically constructed agent.\footnote{This is not to say that both concepts, especially habitus, have not been criticised. A recurring complaint has been that the habitus is still an overly deterministic concept (see, for example, Gartman: 1991, and Jenkins: 1982). Others have seen it as a mediation between structure and agency (Harker et. al.: 1990, Fox: 1985, Miller and Branson: 1987, Lemert: 1990). Bourdieu's main response to this charge of over-determinism is his claim that: 'habitus is not the fate that some people read into it. Being the product of history, it is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures. It is durable but not eternal' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 133).} The concepts of field and position/habitus are meant to combine the objective and subjective aspects of social practice without falling into the problems of objectivism and subjectivism outlined above. It is important to stress that both concepts are necessary for the other to operate, or as Wacquant puts it, 'they function only in relation to one another' (1992a, p. 19). As such, different practices may originate from the same habitus if the state of the field has changed (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 116). The relation between a field and habitus has two dimensions (Bourdieu, 1992a p. 127): firstly, the field conditions the habitus, which becomes the embodiment of the necessary properties and logics of the field; secondly, the habitus 'cognitively constructs' the field as meaningful, that is, it gives the sense of the game and that the game is worth playing, that there is an interest in investing in it (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 128). These cognitive constructs, the belief in the game and thus investment in it, Bourdieu terms the doxa of the game.

**Doxa**

For Bourdieu, there exists an 'official fiction' or communis doctorum opinio within and about the game played in a field, which defines what is at stake and what the players
are playing for within it. This definition is itself at stake in the field. Every field contains its own doxic understanding which is the basis of the relationship between players in the game, a sort of collusion in opposition, or what Bourdieu (1971a, p. 183) calls a 'consensus in dissensus'.

This experience we shall call doxa, so as to distinguish it from an orthodox or heterodox belief implying awareness and recognition of the possibility of different or antagonistic beliefs (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 164).

Doxa is thus the tacit, taken for granted aspects of social life. It makes the world seem naturally so and indisputable. For Bourdieu, doxa is the feeling of an agent that there is nothing to do except what they are doing and they are also doing what they ought (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 74).

Bourdieu believes this doxic link between social and mental structures fulfills political functions (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 25). 'Symbolic systems' (ideas, worldviews, ideologies) are not just ways of knowing the world, but also forms of domination. They promote social integration of individuals into an arbitrary and historically constructed social order. One of the main ways in which this is done, and through which a field can gain autonomy from the meta-field of power, is the rise of 'biographers', a group of agents that chronicle and therefore conserve the 'correct' way of acting in, and perceiving, a field. These schemes of classification which individuals use to see the world show social structures as natural, not as the result of historical power struggles between groups and classes and thus a social order tends to naturalise its own arbitrariness:

What appears to us today as self-evident, as beneath consciousness and choice, has quite often been the stake of struggles and instituted only as the result of dogged confrontations between dominant and dominated groups. The major effect of historical evolution is to abolish history by relegating to the past, i.e., to the unconscious, the lateral possibles that it eliminated (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 15).

The most powerful mechanism for this is the dialectical relationship between objective chances and agents' subjective aspirations, that is, agents' sense of limit, a sense of reality, which fits with their objective position. This is expressed through a harmonious link between the external and the internalised external.
Systems of classification which divide reality secure power relations by being the basis of 'misrecognition' of the arbitrariness of them (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 41). As such, classification systems, schemes of thought, are political instruments (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 168).  

Doxa is rarely challenged in undifferentiated societies where there is no rival view, because the stabler the objective structures, the greater the extent of doxa and things taken for granted. When there is little social differentiation, the actions of agents are based on dispositions shared by the whole group and so reinforced by the group. For Bourdieu, the mythico-ritual homologies of the Kabyle represent a perfectly closed world: '..what is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying: the tradition is silent, not least about itself as tradition' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 167).  

This is not to say that domination in such societies is not hazardous, expensive and difficult. In fact, domination in societies lacking a self-regulating market, educational institutions and a state apparatus, is dependent on the constant efforts and strategies of agents to maintain personal relations.  

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54 For this reason, 'the theory of knowledge is a dimension of political theory because the specifically symbolic power to impose the principles of the construction of reality - in particular, social reality - is a major dimension of political power' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 165). This is the basis of Bourdieu's work on the sociology of education - showing how the symbolic system based in the school system transmits symbolic power - imposing systems of classification which bring about a 'naturalisation' of historical structures of domination. Bourdieu has also claimed that the best example of the political effects of doxa can be seen in the symbolic violence experienced by women (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 74).

55 In archaic society, maintaining domination is very expensive in material goods and time. Overt violence is usually looked down upon by the group, so the strategy of the dominant must be to hide domination and to 'euphemise' relations of domination. This is why symbolic violence is so powerful in these societies, since in order to work, it must be misrecognised. The dominant agents must live up to the duties which are the basis of their dominance. They cannot afford to let the values be changed. A gift is thus a way of dominating and possessing someone. This all occurs through the common habitus, which makes some practices natural and normal, but other strategies (such as naked self-interest) unthinkable. It is important to note that though symbolic violence withers away as objective institutions (mechanisms of the social reproduction of relations of dominance) take over, this does not mean it does not exist. It becomes objective, not subjective. In modern society, dominant groups have a new way of accumulating symbolic capital - through 'taste' and 'distinction'.  

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In class societies, however, the line between opinion and doxa is strongly contested and domination is no longer primarily based on personal ties since possession of economic and cultural capital (see below) allows control over the field of cultural production. Domination becomes entrenched in institutions which reproduce capital and social relations. Class struggle includes the struggle to impose a dominant symbolic and classificatory system within society: 'the dominated classes have an interest in pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted; the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 169). For such struggle to occur, the dominated have to have the symbolic and material means to reject the 'reality' imposed on them. This possibility, and the difference between doxically undifferentiated and class contested societies, seems to depend on a crisis which breaks down the taken for granted nature of the social world. It is thus when the social world loses its character as a 'natural' order that questions can be raised (Bourdieu, 1977a, pp. 168-69).

If doxa is the universe of the undisputed and therefore undisputed, heterodoxy and orthodoxy are competing poles in the universe of discourse, in the realm of opinion which arises after a crisis has dislocated the fit between objective structures and subjective aspirations.\(^{56}\) Orthodox discourse is the official way of speaking and thinking about the world and it aims at restoring as much as possible to the state of doxa. It faces heresy, however, which offers 'competing possibilities' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 169). Bourdieu argues that crisis situations which challenge everyday order bring about extraordinary discourses or 'heterodoxy', which can express these new extraordinary experiences and possibilities.

\(^{56}\) Bourdieu notes that certain conditions have to be met for a 'universe of discourse', as opposed to a universe of practice, to appear. These include: intellectual and material equipment for methodical recording; leisure time to observe and reflect; an interest in doing this, that is, material and symbolic profit from doing it, and therefore a 'market' for discourse (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 221). The emergence of a universe of discourse is historically linked to the emergence of cities which allow concentration of different groups with different practices, along with a body of specialists to analyse and rationalise these and the traditional worldview. As I will point out below, Weber also places heavy emphasis on the role of the city in the development of rationalisation.
Symbolic Violence and Misrecognition

Symbolic systems are thus sites of struggle between groups and the linkage of mental and social structures is an important prop in social domination (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 141). This linkage is the basis of what Bourdieu terms 'symbolic violence', the 'violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 167). Symbolic violence refers to the disguised and 'gentle' violence which is enacted when overt violence is impossible. It is a form of intimidation lacking an act of intimidation (Bourdieu, 1991a, p. 51). This symbolic violence operates through the control of symbolic capital.

Social groups are constantly struggling to impose a definition of the world that best suits their interests, and their success depends on the accumulation of symbolic capital as well as economic capital. Symbolic capital is based on 'misrecognition' (meconnaissance) within practice (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 112). By recognising, that is, believing, that what is at stake in the game is valuable, there is at the same time, a misrecognition of that process. One recognises what is valuable, at the same time misrecognising that act of recognition, in that that act is an unconscious seduction into the game. Both dominant and dominated misrecognise their common recognition of the stakes in the struggle, although the dominant hold an advantage due to their

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57 Probably the most primary and profound form of symbolic violence, according to Bourdieu, is that of gender: 'the case of gender domination shows better than any other that symbolic violence accomplishes itself through an act of cognition and of misrecognition that lies beyond - or beneath - the controls of consciousness and will, in the obscurities of the schemata of habitus that are at once gendered and gendering ... The masculinization of male bodies and the feminisation of female bodies affects a somatisation of the cultural arbitrary which is the durable construction of the unconscious' (Bourdieu, 1992a, pp. 171-72). The reason for this, Bourdieu hypothesises, is that in the economics of symbolic exchange, especially marriages, men are the subjects, and women the objects (p. 173). For more on Bourdieu’s understanding of gender and how it can be critically appropriated by feminism, see Moi (1991) and McCall (1992) (who argues for the development of a feminist habitus), and Krais (1993).

58 Wacquant has argued that we can see Bourdieu's entire work as a hunt for the varied forms and effects of symbolic capital (Wacquant, 1992a, p. 14).
position. Since all equally see the game as worth playing and what is at stake in the
game as worth pursuing, they all misrecognise the game and these stakes. Those
holding a large amount of symbolic capital, agents Bourdieu calls nobiles, are in a
position to impose values which are favourable to their position, usually because they
monopolise institutions, such as the education system, which legitimate rank and
hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 135). As such, symbolic violence becomes tied to
objective institutions, such as the education system, rather than on personal relations.59
Due to the effects of symbolic violence, it will often seem that the dominated
collaborate in their domination by misrecognising the basis of that domination.
Bourdieu sees one of the main tasks of sociology laying in revealing how doxa
operates within a field through misrecognition and symbolic violence. It achieves this,
he argues, by being reflexive.

Reflexivity

I have so far shown the ways in which the main concepts of Bourdieu's science of
practice interconnect to provide a coherent epistemological template with which social
life can be studied. For Bourdieu, the fundamental importance of this template in the
fact that it makes possible a reflexive understanding of the habitus and practice of the
intellectual observer:

A reflexive sociology can help free intellectuals from their illusions - and first of all
from the illusion that they do not have any, especially about themselves (Bourdieu, 1992a,
p. 195).60

59 For an analysis of the relations and differences between Marx's conception of ideology and
symbolic violence, see Wacquant (1993c).
60 Bourdieu is at pains to highlight the differences between his conception of reflexivity to those
proposed by Garfinkel and Gouldner (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 71). For a comparison and contrast of the
work of Bourdieu with that of Raymond Williams, another well known advocate of reflexive social
analysis, see Calhoun (1990).
As Wacquant (1992a, pp. 36-7) has identified, reflexivity plays a central part in Bourdieu's thought in three key ways: firstly, Bourdieu's concern is not with the individual intellectual, but the unconscious habitus in intellectual practice (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 71-2); secondly, reflexivity must be a collective enterprise, not the burden of a lone academic; and thirdly, reflexivity should buttress the epistemological security of sociology by increasing the certainty and scope of sociological knowledge: 'Reflexivity is a tool to produce more science, not less' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 194).  

Sociologists objectify the social world, but often forget or refuse to objectify themselves, and therefore forget that their discourse is not about the object but their relation to the object (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 69). I have shown how Bourdieu identifies the distortions and abstractions which arise in objectivism when it fails to do just that.

For Bourdieu, however, sociology is inherently reflexive because it produces instruments and concepts which it can turn back upon itself (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 214). He argues that a reflexive sociology should be based on the constant unmasking of intellectuals' presuppositions, and 'unthought categories of thought', one of the most important of which is the desire for an absolute view of reality (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 33). As part of this reflexivity, it is not the individual unconscious of the researcher, but the epistemological unconscious of their discipline which must be exposed. Individual sociologists should constantly be reflexive and open to the

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61 This is the point on which he most decisively breaks with post-modernism. For post-modernism, there are many truths in social life, but for Bourdieu, when the truth of the practising agent and the truth of the observer are added, the entire truth can be found: 'It is this double truth, objective and subjective, which constitutes the whole truth of the social world' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 255). For Bourdieu, this is the main achievement of a truly reflexive science.

62 As Bourdieu stated in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France in 1982, '... the lecture on the lecture, a discourse which reflects itself in the act of discourse, should at least have the virtue of reminding us of one of the most fundamental properties of sociology as I conceive it: all the propositions that this science enunciates can and must be applied to the subject who practices this science' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 177).
criticisms of their colleagues/adversaries (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 36). In this way, an understanding of the practice of the intellectual, and their emphasis on theoretical logic, provides greater scientific insights because it overcomes the distortions of unobjectified objectivism. By analysing intellectual life as a field in which agents occupy positions which imbue them with particular habitus and particular dispositions towards practice, Bourdieu turns a science of practice back on the practitioners of science. Reflexive sociology is therefore based on an analysis of the game of sociology, a sociology of sociology which objectifies the position of the observer within the game being played within the intellectual field, a field crucial to the politics of the symbolic system. It is this process which I have coined 'epistemological reflexivity' in this thesis.

As Wacquant has observed, Bourdieu's reflexive sociology tries to transcend the relativism of Derrida and the transhistorical rationalism of Habermas, a position described as 'historical rationalism' (1992a, p. 47). Bourdieu sees rationality as anchored in the historically constructed structures of the scientific field.

Like Habermas, Bourdieu believes in the value of scientific truth, but rejects the claim that there can be a transhistorical or universal reason (1990b, p. 32). He also breaks with the 'philosophical aestheticism' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 155) of some of his French colleagues, most notably those of the Tel Quel group, rejecting their 'anti-scientism'.63 One of the main differences between his work and theirs, is his belief that

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63 'It is not by chance that the French philosophers of the sixties, whose philosophical project was formed in a fundamentally ambivalent relation with the "human sciences", and who never fully repudiated the privileges of caste associated with the status of philosopher, have given a new life, throughout the world but especially in the United States, to the old philosophical critique of the social sciences, and fuelled, under the cover of "deconstruction" and the critique of "texts", a thinly veiled form of irrationalism sometimes labelled, without our knowing too much why, "postmodern" or "postmodernist"' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 155). For the century-long tension and conflict between philosophy and social science in French academic life, and Bourdieu's defence of social science against philosophy, see Bourdieu (1967). For Bourdieu's relation to postmodernism and how his concepts can be used to analyse postmodern culture, see Lash (1990), Harrison (1993), and Laermans (1992).
social analysis is capable of revealing universally valid truths. The most important universal truth is the truth of praxeology:

Praxeology is a universal anthropology which takes into account the historicity, and thus the relativity, of cognitive structures, while recording the fact that agents universally put to work such historical structures (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 139).

One of the other truths of the social world is the truth which is at stake in the struggles within fields. For Bourdieu, the definition of truth and the weapons that 'find' it, are some of the highest objects at stake in social fields. The role of science is to reveal the social origin and symbolic domination of these truths (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 263). It must also, at the same time, point out the limits to knowing social reality so as to undermine those prophetic statements that masquerade as science (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 17). In this way,

by helping the progress of science and thus the growth of knowledge about the social world, reflexivity makes possible a more responsible politics, both inside and outside of academia (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 194). 64

Bourdieu is concerned with the moral and political significance of sociology at two levels. Firstly, for the individual, sociology can show the differences between necessity and freedom, and therefore shows spaces open for action. For Bourdieu, freedom is not a given but a collective conquest (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 15). The more people become aware of the social within them by mastering reflexivity, the less likely they are to be determined by the externality in them. Sociology provides this chance (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 186). 'Socioanalysis' is thus like psychoanalysis. A rational subject is possible, Bourdieu believes, based on applying reflexive sociology:

When you apply reflexive sociology to yourself, you open up the possibility of identifying true sites of freedom, and thus of building small-scale, modest, practical morals in keeping with the scope of human freedom which, in my opinion, is not that large (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 199).

Secondly, sociology has a 'Spinozist function'. For Bourdieu, sociology should denaturalise the world and destroy its myths, especially those produced by the

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64 Despite this comment, I believe that Bourdieu at no point in his work elaborates how and why this is the case. This presents a serious problem in his work, one which I shall detail in a further chapter.
powerful, but it should not say what society's course ought to be (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 188).

I believe that sociology does exert a disenchanted effect, but this, in my eyes, marks a progress toward a form of scientific and political realism that is the absolute antithesis of naive utopianism (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 196).

Sociology is thus, in Bourdieu's eyes, thoroughly political since it is an analysis of strategies and mechanisms of symbolic domination (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 180). Social science can thus never be neutral or apolitical or uncontroversial as the natural sciences usually are. The more scientific sociology becomes, the more political it becomes (Bourdieu, 1981b, p. 278). The more reflexive it is, the more it reveals the doxa of the institutions of symbolic violence, such as the education system, to in fact be the dominant group's orthodoxy.

In an excellent example of reflexive sociology, Rogers Brubaker (1993) has argued that Bourdieu's work has to be seen as part of his own scientific habitus produced in the French intellectual field. Brubaker observes that reflexivity entails the use of the concepts of habitus and field to understand their own origin in Bourdieu's work. He shows how Bourdieu's practice and theory is the product of his earlier dispositions/habitus, and his position in the French intellectual field, a position located between the subjectivism of Sartre and ojectivism of Levi-Strauss. According to Brubaker, Bourdieu has shown how the sociological 'habitus' involves a certain relation to the world, a way of seeing and understanding the world, as well as acting within it. Brubaker argues that we need to incorporate into this sociological 'habitus' the 'thinking tools' that Bourdieu has developed, and 'use Bourdieu to think against Bourdieu'.

Brubaker has also observed that Bourdieu has sought to ground sociology in a shared habitus - reflexive sociology. For Brubaker, this is a desirable situation:
Reflexivity can and should be incorporated into the habitus, in the form of a disposition to monitor its own productions and to grasp its own principles of production (Brubaker, 1993, p. 216).

I also believe such an attempt to make sociology more reflexive is worthwhile. I agree with Brubaker that greater understanding of the sociological habitus is both desirable and necessary. I argue, however, that a substantial part of this understanding is to be found in Max Weber's work on rationalisation. This work goes a long way towards reflexively explaining the origins and workings of the sociological 'relation to the world'. Most importantly, this work focuses attention on the paradoxical tensions which emerge between science and reflexivity. Weber's work, I argue, reflexively reveals the incredible complexity involved in developing a more reflexive sociology. This work shows that a more epistemologically reflexive sociology is reached at the expense of moral reflexivity, a situation which paradoxically bring into question the entire value of epistemological reflexivity. Before turning to this work, however, it is necessary to show how Bourdieu's epistemological reflexivity works in practice.
The Concept of Practice in Practice: Bourdieu's 'Field-work in Philosophy'

Introduction

Bourdieu's efforts to create a properly scientific, that is, reflexive, sociology which reveals the power relations and doxa within different social fields, has seen him traverse an extensive terrain of social space, an undertaking he has labelled 'fieldwork in philosophy' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 28). Running through these studies is a theme he first developed in his ethnographic work in Algeria: the relationship between objective conditions and subjective aspirations (p. 23). Bourdieu has always seen his theoretical concepts as tools which should be used along with, and enable, empirical research (p. 29). This entails the construction of the object of analysis, the break with 'common sense' and doxic views of the social world (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 235), but also means avoiding 'theoretical theory':

This constant attention to the details of the research procedure ... should have the effect of putting you on notice against the fetishism of concepts, and of "theory", born of the propensity to consider "theoretical" instruments - habitus, field, capital, etc. - in themselves and for themselves, rather than to put them in motion and to make them work (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 228).

Since the preconstructed social world is all around the sociologist, it requires a 'radical doubt' to question this world and its presuppositions, and thus allow a rupture from it, but it also requires a questioning and reflexive analysis of the sociologist's own presuppositions, that is, the position they take in relation to the object (1992a, pp. 235-38). In order to avoid the accusation of doing 'theoretical theory' on Bourdieu's work which, as Hage (1994, p. 420) has pointed out, runs the risk of losing the practical
nature of Bourdieu's work, this chapter examines a number of the more important fields that Bourdieu has 'constructed' and examined.

The Educational Field

Academic qualifications are to cultural capital what money is to economic capital (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 187)

Bourdieu's work on the sociology of education (1971b, 1974a, 1974b, 1977b, 1979a, 1980a, 1980b, 1981c, 1990d) is perhaps his most famous 'field' work. Beginning with the publication of 'Les heritiers' in 1964,\(^1\) and culminating with 'La Reproduction' in 1970,\(^2\) his analysis of the importance of cultural capital and the political nature of modern educational institutions has provoked wide ranging praise and criticism.\(^3\)

The importance of the educational system in modern society, according to Bourdieu, is that it becomes one of the main institutions that perpetuate symbolic violence. In modern societies, unlike the situation Bourdieu traced in Kabylia, relations of dominance between individuals work at the impersonal level. That is, particular institutions emerge in modern societies which, under the cloak of impartiality (in other words, through the misrecognition of their political functioning) reproduce

\(^1\) Translated as 'The Inheritors' (1979) by Richard Nice, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
\(^3\) For criticisms, mostly accusing Bourdieu of over-determinism, see Gorder (1980), Giroux (1982), Elster (1980), and MacLeod (1987). Other critics, such as Archer (1993), have argued that Bourdieu's model only makes sense in relation to the French system and therefore is not universally applicable. For rejections of these criticisms, and a more positive appraisal of Bourdieu's work on education, see Harker (1984), Harker and May (1993), Nash (1990), and Shirley (1986). A number of critics accusing Bourdieu of determinism, for example, Macleod (1987), and Connell (1983), have contrasted his analysis of education with the more resistance-based models of Paul Willis and other members of the Birmingham School. Willis himself (1983, pp. 118-19) has argued that Bourdieu's work is too concerned with reproduction and not enough with the production of cultures of resistance. Wacquant (1992b, pp. 80-81), however, has pointed out that Bourdieu and the Birmingham School had established early links and worked together on a number of journals. He also observes that Bourdieu's analysis was conducted in the 1960's, in the climate of meritocracy and the 'end of ideology' thesis which he deliberately aimed to disrupt. Berger (1989) has argued that Willis has an empirical and ethnographic demonstration of habitus at work.
and objectify power relations. The subjective symbolic violence of traditional societies like those in Algeria is replaced by objective symbolic violence within and between modern institutions. Objective institutions thus become mechanisms of the social reproduction of relations of dominance serving the interests of the dominant. As a result, the dominant have to make much less of an effort, in terms of time and money (than they did in Kabylia, for example) to maintain their dominance. They, in a sense, 'have only to let the system they dominate take its own course in order to exercise their domination' (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 190). The education system is just such an objective institution, perpetuating power relations through the specific form of symbolic violence it bases its position on - pedagogic authority. Put simply, whereas in undifferentiated premodern societies, the family controlled the transmission of capital and the power and privileges that went with this transmission, in the highly differentiated societies of contemporary times, the education system inherits and builds on this control (Bourdieu, 1993d, p. 26).

Being a relatively autonomous system within contemporary society, as it must be to have a guise of neutrality and independence, the education system has its own laws and logics, but plays an important part in the reproduction of the wider social system (Bourdieu, 1990d, p. 199). Through its examinations and credentialism, it operates as a mechanism of social selection. According to Bourdieu, the education system gives the dominant what Weber called a 'theodicy of its own privilege', not through ideologies, but through its practical justification of the social order (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 133). It does this through the fact that the school is an objectified and institutionalised form of cultural capital, that is, cultural capital that outlasts the biological life of individuals, and therefore is more durable than the embodied form of
cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 247). By being seen as 'impartial', the school and education system are seen to be the arbitrators of social mobility and success based on merit and ability. In fact, Bourdieu sees the education system as an arbitrary arbitrator (Bourdieu, 1990d, p. 5). By being seen as a legitimate authority, pedagogic authority tends to reinforce the knowledge and values it teaches as legitimate. It is, in fact, the product of the dominant class and emphasises the culture of the dominant class as universally valid and worthwhile, judging all others by its criteria. In this way, those students from the dominant class will be advantaged in that their habitus has provided them with a feel for the game, a feel for the culture that dominates education, provided in the form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 70). In other words, those most likely to successfully interpret and use the knowledge taught by pedagogic authority are those students already predisposed, through their class background, to be receptive to it. In this way, by reproducing the arbitrary cultural values of the dominant strata, the education system acts as a mechanism for social reproduction. As such, cultural capital breeds cultural capital, only misrecognised as 'the gift' (Bourdieu, 1979a, p. 67).

The discourse of the 'gifted' or 'talented' student is the expression of an individualist ideology (or in terms more familiar to Bourdieu's work, the doxic understanding of the educational system). This perpetuates, on the one hand, the apparent impartiality of the education system as referee, and, on the other, the accumulation of cultural capital (in the form of qualifications and degrees) by students whose social origin lies in the dominant strata, which is seen as being legitimate because it is 'deserved' (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 111). In fact, Bourdieu argues, it is the

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4 Shilling (1992) has argued that Bourdieu's work on embodiment and physical capital is also very important in understanding the inequalities in education.
alignment of a habitus with a field which is at the basis of this apparent 'gift' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 109).

Cultural capital, or informational capital as Bourdieu also calls it, works to the advantage of those possessing it in the educational system because it provides them with the means of understanding and appropriating what is taught. In a manner similar to Basil Bernstein's work on educational codes, Bourdieu argues that cultural capital allows its possessors to decipher and appropriate symbolic goods and provides them with the techniques and tools to accumulate more cultural capital (such as art). As such, the school really only reinforces existing inequalities in the distribution of cultural capital (and thus economic capital) but masks this causal relation under the doxa of charisma and precocity (Bourdieu, 1974b, p. 346). Those from the lower and middle classes must strive and struggle to attain something which is 'given' to those from an upper class background (Bourdieu, 1974a, p. 39). As Bourdieu puts it, 'it can be seen that there is no properly scholastic difference which cannot be related to a range of systematically linked social differences' (1974b, p. 344). In this way, habitus, plus the amount of cultural capital, affect the educational trajectory of different students. The education system adds to and reinforces the habitus of the different classes, making some exclude themselves from the possibility of academic success subjectively where it had already excluded them objectively, and making others believe that their own

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5 See Bourdieu (1990d, pp. 133-34), for his analysis of Bernstein's work. Bourdieu (p. 115) makes a distinction between 'bourgeois language' and 'common language' which is similar to Bernstein's public/formal language dichotomy, although Bourdieu criticises Bernstein for seeing the dominance of formal language as implicit in the language itself. He argues that Bernstein thus mistakes the realism of the structure for the arbitrary nature of social relations. This claim has been supported by Harker and May's (1993) work which shows that Bernstein's work demonstrates essentially a structuralist concern with rules, whereas Bourdieu overcomes this with his emphasis on strategy and the habitus. See Collins (1993), Harker and May (1993), Gorder (1980), Atkinson (1985), Blackledge and Hunt (1985) for more on the links and differences between the works of Bourdieu and Bernstein.
success was the result of their subjective superiority, not their objective position (Bourdieu, 1979a, p. 72).

'The Inheritors' and 'Reproduction' both empirically investigate this process. Tracing the history of the French education system and its structural changes, these works show that the lower classes, mainly peasants and workers, are usually excluded from university and high levels of secondary schooling, but that the middle classes become instrumental in the reproduction of the political and ideological nature of education. The middle class students, through hard work and asceticism, may succeed in attaining the distinction bestowed upon graduates and therefore have a strong interest in maintaining the idea of reward and the hierarchical nature of the education system. Being adolescent and seeking recognition for their educational endeavours, they see the education system as a source of identity, as the source of who they are, and therefore are more prone to believe the essentialism presented in the charismatic ideology of the gift (Bourdieu, 1979a, p. 70). The middle class is thus instrumental in reproducing the idea of a democratic aristocracy.

At a deeper level, Bourdieu argues that like all agents, the whole practice of students is the product of their social origins. Language, as expression and vocabulary, is the product of cultural capital (or more accurately, 'linguistic capital') and one of the main selection criteria in the education system (see Bourdieu, 1990d, pp. 72-85). But also the attitude towards language and how it should be used is a part of the class habitus (pp. 115-119). Agents' view on dedication to work, to asceticism,

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6 The statistical analysis revealed that in 1965-66, a manual worker's child had a 3.4 percent chance of going to university, compared to a 71.5 percent chance for an industrialist's child, 16.2 percent for an office worker's child, and 58.7 percent for a professional's child (Bourdieu, 1990d, p. 225). This difference was even more accentuated across university faculties, with the majority of lower class students studying Arts at university compared to the dominance of upper class students in Medicine and Law.
also differs according to class background. The middle class students, and the few lower class students who do make it to higher education, must constantly strive and discipline themselves, being unable to afford the risk-free dilettantism of upper class students (Bourdieu, 1979a, pp. 62-3). Every now and then a few individuals, seemingly exceptional, escape their class origins and the trajectories that their class peers followed. According to Bourdieu, this is not evidence of the success of the education system in overcoming social inequality, but in fact reinforces the charismatic ideology that only those individuals with exceptional ability and ‘gift’ deserve to succeed in the educational field.

Teachers play a role in this also. Like a priest in the religious field, a teacher has institutional authority and status (pedagogical authority). Therefore, like a priest, their position depends on following, and thus conserving, the tradition which taught them (Bourdieu, 1990d, p. 125). In the same way as priests will routinise religious culture, school culture and the education system are routinised by teachers. Having internalised the educational field of which they are a product, they know how to perpetuate it and judge their students according to it. As part of their habitus, this is not a conscious or considered judgement, but the product of the categories of perception and cultural attitude that their educational experience has instilled in them. Using language that the education system has taught them, a language based on dominant values and expressions, the teachers will usually only communicate with those students with the cultural capital needed to decipher this language.7 Thus, the relation between students and teachers, especially at the university level, is affected by

7 'However, just as the status legitimacy of the priest, as Weber remarks, causes the responsibility for failure to fall not on the god nor on the priest but solely on the conduct of the faithful, so the teacher who, without acknowledging it and without drawing all the inferences, suspects he is less than perfectly understood, can, so long as his status authority is not contested, blame his students when he does not understand their utterances' (Bourdieu, 1990d, p. 111).
class background (Bourdieu, 1979a, p. 40). Middle class students are most likely to see their teachers in a prestigious way, as a personal and intellectual mentor, while bourgeois students relate more to their parents and familial background, therefore being more dismissive of their teachers.

Bourdieu’s work on the educational field therefore shows the ways in which the education system plays its part in maintaining the dominance of the dominant class. In its role as reproducer of these power relations through acts of symbolic violence, it is closely tied to the State. Pedagogic authority, through its legitimate position and its reproduction of the distribution of cultural capital, means physical coercion and violence is not necessary, as symbolic violence works just as effectively. Its importance in contemporary society is also tied to the fact that the education system is the product of, and inculcates, a culture of distinction. It gives its graduates social distinction by its act of consecration, as well as providing them with the means to make distinctions in culture and art though providing them with categories of perception (Bourdieu, 1971b, p. 200). As such, it plays its role in modern society by legitimating the dominant group’s accumulation of cultural and symbolic capital in the form of ‘taste’ and distinction. It reproduces the ‘aristocracy of culture’, an aristocracy further analysed in Bourdieu’s writings on the field of culture.

The Field of Culture: Production and Consumption of Cultural/Symbolic Goods

Bourdieu’s analysis of the field of cultural production and cultural consumption attempts to uncover the processes whereby arbitrary systems of classification and symbolic representation are legitimised and naturalised, masking, through a process of misrecognition, the power relations on which such processes are based (Bourdieu,
1984, p. 7). His work in 'The Field of Cultural Production', 'Photography', 'The Love of Art', and 'Distinction', reveal how such diverse cultural practices as art, eating, sport, literature, dress-sense, and the like, are tied to a sense of 'taste' which is an expression of domination, misrecognised (and thus recognised) as such. Employing his concepts of habitus, capital, and field, he attempts to undermine the subjectivist myth of the 'autonomous creator' and of the universal aesthetic, as proposed by Kant. Instead, he points out the social origins of the production and consumption of aesthetic tastes and cultural practice, that is, how they are produced and reproduced by class and social privilege.

To begin with his analysis of the production of cultural goods. Bourdieu's work in the sociology of art and cultural production analyses the relations between the positions occupied by different artists and their works in the field of cultural production. He traces the genesis in French culture of the idea of the 'pure gaze', the equivalent of the idea of the 'gift' in the educational field. Bourdieu attacks this subjectivist reductionism by analysing the social factors and processes that go into the construction of aesthetic 'taste' and how different cultural products gain a market and dominance within the artistic field. To do this, he employs a three-tiered model which examines the relationship between the artistic field and the wider meta-field of power, the objective positions within the artistic field, and the agent's habitus (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 194). The autonomous field of art came into existence in France, according to Bourdieu, with the breakdown of the academic system of artistic teaching in the 1860s. Especially important here were the works of Flaubert and Manet, which were some of the main contributors to the challenge to the traditional legitimacy of the Academe (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 265). What is important about this development is the
emergence of a 'pure aesthetic', a pure gaze concentrating on artistic form which first
provided the field of art with a relative autonomy from the meta-field of power:

They [artists] had to invent that social personage without precedent - the modern artist, full-
time professional, dedicated to his work, indifferent to the exigencies of politics, as to the
injunctions of morality, and recognising no jurisdiction other than the specific norm of art.
Through this they invented pure aesthetics, a point of view with universal applicability, with
no other justification than that which it finds in itself (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 199).

Like all fields, the field of cultural production follows its own logics, but in this
field, it is clear that economism cannot explain these logics. The artistic world is, in
fact, the 'economic world reversed', an 'anti-economic economy', a world where
disinterest in the accumulation of profit is at the very basis of the accumulation of
profit. The field of cultural production has its own specific capitals, and the struggle
within it is over these forms of capital and the legitimate representations and definitions
of culture that accompany it (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 183). The profits of symbolic
capital (prestige, notoriety, honour) within this field are gained through rejecting
economic success and by rejecting validating sources external to the field itself
(Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 41). It is the purity of the artistic work, uncompromised for
economic or populist reasons, which is central in making work valuable.8

Bourdieu's work in this area argues that the artist is not a mystical genius, but
is socially constructed depending on their position in the field of cultural production at
any one moment in its historical configuration:

the source of the "creative power", the ineffable mana or charisma celebrated by the
tradition, need not be sought anywhere other than the field, i.e. in the system of objective
relations which constitute it (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 81).

8'It was Flaubert who said honours bring dishonour' (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 154). Flaubert also asked:
'why do you need to talk directly to the public? It is not worthy of our secrets' (p. 200).
Artistic works and artists are affected by their position in the field, but also by their individual and class habitus which generates their strategies depending on the state of play in the field. For Bourdieu, it is thus only by placing artistic works in the social relations, power relations, and institutional framework within which they are constructed, that they can be understood (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 141). This does not mean, however, that an artist is an unconscious medium, reflecting the social structure, as in the work of Lukacs or Goldmann, or Adorno (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 180). By plotting out the positions in the field, and then the origins of the artist’s habitus, Bourdieu believes sociological analysis of the field of art will avoid the pitfalls of subjectivist or objectivist theories.

As in the sociology of religion, the ‘god’ of the artistic field, the work of art, only exists through common investment in the game, or more specifically, through a common belief by agents within the field in its existence and worthwhileness. Working off Marcel Mauss’ analysis of magic, Bourdieu states: ‘the work of art is an object which exists as such only by virtue of the (collective) belief which knows and acknowledges it as a work of art’ (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 35). As such, to understand this field requires not only an analysis of the material, but also the symbolic production of artistic/cultural goods (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 37).

According to Bourdieu, the field of art is divided between the side of producers and the side of consumers. On the side of producers, it is further divided between, on the one hand, the field of restricted production, that is, the realm of ‘high art’, the prestigious circle of producers and uncomprising ascetic artists, and, on the other hand, 

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9 See Wilson (1988) for an analysis of Bourdieu’s work on culture and a comparison with that of Adorno. Wilson argues that Bourdieu’s view of culture, especially mass culture, is not as removed from that of Adorno as he makes out, and that it leads to similar problems for intervention in cultural politics. Fowler (1994) also sees the pessimism of Bourdieu’s work on art undermining his ability to offer a valid model of resistance in the politics of culture.
the field of large-scale production, made up of those artists producing for mass
circulation and commercial interests, and supported by the culture industry.

Bourdieu’s work analyses the former field and how different agents struggle to
accumulate the symbolic profit/capital at stake in the field of art. As such, it takes into
account the various positions within the field of art, not just that of the artist. Critics,
publishing houses and so on, all have a position and stake within the game played out
on the artistic field (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 36). The field of restricted production is the
site of struggle over symbolic capital, and the honour and acclaim that comes for those
within its boundaries. Legitimacy within the field is consolidated in the position of the
lectores. The newcomers to the field, the entrants, the auctores, must prove
themselves worthy of consecration, or challenge the very basis of the institutions which
consecrate.

Bourdieu analyses the work and life of Gustave Flaubert as an example of the
myth of the creative genius. In a three-step process, Bourdieu reconstructs, via
Flaubert’s work (especially with the character of Frederic in ‘The Sentimental
Education’), Flaubert’s habitus and his position in the field, and attacks the Sartrean
conception of the talented artist, arguing that ‘Flaubert’s point of view’ is based on a
structural position of indeterminancy and uncertainty. Flaubert’s work reflects his own
internalisation of the objective situation of society from his position within it and within
the field of cultural production. It also reflects the strategies he adopted based on an
assessment of the options open to him.

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10 Eric Rhodes (1994, p. 218) has suggested two reasons for this: firstly, Flaubert was the father of the
modern French novel; and secondly, Flaubert was also the focus of a subjectivist work by Sartre.
11 Some critics, most notably Maclean (1993), have criticised Bourdieu’s work on cultural production
as underplaying the importance of artistic skill and creativity, but seem to miss the fact that the
habitus is a creative sense of the game, a creativity within socially determined limits.
'The Field of Cultural Production' traces how symbolic and cultural goods are produced, but equally important to Bourdieu is how these goods are consumed. As Bourdieu states,

... the most specific feature of production, that is to say the production of value, cannot be understood unless one takes into account simultaneously the space of producers and the space of consumers (1993b, p. 139).

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Another practice in the field of cultural production that Bourdieu examines is that of photography. In his 1965 work, 'Un art moyen', translated as 'Photography: A Middle Brow Art', Bourdieu traces how photography is an act of 'creation' which is shaped by social position and class habitus by the way they influence how objects considered worthy of photographing are categorised and interpreted (Bourdieu, 1990c, p. 6). Unlike other artistic activities, such as painting and music, photography is perceived to be accessible to everyone, regardless of social origin. Rejecting this subjectivist individualism, Bourdieu argues that photography is not simply dependent upon individual choice, but is highly regulated through class backgrounds, habitus and aesthetics (Bourdieu, 1990c, p. 46). In fact, photography is undertaken within practice, that is, it determines, and is determined by, the social activities and functions it records and is a part of (Bourdieu, 1990c, pp. 31-32). The sociological study of photography shows how the relations between classes are fundamentally important in shaping attitudes and practice. As Bourdieu notes, 'the different social classes encourage the practice of photography to different degrees' (1990c, p. 42).

The reason for this is that the values of a group, based on the internalisation of objective conditions through the habitus, value photographic practice differently and employ photography for different social functions. A sociological analysis reveals how different social groups perceive reality, that is, choose what is worth photographing, and why.

Bourdieu's analysis shows that peasants tend to reject abstract and aesthetic photography as the decadence of urban life, and use it instead to record important social festivities and events, imbuing the act of photography with practical functions - recording memories and enforcing group solidarity (Bourdieu, 1990c, p. 19). This is because they see in photography a realism and objectivity which is not seen in art. It is not the act of photographing which is rejected, but the ostentatiousness and attempt at status distinction which is associated with photographing certain events and objects (Bourdieu, 1990c, p. 47).

Working class groups also exclude themselves from elaborate and artistic photography, instead emphasising the simplicity of their equipment and their skill as photographer, as opposed to the expensive sophisticated technical objects which they could not afford anyway (Bourdieu, 1990c, p. 18). Their aesthetic is based on the 'naturalness' of what is captured, and photography with its 'objectivity' suits this disposition (Bourdieu, 1990c, p. 80). The populist aesthetic does not see that everything is suitable to be photographed, and insists instead that photographs should have a function. As Bourdieu points out, this excludes the possibility of taking a photograph because one desires to take a beautiful photograph (1990c, p. 90). This emphasis on usefulness is related to the disposition towards economy, that is, against waste, excess, and self-indulgence.

It is the petit bourgeoisie (especially clerical workers) who most fully embrace photography. Excluded from the privileged cultural position of the bourgeoisie, but wishing to distinguish themselves from the working and lower classes, they embrace photography as an artistic activity and attempt to ennoble it (and thus ennoble themselves), by making it more artistically creative (Bourdieu, 1990c, p. 64). As such, it becomes a 'middle brow' art, situated between the legitimate scholarly arts of Music and Painting, and the vulgar activities of cookery and decoration. Freed from the traditional functions of photography, that is, the recording of social occasions, this group experiments with photography. They attempt to become dedicated to photography, not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end - distinction - by rejecting the ordinary photographic practice of lower socio-economic groups. Different again are the senior executives and members of the bourgeoisie who, despite having the funds and time to engage in aestheticised photography, reject it as vulgar in comparison to the fine arts, and as tainted by its populist accessibility (Bourdieu, 1990c, p. 72).
Bourdieu's work on the consumption of cultural goods and objects is in many ways an attempt to refute Kant's understanding of a universalist aesthetic opposing a 'barbarous taste'. For Bourdieu, 'high culture' is a political weapon, a form of symbolic violence, which imposes itself as the universal yardstick of status and therefore social power. His work attacks the view that high culture is 'naturally' superior, instead pointing out how it is the product of social and economic power, reproduced primarily through the family and education system (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 109). By masking the arbitrariness of symbolic dominance through the myth of the 'gift' or 'innate taste' or 'talent', this 'naturalisation' of culture and the naturalisation of judgement based on it, become a political act which masks the social origin of culture. In this way, status groups enforce their objective dominance through subjective categories of aesthetic taste. They mark distance between themselves and other groups by imposing, in an act of symbolic violence, their culture and interests as natural and therefore legitimate. When other groups fail to partake or succeed in internalising this culture, this is explained by reference to natural inferiority. In reality, the comprehension and accessibility of works of art depends on the ability to decode them, an ability which is based on the possession of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 257). As Bourdieu states:

Museums could bear the inscription: Entry for art lovers only. But there is clearly no need for such a sign, it all goes without saying (1993a, p. 257).

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13 'If what Kant called "barbarous taste", that is, popular taste, seems to be at variance with the Kantian description of cultivated taste on all points, and especially in its insistence on relying on concepts, in reality it simply demonstrates clearly the hidden truth of cultivated taste ... The deliberate neglect of the social conditions which make possible culture and culture become nature, a cultivated nature with all the appearances of grace and talent but nevertheless learned and therefore "deserved", is the condition for the existence of the charismatic ideology, which allows culture and especially the "love of art" to be given the central place they occupy in the bourgeois "sociodicy" (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 110).
Bourdieu's 1969 work, 'L'amour de l'art', examined the relationship between levels of education, amount of cultural capital possessed, and museum attendance in Europe. His analysis revealed that museum attendance increased as one moved up the social hierarchy and gained higher levels of education.

The reason for this under-representation of the lower and working classes is not related to economic admission fees, but to cultural admission fees. Bourdieu argues that the fundamental factor affecting museum attendance is education. As we saw above, however, education only reaches those individuals predisposed to incorporate it, that is, those with familial backgrounds that have introduced the individual into cultural and aesthetic tastes which are then developed and reinforced by levels of education. In other words, it is the elaboration and development of the habitus which is at work here. Though many lower class students attend museums during school years, they subsequently exclude themselves as they become aware that they lack the cultural capital necessary to make sense of the museum. They quickly learn that 'that's not for the likes of us', and exclude themselves subjectively from practices which they are restricted from partaking in by their objective conditions. In this way, the dominance of the upper classes in museum attendance becomes legitimised as there appears to be a 'natural' inequality in tastes and ability to interpret cultural works. Yet of course, this naturalness is the result of symbolic violence and the control of cultural capital:

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15 The proportion of visitors in class ratios worked out as follows: working class visitors equalled 4 per cent; middle class visitors made up 24 per cent; and upper class visitors were 75 per cent of the visiting population (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 15).
16 Statistically, this is shown as: 'the proportion of visitors who claim to have gone to the museum for the first time in the company of their family increases very sharply with higher social class (6 per cent of farmers and farm labourers, 18 per cent of industrial manual workers and of the middle classes, and 30 per cent of senior executives)' (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 66).
If it is indisputable that our society offers to all the *pure possibility* of taking advantage of the works on display in museums, it remains the case that only some have the *real possibility* of doing so (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 37).

The basis of this 'real possibility' is the fact that although artistic objects are not rare, being on display to all who visit the museum, the ability to 'consume' them is. This ability is provided by cultural capital, and thus familial and educational background. It is the habitus of someone from the upper classes which gives that individual the 'need' (based on a need for distinction and for living up to class heritage) to consume cultural objects, as well as the means to do so.

Therefore, the art on display in museums is not inherently full of meaning, but is given its meaning and richness by the receiver who consumes it (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 107). As such, different class backgrounds, embodied in the individual habitus, will receive and interpret these meanings differently (Bourdieu, 1991c, pp. 42-3). It is in this way that those from upper class backgrounds hold the advantage proportionate to the amount of cultural capital they hold. This cultural capital provides them with the means, categories, and codes of perception that allow pure appreciation of the aesthetic value of the work (through the 'artistic eye'), as opposed to the practical and everyday interpretation of the work (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 39). These codes of high culture cannot be learnt from everyday experience, but must be taught and transmitted, which is why the family and level of education become crucial in this process. Lower class perception, however, lacking the information which allows classifications of style and appreciation, 'reduces' the object to its functional existence, that is, it insists that the work of art have some functional dimension. Unable to see with the artistic eye they lack, that is, the analytical and cultural framework with which to interpret and judge artistic works, they see with the eye which practice supplies them, the eye of
realism (Bourdieu, 1991c, pp. 44-5). In this way, the more distinctions that an individual makes between and within works of art, that is, the more ‘eyes’ (cultural capital) they possess, the more distinction they seek, consciously or unconsciously, and imbues on themself by 'marking a distance' from others. To put it another way, the act of distinguishing artistically, is, at the same time, an act of distinguishing socially.

In this way, working class visitors to museums have a 'reverential distance' from it, based on their 'respectful confusion' (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 49). They feel out of place, and feeling so, are not likely to visit such a place often, and thus exclude themselves from the museum (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 53). Therefore, the different relations to museums and the art within them experienced by the working and upper classes is the result of accumulated exposure. As Bourdieu puts it, 'the love of art is not love at first sight, but is born of long familiarity' (1991c, p. 54).

Bourdieu’s most intensive and detailed investigation of the field of cultural consumption is in his 1979 work, 'La Distinction'.17 This work was ‘an endeavour to rethink Max Weber’s opposition between class and Stand’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. xii) in order to critique the views on culture raised in Kant’s ‘Critique of Judgement’.18

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17 Translated as 'Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste' (1984) by Richard Nice, Harvard University Press. This work has been praised (for example, see Garnham, 1986, and Zolberg, 1986). It has also been accused of reflectionism and reductionism, missing the macro view of class struggle and long-term changes in taste (for example, see Berger, 1986), but despite such criticisms, it has provided the basis for an illuminating analysis of the consumption of cultural goods (see the analysis of book consumption by Verdaasdonk (1993) and the analysis of the literary field developed in Gerhard (1989) for examples of applications of Bourdieu's concepts).

18 Bourdieu interprets Kant's analysis as follows: "Pure" taste and the aesthetics which provides its theory are founded on a refusal of "impure" taste and of aisthesis (sensation), the simple, primitive form of pleasure reduced to the pleasure of the senses, as in what Kant calls "the taste of the tongue, the palate and the throat", a surrender to immediate sensation ... Thus Kant’s principle of pure taste is nothing other than a refusal, a disgust - a disgust for objects which impose enjoyment and a disgust for the crude, vulgar taste which revels in this imposed enjoyment ... The antithesis between culture and bodily pleasure (or nature) is rooted in the opposition between the cultivated bourgeois and the people, the imaginary site of uncultivated nature, barbarously wallowing in pure enjoyment ... What is at stake in aesthetic discourse, and in the attempted imposition of a definition of the genuinely human, is nothing less than the monopoly of humanity" (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 486-91). For criticisms of Bourdieu’s interpretation of Kant’s work, see Crowther (1994), and Fowler (1994). Though Crowther’s criticism is an appallingly reductionist interpretation of Bourdieu’s work on art (seeing it
The ‘aristocracy of culture’ which Bourdieu examines in this work rests on the subjectivist belief in ‘inner’ or ‘natural’ taste. As Bourdieu states, ‘aristocracies are essentialist’ (1984, p. 24). In other words, those holding legitimate tastes believe it is who they are, not their objective position and possession of economic and cultural capital, which makes them superior. ‘Distinction’ attempts to refute this by showing how the hierarchy of the symbolic order is not the product of charisma or innate taste, but the product of the imposition of arbitrary cultural values advantaging those with large amounts of economic and cultural capital.

Based on surveys of 1,217 people in 1963 and 1967-68, ‘Distinction’ revealed that educational and social backgrounds were crucial in determining a ‘cultivated disposition’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 1). Ranging across diverse cultural practices such as movie-going, painting, playing music, eating, listening to radio stations, and even the purchasing of furniture, Bourdieu’s analysis shows that ‘legitimate’ culture (for example, classical music, painting) is dominated by those from the dominant strata and that time and money (and for some agents, effort) are needed to engage in this culture. These are possessed by the dominant strata but denied to the lower strata due to their lack of economic and cultural capital.

As in the other areas of the field of culture, and in the field of education, that we examined above, there is a subjectivist doxa that dominates the playing of the game of cultural consumption. This is the idea of ‘taste’. Once again, Bourdieu unmasks this subjectivist appearance to show the objectivist reality behind it.

For Bourdieu, one’s taste is the expression of an aesthetic, which is in turn the product of social position. This position is based on one’s ‘distance from necessity’,

as ‘the subtle revenge of those who lost the battles of 1968’, p. 164), Fowler makes a number of valid points on the meaning of art which I shall return to in a later chapter.
that is, the material conditions of life (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 53). According to Bourdieu, there is a clear dichotomy between the ‘pure aesthetic’ of the dominant classes, and the ‘popular aesthetic’ of the lower classes. The former involves a break from the latter, a social break and detachment, and therefore an extended ‘distance from necessity’ (in many ways similar to that of the intellectual), requiring time and money and an interest in doing so, all of which is provided by their possession of economic and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 53-4). The objective distance from necessity is subjectively expressed in the desire to distinguish oneself, to mark a social distance, from those who do not have this objective distance from the material conditions of life. This aesthetic habitus of the bourgeoisie is based on the ‘suspension and removal of economic necessity and objective and subjective distance from practical urgencies’ (p. 54).

The popular aesthetic, however, affirms a ‘continuity between art and life, which implies the subordination of form to function’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 32). This is tied to a subjective awareness (albeit unconscious, that is, through the habitus) of their objective position - where the social distancing from the urgencies and hardships of economic necessity is not a luxury they can afford. The taste of the lower classes is a subjective internalisation of the objective limits imposed by their economic and social circumstances - a lack of economic and cultural capital. Deprived of the perception which would allow them to understand what a ‘legitimate’ symbolic good is conveying, a perception provided by cultural capital, they reduce it to the one means of perception they do have, the perception provided by everyday life (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 376). In

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19 This being said, it is important to keep in mind that the dominant class is itself internally divided between those rich in economic capital, such as industrialists, and those rich in cultural capital, such as artists and intellectuals (who make up the dominated fraction of the dominant class). See Bourdieu (1984, pp. 283-95).
clothing, decoration, and food, the working class habitus provides its agents with realistic choices and practices.

The habitus of the dominant group is therefore a ‘practical mastery’ of the forms of legitimate culture, a mastery that the habitus of the lower strata lacks, and therefore excludes itself from (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 66). Accumulated through years of socialisation and the internalisation of an environment rich in legitimate culture, and rich therefore in cultural capital, the aesthetic habitus of an agent in the dominant class has a ‘feel’ for legitimate culture and is at ‘ease’ with it precisely because of its familiarity. Needless to say, the habitus of lower class agents is not at home in an environment rich in legitimate culture precisely because of its lack of familiarity. While one class habitus provides its agents with the feeling of being ‘a fish in water’, the other provides its agents with all the discomfort of the hysteresis effect.

In between these habitus lies the 'hyper-correct/ascetic habitus' of the petit-bourgeoisie (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 331) which, with limited resources, attempts to distinguish itself from the vulgarity of the barbarous taste of the popular classes, but can only do so by extreme effort and discipline. As Bourdieu states, the middle class ‘is filled with a reverence for culture’ (1984, p. 321). Because of its position in social space, however, this culture is not its own and so its attitude towards a culture which does not come easily to it is one of anxiety and seriousness.20

In cultural consumption, the main opposition, by overall capital value, is between the practices designated by their rarity as distinguished, those of the fractions richest in both economic and cultural capital, and the practices socially identified as vulgar because they are both easy and common, those of the fractions poorest in both these respects. In the intermediate position are the practices which are perceived as pretentious, because of the manifest discrepancy between ambition and possibilities (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 176).

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20 Once again, it has to be kept in mind here that there are different fractions within the petit bourgeois, such as the new and old middle classes, affected by different social trajectories. See Bourdieu (1984, pp. 346-65) for these differences.
Therefore, ‘taste’, and its use in asserting distance from the necessity of material conditions, has to be seen as a strategy adopted by those agents in a similar position in social space to hold and maximise their amounts of capital. It is especially used by those rich in cultural capital but having a small amount of economic capital (in relation to the dominant fraction), such as artists and intellectuals, to reproduce or advance their social position (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 176). In this way, there is an economic market in cultural and symbolic goods that confirms to the same laws of supply and demand that the market in economic goods follows. The consumption of goods is based on the competition for rare symbolic goods, that is, those in short supply and those that thus bring the most prestige and status when appropriated. Distinction is thus based on symbolic capital, that is, the possession of the specific sources of symbolic profit in a symbolic system.

In order to accumulate symbolic capital, however, one must also have the knowledge of what is rare and what is not. This knowledge itself is rare. In the symbolic system, what is rare and what is common is decided in reference to the universe of values imposed by the dominant class. The value of a symbolic good is decided in reference to the criteria laid down by the dominant class and thus legitimatized. In other words, the definition of culture itself is a prerogative of the dominant class. And by defining the cultural game and what is at stake within it, the dominant ‘naturally’ have an advantageous position within it: ‘the hallmark of naturalised distinction is when appearing distinguished amounts to no more than being oneself’ (Bourdieu, 1988b, p. 783). Thus concert-going is valued because it is valued by the dominant class. In this way it moves from being a cultural arbitrary of the dominant class to a ‘universally’ valid and superior practice. It is the differences
between styles of life and the values placed on them, that creates the positions that make up the symbolic system (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 730).

This knowledge of what is rare and what is common, of how to perceive the value of a good, is provided by cultural capital in much the same way as it provides those who understand high art with an 'artist's eye'. As Bourdieu states, 'the consumer helps to produce the product he consumes by a labour of identification and decoding which ... requires time and dispositions acquired over time' (1984, p. 100).

The Judgement of Taste is thus the judgement from the point of view of the dominant, based on their social position, but one which masquerades itself as the universal point of view of society. And how are the values of symbolic goods and practices decided by this dominant view? By the distance from material necessity that it involves. This has the double advantage of being affordable (in economic and cultural capital) for this class, and thus is acquired with 'ease', at the same time as distinguishing them, that is, marking a social distance, from those who do not have the economic or cultural capital to indulge in them. The rules of the game are thus in many ways provided by, and at the same time kept underwraps (by being written in a way that cannot be understood), by the dominant class, and this is why the dominated class excludes itself from playing. They become merely a passive reference point from which distinction begins. The middle class, however, eager to distinguish itself from the vulgarity of the lower classes, is keen to play and enters the game disadvantaged and needing hardwork to play it well. In this way, by getting the middle class to believe in the game of competitive cultural struggle, and thus investing in it, the dominant class keeps the middle class on side. This involves:

changes in the mode of domination, which, substituting seduction for repression, public relations for policing, advertising for authority, the velvet glove for the iron fist, pursues the
symbolic integration of the dominated classes by imposing needs rather than inculcating norms (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 154).

At the same time, however, by being legitimated by an ideology of natural superiority, the dominant come to hide from themselves the true nature of their dominance, and like card players believing in their own bluff, they are also seduced by the game.

Bourdieu’s analysis in ‘Distinction’ thus reveals how the conditions of life, expressed in the position within the cultural field (as dominant or dominated) shape the habitus, which guides practice and perception in a ‘life-style’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 172). To understand these life-styles and the way tastes may be different even within those earning similar incomes, it is necessary to see the agent’s relation to the material conditions of existence, that is, their possession of capitals, over time. Thus a foreman may come to earn more income than a clerical worker, but his tastes will still be ‘vulgar’ because his habitus, his temporal relation to the conditions of existence, not his pay cheque, has a profound effect on his practice (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 177). We thus have to understand why someone has the ‘taste of necessity’ or the ‘taste of luxury’ in relation to their social trajectory. The life-style of the lower classes is a life-style ‘for itself', not ‘in itself’ while that of the dominant classes is precisely the opposite, a practice based on an aesthetic of self-creation. This is clearly seen, for example, in expenditure on food and the types of food bought (see pp. 182-85), and on perceptions and uses of the body since: ‘taste, a class culture turned into nature, that is, embodied, helps to shape the class body’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 190). A further example is that of clothing and self-presentation: where the lower classes opt for

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21 One of the prime examples of this is how working class men do not like to eat fish as it contradicts the ‘masculine’ way of eating, being small and requiring delicate eating due to bones (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 190).
functionality and affordability, the dominant classes use these items to accumulate material and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 200-208).

the space of life-styles, i.e., the universe of the properties whereby the occupants of different positions differentiate themselves, with or without the intention of distinguishing themselves, is itself only the balance sheet, at a given moment, of the symbolic struggles over the importance of the legitimate life-style (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 249).

'Taste', therefore, is not the product of nature, but of the dispositions inscribed in a particular class habitus, which is itself the product of the long socialisation process involving the internalisation of particular conditions of life (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 466).

Of course, individuals will have different social trajectories, based on their accumulation or loss of capital (in all its forms) over time, on their understanding of the objective probabilities of the situation and the strategies they develop accordingly. Different trajectories may mean agents from the same class and familial background may have different experiences and attitudes and thus different strategies. The point is that sociologically, most members of a certain class background will follow similar trajectories and develop similar strategies. The differences between classes and within classes depends on three factors: the volume of capital (the amount of economic, cultural, and social capital an agent has); the composition of capital (the breakdown in quantities of each type of capital, for example, more cultural capital than economic capital); and the change in relations between the first two factors over time (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 114).22

Thus Bourdieu is able to trace different strategies of investment used by different social groups depending on the amount and type of capital they possess:

22 As Brubaker (1985, p. 769) points out, this mapping of ‘three dimensional social space’ is one of the strengths of ‘Distinction’: ‘his distinctive contribution to the study of class structure, though, is in his analyses of intra-class divisions. In these analyses, both middle and upper classes (though not the working class) are conceived as internally structured around the opposition between fractions relatively poor in economic capital but rich in cultural capital ... It is above all the subtle analyses of such intra-class oppositions that make Distinction a brilliant and engaging ethnographic portrait of the contemporary French class structure’
The fractions richest in cultural capital do in fact tend to invest in their children’s education as well as in the cultural practices likely to maintain and increase their specific rarity; the fractions richest in economic capital set aside cultural and educational investments in favour of economic investments (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 120).

That being said, however, it is still the case that economic capital remains the predominant power in social life and those holding large amounts of cultural capital, but very little economic capital, are the ‘dominated fraction of the dominant fraction’.

The consumption of cultural goods by different social groups, mediated through ‘taste’, an expression of aesthetic disposition, is thus central in the hierarchy of status and distinction. It expresses itself in everything from furniture to political voting patterns and attitudes. As Bourdieu puts it, ‘taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier’ (1984, p. 6). The particular classifications, and the more classifications, an agent makes, the more they reveal their social and educational background.

Bourdieu’s work on the field of culture deals fundamentally with this classification process (‘taste’) and the struggles over classification. The ability to impose a representation of reality and thus help form social reality by providing agents with perceptions and attitudes towards the social world, is one of the fundamental powers in social life (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 483). This ability manifests itself through the classification process: by combining some goods and separating others; by valuing some objects and devaluing others. This classification process, however, is generally not an explicit undertaking, but is instead product, and producer, of the habitus. If every good, every class, and every agent is defined by its ‘being-perceived as much as its being’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 483), then this occurs at the level of practical knowledge, in the schemes of perception found in the habitus which are the basis of

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23 See Bourdieu (1984, pp. 397-465) for his analysis of the dialectic between culture and politics, covering such issues as opinion polls, voting patterns, newspapers reading, and political language.
classifications of, and within, the social world. In this way, classification schemes and the habitus are part of the struggle for identity:

In short, what individuals and groups invest in the particular meaning they give to common classificatory systems by the use they make of them is infinitely more than their “interest” in the usual sense of the term; it is their whole social being, everything which defines their own idea of themselves, the primordial, tacit contract whereby they define “us” as opposed to “them”’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 478).

It is Bourdieu’s studies of his own domain, the intellectual field, where he has most keenly sought to show the ways in which classifications and practical knowledge operate. It is to his work in this area, where arguably his sociology is at its most ‘reflexive’, that we now turn.

**The Intellectual Field: The Domain of *Homo Academicus***

... my sociological analysis of the academic world aims to trap *Homo Academicus*, supreme classifier among classifiers, in the net of his own classifications (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. xi)

In 1982, Bourdieu was appointed as Chair in Sociology at the prestigious *College de France* in Paris. From this position in the intellectual field, Bourdieu was able to reflect on his own successful academic trajectory and the organisation of the French academic field.24 This led to the publication of 'Homo Academicus' in 1984.25 It also led him to publish in 1987 a more ‘accessible’ collection of his essays, entitled 'Choses dites'.26

**The Intellectual Field**

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24 It was in the analysis of intellectual life, that Bourdieu first developed the concept of the field: ‘it is not by chance that I first elaborated the notion of field in the case of the intellectual and artistic world. I deliberately constructed this notion to destroy intellectual narcissism' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 193).
26 Translated as 'In Other Words' (1990) by Matthew Adamson, Polity Press.
Bourdieu sees intellectuals and scientists as part of a group of 'symbolic producers' (also including journalists and artists) which is a dominated fraction of the dominant class. For Bourdieu, like Weber, the intellectual field has gradually gained autonomy since the Middle Ages when intellectuals and artists began to liberate themselves, socially, economically, and ethically from the Church and aristocracy (Bourdieu, 1971a, p. 162). This is tied to the development of specific intellectual interests and mechanisms of legitimacy and authority which defined an intellectual. It was the development of this autonomous intellectual field which gave rise to the autonomous intellectual - the 'uncreated creator'.

Bourdieu's analysis of the intellectual and scientific fields shows that these fields have the same invariants as other social fields (struggle between agents, strategies, capital, doxa, and the like) but that the specific form of capital in these fields is intellectual capital and the scientific and academic benefits that come with it. There is a struggle over the prestige and recognition within the scientific field and the wider society, of having discovered a truth, a discovery which then makes the discoverer an authority (in both senses of the word) in the field. The intellectual 'market' has its goods, intellectual products, and its consumers, other intellectuals. Thus an intellectual's or scientist's research is not based on their intellectual interest alone, but on their social interest, that is, the interest in accruing social and intellectual capital in

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27 Despite this similarity, Bourdieu does not analyse the reasons why this autonomy came about, nor its effects on contemporary society, to any comparable extent that Weber did. As I will argue in detail in a later chapter, this is a major limitation to Bourdieu's work, and has a profound effect on his reflexivity.

28 As a system of objective relations between positions already won (in previous struggles), the scientific field is the locus of a competitive struggle in which the specific issue at stake is the monopoly of scientific authority, defined separately as technical capacity and social power, or, to put it another way, the monopoly of scientific competence, in the sense of a particular agent's socially recognised capacity to speak and act legitimately (i.e., in an authorised and authoritative way) in scientific matters' (Bourdieu, 1981b, p. 257).
playing the game. An intellectual's areas of interest in research are shaped by their interest in the game and thus how they perceive the state of play in the game. Research topics are often chosen as a result of the scientist's perception as to what will bring the most economic capital (in the form of research grants) and the most intellectual capital (in the form of prestige and influence), or what Bourdieu terms 'symbolic profit'. In other words, the intellectual's strategies and moves are provided by their intellectual and scientific habitus, that internalised product of exposure to the workings and processes of the intellectual field, an exposure mediated through a position within that field (Bourdieu, 1992a, pp. 223-24). They are the product of their internalisation of history which constitutes what Bourdieu calls the 'cultural unconscious': 'the kind of problems and themes in terms of which [the intellectual] is obliged to think' (Bourdieu, 1971a, p. 183).

In many ways, the scientific field is similar to the field of art. Most notably, like that social field, symbolic capital within that field must be won off the agent's competitors - other agents in the field engaged in the same game. Scientific authority and intellectual capital are accumulated by the recognition of an agent's work by their peers, other intellectuals and scientists. The product of an intellectual, in the same way as the art of an artist, is given a particular value by their peers, based on its contribution and originality. As in the artistic field, an agent searching for merit outside the field, such as from the general public, will invoke discredit from those

29 Thus the researcher's tendency to concentrate on those problems regarded as the most important ones (e.g., because they have been constituted as such by producers endowed with a high degree of legitimacy) is explained by the fact that a contribution of discovery relating to those questions will tend to yield greater symbolic profit (Bourdieu, 1981b, p. 261). This is evident in Bourdieu's own career in relation to the symbolic capital he accumulated from a solution to the subjectivist/objectivist dualism, one of the major problems in social science.

30 This concept of a 'cultural unconscious' has many similarities with Weber's understanding of the presuppositions at the heart of worldviews, a point I shall return to in a later chapter.
within the game and lose intellectual capital. Like the artistic field, critics, journals, and authority figures, are part of the game and imbue prestige or ridicule on the product via the power of their position in the game. As such, the dominant in the field set the definition of what is at stake in the field. Thus struggle over the definition of scientific and intellectual work, as well as truth, is part of the struggle within the field. Yet there is also the common, doxic belief that what is at stake in the scientific field is valuable, a further example of 'consensus in dissensus'.  

One of the effects of the imposition of the dominant view is that cultural and intellectual products are placed in a hierarchy, and this links back to the field of cultural production and to the wider patterns of consumption outlined in 'Distinction'. This is tied to a firm distinction between 'learned' and lay culture.

The scientific field is unique in that it is historical, but it produces goods ('truth') which transcend history. The importance of universal truths through Reason can be attributed, according to Bourdieu, to the fact that those in the scientific field see truth as a value, and thus it becomes a form of capital (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 32). Thus they have an interest in the universal, the universal being the monopolisation of truth, and thus capital, in that field. In the social sciences this is particularly clear because the truth of the social world is bound to be a political truth. A sociology of science is difficult because very few intellectuals are prepared to examine their own position in

31 'Science never has any basis than the collective belief in its bases which is produced and presupposed by the very operation of the scientific field' (Bourdieu, 1981b, p. 275).

32 '... the power which is at stake in the field of the social sciences, i.e., the power to produce, impose and inculcate the legitimate representation of the social world, is one of the things at stake in the struggle between the classes in the political field... The idea of a neutral science is fiction' (Bourdieu, 1981b, p. 278, italics added). The best example of this is seen in intellectual uses of the term 'The People', a concept struggled over by intellectuals, who view it as 'vulgar', or as 'noble'. The nobility of 'The People' is espoused by those who idealise 'popular culture' as a refuge against their own intellectual failure (Bourdieu, 1990b, pp. 150-1). But it is in the political field that the use of the term 'The People' is most profitable (p. 152). This involves a break with the people at the very moment of claiming, and becoming, a representative of them.
the game, but are much keener to discredit the position of others (Bourdieu, 1981b, p. 283). What this overlooks, however, is that the freedom of the intellectual is not the freedom of a Cartesian cogito/individual, but the freedom of an intellectual space/field where discussion and intellectual conflict exists and is allowed to exist.33

**Homo Academicus**

Bourdieu's analysis of his own universe in 'Homo Academicus' was an attempt to analyse his own position in the intellectual field, to objectify the objectifiers in order to do what Durkheim and Levi-Strauss had failed to do - treat the domestic as the exotic. Bourdieu sees this as related to his other reflexive studies in Bearn and Algeria (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 67). The aim of these reflexive studies was to challenge the 'natural' relation of the observer to the object and to understand what is taken for granted in this relation (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 68). Bourdieu had scientific and personal, as well as political reasons for doing this.34

33 As such, Bourdieu (1989b) has argued we need a 'collective intellectual' which straddles the 'total intellectual' personified by Sartre and the 'specific intellectual' of Foucault. This collective intellectual would involve employing a 'Realpolitik of Reason' to further push for and guard, universals (Bourdieu, 1992b, p. 47): 'my dream would be to create an international of artists and scientists which would become an independent political - and moral - force capable of intervening, with authority and a competence founded on their autonomy, about problems of general interest ... They would not rule but, while remaining in their place, they would constitute a very serious control over rulers' (Bourdieu, 1993d, p. 38). I must say that given Bourdieu's writings on the nature of intellectual life, and the struggles and narcissism it involves, such a dream does seem rather utopian.

34 The scientific reasons were based on the fact that 'it is by turning to study the historical conditions of his own production, rather than by some form or other of transcendental reflection, that the scientific subject can gain a theoretical control over his own structures and inclinations as well as over the determinants whose products they are, and can thereby gain the concrete means of reinforcing his capacity for objectification' (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. xii). In terms of personal issues, 'Homo Academicus' was an attempt by Bourdieu to confront his own social and intellectual trajectory, a form of socio-analysis: 'And the special place held in my work by a somewhat singular sociology of the university institution is no doubt explained by the peculiar force with which I felt the need to gain rational control over the disappointment felt by an "oblate" faced with the annihilation of the truths and values to which he was destined and dedicated, rather than take refuge in feelings of self-destructive resentment' (p. xxvi).
Beginning the study in the mid 1960's, Bourdieu has stated (1992a, p. 67) that it had two principal aims: firstly, to understand the French University as an object - its power structure and species of capital, its trajectories and 'professorial vision' of the world; and secondly, to be a reflexive analysis of his own universe - objectifying a social institution built on the act of objectification. The events of May 1968 were to provide the backdrop for this study.

According to Bourdieu, the crisis in the French university system of 1968 was caused by the coming together of two separate crises: firstly, the crisis in the Faculties due to the swelling of academic ranks; and secondly, the crisis of the student body due to overcrowding and the devaluation of credentials.

Academics represent a dominated fraction of the dominant class in the social field, holding cultural capital, but lacking the economic capital of business managers and the capitalist elite. Within academia, there is a further division of dominant and dominated, the former being the Faculties of Law and Medicine, and the latter including the Arts and Science Faculties. The academics within these Faculties tend to reflect the wider social power relations: the professors of law and medicine are the sons of professionals, managers and executives (three quarters being of bourgeois

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35 Bourdieu has argued that 'Homo Academicus' should be seen as research that can be applied to any academic field, not just the French of the 1960's (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 75): 'my intention was to conduct a sort of sociological test about sociological practice itself' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 67). For an interesting use of Bourdieu's writings on the academic field applied to the Arabic academic field, see Sabour (1993).

36 Bourdieu has stated that he has probably never handled more data than that accumulated for 'Homo Academicus' (1992a, p. 64). Due to this fact and the controversial nature of the subject matter, Bourdieu feared how 'Homo Academicus' would be received and interpreted, and so for a number of years kept it under wraps (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 62): 'it is well known that no group loves an "informer", especially perhaps when the transgressor or traitor can claim to share in their own highest values. The same people who would not hesitate to acclaim the work of objectification as "courageous" or "lucid" if it is applied to alien, hostile groups will be likely to question the credentials of the special lucidity claimed by anyone who seeks to analyse his own group' (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 5).
origin).³⁷ Therefore, at one pole in the academic field are those Faculties which are scientifically and intellectually dominant, but socially dominated, and at the other pole, those Faculties temporally dominant but dominated in the intellectual game. The crisis in the Faculties has at its roots the tension between two forms of capital in the academic field. The main opposition in the intellectual field was between academic capital (based on power over the instruments of reproduction) and 'intellectual capital' (based on scientific success and renown):

Thus we discover that the university field is organised according to two antagonistic principles of hierarchization: the social hierarchy, corresponding to the capital inherited and the economic and political capital actually held, is in opposition to the specific, properly cultural hierarchy, corresponding to the capital of scientific authority or intellectual renown (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 48).

The dominant Faculties base their dominance on their relation to temporal powers giving them economic and political power, and thus the transmission of competence and technique without questioning or doubting. Meanwhile the Arts and Science Faculties attempt to maintain the autonomy of the intellectual field from the wider power relations of the social field by pursuing questions and rational grounds for knowledge which the dominant faculties assume (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 63).³⁸

By analysing the position of the Arts and Social Science Faculties, centrally positioned in the university field between that of Medicine and Law on the one hand, and Physical Science on the other, Bourdieu is able to trace the tensions involved in the claim to practice science and the struggle over academic and intellectual capital (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 128). This is because the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences

³⁷ Entrance to the medical faculty for example, is based on a large accumulation of social capital (social networks and family connections) as well as cultural capital and this inculcates a strong habitus based on a communis doctorum opinio (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 65).
³⁸ '.. on the one hand we have knowledge in the service of order and power, aiming at the rationalisation, in both senses, of the given order; on the other hand we have knowledge confronting order and power, aiming not at putting public affairs in order but at analysing them as they are' (Bourdieu, 1988a, pp. 68-69).
are evenly divided within themselves between those devoted to the intellectual field and those engaged in the reproduction of the temporal order (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 74). The dominant professors base their power on control of mechanisms in the institution, such as academic boards, examination committees, and the like. This is the basis of academic capital. Like all other fields, capital breeds capital in academic life. In a system reminiscent of the Roman cursus honorum and based on a patron-client relationship, senior academics annoint and appoint successors most disposed to reproduce the system as they understand it (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 89). The habitus of the academic game enables aspirants, both consciously and unconsciously, to understand that those with academic power and the reputation of academic power, are the patrons that they must seek out and gain the support of to further their own careers. What Bourdieu finds is that the client-patron relationship in the academic world is not based on intellectual affinity, but primarily on affinity of social origin (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 93).

The accumulation of academic capital takes time (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 95). In many ways, academic capital is a 'poor man's consolation prize' for academics that fail to make an impression in the intellectual field or economic and political fields. As such, trained by the university and loyal to the university, their habitus guides them in its reproduction.\textsuperscript{39}

At the other pole are the academics who accumulate intellectual capital based on the prestige and 'truth' of their research. These are usually to be found in newer disciplines (such as linguistics and ethnology). These academics have pupils or

\textsuperscript{39} The "oblates" are always most inclined to think that without the church there is no salvation - especially when they become the high priests of an institution of cultural reproduction which, in consecrating them, consecrates their active and above all passive ignorance of any other cultural world. Victims of their elite status, these deserving, but miraculously lucky "survivors", present a curious mixture of arrogance and inadequacy (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 100).
disciples, rather than clients, and often gain intellectual renown through the popular press (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 106).

Though these poles oppose each other as orthodoxy and heterodoxy, like all fields, their relation is also based on complicity - complicity in the doxic understanding of the autonomy of the field. Bourdieu traces the debate within the discipline of literary criticism between Raymond Picard and Roland Barthes to personify this complimentary opposition (Bourdieu, 1988a, pp. 115-18). The deposition of philology by linguistics is for Bourdieu, a prime example of how the academically dominant can be overthrown by the force of intellectual renown.

Bourdieu observed that the events of May '68 were greeted with hostility or support by different academics depending on their various positions in the university field and their relation to the institution under threat (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 126).

The increase in the number of students, due to post-war birth rates and educational enrolment, and the resultant increase in the number of lecturers and accelerated careers, had major affects on the power relations within the university field. This rise in the 'new academics' within new disciplines threatened and undermined the traditional balance of power within the university system where those holding academic capital reproduced the system according to their conscious and unconscious imperatives (as defined by their habitus), imperatives based on their position within the field. In other words, new positions in the field threatened to bring about a crisis in the finely balanced reproductive mechanisms of the field (Bourdieu, 1988a, pp. 143-44). In effect, the habitus failed to operate as a self-regulating principle, as expectations of the new entrants in the game were incongruent with what was achievable. The lack of manpower had forced the academic system to recruit new members, but these new
members were not inculcated in the habitus of the academic field. In a sense, they had failed, by not being brought up within the game, to internalise its internal laws. They soon realised their careers were the result of false promotion and unsustainable expansion. As a result, the clash between expectations and academic reality brought about a sense of crisis and produced a number of academics willing to challenge the system which they viewed as denying them their rightful place. Added to this situation were the academics outraged that their years of training and painful advancement up the *cursus honorum* were worth nothing when compared to those upstarts who had, so to speak, slipped in through the backdoor.

The result was a massive increase in the stakes of the game: traditional professors maintained their dominant position in the field through monopolisation of academic capital, not collectively, but nevertheless orchestrated, though their common habitus and position in the game (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 150). Like all crises, this crisis effected, and was effected by, the questioning of the doxic understanding of the field. As such, it became a crisis of belief. The self-evidence of work and promotion and the natural order of things in the university field were broken.

At the same time, the massive increase in numbers of students entering the university meant a devaluing of qualifications, and this was accutely felt by those students originating from the dominant class. They experienced the inability of the system to reconvert their cultural capital into economic capital and began to question the legitimacy of the university as a result (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 163). Once again, the faith in the system was undermined by structural changes to the field (1988a, p. 193). It was the new disciplines, sociology and psychology, which attracted these students as their futures were indeterminate. These disciplines also attracted the students from
middle class backgrounds who were academically adept, but limited in their entrance into the higher faculties by their lack of social capital. These groups of students, combined with the younger and new academics who had been hastily appointed without internalising the conventions of the university, made the arts and social science Faculties the hotbeds of unrest and resentment. There thus developed what Bourdieu calls a 'structural affinity' between the junior academics and students, as opposed to the position of the senior academics and professors.

The result was the crisis of the system. Doxa was undermined and replaced by orthodoxy and heterodoxy. In such conditions, tacitness is replaced by proclamations and there is a general 'radical questioning' of the game and its rules (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 181):

> It is the critical moment when, breaking with the ordinary experience of time as simple re-enactment of a past or future inscribed in the past, all things become possible (at least apparently), when future prospects appear really contingent, future events really indeterminate, the moment truly instantaneous, suspended, its consequences unpredicted and unpredictable (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 182).

Bourdieu's analysis in 'Homo Academicus' also examines how the intellectual posture, based on withdrawing from the game to conceptualise it, is based on social institutions which make it a social, as well as a scientific, break.40

Again taking both objectivist and subjectivist epistemologies, Bourdieu analyses how the process of classification works, being based on a certain position within the social world. Making the practice of classifying the object of analysis, not the classifications themselves, Bourdieu analyses the 'Professorial Judgement', that is,

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40 If socially accredited scientifficity is such an important objective, it is because, although truth has no intrinsic force, there is an intrinsic force of belief in truth, of belief which produces the appearance of truth. In the struggle between different representations, the representation socially recognised as scientific, that is to say as true, contains its own social force, and, in the case of the social world, science gives those who hold it, or who appear to hold it, a monopoly of the legitimate viewpoint, of self-fulfilling prophecy (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 28). This view of science, and Bourdieu's valuing of science, creates particular tensions in his work which I shall examine in detail in a further chapter.
the categories employed by senior academics in judging students and colleagues. His findings showed that the posture taken by the professors, based on their position as dominant in the university field, and also as reproducers of the cultural order through the maintainence of educational standards, reflected their social origins. Bodily hexis and use of language were two important categories according to which professors unconsciously categorised their students. These academic taxonomies and classifications are the product of the internalisation of the position of the professor within both the university and other social fields, and in effect act to reproduce these positions and relations. In this way, the 'Professorial Judgement' is not neutral or natural, but in fact the product of a dominant position in a social field. It contributes to the reproduction of this field precisely by seeming neutral and natural (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 204).

The Field of Power: The Grandes Ecoles and the State

Recently, Bourdieu has begun to investigate the role of the 'meta-field' of power and its relations with other social fields. Specifically, the role of the State and the grandes ecoles have been the focus of his attention. Bourdieu has adopted the term 'field of power' to replace that of 'ruling class' in order to stress the importance of the positions and relations of those agents in dominant positions in social space, thus adopting a more relationalist, rather than essentialist, approach (Bourdieu, 1993d, p. 21). This field of power is made up of two poles: on the one hand, there are those rich in economic capital, such as industrialists and senior managers, whose influence is

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41 As at the writing of this text, Bourdieu's main work on the field of power, 'Noblesse d'etat' has not been completely translated. As such, the comments here on Bourdieu's work on the state and the field of power will be brief and cursory, utilising only Bourdieu (1994), Bourdieu (1993d), and Wacquant (1993a).
based on 'temporal power'; and on the other, there are those rich in cultural capital, such as intellectuals and artists, whose influence is based on 'spiritual power'. Between the two are those agents possessing a reasonable amount of both forms of capital, mostly professionals and senior bureaucrats. These positions are constantly struggling to maximise the value of the capital they possess and thus improve their influence in the field (Bourdieu, 1993d, p. 24). Like any game, however, there is 'consensus in dissensus' within the field of power, and in the case of France, this is mediated through the elite schools, the *grandes écoles*.

These elite schools manage the internal tensions of the dominant class. One set of these schools (including, for example, the *Ecole normale supérieure* which Bourdieu himself attended) directs their students to an intellectual career, while another set, such as the *Ecole des hautes études commerciales*, lead to the business world. Still another group, including the *Ecole nationale d'administration*, leads to the state bureaucracies. In this way, the *grandes écoles* inculcate within their students both the ability, through mental and corporeal schemata, and the desire, to 'inherit their class inheritance' (Bourdieu, 1993d, p. 35). These elite schools therefore play a seminal role in reproducing the 'nobility of the school' which replaces the medieval 'nobility of blood', both of which are, as Bourdieu's analysis reveals, nobilities of birth (Bourdieu, 1993d, p. 28). Once again, the elite are consecrated by an institution which gives them the sociodicy they seek: the belief that their superiority is based on their 'natural' and 'inner' talents.43

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42 'the structure of the field of power depends at every moment on the forms of capital engaged in struggles over their respective weight within the structure' (Bourdieu, 1993d, p. 24).
43 This is not to say that all individuals going to these schools will automatically enter the elite: some will fall in social space, but not fall very far (see Bourdieu, 1993d, p. 29).
Another institution which is crucial in the field of power is the state. For Bourdieu, the term 'state' is only a convenient label for all the positions of power and alliances within a society attempting to rule through administrative and legislative means (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 111). In this way, the state is the central arena for struggle over the monopoly of what Bourdieu calls 'statist capital', which is a 'meta-capital' allowing those wielding it to rule over other forms of power:

The state is the culmination of a process of concentration of different species of capital: capital of physical force or instruments of coercion (army, police), economic capital, cultural or (better) informational capital, and symbolic capital. It is this concentration as such which constitutes the state as the holder of a sort of meta-capital granting power over other species of capital and their holders (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 4).

The concentration of physical capital refers to the monopolisation of the means of physical violence, which is achieved through concentrating an army into the hands of a ruler or government to fight external wars and bring about internal pacification of a territory.

The concentration of economic capital comes about through the establishment of an efficient fiscal regime which can take advantage of the existence of a national market. This is primarily achieved through the monopolisation of taxation which is usually achieved through the need for war expenses.

The concentration of informational or cultural capital refers to the process of monopolising the totalised knowledge in a territory. Through codification and totalisation, the state is able to gain a synoptic view of the workings of the administered territory. This is reinforced by the creation and enforcement of a unified language and judicial system (Bourdieu, 1991a, p. 45). In this way, the state is able to control and regulate the symbolic order in a society by shaping and determining the
modes of perception and categories of appreciation of the populace (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 7).

In other words, one of the fundamental bases of the power of the state lies in its monopolisation of symbolic capital and thus symbolic violence. Through this monopoly, the state is able to develop and enforce norms which are applied universally within a given nation, not just through monopolising physical violence, as Weber argues, but also through monopolising symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 137). The state, usually through the education system, is able to impose categories of thought and perception about the social world and about itself.44

This comes about as the symbolic capital of the sovereign, that is the subjectified form of symbolic capital, is replaced by an objectified form of symbolic capital based in an administrative apparatus, that is, a bureaucracy. This administrative power gives the state the ability to define, identify, and classify agents and groups of agents (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 13). In this way, the state is crucial in the implementation and reproduction of doxa in modern societies. By imposing certain categories of perception as ‘normal’ and ‘real’, it partakes in struggles within the symbolic order, and more often than not, ensures that perception remains at the doxic level (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 15).

**Conclusion: The Practice of Revealing Practical Logic**

Bourdieu has investigated a number of other fields of social life, not explored here, including the field of sport (see Bourdieu, 1990b and 1993b),45 the judicial field (see

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44 In this sense, Bourdieu warns that social science is intimately tied up in this symbolic violence as it often unquestioningly takes as granted the problems and perceptions imposed by the state, as well as relying on it for economic capital, in the form of research grants (see Bourdieu, 1994, p. 3).

45 Wacquant has pointed out that, besides Elias, Bourdieu is probably the only major sociologist to have investigated sport in some detail. He suggests that this may be due to the central importance of
Bourdieu, 1987c), and the field of philosophy (see Bourdieu, 1991b). These studies lie outside the scope of this thesis.

In his investigation of each field of social life, Bourdieu attempts to reveal the operation of symbolic violence, the operation of practical knowledge, and the relation between the two. His work on education, the State, culture, and so on, all reveal, through his employment of the concepts of field, habitus, and capital, how domination in contemporary societies is often unconsciously enforced and submitted to (that is, misrecognised) through the practical knowledge gained within a particular position in social space and within particular social fields. Whether the practice of the student or university professor, of the artist or industrialist, of Heidegger or Flaubert, of the dominant or dominated, Bourdieu illustrates the ways in which each employs classification schemes to divide up and understand the social world in order to act within it. These are simply a part of their practical knowledge and therefore a part of their habitus. These practices and classificatory schemes are not the product of free-floating subjects, but of historically and socially located agents. They are the product of agents’ perceptions of, and struggles within, the objective relations which exist between them, relations which are based on the possession of various species of capital. In this sense, Bourdieu’s ‘fieldwork’ is very much a part of his sociology of knowledge which is, at the same time, a sociology of power. It is a sociology which shows how symbolic domination operates through seemingly harmless and ‘natural’ practices.
Another part of Bourdieu's reflexive sociology (as most clearly shown in 'Homo Academicus') is his attempt to raise the practical knowledge of the sociological habitus, and the classificatory schemes it employs, to the level of consciousness. For the benefit of science, he attempts to make sociological researchers aware of their presuppositions in order to make them a part of their methodology (Bourdieu, 1993c, p. 271). Only then, he believes, can a reflexive sociology be developed. I have detailed Bourdieu's science of practices within the last two chapters in order to show how he believes he develops just such a reflexive sociology through a sophisticated epistemological reflexivity. I have shown the ways in which this science attempts to understand the logics of practice by applying its various concepts to different fields in social space. It is one such field, the religious field, which offers perhaps the clearest example of the strengths and limitations of analysing social life with Bourdieu's science of practice, as well as the similarities between his work and that of Max Weber. It is to this field that I now turn.
The Religious Field and Weber

Introduction

Many commentators have pointed to the similarities and differences between the work of Weber and that of Bourdieu, as well as to the debt Bourdieu owes to Weber’s work. Bourdieu himself recognises this:

I must say that... my reading of Max Weber - who, far from opposing Marx, as is generally thought, with a spiritualist theory of history, in fact carries the materialist mode of thought into areas which Marxist materialism effectively abandons to spiritualism - helped me greatly in arriving at this kind of generalised materialism; this will be a paradox only to those who have an over-simple view of Weber’s thought, owing to the combined effect of the rarity of the translations, the one-sidedness of the early French and American interpretations, and the perfunctory anathemas pronounced by “Marxist” orthodoxy (1990a, p. 17).

Bourdieu credits Weber with a number of achievements which influenced his own work. He argues that Weber was able to develop a ‘political economy’ of religion, a form of materialist analysis which did not destroy the symbolic content of religion (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 36). Bourdieu also credits Weber with the introduction of economics into sociology (1990b, p. 46). Finally, it was partly Weber’s work which convinced Bourdieu that rules cannot be seen as the basis of practice. 2

Despite these affinities, Bourdieu is not a Weberian and there are major

2 By pointing out that rational action, “judiciously” oriented according to what is “objectively valid” (1922), is “what would happen if the actors had had knowledge of all the circumstances and all the participants’ intentions (1968:6), that is, of what is “valid in the eyes of the scientist”, who alone is able to calculate the system of objective chances to which perfectly informed action would have to be adjusted, Weber clearly shows that the pure model of rational action cannot be regarded as an anthropological description of practice’ (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 63).
Bourdieu himself critiques Weber's work as
ist, a critique most forcefully presented in Bourdieu's analysis of Weber's
religion. Bourdieu was heavily influenced by Weber's sociology of religion
ey 1970's, and this influence was instrumental in Bourdieu's development of
t of 'field'. In two articles, 'Une interpretation de la theorie de la religion
x Weber' and 'Genese et structure du champ religieux', Bourdieu
and critiqued Weber's sociology of religion, proposing that it be purged of
ivist presuppositions and reworked into a more 'objectivist' framework. In
eter I outline this critique in order to show how Bourdieu attempts to
ate his work from that of Weber.

**tivism and Charisma**

Bourdieu's examination of Weber's sociology of religion was substantially
Chapters VI and XV of 'Economy and Society'. In these chapters, Bourdieu
Weber placed too much emphasis on 'charisma' in order to illustrate the
ce of religion as against the economic determinism of vulgar Marxism
, 1987a, p. 119). Bourdieu sees this emphasis on charisma operating in
work in essentially the same way as he saw it operating in the educational and

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reffects labels such as 'Weberian' or 'Marxist' since 'the logic of the classificatory label is
that of racism, which stigmatises its victims by imprisoning them in a negative essence'
1990b, p. 28). In fact, as Brubaker has stated (1985, pp. 747-49), Bourdieu owes much to
the 'holy trinity' of the sociological scriptures: 'at the risk of crude oversimplification, it
sisted in summary that Bourdieu attempts to systematise Weber's thought in a qua-
de and to "subjectivize" Marxian thought by incorporating the Durkheimian concern with
ms and the Weberian concern with symbolic power and symbolic goods in a systematic
social world as a structure of class-based power and privilege' (p. 749).
ted the notion of field both against and with Weber, by thinking about the analysis he
' the relations between priest, prophet and sorcerer' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 49).
ily re-written and translated as Bourdieu (1987) 'Legitimation and Structured Interests in
iology of Religion' in Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity, edited by Scott Lash and
eter. It is this version I shall concentrate on in this chapter.
1 as Bourdieu (1991) 'Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field' in Comparative Social
ol. 13, pp. 1-44.
cultural fields and in Sartre's subjectivist epistemology - as an ideology which masks the objective nature of social interaction.

According to Bourdieu, Weber's sociology of religion in 'Economy and Society' should be seen as a symbolic interactionist analysis of the relations between religious agents - prophets, priests, and laity (1987a, p. 121). For Bourdieu, the problem with this 'interactionist' view is that it explains social relations by reducing them to interpersonal and intersubjective relations between agents, that is, it concentrates on how agents perceive themselves and others, and explains practice by the logic of these perspectives. It therefore 'suffers enormously in explanatory power' (1987a, p. 121). Bourdieu rejects this interactionist view in favour of analysing the conditions that shape the interaction, that is, the material conditions of life that are at the basis of the religious field:

Any analysis of the logic of the interactions that may develop between agents in direct confrontation with one another must be subordinated to the construction of the structure of the objective relations between the positions these agents occupy in the religious field, a structure that determines both the form their interactions may assume and the representation they may have of these interactions (Bourdieu, 1987a, p. 121).

For Bourdieu, Weber is trapped within the limits of subjectivism by seeing the agent's primary experience as the most valid one, and therefore, as the object of analysis. He argues that Weber's work on religion obscures or ignores the existence of the objective relations between the positions in the religious field occupied by agents. For Bourdieu, it is necessary to establish these objective relations first in order to adequately explain the experiences that Weber traces:

It is only by constructing the religious field as the set of all the objective relations between positions that we can arrive at the principle which explains the direct interaction between social agents and the strategies they may employ against each other (Bourdieu, 1987a, p. 121).
According to Bourdieu, the subjectivist symbolic interactionism in Weber's work stems from Weber seeing the most important factor in the division of labour in the religious field as that between the producers of the religious view of the world (the prophets, or as Bourdieu often calls them, the *auctores*) and the agents of its reproduction (the priests, or *lectores*). The power and position of priests is based on their membership of churches, institutions which legitimate the religious worldview through their rationalised routines which bureaucratise religious administration. As part of this bureaucratisation, the Church claims a monopoly over the means to salvation, and is thus an institution hostile to the alternative means proposed by the prophet.

For Weber, Bourdieu argues, the power of the prophet, an agent of disruption whose very existence brings about the challenging and breaking of routine, rests on his charisma.\(^7\) According to Bourdieu, Weber sees this charisma of the prophet in 'psycho-sociological' terms, that is, as based in the recognition by the followers of the extra-ordinariness of the charismatic agent. The prophet is a charismatic individual who, through symbolic power, embodies in his person or words, the feelings and aspirations of the lay people of certain social positions.

Bourdieu rejects this Weberian analysis as subjectivism, instead arguing that the:

> Competition for religious power owes its specificity ... to the fact that what is at stake is the *monopoly of the legitimate exercise of power to modify, in a deep and lasting fashion, the practice and world-view of lay people*, by imposing on and inculcating in them a particular religious habitus (Bourdieu, 1987a, p. 126).

In other words, the interactions in the religious field are shaped by the struggle of religious specialists over the specific interest in that field - religious interest or capital.

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\(^7\) Within both Bourdieu's and Weber's works, prophets are referred to as males and thus I think it appropriate to follow this despite the possibility that prophets could be female throughout history.
This interest is the pursuit of the power and influence that comes from lay people allowing religious specialists to satisfy their religious needs:

The exchange relations established between specialists and laypersons on the basis of different interests, and the relations of competition, which oppose various specialists to each other inside the religious field, constitute the principle of the dynamic of the religious field and therefore of the transformations of religious ideology (Bourdieu, 1991h, p. 17).

Bourdieu sees such religious capital as emerging when a systematic message which gives a unitary meaning to life, is developed by religious specialists to meet the demands of the laity. Such a message gives a coherent vision of the world and a meaning to human life, and therefore allows the systematic regulation of everyday activity. In this way, religion has a social function - it justifies the existence of agents and can offer them comfort from the existential woes of their life. Concomitantly, it acts as a justification of their social position and the existing status quo (Bourdieu, 1987a, pp. 123-4).

For Bourdieu, Weber begins to show how this operates when he indicates how religion acts as a 'sociodicy', that is, how it fulfills the dominant classes' need for 'perfection' and 'natural' superiority. For the 'dominated' groups, the religious need is for some form of salvation from this world, usually seen in the form of compensation of an 'otherworldly' nature. Bourdieu believes that Weber adheres to the Nietzschean argument that even the lower positions in society gain a feeling of legitimacy from religion because it 'turns the world on its head' - it makes those who suffer worthwhile and thus values their position. The problem with this for Bourdieu is that Weber sees this in subjectivist terms, not as the product of objective social relations and different material conditions of life. As he states:

to the extent that religious interests have as their central principle the need for justification of a person's or group's existence in a determinate social position, they are directly determined by the social situation (Bourdieu, 1987a, p. 124).
In this way, according to Bourdieu, we need to reconceptualise the role and nature of the prophet. To him, the prophet gives explicit expression to what was only implicitly felt before his arrival. In this way, he becomes the heterodoxy which breaks the doxic view of the world. As we have seen, with any breakdown in doxa, there must be some sort of crisis to undermine the routine and taken-for-grantedness of this view of the world. In the case of the prophet, he successfully disseminates his message and gains adherents in periods of decline or obsolescence of a traditional worldview. Thus Bourdieu agrees with Marcel Mauss that prophecies arise in periods of wars and famines, and merely put words to what everyone is thinking (1987a, p. 130).

According to Bourdieu then, charisma is not a 'natural' talent of the individual but depends on the socio-historical circumstances in which it arises and which allow it to be heard in the first place. The prophet’s message seems charismatic because it explains socio-economic changes which the priesthood’s traditional message cannot. The charisma is not within the individual prophet, but is an expression of the objective relation between prophet, priesthood, and laity, in conditions of socio-economic crisis. This raises the question of how an individual prophet is able to socially express what the laity are feeling if not by their ‘inner’ charisma.

The answer for Bourdieu is the habitus. The habitus that produces the prophet’s message is also that which allows the followers to understand and relate to that message. Internalising similar conditions of existence to his followers, the prophet generates a message and religious system 'attuned' to the habitus of his addressees (Bourdieu, 1987a, p. 131). Just like the message in a piece of art, the message of the

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8 ‘Let us then dispose once and for all of the notion of charisma as a property attaching to the nature of a single individual, and examine instead, in each particular case, sociologically pertinent characteristics of an individual biography’ (Bourdieu, 1987a, p. 131).
prophet must be developed in relation to, and interpreted through, the lay followers' habitus, itself a product of social position.  

For Bourdieu, it is therefore only possible to fully understand the prophet, not in terms of subjectivist ideas of 'charisma', but in relation to the laity to which he becomes a source of inspiration and religious mobilisation. It is this relationship which brings about the initial accumulation of symbolic power for the prophet and gives him such influence in the religious field.

The Church and priesthood, on the other hand, hold power through a monopolisation of transactions with the laity (Bourdieu, 1987a, p. 133). Thus priests are increasingly required to become 'magicians' to meet the needs of varied social positions. As they spread their influence out across the religious field, the more diverse and often contradictory become the messages they have to deliver to meet the diverse religious interests of different strata. In other words, the priests 'adapt' the original message/story to gain as many followers as possible. The priests are the professional interpreters of symbolic goods who keep this process of adaptation developing.

In Bourdieu's terms then, the 'game' within the religious 'field' is a struggle to accumulate religious capital through controlling the set of dispositions that make up a 'religious habitus' via control of a society's worldview. The power that an agent (individual or institution) is able to bring to the struggle in the religious field depends

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9 'The religious message that will be most capable of satisfying a group's religious demand, and therefore of exercising its properly symbolic function of mobilisation upon that group, will be the one that provides it with a quasi-systematic set of justifications for its existence as the occupant of a determinate social location. The quasi-miraculous harmony between the content of the religious message that ultimately wins out and the most strictly temporal interests of its privileged addressees - namely, their political interests - constitutes an essential condition of its success' (Bourdieu, 1987a, p. 124).
on their position in the religious field, as well as on their previous success in that struggle:

On the one hand, religious capital depends, at a given moment in time, on the state of the structure of the objective relations between religious demand (i.e., the religious interests of various groups or classes of laity) and religious supply (i.e., religious services, whether orthodox or heretical) that the various claimants are brought to produce and to offer by virtue of their position in the structure of relations of religious power, that is, a function of their religious capital (Bourdieu, 1991h, p. 22).

The prophet has to continually win and re-win his position, while the priest has legitimacy based on his position and office.

For Bourdieu, therefore, the dominance of what we might term the 'market of the soul' is only possible when the message of the religiously dominant meets the needs of the religiously dominated (1987a, p. 129). The dominant hold symbolic power in the sense that they give symbolic expression to the religious interests of lay people. Religious legitimacy is thus the state of play of existing power relations within the religious field at any one moment. It is the result of past struggles over symbolic monopoly, and therefore the result of history (Bourdieu, 1987a, pp. 127-8).

**Conclusion**

In summary, Bourdieu's analysis of Weber's sociology of religion develops a number of criticisms. Firstly, charisma is not a 'natural' talent of the individual, but is the subjectivist interpretation of the correspondence between a prophet's habitus and those of his adherents. As such, charismatic prophecy is only one strategy aimed at maximising religious capital and thus improving the agent's position in the religious field. Secondly, the religious work of specialised agents corresponds to the religious needs of other social groups, religious needs shaped by the material conditions of
existence experienced from a particular social position. Thirdly, there is a constant tension between the producers of worldviews (prophets), and the sustainers of other worldviews (priests). Finally, Bourdieu argues that the prophet could only achieve a successful dissemination of his message if it found an audience with those agents occupying a similar field position, that is, that it corresponded to a particular habitus.

There are, however, serious problems with these criticisms of Weber's sociology of religion. In the next part of the thesis, I argue that Bourdieu's analysis of Weber's writings on religion is not only reductionist, but that Weber's study of the world's religions has many similarities and affinities with Bourdieu's own empirical works.
Part II

Max Weber and Religious Rationalisation

In this, Part II of the thesis, I outline Max Weber's main writings on the sociology of religion. I do this for two reasons. Firstly, as commentators such as Tenbruck (1980) and Molloy (1980) have noted, these writings contain many of Weber's central concerns. Secondly, Weber's work on religion is, as we have just seen, the main target in Bourdieu's critique of Weber's work as subjectivist and idealist.

In light of these two points, I hope to achieve three things by outlining Weber's work on religion. Firstly, in a bid to refute Bourdieu's aforementioned criticisms, I will show the complexity of Weber's understanding of religion by indicating how it focuses on the interaction of objective, subjective, and contingent elements in religious/cultural history. Secondly, I show the concrete and historically grounded understanding of the interaction of agency and structure which operates within this work. Finally, I will emphasise the paradoxes of rationalisation which Weber identifies in this empirical work, paradoxes which help explain the tension between moral and epistemological reflexivity which has arisen in the modern intellectual sphere, and which profoundly affects Bourdieu's science of practices.

To achieve these three aims, Part II firstly examines the concepts employed in Weber's work on religion, then examines how Western religious development proceeded. This is followed by an examination of the unique processes of religious rationalisation that occurred in China and India.
Religious Rationalisation and Life-Conduct

Introduction

Max Weber's writings on religion occupy a central place in his oeuvre. Starting with the publication of 'Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus' in 1904, through to the 'Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie' ('Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion') of 1920/1921, these writings in many ways encapsulate the most important themes and concepts of his sociological analysis.²

¹ Translated as 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' by Talcott Parsons, 1930.
² Most of Weber's detailed writings on the world religions were first published in a journal of which Weber was an editor, the Archiv fur Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik, in a series titled 'Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen' ('The Economic Ethic of the World Religions'). An introductory article, 'Einleitung', was written in 1913 and published in the Archiv in 1915. This was followed by 'Konfuzianismus und Taoismus', written in 1913 and published in 1915. At this point, Weber undertook an article entitled 'Zwischenbetrachtung', involving some 'intermediate reflections' on his work on religion thus far. In 1916, he published 'Hinduismus und Buddhismus', and from 1917-1919, 'Das antike Judentum'.

Shortly before his death, Weber began to revise and amalgamate these writings and other writings into one complete work, the Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie. This process was completed by Weber's wife Marianne after his death and published in three volumes over the course of 1920 and 1921. Volume I contains a 'Prefatory Note' entitled Vorbemerkung (translated by Talcott Parsons as 'Author's Introduction', in 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism', 1930). Benjamin Nelson (1974) has pointed out the seminal importance of this essay in understanding the wider context and concerns of Weber's analysis of religion. He has also pointed out that it may have been the last essay written by Weber and therefore may be the most definitive statement of Weber's project. I shall be referring to it extensively in this chapter. Volume I also contains revised versions of the articles 'Einleitung' (translated as 'Social Psychology of the World Religions' by H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, 1946) and 'Zwischenbetrachtung' (translated as 'Religious Rejections of the World and Their Direction' by H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, 1946). Both translations have received criticism for their accuracy (see Molloy, 1980). Volume I contains Weber's writings on ascetic Protestantism, 'Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist der Kapitalismus', 'Die protestantischen Sektion und der Geist des Kapitalismus' (translated as 'The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism' by H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, 1946), and an enlarged revision of 'Konfuzianismus und Taoismus' (translated as 'Religion of China' by H.H. Gerth, 1951). Volume II contains a slightly revised version of 'Hinduismus und Buddhismus' (translated as 'Religion of India' by H.H. Gerth and D. Martindale, 1958) and Volume III contains a revised version of 'Das antike Judentum' and supplementary essays on 'The Pharisees' and the influence of Judaism on Early Christianity (translated as 'Ancient Judaism' by H.H. Gerth and D. Martindale, 1952). Weber never lived
As with my coverage of Bourdieu’s work, I will firstly outline the concepts and epistemological framework with which Weber investigated the ‘world religions’ in the Gesammelte, before going on to examine how these concepts were employed by him in his empirical research. Drawing primarily on his 'Author's Introduction' and 'Social Psychology of the World Religions', I want to clarify in this chapter the main concepts, including 'rationalism', 'economic ethics', 'life-conduct', and 'religious virtuosi', which Weber employed in the Gesammelte. This will provide a theoretical grounding for Weber's examination of the ontological presuppositions of the various world religions, which, as I show in following chapters, was far more complex than Bourdieu's criticisms would suggest. Before examining such concepts, however, it is perhaps timely to first undertake an analysis of Weber's own ontology and presuppositions about reality.

Chaotic Reality, 'Historical Individuals', and Ideal Types

Human-Created Reality and the Reality of Human Interests

Weber saw socio-cultural reality as an infinitely complex chaos which was beyond total human understanding (1949, p. 78). The attempt to understand this reality, however, was for Weber, one of the main components of being human.

Weber believed that human beings were meaning-generating beings (Kulturmenschen) who related to the infinite chaos of reality through their attempt to gain

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1 By ‘world religions’, Weber meant those religions which had ‘gathered multitudes of confessors around them’ (1991, p. 267). Thus Weber's examinations concentrated on Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Judaism, while having a smaller number of followers, was included by Weber because 'it contains historical preconditions decisive for understanding Christianity and Islamism, and because of its historic and autonomous significance for the development of the modern economic ethic of the Occident' (Weber, 1991, p. 267). Weber also examines the contents of a number of more ‘minor’ heterodox religions, such as Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and Jainism.
its meaning and to give their own existence meaning. In this way, they imbue segments of reality with significance. This, for Weber, was the key presupposition from which the human or 'cultural sciences' (Kulturwissenschaften) should begin (Weber, 1949, p. 81).

Through this valuing of certain parts of concrete reality due to the meaning it has to them, human beings establish both a sense of order and an ordering of that reality (Weber, 1949, p. 78). This ordering and valuing creates 'culture'. As Weber defines it, "culture" is a finite segment of the meaningless infinity of the world process, a segment on which human beings confer meaning and significance' (1949, p. 81).

As well as being Kulturmenschen, Weber saw humans as beings with particular 'interests' that needed to be met or satisfied. These interests were: 'material interests', needs which were directed at material goods and the material well-being of agents (such as food, shelter, wealth, biological health); and 'ideal interests', needs stemming from the 'inner life' of human beings (such as a meaning to life, salvation, a sense of worthwhileness).\(^4\) Weber believed that it was the drive to satisfy these interests which was one of the main determinants of social action in human life.

Science and Perspectivism

Weber's epistemology seems to have been drawn in many ways from Heinrich Rickert's Neo-Kantianism.\(^5\) For Weber, both natural and social scientists, as meaning-generating

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\(^4\) For a discussion of these two types of interest see Habermas (1984, pp. 187-88) who examines their roots in Neo-Kantianism. For detailed analyses of the exact meaning of the obscure term 'ideal interests', see McIntosh (1977), and Kalberg (1985).

\(^5\) For analysis of the connections between Rickert's and other Neo-Kantians' works, and those of Weber, see Burger (1976) and Goddard (1973). For a contrasting view, which argues that Weber's epistemology came almost directly from Kant, see Brand (1979). Barker (1980) has argued a contrasting view, pointing out the differences between the work of Weber and Kant.
beings in pursuit of interests, also create culture by imbuing some segments of cultural reality as meaningful and significant through their scientific investigations. Such segments of reality which are given significance and therefore investigated by scientists, Weber calls 'historical individuals' (Weber, 1949, p. 84). These are historical and cultural phenomena, such as, for example, modern rational capitalism, which are formed, not by historical 'laws', but by unique constellations of events from infinite reality (Weber, 1949, p. 79). These historical individuals and the constellations which produce them can never be known by humans in their entirety. They are only perceived due to their valuing by scientists attempting to understand them over other aspects of concrete reality.

Weber believed that the aim of science is to understand these 'historical individuals' by understanding their cultural significance:

the type of social science in which we are interested is an empirical science of concrete reality (Wirklichkeitswissenschaft). Our aim is the understanding of the characteristic uniqueness of the reality in which we move. We wish to understand, on the one hand, the relationships and cultural significance of individual events in their contemporary manifestations, and on the other, the causes of their being so and not otherwise (Weber, 1949, p. 72).

In other words, the cultural sciences should attempt, as Lwirth puts it, to 'render comprehensible how we are today as we have become' (1982, p. 29). In this way empirical science can provide a partial illumination of contemporary cultural phenomena and how they have been affected by events in the past.

This illumination can only ever be partial, however, never total, since the values humans hold affect what they draw out of complex reality. In this way, the relation of an agent to reality, including a scientific agent, is always a relation from a particular point of view. This includes the relation to 'historical individuals'. For this reason, only those
aspects of the 'historical individual' which are seen to be significant and therefore of interest to the scientist, will be investigated. Thus,

all the analysis of infinite reality which the finite human mind can conduct rests on the tacit assumption that only a finite portion of this reality constitutes the object of scientific investigation, and that only it is "important" in the sense of being "worthy of being known" (Weber, 1949, p. 72).

Causality and Ideal Types

In addition to this 'perspectivism' affecting what constitutes a 'historical individual', according to Weber, the attempt by an empirical science to find the uniqueness and causes of 'historical individuals' is also complicated by problems in attributing causality:

how is the causal explanation of an individual fact possible - since a description of even the smallest slice of reality can never be exhaustive? The number and types of causes which have influenced any given event are always infinite, and there is nothing in the things [causes] themselves to set some of them apart as alone meriting attention (Weber, 1949, p. 78).

For Weber, this 'infinite causal web' makes a complete causal understanding impossible.\(^6\)

Once again, as meaning-generating beings, scientists will value certain causes over others and this valuation will obviously shape their analysis.

Weber believed that such a situation demanded the adoption of what he termed 'ideal types'.\(^7\) An 'ideal types' is a:

... conceptual pattern [which] brings together certain relationships and events

\(^6\)... an exhaustive causal investigation of any concrete phenomena in its full reality is not only practically impossible - it is simply nonsense. We select only those causes to which are to be imputed in the individual case, the "essential" feature of an event (Weber, 1949, p. 78).

\(^7\)The amount of literature both for and against Weber's conception of the ideal type is enormous and a detailed coverage of it is beyond the scope of the present work. For some of the more notable commentaries, see Rex (1977), Mommsen (1992, pp. 121-32), Kalberg (1994a, pp. 81-142), McIntosh (1977), and Burger (1976). Susan Hekman (1983) has attempted to show how the ideal-type is a means of overcoming the subject/object dichotomy through its combination of subjective meaning and structural analysis. Her bid to show this, however, does not tie Weber's epistemology to his empirical works and the processes of rationalisation he traces within them. Nevertheless, her clarity and detailed comparisons with other schools of social theory, make it one of the most insightful and original analyses of both Weber's 'methodological writings' and attempts to solve the object/subject dualism.
of historical life into a complex, which is conceived as an internally consistent system. Substantively, this construct in itself is like a utopia which has been arrived at by the analytic conceptualisation of certain elements of reality (Weber, 1949, p. 90).

Ideal types, as used by Weber, were the logical extension of his own ontological presuppositions. They were the methodological means of dealing with the immense complexity and chaotic nature of reality. The ideal type was used to accentuate what Weber believed to be the key features of certain periods of history or social orders, 'historical individuals'. For Weber, it was a matter of intellectual honesty to make such accentuations explicit in scientific work rather than leaving them implicit, yet somehow 'objective'.

Weber thus believed that the ideal type was the only possible way of achieving a partial causal understanding of a particular socio-cultural phenomenon or event, because an exhaustive and absolute account of any part of empirical reality is impossible. The ideal type presented for Weber the best possibility of getting close to understanding the causes and nature of a 'historical individual' in its cultural significance (Weber, 1949, p. 93). In this sense, they were means to ends, not ends in themselves, and Weber was hostile to the idea of dedicating scientific pursuits solely to the construction of ideal types and general laws or concepts, engaging in methodology for methodology's sake (Weber, 1949, p. 111). Nor should ideal-types be seen as 'ideal' in the sense of a value-judgement or ethically 'ideal' situation, but merely as analytical constructs (Weber, 1949, p. 92).

Weber's work in the Gesammelte revolves around the use of the ideal type. He was aware, for example, that individual Christians each had a different conception of what was 'true' Christianity. Though there were common essential themes which could be distilled into an ideal-type, such a distillation depended on who decided what was
essential, and thus a more general perspective could only ever remain an ideal-typical Christianity, not an 'absolute' Christianity (Weber, 1949, p. 96). Thus, all the religions Weber analysed were ideal-typical representations. Weber's 'Calvinist', 'Catholic', and 'Lutheran' were all 'ideal-typical' agents, the construction of which did 'violence to historical reality' (Weber, 1985, p. 233).

Weber also believed that not only 'historical individuals' but 'developmental processes' should be examined in the cultural sciences (Weber, 1949, p. 101). Like 'historical individuals', these processes were chosen by the values of the agent engaging with concrete reality, and therefore could be best understood by using ideal typical constructions. Weber's concern with the development of various rationalisation processes, which we shall soon examine, must also therefore be seen as ideal-typical examinations of what were exceedingly complex phenomena with an infinite number of causes.

An Ideal Typical Weber versus an Ideal Typical Bourdieu

The obvious implication of Weber's concept of ideal-types is that my particular interpretation of Weber's work is ideal-typical. It is a construction developed out of the 'infinite web' of Weber's textual reality which has been created through my attempt to relate it to my equally ideal-typical construction of Bourdieu's work. Both the words 'Weber' and 'Bourdieu' in this thesis thus refer to the accentuation of certain parts of those authors' work over other parts, an accentuation shaped by the necessities of relating and comparing the two thinkers. It is for this reason that my 'ideal-type Weber' stems from his
work on rationalisation. This interpretation, however, is not the only 'Weber' to have existed.

The dominant ideal-type 'Weber' has shifted from the American-Parsonian value-free sociologist,\(^8\) to an early phenomenologist,\(^9\) to the 'bourgeois Marx',\(^10\) to the arch-modernist, to the 'despairing liberal',\(^11\) to the theorist of rationalisation,\(^12\) to the forerunner of existentialism,\(^13\) to the sociologist of culture,\(^14\) to the Aristotelian non-sociologist\(^15\). In this context, it should be recognised that the whole debate over the 'thematic unity' of Weber's work, and the 'real' Weber is really a struggle, as Weber himself would have likely recognised, over an ideal type.\(^16\) Like the resurrected but disenchanted gods that Weber

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\(^8\) See Parsons, (1937) and Bendix (1966) for versions of this incarnation.
\(^9\) The classic statement in this regard, of course, is Schutz (1972).
\(^10\) This phrase was first coined by Topitsch (1950).
\(^13\) See Lowith (1982), Seidman (1983), and Alexander (1989) for arguments supporting this interpretation.
\(^14\) See Scaff (1989) and Schroeder (1992) for this interpretation.
\(^15\) See Hennis (1988).
\(^16\) Perhaps Tenbruck (1980) deserves the most credit (or blame ?) for beginning this debate. Tenbruck's own position was that the Gesammelte, especially its essays 'Social Psychology of the World Religions' and 'Religious Rejections of the World', not 'Economy and Society', should be seen as Weber's crowning achievement and reflecting his main concerns. In these works, according to Tenbruck (1980, p. 320), Weber reveals the historico-religious process of 'disenchantment' (Entzauberung) which had moved through Western religious rationalisation from the Hebrews to its logical fulfilment under the Puritans. Disenchantment, according to Tenbruck (1980, p. 326), was thus the result of an inner logic (Eigenlogik) of Western religion: 'Weber's important discovery ... lay in the knowledge that rationalisation in all its historical fragility was born from the compulsion of an inner logic, which was situated in the irresistible drive towards the rationalisation of religious belief. Therefore, the process of rationalisation is at heart a historico-religious process of moments in the history of rationalisation derive their unity from the process of disenchantment'. As Stephen Kalberg (1979, p. 131) has noted, this interpretation by Tenbruck leads to a form of idealism since: 'his article leaves the general impression that the "inner logic" proceeds under its own internal steam, divorced from all reality'. For a similar critique, see Love (1993).

Largely in response to Tenbruck's Neo-idealism interpretation of the process of disenchantment as the centerpiece of Weber's work, Schluchter (1981) has shown how the religious rationalisation of ideas was very much rooted in specific socio-economic contexts, a claim I most strongly support. Schluchter attempts to draw up a developmental history of Western rationalism in Weber's work which follows a number of stages in an Neo-evolutionary manner. After passing through 'primitive civilisation' and 'historical civilisation', the development of Western history ends in 'modern civilisation'. For Schluchter
(1991, p. 148) sees walking the earth in Modernity, these incarnations of Weber's work combat each other for monotheistic supremacy. All are, to some degree, correct, in that they are abstracted out of historical reality. None is, however, an absolute truth and definitive understanding of the complex reality of Weber and his work. They are, as Weber's own work suggests, the interpretation made by intellectuals occupying particular socio-historical realities and viewing complex empirical reality (reality in this case being Weber's complex oeuvre), from specific viewpoints and with certain value-orientations (in most cases, their aim being to gain the support of Weber for their own work). They are,

then, Weber's central, though not sole, concern, is with the historical development of the unique Western rationalism which allowed the West to master the world like no other civilisation.

Rejecting both Tenbruck's and Schluchter's interpretations is the work of Hennis (1988) which questions the whole concern with rationalisation as the central theme. Rather, Hennis proposes it is the rationalisation of a specific aspect of human existence, life-conduct (Lebensführung) in the face of various life-orders (Lebensordnungen), which is of central concern to Weber (1988, pp. 38-45). It was the tension between human beings and these life-orders that never ceased to fascinate Weber (p. 71). Specifically, Weber was concerned with how Menschentum ('humanity') had been transformed through the Lebensführung produced by modern socio-economic institutions and ideas. Hennis (p. 52) argues that this concern with how the rationalisation of Lebensführung affected Menschentum can be found in Weber's 'Freiburg Address of 1895', and runs throughout Weber's entire works, from those on methodology to those on religion. This concern also places Weber firmly in the tradition of Western political thought, dating back to Plato and Aristotle, which attempted to understand the relationship between the conditions of life and the best way to live, although Weber attempted this in an empirical scientific manner (Hennis, 1988, pp. 53-58). For Hennis (1988, p. 86), Weber's work on religion showed how different 'humanities', different types of Menschentum, were born out of different historical constellations of life-orders. In contrast to Tenbruck and Schluchter, Hennis thus argues that the 'disenchantment' and peculiar 'Western rationalism' that resulted from religious rationalisation was of interest to Weber because of its effects on Menschentum, not as processes in themselves: 'his theme is thus not some process of rationalisation "in general", but rather that of the process of rationalisation of "practical Lebensführung"' (Hennis, 1988, p. 45).

Though there has been no satisfactory resolution to this debate, nor is there likely to be, these works have focussed attention on the Gesammelte as perhaps Weber's main work, and my own ideal-typical analysis of it will be informed by these scholars' insights.


See, for example, Cohen et.al.'s (1975) critique of Parsons' interpretation of Weber, Factor and Turner's (1984) critique of consensus sociology's interpretation of Weber's value-free sociology, and Hennis' (1988) critique of the 'hijacking' of Weber's work by sociology away from its place in political theory.
to use Bourdieu's terms, the result of struggles over intellectual capital. One must, of course, also include this thesis in that analysis.

**Rationalisms and Life-Orders**

So far in this chapter, I have examined Weber's presuppositions about: cultural-historical reality; human beings' pursuit of meaningful interests; and the ideal-typical manner in which these phenomena can be investigated. I now examine how these presuppositions shaped the concepts he employed to study the world religions.

**A Plurality of 'Rationalisms'**

Weber believed that the main question facing contemporary cultural science was why Western culture had come to have world-historical significance. For Weber, the answer lay in the development of what he termed 'Western' or 'Occidental rationalism'. This 'rationalism', Weber believed, was unique in human history because of the relations between human beings and the world, and between each other, that it produced. That being the case, Weber saw it as necessary to work out why such a unique rationalism

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19 'A product of modern European civilisation, studying any problem of universal history, is bound to ask himself to what combination of circumstances the fact should be attributed that in Western civilisation, and in Western civilisation only, cultural phenomena have appeared which (as we like to think) lie in a line of development having universal significance and value' (Weber, 1985, p. 13). For an analysis of the various interpretations of this quote, see Habermas (1984, pp. 179-81). Habermas's argument that this quote indicates that Weber was concerned with universal significance misses the crucial fact that Weber was not questioning this, but did not believe that this universal significance came out of a 'line of development', or teleology. Habermas confuses the 'at least we like to think' as undermining Weber's opinion of the consequences of Western Modernity for the rest of the globe (which is not in doubt, as other areas of Weber's work shows), with Weber's questioning of an evolutionary idea of progressive development. As we shall see, Weber believed no such inevitable line of development existed as religious rationalisation in the West was shaped by innumerable factors and historical contingencies.
developed (1985, p. 26). This could only be done, he believed, by comparing this rationalism and its development with other rationalisms developed in other cultures.20

Yet what exactly is a 'rationalism' to Weber? Though the precise meaning of this term has been a source of controversy, Weber's empirical works seem to indicate that it refers to a certain way of thinking about, and relating to, the world.21 For example, he talks of 'Western rationalism', 'Confucian Rationalism', and 'Hindu Rationalism', with each expressing a different way of viewing the world and acting in it. It is unclear when Weber first became aware of these different rationalisms, although his studies of religion seem the most likely period. These studies seem to have resulted in Weber moving from an ethnocentric view of rationality as existing only in the modern West, to a view where rationality was a matter of perspective. In this way, he realised that modern Western culture was based only on a specific type of rationality, instrumental/purposeful rationality, and this therefore involved changes to the contents and definition of rationalism.22

20 Contrary to claims that Weber was analysing the rise of 'Western rationalism' alone (for example, Schluchter, 1981), it is clear that Weber was examining a plurality of 'rationalisms'. These examinations of other cultures' rationalisms were not meant to be statements about those cultures in toto. This is made clear in the 'Author's Introduction': 'the studies do not claim to be complete analyses of cultures, however brief. On the contrary, in every culture they quite deliberately emphasise elements in which it differs from Western civilisation. They are, hence, definitely oriented to the problems which seem important for the understanding of Western culture from this viewpoint' (Weber, 1985, pp. 27-28).
21 The complexity and seeming confusion of Weber's use of the words 'rational' and 'rationality' has been a hallmark of commentator's critiques of Weber's work on rationalisation (see for example Eisen, 1978, Levine, 1981, Wallace, 1990). Brubaker counts at least sixteen uses of the term 'rational' in Weber's works (1984, p. 2). For this reason, I agree with Schroeder that 'an abstract typology of "rationality" in his writings is impossible since he attaches different meanings to this term in different contexts' (1992, p. 36). Schroeder (1992, p. 28) correctly points out that Schluchter's (1979) and Kalberg's (1980) attempts to provide such a typology are abstract classifications which fail to 'take the place of Weber's more concrete historical processes'. Habermas (1984) makes a similar attempt. As I show in the course of this thesis, it is precisely the resistance to such abstraction which is the strength of Weber's understanding of the interaction of agency and structure and the rationalisation of life-conduct.
22 See Mommsen (1992, pp. 148-51) for an analysis of this change.
One major effect on agents that a rationalism produces is the manner in which it shapes their practice or 'life-conduct' (*Lebensführung*) by directing their relationship to the world. This life-conduct is usually common to a group of agents or social strata. When the life-conduct of agents does express this rationalism, Weber says it has a certain 'ethos' or 'spirit'. In many of Weber's works, he is concerned with the link between, on the one hand, this rationalism and the 'spirit' of life-conduct it produces, with, on the other, the structural and material organisation of particular societies. When such a fit exists, there occurs what he terms an 'elective affinity' (*Wahlverwandtschaft*) between this rationalism and the social organisation in which it exists. For example, much of his work on religion was concerned with analysing how a particular life-conduct, which originated in sixteenth century Puritanism, had an ethos or 'spirit' which gave it an 'elective affinity' with the socio-economic structures of modern capitalism.

**Theoretical and Practical Rationality**

The 'ethos' of a rationalism was shaped to a great degree by one of two forms of rationality which dominated it: theoretical rationality (also called 'intellectual rationality' by Weber), which involved: 'the theoretical mastery of reality by means of increasingly precise and abstract concepts' (Weber, 1991, p. 293); or practical rationality, which aimed at controlling the world surrounding agents, and was based on the criteria of success.\(^\text{23}\) The former was mostly 'carried', not surprisingly, by intellectual strata, who always exhibited a

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\(^{23}\) See Habermas (1984, pp. 168-74) for an analysis of these two types of rationality. His typology of practical rationality is too rigidified and abstract, I would argue, to gain the sense of 'flux' in which practical rationality operates in Weber's empirical works. Kalberg (1980, p. 1152) sums up the nature of practical rationality rather well: 'the pragmatic and this-worldly predisposition of practical rational patterns of action implies a subordination of individuals to given realities and a concomitant inclination to oppose all orientations based on transcendence of daily routine'.
'drive towards consistency', whereas the latter was seen mostly in civic strata whose conditions of life were based on calculations and the technical control of nature (Weber, 1991, p. 284). Which social strata with its particular rationality dominated a society greatly affected the ethos of a society's rationalism. Thus for example, China and India both had intellectual strata dominating their cultures, and their respective rationalisms reflected a theoretically rational view of the world, whereas the West saw the rise of specific civic strata with an emphasis upon practical rationality. The ethical valuing of either rationality thus became crucial in determining which direction religious rationalisation moved. According to Weber, this ethical valuing was almost always provided by religion and this process was one of his main concerns in his work on religion.

'Life-Orders'

Weber believed that the genesis of the unique, modern Western rationalism lay in a number of rationalisation processes which occurred in various areas of life in Western society, areas Weber calls 'life-orders' (Lebensordnungen) or 'value-spheres' (Wertsparen). These 'orders' are different areas of life that make different demands on agents engaging in them. The main life-spheres outlined in Weber's work were: the religious sphere, the rationalisation of which the Gesammelte traced in detail; the economic sphere, the relation of which to the religious sphere was also a main theme of the Gesammelte; the political sphere, the relation of which to the religious sphere was a particular focus in Weber's analysis of Confucianism; and the intellectual sphere, which, as

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24 It is important to remember that Weber's analysis of the life-orders is a theoretical and ideal-typical construct which presumes agents have accepted the values of these spheres (Weber, 1991, pp. 323-24).
we shall see, emerged out of the religious sphere and eventually consumed it. Each of these spheres valued different ends. Thus the religious sphere, as we shall see, valued salvation from suffering and death as an end, while the intellectual sphere valued knowledge as an end in itself. Weber believed that different societies were based on different combinations and antagonisms between these different life-spheres. The rationalisation of one area of life, for example, the economic sphere, could bring it into tension with other spheres of life, such as the religious sphere, when both have been rationalised towards certain values. The rationalisation of these different areas was each affected by numerous other factors, including geography, the ordering of social relations, and a large degree of historical contingency.

Weber's analysis of the life-spheres shows very clearly that they are structured by objective logics and relations without these being materially determined, that is, that the structures of ideas and their internal logics have an objective existence which is internalised by those subjects entering it. Weber's understanding of life-spheres revolves around the position of 'values' and, as Brubaker (1984, p. 62) states, values are both 'subjective' and 'objective' in Weber's work. They are 'subjective' in the sense that, firstly,

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25 I have chosen to concentrate on the rationalisation of the religious sphere for the reasons outlined at the beginning of Part II of the thesis. A detailed coverage of the rationalisation of the political sphere, economic sphere, legal sphere, and intellectual sphere is beyond the scope of the thesis and moves beyond its central aim - to engage the work of Bourdieu. For these reasons, I shall only touch on these spheres of life when they interact with the religious sphere in Weber's sociology of religion. For a summary of the rationalisation of each of these spheres, see Roth (1987, pp. 82-88).

26 This was covered in most detail by Weber in his essay, 'Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions' where he examined the way in which the religious ethic of brotherliness came into tension with the other rationalised life-spheres. I shall return to this essay and its theme later.

27 Thus, as Roth (1987, p. 76) and Brubaker (1984, p. 9) have pointed out, Weber had no simple 'rationalisation thesis' since he was concerned with the different degrees of rationalisation of the different spheres/areas of life. There was no unilinear progress in rationalisation, but different levels of rationalisation in different spheres of life in different cultures. In the Western case, there were 'progresses' towards modern Western rationalism, as well as 'regressions' in various areas of life at different times, not an inevitable evolutionary telos.
they exist 'within' subjects. Secondly, they are 'generated' by individuals, that is chosen by them, and for Weber, this choice is what define agents as 'truly' human (Weber, 1949, p. 66). Values are also objective, however, in that they are part of a value-sphere, that is an objective area of life with its own norms. The life-orders impose their own objective laws on subjects and subjects must choose to accept this if they wish to enter that sphere and 'believe' in its value. The individual subject confronts the objective value-sphere as a given, and must decide to value it, a decision developed out of a struggle with their 'inner demons'.

**Rationalisation of the Religious Sphere and Life-Conduct**

Weber's work on religion in the *Gesammelte* attempted to trace how rationalisation of the religious spheres of the various civilisations of the world contributed to the development of their respective rationalisms. In the case of Western rationalism, as Murray Wax (1960, p. 449) has stated: 'the sources of this widely diffused and polymorphic rationalism Weber traced to the Judeo-Christian religion, but in a complex rather than a simple descent'. In his analysis of the 'non-Western' civilisations, Weber attempted to examine what factors were involved in the development of their specific rationalisms (why, for example, China developed a 'Confucian rationalism'), and why these rationalisms were different to that of the West. China, India, and other cultures did not rationalise their life-conduct and ontological presuppositions in the same way as the West, primarily because their rationalisation processes followed different trajectories. They developed, in other words,

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28 As Brubaker (1984, p. 85) points out, within Weber's work, the economic and political life-orders are objective and self-perpetuating, while the other spheres tend to be more 'subjective' by relying on the personal values of people.
different rationalisms which related to the world and directed the life-spheres in their
cultures in different directions than that of the West (Weber, 1985, p. 25). Once again,
religious rationalisation played a crucial role in these processes.

Religious rationalisation led different cultures in different historical directions
because the various world religions valued different states of activity, different ethics,
different ideas about the world, and ultimately, different spheres of life, in different ways.
In Weber's sociology of religion, the religious sphere seems to have had a dominant
position in most of the cultures he examined (China being the main exception to this), and
all other spheres were subordinated to it and its values, existing in effect, as extensions of
it.\footnote{Indeed, it is only in Western culture, as we shall see, that these spheres differentiated enough that they
could be distinguished as analytically separate, a point Weber, living within this cultural process, realised.}

In his 'Author's Introduction', Weber makes it very clear that he was not setting out
to provide new insights into, or complete understandings of, the main world religions.\footnote{The Sinologist, the Indologist, the Semitist, or the Egyptologist, will of course find no facts unknown to
him. We only hope that he will find nothing definitely wrong in the points that are essential' (Weber,
1985, p. 28).}
He was well aware of the limited character of his studies, limitations shaped by his inability
to read some of the religious texts in their original languages (Weber, 1985, p. 28). And
like all scientific work, Weber (1985, p. 28) realised that his work was destined to be
superseded as more information was brought to light. He did believe, however, that since
specialists have seen things from their specialised points of view and missed the relations
between civilisations, his comparative research could shed light on such relations.

Weber's main concern in the Gesammelte was therefore with 'religious
rationalisation', that is, the intellectual development of certain ideas and values within one
of the main spheres of life in pre-modern societies, the religious sphere. Weber was not concerned with the 'truth' of these ideas, but the effect that such ideas produced on the conduct of agents.\textsuperscript{31}

Weber attempted to analyse how 'dispositions' towards particular forms of life-conduct are shaped and affected by material and ideational structures. The \textit{Gesammelte} traced the way in which dispositions towards acting in certain ways are produced or 'blocked' by the ethical and value-positions of religious and magical worldviews (Weber, 1985, pp. 26-27). Specifically, Weber was concerned with how religious rationalisation affected economic conduct, through the development of what he termed 'economic ethics'. By 'economic ethics', Weber meant, 'the pragmatic impulses for action which are founded in the psychological and pragmatic contexts of religions' (1991, p. 267). In other words, Weber attempted to show how religious ideas and ethics, specifically those concerning economic life, affected economic thinking and practice in their followers. He was thus concerned with the links between the religious and economic life-spheres. Especially important for Weber was how these economic ethics contributed to or hindered the historical development of a specific type of economic rationalism and conduct, 'the type which, since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, has come to dominate the Occident as part of the rationalisation of civic life' (Weber, 1991, p. 293) and gone on to shape

\textsuperscript{31} We are here naturally not so much concerned with what ethical concepts the theological moralists developed in their ethical theories, but, rather, what was the effective morality in the life of the believers - that is, how the religious background of economic ethics affected practice' (Weber, 1985, p. 267). Weber believed that the evaluation of religious ideas and values as being 'true' or 'legitimate' lay outside of the domain of scientific investigation. As we shall see, this view became very important in Weber's understanding of the limits of science.
global history. This economic rationalism and life-conduct is, of course, that which dominates modern industrial capitalism.

**Religion as Irrationality**

From the point of view of modern Western thought it seems nonsensical to write of the 'rationalisation' of religion, which, as Weber (1991, p. 351) points out, is considered the 'irrational' force within modern society. For Weber, however, such a dichotomy is misleading. He believed that the question of what is 'rational' is a matter of perspective:

> a thing is never irrational in itself, but only from a particular rational point of view. For the unbeliever every religious way of life is irrational, for the hedonist every ascetic standard ... If this essay makes any contribution at all, it may be to bring out the complexity of the only superficially simple concept of the rational (Weber, 1985, p. 194).

As part of this perspectivism, Weber believed that all cultures were **internally rational**.\(^{32}\)

Forms of rationalism exist within all societies and cultures, whether 'primitive' or 'modern'. Such rationalisms are coherent when seen from the perspective of their ontological presuppositions and ethical postulates. The differences between these cultures lay in the fact that they, with their different ethics and values, usually provided by religious ontologies, rationalised life and different parts of life, in different ways. In other words, different areas of life have been rationalised towards different values in different cultures.

There is, for example, rationalisation of mystical contemplation, that is of an attitude which, viewed from other departments of life, is specifically irrational, just as there are rationalisations of economic life, of technique, of scientific research, of military training, of law and administration. Furthermore, each one of these fields may be rationalised in terms of very different ultimate values and ends, and what is rational from one point of view may well be irrational from another. Hence rationalisations of the most varied character have existed in various departments of life and in all areas of culture. To characterise their differences from the viewpoint of cultural history it is necessary to know what departments are rationalised, and in what direction (Weber, 1985, p. 26).

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\(^{32}\) Brubaker sums this up well: 'rationality does not inhere in things, but is ascribed to them. Further, rationality is a relational concept: a thing can be rational (or irrational) only from a particular point of view, never in and of itself' (1984, p. 35).
Weber was thus clearly aware that religions are not part of an evolutionary chain towards ethical superiority or 'progress' (1991, p. 292). They are all 'historical individuals' and therefore only possible outcomes of the interplay of historical events (Weber, 1991, p. 292). In terms of anti-evolutionism, Weber argued that there are logical developments out of certain presuppositions about reality, but there is no inevitability in history.\textsuperscript{33} This is, after all, what he rejected most in Marxism.

Why these ontological presuppositions of different cultures should be adopted and supported depends on a range of contingent factors, and can be changed by such factors. Weber was at pains to point out that he in no way regarded religious ethics to be in some way hierarchically ordered, with Western Christianity at the pinnacle. To do so, for Weber, would be unscientific. Weber's analysis does not contain judgements of the moral or ethical correctness of the various religions.\textsuperscript{34} It is instead concerned with understanding how these religions affected and contributed to the development of their respective

\textsuperscript{33} For a quite detailed analysis of the context of Weber's anti-evolutionism and the schools it was aimed against, see Roth (1987) and Habermas (1984, pp. 145-54). Habermas, however, along with Tenbruck (1980), falls into the mistake of arguing that though religious rationalisation starts from the same problem, the problem of theodicy, and points in the same direction, it therefore leads inevitably to the disenchantment of the world (although only the Occident achieves this due to 'external' historical factors). In this way, other cultures' religious rationalisation was 'blocked' from reaching their logical conclusion of the disenchantment of the world. What both commentators overlook, however, is that there were \textit{internal} reasons why only the Occident led to the disenchantment of the world. That is, only the Occident has a particular conception of the divine which could promote an ethnically positive evaluation of practical mastery over the world. It was the valuing of certain types of knowledge over others which shaped whether a religious rationalisation disenchanted the world or not. Though all the world religions end with different solutions to the same problem of theodicy, this is not purely for external reasons, but due to their interaction with the logical unfolding of ideas which were adopted by certain strata as an elective affinity with their life-conditions. It was thus the combination of unique internal and external situations which led to the Western disenchantment of the world, not an inevitable universal religious process. For arguments supporting the view that there was no inevitability or evolutionary 'progress' to Weber's view of rationalisation, see Weiss (1987) and Roth (1987).

\textsuperscript{34} 'And, I might add, whoever wants a sermon should go to a conventicle. The question of the relative value of the cultures which are compared here will not receive a single word' (Weber, 1985, p. 29).
culture's rationalisms. It is also concerned with how far this contribution pushed a culture's rationalism towards the modern scientific understanding of causality. Thus when he refers to one religion as more 'rational' than another, this refers to the degree of approximation of its ontology to the modern scientific understanding of causality. This approximation is based on how intellectualised and 'rationalised' the religion is, that is, how far magic has been eliminated from it, how systematised it is, how far there is 'ethical absolutism' (Gesinnungsethik) within it, how universal the conception of God, and how far anthropomorphism has been eliminated from its conception of God (Weber, 1952, p. 426).

For Weber it therefore makes as much sense to talk of Confucianism or Hinduism as forms of 'rationalism', and as providing a rational basis for the direction of life-conduct, when one considers their ontological understandings of the world or worldviews (Weltanschauungen), as it does to talk of modern Western thought as 'rationalism'. Of course, seen from within the perspective of one, the others must be seen as 'irrational'. Weber's own work has chosen the perspective of none of these religious ontologies, but instead, the modern Western scientific ontology, which sees all such religious ontologies and their impulses for particular conduct as 'irrational'. He was very clearly stating, however, that there is no ethical superiority in such a position, and in fact, as we shall see, he personally believed that there was a great loss involved in modern Western culture and its scientific ontology. One of the great strengths of Weber's work, therefore, was his reflexive awareness of the context and limits of Western conceptions of 'rational' and
'irrational'. When Weber uses these terms, especially in his analysis of Non-Western and pre-modern cultures, it is necessary to keep in mind this reflexive awareness.35

Suffering, Death and Ethical Rationalism

To what, exactly, does the term 'religious rationalisation' refer? Since it is an important factor in the development of specific rationalisms, and is the basis of the autonomy of the religious life-sphere, this question is obviously paramount. For Weber, this question can only be answered empirically and concretely, although there is a general line of development which he tried to describe under the term 'religious rationalisation'.

For Weber, human life is faced with suffering and the inevitability of death. The gap between the aspirations of human beings to live free of pain, misery, misfortune and death, and the cold realities of these affictions, was at the basis of what Weber termed 'religious rationalisation'.36 Religious rationalisation referred to two separate but interrelated processes: the attempt to intellectually understand the meaning and purpose of such afflictions as suffering and death; and the development of means to overcome them.37

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35 Thus, for example, Weber almost always wrote terms such as 'rational', 'irrational', or 'progress' within quotation marks in order to convey his scepticism towards the absolutism of such concepts.
36 The importance of suffering and death in religious rationalisation has been noted by Shafir (1985) and Habermas (1984, p. 201).
37 Too often, only the former is seen as the basis of religious rationalisation (see for example, Shafir, 1985). Though the first dimension which is found primarily in the intellectual sphere is fundamentally important for the consequences of religious rationalisation, the second dimension, which mostly relates to the relations between religious 'virtuosi' and 'masses' is vitally important because it shapes the degree of magic left in the religious rationalisation process, which in turn shapes, as we shall see, how far a religion has achieved 'ethical absolutism'. The problem of meaning is not a problem for intellectuals alone, but the drive for a systematic, consistent and coherent answer, based on theoretical rationality, is what marks intellectuals' solutions to this problem.
These two aims become the main ends valued and sought after within the religious value-sphere.

**Religious Intellectualisation and the 'Problem of Theodicy'**

all religions have demanded as a specific presupposition that the course of the world be somehow meaningful (Weber, 1991, p. 353)

For Weber, humans originally existed in a 'naive magical garden' where the understanding of the world and events in it were tied to a magical understanding of causality. Events happened in the world because spirits and demons made them happen. This magical worldview was this-worldly in orientation. Primarily based in ritualism, this magical view attempted to manipulate objects to achieve certain this-worldly results: wealth, happiness, a long life. During this cultural period, all the spheres of life were tied together in a this-worldly manner. Any end one wished to achieve, whether it be political dominance, economic success, or the ending of sickness, was believed to be achieved through magical ritualism. Magic gained its power and continuity from the fact that it continued to work. Thus the ritualism of magic became traditionalistic in nature. This, for Weber, was of paramount importance in cultural history because it meant that wherever magic and ritualism remained the dominant way of understanding the world (as, he believed, was the case in India), then a positive attitude towards continual change and world transformation was unlikely to emerge.

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38 Weber did not see magic in negative terms, however, as he believed that most 'primitives' knew much more about the workings of the world than their modern counterparts (1991, p. 139). Furthermore, the magical worldview saw life in an enchanted way in awe of existence and the power of the elements. The problem with magic was that its conception of causality, as modern science shows, was wrong (Weber, 1978a, p. 400). Since control and transformation of the world has become highly valued in the modern West, this knowledge of causality has rid the Western worldview of magic and its enchanted awe. Weber was obviously ambivalent about this outcome, being very much aware that the 'progress' in the
For many agents, especially intellectuals, the fact that suffering and misfortune continued in the world undermined their belief in the power of magic and forced them to look for something beyond the this-worldly manipulations and goals of magic. This led them to the development of an autonomous sphere of the sacred, the religious sphere. The attempt by religious intellectuals to solve the 'problem of theodicy' (why do suffering and death exist, what is their meaning) has almost always led them to see the world as imperfect and as the result of a fall from a divine state. This view produced a tension between religion and the world, culminating in what Weber termed the 'religious rejection of the world'. This rejection of the world was the basis of the establishment of an autonomous religious life-sphere which broke from the 'naive magical view of the world'. In opposition to the world and the magical view of it, religious intellectuals, through their employment of theoretical rationality, developed a systematised worldview which explained the imperfection and suffering of this world as part of a wider cosmic and divine purpose. In this way, suffering and death could be made meaningful because they made sense in a wider context. In establishing a meaningful worldview in opposition to the world and thus a separate religious life-sphere, religious intellectuals met a general human need to make sense of the seeming senselessness of suffering and death (Weber, 1991, p. 281). This drive by religious intellectuals to develop a coherent and systematic manipulation of the world has been at the expense of other valued areas of life, such as a feeling of enchantment.

39 The exception to this, as we shall see, was Confucianism which, due to a number of factors, actually saw the world as a positive place, in fact, the best of all possible worlds. For this reason, it failed to develop the religious tension with the world I am now outlining, and indeed, Weber was ambivalent about whether one could even consider Confucianism a religion at all. This lack of tension had enormous consequences for the direction intellectual rationalisation took in Chinese history.
explanation for the existence of suffering and death is one of the main dynamics of religious rationalisation and the main pre-modern form of theoretical rationality.\textsuperscript{40}

Some of these religious ontologies have made sense of human afflictions through seeing suffering as the result of possession by a demon or of insulting the gods (Weber, 1991, p. 271).\textsuperscript{41} Others have glorified suffering and death (Weber, 1991, p. 270),\textsuperscript{42} while others still have seen them as the result of the incorrect following of rituals, or for failing to meet the ethical commandments laid out by God.

According to Weber (1991, pp. 358-59), there have been only three rationally consistent theodicies: dualism,\textsuperscript{43} predestination,\textsuperscript{44} and karma.\textsuperscript{45} Each of these had major effects on the direction of religious rationalisation in their respective cultures, and on the life-conduct of their adherents.

\textsuperscript{40} Weber (1991, p. 324) argues that religious worldviews and the ethics that flow from them, are rationally consistent in theory, if not in practice. This is mainly due to the fact that intellectuals that develop them have an ideal interest based on consistency and systematically producing a meaningful cosmos.

\textsuperscript{41} In this way, suffering is explained in such a way that those who do not suffer can blame the misfortunate themselves for their suffering. In the eyes of the fortunate, this suffering was deserved, and therefore legitimate. It also works the other way, as Weber points out, ‘religion provides the theodicy of good fortune for those who are fortunate’ (1991, p. 271).

\textsuperscript{42} This is a complex historical phenomenon, but one, according to Weber (1991, p. 270), which is not, as Nietzsche asserts, based on resentment.

\textsuperscript{43} Dualism explains suffering and misfortune as the result of the struggle between a divine being of goodness and light and an entity of pure evil. Only Zoroastrianism has been rationally consistent here, accepting that God was a limited being faced with a powerful rival. Zoroastrianism, however, did not develop into a major world religion, having only a minor influence on ancient Judaism. Christianity, a world religion which also has developed a concept of dualism, has not been able to consistently follow this through as it sees God as the creator and master of Satan, yet must, because of this, also sacrifice the idea of an All-loving God (Weber, 1991, p. 359).

\textsuperscript{44} The theodicy of Predestination starts from the abandonment of the idea of an All-loving God. Instead, God’s ways and means were beyond the scrutiny of mere humans. According to Weber (1991, p. 358), this meant that the problem of meaning was no longer a problem because humans could never know the meaning of the cosmos or why God allows suffering. One had to accept these events as inscrutable and concentrate on carrying out what was known of God’s will, that is, action in the world through a vocational calling. Only the virtuoso of these religions have been able to endure the psychological tension that such a belief brings forth. This had the paradoxical effect of actually denying the question of meaning in toto. We shall examine this idea in more detail when we examine Puritanism.

\textsuperscript{45} Karma saw the cause of suffering as failure to meet obligatory ritual duties in a past life. Because of this, one could only hope to escape suffering in the next life. We will examine karma in more detail when outlining Weber’s work on Hinduism.
Numerous historical and social factors were involved in the process whereby one ontology or religious worldview would gain cultural dominance. Nevertheless, the cultural movement (which Weber often terms 'ethical rationalisation' as well as religious rationalisation) from ritualism to an increasing rejection of the world, characterised by 'ethical absolutism', was profoundly important in Weber's work. Ethical absolutism referred to the process whereby a salvation religion provided an agent with a sacred value which was felt, and carried, 'within' them. The process of thinking about, judging, and relating to the world via this core value of ethical absolutism Weber referred to as 'ethical rationalism'. By this term, he also seems to have meant the attempt to understand the meaning of the cosmos, and how life could be made meaningful by understanding the meaning of suffering and death. Ethical rationalism was thus a reflection on morality and the best values to live by, what I have chosen to call in this thesis 'moral reflexivity'. Part of this ethical rationalism was the attempt to analyse and understand the world from the point of view of the ethical framework which gave suffering and death, and thus life, meaning. The more religious rationalisation carried a worldview and agent in the direction of ethical absolutism and understanding the world through ethical rationalism, the more tension was experienced with the harsh realities of this world and thus the more this world was rejected (Weber, 1991, p. 328).

The religious worldview and ethical rationalism developed by religious intellectuals to give meaning to suffering and death play an important part in Weber's work because, as he states in his famous 'switchman quote', it can, by the logical unfolding of its
presuppositions about the world, lead to particular historical developments and distinct types of human action:

Not ideas, but ideal and material interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the "world images" that have been created by "ideas" have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest. "From what" and "for what" one wished to be redeemed and, let us not forget, "could be" redeemed, depended upon one's image of the world (1991, p. 280).

As this quote makes clear, though the attempt to meet human interests, both ideal and material, is the motor behind human agency and action, agents can only achieve these in the context of what they understand the world to be. This understanding of reality will therefore direct human agency in its attempts to meet ideal and material interests. Though different social strata, due to their conditions of life, will have different ideal and material interests, the way they can meet them will depend on their following, in their life-conduct, the logical outcomes of their presuppositions about the 'nature' of the social and natural worlds. Simply put, one's view of reality will shape how one gets what one wants, and even what one wants, from reality. It is in this way that Weber argues, against what he perceived to be the economic determinism of historical materialism, that ideas have a degree of logical autonomy in social life.⁴⁶

Means to Salvation

Along with providing a worldview which gave meaning to suffering and death, religious rationalisation attempted to work out ways of attaining 'salvation' from suffering and death. As Weber puts it, 'formulated abstractly, the rational aim of redemption religion

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⁴⁶This does not mean one should see Weber's work as a form of Neo-idealism as Tenbruck's (1980) and Schroeder's (1992) positions ultimately do. As we shall see, these ideas were socio-economically grounded through their adoption by certain social strata whose life-conditions promoted an 'elective affinity' with them.
has been to secure for the saved a holy state, and thereby a habitus that assures salvation’ (1991, p. 327).

Nearly all religions aimed at offering salvation in this life in this world, that is, they tended to offer such things as a long life, a healthy life, and wealth. As Weber puts it, ‘psychologically considered, man in quest of salvation has been primarily preoccupied by attitudes of the here and now’ (1991, p. 278). In most religions, this has been achieved by the manipulation of objects through ritualism and magical spells.

Where magical ritualism was replaced by ethical absolutism, however, the means to salvation were believed to lie in an ethically regulated life. Prophets and saviours of such religions have attempted to guide the life-conduct of their followers towards these ethical principles which were usually provided through their holy message (Weber, 1991, p. 327).

The religious rejection of the world which resulted from intellectually establishing a meaning for its imperfections, leaves two options open for an ethically rational life-conduct: one can flee from this world, cutting all ties with it, and attempt to reach salvation in an other-worldly realm through contemplative mysticism; or one can set about changing this world so that the causes of suffering and death are negated in it through what Weber terms 'inner-worldly asceticism' (Weber, 1991, p. 325). Active asceticism involves seeing oneself as a ‘tool’ of the divine, while contemplative mysticism means seeing oneself as a ‘vessel’ of the divine.

This contrast between inner-worldly asceticism and contemplative mysticism, Weber points out, is a theoretical construct and cannot be strictly maintained in empirical
reality. In between the two is ‘ascetic flight from the world’ where asceticism aims to tame the wicked internal nature and inner life of the followers (Weber, 1991, p. 326). This means avoiding action in the world by withdrawing from it and avoiding its temptations. Weber saw the Medieval Christian monasteries as the best example of this means to salvation.

Also between the two poles is ‘inner-worldly mysticism’. This sees the devout remain in this world. Unlike inner-worldly asceticism, however, this type of mysticism proves itself by being in the world but not acting within it. As Weber states, ‘he [the mystic] proves himself against the world, against his action in the world. Inner-worldly asceticism, on the contrary, proves itself through action’ (1991, p. 326).

Weber's concern with these types of rejection of the world stem from the fact that he believed that inner-worldly asceticism, which aimed to transform the world in accordance with God's ethical commands, was at the basis of modern Western rationalism. This ‘inner-worldly asceticism’ rejects the ‘creatural wickedness’ of this world, but sees this very wickedness as the object through which it can prove salvation by overcoming it.47 In this way, the agent becomes God’s tool, His instrument for changing the wickedness of this world. This attempt to control and transform the world was the hallmark, Weber believed, of modern Western rationalism.48

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47 In inner-worldly asceticism, the grace and the chosen state of the religiously qualified man prove themselves in everyday life. To be sure, they do so not in the everyday life as given, but in methodical and rationalised routine activities of workaday life in the service of the Lord. Rationally raised into a vocation, everyday conduct becomes the locus for proving one’s state of grace (Weber, 1991, p. 291).

48 The only large scale development of inner-worldly asceticism, as we shall see, was found in Puritanism, which explains the importance of this religion in Weber's studies.
Mysticism on the other hand, attempted to understand the meaning of the world through contemplation, that is, to understand, not to change, what is given. Though all four means of salvation rejected this world as ethically 'irrational', their consequences for life-conduct, including economic conduct, were radically different.

**Factors Affecting Religious Rationalisation**

Thus, the term 'religious rationalisation' refers to the development of an autonomous religious life-sphere with its own worldview and means of overcoming suffering and death, that is, its own internal value - salvation. Weber's emphasis on religious ideas about the world and religious ontologies does not mean, however, that we should see his work as a form of idealism advocating the preeminence of religion in history. Religious rationalisation was not to Weber, as some critics of his work have alleged, an autonomous, 'idealist' teleology moving irresistibly through history. As Peter Berger points out:

> throughout his work in the sociology of religion, Weber was concerned to demonstrate that religious ideas have a historical efficacy of their own, and cannot be understood as a "reflection" or even "function" of some underlying social processes.... This does not mean that Weber conceives of such religious innovations as originating in some realm of pure spirit that is completely independent of the social structure. Such "idealism" is quite foreign to Weber's thinking (1963, pp. 949-50).

As mentioned previously, Weber was aware that other factors shaped the development of Western rationalism since each life-order had its own rationalisation process. Weber was aware, for example, that not all economic ethics, and therefore not all economic practice and thinking, has been caused by religion and its ethics. Economic ethics have a degree of logical autonomy in that they are affected by geographical and
historical circumstances apart from religious influences. Thus religion is only one variable which affects life-conduct, including economic conduct (Weber, 1991, p. 268). As Zeitlin states, 'religion for Weber was neither an epiphenomenon nor a prime mover of history. It was rather a significant element in a complex constellation of factors' (1984, p. xii). Such an understanding provides a much more comprehensive coverage of the various factors involved in the workings of the religious sphere than Bourdieu's criticisms would lead us to believe.

Furthermore, Weber was aware that religion itself was shaped by many other socio-historical factors which denied it a monocausal role in cultural history. He realised that the doctrine and belief of a religion does not play a direct causal role in such a manner that followers adopt in practice what religion advocates. The impact of religion on life-conduct is shaped by other factors, such as the interpretation of these ideas by mediating agents such as preachers, priests, and prophets (whom Weber called 'religious virtuosi'), as well as the interpretation produced by the ideal and material interests that a follower has as part of their social position. For these reasons:

what a religion has sought after as an ideal, and what the actual result of its influence on the lives of its adherents has been, must be sharply distinguished, as we shall often see in the course of our discussion (Weber, 1985, p. 192).

The Social Order and 'Elective Affinity'

According to Weber, the order of social relations has shaped the development of religious rationalisation in two ways: firstly, by determining what religious interests various strata

49 We shall examine these other factors in detail when we outline Weber's empirical studies.
have sought, and secondly, by providing a particular strata as the dominant bearer of the
religion.

For Weber, the position of agents in the social hierarchy affects what they want
from religious worldviews. He argued that most of the 'socially deprived', that is the
lower social strata, have been in need of salvation since, as we saw, the socially dominant
asked of religion that it show their position to be legitimate or deserved (Weber, 1991, p.
274). The dominant strata have nearly always seen their position as based on an essence,
that is, on an intrinsic quality of themselves:

Strata in solid possession of social honour and power usually tend to fashion their status-legend
in such a way as to claim a special and intrinsic quality of their own, usually a quality of blood;
their sense of dignity feeds on their actual or alleged being' (Weber, 1991, p. 276).

For this reason, prophets therefore addressed their messages to the lower strata, knowing
that these people were the ones primarily seeking a meaning for their suffering. The lower
classes, especially the peasantry, however, have tended to look to magic as the source of
salvation, except where a systematic ethical prophecy has mobilised them towards an
ethical movement. Even then, the prophet has usually had to make concessions of a
magical nature to gain popular support for his views.

**Elective Affinity**

For Weber, a worldview developed by religious intellectuals had to find supporters if it
was to survive, let alone gain cultural dominance (1991, p. 281). As Berger states:

thus while Weber is anxious to show the autonomy of thought as against any
specific social structure, he is fully aware that thought always occurs in a social
context and, even more important, that thought must find a social group to become
its "carrier" if it is to be historically efficacious (1963, p. 950).
Weber believed that such supporters or 'carriers' (Trager) could usually be found in one strata. This was because the life-conditions in which the strata lived made it predisposed to accept some worldviews and not others. The complex process whereby a strata came to support and carry a specific view of the world Weber termed 'elective affinity' (Wahlverwandtschaft).\textsuperscript{50}

This 'affinity' between experience of material conditions and the content of ideas, was complicated by the fact that in any one culture there existed a number of ideas which could be plausibly adopted by a strata. The contest between ideas could only be resolved by the 'election' of one idea. Only then did such an idea survive the currents of cultural history by becoming entrenched in the way of life of a social strata.\textsuperscript{51}

The social order affected religious rationalisation in another way. Weber believed that a complex interaction of economic, political, and cultural factors would see one strata rise to be the most influential in that society's realm of ideas. Examples of such 'culture-bearing strata' include the Confucian literati and the Hindu Brahman caste. Weber chose to examine such strata in the Gesammelte because their ideas and life-conduct profoundly affected that culture's rationalism, and thus the life-conduct and beliefs of the other strata in that society (Weber, 1991, p. 270). Weber was aware that each strata had different ideal and material interests based on its conditions of life, and these interests shaped how each particular strata interpreted the religious message promoted by the culture-bearing

\textsuperscript{50} For the details of the origins of this term in chemistry and its history in German thought, see Howe (1978). Bendix believed that: 'the term "elective affinity" was taken from the title of a novel by Goethe. Weber used it frequently to express the dual aspect of ideas, i.e., that they were created or chosen by the individual "elective") and that they fit in with his material interests ("affinity") (Bendix, 1966, p. 64).

\textsuperscript{51} This process has been summed up well, if rather colourfully, by Stephen Kalberg: 'in history's battleground, interests have struggled against interests, and values and "ideas", regardless of the clarity of their formulation or intrinsic plausibility, have died a sudden death unless anchored securely within social and economic matrices' (1980, p. 1169).
strata. In this way, a religious worldview and message met different social strata’s ideal and material interests in different ways.\textsuperscript{52}

Furthermore, which strata is the religiously influential strata will change over time, as new challengers and new historical conditions force changes to the content of religious ethics (Weber, 1991, p. 268). In this way, Weber’s work on religion recognises its dynamic nature changes, conflicts, and interactions in and through religious worldviews.

Therefore, Weber historically traces how particular religious worldviews are developed in societies, and how one strata succeeds in establishing its preeminence over the cultural sphere and worldview by making its values, lifestyles, and ontological presuppositions the dominant ones. These values and presuppositions become the reference point by which all other agents and strata are judged. How this occurs, is a complex social, historical and religious process, powered by ideal and material interests. It is not based on material factors alone, as demonstrated by the contemplative virtuosi (who are materially deprived, but information - and thus status - rich).

The main social strata Weber analyses in the Gesammelte are the civic strata, the warrior strata, the peasantry, and the intellectuals.

The civic strata, mostly artisans, traders and merchants, due to their life-conditions in urban settlements (that is, their separation from nature), emphasise a form of ‘practical rationality’ based on the calculations and techniques they constantly employ in their life-conduct. Thus ‘their whole existence has been based upon technological or economic calculations and upon the mastery of nature and of man, however primitive the means at

\textsuperscript{52} For a detailed analysis of the different elements the various strata’s seek in a religion, see Kalberg (1985).
their disposal’ (Weber, 1991, p. 284). Since both their ideal and material interests were met by their efforts to calculate the workings of, and tame, the human and material elements they dealt with, civic strata were the most likely to adopt messages of religious salvation which called for ethical conduct, especially conduct which promoted world mastery. For Weber, the rise of this strata was crucial in shaping Western history and the rise of Western rationalism.

Unlike the civic strata, warriors were not inclined towards rationally mastering reality because of their belief, stemming from the realities of warfare, that fate and death are indiscriminate (Weber, 1991, p. 283). They saw their military exploits and virtues, such as valour and courage, as the basis of their meaning and worthwhileness, which thus satisfied their ideal interests. Their material interests were usually satisfied by the plunder and booty exacted in victory. For both of these reasons, the orientation of the warrior strata was this-worldly, and they almost always rejected salvation religions as a model for life-conduct.

Peasants, with their ties to nature and the unpredictability of the elements, were more inclined towards magic, rather than rationally mastering reality (Weber, 1991, p. 283). Their material interests were met by their labours in and through nature, especially the land, and their ideal interests were met through whatever means provided success in this relationship, including spells, rituals, and other magical means.

The intellectual strata have aimed primarily to understand the world, rather than practically master it. Adopting mainly 'theoretical rationality', that is, abstract and 'pure' thought, they have attempted to gain a systematic and consistent view of the world and
reality (Weber, 1991, p. 279). Their ideal interest has stemmed from gaining this view which could give a meaning to the world. Their material interests have usually been tied to receiving material benefits in exchange for their theoretical knowledge.\textsuperscript{53}

The types of social strata, with their dispositions towards particular forms of life-conduct and particular types of rationality, obviously profoundly affected the direction that religious rationalisation took in any society.

**Religious Virtuosi and the Masses: Asceticism and Mysticism**

The direction of religious rationalisation within a culture has also been shaped by the relations between two groups in the religious life-sphere, the religious 'virtuosi' and the religious 'masses' or 'laity'.\textsuperscript{54} The former were agents who strove for something beyond this-worldly objects such as wealth and longevity, for a ‘higher’ religious object - the experience of 'extraordinariness' that comes from sacredness. It was the intensity of the emotional and psychological experience which was sought by them. This extraordinary religious experience could be achieved in three main ways: the ecstasy of the orgiastic ritual or intoxication, methodical asceticism, or mystical contemplation.

The ‘higher’ religious values, those emotional states which come from the extraordinariness of ‘pure’ religious experiences, have not been accessible to or sought after, by everyone, however. Often there have been stipulations on who is ‘worthy’ of

\textsuperscript{53} As with most of Weber's work, complications arise when drawing up a typology due to the historical nature of his work. Thus, as Kalberg (1985, p. 65) has pointed out, Weber's view of intellectuals depended on which strata they originated from or were aligned to (petty-bourgeois intellectuals, proletarian, genteel, or whatever). For this reason, I prefer to detail Weber's analysis of the intellectual and other strata in the context of his empirical works. The comments here are meant as little more than precursory to that discussion.

\textsuperscript{54} For an analysis of the relations between religious virtuosi and masses in Weber's work and an attempt to apply it to empirical studies, see Turner (1981, pp. 109-41).
these experiences and who is not, as most clearly seen in the Calvinist idea of ‘the elect’. In this way, individuals faced differences in ‘religious qualification’. For Weber, this meant that a scale of status stratification was established which judged religious ‘virtuosi’ as more deserving and able to attain higher religious states, than the religious ‘masses’, the laity who were not qualified to do so.\textsuperscript{55} Weber makes it clear that these religious masses may not have a negative status in the secular status order (for example, they may be politically dominant), but that the religious virtuosi are perceived to have a specifically religious ‘charisma’, that is, extraordinary qualities which endowed them with the ability to achieve such religious states (1991, p. 287). The masses, however, have different needs from religion, ranging from a legitimation of their deserved dominance in the social order, to magical rituals which would allow them to have this-worldly benefits such as wealth, health and longevity.

Those virtuosi (mostly found in Asia) that emphasised contemplation and mysticism as the means to salvation, did not bring about a linking of religious ethics with the everyday life-conduct (including economic conduct) of the religious masses. This was, of course, because such action in this world was seen as a distraction from the importance of contemplation. The result, according to Weber, was a passivity towards the world and conduct, especially economic conduct. For this reason, the religious virtuoso became dependent on the masses as a source of tribute, which was exchanged when the layman ‘bought’ the religious service of the virtuoso, usually in the form of advice on ritualism and magical acts.

\textsuperscript{55} It is from these ideas of Weber which Bourdieu has obviously drawn the most inspiration, and which he as applied in his studies of the religious field.
Active ascetic virtuosi have had a different relation to the everyday world and the masses. Often they formed sects, closed religious communities with strict barriers of inclusion and exclusion based on religious qualification. This qualification was based on how far an agent ethically rationalised their life, that is, how far they were able to constantly and consistently orientate their whole life, through the use of discipline, to certain ethical principles laid out and demanded by God. This ethical life-conduct thus not only proved the practitioner's worthiness for salvation to God, but also to themself and to fellow members of the sect.

These ascetic sects have only been organised on a large scale in Occidental Protestantism. This, as we shall see, was due to a number of contingent historical developments, but also to the internal logics of the Christian worldview and the cosmological presuppositions it inherited from ancient Judaism. It was thus the Occidental ascetic sects which were the source of the rationalisation of life-conduct in a thorough and methodical way towards particular ethical beliefs to be proved through action in the world. This ethical rationalisation of life-conduct included economic conduct. Weber argued that the more religious virtuosi conceded to the masses' needs for this-worldly goods, the less 'ethical absolutism' and thus ethical rationalisation of everyday life was achieved.

The role of the organised Church was crucial in shaping the relation between virtuosi and the masses because of its attempts to meet the needs of the latter. In general, the Church attempted to monopolise religious objects, specifically the means to salvation and thus attacked the autonomy of religious virtuosi (Weber, 1991, p. 288). The resultant
struggle between religious virtuosi and the Church often meant that the virtuosi had to make concessions to the religious masses in order to survive. In Asia, as we shall see, these concessions were in the form of allowing the religious masses to remain enchanted with magic.

Relations between religious virtuosi and the religious masses were similar in the Occident under the 'magical' dominance of the Roman Church in Medieval Christianity. The rise of Protestantism in the West, however, saw some virtuosi attempt to ethically rationalise everyday life and demand that the masses follow. The success of this demand and the sects it produced were to have a major effect on the life-conduct of the masses.

**Conception of the Divine/God and the Role of Prophets**

The direction of religious rationalisation was also affected not only by external circumstances, such as the makeup of the social order, but also by more 'internal' factors such as the ideas and presuppositions at the base of the religious worldview. Paramount amongst such presuppositions were the nature of the divine.

Within the Middle East and West, the conception of the divine has predominantly been of a supramundane, agentic and personal God (Weber, 1991, p. 285). This God created the cosmos, controlled it, and usually made demands on human beings according to which they should live. In Asia, however, the conception of the divine has generally been of an impersonal, harmonious order, an All-Oneness which connects all life.

The acceptance of these different conceptions of the divine depended on a host of political, economic, social, and historically contingent factors which we shall examine in
more detail in the next few chapters. It is important at this stage, though, to observe that these differing perceptions of the divine had logical consequences for action in the world, and for the type of prophets that promulgated them. The conception of a personal, active/agentic God has lent itself more easily to the rise of what Weber terms 'emissary prophecy', that is, where the prophet exists on behalf of a godhead and makes ethical demands on his followers in the name of God. This has promoted the idea that followers are God's 'tools', or instruments placed in this world to do His bidding (Weber, 1991, p. 285). This in turn has promoted asceticism as a means to salvation.

The Asian conception of a harmonious order promoted what Weber termed 'exemplary prophecy' and the idea of salvation being achieved through an individual becoming a 'vessel' of the divine. It was the outstanding conduct of these prophets which was seen by their followers as the path to salvation. This exemplary 'vessel' promoted contemplative mysticism as the means to salvation.

Once developed and systematised, these conceptions of the divine, and the types of prophets they promoted, have had a logical autonomy which has had important repercussions for life-conduct (Weber, 1991, p. 286).

**Conclusion**

I have outlined in this chapter the main concepts and epistemological framework that Weber employed in his sociology of religion, as outlined in the *Gesammelte*, in an attempt to trace how far religious rationalisation contributed to the formation of the unique
Western rationalism found in modernity and the life-conduct this helped to produce.\textsuperscript{56} I have also shown that, although believing a number of factors affected the direction of religious rationalisation, Weber believed religion did have autonomy as a distinct life-sphere, the basis of which was addressing the reality of human suffering and finiteness, and the attempt to overcome them. He was adamant that religion could not simply be reduced to class interests or material conditions. 'External' factors (such as geography, historical contingency, material conditions affecting social strata), though influential, must not be seen to be the prime factors affecting religious development, Weber argued, because there were also 'internal' factors involved. Thus Weber emphasised not only that religious ideas have a logical autonomy, that is, that certain presuppositions at the base of a religious worldview will have logical consequences, but also that human beings have 'religious needs', a need for some kind of framework of meaning in their lives, especially one which makes sense of death and suffering. In this way, he saw humans as morally reflexive or 'ethically rational' beings. It was thus the complex combination of external factors, such as geography and historical developments, plus inner factors such as the logic of ideas and the human need for meaning, which shaped a religion's ethics and worldview, and in turn, shaped its adherents' life-conduct, including their economic conduct. In Weber's terms, there was a 'mutual inter-relation between external and internal interest-situations' (1991, p. 287).\textsuperscript{57}

In the next few chapters, by examining how this conceptual framework was utilised in Weber's empirical studies of the world religions, I intend to show, contra

\textsuperscript{56} For this reason, Weber saw his sociology of religion as a contribution to the sociology of rationalism (Weber, 1991, p. 324).
\textsuperscript{57} For a detailed analysis of Weber's multicausality, see Kalberg (1994a, pp. 50-78).
Bourdieu's claim that Weber's sociology of religion is a form of symbolic interactionism and subjectivism, that it is in fact a highly complex and dynamic understanding of the workings of the religious life-sphere. It was the workings of the Western religious sphere, and the paradoxical consequences brought about by the process of religious rationalisation undertaken within it, that Weber attempted to analyse in great detail. These consequences are not examined at all in Bourdieu's critique of Weber and this fact, I will argue, presents serious problems, not only for Bourdieu's interpretation of Weber, but also for his own work. It is to this Western religious rationalisation, with its origins in the ancient Hebrew society of Palestine, that we now turn.
Western Religious Rationalisation: Palestine, Puritanism, and Paradoxes

Introduction

Rationalisation of the religious sphere in Western cultural history began with the formation of Judaism in ancient Israel, and culminated with Puritanism in the sixteenth century. According to Weber, this religious rationalisation was vital to the development of modern Western rationalism. In this chapter, I trace Weber's work on this Western religious rationalisation in a bid to illustrate some of the complexity of the constellation of factors involved in this process, as well as to show Weber's reflexive awareness of modern Western culture's origins and inheritance. This chapter examines the rise of a particular ethical understanding of the place of human agency within Judaism and Puritanism, the dominance of particular values and knowledge in these religions, and the process of disenchchantment they brought into being. Most importantly, this chapter shows how the religious values and presuppositions developed in ancient Palestine and transmitted through early modern Puritanism, have left a profound legacy for modern Western rationalism, a rationalism in which Bourdieu's science of practices is very much located.
I. Ancient Judaism

To Weber, the religion of the ancient Israelites was a 'pathos of punishment' (1952, p. 320). Yet it was precisely this pathos, and its concern with the meaning of suffering in the world, which lay at the basis of ancient Judaism's contributions to the development of modern Western rationalism. For a constellation of reasons, ancient Judaism developed a form of religious rationalisation which broke from the magical conception of the world. Part of this constellation was the geography of Palestine which affected the socio-economic organisation of Hebrew society, shaped its conception of the divine, and brought it into contact with the Near Eastern empires which surrounded it. Another factor was the unique development of the ontological presupposition of the berith, or ethical covenant, with God. This ethical framework, which was the result of ethical rationalism, allowed the Hebrew prophets to rationalise the conception of the divine towards monotheism by explaining all political crises and historical events as the result of His will and power.¹ Yet another factor in this constellation was the quite arbitrary historical threat of the Near Eastern empires conquering Palestine, a threat which was interpreted by these prophets as indicative of immoral living and God's displeasure. Still another factor

¹For an in-depth analysis of how Weber saw monotheism developing in ancient Judaism, see Kalberg (1994b). Though this analysis suffers from an over-rationalised systematisation of Weber's methodology, it sets out the constellation of factors involved in this development very well. For a criticism of Weber's work on monotheism based on more recent historical analysis, see Zeitlin (1984). Zeitlin argues that such analysis now indicates that the priesthood was just as influential, if not more so, in systematising a monotheistic conception of Yahwe (1984, p. 266). He misinterprets, however, Weber's understanding of how the prophets saw themselves, and the nature of their charisma, and in so doing, concludes with an interpretation very similar to that of Weber (Zeitlin, 1984, pp. 211-12). It is beyond my competencies to judge Zeitlin's argument that Weber was wrong to see monotheism only emerging under the prophets after the Exile (1984, p. 266). Zeitlin does admit, however, that many contemporary Biblical scholars still firmly agree with Weber's position. In any case, I do not consider that this seriously effects or undermines Weber's overall argument about the ethical importance of the prophets, and the importance of Judaism in breaking from the magical worldview.
in this constellation was the increasing urbanisation of Israelite society, and the social
tensions which emerged out of this, which provided conditions in which these ideas could
exist.

As a result of these and other factors, Judaism witnessed an increasing hostility
towards magic and ritualism, and the demand for ethical regulation of life in accordance to
the moral order of the cosmos as laid out by God.\(^2\) Although the ethical regulation of
everyday life promoted by the prophets did not culminate in an inner-worldly asceticism
because the prophets did not see economic conduct as a means of proving ethical conduct,
Weber saw the origins of a particular form of ethical rationalism and process of religious
rationalisation within ancient Judaism. This process and ethical rationalism emphasised
certain values and began the process of 'de-magicalisation' which were to profoundly
affect ascetic Puritanism, and from there, modern Western culture. Because of this, and
because of the prime example of Weber's multicausality it provides, even though it was his
last systematic writing on religion, we shall begin an analysis of Weber's empirical studies
of the world religions by examining 'Ancient Judaism'.\(^3\)

\(^2\) Wax sums this up nicely: 'the reforms preached by the pre-Exilic prophets were institutionalised in the
legal codes that were subsequently declared and successively elaborated. These stated that any behaviour
resembling the rituals of fertility was subject to extreme punishment and they enjoined as compulsory a
style of conduct that required stern self-discipline. The magical world was "disenchanted" and displaced by
a world regulated by legal and moral principles' (1960, p. 451).

\(^3\) Though there are references to ancient Judaism in 'Economy and Society', 'Social Psychology of the
World Religions', and 'General Economic History', I will concentrate for the most part in this section on
the essays written in the *Gesammelte*. These essays, entitled *Das antike Judentum*, appeared in the
*Archiv* between 1917 and 1919. Weber's death in 1920 prevented him from finishing them and
Marianne Weber published them as Volume Three of the 'Collected Works on the Sociology of Religion'
in 1921, with an additional essay on the Pharisees. According to Marianne Weber (1975, p. 593) most of
this research was done in fall, 1916, a remarkably short time. As Weber (1952, p. 425) himself
recognised, it would take a lifetime to examine all the scholarship on ancient Judaism and he was
therefore very much aware of his reliance on the Biblical scholarship of his time. This scholarship fell
into two main camps: the 'immanent evolutionary' scholars following the work of Wellhausen; and the
'Pan-Babylonian' scholars which argued for the primacy of external factors in Judaism's development.
According to Weber, all Old Testament study up to the time of his research was influenced by the work of
Geography and Ancient Judaism

Like most of his empirical works on the world religions, and as part of his multicausal understanding of the constellation of factors involved in historical development, Weber began his analysis of ancient Judaism by examining the influence of geographical factors on the religion and the society of which it was a part. According to Weber, the geography of Canaan and Palestine profoundly affected the economic, social, and cultural development of the Hebrews and Judaism.

Faced with desert in the south and the east, the Hebrews lived in the steppes in southern Palestine and the plains in northern Palestine. For Weber, these two regions had different climatic conditions which promoted different forms of economic activity (1952, pp. 8-10). The heavy rain of the thunderstorms, which came in from the south and onto the steppes, blew off top-soil in the region, thus undermining the possibility of agriculture there. These thunderstorms, however, were favourable for pastoralism as they were

Wellhausen: 'Wellhausen's central conception of Jewish religious history may best be termed "immanent evolutionary". The developmental course of Yahwe religion is determined by its unique, intrinsic tendencies, though, of course, under the influence of the general fate of the people' (Weber, 1952, p. 426). The similarities here to Tenbruck's interpretation of Weber's own work are obvious.

The opposing camp of Old Testament scholars argued the 'pan-Babylonian' position, that is, that Judaism was produced by, and part of, the surrounding Mesopotamian culture. Weber, however, argues that the cultural relations between Babylonia and Israel's practical ethics were not as decisive as those scholars believed (Weber, 1952, p. 428). Importantly though, this 'pan-Babylonian' position forced revisions in Old Testament studies against Wellhausen's work:

The actual permeation of Israelite religion with magical and animistic elements, on the one hand, the interrelation with the circles of great neighbouring cultures, on the other, was brought out more clearly, and work was concentrated upon the question, which is actually decisive, as to what, after all, constitutes the indubitable peculiarity of Israelite religious development in comparison with those which were, in part, universally diffused, in part, common traits specifically culturally determined (Weber, 1952, p. 428)

It is this last position that Weber is addressing in 'Ancient Judaism', not the evolutionary model that some have imputed to him. As Fahey (1982, pp. 78-79) points out, though Weber was heavily reliant on Wellhausen and his colleagues for secondary analyses of the Old Testament, this reliance was primarily 'instrumental'. Much more influential was the work of Eduard Meyer (see Fahey, 1982, pp. 80-82, for an examination of these influences). It is possible to see in 'Ancient Judaism' the influence of all these positions and an attempt to combine them.
suitable for watering camels and cattle. For the pastoralists who received these rainy thunderstorms, the divine power was seen as a god of thunderstorms and rain.

On the open plains in the north, however, there were the mild rains which came in from the sea and southwest. These rains, and the plains on which they fell, promoted the development of agriculture based on grain and dates and this area was occupied by peasant communities.

The geography of Palestine affected not only the economic activity, but also the social order of Hebrew society. The various social strata, which we shall examine below, struggled over the control of land and the wealth it generated, as well as over the trade routes which criss-crossed Palestine. This social struggle was to have an important influence on the development of Judaism.

The geographical position of Palestine also meant that it came under the cultural influence of the Near Eastern empires that surrounded it (Weber, 1952, pp. 5-7). Throughout its history, ancient Judaism was exposed to Mesopotamian and Egyptian influences. The commercial ties of the Phoenician cities with Babylon and the Egyptian Kingdoms meant that Palestine was a region of trade routes and cultural exchange.⁴

Egypt had a significant influence on Israel's development. The Israelite kings took over the 'megalomania' of the Egyptian pharaohs, the Egyptian practice of circumcision

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⁴These trade routes were the target of many militarily expansive regimes. The Eighteenth Dynasty of New Kingdom Egypt raided Palestine after the Hyksos Wars, before becoming engaged in an enduring struggle for control over it with the Hittites. Within Palestine, various smaller kingdoms fought amongst each other to dominate their surrounding regions. The Assyrians also conquered the area in the eighth and seventh centuries BC. All of these events effected the political and religious outlook of the Hebrews (see Weber, 1952, pp. 6-8).
was introduced, and Solomon established most of his government in accordance with Egyptian principles (Weber, 1952, pp. 198-201).

In the religious sphere, however, Egyptian cultural influence was slight (Weber, 1952, pp. 7-8). Hebrew religious intellectuals rejected the Egyptian cult of the dead, the basis of the Egyptian priesthood’s power, as a depreciation of this world in favour of the next. Furthermore, the Egyptian 'corvee state' was seen by the Hebrews as a 'house of bondage', a perception which was based on the tradition of the Egyptian enslavement (which Moses had liberated the Hebrews from under the guidance of the god Yahwe). This perception was to become increasingly important in the development of the Judaic worldview.

In the case of Mesopotamia, Weber argues, religious influence was stronger and more complex (1952, pp. 201-205). The proliferation of orgiastic and fertility cults (such as that of Ba'ale) affected much of Israelite life, especially that of the lower strata. It was not until the revolution of Jehu, instigated by Elijah, that these were ceased (Weber, 1952, p. 202). It was the resistance to Babylonian influence of Israelite religious intellectuals which allowed Hebrew religion to maintain its independence (Weber, 1952, p. 202-205).5

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5 For Weber, this is a prime example of a great religious conception emerging on the periphery of major civilisations: 'the reason for this is always the same: prerequisite to new religious conceptions is that man must not yet have unlearned how to face the course of the world with questions of his own. Precisely the man distant from the great cultural centres has cause to do so when their influence begins to affect or threaten his central interests ... The possibility of questioning the meaning of the world presupposes the capacity to be astonished about the course of events' (Weber, 1952, p. 207).
The Social Relations of Ancient Judaism

Having examined the geographical setting of Ancient Judaism, Weber then shows how this effected the historical development of the social stratification of Hebrew society. As he puts it, 'the naturally given contrasts in economic conditions have always found expression in differences of the social and economic structure' (Weber, 1952, p. 10). Weber traces the changes in the social relations of the various strata over time as a means of establishing the social environment in which certain ethics and worldviews arose.

As we have seen, the inhabitants of Palestine originally consisted of peasants in the fertile plains of the north, and herdsmen in the southern steppes region. According to Weber (1952, p. 24), as witnessed by the Song of Deborah, in the Hebrew's early history these groups would unite in times of warfare into a confederacy (called the 'am hamilchama) based on a peasant militia (called the Gedah).  

This confederacy decided on many issues as an assembly and was led by charismatic warriors who promised victory. It was this confederacy which was to be the basis of the Israelite nation and which, led by Moses, made a pact with the god, Yahwe (of which more shall be said below). Yahwe was seen to be the true leader of the army and He was believed to send warlords as His representatives to lead the Gedah. In this way, every confederate war was also a holy war

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6 According to Weber, this confederacy must have existed in Palestine at least around the time of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom and he believed that its formation was 'the most important instance in the history of religion'. He placed such importance on it due to its role in providing social conditions for the shattering of the unified magical worldview, as will become clear below.

7 Before the time of the kings, the confederacy had no permanent political organisation and was led by charismatic leaders which managed to unite the various tribes of the confederacy during times of war and lead them to the divinely promised victories. According to Weber, these charismatic warrior leaders were probably the Judges referred to in the Old Testament (1952, p. 40).

8 Here I employ the spelling used by Weber's translators, 'Yahweh', as opposed to the more common 'Yahweh', for reasons of uniformity and consistency.
(Weber, 1952, p. 91). This confederacy fought many of the surrounding peoples in Palestine, including the Philistines and Phoenician city-states. Eventually, under the leadership of King David (c. 1000 BC), this confederacy gained hegemony over Canaan and established a kingdom of the Israelites.

The military victories of David cemented the power of the monarchy over Hebrew society, and the administrative reforms of his son Solomon moulded and consolidated these gains in the form of an Egyptian-style bureaucracy (Weber, 1952, pp. 99-100). These events saw a professional army replace the peasant militia and the emergence of a military elite (Weber, 1952, p. 100). The city sibs, through the monarchical administration (and the growth in urbanisation and changes in military technology which accompanied it), came to dominate social relations as power was centralised in the capital, Jerusalem. This urban elite gradually conquered the surrounding areas, bringing both the peasantry and herdsmen into economic and social subjugation and excluding them from military activities. With the victory of the urban elite, a new social stratification system emerged, based on the city warriorhood, the Gibborim, who became a patriciate through taxing and enslaving the indebted and landless poor.

The Gibborim were large landowners who were economically independent and could thus afford to arm themselves in war (Weber, 1952, p. 16). Based in cities (gir), which grew out of the forts of warrior chiefs and the refuges for cattle-owners, they came to dominate political and military decisions in the confederacy. Their dominance of

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9 The peasants in the North constantly rebelled against this domination, as did the herdsmen in the south. In many ways, it was a struggle of the mountain against the plain. This, according to Weber, is borne out by the fact that the heroes of the Israelites ride asses, the animal of the mountains, not horses or chariots (1952, p. 54).
politics rested on the fact that war, increasingly based on chariot and armour technology, was costly. The power and prestige of a dominant sib was based on its military role and therefore its wealth. This wealth in turn, was based on the exploitation of the surrounding countryside and the peasant villages that existed there (Weber, 1952, pp. 20-21).

The caravan routes across Palestine were also important in these struggles for wealth and influence, and the attempts of the cities to expand and conquer the highlands were attempts to gain control of these routes. Trade income allowed the rich to buy more land, gain debt slaves through usury to peasants, and to finance their military power (Weber, 1952, pp. 21-22).

The increasing power and reach of the Gibborim was in stark contrast to the social trajectory of the traditional Israelite peasantry. The peasants usually lived outside the cities dominated by the Gibborim. Due to the changes in military technology and the increasing importance of landed wealth, the peasant militia was gradually excluded from the army of the confederacy (Weber, 1952, pp. 24-25). Correspondingly, the peasantry became more and more indebted to the Gibborim and thus excluded from war and politics. As Weber puts it:

Once the kernel of the army of the Israelite Confederacy in the battle against the Canaanite chariot-fighting city-patriciate, the free peasant with the increasing urbanisation of the great Israelite sibs, and the change-over to the chariot fighting technique was increasingly reduced to a plebeian within his own people (1952, p. 27).

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10 In Palestine, as elsewhere, it was of decisive importance that the city-state promoted the most highly developed military technology of the time. For the urban patriciate [Gibborim] was the champion of knightly chariotry, which only the wealthiest sibs could afford under conditions of self-equipment (Weber, 1952, p. 22). Here is a prime example of how Weber’s work constantly emphasises the importance of military technology and its degree of expense. The type of military technology, and who could afford it, was crucial in influencing the outcome and direction of social and political struggles in many of the societies Weber analysed.
The herdsmen likewise suffered reverses with the increasing urbanisation and power of the Gibborim. Formerly, the semi-nomadic herdsmen bred stock and followed the rains required for this. They were often attacked by the Bedouin of the region and thus allied with the settled peasants of the villages and areas surrounding the cities. As the free peasantry expanded to escape the grip of the Gibborim, however, they expanded into the traditional lands of the herdsmen (Weber, 1952, p. 40). This therefore meant a decline in the number of areas in which the herdsmen could graze their stock. Though there were often clashes against the peasants who tried to take over the fertile lands in the hills used by the herdsmen, the two strata often allied against the city patriciate which was attempting to conquer and indebt them both by gaining control over the trade routes of the region (Weber, 1952, p. 54). Over time, faced by the social pressures of the peasantry and urban elite, many of the herdsmen settled and became agriculturalists, thus aiding the spread of urbanisation. With this, the numbers of herdsmen declined and they were gradually de-militarised. Along with the peasants, they became poorer (and thus lost their military qualifications) through the usury of the city patriciate (Weber, 1952, p. 46).

Another 'middle' strata in Israeliite society was the plebeian urban strata, mainly composed of artisans and merchants. Kalberg notes the changes that the kingship had on this stratum:

in expanding the civic strata of artisans, craftsmen and corvee labourers, this form of rulership had the effect of orienting Israeliite society to new rhythms based upon daily tasks radically disjunctive from the peasant life in harmony with the forces of nature.... patrimonialism attempted to habituate this class to a "practical rationalism" characterised by a systematic division of labour, a linear organisation of work, the rational accounting of one's tasks, and economic calculations. Thus, the growth of the plebeian strata implied, to Weber, a clear weakening of magic (1994b, p. 568).
They too were economically and socially dependent on the *Gibborim*. This was primarily because they had no means of partaking in warfare and could not afford to do so.\textsuperscript{11} As we shall see, even after the Exile, this social and economic dependence of the plebeian and peasant strata on the urban elite via the mechanism of usury, continued.\textsuperscript{12}

**The Ethic of Brotherliness**

The deepening division between urban and rural strata in Hebrew society is mirrored in the Israelite laws of the period. Increasingly these laws emphasised an 'ethic of brotherliness' between Israelites. This ethic expressly forbid the economic exploitation, such as slavery and usury, of one Israelite by another (Weber, 1952, p. 64). For example, the Book of the Covenant, probably written when the power of the urban patriciate was just beginning to increase, signifies the importance of land ownership but also talks of brotherliness in general terms, such as helping neighbours and widows (Weber, 1952, p. 67). The Book of Deuteronomy takes this ethic further, demanding the cancelling of debts for all Israelites after seven years of debt. The ethic of brotherliness in these works is limited, however, to tribal brothers and Israelites, whereas foreigners and gentiles could be economically exploited. The importance to Weber of this ethic of brotherliness was that when it was

\textsuperscript{11} 'Still lacking were the political preconditions, such as the military organisation of the ancient hoplites or of the medieval citizens on which the political power of the occidental plebeians was based' (Weber, 1952, p. 31). I shall return in a later chapter to the importance of certain forms of military technology regarding the history of the Greek and Roman hoplite which gave them a different destiny to their Israelite counterparts.

\textsuperscript{12} However, one major change in Post-Exilic Judaism was the increasing *moral* importance of the petite bourgeoisie (Weber, 1952, p. 32).
universalised under Christianity, it would become one of the main forms of ethical rationalism to shape Western cultural history.

**The Judaic Conception of the Divine - Yahwe**

Having set out the historical changes to the social relations of Israelite society in which Judaism emerged, if one likes, the 'objective' and 'material' conditions in which it originated, Weber then turned to analyse the 'inner' and 'ideal' dimensions to Judaism. This involved outlining its ontological presuppositions about the cosmos and the place of humans within it. For Weber, this was necessary in order to show how the political and socio-historical changes which affected Israelite society were interpreted via and through the presuppositions about reality of the Judaic worldview.

As mentioned, the peasant militia of the early Israelite confederacy formed a pact with a deity they named Yahwe via the intermediary of Moses (c. 1220 BC). According to Weber, Yahwe seems to have been a pre-Israelite god who Moses first introduced into Hebrew society. The destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea seems to have been the act which most cemented the relationship between the Hebrews and Yawhe by giving Him great prestige.\(^{13}\)

Yahwe was conceived by the Hebrews as a god containing attributes very similar to those of a this-worldly king. He was a god from afar, living on his mountain throne, and this imbued on Him a certain majesty (Weber, 1952, p. 124). He was also a god of war whose frightful wrath was indicated by the onset of natural catastrophes such as

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\(^{13}\) Weber suggests that this event was probably the result of volcanic activity (Weber, 1952, p. 124).
lightning and locust plagues (Weber, 1952, p. 128). He possessed Israelite warriors in order to give them victory, the most famous of which was Samson.

Originally, Yahwe was perceived to co-exist with other fertility and vegetation gods from cultures within and around Palestine. These other gods were seen as separate to Yahwe, but over time, due to religious rationalisation, He became perceived as the God of gods and these other gods were reduced to the status of messengers and tools for His will (Weber, 1952, pp. 152-53). There was also no divine female consort in Israelite theology and so this stopped the development of theogony myths. Yahwe was increasingly seen as the sole god and all wars were to be fought in His name. This rationalisation towards monotheism profoundly affected the Judaic worldview.

For Weber, the importance of the Hebrew's conception of Yahwe lay in the this-worldly nature of His promises and powers:

He was and always remained a god of salvation and promise. What mattered chiefly, however, was that salvation as well as promise concerned actual political, not intimate personal affairs. The god offered salvation from Egyptian bondage, not from a senseless world out of joint. He promised not transcendent values but dominion of Canaan which one was out to conquer, and a good life (Weber, 1952, p. 126).

This being said, however, it is important to realise that Weber sees conceptions of Yahwe as differing in emphasis between social strata due to their life-conduct.\(^{14}\) What was common to all strata, however, was the belief that Yahwe was the guardian of the confederacy and was opposed to all that was not a part of the confederacy. It is to this relation between Yahwe and the Israelite confederacy that we now turn.

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\(^{14}\) For example, the army saw Him as their god of war who battled the enemy's god; the urban patriciate and masses believed Yahwe resided in the Temple of Jerusalem and other gods existed outside Israel; and the herdsmen believed Yahwe was with them wherever they went (Weber, 1952, p. 133).
Suffering and the Paths to Salvation in Judaism: the Berith

The understanding and meaning of human suffering, misery and death in ancient Judaism was intimately tied to the special contractual relationship between Yahwe and the Hebrews. The unique nature of this relationship stemmed from the fact that the contract between them (the berith), was both the cause of suffering and the means of alleviating it.

According to the Book of the Covenant, Moses formed an oathbound covenant with Yahwe on behalf of the Hebrews when receiving the Decalogue (also known as the Ten Commandments). The uniqueness of Israel's position in religious history stemmed from this covenant (Weber, 1952, p. 118). The berith meant that the Hebrews were to be Yahwe's chosen people and that He would bring them military victory and this-worldly dominance in exchange for their unflinching fidelity to Him and strict adherence to His ethical commandments. If these obligations were met, the Israelite confederacy would be under His divine protection (Weber, 1952, p. 81).

Tradition states that the Commandments given to Moses were the contractual obligation of the Israelites' berith with God. Most importantly, these commandments were ethical in nature, and thus it was to be ethical behaviour in accordance with these moral laws which was the basis of God's relations with the Israelites (Weber, 1952, pp. 301-302).

For Weber, this ethical relation was in contrast to the use of magical spells or rituals used in the attempt to control spirits and gods for one's benefit. Yahwe's favour,

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15 The this-worldly nature of Israelite ideas of salvation and the emphasis on the ethic of brotherliness and justice, can be traced to the experience of the Israelites as a slave race under the Egyptians. This is made clear by Zeitlin: "... there can be no doubt that the ethic expressed in the Decalogue and covenant, notably the striking concern for justice, has its roots in the slave experience of the people. A basic principle of Mosaic legislation is the protection of the weak from the strong" (1984, p. 94).
and thus salvation, could only be achieved by an ethically correct 'inner' life towards which the individual should adjust themself, not the manipulation of external objects. For Weber, this was the beginning of 'ethical absolutism' in Western religious history.

The berith was thus the basis of salvation in this world. For the Hebrews, the promises of Yahwe related to military and political dominance of the world and this was possible because Yahwe had made them His chosen people through His contract. This-worldly salvation would see their oppression and political domination by the great empires around them overturned and they would become the dominant strata in a new political order. At the same time, however, if broken, the berith could be the source of suffering in this world.

Thus, Yahwe would fulfil His promises of this-worldly political and economic benefits if the people lived up to the berith. Otherwise, He would make them suffer for their unethical conduct. For Weber, the importance of the concept of the berith lies in the fact that, on the one hand, it demanded an ethical systematisation of life-conduct, and on the other, that it was the basis of the prophecies which would have such effect on Jewish history (Weber, 1952, p. 119).

This being said, Yahwe did not advocate an absolute ethic and, like the arbitrary decisions of a this-worldly king, He could change His will at any moment. In this way, Yahwe was above human judgement (Weber, 1952, p. 136). This added to the psychological pressure felt from the uncertainty over Yahwe's will, along with whether one was acting correctly.
Another important rational outcome from the presupposition of the *berith* was that since it had been made between Yahwe and His chosen people, they were collectively responsible for maintaining their contractual obligations. What became ethically important was the religious joint-responsibility of the confederate members for the offences of each individual fellow believer (Weber, 1952, p. 137).

From where did this unique conception of an active God seeking retribution if betrayed by His contractual partners stem? According to Weber, there were a number of political, social, and historical conditions which shaped this conception. As part of this multicausality, Weber rejects a materialistically determined solution such as that proposed by historical materialism which would see this as being an ideological reflection of social relations, instead arguing that there was an 'elective affinity' between the nomadic life-conditions of the herdsmen and peasant, and the religious ideas developed (Weber, 1952, pp. 79-80).

The covenant idea was primarily based on the ancient social structure of Israel which saw settled peasant sibs establishing contractual obligations with guestmetics and artisans (*gerim*) and with other sibs. The idea of the *berith* was thus part of the traditional power relations and social interaction of Israelite society (Weber, 1952, p. 79).

It was the changing political fortunes of the Israelite kingdom, however, which brought about renewed emphasis on the idea of the *berith*.¹⁶ The decay of the former

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¹⁶ After the death of Solomon (c. 930 BC), the Israelite Kingdom was divided between his two sons, Rehoboam (ruler of the Southern Kingdom of Judah) and Jeroboam (ruler of the Northern Kingdom of Israel), and a period of political instability and civil war begun. This internal instability was overshadowed by the looming power of the Assyrian Empire, which conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, followed by that of the Neo-Babylonian Empire which conquered Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom of Judah in c. 586 BC, eliminating the only remaining independent Jewish state in the process.
splendour of the kings was an indication to many religious virtuosi that the Hebrews had strayed off the path to salvation by neglecting their ethical obligations as outlined in the berith. It is to these religious virtuosi and their calls for an ethically regulated life-conduct that we now turn.

Religious Virtuosi of Ancient Judaism: Nebiim, Levites, and Prophets

Since the Israelite confederacy was formed as a religious association with Yahwe as its leader, religious virtuosi were important in its history from the outset. These religious intellectuals attempted to understand historical and political events through the framework of their religious worldview, and in so doing, attempted to attain explanations about the meaning of these events. The main events which vexed the Israelite religious virtuosi were: the wars of liberation; the rise of kingship; the development of the corvee state; the development of urban culture; the threat of the great powers; the collapse of the Northern Kingdom and the impending threat to Judah; and the Exile.

The Nebiim

Initially, the religious virtuosi of the Hebrews were the Nebiim, ecstatic mystagogues believed to be given magical powers of insight and prophecy. The Nabi, head of the Nebiim, was a magical ecstatic who used physical mortification to 'receive' the charisma of magical powers (Weber, 1952, p. 96).
The *Nebiim* seem to have come into existence with the peasant army and acted like shamans and magical advisers on camp. Gradually they became war prophets inciting war and promising victory. Saul and David listened to them,\(^{17}\) but with the centralisation of the Davidic kingship, especially that conducted under Solomon, they declined in influence and number as new foreign cults were imported. The result was that religious promises became less important in war, which moved from being conducted for Yahwe's benefit to reasons of state. The *Nebiim* increasingly saw themselves, after the elimination of their influence in political matters, as the 'true' upholders of the 'pure' Yahwe cult (Weber, 1952, p. 102).

It was not until Jehu's revolt (c. 840 BC) against the Omrid Dynasty, instigated by the *Nabi* Elisha, that the *Nebiim* again became a powerful political and military influence. Many became attached to the court as religious advisers to the king, prophesising good fortune and the continued existence of the dynasty. Sometime after this, however, these 'royal' *Nebiim* came to be perceived as corrupt by other *Nebiim* (indicated by the fact that the prophet Amos sharply distanced himself from them). For Weber, this is indicative of a split within the religious virtuosi. Increasingly, these 'royal' *Nebiim* were seen by the anti-royalist prophets as the 'lying prophets of the kings'. There was thus a struggle over religious influence within the kingdom, brought about by the increasing strength of the monarchy. The religious sphere was split in two, with some virtuosi (such as the royal prophets and *Nebiim*), adapting to this change, with others (called the *Roeh*) refusing to recognise the monarchy's power as legitimate.

\(^{17}\)With the brief kingship of Saul, we see the first *Nabi* (Samuel) acting as an oracle aiding the military leader.
The Levites

Along with the split within the Nebiim into royal and anti-royal forces, there also emerged within Judaism a quasi-priesthood called the Levites. The kings and princes allowed these priests to control various temples, but importantly, this emerging priesthood could not establish a religious monopoly over a congregation of followers (Weber, 1952, p. 162). This was due primarily to the fact that they faced religious opposition from the ecstatic Roeh who became the later prophets of doom (who we shall examine below).

The Levites were exempt from military service and gained fees for their priestly services. These priestly services were based on the Levites' knowledge of the rituals and ethical commandments of Yahwe worship. The main reason behind the growth of the position and patronage of the Levites was the belief that suffering was a sign that an ethical commandment had been violated, and that only knowledge of the laws and scrutiny of conduct could alleviate the situation.

This growth in prestige and patronage of the Levites had a number of important effects, as outlined by Fahey:

.. on the one hand, magic - the ritual coercion of the deity - along with individual charismatic authority, is combated as inimical to the exclusiveness of the priests' access to God and as hostile to God's transcendent superiority; on the other hand, the ever-increasing complexity of moral problems requires an increasing sophistication in the ethical casuistry applied to the deciphering of God's will. Elaborate moral arguments, tailored to fit the problems and consciences of the priestly clientele, become the stock-in-trade of the priestly craft and lead to the accumulation of a dogma, a canon, and an ever-refined image of the divine (1982, p. 70).

This canon became the Torah. Particularly as the political threat of foreign conquest increased, the Levites came to be sought by kings and the community as well as individuals, for their training in purely rational knowledge of Yahwe's commandments and of ritualistic means of avoiding God's anger (Weber, 1952, p. 178). The Levites' status
and influence was thus based on their vast and authoritative knowledge of the commands, demands, and prescriptions of Yahwe.

For Weber, the fundamental importance of the Levites in Judaism was based on the fact that they refused to conceive of sin and suffering as the result solely of ritual and magical errors, but instead emphasised that they were the result of the ethical failures of the Israelites to meet their obligations under the berith with Yahwe.

An offence, obviously, was first and foremost a ritualistic transgression evoking God's anger. Hence, here as elsewhere, fear of ritualistic mistakes and their consequences was the oldest motive for the quest of expiation. But Yahweh was also contractual partner to the berith with Israel, and the old social law based upon fellowship and brotherly aid in need was considered an obligation toward him. The concept of sin, thus, had to extend to substantively ethical, particularly social-ethical stipulations. Yahwistic criticism of the attitudes of the kings and of the social changes brought about by urbanism thus led to expansion of the concept of sin beyond the area of ritual to social ethics (Weber, 1952, p. 165).

It was the political emergencies of Israel's situation that brought new importance to these ideas of the Levites in an attempt to appease Yahwe's wrath. Israel's dire situation was seen as a result of sin, that is, transgression against His will and commandments (Weber, 1952, p. 164). Only by ethical conduct could the situation be changed and Yahwe's wrath be soothed. This message developed by the Levites was carried to the masses by another group of religious virtuosi, the Roeh, or 'prophets of doom'.

The Prophets

The prophets whom Weber believed played such an important part in the development of ancient Judaism, 'these giants [who] cast their shadows through the millennia into the present' (Weber, 1952, p. 334), emerged out of the Roeh, the former Nebiim who were in
opposition to the monarchical bureaucracy and military elite. Instead of proclaiming good fortune for the king and confederacy as the Nebiim had done, these new prophets proclaimed doom and misfortune for the future of the Israelites.\textsuperscript{18}

The great social upheavals which accompanied the transformation of the Davidic kingdom into an 'oriental monarchy' based on a centralised bureaucracy coincided with the rise of these prophets. As military, political, and religious power was increasingly centralised in Jerusalem, these prophets became increasingly critical of the loss of devotion to Yahwe and the social injustices associated with the indebting of the peasantry to the Gibborim.

To them the source of all evil was the transformation of the state into a liturgical state, into an Egyptian 'house of bondage' in connection with chariot combat and world politics. The whole bureaucratic apparatus was an Egyptian abomination (Weber, 1952, p. 111).

Though at first these seers saw David and Solomon as anointed by God and bringing liberation and victory, the declining political position of the Israelites saw a change in their view of kingship. They argued that the pre-monarchy peasant army had

\textsuperscript{18} As Weber puts it: 'they were no longer military dervishes and ecstatic therapeutics and rainmakers, but a stratum of literati and political ideologists' (1952, p. 112). Berger (1963) has shown that recent Biblical scholarship has supported the importance of prophecy in ancient Judaism, but seen the social position of these prophets differently to Weber. Since the 1920's, Old Testament scholars have increasingly argued that, in fact, the prophets were tied to the cultic priesthood. Beginning with the work of Mowinckel (Berger, 1963, p. 944) and Hagar (p. 945), this scholarship argues that nearly all cultures in the Near East at the time of the Israelites saw the cultic priesthood divided between two functions: baru priests, who used technical methods for supplying oracles, and mahhu priests, who gave oracles based on ecstatic insights. In Israelite society, the baru priests were the Levites and the prophets equated with the mahhu (pp. 945-46). This scholarship also argues that the radical element of the prophets' message was not their ethical arguments, but the fact that the lack of ethical conduct was viewed as the cause of Yahwe's abandonment of the Israelites (p. 948). Though this scholarship undermines Weber's statements about the social position of the prophets, Berger (1963, p. 948) recognises that this does not undermine the important elements of Weber's overall analysis, as it does not in anyway invalidate Weber's view of the prophets' role in the 'rationalising' re-interpretation of Israel's history or in the survival of Israel through the Exile'. In other words, the social position of the prophets is not as important to Weber as the ideas themselves and their effects. Thus, as Berger himself recognises, the findings of Old Testament scholarship may require a re-thinking of the social position of the prophets, but in terms of Weber's main concern, ethical rationalisation and its effects on life-conduct, this re-positioning matters little.
gained victory because of its complete trust in Yahweh, and rejected the way the monarchy had established itself at the apex of Hebrew society (Weber, 1952, p. 115). They were also critical of the Gibborim who they believed exploited the poor (the officials of the king were mostly appointed from the ranks of these patricians). Prophecy incorporated, but did not originate from, this social antagonism (Weber, 1952, p. 117).

The social origins of the prophets were diverse, and for Weber this eliminated the possibility that they simply represented the interests of the poor and negatively valued social strata. Importantly, their calls were not so much political in motive, as political in effect, and despite their different social origins, the prophets shared the common goal - the fulfilment of Yahwe's commandments. Weber thus concludes that they therefore had primarily religious motives (Weber, 1952, p. 277).

Thus, a clash of groups within different spheres of life, each rationalising according to their own social position and ideas, resulted in a tension between the religious and political life-spheres in Judaism. While the monarchy's reforms and exactions were needed for administration and defence in the vortex of Near Eastern 'world politics', the religious virtuosí, rationalising events in the world from the position of their own values and interests, saw the Egyptian model of monarchy as sacrilegious. It brought social injustice and was not part of Yahwe's plan, and thus threatened to bring His wrath upon His chosen people. The prophets, disenfranchised descendants of the warrior Nebiim, saw the peasant army reduced to debt bondage, and hubris within the king's rejection of Yahwe's military
protection by relying on chariots and alliances. They thus resisted vehemently the political sphere's attempts to appropriate the religious sphere for its own ends.\footnote{In other cultures there were court prophets advising the king but, according to Weber, nowhere else were there public prophets talking on political matters in opposition to the king. The established authorities and monarchy reacted differently at different times to these prophets, depending on their degree of power. Sometimes the monarchy attempted to enlist the prophets' support, but this usually failed. Under strong governments, according to Weber (1952, p. 271), prophets could be banned, exiled, executed, or played off against each other. Often the prophets unintentionally aided the power struggles of different cliques within the government.}

Having held these views for some time, these prophets of doom only began to have an influential role in the Judaic religious sphere with the occurrence of a number of historically contingent events (Weber, 1952, p. 112). With the rise of the Assyrian Empire, warfare spread throughout the Near East. The pre-Exilic prophets reacted to this as political demagogues warning the public of the doom to come (Weber, 1952, p. 268). Without this frightening political climate, the prophets would not have gained such prominence.\footnote{Except for the world politics of the great powers which threatened their homeland and constituted the message of their most impressive oracles, the prophets could not have emerged' (Weber, 1952, p. 268) and 'Free prophecy developed only with the rising external danger to the country and to royal power' (Weber, 1952, p. 268). This also meant that when the Near Eastern empires did conquer the Israelites and used the worship of Yahwe as a means of controlling the conquered state, the prophets lost much of their influence. The Babylonians and Egyptians, and later the Persians, allowed old customs to be tolerated. Thus the great threat of religious extermination seemed to decline, and along with it, the power and influence of the prophets.} Repeating the promises of material welfare and military glory that had been made to the peasant militia, the prophets' call for a return to an unquestioning belief in Yahwe's guardianship offered a means of salvation from the political and military disasters which threatened to overwhelm the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (Weber, 1952, pp. 111-12). The prestige of the prophet's messages of doom came from the fact that they had unexpectedly come to fruition. The prophecies of Isaiah (c. 730 BC) proclaiming the repulsion of the Assyrians, and Jeremiah (c. 600 BC) proclaiming that Nebuchadnezzar
was the servant of God and should be surrendered to, gained prestige when these political events occurred (Weber, 1952, p. 274).

In this way, it was only when these contingent events transpired that the religious message of the prophets of doom was accepted. It is quite likely, therefore, that had these contingent events not happened, these prophets would not have been listened to. This is a prime example for Weber of the contingencies of history affecting the rationalisation of the religious (and other) spheres of life.

The prophets claimed to have special powers as a result of their communication with Yahwe. They saw themselves as the 'tools' of Yahwe and it was in this that they gained their significance. It is within these Judaic prophets, that, as Weber (1952, p. 299) puts it, 'the emissary type of prophecy had never been more completely developed'. Because Yahwe was perceived to be an active god, comprehensible to human beings by the fact he laid out His ethical commandments, the prophets could not be mystics trying to understand the meaningful unity of the cosmos (as was the case in Asian religions). This thus excluded the possibility of them becoming 'vessels' of the divine through gnosis or unio mystica (Weber, 1952, pp. 313-14). The prophet was only left with discharging his emotionalism. This determined the temperament of all the prophets (Weber, 1952, p. 314). The prophets lived in tension, continually attempting to work out what Yahweh expected and their emotional joy and intensity came from solving these puzzles (Weber, 1952, p. 291). The prophets did not see themselves as holy, as separate from the masses or above the laws of Yahwe (Weber, 1952, p. 298). They felt hated by the masses and did not address the public as 'brothers' (Weber, 1952, p. 292).
The prophecy of doom which they developed could not be taught, unlike the techniques of professional magicians or priests, no economic profit came from such a prophecy as no one wished to pay for an oracle of doom, and the authorities of the monarchy outlawed them as disturbers of the peace. All of these factors helped to give them an extraordinary status or 'charisma'.

The main concerns of these prophets were the destiny of the state and the people. Their proclamations were attempts to elaborate and understand Yahwe's will and its affect on the Israelites' future, thus maintaining the this-worldly orientation of Judaism. The prophets idealised the kingless past, and probably represented the nomadic ideal. In the future, it was believed, Israel would again became a desert community and its people would consume the nourishment of the steppes - milk and honey (Weber, 1952, p. 285). The prophets all dreamt of a peace and paradise to come. A new prince (riding on an ass, in contrast to the hated chariot) would bring victory over Israel's this-worldly enemies and thus bring peace, milk and honey, by turning swords into ploughshares (Weber, 1952, pp. 321-22). Yahwe might also form a new berith with His chosen people which was not as exacting as the present covenant (Weber, 1952, p. 327). The 'day of Yahwe' was expected constantly and almost every generation expected to see it during their lifetime. Importantly, the prophets also reinforced the ethic of brotherliness promulgated by the Levites.

The nature of the religious message of the prophets meant that only some social strata would accept this message as valid. The main supporters of the prophets were the distinguished and pious sibs and houses in Jerusalem and the rural gentry. The peasants,
however, did not support the prophets, despite their calls against debt slavery and military re-enlistment because the prophets denounced the fertility cults and orgiasticism, which were part of everyday life for the peasants.

The prophets obviously were not supported by the kings. Only David was seen by them as a pious king, ruling over a golden age. Hosea, for example, saw all the Northern kings as illegitimate. The political manoeuvring and alliances of the kings were seen as rejecting faith in Yahwe. The kings could not accept the politically utopian calls from the prophets without terminating their own position. Their knightly sense of dignity also meant that they saw the prophets as being beneath them. The upper classes were also castigated by the prophets, especially the Gibborim. It was their unjust control of the courts and their extravagant living that received the most criticism (Weber, 1952, p. 281). The prophets saw a future kingdom of peace and so their prophecies did not appeal to the Royal army.

The prophets also attacked the priests. The priests had to accept these attacks as the prophets were supported by powerful sibs in the laity. Though the prophets never attacked the Temple of Jerusalem, they rejected cult practices and rituals and argued that these were useless unless correct behaviour was the basis of religiosity (Weber, 1952, p. 283). The prophets supported the ethical framework of the Torah, rather than the ritualism of the priests.

For Weber, what was important and unique about the prophecy of Judaism was that it demanded the ethical regulation of everyday life-conduct as the only way of achieving this-worldly salvation. This meant the rejection of ritualism in favour of 'ethical
absolutism' (1952, p. 296). This is of central concern to Weber because the prophets became advocates of 'de-magicalisation'. They extended the trend initiated by the Levites of valuing ethics over magic and ritualism. They demanded that the Israelites obey God before other men, and this allowed the development of an ethical conscience which 'freed' the Hebrews from a magical view of the world.

The Ethical Rationalism of the Judaic Religious Virtuosi

Prior to the Exile, the Torah teaching of the Levite priesthood competed with prophecy for dominance over Judaism. Despite their differing locations in the religious sphere, the Levites and the prophets unintentionally worked together to systematise the Judaic worldview and its specific ethic:

Prophecy did not so much influence the content - which it rather accepted as given - rather it promoted systematic unification, by relating the people's life as a whole and the life of each individual to the fulfilment of Yahwe's positive commandments. Moreover, it eliminated the predominance of ritual in favour of ethics. In this the Levitical Torah gave its imprint to the content of the ethical commandments. Both jointly imparted to the ethic its simultaneously plebeian and rationally systematic character (Weber, 1952, p. 255).

The Levites were men of knowledge, not magic. To them, knowledge was not about the techniques of rituals, but was based on what is good and evil, that is, the ethics provided by the commandments of Yahwe. What mattered was not esoteric or ritualistic knowledge, but publicly taught ethics and charity (Weber, 1952, p. 220). These ethics were expressed in the Decalogue.21

21 The Decalogue owes its position to the impressiveness, plasticity, and precision of its formulations, to the sublimation or loftiness of its ethical demands, (which are actually quite modest). Without doubt, the 'ethical' Decalogue owes its most important characteristics, above all its separation from both ritualistic and welfare prescription to its public. The Decalogue aims neither at teaching the political authorities nor
These religious ethics were accepted by the prophets and, through moral reflexivity and ethical rationalism, syncretised into a unified ethical system based on the fate of Israel as a political nation (Weber, 1952, p. 304). As Weber states,

the commandments of God as well as the expiation of offences were more and more sublimated in the direction of ethical absolutism (Gesinnungsethik). What mattered to the heavenly ruler was not external conduct, but unconditional obedience and absolute trust in what, repeatedly, would seem to be problematical promises (1952, p. 216).

Fundamentally for Weber, this ethical absolutism was about ethically rationalising the believer's inner life. This meant that religious practice was not based on external forms of salvation, such as a saviour or magical ritualism, but on the belief that salvation came from within by ethically rationalising one's thoughts and actions.

At the basis of this ethical system was the belief that the more the political and military situation deteriorated, the more faith in Yahwe was required, along with the strict adherence to ethical principles laid out as part of the berith. This was the only path to the political and this-worldly salvation Yahwe promised.

The prophets saw Yahwe as a universal and majestic god, jealously seeking His own glorification, who used the Great Kings of the world empires as tools to punish Israel (Weber, 1952, pp. 308-309).

The prophets' claim that it was the people's, and especially the rulers', unfaithfulness to Yahwe and the contractual obligations of the berith, that was the cause of Israel's woes meant that the people were jointly responsible for the sins of the king (Weber, 1952, p. 303). The prophets chastised the people about their failings, but argued

members of a cultured elite, but the progeny of the broad mass of the bourgeois and peasant middle classes, the 'people'. Therefore, it contains no more and no less than what all age groups should observe in everyday life' (Weber, 1952, p. 242).
that suffering was caused by sins committed now, not in the past. If the people of Israel would trust in Yahwe again, things would be restored and His' promises delivered.

It was thus the unique ethical nature of the berith, the basis of the Israelites' ontological presuppositions of reality and the meaning of suffering, which directed their ethical rationalism and moral reflexivity. It was precisely this ethical rationalism that the prophets demanded the masses adhere to if salvation and the overcoming of suffering were to be achieved.

It is a stupendous paradox that a god does not only fail to protect his chosen people against its enemies but allows them to fall, or pushes them himself, into ignominy and enslavement, yet is worshipped only the more ardently (Weber, 1952, p. 364).

This is possible since, as Fahey observes, 'the occurrence of disaster confirms rather than denies God's justice' (1982, p. 72).

De-Magicalisation in Judaism

The ethical rationalisation of Judaism by the prophets and Levites, was antagonistic towards magic. For Weber, this was fundamentally important as it was here that he identified the beginnings of the 'disenchantment' of the world, that is, the ridding within ontologies of any magical understanding of causality.22

One of the other fundamental factors behind this ethical rejection of magic was that since Yahwe, as a universal deity, was the source of all good and all evil in the world, the idea of demons and the manipulation of them for good or evil was nonsensical (Weber, 1952, p. 222). The Levite priesthood did not cultivate magic due to this monotheistic conception of Yahwe and the emphasis on fidelity in the berith, thus the masses were not

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22 As Schroeder points out, the German term for this process of disenchantment, Entzauberung, literally translated, means 'demagicalisation' (1992, p. 72).
left in a magical 'enchanted garden' within Judaism, but were instead called upon to ethically rationalise their everyday life:

The consequence of all this was that to the prophet's mind, there existed no demons of any sort besides Yahwe. No independent or anti-Yahwe demons were necessary to bring misfortune to individuals and to Israel. Yahwe alone determined the details of the world. As we have seen, this monism was the most important presupposition of all prophecy (Weber, 1952, p. 311).

It was only in post-Exilic times, after the influence of Zoroastrian dualism, that the ideas of incarnate evil emerged in Judaism.

Another element of the Judaic ontology which was antagonistic to magic was the belief that Yahwe's actions and ethical commandments were comprehensible to ordinary humans, as evidenced by the fact that He had lain down comprehensible commandments (Weber, 1952, p. 314). This comprehensible monotheistic god, as well as blocking the kind of contemplative mysticism found in Asian religions, was also one of the first steps to the demagicalisation of the world because it meant events in the world could be understood and calculated in relation to the will of the ultimate causal agency - Yahwe. Thus miracles, understood as demonstrations of God's will, were more 'rational', that is, understandable and therefore 'calculable', than the mysterious workings of magic and demons. One could understand events because God's will and power was known, unlike the unknown motives of demons (Weber, 1952, p. 223). This meant that though Yahwe was wrathful, He acted rationally according to a plan: 'like prophecy itself, world events are rational in character; they are determined neither by blind chance nor magical forces. They have understandable reasons' (Weber, 1952, p. 314).

The role and aim of the prophets was to attain these 'understandable reasons' for the occurrence of events in the world that brought about suffering and misfortune. They
attempted, not to coax demons into doing something, as a magician does, but to understand the will of God and what should be done in accordance with this will. To coax God for one's benefit was seen as arrogantly undermining His power and majesty, as well as being doomed to fail.

Speculation about the why of the world was rejected in favour of maintaining the ethical commandments of God. Therefore, a barrier to pondering the meaning of the cosmos emerged in the ontology of Judaism. Conduct according to God's commandments, not speculation of knowledge about the meaning of the cosmos, was the main trait of Judaic religious intellectuals.

**Religious Intellectuals and the Plebeian Strata**

At the same time as this ethical rationalism was being developed by the Levites and prophets, Judaism was increasingly being oriented to the lower plebeian strata which had been produced by urbanisation. With the increasing demilitarisation of many of the peasantry and herdsmen and their transformation into a plebeian urban strata, the ethical calls of the religious virtuosi found support here (Weber, 1952, p. 206). This support allowed the religious intelligentsia to maintain their autonomy from the political and economic spheres.

The main characteristic of the prophet's message was faith. There had to be unconditional trust in Yahwe and His word, and this promoted the personality traits of obedience and humility. This was the fundamental reason why the prophets attacked the kings for their hubris (Weber, 1952, p. 318). Accordingly, beliefs about which strata
embodied this ethical virtue also changed. The prophets increasingly came to admire the peaceful and devout peasants and plebeians who did not have a share in political and social power.

There were a number of reasons as to why the Israelite intellectuals nominated the plebeians as the source of virtue: firstly, both the intellectuals and plebeians were excluded from political power; secondly, the future of the state was uncertain due to the possibility of military conquest and this could be blamed on the present rulers; thirdly, there was the tradition of the active angry god in partnership with the confederacy, not the monarchy; fourthly, this-worldly political salvation could only come about through Yahwe again supporting his people, and this had failed due to the hubris of the kings; and fifthly, Yahwe had given ethical commands which one had to obey, and though someone could ponder his purposes for wrath or mercy, beyond that there was no option for contemplation. In light of this, the intellectuals encouraged the development of a puritanical, sincere, anti-orgiastic, anti-magical, anti-idolatrous devout people: 'the peculiarity in this consisted in the fact that here and here only plebeian strata became exponents of a rational religious ethic' (Weber, 1952, p. 224).

The Exile and its Effects on Judaism

With the fall of Jerusalem and the conquest of Judah by the Babylonians (c. 586 BC), the prophets' worst fears were realised and the period of the Exile began (c. 586-535 BC). During this period, the prophecy of doom receded and the promise of hope rose in its place, a promise offered by the increasingly powerful priesthood (Weber, 1952, p. 334).
The Exiled community in Babylon seem to have prospered and gained great cohesion, mainly due to the work of the priests. Since the Persian rulers had a policy of using priesthoods to tame subject peoples, the priesthood became paramount in the Israelite community (Weber, 1952, pp. 348-49). In turn, the priests prevented the rise of a new kingship and managed to slowly eliminate the power of the Levites and prophets in the religious sphere. The priesthood managed to unify the Jewish people in exile through strict segregation based on exclusionary rituals (Weber, 1952, p. 350).

The Babylonian exiles were able to rebuild their community in Palestine, organised around the Temple and priesthood in Jerusalem after their return in 535 BC (the Temple had been rebuilt in c. 520 BC). The ritual segregation of the Jews intensified with mixed marriages being prohibited and the development of ritually correct meals. The Sabbath and circumcision also became important again (Weber, 1952, pp. 350-55).

The rituals, especially the Sabbath, the dietary rules, and access to teaching of the commandments, were extremely hard for the peasants to meet. It was thus hard for rural people to live as Jews. Therefore, when Jews lived in foreign countries they had to live in cities and the Jews became predominantly an urban people (Weber, 1952, p. 364).

With the environment of peace and prosperity that existed after the Exile, the newly dominant priesthood was able to change the conception of the berith as the basis of suffering. Under their influence, the Jews came to see themselves as being sent on a

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23 Murray Wax (1960, p. 454) argues that the Babylonian Exile forced the question of Jewish identity to come to the forefront - how did one know one was one of the Chosen People? Evaluation was determined through ritual segregation and the development of an in-group/out-group mentality, a development which limited the possibility of identity being based on economic conduct. This issue of identity became more important under Protestantism, with the problem of followers knowing whether they were a part of 'the Elect', a problem I shall return to shortly.
world-historical mission - to suffer so that eventually the world would be rid of suffering and know peace. Suffering and humility were increasingly glorified as a sign of the Jews' holy destiny, a destiny which became the basis of the Jews' 'pariah status' (Weber, 1952, p. 376).  

Judaic Economic Ethics and Economic Conduct

This status as a 'pariah people' had major effects on economic conduct in ancient Judaism (Weber, 1952, p. 343). It cemented an in-group/out-group dualism as the basis of economic relations, and human relations generally. For Jewish ethics, there was no soteriological motive for rationally overcoming this dualistic economic mentality. As a result, the Jews became involved in trade and usury, or what Weber calls 'booty capitalism', not industrial production. The beliefs of Judaism meant that '...the area for proving one's piety in practice, for the Jew, lay in quite a different area than that of rationally mastering the "world" and especially the economy' (Weber, 1952, p. 345).

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24 For an insightful analysis of the problems of labelling the Jews a 'pariah people', see Momigliano (1980). He argues that the pariah status must be externally imposed or it is not an inferior status: 'if the word "pariah" indicates a people who accept their position as inferiors in an alien social system, and work out their own salvation through this acceptance, the Jews were no pariahs' (1980, p. 17). In this way, he sees Weber's mistake laying in the fact that he '...confused ritual separation as willed by a sovereign nation (which is what we find in the Bible, in the Talmud and in later legal treatises) with pariah status' (1980, p. 17). Despite this, 'much of what Weber said on ancient Judaism remains valid even if we eliminate his definition of it as a pariah-religion' (1980, p. 17). The main problem here hinges on the definition of 'pariah', and it seems to me that Weber was not so much analysing the voluntary nature of Jewish segregation, as the belief that this segregation and the suffering that the Jews endured was bringing about redemption for the entire world: 'the situation of the pariah people and its patient endurance were thus elevated to the highest station of religious worth and honour before God, by receiving the meaning of a world historical mission. This [was an] enthusiastic glorification of suffering as the means to serve world deliverance' (Weber, 1952, p. 376). In this sense, 'pariah people' refers not to an inferior social status, but the social organisation associated with a particular understanding and ethical rationalisation of suffering.
In terms of 'in-group' relations, the economic ethics of ancient Judaism rejected usury against other Jews and oppression of the poor. This ethic developed out of the ethic of brotherliness and though one could have usury with a non-believer, charity and brotherliness were ethically deemed to be the basis of economic relations with other Jews.

**Religious Virtuosi of Post-Exilic Judaism**

Following the re-establishment of the Jewish community and priesthood in Jerusalem under the Persian Empire, it was in turn conquered by the Hellenistic Greeks (c. 333-166 BC) and the Romans (c. 63 BC). The period following the Exile saw changes to Judaism with the rise of a new set of religious virtuosi who profoundly shaped the direction of the religious rationalisation of Judaism away from inner-worldly asceticism. These virtuosi were the Pharisees and the Rabbis.

The main factor involved in the formation of the Pharisees was a reaction against the upper classes immersion in Hellenistic culture (Weber, 1952, p. 385). They emerged in Herodian times and were a brotherhood that segregated themselves from impure persons and objects (Weber, 1952, p. 386). Their origins can be seen in the *Hassidim*, a sect that supported Judas Maccabee.²⁵ Following Maccabean times, Pharisaism developed characteristics which influenced the development of Judaism.

The Pharisees claimed holiness equal to the priesthood, and it was the personal charisma of their exemplary conduct which gave them popular support. The great

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²⁵ Judas Maccabee led a rebellion against the Seleucid Greek rulers of Palestine, gaining independence for the Jews in 166 BC and establishing his family, the Hasmoneans, as the rulers of Palestine.
opponents of the Pharisees were the patrician aristocratic sibs as well as the priestly

The Pharisees maintained a close adherence to the law on all matters. Increasingly
individuals would consult a Pharisee learned in the Law rather than a priest. This had the
effect of devaluing sacrifice and thus the priesthood. The Pharisees profoundly shaped the
direction of religious rationalisation in Judaism when they introduced Babylonian
demonology to argue that God was not entirely responsible for evil in the world. This was
the beginnings of the establishment of an ontological dualism within Judaism.

Weber believed that the changing material conditions of Judaism, that is, the
increasing social influence of the civic plebeian strata, facilitated an increase in religious
influence and social power for the group which met the religious needs of that strata
(Weber, 1952, p. 390). The Pharisees mostly came from the civic strata and petty
bourgeoisie and so their message mostly found resonance within this strata. They rejected
intellectual and philosophical speculation as Hellenistic, favouring a more 'practical

With the fall of the Second Temple, the Pharisees became dominant in Judaism and
the Sadducees lost their former influence. The rise of the Rabbis was the main product of
this change in religious power (Weber, 1952, p. 391).

The prestige and respect accorded Rabbis in Judaism was based on their superior
knowledge of the scriptures and holy laws (Weber, 1952, p. 392). The Rabbis were
mainly plebeian intellectuals who did not survive off donations from the people they
advised, but instead worked in secular occupations, as well as teaching. The Rabbi was a
teacher, not a preacher or guru, a fact which distinguished them from their Asian intellectual counterparts (Weber, 1952, p. 413). Since they interpreted the law based on the nature of the particular cases, a formalistic legal system with abstract laws and legal experts did not emerge.

Post-Exilic Conception of God

The influence of the Rabbis and their consideration of the religious needs of the civic strata led to a change in the conception of the divine from that of the angry, jealous Yahwe, to a loving and benevolent, though stern, 'Father' god. Weber sees this latter conception as follows:

The paradigm of the one super-worldly god constructs him in part as a father, in part as a now gracious, now ungracious king controlling the vicissitudes of the world. To be sure, he loves his people, yet when it disobeys him he punishes it sternly, but can be won again through prayer, humility, and moral conduct. Among all cosmogonic and anthropological mythologies this construction makes all of the events of the world and of life rationally understandable in agreement with the naïve, philosophically unsophisticated mind of the masses and children. It forced rabbinical thought in its course (1952, p. 398).

God was beyond magical compulsion and faith was based on obedience to His laws and will. Thus Judaism became a religion of humble faith based on trust in God and fear of the consequences of disobeying him. Such a religion, Weber believed, could not develop the inner-worldly asceticism based on an ethic of world transformation which he saw as instrumental in the development of modern Western rationalism:

For the individual, only the law and its fulfilment came into consideration. Indeed, there was no other holy path. The prescribed path, however, was open to every man, for, in the last analysis, the rabbis rejected asceticism as well as the intellectual mysticism of a salvation aristocracy (Weber, 1952, p. 399).

Thus post-Exilic Judaism saw a growth in the priests' power, an increasing emphasis on ritual correctness over ethical absolutism, a corresponding development of an
'in-group/out-group' mentality, a changing conception of the divine, and the attempt to meet the religious needs of a new stratum, the peace-loving petty bourgeoisie, all of which led away from the ethical rationalisation of everyday conduct and the trend towards demagicalisation found in pre-Exile Judaism.

The Importance of Judaism

Though there has been some debate as to how 'Ancient Judaism' fits into Weber's sociology of religion, there is little doubt he placed great importance on a number of unique elements in ancient Judaism which were to have great cultural significance for the history of Western culture and rationalism.26 For Weber, the fundamental importance of

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26 Tony Fahey (1982, p. 84) has argued that 'Ancient Judaism' is firm evidence that Weber's historical perceptiveness and analytical abilities continued until his death, an argument rejecting the positions of Anderson (1979, p. 410) and Mommsen (1974, pp. 4-5), that Weber become more concerned with formalistic analytical models in his later years. Fahey sees 'Ancient Judaism' as primarily concerned with historical questions, that is, why was Israelite religion and the pariah-position of the Jews so unique? In this sense, he argues, Weber uses sociological concepts from 'Economy and Society' to inform his analysis of these historical problems: "Ancient Judaism" and "Economy and Society" are thus the two halves of a single enterprise, logically separable but in practice thoroughly interdependent' (Fahey, 1982, p. 75).

Camic (1984) has criticised Fahey's analysis of 'Ancient Judaism', pinpointing that it separates this work from Weber's other works on religious ethics and economic life-conduct. This has, according to Camic (1984, pp. 1410-11), the effect of reinforcing the all too common view that this work is marginal to Weber's central concern. As Camic (1984, p. 1411) points out, Weber would then have had no reason to have kept this under the title 'Economic Ethics of the World Religions' in the Archiv and the Gesammelte. He shows that Weber explicitly states (1952, p. 428), that his "central concern [...] the practical ethic of Israel' The importance of Judaism in this regard was that it produced a dualistic economic ethic based on an in-group/out-group mentality. This was one of the reasons why inner-worldly asceticism, the object of Weber's examination, failed to develop in Judaism (1984, p. 1412). While admitting that there are many other issues considered in 'Ancient Judaism' in addition to this, Camic argues that Fahey is wrong to assign centrality to these other features (1984, p. 1413). In response, Fahey (1984, p. 1417) argues that Camic places emphasis on the context rather than the text itself: 'those parts of the text which re-echo the main contextual theme constitute the real meaning of the text; those parts which do not, no matter how great their length or prominence in the text, are digressions and therefore show nothing of what the text is "really about"' (1984, p. 1417). For Fahey, though the analysis of economic ethics was important, it was not central to Weber's main concern which was with the unique historical and religious factors which contributed to the ritualistic segregation of the Jews (1984, p. 1419).

From my own position, this debate tends to oscillate between two forms of reductionism. Like all his works, it is probably closest to the mark to say that a mind like Weber's was not content with focusing on one issue, but investigated both historical and general cultural developments in 'Ancient Judaism'. There can be little doubt that Fahey is correct when he points to Weber's willingness to discover the historical origins of Judaism and the unique 'pariah status' the Jews attained. Weber's preface to the work
the ancient society of the Hebrews lay in the fact that they developed a, 'highly rational religious ethic of social conduct; it was free of magic and all forms of irrational quest for salvation; it was inwardly worlds apart from the paths of salvation offered by Asiatic religions. To a large extent this ethic still underlies [the] contemporary Middle Eastern and European ethic' (Weber, 1952, p. 4). The emergence of this religious ethic, its ontological presuppositions, and their combined hostility to the magical worldview, 'created the basis for our modern science and technology, and for capitalism' (Weber, 1966, p. 265).

states 'Hence we ask, how did Jewry develop into a pariah people with highly specific peculiarities?' (Weber, 1952, p. 5). Weber's analysis of the economic ethics of Judaism is only systematically developed in a small section of the work (pp. 342-345 and pp. 401-403), that analysing the economic ethics promoted by the Pharisees and Rabbis. This very meagre attention to the subject is quite problematic for the argument that this is the central theme.

The point both commentators seem to miss is that in all Weber's empirical works on religion he spent much of his time analysing the social and historical conditions in which the economic ethics of religions were born. 'Ancient Judaism' is no exception. Throughout this work Weber traced the conditions which gave rise to Judaism and its ethical rationalism, and their effects on believers' life-conduct, as well as economic conduct. What is fundamentally important in this work is that Judaism marks off a radical break from the magical presuppositions of other cultures surrounding it, and thus is extremely important in the long historical development of what would become modern Western rationalism. Thus he observes that:

... in considering the conditions of Jewry's evolution, we stand at a turning point of the whole cultural development of the West and Middle East. Quite apart from the significance of the Jewish pariah people in the economy of the European Middle Ages and the modern period, Jewish religion has world-historical consequences (1952, p. 5).

As mentioned, these 'world-historical consequences' are the abrupt changes Judaism introduced into cultural history, changes which meant the de-magicalisation of the world as well as the preconditions for the Protestant economic ethic. The questions following this conclusion would then obviously be, firstly, if Judaism was to have such an effect, why it was so unique in cultural history, and secondly, if it was so unique, why did it not produce modern Western rationalism? It is in order to answer this first question that Weber undertook the extensive social and historical analysis of the conditions which contributed to the formation of Judaism and shaped its ontological presuppositions. The second issue is addressed by showing how ritualism returned to Judaism after the Exile and by comparing Judaism's economic ethic with that of the inner-worldly asceticism of Puritanism.

Thus Fahey is wrong to argue that 'Ancient Judaism' is primarily an examination of historical questions about the uniqueness of the Jews' pariah status without seeing that this is part of a wider project to understand the break which Judaism introduced into cultural history. As for Carnic, 'Ancient Judaism' is part of a much broader project than comparing the economic ethics of Judaism to Protestantism. In this way, both commentators provide a reductionist interpretation of this final volume of Weber's analysis of religion.
Ancient Judaism was important in a number of ways for the future course of Western culture. First and foremost was its the shattering of the unity found in the magical worldview between the world and humanity. Under Judaism, salvation was to be achieved through ethical imperatives, not ritualistic manipulations. Through a long process of moral reflexivity and ethical rationalism, the Levites and prophets came to believe that all Hebrews, king and peasant alike, had to orient their everyday life-conduct according to ethical values, in order to achieve salvation. 'Ancient Judaism' thus is an empirical investigation of the operations of moral reflexivity in ancient Hebrew society, and the way in which the values and beliefs produced by this ethical rationalism shaped the development of Judaic, and Western, history.

This ethical rationalism, as Wax (1960, pp. 452-53) points out, also had an effect on the perception of time, shifting it from an understanding based on recurrent cycles tied into nature, to one where time was separated from nature and then made the basis for the scheduling of activities. This has obvious links to Protestantism and the view of time promulgated in the works of Benjamin Franklin (which we shall soon examine). As Wax states:

> ideally, life was to be organised according to a stern routine that granted no exemption for condition, emotion, or the state of nature. In this respect, Judaism was the forerunner of Protestantism (1960, p. 453).

This changing conception of time in turn allowed the development of an idea of 'history', that is, that there was a start, middle, and end-point to the movement of time. This conception of time placed importance on self-discipline, but merely as means to an end. The future would bring redemption and salvation, either through the after-life (as in Protestantism) or through this-worldly political dominance (as in Judaism). Nevertheless,
the discipline had a meaning, in that it had a purpose (future salvation), towards which it is orientated.

This conception of 'history' developed by the Jews also affected their understandings of agency and determinism. For them, human agency rested primarily in ethical regulation of the self in everyday life in accordance with Yahwe's commands. Outside of this, events in nature, and political events outside of the Israelite kingdom, were seen as controlled by Yahwe and used by him to reward or punish correct ethical agency. Thus, an ethically rational discourse surrounded the Judaic understanding of human agency and determinism, based on the presupposition that human beings could make the 'future' only by acting ethically. As I shall show in a later chapter, this ethical discourse is in marked contrast to modern conceptions of human agency and determinism, as expressed in Bourdieus work.

In 'Ancient Judaism', Weber therefore reveals how the problem of meaning and the attempt to solve it have had far reaching ramifications for the history of Western culture, beginning with Judaism. For Weber, Judaism was very important, in part, because it preceded Islam and Protestantism in maintaining monotheistic beliefs, even at the level of popular belief. This was of great importance for the idea of predestination which was to have such an effect on the inner-worldly asceticism of Puritanism. Weber did not live to complete his aim of systematically investigating Islam or Early and Medieval Christianity, and I shall not attempt to address his scattered writings on these areas. It does seem clear, however, that the monastic asceticism produced in Medieval Catholicism, while maintaining a social cleavage between the religious virtuosi of monks and the masses,
became a basis for the later inner-worldly asceticism of Puritanism. It is to Weber's work on this asceticism that we now turn.

II. Ascetic Protestantism

Without doubt, Weber's most famous work, indeed it is widely known as the 'Weber thesis', has been his investigation of ascetic Protestant Christianity, the 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism'. This work, of all Weber's works, has also received the most intense criticism. First published in the Archiv in 1904, Weber did not substantially alter this essay when he made his revisions for the Gesammelte in 1920 (Weber, 1985, p. 187). Despite the criticisms of commentators such as Rachfahl, Brentano, and Sombart, there is little doubt that Weber considered the thesis presented in this essay and his others on Protestantism, as valid and worthwhile at the time of his death. For our purposes, the

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27 An attempt to reconstruct a Weberian analysis of Early and Medieval Christianity from the remarks on them scattered throughout the 'Gesammelte' and 'Economy and Society' has been fruitfully undertaken by Schluchter (1989) and Schroeder (1992). Their work indicates that Early Christianity, based primarily on the efforts of Paul, promoted an other-worldly salvation, seeing faith in Jesus, not mastery of the world, as the necessary state for salvation. As a result, Early Christianity did not promote an ethical reorientation of life-conduct, but instead accepted ritual and magic as important means to salvation. Indeed, for Weber, Jesus was 'primarily a magician' who appeared 'during the period of the most intense messianic expectations' (1978a, pp. 630-31).

Medieval Catholicism also failed to develop an inner-worldly asceticism despite the monastic asceticism of its virtuosi monks. The ethically oriented asceticism of the medieval monk did not lead to a rational mastery of the world, but rather a withdrawal and rejection of it, and thus was other-worldly in orientation. For the Catholic masses, their means to salvation increasingly became the Church. The result of this was a magical and disparate view of the world. As Weber observes: The rationalisation of the world, the elimination of magic as a means to salvation, the Catholics had not carried nearly so far as the Puritans (and before them the Jews) had done. To the Catholic the absolution of his Church was a compensation for his own imperfection. The priest was a magician who performed the miracle of transubstantiation, and who held the key to eternal life in his hand (1985, p. 117).

28 The amount of literature on this essay, both critical and praiseworthy, is monumental, and a thorough analysis of it is beyond the scope of the present work. Nevertheless, I will refer to and examine the validity of the arguments presented in some of the more famous and insightful commentaries.

29 These other essays are 'The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism' (Weber, 1991, pp. 302-22) and 'Anticritical Last Word on the Spirit of Capitalism' (Weber, 1978b, pp. 1105-1131). The latter essay is very important, as noted by Hennis (1988, pp. 27-35), since it is a response to one of his most strident critics, Rachfahl, and it is where Weber mostly clearly and concisely states his argument.
'Protestant Ethic' essays provide numerous insights into Weber's understanding of the interrelation, through an 'elective affinity', of ideas, worldviews, life-conduct, and material conditions. They also examine the logical continuation of the religious rationalisation of the world commenced by ancient Judaism, and the paradoxical outcomes that this produced. For these reasons, an extensive and detailed analysis of these essays is indispensable to an understanding of Weber's sociology of religion and its relation to Bourdieu's work.

The Elective Affinity between Capitalism and the 'Spirit of Capitalism'

Weber saw his work on Protestantism as grappling with the 'most difficult' dimension of his analysis of the relations between religion and society - how religious ethics are connected to the 'ethos' of the modern economic system (1985, p. 27). For Weber, this connection is found through an affinity between the 'spirit of capitalism' and the Calvinist idea of a calling or vocation.\(^{30}\) Interestingly, this understanding has a very 'Bourdieuian' ring to it:

From their religious life, out of their religiously conditioned family traditions and from the religiously influenced life-style of their environment, there emerged a "habitus" among individuals which prepared them in specific ways to live up to the specific demands of early modern capitalism (Weber, 1978b, p. 1124, italics added).

According to Weber, therefore, the spirit of capitalism is that ethos found in life-conduct which is most conducive to success in the objective structures of capitalism:

Thus the capitalism of today, which has come to dominate economic life, educates and selects the economic subjects which it needs through a process of economic survival of the fittest ... In order that a manner of life so well adapted to the peculiarities

\(^{30}\)I came upon the notion of "vocation" and pointed out the long noted affinity between Calvinism and capitalism - an affinity also observed of the Quakers and similar sects. At the same time, I attempted to demonstrate that the contemporary concept of vocation was somehow religiously rooted' (Weber, 1978b, p. 1112).
of capitalism could be selected at all, i.e. should come to dominate others, it had to originate somewhere, and not in isolated individuals alone, but as a way of life common to whole groups of men. This origin is really what needs explaining (Weber, 1985, p. 55).

What Weber attempted to determine in his essays on Protestantism was the origin of this life-conduct imbued with the 'spirit of capitalism', which had an elective affinity with capitalism to such an extent that it became the dominant and only form of life-conduct one followed if one wished to survive in the competitive economy.  

Yet what was the 'ethos' of this life-conduct which was conducive to capitalism? For Weber, this ethos was provided most clearly in the work of Benjamin Franklin. The writings of Franklin reveal a specific economic ethic which states that the accumulation of wealth is an end in itself, an end which one has an ethical duty to fulfil. In this way, all virtues and values were to be subservient to this end.  

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31 As Weber puts it: 'Whoever does not adapt his manner of life to the conditions of capitalistic success must go under, or at least cannot rise' (1985, p. 72). Of the main commentaries on Weber's work, this emphasis on an 'elective affinity' between the logics of capitalism and the spirit of capitalism developed from ascetic Protestantism was first and most succinctly argued by Ephraim Fischoff (1944). As Fischoff makes clear, those critics which miss this point and argue for a causal connection between Protestantism and capitalism (such as Luthy, 1960, and Cohen, 1980), misunderstand Weber's intentions and investigations. These latter critics misinterpret Weber's attempt to show a causal link between the spirit of capitalism and ascetic Protestantism as an attempt to show a causal link between capitalism and Protestantism. As I will show, this was definitely not Weber's intention, nor his achievement.

32 '... we provisionally use the expression spirit of (modern) capitalism to describe that attitude which seeks profit rationally and systematically in the manner which we have illustrated by the example of Benjamin Franklin' (Weber, 1985, p. 64). According to Weber (1985, pp. 48-50) Franklin's work emphasises four main themes in relation to virtues: time is money; credit is money; money begets money; and always return your debts quickly.

33 Thus Franklin's view on such ethics as honesty, frugality, and so on, was to see them as utilities: 'According to Franklin, those virtues, like all others, are only virtues in so far as they are actually useful to the individual, and the surrogate of mere appearance is always sufficient when it accomplishes the end in view' (Weber, 1985, p. 52). In this way, Franklin sees these virtues, not as ends in themselves or as morally correct for their own intrinsic worth, or even as means to salvation, but instead purely as means to an end, the increase of riches and capital. For this reason, Weber sees Franklin's work as a form of utilitarianism (1985, p. 52). Nevertheless, the ethical quality of the sermon to the young business men is impossible to mistake, and that is the characteristic thing. A lack of care in the handling of money means to him that one, so to speak, murders capital embryos, and hence it is an ethical defect' (Weber, 1985, p. 196).
Fundamentally important in the ethical position promoted by Franklin is the idea that the accumulation of wealth, as an end in itself, should occur within a specialised labour - a calling (Weber, 1985, pp. 53-54). For Weber, this idea of disciplined labour in a calling had its origins in the idea of the calling promoted by ascetic Protestantism. This is not to say, however, that Franklin held religious convictions as the basis of his economic ethic.\textsuperscript{34} Indeed, as we shall see, the positive ethical evaluation of the accumulation of money as an end in itself stands in direct tension with the religious ideal of accumulation of wealth as merely a means to an end - certainty of salvation.

Most importantly, Franklin's view is also in direct tension with what Weber called the 'natural' state of human life, one which sees the accumulation of wealth as a means to an end - consumption. This hedonistic view was at the basis of what Weber termed the 'traditionalist' view of wealth. It is seen most clearly from the point of view of the capitalist, in the 'adventurous' acquisitions made in booty capitalism, the main form of capitalism existing before modern rational capitalism (Weber, 1985, pp. 57-58). From the point of view of workers, this traditionalist spirit was expressed through the question "how can I work less" rather than "how can I earn more?". For Weber, 'a man does not "by nature" wish to earn more and more money, but simply to live as he is accustomed to live and earn as much as is necessary for that purpose' (1985, p. 60).

The utilitarianism in Franklin's ethics turns the traditional attitude towards wealth on its head, since: 'man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the

\textsuperscript{34} 'Franklin on the other hand no longer related his recommendation of economy to religious conceptions' (Weber, 1985, p. 196). 'I have expressly denoted him as a man who stood beyond the direct influence of the Puritan view of life, which had paled considerably in the meantime' (Weber, 1985, p. 198).
ultimate purpose of his life. Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs' (Weber, 1985, p. 53).

Thus, the spirit of capitalism, which saw wealth as an end in itself, was not about enjoyment in terms of happiness for individuals, and from the traditional hedonistic perspective, seems irrational (Weber, 1985, p. 53). The question then arises: how could the 'natural' relationship of work and consumption which we see in traditionalism be overthrown for such an 'irrational' dominance of material goods over human beings?

Once again, Weber's answer to this is Puritanism. Specifically, he believed the culture of discipline Puritanism promoted, along with its ontological worldview, formed, for capitalist entrepreneurs and workers alike, a distinct life-conduct imbued with a particular meaning.

Thus according to Weber, at some time in the transition between the Middle Ages and the modern capitalist era, the traditional ethos of business was challenged and overthrown by the modern rational ethos of capitalism (1985, pp. 67-68). Weber argued that this may have begun when an entrepreneur, imbued with the spirit of capitalism, turned peasants into labourers (also imbued with this new spirit) and began new forms of

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35 This, of course, depends on the position from which these ethical postulates are viewed. As was mentioned in Chapter 4, 'rationality' and 'irrationality' are a matter of perspective for Weber, and he sees the 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' as contributing to a sociology of rationalism: 'if this essay makes any contribution at all, may it be to bring out the complexity of the only superficially simple concept of the rational' (Weber, 1985, p. 194). This statement, written in 1920, makes it clear that the sociology of rationalism was very much on Weber's mind as he was writing his revisions.

36 In terms of workers, Weber uses the example of Pietistic working girls to demonstrate this change: the ability of mental concentration, as well as the absolutely essential feeling of obligation to one's job, are here most often combined with a strict economy which calculates the possibility of high earnings, and a cool self-control and frugality which enormously increase performance. This provides the most favourable foundation for the conception of labour as an end in itself, as a calling which is necessary to capitalism: the chances of overcoming traditionalism are greatest on account of the religious upbringing' (Weber, 1985, p. 63). As Wallace (1989) has pointed out, this dimension of Weber's writings on Puritanism has been generally overlooked.
frugality and profit-making, forcing his competitors to do the same to stay in business. It was not money or capital, but a new attitude, a new 'spirit', which was the key to this transition and the overthrow of traditionalism. This ethical maxim for the conduct of life, according to Weber, was non-existent in all other capacitisms (such as that in India or China), and thus only the West of his time held this particular modern capitalist ethos (1985, p. 52).

For Weber, the new breed of capitalist entrepreneur imbued with the spirit of capitalism slowly came to disregard religion, seeing it as drawing away from activity in the world. They increasingly saw the meaning of their existence as residing in their businesses:

> The people filled with the spirit of capitalism today tend to be indifferent, if not hostile, to the Church. The thought of the pious boredom of paradise has little attraction for their active natures; religion appears to them as a means of drawing people away from labour in this world.... business with its continuous work has become a necessary part of their lives. That is in fact the only possible motivation, but it at the same time expresses what is, seen from the viewpoint of personal happiness, so irrational about this sort of life, where a man exists for the sake of his business, instead of the reverse (Weber, 1985, p. 70, italics added).

In this way, the spirit of capitalism slowly exorcised the religious elements from the idea of a calling, until it reached the point where: 'it no longer needs the support of any religious forces, and feels the attempts of religion to influence economic life, in so far as they can still be felt at all, to be as much an unjustified interference as its regulation by the state' (Weber, 1985, p. 72).

How and why did this curious development, from the ethical condemnation of money-making as an end in itself (which occurs in most societies), to the ethical demand that its pursuit is one's ethical duty, occur in the West, and from there, engulf the globe?
As Weber asked: 'how could activity, which was at best ethically tolerated, turn into a calling in the sense of Benjamin Franklin?' (1985, p. 74).  

Before turning to his answer, Weber explicitly rejected other proposed solutions. Firstly, he rejected the idea that the spirit of capitalism originated as a reflection of economic conditions, since it existed in Franklin's time before the capitalist economy did (1985, p. 55). Thus the capitalist economy did not produce this form of life-conduct in a causal or functionalist manner.

Nor, for that matter, did Puritanism bring the spirit of capitalism, or even capitalism itself, into existence in an idealist form of causality. Rather, 'the spirit of capitalism, in the sense in which we are using the term, had to fight its way to supremacy against a whole world of hostile forces' (Weber, 1985, p. 56). And therefore,

... we have no intention whatever of maintaining such a foolish and doctrinaire thesis as that the spirit of capitalism .. could only have arisen as the result of certain effects of the Reformation, or even that capitalism as an economic system is a creation of the Reformation (Weber, 1985, p. 91).

For Weber, the origins of the life-conduct and behaviour of Homo Economicus, a life-conduct he calls the 'spirit of capitalism', lies in a complex and contingent interaction of material and ideational, as well as objective and subjective, factors, of which only the ideational dimension is analysed in the Protestant ethic essays. Thus,

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37 Furthermore, Weber asks (1985, p. 75), why was the spirit of capitalism rejected as ethically repugnant, and at the most, tolerated, in Florence, the centre of economic activity of the late Medieval and Renaissance periods, while in the American colonies it was seen as the basis of an ethical life-conduct? For an analysis of Protestantism and the early American colonies which attempts to refute Weber's analysis, see Kolk (1961).

38 This is supported by the fact that his other investigations of Western civilisation had emphasised more 'materialistic' factors: 'I have indicated elsewhere that the emergence of Homo Economicus depended upon some very specific objective conditions. Among them were the geographical, political, social, and other conditions of culture in the Middle Ages, in contrast to those of Antiquity' (1978b, p. 1125). Thus: 'it is, of course, not my aim to substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and of history. Each is equally possible, but each, if it does not serve as the preparation, but as the conclusion of an investigation, accomplishes equally little in the interest of
.. we are merely attempting to clarify the part which religious forces have played in forming the developing web of our specifically worldly modern culture, in the complex interaction of innumerable different historical facts. We are thus inquiring only to what extent certain characteristic features of this culture can be imputed to the influence of the Reformation (Weber, 1985, p. 90).

It would have been easy to proceed ... to a regular construction which logically deduced everything characteristic of modern culture from Protestant rationalism. But that sort of thing may be left to the type of dilettante who believes in the unity of the group mind and its reducibility to a single formula (Weber, 1985, pp. 283-84).

These essays therefore concentrate on the elective affinity between a specific life-conduct, religious ideas, and capitalist culture. In this way, 'the following study may thus perhaps in a modest way form a contribution to the understanding of the manner in which ideas become effective forces in history' (Weber, 1985, p. 90).

Having said that, Weber explicitly rejected the idea that this occurred through 'the development of rationalism as a whole' (Weber, 1985, p. 76). According to him, there was no evolutionary progress or teleological development in Western rationalism, primarily because different areas of life have been rationalised in different directions and to different degrees.39 In fact, people:

.. rationalise life from fundamentally different basic points of view and in very different directions. Rationalism is an historical concept which covers a whole world of different things. It will be our task to find out whose intellectual child the particular form of rational thought was, from which the idea of a calling and the devotion to labour in the calling has grown, which is, as we have seen, so irrational from the standpoint of purely eudemonistic self-interest, but which has been and still is one of the most characteristic elements of our capitalistic culture (Weber, 1985, p. 78).

39 'historical truth' (1985, p. 183). This materialist analysis, as pointed out by Parkin (1982, p. 40), has often been missed by those who see Weber as an idealist, such as H.M. Robertson (1935, pp. 601-606) who accuses Weber of substituting Marx's economic interpretation of history with a purely psychological one. Randall Stokes (1975), in his analysis of Afrikaner Calvinism in South Africa, has shown how ascetic Protestantism, especially in its Calvinist form, can act as a conservative force against capitalism when introduced into certain material conditions. Thus it must be constantly kept in mind that Weber's essays on Protestantism are not (and are not intended as) a definitive or comprehensive historical analysis, but a cursory examination of the ideational components of modern capitalistic culture.

39 '... the history of rationalism shows a development which by no means follows parallel lines in the various departments of life' (Weber, 1985, p. 77). This is most clearly seen in the fact that rational Roman Law did not really exist in England, which was a leader in capitalistic economic rationalism.
So what was it about particular religious ideas which allowed the spirit of capitalism to become supreme as a form of life-conduct in capitalism, triumphing over other practices in the struggle between various ideas and life-conducts?

For Weber, this question could be answered by examining religious rationalisation, specifically, the rationalisation of Western Christianity, which occurred under ascetic Protestantism.

The Origins of the 'Spirit of Capitalism' in Ascetic Protestantism

For Weber, the idea of rational, methodical labour utilised within a calling, and the specific form of economic rationalism promoted by this idea, was the 'intellectual child' of four forms of ascetic Protestantism - Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism, and Baptism - collectively known as Puritanism.\(^{40}\) He thus attempted to trace 'the influence of those psychological sanctions which, originating in religious belief and the practice of religion, gave a direction to practical conduct and held the individual to it' (Weber, 1985, p. 97).

The worldview of ascetic Protestantism, based on certain presuppositions about the nature of reality, God, and salvation, affected the life-conduct and practice of its adherents in a specific direction, one with a distinct similarity to that life-conduct Weber called the 'spirit of capitalism'.\(^{41}\) Having said that, Weber was very much aware that the

\(^{40}\) 'When we use the expression ['Puritanism'] it is always in the sense which it took on in the popular speech of the seventeenth century, to mean the ascetically inclined religious movements in Holland and England without distinction of Church organisation or dogma, thus including Independents, Congregationalists, Baptists, Mennonites, and Quakers' (Weber, 1985, p. 217). Weber's presentation of Puritanism is, of course, an ideal-typical one which unavoidably does 'violence to historical reality' (Weber, 1985, p. 233).

\(^{41}\) 'The essential point... is (to anticipate) that an ethic based on religion places certain psychological sanctions (not of an economic character) on the maintenance of the attitude prescribed by it, sanctions which, so long as the religious belief remains alive, are highly effective. Only in so far as these sanctions
relationship between the ideas of a religion and the practice of its adherents is not directly causal, as this relationship is mediated by other factors, such as the role of preachers (as Weber demonstrated in detail with the work of Baxter), and the ideal and material interests of believers resulting from their social position (Weber, 1985, p. 192). He also explicitly pointed out the importance of economic conditions in shaping how such religious ideas are interpreted and accepted.\footnote{For those to whom no causal explanation is adequate without an economic (or materialistic as it is unfortunately still called) interpretation, it may be remarked that I consider the influence of economic development on the fate of religious ideas to be very important and shall later attempt to show how in our case the process of mutual adaptation of the two took place. On the other hand, those religious ideas themselves simply cannot be deduced from economic circumstances. They are in themselves, that is beyond doubt, the most powerful plastic elements of national character, and contain a law of development and a compelling force entirely their own. Moreover, the most important differences, so far as non-religious factors play a part, are, as with Lutheranism and Calvinism, the result of political circumstances, not economic' (Weber, 1985, pp. 277-78).}

Evidence of the connection between Protestantism and the 'spirit of capitalism' for Weber is found in the fact that the main holders and managers of capital in the capitalism of his time were predominantly Protestant. The economically advanced areas of Europe and the United States were Protestant, and these were the areas where entrepreneurial capitalist classes first emerged. These middle classes and petty bourgeoisie, and not the commercial elite, were the primary exponents of this 'spirit of capitalism' and the people to whom Benjamin Franklin had addressed his work.

For Weber, the connection between ascetic Protestantism and the 'spirit of capitalism' was based on the practical impulses which emanated from the ideas of Puritanism. These ideas, Weber pointed out, were not about a 'joy for living' and a
celebration of materialism, but precisely the reverse (1985, p. 45). Protestantism saw a redirection in the regulation of life-conduct away from the merely formal and external control exercised by the Catholic Church:

...the Reformation meant not the elimination of the Church's control over everyday life, but rather the substitution of a new form of control for the previous one. It meant the repudiation of a control which was very lax, at that time scarcely perceptible in practice, and hardly more than formal, in favour of a regulation of the whole of conduct which, penetrating to all departments of private and public life, was infinitely burdensome and earnestly enforced (Weber, 1985, p. 36).

For Weber, this ethical regulation and disciplining of everyday life was especially advocated by Calvinism, a denomination with strong affinities with capitalist economic rationalism.\textsuperscript{43} Though many of the ideas of Puritanism were first developed by Luther, they were only rationalised to logical consistency by Calvin.

Weber's analysis of Calvinism was not based on an analysis of the writings of Calvin, so much as the practical interpretations and implications of his thought (Weber, 1985, p. 220). For Weber, the fundamental importance of Calvinism lay in four main areas: its ontological dualism; its conception of God; its idea of 'predestination' as the basis of salvation; and the unprecedented need for proof of one's salvation which stemmed from this idea. We shall look at each of these areas in turn.

\textbf{Calvinist Ontology: States of Grace and Nature}

\textsuperscript{43}'... an extraordinary capitalistic business sense is combined in the same persons and groups with the most intense forms of a piety which penetrates and dominates their whole lives... Especially Calvinism, where it has appeared, has shown this combination' (Weber, 1985, p. 43). Therefore, 'Calvinism was historically one of the agents of education in the spirit of capitalism ... The rising middle and small bourgeois, from which entrepreneurs were principally recruited, were for the most part here and elsewhere typical representatives both of capitalistic ethics and of Calvinistic religion' (Weber, 1985, p. 200).
Calvin's ontology saw reality as a radical dualism between, on the one hand, the 'state of grace' (*status gratiae*), and on the other, the realm of sin, flesh, and creatural wickedness, the 'state of nature' (*status naturae*). This world, with its suffering, misery, and imperfections, existed in the state of nature. Also included in this state was 'human nature', the internal life of human beings based on emotionalism, spontaneity, and desires. For Calvinists, these two aspects of the state of nature existed solely for the glory of God, that is, they existed to be tamed, mastered and transformed to His will:

The world exists to serve the glorification of God and for that purpose alone. The elected Christian is in the world only to increase this glory of God by fulfilling His commandments to the best of his ability (Weber, 1985, p 108).

This ontological dualism between the state of nature and the state of grace permeated the Calvinist conception of God, its ideas concerning the path to salvation, and its view of how one could be certain of achieving salvation.

**The Conception of God in Calvinism: Transcendentalism**

For Weber, the conception of God in Calvin's work was of a transcendental being separated from the world of sin and flesh by an unbridgeable chasm. God was perceived to be omnipotent, and His power and majesty made Him beyond the comprehension and judgements of mere humans. In fact, human beings were considered to exist only for the greater glory of God and to transform this world according to His will: 'God does not exist for men, but men for the sake of God' (Weber, 1985, p. 102). In terms of agency, 'He and He alone is free, i.e. is subject to no law' (p. 103).
This conception was in contrast to the loving Father God of medieval and Lutheran Christianity:

The truth is that both Luther and Calvin believed fundamentally in a double God ... the gracious and kindly Father of the New Testament ... and behind Him the *Deus absconditus* as an arbitrary despot. For Luther, the God of the New Testament kept the upper hand, because he avoided reflection on metaphysical questions as useless and dangerous, while for Calvin the idea of a transcendental God won out (Weber, 1985, p. 221).

This idea of an omnipotent and moncausal Agent was seen by Weber as the end-point of the logical rationalisation of ontological presuppositions about reality and salvation which were first developed by the Hebrews. The logical outcome of such a view of God was that human salvation was also ultimately determined by the one causal Agent. The result was the doctrine of predestination.

**Salvation as Predestination**

The Father in heaven of the New Testament, so human and understanding ... is gone. His place has been taken by a transcendental being, beyond the reach of human understanding, who with His quite incomprehensible decrees has decided the fate of every individual and regulated the tiniest details of the cosmos from eternity (Weber, 1985, pp. 103-104).

The main points of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination are summarised, according to Weber, in the 'Westminster Confession' of 1647, which states that:

"by the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. Those of mankind that are predestined unto life, [are done so by] God before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose" (cited in Weber, 1985, p. 100).

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44 That great historical process in the development of religions, the elimination of magic from the world, which had begun with the old Hebrew prophets and, in conjunction with Hellenistic scientific thought, had repudiated all magical means to salvation as superstition and sin, came here to its logical conclusion' (Weber, 1985, p. 105).
Thus the fact of salvation for a few, damnation for the majority, as predetermined by God at the beginning of Creation, meant that salvation, as perceived by Calvinism, was beyond human action and effort, lying in the hands of the All-mighty alone. The path to salvation was predetermined by the actions of God, and there was no humanly made or even knowable path to salvation beside this. No priests, no scriptures, no church, not even Jesus, could help the individual achieve salvation since their destiny was immutable.\textsuperscript{45} The extreme 'inhumanity' of this idea led to a '... a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual' (Weber, 1985, p. 104) since 'the Calvinist's intercourse with his God was carried on in deep spiritual isolation' (p. 107). In this way, Calvinism was unique in the history of religion in that it believed that the path to salvation could not be walked upon by mere humans, and in this sense, it eliminated the idea of a path to salvation.\textsuperscript{46}

The idea of predestination, which had existed in Catholicism but only amongst its theologians, was taken up by the religious masses of Calvinism, that is, the middle classes

\textsuperscript{45} This was, for Weber, the decisive break with Catholicism (1985, p. 105).

\textsuperscript{46} This emphasis on the anxiety produced through the idea of predestined salvation has been recently questioned by MacKinnon (1988a and 1988b). MacKinnon argues that Puritan theologians that followed Calvin dropped his concept of predestination in favour of 'covenant theology' which allowed good works to be the basis of certainty of salvation. This covenant theology 'succeeded in disposing of Calvin's predestinarian determinism' (MacKinnon, 1988a, p. 152) and thus also eliminated Weber's argument that anxiety over salvation produced inner-worldly asceticism. At first, this seems a formidable attack on Weber's position, but it contains a number of flaws. David Zaret (1992) has pointed out that other Puritan theologians can be used to counter MacKinnon's interpretation of covenant theology and thus that MacKinnon's work suffers from a selective reading. More importantly, Zaret (1992, p. 372) argues that MacKinnon's reliance solely on the primary texts of theologians obscures the difference between theory and practice, since the records, diaries, letters and the like, of practising Puritans of the time reveal a discrepancy between what was preached and what was followed: 'nowhere does MacKinnon confront the relevant primary and secondary evidence, which obliges him to explain why the behaviour of Puritans did not correspond to the serene doctrine of assurance that he detects in [covenant] theology'. From my own position, this reinforces the fact that Weber was acutely aware of the differences between belief-systems systematised by religious intellectuals and the actions of religious followers, in other words, of the differences between theory and practice, intellectuals and practitioners. Once again there are echoes here of Bourdieu's statements on these matters.
and petty bourgeoisie (Weber, 1985, p. 226). This idea of salvation had profound effects on the life-conduct and attitudes of these Calvinists.

Firstly, it prevented the rise of the problem of theodicy. Questions of why suffering and death exist, and therefore of meaning, could never be answered by humans. Only God knew the reasons behind these things, and to even contemplate such issues was seen as a challenge to his power and majesty.

Secondly, this spiritual isolation had a profound effect on brotherly love, which was now seen to be achieved through impersonal work for the glorification of God. Working according to God's will was perceived to be the best way to help one's fellow believer. Brotherliness was not to be undertaken because of care for the other, but to further the glory of God, and this paradoxically, led to an impersonal means of showing it. These themes are expressed in:

... the ideas, running through the whole Puritan ethic, according to which the duty to love one's neighbours is satisfied by fulfilling God's commandments to increase His glory. The neighbour thereby receives all that is due to him, and anything further is God's affair. Humanity in relation to one's neighbours has, so to speak, died out (Weber, 1985, p. 226).

Perhaps the most important effect of the idea of predestination, however, concerned how a believer knew whether they were to be saved. In Calvinism, this question revolved around whether one could be certain that one was in the state of grace, and not trapped in the creatural and sinful state of nature.

The 'State of Nature' or the 'State of Grace'?
The question of certainty of salvation (\textit{certitudo salutis}) has been at the basis of all the world religions (Weber, 1985, p. 229). Under Calvinism, with its radical dualism between the 'state of nature' and 'the state of grace', the need to know if one was gifted with grace, and therefore predestined to be saved, became unusually heightened:

The question, Am I one of the elect? must sooner or later have arisen for every believer and have forced all other interests into the background. And how can I be sure of this state of grace? (Weber, 1985, p. 110).

One could not know if one was a member of the chosen few to be saved by God at the dawn of creation because 'the elect differ externally in this life in no way from the damned ... The elect thus are and remain God's invisible Church' (Weber, 1985, p. 110).

This radical dualism between the divine and the 'all too human' meant that one could not unite with God for salvation. Unlike various forms of mysticism or Lutheranism, there was no possibility of a \textit{unio mystica}, a spiritual absorption of the divine.\footnote{This point is completely lost in Parkin's critique (1982, p. 55): 'the interesting question is why the option of emotional contemplation was rejected in favour of an alternative stance ... There was no doctrinal imperative that propelled true believers along one unavoidable path, and foreclosed all other possibilities'. This statement is almost incredible in its inaccuracy. It was precisely the iron-clad consistency of the ontological presupposition of the transcendental God which Weber was trying to show ruled out all other possibilities. Without this conception of God, Weber's whole analysis of Calvinism would be much different.} Since the proof of salvation could not be found in this way, it had to be found in another.

The 'inhuman consistency' of Calvin's ontology produced great anxiety in the mass of believers who demanded to know if they were one of the elect (Weber, 1985, p. 126). Pastoral advice, which tried to meet this anxiety, came up with two solutions: firstly, be confident you are one of the elect because to doubt this is a lack of faith and therefore a sign that you were not saved; and secondly, '..in order to attain that self-confidence,
intense worldly activity is recommended as the most suitable means. It and it alone dispenses religious doubts and gives rise to the certainty of grace' (Weber, 1985, p. 112).

The reason for this emphasis on worldly activity in order to attain the certainty of salvation goes back to the ontological dualism within Calvinism, and to the idea that the purpose of human life was to transform the state of nature through a life-task or 'calling'.

The idea of the *Beruf*, or 'calling', was developed by Luther, and was a result of his increasing disgust with the monastic existence of Catholic monks, which he saw as a 'renunciation of the duties of this world [and] as the product of selfishness' (Weber, 1985, p. 81). Rejecting this other-worldliness, Luther argued that it was necessary for believers to fulfil their ethical duties within life-tasks given to them by God:

> the only way of living acceptably to God was not to surpass worldly morality in monastic asceticism, but solely through the fulfillment of the obligations imposed upon the individual by his position in the world. That was his calling (Weber, 1985, p. 80).

The revolutionary nature of this idea was that this-worldly activity was to be the basis of morality.

Despite this major reorientation in the attitude of Christianity towards worldly activity, Luther and the Reformation did not give rise to the spirit of capitalism. In fact, Luther's teachings were often anti-capitalistic in intent. Weber believed that Luther's conception of the calling was primarily traditionalistic and conservative in nature since:

> the individual should remain once and for all in the station and calling in which God had placed him, and should restrain his worldly activity within the limits imposed by his established station in life. While his economic traditionalism was originally the result of Pauline indifference, it later became that of a more and more intense belief in divine providence, which identified absolute obedience to God's will, with absolute acceptance of things as they were (Weber, 1985, p. 85).

Nevertheless, it was the idea of maximising profit within a calling as the ethical duty of individuals which gave ethical justification to a new form of entrepreneurship
(Weber, 1985, p. 75), Weber believed that the idea of the calling is central to understanding the relation between Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism.\footnote{Weber rejects that the idea of labouring in a specialised calling was the result of the complex division of labour produced by capitalism. He points out that specialisation was further developed in medieval Italy than in capitalist England (Weber, 1985, p. 266). For an historical analysis which supports Weber’s understanding of Puritanism and the concept of the calling, though questioning its links to capitalism, see Charles and Katherine George (1958).}

Once the Reformation in a sense 'broke' the Catholic attitude toward labour and morally emphasised labour in this world, the idea of the calling could be interpreted in many different ways. These interpretations varied between the different sects in Protestantism (Weber, 1985, p. 83). It was Calvinism, however, that ushered in the radical reorientation of worldly activity in which developed in ascetic Protestantism. It did this through the reconceptualisation of salvation as predestined, and the uncertainty over salvation that this doctrine promoted (Weber, 1985, p. 210). Since human beings were here to transform, through a calling, the state of nature in accordance with God's will, only this activity in the world was a sign of fulfilling God's plan:

> It was through the consciousness that his conduct, at least in its fundamental character and constant ideal, rested on a power within himself working for the glory of God; that it is, not only willed by God but rather done by God, that attained the highest good towards which this religion strove - the certainty of salvation (Weber, 1985, pp. 114-15).

Since the elect were those that furthered the glory of God through work in a calling, they were in a sense active 'tools' for God's will to be done.\footnote{The religious believer can make himself sure of his state of grace either in that he feels himself to be the vessel of the Holy Spirit or the tool of the divine will. In the former case his religious life tends to mysticism and emotionalism, in the latter to ascetic action; Luther stood close to the former type, Calvinism belonged definitely to the latter (Weber, 1985, pp. 113-14). Arnold Eisen’s (1979) research has supported Weber's understanding of the calling within Puritanism and its emphasis on calculability, control and order, although it indicates that Weber may have relied on English post-Civil War writings which were different in emphasis to those before the war.} The more active a Calvinist was, the more faith they were seen by themselves and others to possess, and thus the more certain of salvation they could be. The great uncertainty over whether one was
in the state of grace or nature, that is, uncertainty over one's ultimate fate, could thus only be alleviated by active work in a calling.

The communion of the elect with their God could only take place and be perceptible to them in that God worked through them and that they were conscious of it. That is, their action originated from the faith caused by God's grace, and this faith in turn justified itself by the quality of that action (Weber, 1985, p. 113).

Being active in the world meant that an agent was acting as God's 'tool' in taming the state of nature, and if God was acting through them, than this could only mean that they were in the state of grace, that is, touched by God. This activity was therefore a way of proving to themself and to others that God had made them one of the elect, and therefore chosen them to be saved. It was thus the means through which certainty of salvation could be achieved, namely, activity in the world, which was fundamentally important and unique in Calvinism. Good works and action in the world were not means to salvation (as no human effort could bring about salvation) but were means of showing that the individual had already been saved. Thus 'they are the technical means, not of purchasing salvation, but of getting rid of the fear of damnation' (Weber, 1985, p. 115). In this way, the Calvinist did not achieve their salvation (only God could do that), but they did achieve the belief that they were saved. This idea of the means, driven by the ideal interest in certain knowledge of salvation (which would make life meaningful), was what was important in producing and maintaining certain forms of action. In this way,

50 This point is completely missed by Parkin (1982, p. 48). Parkin asks why the Calvinist threw themselves into frantic this-worldly activity (when this would surely look like someone doubting their salvation), and not just take comfort in the belief that they were part of the elect. Parkin misses the links between transforming the world as the state of grace and as proof of salvation. Activity was not just a means of alleviating salvation anxiety, but morally necessary to be part of the elect. For this reason, a Calvinist could never take comfort in laxity.
we can see how the motor of ideal interests (in this case, salvation) runs along the 'tracks' of an idea (action as evidence of faith in a predestined world).

Furthermore, since the state of nature was the realm of spontaneity, desires of the flesh and chaos, Calvinist activity in the world had to be orderly and methodical:

The God of Calvinism demanded of his believers not single good works, but a life of good works combined into a unified system.... The moral conduct of the average man was thus deprived of its planless and unsystematic character and subjected to a consistent method for conduct as a whole (Weber, 1985, p. 117).

The Calvinist had to be on guard constantly against the state of nature and thus constant thought and vigilance were called for, lest they were seen by themselves or others as failing in their duty to transform the world.

This methodical self-control over the state of nature was actually first developed in the monasteries of Medieval Christianity.\(^{51}\) Such self-control of one's inner nature was not, however, carried over to the control and transformation of nature generally. This changed when 'the Reformation took rational Christian asceticism and its methodical habits out of the monasteries and placed them in the service of active life in the world' (Weber, 1985, p. 235). Ascetic Protestantism broke from monastic asceticism with its demand that asceticism be exercised in the world, that is, through one's occupation and

\(^{51}\) Weber observed that 'Christian asceticism ... had a definitely rational character in its highest Occidental forms as early as the Middle Ages, and in several forms even in Antiquity.... In the rules of St. Benedict, still more with the monks of Cluny, again with the Cistercians, and most strongly the Jesuits, it has become emancipated from planless otherworldliness and irrational self-torture. It had developed a systematic method of rational conduct with the purpose of overcoming the status naturae, to free man from the power of irrational impulses and his dependence on the world and on nature. It attempted to subject man to the supremacy of a purposeful will, to bring his actions under constant self-control with a careful consideration of their ethical consequences' (Weber, 1985, pp. 118-19). Thus Weber is aware of the emphasis on self-discipline and methodical self-control over one's inner 'state of nature', as developed by monks like the Cistercians. For this reason, Randall Collins' (1986, pp. 52-58) thesis that it was in fact the Cistercians which gave rise to capitalism misses the central point that the main historical problem is why this methodical asceticism of the monasteries actually expanded to a methodical control over all of the state of nature. For an analysis of the economic achievements of the monastic asceticism of the Medieval West which reaches similar conclusions to Weber's own investigations, see Silber (1993).
calling (Weber, 1978b, p. 1122). The result was that 'every Christian had to be a monk all his life' (Weber, 1985, p. 121). In this way, Puritanism eliminated the spiritual aristocracy outside the world and replaced it with a spiritual aristocracy within the world (Weber, 1985, p. 121): 'the active energies of the Elect, liberated by the doctrine of predestination, thus flowed into the struggle to rationalise the world' (Weber, 1985, p. 224).

This new this-worldly spiritual aristocracy had major effects on the ethic of brotherliness:

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, 1985, p. 122).

Attachment to others was seen as a slight against God, and more importantly, as an idolatry of the flesh and was thus seen as part of the state of nature (Weber, 1985, p. 224).

In summary, Calvinists believed that salvation resulted from the transformation of individuals from the status naturae ('state of nature') to the status gratiae ('state of grace'), a transformation which could only come about through God's gift of grace to the elect. Salvation thus occurred through God's actions, not the actions of humanity. This transformation and its effects, could be proved, though not achieved, through methodical worldly asceticism. The ideal interest in knowing, for certain, that one was saved, could only be met by showing that one was constantly transforming this world for the glory of God. In this way, the necessity for proof of salvation was the main dynamic which
sanctioned and influenced life-conduct in a particular direction which made it highly compatible with the logics of capitalism.\textsuperscript{52} Thus, for Weber:

The Calvinistic faith is one of the many examples in the history of religions of the relation between the logical and psychological consequences for the practical religious attitude to be derived from certain religious ideas (Weber, 1985, p. 232).

It is important to note that this outcome was not the result of the free-floating ideas of Calvinism shaping life-conduct, but the result of the interaction of these ideas with the practical needs of the believers:

Fatalism is, of course, the only logical consequence of predestination. But on account of the idea of proof, the psychological result was precisely the opposite ... The practical interests cut off the fatalistic consequences of logic (Weber, 1985, p. 232).

Nevertheless, it was the conceptions of reality and of the nature of God, brought about by logic and religious rationalisation, which were still fundamentally important in arriving at the practical implications:

The significance of the rational element in religious metaphysics is shown in classical form by the tremendous influence which especially the logical structure of the Calvinistic concept of God exercised on life. If the God [a transcendental God] of the Puritans has influenced history as hardly another before or since, it is principally due to the attributes which the power of thought had given Him (Weber, 1985, p. 232).

\textbf{Pietism, Methodism, Baptism}

For Weber, Calvinism was the most rationally consistent form of Puritanism, and the other denominations of Puritanism were at best 'weaker' forms of it (Weber, 1985, p. 128). In this way, 'the Pietism of the Continent of Europe and the Methodism of the Anglo-Saxon peoples are, considered both in their content of ideas and their historical significance,

\textsuperscript{52} This was different to 'passive' Lutheranism: 'the fact is that Lutheranism, on account of its doctrine of grace, lacked a psychological sanction of systematic conduct to compel the methodical rationalisation of life' (Weber, 1985, p. 128). This was primarily because '...there was no motive to give the idea of proof such a significance as it attained in Calvinism through the doctrine of predestination... Particular acts of grace for particular sins, not the development of an aristocracy of saints creating the certainty of their own salvation, was the necessary form salvation took for the average Lutheran' (Weber, 1985, pp. 239-40).
secondary movements' (Weber, 1985, p. 144), primarily because they are 'milder forms of the consistent ascetic ethics of Puritanism' (Weber, 1985, p. 252).\(^5\)

A different development of Protestant asceticism, however, is found in the Baptist sects. These sects were much more selective and discriminating than churches and thus did not see themselves as institutions bringing the means of salvation to humanity (as in Catholicism or Lutheranism) (Weber, 1985, p. 144). In terms of the calling, the Baptist sects did not give birth to the spirit of capitalism.\(^5\)

The Baptists saw salvation as being achieved with the 'baptism' of adults through the spiritual possession of God's gift of salvation. The path to salvation in Baptism was thus to be continually 'reborn' by the inner light of the Holy spirit entering the body. Without this inner light one remained purely a creature of flesh (Weber, 1985, p. 147). In this way:

The Baptist denominations along with the predestinationists, especially the strict Calvinists, carried out the most radical devaluation of all sacraments as means to salvation, and thus accomplished the religious rationalisation of the world in its most extreme form (Weber, 1985, p. 147).

\(^5\)According to Weber, though Pietism also had the doctrine of predestination, it was much more concerned with an emotional union with God in this world, than with transforming it: 'all in all, when we consider German Pietism from the point of view important for us, we must admit a vacillation and uncertainty in the religious basis of its asceticism which makes it definitely weaker than the iron consistency of Calvinism, and which is partly the result of Lutheran influences and partly of its own emotional character' (Weber, 1985, p. 137). Therefore, when 'compared to Calvinism, the rationalisation of life was necessarily less intense because the pressure of occupation with a state of grace which had continually to be proved, and which was concerned for the future in eternity, was diverted to the present emotional state' (Weber, 1985, p. 137). In this way, Pietism seems to have had an elective affinity with the values and life-conduct of clerks and workers, rather than those of bourgeois capitalist entrepreneurs (Weber, 1985, p. 139).

The Anglo-American version of Pietism, Methodism, also contained an emotional state and 'weaker' consistency than Calvinism. This was primarily because 'only the concept of regeneration, an emotional certainty of salvation as the immediate result of faith, was definitely maintained as the indispensable foundation of grace' (Weber, 1985, p. 142). For an analysis of how the Protestant ethic worked within these other denominations, see Barclay's (1969) analysis of the Holdemann Mennonites.

\(^5\)Of the following sketch it may be further remarked that its brevity is due to the fact that the Baptist ethic is of only very limited importance for the problem considered primarily in this study, the development of the religious background of the bourgeois idea of the calling. It contributed nothing new whatever to it' (Weber, 1985, p. 254).
This search for the inner light also meant a rejection of the entanglements of this world in favour of listening to God through one's conscience (Weber, 1985, p. 148). As part of this rejection of the world, the Baptist sects increasingly concentrated on economic activity. Most importantly for the spirit of capitalism, this economic activity was undertaken with profound ethical conscientiousness, since the conscience was where the spirit of God was believed to sit (Weber, 1985, p. 151). This was especially clear in the Baptists' emphasis on the maxim, 'honesty is the best policy'. This conscientiousness placed great importance on the external requirements of sect membership:

What was decisive was the fact that a fairly reputable sect would only accept for membership one whose conduct made him appear to be morally qualified beyond doubt (Weber, 1991, p. 305, italics in original).

Once the sect had accepted individuals, this was seen as certifying their moral worth and trustworthiness. This meant that other's sought them as reliable businessmen. Sect membership provided another impetus to the spirit of capitalism because, 'in order to hold his own in this circle, the member had to prove repeatedly that he was endowed with this qualities. They were constantly and continuously bred in him. For, like his bliss in the beyond, his whole social existence in the here and now depended upon his "proving" himself' (Weber, 1991, p. 320).

Members of the Baptist sects, therefore, found proof of their salvation in their ethical and conscientious actions in economic life, but did not place the same degree of

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55 Admission to the congregation is recognised as an absolute guarantee of the moral qualities of the gentleman, especially of those qualities required in business matters. Baptism secures to the individual the deposits of the whole region and unlimited credit without any competition' (Weber, 1991, p. 305). Sect members also benefited from the brotherliness internal to the sects. Members were ethically obliged to help their fellow believers in any time of economic or emotional distress (Weber, 1991, p. 318). This brotherliness, however, was restricted to fellow members of the sect, not universally given.
religious importance on their actions in the world as Calvinists did. Furthermore, since these ethics were important as requirements for membership in the sects, they became increasingly external in nature, acting as expressions of social worthiness. Thus 'this attitude saw a weakening of the Calvinist conception of the calling similar ... to the German Pietists' (Weber, 1985, p. 150).\textsuperscript{56}

Despite the differences between these ascetic Protestant denominations, they did have similar characteristics. They all conceived of the state of religious grace as being a state separate to the creatural state of nature (Weber, 1985, p. 153). The difference between them lay in the way numbers could prove the possession of this state of grace, to themself and to others.

Another important similarity amongst the Protestant asceticist denominations was that this state of grace could not be achieved or proved through magical means, such as, confession or sacraments or good works. Proof of the state of grace was only possible through having a life-conduct completely different and separate to that of 'natural' man (Weber, 1985, p. 153).

Therefore, all the denominations attempted to reach the 'state of grace' for their believers, and although some emphasised emotional means more than inner-worldly asceticism, they all rejected magical means to do so. Furthermore, the state of grace was to be experienced 'in-the-world', not outside it in monasteries. And so 'the rationalisation

\textsuperscript{56} For an analysis of Weber's writings on the Protestant sects in America and the degree of accuracy of his belief that increasing secularisation would undermine their position, see Benton Johnson (1971). Edward Tiryakian (1975) has argued that, of the three 'founding fathers' of sociology, Weber's understanding of the Puritan sects and their role in American history represents the strongest account of the basis and workings of modern American culture.
of conduct within this world, but for the sake of the world beyond, was the consequence of the concept of calling of ascetic Protestantism' (Weber, 1985, p. 154).

The Effects of the Puritan Worldview on Life-Conduct

For Weber, the unique nature of the Puritan concept of the calling was the religious basis of what would become the 'spirit of capitalism'. The calling provided the means of a systematic and methodical life-conduct which, under the pressure of an uncertainty about predestined salvation, provided a sign that one was in the state of grace. Through the rational labour of a calling, the transformation of the world could be undertaken and thus the follower could be certain of fulfilling God's plan. Hard work was valued by the Puritans as a good ascetic technique for ridding themselves of temptations, but also because sloth was seen as being tied to the state of nature. This rational asceticism therefore meant challenging and suppressing the 'spontaneity' of the state of nature and passion: 'this asceticism turned with all its force against one thing: the spontaneous enjoyment of life and all it had to offer' (Weber, 1985, p. 166).

Even the wealthy therefore had to work in order to be saved. Wealth was seen by the Puritans as evidence of fulfilling their duty of working rationally in a calling. It was not for individual enjoyment, but for God's glory and the wider social good that wealth was to be accumulated. In this way, the Catholic idea of allowing acquisition only in certain circumstances, was completely overthrown in Protestantism, which made accumulation a positive moral good (Weber, 1985, p. 267).
This attitude is seen clearly in the writings of Richard Baxter, which Weber used as an ideal-type of how ministers acted as mediators between Calvinist ideas and the life-conduct and interests of adherents. Weber examined Baxter's 'Christian Directory' in detail since it was the main set of writings used by the Puritans (Weber, 1985, p. 156). Baxter's ethics and tone were very much practical in orientation, emphasising mental and physical labour. His writings warned that wealth was a great danger and temptation since the enjoyment of wealth would mean giving into the temptations of the flesh and thus falling back into the state of nature. He also saw relaxation as a waste of time and of the opportunity to make money. For the elect, 'every hour lost is lost to labour for the glory of God' (Weber, 1985, p. 158).  

Baxter's views condoned the paradoxical situation that the more a believer earned and accumulated, the harder they should work:

The idea of a man's duty to his possessions [given to him by God], to which he subordinates himself as an obedient steward, or even as an acquisitive machine, bears with chilling weight on his life. The greater the possessions, the heavier, if the ascetic attitude toward life stands the test, the feeling of responsibility for them, holding them undiminished for the glory of God and increasing them by restless effort (Weber, 1985, p. 170).

In this way, this ascetic religion, just as in the monastic communities, gave birth to a specific form of economic rationalism, one highly complementary to modern capitalism, by making restless labour and accumulation the basis of meeting the ideal interest of meaningfulness: 'that fact alone is under discussion and is the whole point of this essay' (Weber, 1985, p. 259).

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57The emphasis on using time also goes back to monastic Catholicism: 'We ought not to forget, however, that the first people to live (in the Middle Ages) with careful measurement of time were the monks, and that the church bells were meant above all to meet their needs' (Weber, 1985, p. 261).
For Weber, Puritanism thus had two main effects which helped give birth to the spirit of capitalism in the sense promoted by Benjamin Franklin (1985, p. 171). Firstly, it denied the possibility of enjoying the consumption of goods that were accumulated, arguing that they should be re-invested to produce more goods. Secondly, it gave a positive psychological and social sanction to the accumulation of wealth and goods, seeing it, in opposition to the traditionalist view, as not only permissible, but morally obligatory. From this point of view, the enjoyment of wealth was seen as irrational, while its sober acquisition was viewed as completely rational. We are thus merely a step away from seeing, as Benjamin Franklin did, the accumulation of wealth as an end in itself and as the source of meaning in human life. In this way, the inner-worldly asceticism and the Protestant sects helped give birth to a particular life-conduct which in turn facilitated the rise of the 'spirit' of modern capitalist culture:

For Puritanism, that conduct was a certain methodical, rational way of life which - given certain conditions - paved the way for the "spirit" of modern capitalism. The premiums were placed upon "proving" oneself before God in the sense of attaining salvation - which is found in all Puritan denominations - and "proving" oneself before men in the sense of socially holding one's own within the Puritan sects. Both aspects were mutually supplementary and operated in the same direction: they helped to deliver the "spirit" of modern capitalism, its specific ethos: the ethos of the modern bourgeois middle classes (Weber, 1991, p. 321).

When Christian asceticism moved from the monastery to the market-place, and attempted to rationally regulate everyday life, it helped to facilitate a number of cultural and social changes. These changes would help give birth to Modernity, but would also, paradoxically, strangle the roots from which it grew. It is to these legacies we now turn.

The Legacy of the Puritan: Paradoxes of Protestant Religious Rationalisation

One of the fundamental elements of the spirit of modern capitalism, and not only of that but of all modern culture: rational conduct on the basis of the idea of the calling, was born - that is what
this discussion has sought to demonstrate - from the spirit of Christian asceticism (Weber, 1985, p. 180).

The religious origins of the life-conduct most conducive to success in capitalism, what Weber called the 'spirit of capitalism', can thus be found in the worldly asceticism of Puritanism. One of the main legacies of the Puritan, therefore, was the development of a way of life which was suitable to the structural and objective laws of capitalism.\footnote{One of the ways in which this occurred was through the homogenisation of life produced by the rational, methodical asceticism of Puritanism: 'that powerful tendency toward uniformity of life, which today so immensely aids the capitalistic interest in the standardisation of production, had its ideal foundations in the repudiation of all idolatry of the flesh' (Weber, 1985, p. 169).} And thus,

As far as the influence of the Puritan outlook extended... it favoured the development of a rational bourgeois economic life; it was the most important, and above all the only consistent influence in the development of that life. It stood at the cradle of the modern economic man (Weber, 1985, p. 174).

Though the religious origins of the calling and economic rationalism were important in giving birth to the 'spirit of capitalism' as personified in Benjamin Franklin's work, Weber was very much aware that the religious connections between ascetic Protestantism and the dominant life-conduct in capitalism have long since died off, and are left now to 'prowl about in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs' (Weber, 1985, p. 182). Modern capitalist culture has broken from its religious foundations (Weber, 1985, p. 188). The result, as Eisen states, is that we are \emph{Berufsmenschen}, studying \emph{Berufsmenschen}, wearing the blinders of \emph{Berufsmenschen} (1979, p. 15).

Puritanism, in attempting to solve one historical paradox, produced another. The paradox of monastic asceticism had always been how to deal with the riches which arose from intense activity combined with a lack of consumption. The Puritan reformers who
overcame this paradox by making the accumulation of wealth through asceticism morally obligatory, were not concerned with worldly goods, but primarily with salvation. These religious ideas, however, unintentionally and even paradoxically, undermined these religious motives:

> We shall thus have to admit that the cultural consequences of the Reformation were to a great extent, perhaps in the particular aspects with which we are dealing predominantly, unforeseen and unwished-for results of the labours of the reformers. They were often far removed from or even in contradiction to all that they themselves thought to attain (Weber, 1985, p. 90).

In this way, just as with monastic asceticism, the means defeated the ends. Slowly but surely, the religious dimension of rational labour in a calling faded out: 'then the intensity of the search for the Kingdom of God commenced gradually to pass over into sober economic virtue; the religious roots slowly died out, giving way to utilitarian worldliness' (Weber, 1985, p. 176).

Thus, the economically-driven man who only carried out religious activities on the side, replaced the lonely Puritan pilgrim (Weber, 1985, p. 176). Most importantly, the religious movements of the seventeenth century left to their more secular and utilitarian successors a good conscience in the acquisition of money (Weber, 1985, p. 176). The Puritans left their successors with a sense of duty to work in a calling and to make money. They also provided them with 'sober, conscientious, and unusually industrious workmen, who clung to their work as to a life purpose willed by God' (Weber, 1985, p. 177). Further, through the impersonal relations it promoted, ascetic Protestantism, Weber argues, in many ways 'legalised' the exploitation of labour:

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59 'An entrepreneur with an unshrined conscience stepped into the place of the one whose desire for gain was at most tolerated by God ... This entrepreneur was filled with the conviction that Providence has shown him the road to profit not without particular intention. He walked it for the greater glory of God, whose blessing was unequivocally revealed in the multiplication of his profit and possessions' (Weber, 1978b, p. 1124).
asceticism certainly deprived all labour of this worldly attractiveness, today forever destroyed by capitalism, and oriented it to the beyond ... Capitalism at the time of its development needed labourers who were available for economic exploitation for conscience's sake. Today it is in the saddle, and hence able to force people to labour without transcendental sanctions (Weber, 1985, p. 282).

For Weber then, '.. with the dying out of the religious root, the utilitarian interpretation crept in unnoticed' (1985, p. 177). One of the ways this occurred was through the impersonal nature of human relations and production. The lack of universal brotherliness in Puritanism unintentionally provided the ground on which an impersonal and utilitarian economic cosmos could develop.\textsuperscript{60} This impersonality helped facilitate the impersonal structures of capitalism which also work at the impersonal level:

The capitalist economy of the present day is an immense cosmos into which the individual is born, and which presents itself to him, at least as an individual, as an unalterable order of things in which he must live. It forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships, to conform to capitalist rules of action. The manufacturer who in the long run acts counter to these norms, will just as inevitably be eliminated from the economic scene as the worker who cannot adapt himself to them will be thrown into the streets without a job (Weber, 1985, pp. 54-55).

The Calvinist idea of rational and systematic activity in a calling which manipulated and controlled nature, produced a life-conduct which had an elective affinity with the developing structural logics of capitalism. Once integrated with the laws of capitalism, however, the calling and its associated life-conduct had no need for a religious basis (as Franklin's writings show). The structures of the system, unfettered from the control of

\textsuperscript{60} This was facilitated through the specialisation promoted by the idea of the calling: 'the specialisation of occupation 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, 1985, p. 161). This specialisation allowed utilitarianism to develop: 'the utilitarian turn, that the economic cosmos should serve the good of the many, the common good, etc., was a consequence of the idea that any other interpretation of it [the economy] would lead to aristocratic idolatry of the flesh, or at least did not serve the glory of God, but only fleshy cultural ends... But God's will ... [can] only be embodied in the good of the community, in impersonal usefulness. Utilitarianism is thus the result of the impersonal character of brotherly love and the repudiation of all glorification of this world by the exclusiveness of the Puritan' (Weber, 1985, pp. 265-66).
ethical rationalism and traditionalism, then came to dominate agents and constrain ethical action. The economic life-sphere cranked into autonomous life, liberated from its 'subservience' to the religious sphere, and free to follow its own logics. The resulting effects on modern life have been obvious:

The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so. For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which today determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilised coal is burnt (Weber, 1985, p. 181).

Thus the Puritan bequeathed the legacy of a structurally determined calling. This modern determinism replaces the determinism of the transcendental God of the Puritans. Whereas the Puritan cared for 'inner goods', that is, a sense of meaning, a moral framework within which to live, and a certainty of salvation, modern humanity is increasingly forced to care only about external goods. Material goods, which gained their heightened importance under Protestant asceticism,

have gained an increasing and finally an inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history. In Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the "saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment". But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage (Weber, 1985, p. 181).

Whereas the Puritan saw the accumulation of material goods merely as a means to an end - certainty of salvation - modern humanity exists in a social order where this accumulation becomes an end in itself. The evaluation of the accumulation of wealth, according to Weber, thus moved from being rejected traditionally, to being seen as a means to an end (for example, consumption, or, more importantly, as a means of proving one was in the state of grace), and, finally, to be seen as an end in itself.
Today the spirit of religious asceticism - whether finally, who knows? - has escaped from the cage. But victorious capitalism, since it rests on mechanical foundations, needs its support no longer (Weber, 1985, pp. 181-82).

Conclusion

My aim in this analysis of Weber's essays on Protestantism has not been to prove or disprove the theological and historical accuracy of Weber's writings on Calvinism and Puritanism. This project has been already undertaken by many commentators and critics.62 Instead, I have endeavoured to outline how these essays fit into Weber's wider understanding of religious rationalisation in Western history, and how they examine the interaction of ideas, life-conducts, ideal interests, and structural constraints. These works show how subjectivity unintentionally undermines itself by creating objective structures which make it meaningless, that is, 'irrational'. The subjectively valued pursuit of salvation by the Puritans established objectively structured ideas, which in turn produced objective forms of life-conduct in agents, objective structures which acted as a rationalism or 'habitus' which gave those agents superior means of advancing in, at the same time as

61 Though Weber realised further investigation of ascetic Protestantism was necessary (for example, to see how it had been affected by socio-economic conditions - see Weber, 1985, p. 183), he turned after his essays on Protestantism to his comparative works in religion 'in order to correct the isolation of this study and to place it in relation to the whole of cultural development' (Weber, 1985, p. 284). I shall examine these works on the religious rationalisation undertaken in China and India in the next chapter.

62 In terms of historical inaccuracy, for example, Sombart (1967), Hagen (1962), and Parkin (1982), criticise the inability of Weber's thesis on Calvinism to explain Scotland's failure to develop capitalism, a criticism which is strongly refuted by Marshall (1980), who emphasises the lack of structural conditions conducive to capitalism in Scotland. Others, such as Tawney (1929), Robertson (1935), Hyma (1951), Fanfani (1936), and Cohen (1980), have argued that rational modern capitalism existed in Renaissance Italy prior to the Reformation and therefore Protestantism could not have been its cause. This has been refuted as a misunderstanding of Weber's intentions by, among others, Holton (1983), and Sprinzak (1972). In terms of theological inaccuracy, critics such as Hudson (1949) and MacKinnon (1988a and 1988b) have argued that Weber distorted Calvinism to suit his thesis, while others such as Fanfani (1936), Hyma (1951), Samuelsson (1961), and Sombart (1967) have argued that Weber's interpretation of late medieval Catholicism missed the important roots of the spirit of capitalism within it. These claimed theological inaccuracies have been challenged by Sprinzak (1972) and Zaret (1992). See the debate between Pellicani (1989) and Oakes (1988 and 1989) for a more recent account of many of these issues.
advancing, the objective socio-economic structures of capitalism. In this way, the subjectively meaningful intent and action of the Puritan paradoxically facilitated the development of objective material structures which denied the possibility of that subjective intent remaining meaningful. They helped advance a social system which promoted values and conceptions of the world antipathetic to their own values and conceptions, and which exiled them to the realm of the 'irrational'. The Puritan's religiously based life-conduct reinforced the development of conditions which eventually strangled that religious base. The 'Protestant ethic essays' show that Weber's focus in his empirical studies of religion was the intricate relations between subjective meaning and objective structures.

Weber believed that the process of religious rationalisation within Western cultural history contained profound moral and social consequences for modern Western humanity. These paradoxical consequences also profoundly affect Bourdieu's work in a number of ways. Before turning to these paradoxes, however, I will contrast the process of religious rationalisation which culminated in these outcomes with the processes that shaped Chinese and Indian cultural history in order to show their own unique outcomes, as well as to highlight the complexity of Weber's sociology of religion. Indian and Chinese cultural histories witnessed different forms of religious rationalisation, valued different types of knowledge, and had different accounts of how human agency interacted with social structures, than that found in the West. By examining such differences, we are able to contextualise Bourdieu's science of practices, the ontological presuppositions it makes, and the limits to reflexivity it produces.
6

Religious Rationalisation in China and India

Introduction

Weber's investigations of the religions of Asia, *Konfuzianismus und Taoismus*\(^1\) and *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*,\(^2\) further explore the complex relationship between life-conduct, ontological presuppositions, the ethical rationalisation of particular areas of life, and the contingencies of history and geography. These studies continue Weber's analysis of the ways in which the rationalisation of cultural life in particular directions shaped the course of the world's major civilisations differently.

Weber's analysis of Chinese and Indian history and culture reveals distinct types of rationalisation processes and 'rationalisms' produced by them. These processes, like their Western counterpart, were developed through a complex interaction of religious and ethical ontologies, and the material and ideal interests of different social strata. Each rationalisation process shaped action in the world in certain ways in accordance with the ideas resulting from particular views of the cosmos. Weber's 'Religion of China' and 'Religion of India' trace these ethical/religious worldviews, and the effects they had on their respective societies and histories, not only in order to compare them to Western rationalisation, but also as a means of understanding them in their own right.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Translated as 'Religion of China' by H.H. Gerth, 1951, Macmillan.

\(^2\) Translated as 'Religion of India' by H.H. Gerth and D. Martindale, 1958, The Free Press.

\(^3\) Ideally, the other main 'non-Western' world religion, Islam, should be included in this chapter. As is well known, however, Weber unfortunately never lived to systematically develop his cursory writings on Islam (which are mostly scattered in the section on religion in 'Economy and Society'). The ground-breaking work of Bryan Turner (1974) has gone a long way to redressing that situation, and others such as Schroeder (1992) and Clammer (1985) have aided this process. Based on this work, one can hesitantly...
In this chapter, I outline Weber's analysis of the rationalisation of pre-modern Asian religions in an attempt to illustrate two things. Firstly, I will further show the complexity and multicausality of Weber's understanding of religion, contra Bourdieu's accusations of subjectivism. Secondly, I will show Weber's analysis of the moral reflexivities developed in these religions, their effects on values, knowledge, and life-conduct, and their differences to the moral reflexivity of the West. By highlighting both of these elements, I show how other civilisations have produced reflexive understandings of human agency, and the meaning of suffering and death without the paradoxes found in the modern Western intellectual sphere and Bourdieu's science of practice.

I. The Religions of China

Weber's investigation of the rationalisation of Chinese culture and life-conduct revealed that, unlike the Modern West, maintenance of tradition and social stability were the ends towards which rationalisation was directed.\(^4\) Not control and transformation of the world, but a harmonious social order was deemed to be the most valuable goal towards which

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\(^4\) This point has also been highlighted by Molloy: 'in fact, Weber was concerned, not with a Chinese social system analogous to the social system of pre-capitalist Europe, but with a unique and immensely lengthy historical process: the rationalisation of Chinese culture' (1980, p. 395).
society and culture should be directed. The absence of capitalism, Weber believed, was indicative of this rationalisation process.\(^5\)

The reasons why rationalisation moved in this particular direction, Weber suggests, were multifaceted:

*Both* economic and intellectual factors were at work. The former, which we shall discuss first, pertained to the state economy and were therefore political in nature. The political-economic, like the "intellectual" factors at work, resulted from the peculiarity of the leading stratum of China, the estate of officials and candidates for office, the mandarins (Weber, 1951, p. 55, italics added).

Like Weber, we will begin with an analysis of the 'political-economic' and material factors which he saw as vital in shaping Chinese culture and society.\(^6\) These factors can be summarised as: the intricate and delicate balance of the Chinese social order between

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\(^5\) Nowhere does Weber make a value-judgement about the ethical superiority of these ends or rationalisation processes, instead focussing his concern on comparisons to the Western rationalisation process. Though Weber has been accused of 'Orientalism', that is, seeing Chinese civilisation as static (see, for example, Van der Sprekel, 1954), this needs to be kept in context. There are few sociologists who would contest the idea that traditional societies, such as Imperial China, never experienced the rapidity of social and technological change experienced in modern industrial societies. As Mommsen observes, 'it is only in contrast to the perennial restlessness of the Puritans that these oriental religions appear to be agents of social stagnation per se' (1992, p. 160). It is to this change which Weber refers, not as an ethical judgement on Chinese civilisation, but as a fact of comparison. We must not see in Weber's work an association of technological 'progress' with ethical 'progress'. Running throughout Weber's entire oeuvre is a caustic dismissal of any argument that the West had achieved some sort of ethical 'progress' with the advent of Modernity. As Ulmen has put it: 'his comparative studies imply no moral argument with respect to any one culture, and certainly not with respect to Western culture. Industrial capitalism and occidental rationalism are historical and cultural - not moral phenomena' (1991, p. 183). For Weber's links with, and divergences from, German Orientalism, see Turner (1981, pp. 257-86).

\(^6\) This emphasis on the economic and material factors which prevented the development in China of Western style economic rationalism and therefore also Western capitalism, have been almost completely overlooked in Mark Elvin's (1984) critique of Weber's work on China. Elvin argues that Weber's stress on the lack of a cultural 'mentality' suitable for the development of rational capitalism misses the economic factors affecting China's development towards capitalism: 'the crucial fact is that this conception of the problem led Weber in practice to place an excessive faith in the explanatory power of an analysis of ideas considered in relative isolation from their socioeconomic context' (Elvin, 1984, p. 389). As I will show, this type of ideal-typical construction of a monocausal, historically idealist Weber, completely misses the complexity and multicausality of Weber's understanding of the interrelation between material and ideational factors in historical development. In fact, Elvin's criticism that 'what is wrong with this [idealist] view is that ideas and motives (like genes) have to fight for survival. The context in which they operate is as important as their intrinsic nature' (1984, p. 380) could not be closer to Weber's own position. *Contra* Elvin's opinion, Weber was at great pains to show the socio-economic context of Chinese cultural ideas.
the imperial court, the provincial administrators, and the rural sibs; the pacification of China under a patrimonial bureaucracy; the lack of development of autonomous cities and an armed citizenry; and the material and ideal interests of the Chinese intellectuals, the Confucian literati, in maintaining the status quo. We now turn to each of these points in more detail.

The Chinese Social Order: From Warring States to Patrimonial World Empire

From the ninth century BC to the third century BC, the region of China existed in a feudal condition known as the Warring States Period. During this time, a number of lords and princes fought each other for control of land and the expansion of their realms. According to the Annals, the Period of Warring States was brought to an end when Shih Huang Ti succeeded in conquering his rivals and unifying the realm into an empire in 221 BC. As the prince of Chin, he brought the administration of the empire under his own patrimonial bureaucracy. A According to the Chou Li (the oldest document on administration to which Weber had access) the establishment of the empire brought about the development of a bureaucratic officialdom controlling the river systems, silk cultivation, the army, and storehouses (Weber, 1951, p. 37). The power of the central authority was based on this river regulation and this control allowed it to prevent a feudal order re-emerging (Weber, 1951, p. 20). Correspondingly, the empire was gradually pacified. Weber's main

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7 For a detailed analysis of Weber's conception of patrimonialism and feudalism, see Turner (1981, pp. 201-233) and Poggi (1988).
8 According to Weber (1951, p. 20), the main forms of water control utilised by the government were: dike construction against floods; dike construction for inland water transport; and canal construction for irrigation. Current Sinological research, as Van der Spenkel (1965, p. 202) points out, supports Weber's assessment of the importance of river control for the central government.
concern in his analysis of Chinese civilisation is with the period of this bureaucratic empire 
(221 BC to AD 1911). The transition from the feudal period of the Warring States to the 
pacified Imperial Age was important in shaping the history of Chinese culture, however, 
and Weber notes a number of factors in relation to this transfer.

The most important of these for Weber's analysis was the role of the Confucian 
literati during the Warring States Period. The literati, as rationally educated 
administrators, became increasingly important to the warrior princes during this period as 
they could advise them on how to rationalise their feudal administrations for financial and 
military purposes.⁹ The literati, due to their mastery of the rites and classics, became 
unofficial ministers and 'father-confessors' to the princes. They advised the princes on 
how to avoid upsetting the demons and spirits, which were believed to often decide 
victory, as well as on how to maximise the efficiency of their realms for the attainment of 
military victory. In this way they came to occupy an extremely powerful position in the 
social order of the Warring States Period.

With the unification and pacification of the Empire, this position increased in 
power and influence. As we shall see below, the organisation of the administration of the 
Empire around a patrimonial bureaucracy meant that it depended on the educated literati 
as its officials, a position from which the literati were able to become the dominant social 
stratum in China. This political and cultural dominance by the Confucian literati was a 
decisive factor in the direction Chinese socio-cultural history was to take.

⁹For a supporting analysis of the rationalisation of internal administration techniques during the Warring 
States Period, see Van der Sprekel (1965, p. 202).
The Warring States Period also saw the development of 'political capitalism' based on loans to warring princes (Weber, 1951, p. 103). Yet when the empire was unified, this form of capitalism was extinguished (Weber, 1951, p. 84). Despite the preponderance of merchants, Chinese history took a different direction under its patrimonial bureaucratic administration than the Occident. The reasons for this were some of the main questions Weber's analysis sought to address.

**Imperial Social Relations**

**The Emperor - Warlord and Pontifex**

At the head of Chinese social relations in the Imperial Age was the Emperor and his entourage. All military, political, and most importantly for Weber's analysis, religious power, was concentrated into his hands, at least in theory (Weber, 1951, pp. 20-32). The reason for this was the central authority's monopolisation of the water system (p. 51). Similar in many ways to the Middle East, where the king was associated with the chief deity as provider of water and harvests, the Chinese emperor was seen as the 'Son of Heaven' and the quality of his rule was believed to determine socio-economic conditions in the Empire. In this way, 'the empire resembled a confederation of satrapies under a pontifical head' (Weber, 1951, p. 48).

Importantly, this centralisation of religious power in the imperial personage meant that the political and religious spheres where unified in Imperial Chinese society, which thus prevented the emergence of a powerful priesthood standing in opposition to the central government (Weber, 1951, p. 142). It also eliminated the possibility of emissary
prophets standing against the political order, as was the case in Ancient Judaism (Weber, 1951, p. 142).

All this added up to a lack of religious opposition for the main stratum of intellectuals in Imperial China, the Confucian literati. It thus gave them free reign over the control of knowledge, political offices, and most importantly, the rationalisation of culture towards values/ends that suited their ideal and material interests. It is to this stratum we now turn.

**Confucian Virtuosi - The Literati**

For Weber, the Confucian literati, the stratum that dominated Chinese society by its education and monopolisation of political office, unified Chinese culture, and were the source of its rational intellectualism.\(^{10}\) They were the bearers of a specific worldview and life-conduct which had a profound effect on the historical direction of Chinese civilisation, and thus were instrumental in the development of a rationalisation process which differed dramatically to that undergone in Europe.

As mentioned, during the period of the Warring States, the literati were employed by the warring princes and lords in attempts to rationalise their administration to maximise its efficiency for the purposes of war. The *po-shih*, or 'living libraries' as the literati were called, gained prestige and charisma through their knowledge of the rituals and classical scriptures of Chinese belief (Weber, 1951, p. 108). These rituals and scriptures were believed to be magical in nature and kept the spirits and demons that populated Chinese

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\(^{10}\) Both Van der Spenkel (1965, p. 202) and Eisenstadt (1985, p. 56) have stressed the accuracy of Weber's analysis of the social position and dominance in culture and politics of the Confucian literati.
cosmology under favourable control. With the pacification and unification of the empire, the literati emerged as the dominant stratum in China, monopolising the control of the patrimonial bureaucracy established to administer the empire (Weber, 1951, p. 108). The literati gained increasing power at the expense of the old feudal nobility and 'this struggle was decisive for the structure of Chinese politics and culture' (Weber, 1951, p. 46). In this way, 'feudal elements in the social order gradually receded and patrimonialism became the structural form fundamental to the Confucian spirit' (Weber, 1951, p. 47).

In the Period of Warring States, and during the early formation of the empire, the literati aimed at working out problems for efficient administration and politics. This, according to Weber, oriented their thinking in a particular direction: 'this constant orientation toward problems of the "correct" administration of the state determined a far-reaching, practical, and political rationalism among the intellectual stratum' (1951, p. 110). This concern with internal administration and its ordered process, for Weber, was at the heart of the importance of the literati, in contrast to the Jewish prophets and other priestly classes who were concerned with foreign relations or the Beyond (1951, p. 110). What made the Chinese literati unique, compared to the intellectuals of the West which were primarily religious and other-worldly in orientation, was the fact that they were genteel laymen concerned with this-worldly affairs (Weber, 1951, p. 108).

With the establishment of the empire, the literati became increasingly conservative as their interests became vested in the system and bureaucracy they were instrumental in developing. After the unified empire was established, the opposing princes no longer

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11 The power of the literati was elevated to its dominant position especially after they placed Kuang Wu on the throne in 21 AD. The Tang dynasty in the seventh century set up colleges for the literati and created Hanlin Yuan, the Academy for the literati (Weber, 1951, p. 117).
competed for the literati, but the literati competed for the offices of the central government. Thus, their political orientation moved from that of political innovation to political stabilisation, a move reflecting their changing material interests (Weber, 1951, p. 110). The 'ethos' of the group increasingly became concerned with office-holding and official duty, as this was the basis of their social, economic, and political power.

As part of the administration of the empire, the ruling of provinces was to be based on merit, not noble birth. This merit was to be assessed through a rigorous and costly series of examinations:

For twelve centuries social rank in China has been determined more by qualification for office than by wealth. This qualification, in turn, has been determined by education, and especially by examinations. China has made literary education the yardstick of social prestige (Weber, 1951, p. 107).  

This examination system was aimed at maximising competition between the administrators and governors for offices, thus preventing them from uniting into a feudal group (Weber, 1951, p. 119). For this reason, education became the main focus of division between social strata. This education was based on the classical scriptures, the knowledge monopolised by the literati. The literati were thus able to transform themselves into a status group by monopolising knowledge.

Consistent with its social function, this education was conservative and traditionalistic in character.  

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12 Of course, due to the high costs in terms of time and money involved in studying for the examinations, wealth, and access to loans and patronage, often replaced merit in the choosing of administrators (Weber, 1951, p. 134). Weber was very much aware of the relationship between 'economic' and 'cultural' capitals.

13 Two main characteristics of Chinese literary education were its non-military form and its subordination of speech to writing (in contrast to the Hellenic poleis). Thus, 'in spite of the logical qualities of the language, Chinese thought has remained rather stuck in the pictorial and the descriptive. The power of logos, of defining and reasoning, has not been accessible to the Chinese' (Weber, 1951, p. 125). There was also a distinct lack of mathematics in Chinese education.
In terms of practical administration, Confucian education tested how far the pupil understood the classical scriptures and traditional means of administration based on them. As such, it tested the 'ways of thought' of the student and made sure they were in accordance with traditional ways of thinking. The literati were thus not autonomous scholars, but educated officials (Weber, 1951, p. 122). Weber (1951, p. 121) makes it very clear that the traditionalism of Confucian education was reproduced not just through the content of teaching, but the whole 'mentality' which was produced.

Confucian education also aimed at developing the 'cultivated man' in its pupils. This included the ideal of self-control in all situations. In Weber's view, as part of the Confucian dualist ontology, education was seen as furthering Yang (the male, beneficial side), bringing the individual in tune with the harmony of the good spirits, and denying the Yin (the feminine and emotional) side (Weber, 1951, p. 131). 14

This ideal was important because the masses looked at the 'cultivated' administrator as having magical powers (or 'magical charisma' as Weber terms it) which kept evil spirits out of their province (Weber, 1951, p. 128). This charisma legitimated the education and rule of the Confucian literati. This legitimation, of course, depended on a continually ordered and prosperous rule. Like the emperor, if the Confucian official failed in his administration, he was seen as unable to control the restless spirits.

Importantly, this education was not conducted by an autonomous priesthood which could have established a hierocracy, but was instead undertaken by secular and

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14 This emphasis on Yang and the rejection of Yin was partly due to the power the women of the court often exercised over the young heir or emperor, as well as the possibility of the loss of self-control which women were considered to represent (Weber, 1951, p. 138). Van der Srenkel (1954, p. 273) has questioned Weber's interpretation of the concepts of Yin and Yang, seeing in it a Zoroastrian dualism which extinguishes the important complementarity of the concepts.
political officials, that is, other literati. This allowed a relatively smooth reproduction of this strata.

This Confucian education allowed the individual to perform the correct rituals and ceremonies for administration and to adopt a life-conduct imbued with the spirit of traditionalism (Weber, 1951, p. 126). Chinese thought thus 'remained oriented to purely practical problems as well as to the status interests of the patrimonial bureaucracy' (Weber, 1951, p. 127).  

After receiving this education, the successful graduate became a provincial governor or mandarin. Strengthening the power of the central government against centrifugal forces, a mandarin could only spend three years in any one province, before being moved to another. This prevented him gaining too much power in one place and rebelling. Since the governors/mandarins were moved to new provinces, they and their entourages knew little of local administration and customs and were thus reliant on the local literati (Weber, 1951, p. 49). This obviously increased the power of the literati as an homogenous stratum.

Imperial Cities

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15 Van der Sprekel (1965, p. 214) is incorrect when he accuses Weber of seeing the examination system as merely the principal weapon used by the emperor's court against the bureaucracy. Though Weber saw that the examinations did keep the officialdom internally divided and competitive over offices, he certainly recognised they were necessary for the administration of such a large empire. More importantly, the literati were able to maintain their power and control over the emperor and central government by claiming any disaster striking the kingdom as a result of straying from tradition and thus upsetting the cosmic order:

"Constitutionally" - and this was the theory of the Confucians - the emperor could rule only by using certified literati as officials; "classically" he could rule only by using orthodox Confucian officials. Every deviation from this rule was thought capable of bringing disaster and, in case of obstinacy, the downfall of the emperor and the ruin of the dynasty' (Weber, 1951, p. 141).
The control of cities was vital to the administration of the provinces of the Empire. The Chinese city was primarily a fortress and place of residence for the provincial governor, and thus was kept under strict control by the central government for fear of rebellion. This control was based on imperial administration of rivers and irrigation (Weber, 1951, p. 16). The main cause of the lack of autonomy on the part of the Chinese city therefore was the construction of a centralised bureaucratic empire early in China's history. The cities were administered by mandarins as prebends - gifts from which to exact rent and income. Even so, the imperial officials had to deal with the town associations (such as guilds and clubs) that ran the city's economic life. The power of the imperial administration could not reach too far into the everyday life of the town and rural village, since it confronted the power of the personal relations that were the basis of the sib and guild. Though the imperial administration could take control of the city, it preferred to let it govern itself, since control over China's vast areas was exacting (Weber, 1951, p. 47).

The main form of urban self-government was the guild. The guild had much more control of an individual's life than its Occidental counterpart. The guilds maintained monopolies, regulated taxes, and enforced restrictions on the number of apprentices, yet they had no politico-military power of their own (Weber, 1951, p. 20). In contrast, the cities did not become more economically powerful than the villages, as opposed to the Occident. Furthermore, unlike the Occident, the power of the sibs was not broken, and no

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16 Weber believed that Chinese cities originated as fortresses established to control rivers (1951, p. 16). Van der Sprekel (1954, p. 273) has questioned this, arguing instead that many cities were aimed at controlling important trade routes, not rivers. This may be true, but is an inconsequential point in Weber's analysis because it in fact reinforces the main point Weber is trying to make about the Chinese city: its control by the central government. It matters little whether this control was for military or trade purposes, it nevertheless prevented the rise of autonomous cities as in the Medieval Occident. Eisenstadt has pointed out that Weber's analysis of the lack of autonomy of the Chinese city from the central administration is widely accepted by contemporary Sinologists (1985, p. 56).
armed citizenry controlled the cities (Weber, 1951, p. 13). In fact, the village secured more autonomy from the central government (Weber, 1951, p. 15). As such, 'the guilds were never able to make the administration and wealth of the cities independent from the imperial administration primarily because they lacked the military and political means to do so' (Weber, 1951, p. 20).

Chinese cities did not have the same degree of political, economic and legal autonomy as European cities such as Florence or Genoa, and this limited their ability to become prosperous through trade (Weber, 1951, p. 13). In the Occident, the city was the vehicle for financial rationalisation. In China, by contrast, the city had no charter guaranteeing its rights against imperial officials, and therefore it could not function as a united corporate body. For Weber, this meant the rationalisation of Chinese society was in such a direction that it did not allow a separate economic sphere with its own values and logics to emerge. It also prevented the development of a homogenous civic stratum with specific ideal and material interests, precisely that strata, Weber believed, that was inclined to undertake economic rationalisation towards world transformation. This reinforced China's ethically rational social stability.

The Power of the Rural Sibs

The sib (Sippe) and kinship network were the basis of the social order of China, and thus the basis of human relations for the majority of its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{17} The cohesion of the sib

\textsuperscript{17} According to Van der Sprenkel, Weber's greatest insight was into the way lineage operated as the basis for life in rural China (1965, p. 216).
rested on the ancestor cult, and the power of the sib counteracted the influence of the 
central administration (Weber, 1951, p. 87).

The sib, which in the Occidental Middle Ages was practically extinct, in China was completely 
preserved in the administration of the smallest political units as well as in the operation of 

The sib controlled the village, the centre of rural life. The temple of the village was 
extremely important in this, being the centre of law, ancestor worship, and weapons 
storage (Weber, 1951, p. 92). The sib was the basis of an in-group/out-group mentality, 
since it 'faced the outside world with solidarity' (Weber, 1951, p. 88). Economically, 
reforms and attempts at economic efficiency which deviated from tradition had to meet the 
agreement of the village sib and its administrative body of elders. Weber even compared 
these sibs to the modern Occidental trade unions, seeing them as antagonistic to attempts 
to impose work discipline and 'free' labour markets (1951, p. 95). Since ancestor piety 
was of utmost importance to the sib, innovation was considered to have the potential to 
upset the social and cosmic harmony and thus bring about magical evils by showing 
disrespect to ancestors and the tradition they established. Furthermore, the sibs were self-
sufficient and demanded that each house be the same. This obviously limited domestic 
market opportunities.

This power of the village sib undermined the autonomy and influence of the city.¹⁸

The city was thus undermined from above by the central administration, and below by the 
village-based sib. The central bureaucracy was often happy to leave affairs to the local sib

¹⁸The "city" was, therefore, never the "hometown" but typically a "place away from home" for the 
majority of its inhabitants. The alien character of the city was further sharpened by the above-mentioned 
absence of the organised self-government found in the village' (Weber, 1951, p. 90).
village and temple, since the power of the city never reached far beyond its walls. Indeed, according to Weber (1951, p. 91), the villages often had thousands of residents and were just as fortified as cities. In this way, a "city" was the seat of the mandarin and was not self-governing; a "village" was a self-governing settlement without a mandarin! (Weber, 1951, p. 91).

For Weber, the absence of an autonomous city with a bourgeois citizenship, and the centering of social life in rural organisations, directed rationalisation in China in a different direction than that of the Occident by reinforcing tradition:

The rationalism of the bureaucracy was faced with a resolute and traditionalistic power which, on the whole and in the long run, was stronger because it operated continuously and was supported by the most intimate personal associations (Weber, 1951, p. 95).

The social order of China was thus an intricate and finely balanced set of relations between the imperial centre personified by the emperor, the cultural and administrative dominance of the Confucian literati, and the kinship ties of the sib. All of these factors helped maintain the status quo so that traditionalism was the dominant 'spirit' of this social order. The administration of this order reinforced this traditionalist spirit.

The Administration of the Imperial State

For Weber, there were a number of ways in which the patrimonial administration undertaken by the central authority of the Empire promoted the development of the unique

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19 Van der Sprenkel points out that it is now an accepted point in Sinology that the relation between the rural sibs and the central government under the empire was one of compromise and collaboration (1965, p. 219).
Chinese rationalisation process which gave rise to a different type of rationalism than that found in the West (Weber, 1951, p. 100).

The balance of social power between the imperial centre, the provincial mandarins, and the rural sibs, meant that no 'rational' economic policy could be implemented. Though the emperor often intervened in the economy for the welfare of his subjects, there was no way he could break the entrenched power of the governors and sibs (Weber, 1951, p. 136). The economy was therefore largely left to itself.

The mandarin administrators, according to Weber, exhibited a 'rentier mentality' due to their material interest in maintaining the system of prebends they controlled (1951, p. 61). This system was based on them exacting as much revenue as possible from the prebend they administered in order to make up for the costs involved in their education and bribes needed to advance through the imperial bureaucracy. The governors' salaries were minimal, and their personal and administrative costs were not separated (Weber, 1951, p. 57). They thus resisted any economic or social reform which would jeopardise their control over prebends.

**Fragmentary Money System**

Due to the 'preponderance of agrarian production' (Weber, 1951, p. 3), Weber believed the absence of development of a coherent monetary system in China handicapped the 'rational' calculation of profit.\(^{20}\) Without money, budgets and profit/loss transactions

\(^{20}\) According to Weber (1951, p. 3), the money economy was almost non-existent. Copper was the currency of everyday trade because gold and silver remained scarce. The main reason for the very low output of coins was the discrepancy between price and costs:

* transport costs were high;
* labour costs (based on corvee labour) were high;
could not be rationally and therefore accurately ascertained. Despite the influx of silver in the late eighteenth century, China did not develop a rational monetary system, mainly due to the influence of its dominant ethical value system, Confucianism, and the hostility of traders and regional governors to attempts by the imperial centre to centralise the financial system.

**Substantively Rational Law**

The patrimonial bureaucracy that administered the Chinese Empire did not develop a calculable system of law, law-enforcement, and predictable administration. Instead, it was based on the substantively rational law of 'kadi justice'. Legal decisions were made on the details of the actual case, not abstract legal codes.  

The literati in control of the patrimonial bureaucracy saw it to be against their material and ideal interests to codify laws and develop forms of natural rights. They preferred to let sib members act as lawyers since the latter knew the customs and people involved. Justice was thus left in the hands of local rural organisations, and an autonomous stratum of formal legal experts did not emerge as in the Occident.

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* foreign invasions of the mining areas cut off supply;
* the government imported cheaper copper;
* the government took 25% of profit;
* it therefore cost almost 1000 pieces to produce 1000 pieces.

Traditionalism, based on a fear of upsetting ancestors and magical spirits, prevented the technical development of mines. Shortage of precious metals led to the sacking of Buddhist and Taoist temples and monasteries. Paper money failed to substantially develop because the paper quality was poor. Only with the trade with the West in 17th century did silver bullion became the main means of exchange.

21 'Be it in China, India, or Islam, in general, whenever rational enactment and adjudication of law had not triumphed, the dictum was: Prerogatives have precedence over common law' (Weber, 1951, p. 100).

22 They believed, as Weber puts it, that: "if the people can read, they will despise their superiors". The charismatic prestige of the educated patrimonial bureaucracy seemed endangered and these power interests never again allowed such an idea to emerge' (1951, p. 101).
Pacification of the Empire

Similarly, the rationalisation of Chinese culture towards social stability meant it did not witness the political preconditions for the development of Western style capitalism. This was mainly due to the early pacification of the Empire and unified administrative rule:

A general result of oriental patrimonialism with its pecuniary prebends was that, typically, only military conquest of the country, or successful military or religious revolutions, could shatter the firm structure of prebendary interests, thus creating new power distributions and in turn new economic conditions (Weber, 1951, p. 61).

China, unlike early modern Europe, had a pacified 'world-empire', and the attempts at rationalising and making administration more efficient in an environment of aggressive competitiveness were not necessary.

Since the pacification of the world empire ... there has been no rational warfare, and what is more important, no armed peace during which several competing autonomous states constantly prepare for war. Capitalist phenomena thus conditioned through war loans and commissions for war purposes did not appear (Weber, 1951, p. 103).

Thus the environmental conditions in which the type of rationalisation which occurred in the Occident were not existent in China. Though many forms of political, military and economic rationalisation were undertaken by the different Warring States in their bid for supremacy, the triumph of the state and the centralisation of power brought about an 'ossification' of the course of rationalisation (in the Occidental sense), and redirected it towards social stability and tradition. Rationalisation thus moved from working out the means to achieving military conquest and expansion, to the goal of the maintenance of social order and control.

Consequently, practical rationalism, the intrinsic attitude of bureaucracy to life, free of all competition, could work itself out fully. There was no rational science, no rational practice of art, no rational theology, jurisprudence, medicine, natural science or technology; there was neither divine nor human authority which could contest the bureaucracy (Weber, 1951, p. 151).
Chinese civilisation, under the direction of the patrimonial bureaucracy, thus developed a rationally consistent worldview and rationalisation process which was in stark contrast to that undertaken in the West. The administration of the Chinese Empire, with its balance of power among three social strata, its fragmentary economic and monetary policies, its absence of a formally rational legal system and autonomous strata of legal experts, and its pacification of the empire, maintained the traditional social order with incredible vigour. It also prevented the rise of rational industrial capitalism which is far too insensitive to such irrational rule and too dependent upon the possibility of calculating the steady and rational operation of the state machinery to emerge under an administration of this type' (Weber, 1951, p. 103).

For Weber, the question then becomes: why did the administration and culture of Chinese civilisation, 'rational' from its own internal worldview, yet 'irrational' from the modern Western capitalist view, maintain itself with such consistency? This question is not so much concerned with why rational industrial capitalism failed to emerge in China, as to why and how the equilibrium of Chinese society maintained itself over such a vast period.23

For Weber, the answer to this question lay in the 'ethos' of Chinese civilisation:

Rational entrepreneurial capitalism, which in the Occident found its specific locus in industry, has been handicapped not only by the lack of a formally guaranteed law, a rational administration and judiciary, and by the ramifications of a system of prebends, but also, basically,

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23 Van der Srenkel accuses Weber of falling for the old myth of a static China (1965, p. 200). For example, he criticises Weber for believing that the patrimonial empire lasted after the unification in 221 BC, missing the collapse of the central government and rule by the great landed families during the 'Age of Division' from the fourth century to the end of the sixth century AD (p. 211). As Molloy points out, however, Van der Srenkel's critique shows little grasp of Weber's use of ideal-types, and almost no knowledge of the wider context of Weber's analysis, the rationalisation of Chinese culture in comparison to the West (1980, p. 380).
by the lack of a particular mentality. Above all its has been handicapped by the attitude rooted in the Chinese "ethos" and peculiar to a stratum of officials and aspirants to office. This brings us to our central theme (Weber, 1951, p. 104).

His answer was thus that the incredible power of the vested interests of the dominant strata over the social order and cultural worldview of Chinese civilisation made rationalisation, in the same direction as that experienced in the West, unlikely. Not only this, but the ontological presuppositions of the cultural worldview itself were hostile to such a direction. In this way, Weber sees a complex interrelation of material and ideational factors at the basis of the maintenance of Chinese civilisation in its traditional form.

Confucian Conception of the Divine: the Tao

Having examined the material or socio-economic context in which Chinese culture in the Imperial Age developed, we now turn to the ideational components (or 'images of the world') that made up this culture. The main set of ideas that comprised the Chinese worldview stemmed from the ontology of the Tao.

Tao was an orthodox Confucian idea referring to the eternal order of the cosmos (Weber, 1951, p. 181). It was conceived as a harmonious balance of cosmic and social relations. Weber characterised it as follows:

Not a supramundane lord creator, but a supra-divine, impersonal, forever identical and eternal existence, was felt to be the ultimate and supreme. This was to sanction the validity of eternal order and its timeless existence. The impersonal power of Heaven did not "speak" to man. It revealed itself in the regime on earth, in the firm order of nature and tradition which were part of the cosmic order (1951, p. 28).
This Tao, or 'Spirit of Heaven', was a divine principle of harmony in accordance with which everyone from the emperor to the lowliest peasant was to have a place, establishing a 'quasi-superstitious Magna Charta' (Weber, 1951, p. 25). The maintenance of this order was the duty of the rulers of society. The internal pacification of the empire achieved by the central government 'was placed under the divine tutelage and then considered as the revelation of the divine' (Weber, 1951, p. 27). The social order was thus seen to be connected to the Heavenly order and any change from a perfectly functioning harmony was seen as the result of poor administration or magical intervention. The social order of this world, it was believed, was the only possible one, and its permanence was divinely ordained. China thus had an 'optimistic conception of cosmic harmony' (Weber, 1951, p. 28).

The emperor was seen as a monarch ruling by divine right on behalf of the Spirit of Heaven, and was therefore called the 'Son of Heaven'. If upheaval or natural disaster struck during his reign, however, that is, if the cosmic harmony of Tao was upset, his administration was blamed as its source and often he needed to do public penance to bring back Heaven's favour (Weber, 1951, p. 31). This was also the case with officials of the bureaucracy and provincial administration. In this way, the social and natural order was seen as the responsibility of the earthly representatives of Heaven.

The other main source of Chinese religion was the ancestor cult (*Chung-Maio*). Magical spirits and beings were seen to be more powerful than mere humans, but they were not as powerful as the impersonal order of Heaven, nor were they as powerful as the emperor-pontifex that ruled over earth in Heaven's name. According to Weber, these two
supreme powers were seen as the determinants of cosmic order, whereas magical spirits
could be used to help the individual and their fate (1951, p. 29). Stemming from this was
the belief that the good spirits had to be supported to maintain the harmonious order and
keep the evil spirits at bay.

The origins of this conception of a divine, harmonious order can be seen in the
establishment of a peaceful, ordered empire. The idea of the Tao struggled against
competing ideas and ontologies during the Warring States Period, but gained ascendancy
when adopted by its main carrier, the Confucian literati, with whose experiences of
material and social reality it had an elective affinity. Their life-conduct and practical
rationalism, based on their dominant social position and administration of the patrimonial
empire, predisposed them to adopt and accept the emphasis on order and social harmony
contained in the ontology of the Tao. The 'affirmation' of this world as the best of all
possible worlds was in accordance with the social position and values, that is, the material
and ideal interests, of the culturally and intellectually dominant Confucian literati. Without
the numerous historical factors involved in the social ascendancy of this strata, the Tao
would most likely not have reached its ontological status within the Chinese worldview.
From this position, it became the basis of intellectual rationalisation within Chinese
culture, creating a systematised and rationally consistent explanation of the existence and
maintenance of China's social relations.

As part of this affirmation of this world, religion remained focused in a 'this-
worldly' direction. Chinese religion was based on the hope for a long life, health, and
wealth. The obvious result was a disregard for the Beyond. There was no desire for a
utopia to replace the existing state of this world (as there was in Judaism), since this was the best and most harmonious of worlds (Weber, 1951, p. 145). The state cult had no salvationist competitors, and remained simple and sober - concerned with the correctness of rituals and with tradition.

Most importantly, Confucianism did not have a dualistic understanding of the cosmos which saw a tension between this world and a superior 'other-world'. For this reason, it had no conception of a 'state of grace' which was beyond and better than this world as in Puritanism (Weber, 1951, p. 146). There was no division between the 'elect' and the 'damned', since Confucianism believed in a natural equality of men. Man was naturally born good, and evil was a result of his own actions (that is, allowing Yin to dominate his soul). Education and self-control were the means of preventing this occurring and thus became the basis of the differentiation between status groups (Weber, 1951, p. 146).

Confucianism was not in tension with the world, lacking the tension which was at the basis of the religious rejections of this world found in other salvation religions. Indeed, the concept of salvation thus made little sense, as it was not clear in this most perfect of worlds from what the individual would be saved (Weber, 1951, p. 156). For this reason, Weber doubted Confucianism could be considered a salvation religion at all.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{24} The one Messianic hope, held mainly by the masses, and one completely logically consistent with the presuppositions of Chinese ontology, was the hope for a future emperor who was a perfect ruler (Weber, 1951, p. 155).

\textsuperscript{25} In fact, Weber doubted that Confucianism, due to its practical rationalism could even be considered a religion. He points out that the Chinese had no word for 'religion', instead calling Confucianism \textit{ju chiao} - 'doctrine of the literati' (1951, p. 144).
Lacking such an ethical tension with the world, Confucianism did not develop the religious rationalisation found in the West and other areas, instead experiencing a practical and political rationalisation of its culture.

Tension toward the world had never arisen because, as far as known, there had never been an ethical prophecy of a supramundane god who raised ethical demands. Nor was there a substitute for this in the spirits who raised demands and insisted upon faithful fulfillment of contract. For it was always a matter of specific duty placed under the spirit's guardianship, oath, or whatever it happened to be; never did it involve inner formation of the personality per se, nor the person's conduct of life (Weber, 1951, p. 230).

Without priests or prophets, that is specifically religious intellectuals concerned with religious rationalisation, the pluralist pantheon of the Chinese masses' magical beliefs were never systematised in an ethically rational direction by the Confucians (Weber, 1951, p. 143). Indeed, it was in their interest not to do so. Instead, Confucianism argued for an 'adjustment' of life-conduct to the harmonious order of this world.

**Confucian 'Adjustment to the World'**

Confucianism exclusively represented an innerworldly morality of laymen. Confucianism meant adjustment to the world, to its orders and conventions. Ultimately it represented just a tremendous code of political maxims and rules of social propriety for cultured men of the world (Weber, 1951, p. 152).

As we have seen, the harmonious order of the social world was a reflection of the perfect order of the cosmos (Weber, 1951, p. 153). Because of this, social or economic change was to be resisted and a man's duty was to understand himself in relation to the cosmic harmony. Self-control, disciplined literary (not speculative) intellectualism and the fostering of the 'cultured man' were the aims. This could be attained by the educated person learning the *li*, the traditional rules of correct behaviour. The Confucian lived in the world and adjusted (Anpassung) to its problems. This in turn shaped practical action...
in the world. The central components of the Confucian worldview, the idea of the harmonious Tao and the affirmation of this world, thus shaped the rationalisation of practice and psychological sanctions on action.

There was no radical evil or deity of evil in the concept of Tao and the individual had to develop his Yang within himself to help maintain the harmony. To the Confucian, the basic human impulses were economic and sexual and coercion was needed to prevent chaos. There were evil spirits and problems, but nothing which could not be overcome by education (Weber, 1951, p. 154).

Basic to the Confucian outlook was that the individual should have propriety (Weber, 1951, p. 156). This involved self-control, discipline, and rejection of all forms of passion because passion destroyed the harmonious good of the world. This propriety meant doing rituals in the traditional way, and maintaining a profound respect for tradition.

The Confucian strove to be well-rounded, and only education could provide this (Weber, 1951, p. 160). Specialists were seen as lacking a wide education and thus considered Philistines. The cultured man was not a 'tool' to a higher end as was the case in Puritanism, but an end in himself (Weber, 1951, p. 160).

The Confucian literati valued knowledge above all else. This knowledge, however, was not scientific knowledge of nature and the cosmos gained through empirical observations and experimentation, but knowledge of the sacred classical literature, acquired through a long period of literary education (Weber, 1951, p. 169).²⁶

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²⁶ For Weber, this conception and definition of knowledge strongly discouraged the development of empirical sciences in the Occidental sense. We shall return to this important point in a later chapter.
The Confucian Economic Ethic

As part of this adjustment to the affirmed world, the main economic ethic of Confucianism was one of consumption, but also thriftiness. Wealth was seen as a sign of good administration (part of the bureaucratic outlook), but this was obviously tempered by the subordination of wealth to cultural pursuits. It was, for example, immoral for a Confucian to be involved in lowly profit pursuing enterprises (Weber, 1951, p. 158). Acquisitiveness was often seen as a source of social unrest. Wealth was generally regarded as important, however, because it was needed to provide economic security for education and gaining a balanced self and mind (Weber, 1951, p. 160).

In contrast to the economic ethic of Puritanism, a vocational calling (particularly for economic gain) would have gone against the outlook of Confucius which rejected rational specialisation. The cultivated man pursued a position or office (and the status and economic rewards that came with it), not profit. The Confucian disapproved of lavish expenditure and luxurious living but did not reject worldly goods as was the case in Buddhism (Weber, 1951, p. 161).

The Chinese Masses: the 'Magical Garden'

Confucianism allowed ancestor worship for the masses. Popular religion thus revolved around a complex configuration of magical spirits. Popular magic kept the masses docile and largely prevented criticisms of the government. The importance of piety to superiors also assisted the maintenance of this tradition. To ethically rationalise existing religious
beliefs would have been counter to the literati's material and ideal interests (Weber, 1951, p. 164).

Any rationalisation of popular belief as an independent religion of supra-mundane orientation would inevitably have constituted an independent power opposed to officialdom (Weber, 1951, p. 144).

The patrimonial bureaucracy had no competition from an autonomous hierocracy since the emperor was the pontifical head of China, and only he and his officials had the right to conduct the traditional sacred rituals (Weber, 1951, p. 142). Thus the chief and official cults were controlled by the state.27

More importantly, there were no prophets raising ethical demands for the religious rationalisation of life-conduct. Therefore, the dominant form of rationalism was a practical intellectual rationalism, not the religious rationalism of the Jewish prophets. The Confucians also doubted the power of magic, believing that 'he who lived the classical way of life need not fear the spirits' (Weber, 1951, p. 155).

Their dismissal of magic as superstition, and their awareness of the possibility of producing an independent hierocracy, meant that the Confucian literati were content to leave the masses in their 'magical garden' of spirits and demons and this-worldly demands. These demands were met by the magical promises and manipulations of Taoism, the main heterodoxy in China.

**Taoism**

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27 This was not always the case. Confucianism was the official doctrine during the Imperial Age, but in the Period of the Warring States it had to compete with other schools. The victory of Confucianism was only firmly established by the 8th century AD (Weber, 1951, p. 165).
The masses were blocked from the worship of the Spirit of Heaven by the literati's monopolisation of ritual and sacred knowledge. As mentioned, the religious virtuosi did not care for, nor interfere with, the magical needs of the masses. These needs were predominantly met by Taoism. This raises the question of whether or not Taoism could have been a source for the ethical rationalisation of life-conduct towards methodical world mastery. Weber believed not, for the following reasons.

The existence of Taoism was not really heterodox, but more correctly, a variation of Confucianism for the masses, for it did not offer any alternative ontology. In this sense it shared what Bourdieu would call the 'doxa' of Chinese thought with Confucianism, the Tao. The harmonious cosmic order and its maintenance were just as important to Taoism as Confucianism. Taoism accepted the classical writings, but Taoism also referred to Lao-tzu's writings, which the Confucians rejected. Lao-Tzu saw the Tao as unchanging and thus the one thing of absolute value in the cosmos. It was the All-One in which adherents could partake through contemplative mysticism, rejecting worldly interests and desires and escaping this-worldly activity (Weber, 1951, p. 182). To Lao-Tzu, 'the supreme good was a psychic state, a unio mystica, and not a state of grace to be proved in active conduct like Occidental asceticism' (Weber, 1951, p. 182). Taoism thus valued an 'incognito existence' in the world, minimising activity to the greatest possible extent. The office-holding or cultural pursuits of the Confucians were seen as dangerous by Lao-Tzu because they distracted from the contemplative unification with the Tao (Weber, 1951, p. 183).

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28 This harmonious state was called hu or wu and was attained by saying and doing nothing (wu-wet) (Weber, 1951, p. 180). The aim was to 'throw off one's body', to make oneself like ether. Breathing control was central since it was thought to bring about mystical experiences (Weber, 1951, p. 179).
Only withdrawal from the affairs and entanglements of this world made this contemplation possible.

Once again, the idea of the Tao central to the Taoist worldview shaped the rationalisation of practice. With this view of the world as being harmonious but also magical and enjoyable, there was no need to transform it or struggle against it. Thus Taoism, like Confucianism, existed in an 'enchanted garden' and also acted to reinforce traditionalism. Neither of these belief systems sought to transform the world by ethically rationalising action. Both were rationalised according to the inner logic of the idea of Tao, an ordered, harmonious cosmos. They differed only according to the methods by which harmonisation with the Tao was to be achieved, Confucianism emphasising accommodation, while Taoism emphasised a withdrawal from the world.

Both agreed, however, that the rule of the emperor was central to maintaining the harmonious order, even if they disagreed on the best methods by which he could achieve this. The Confucian literati argued that this should be done by following the traditional rituals and administrative practices laid out in the classical texts. The Taoists argued that this could only be achieved if the emperor united with the Tao through contemplation. The latter obviously contradicted the this-worldly focus required for ruling an empire (Weber, 1951, p. 185). The literati refused to accept this and excluded the Taoists from politics.
The Taoist acceptance that order in government kept the demons away thus prevented revolutionary political interpretations and movements from developing (Weber, 1951, p. 186).\textsuperscript{29}

Like the Confucian intellectuals, the Taoist mystics did not perceive a tension between the world and the divine which they needed to re-address. Seeking to maintain rational self-sufficiency in the world in order to prolong life, Taoism did not promote a complete rejection of this world, but a minimisation of action within it (Weber, 1951, p. 187). In economic terms, Taoist thriftiness was based on consumption to prolong life and maintain contemplation, and therefore did not seek to change the world in God’s image (Weber, 1951, p. 188). Rather, Taoism canonised gods for special this-worldly interests, mainly good health, wealth, and a long life. Gaining the favour of these gods and influencing the spirits were seen to be the main ways to achieve these ends (Weber, 1951, p. 202). Breathing exercises and herbal elixirs were developed to enable this influence. This led to a concentration on magic and the rise of magicians (Weber, 1951, p. 191).

The Confucian literati did not seek to destroy Taoism because it presented no threat to their office-holding, and instead perpetuated the adherence of the masses. The Taoists were thus tolerated. This cultivation of magic and animist religion by Taoism, and its toleration by Confucianism profoundly affected Chinese life (Weber, 1951, p. 196). All rationalisation of empirical knowledge moved towards a magical view of the world.

\textsuperscript{29}This being said, a Taoist church-state was set up in the province of Szechwuan from AD 184-215, but was attacked and persecuted by the Han dynasty. The Taoists generally took the side of the anti-literati forces e.g., feudal families and eunuchs, in any political struggle (Weber, 1951, p. 193).
Medicine, astronomy, technology were all rationalised in animistic and magical directions (Weber, 1951, pp. 196-97). 30

This Chinese 'universist' philosophy and cosmogony transformed the world into a magic garden. Every Chinese fairy tale reveals the popularity of irrational magic (Weber, 1951, p. 200).

Neither Confucianism nor Taoism experienced a tension between a transcendental realm and this world, and therefore did not contain a rejection of this world as ethically 'irrational'. There was no personal creator god required to bring salvation in Chinese religion, and this meant cultural rationalisation moved in a different direction to any conception of the asceticist 'tool' doing god's work. The ethical rationality which emerged with the concept of miracles was absent. Not only was there no path to a 'rational' method of life in Taoism (either in the here or hereafter), the centrality of magic made such a path 'irrational'. It was for this reason, that compared to Western rationalism, Chinese thought was 'traditionalistic'. Taoism, rather than challenging this traditionalism, reinforced it: 'Taoism, because of its a-literate and irrational character was even more traditionalistic than Confucianism. Taoism knew no "ethos" of its own; magic, not conduct, was decisive for man's fate' (Weber, 1951, p. 200).

A Comparison of Confucian and Puritan Life-Conducts: World Affirmation or World Transformation

Neither in its official state cult nor in its Taoist aspect could Chinese religiosity produce sufficiently strong motives for a religiously oriented life for the individual such as the Puritan method represents (Weber, 1951, p. 206).

The life-conduct of the Confucian literati was a product, and producer, of the unique rationalisation of Chinese culture. This rationalisation was not a religious

30 For a different analysis of the possibilities for innovation in Taoism, possibilities which were mostly stamped out by the persecutions by the Confucian orthodoxy, see Needham (1954).
rationalisation, but primarily a socio-political one. Concern was not with the individual's fate, but with the fate of the social order (Weber, 1951, p. 207). This stemmed from the fact that there was no religious rejection of the world in Confucian ontology, but in fact an affirmation of it. Confucianism almost completely rejected tension with the world because it conceived this world as being harmoniously ordered (Weber, 1951, p. 227). 31

If we recall that Weber believed that 'every religion which opposes the world with rational, ethical imperatives finds itself as some point in a state of tension with the irrationalities of the world' (1951, p. 227), (these 'irrationalities' being irrational from the religious point of view, that is, the view which tries to make sense of the meaning of

31 Eisenstadt (1985), following the work of Thomas Metzer, has questioned this lack of a tension with the world in Confucianism. He argues that Confucianism was aware of a transcendental ideal state which was in tension with the imperfection of this world. What was unique about Confucianism, however, was that it had a this-worldly orientation which meant that it attempted to address this tension in a secular manner and alleviate it through improving the social, political, and cultural spheres, especially of the political centre, the emperor and his court (1985, p. 49). Most importantly, however, these attempts did not radically change the institutional organisation of the empire (1985, p. 50). This was because the literati developed a number of complex mechanisms whereby the centre could control the periphery of the Empire (1985, pp. 56-57). Eisenstadt thus supports Weber's view that the position of the literati and its attempt to maintain its position was the main factor in the institutional and cultural stability of Chinese civilisation: 'these mechanisms of control were among the most important stabilising influences on the Imperial system, helping it to regulate and absorb changes throughout its long history and inhibiting the development of far-reaching transformative capacities in China's culturally and politically most articulate groups and giving rise to a relatively - but only relatively - low level of internal institutional transformability of the Confucian system - all of which constituted, as we have seen, the central problem of Weber's analysis' (1985, p. 60). What Eisenstadt (1985, p. 58) does disagree with in Weber's analysis is that Confucianism was characterised by a spirit of traditionalism, and argues instead that it was highly reflexive. The problem with this criticism is that it sees reflexivity and traditionalism as mutually exclusive. For Weber, Confucianism was traditionalistic in relation to Western rationalism given its fast pace of social change. A culture can, however, be both reflexive and traditionalistic simultaneously, since one dimension of reflexivity is the considering of the best means to achieve certain ends. In the case of Confucianism, the end/value chosen was the maintenance of the social order, an end 'traditionalist' in character when compared to the 'transformative' rationalism of the Occident, but one nevertheless involving reflection on means and therefore reflexivity. Weber highlights the great thought and reflection of the literati on the complexities of balancing the counteracting forces involved in the administration of the empire. Weber's point was that the values chosen by the dominant strata, as their material and ideal interests would suggest given their dominant social position, were oriented towards maintenance of the social order, and their rationalism and life-conduct supported this. Thus, Eisenstadt in many ways reinforces Weber's analysis of the stability of Imperial China.
suffering and death), then we see that Confucianism is in a unique historical situation to 
the extent that its ethics do not oppose the world, but instead affirm it.

Confucianism lacked a conception of a satanic evil which the individual had to 
strive against,\(^\text{32}\) and instead saw misfortune and suffering as the results of a lack of 
education, a poor government, or, for Taoism, invoking evil spirits by inappropriate 
actions (Weber, 1951, p. 228). There was no concept of natural law, or a separation 
between God and nature which may have brought tension with the world and therefore 
attempts at changing it or oneself. The world was not a place of sin and wickedness which 
had to be transformed, but instead an internally harmonious order. To Confucians, there 
was no primeval Paradise, but only uncultured barbarism, and this was to be prevented 
from recurring.

Completely absent in Confucian ethics was any tension between nature and deity, between ethical 
demand and human shortcoming, consciousness of sin and need for salvation, conduct on earth 
and compensation in the beyond, religious duty and socio-political reality. Hence, there was no 
leverage for influencing conduct through inner forces freed of tradition and convention (Weber, 

Thus for Weber, Confucianism lacked a tension with the world and a 
transcendental power or order which demanded that this-world be transformed closer to 
that transcendental order. Confucianism believed that the transcendental and this world 
were intimately connected. Confucianism did not undertake a 'religious' rationalisation of 
this world and conduct in it as other religions had done, which usually involved a flight 
from the world or an attempt to transform it, but instead rationalised how this world could 
be maintained. In this way, it was not so much a religious rationalisation, but a socio-

\(^{32}\) When Christian missionaries tried to awaken a feeling of sin, the Chinese refused to be burdened with 
this (Weber, 1951, p. 228).
political one, as could be expected from a strata whose social position was based on the
control of a bureaucracy and thus demonstrated a 'practical rationalism'. The aim of this
rationalisation was to maintain the harmonious equilibrium of Chinese society and the
bureaucratic culture succeeded in this (Weber, 1951, p. 233). It was the emphasis on an
ethical adjustment of the individual to the objective moral and political order of the world,
rather than the attempt to transform them, that interested Weber in his study of China.
For, as we have seen, this inclination towards world transformation was at the basis of
modern Western culture and capitalism.

There was thus no need for major transformation (or ethical reorganisation) of the
world and no basis for Chinese culture to make the transition from ritualism to ethical
absolutism. There was also no development of prophecy which orientated people to
inner values. As Weber states, 'a true prophecy creates and systematically orients conduct
toward one internal measure of value. In the face of this the "world" is viewed as material
to be fashioned ethically according to the norm' (1951, p. 235).

This was in complete contrast to the life-conduct of the Puritan. As we have seen,
Puritan ontology and the rationalisation of life-conduct which stemmed from it, produced
an ethically rationalised life-conduct aimed at mastering and transforming the world and
the self. This ethic originated precisely out of the tension with the creatural and wicked
'state of nature' of this world, and the ethical command to tame it. As Weber puts it, 'the
rejection of the world by Occidental asceticism was insolubly linked to its opposite,
namely, its eagerness to dominate the world' (1951, p. 248).
Puritan life-conduct and work became ethical in nature, not ritualistic and traditional. The world and sin were to be transformed by ethical discipline in a rational manner (Weber, 1951, p. 240). Asceticist rejection of the world viewed magic as problematic (Weber, 1951, p. 238):

From magic there followed the inviolability of tradition as the proven magical means and ultimately all bequeathed forms of life-conduct were unchangeable if the wrath of the spirits were to be avoided...From the relation between the supra-mundane God and the creaturely wicked, ethically irrational world, there resulted, however, the absolute unholiness of tradition and the truly endless task of ethically and rationally subduing and mastering the given world, i.e., rational, objective "progress" (Weber, 1951, p. 240).

Puritan ethics thus demanded methodical self-control as a means of achieving transformation of the world, whereas Confucianism viewed methodical self-control as an end in itself. Both idealised discipline and self-control, but for different purposes. The Puritan demand for specialisation would be seen by the Confucian as uncultured barbarism, while the Confucian's attempt at self-perfection would be seen as blasphemous, idle pride by the Puritan. The discipline of the Confucian was aesthetic in nature, whilst the Puritan's was economic and ethical (Weber, 1951, p. 244). Weber makes it clear that both were rational from the presuppositions they began with, but only Puritanism resulted in the rationalisation of everyday life-conduct towards the ethic of world mastery (Weber, 1951, p. 237):

Puritanism did create it, and unintentionally at that. This strange reversion of the 'natural', which is strange only at first, superficial glance, instructs us in the paradox of unintended consequences: i.e., the relation of man and fate, of what he intended by his acts and what eventually came of them (Weber, 1951, p. 238). 33

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33 A I shall show in a later chapter, Weber's analysis of such 'paradoxes of unintended consequences' is one of the most important and fruitful insights of his work, and which is vital in understanding why a tension exists between moral and epistemological reflexivity in the modern intellectual sphere.
Summary: the Uniqueness of Chinese Rationalisation

Despite it being published 'with misgivings and the greatest reservation' (Weber, 1951, p. 252), *Konfuzianismus und Taoismus* has stood up well to the test of subsequent Sinological investigations.\(^{34}\) Even one of the most strident critics of his work on China, Van der Sprenkel, concedes that, 'limited by inadequate equipment, and with a hampering linguistic barrier between himself and his sources, Weber was yet able to raise nearly all the important questions, though not to answer them' (1954, p. 274).

Weber's analysis may have been wrong on many details of Chinese history, but one would expect this given his limited access to sources, and his own belief that all scientific knowledge is constantly superseded. No one was more aware than Weber of the historical limitations of his analysis.

That being said, however, no critic has as yet has successfully undermined Weber's central thesis - explaining why the rationalisation of Chinese culture by Confucianism developed such an integrated and stable social order, and why, despite certain similarities, it did not follow the course of Western rationalisation which produced an ethic of world mastery and modern industrial capitalism.

As I have shown, this thesis was a multi-causal examination of ideal and material factors, involving an understanding of the mutual reinforcement of objective structures and subjective meanings. China's stability was the result of a complex interaction of political, economic, and cultural factors, including the political balance between the central power

\(^{34}\) As Molloy has noted, most of these critiques have not read Weber's work on China in the context of his other works on religion, especially 'Social Psychology of the World Religions' and 'Religious Rejections of the World' (1980, p. 378).
of the patrimonial bureaucracy and the rural and personalised power of the sibs. This balance crucially kept the autonomy of the Chinese cities in check, preventing the rise of an autonomous civic strata. It also prevented, through the examination and rotation systems, provincial officials setting up a feudal order and breaking away from the central government. The bureaucracy was stable, as it did not collapse into a feudal system, but it was not rationalised in the manner of modern nation-states with formal laws or formal economic policies, primarily because, being a pacified and unified empire, it did not have the environment of hostility in which this transformation occurred in the West. It was thus the balancing of complex and counteracting forces which was one of the main achievements of Confucian rationalism. This was achieved through the rationalisation of Chinese culture towards the value or goal of maintaining the social order. Yet, as Bryan Turner has pointed out, this success of Chinese patrimonialism had its own paradoxical consequences:

The paradox of patrimonialism is that its success (in terms of its own reproduction) depends on preventing officials from converting their beneficences into hereditary rights, but these preventive measures are also the origin of the ineffectiveness and immobility of the administrative apparatus (1981, p. 283).

The rationalisation of culture towards the goal of social maintenance, a goal which all social strata seem to have accepted as valid, shaped life-conduct, through its practical ethics (including economic ethics) towards that end. Weber was concerned with the rationalisation of practice in certain directions, delineated by the logic of ideas within the Confucianist and Taoist worldviews. A distinct type of Chinese rationalism emerged from the worldviews of Confucianism and Taoism which, in turn, produced a certain type of disciplined way of life. Thus Weber's work on the religions of China is a concrete analysis
of the process whereby agents, through life-conduct oriented towards meeting their ideal and material interests, construct and reproduce worldviews at the same time as those worldviews construct and reproduce their life-conduct and their relations with the world and each other.

What seems to have impressed Weber greatly was how successful and uniform this dominance of the Confucian practical ethics and ontology was. He believed the reason for this was that the Confucian worldview had an 'elective affinity' with the Chinese social order. That is, in its symbiotic relationship with Taoism, it met the ideal and material interests of all strata. There was thus no strata hostile to this situation (such as an autonomous civic strata, prevented from arising by the lack of free cities) which, compelled by ethical prophets (which failed to emerge because of the political control over the state religion and the conception of the divine as an unchanging order), would challenge the existing order. In this way, the social order and the dominant cultural worldview were mutually reinforcing, and this fact lay at the heart of the traditionalist affirmation of the world and the stable bureaucratic state produced by Chinese rationalisation.

The life-conduct of the dominant strata, the Confucian literati, exhibited an 'ethos' which was based on the internalisation of the logics of the Chinese social order and worldview. It was this life-conduct and its ethos which allowed them to dominate Chinese society for almost 1500 years. Rather, therefore, than representing a subjectivist idealism, as Bourdieu would have us believe, or a concern with the origins of Western capitalism, as others believe, Weber's main concern in his analysis of Chinese cultural history was the
rationalisation it underwent and the effects of this on life-conduct. In line with this, one of his major findings was that the rationalisation of Chinese culture was almost unique in human history.35

This work also reveals a different understanding of human agency than that of the modern West. Under Confucianism, and its emphasis on social stability and the harmonious cosmic order, agency was conceived as existing in redirecting or 'adjusting' the self towards this order. Agency was not about transformation of the world or society, but transformation of the self. Weber's work shows, however, that the agency of the Confucians was able to redirect the rationalisation of Chinese culture after the Period of Warring States towards values and ideas which maintained social stability and their social position. Weber's work on China therefore reveals a multi-layered conception of agency within Confucianism which was in many ways opposed to modern sociological understandings.

II. Religions of India

As in his analysis of China, Weber's study of the religions of India examined the interplay between agents' material and ideal interests, the social order in which these interests arise, the internal dynamics of cultural worldviews attempting to provide meaning for death and suffering, and the material environment in which this takes place. In this work, Weber

35 For this reason, I would question Gary Hamilton's (1985) argument that little can be learnt about China by comparing it to Western civilisation. I do agree, as Weber would, that framing analysis of Chinese civilisation in terms of 'why no capitalism in China?' is fruitless, due to its Eurocentric and Orientalist presuppositions. Although I also agree that a definitive understanding of China is not possible through comparative analysis alone, in terms of understanding the uniqueness of China's historical development, I believe such comparisons are necessary and fruitful, as Weber's analysis of Chinese cultural rationalisation shows.
examined how and why the rationalisation of Indian culture took a radically different direction than that experienced in the West.\textsuperscript{36} His analysis of Indian religious rationalisation reveals what he believed to be the most rationally consistent theodicy developed by the world religions, Hinduism (Weber, 1958, p. 121). This theodicy, like Confucianism (although for completely different reasons), was able to rationalise Indian culture towards stable social relations and maintain magical understandings of the cosmos. Despite the development of extensive domestic and international trade from ancient times, India remained throughout most of its history a place of villages, and its social order was characterised by the birth-based stratification system of castes (Weber, 1958, p. 3). Though there were periods of political and military unity, as under Akbar and the Moguls, India mostly experienced fragmentation and warfare between rival princehoods.

Weber noted that there were a number of developments in India which could have led Indian cultural history in a similar direction to the West (1958, p. 4).\textsuperscript{37} Yet modern rational capitalistic culture did not develop there until it was transplanted under English rule.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{36} For a critique of the main interpretations of this work which see it as concerned with India's lack of capitalism, rather than its cultural rationalisation, see Kantowsky (1982). Kantowsky pinpoints how the North American 'Ideal Type Weber', as found in Parsons' work and the so-called 'Weber Thesis', misses the complexities of Weber's analysis of religion and rationalisation in Indian society and history.

\textsuperscript{37} These included: the development of mathematics; the cultivation of rational empirical science; a number of religious sects and philosophical schools which were all carried by the drive for rational consistency; Indian law which was favourable to the development of capitalism; highly specialised crafts; the development of a considerable degree of autonomy for the merchant class, especially over issues of law-making; and the fact that nearly every class was acquisitive in nature.

\textsuperscript{38} For a refutation of this point and an argument that Hinduism can be adapted to modern capitalist culture, see Singer (1972). Both Kantowsky (1982) and Buss (1985b) have criticised Singer's work for misunderstanding Weber's main intentions and for failing to show how Hinduism would have been likely to develop an \textit{indigenous} capitalistic culture. As Buss puts it: 'Singer has not shown that the ethos of his industrialists springs directly from the "Indian spirit" as Weber defined it ... Singer has only shown that certain businessmen are adjusting, adapting to a Western style industrial economy, to a capitalist system or to the "Western world"' (1985b, p. 12). For a response to these criticisms, see Singer (1985).
The main religions which came under Weber's gaze for this study were Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, although Hinduism was the main focus of his work due to its 'orthodox' status. As in his other empirical works on religion, Weber began his analysis of these religions by examining the socio-economic context, or 'material' environment, in which they developed.

Social Order in India: Castes

For Weber, an understanding of Indian culture, especially Hinduism, was impossible without understanding the caste system in which it existed and played a vital part in promoting (1958, p. 29). This was because 'caste, that is, the ritual rights and duties it gives and imposes, and the position of the Brahmans, is the fundamental institution of Hinduism' (Weber, 1958, p. 29). Perhaps originally based on differences in skin colours (Weber, 1958, p. 30), the caste system emerged as a social hierarchy of hereditary and closed status groups (Weber, 1958, p. 35). Based on strict, exclusionary rules on connubium (intermarriage) and commensalism (social intercourse), the castes were the basis of a rigid social order, characterised by the ritualised segregation of agents.40

The basis of this differentiation was the ritual obligations (dharma) which defined each caste and its degree of social honour. The caste system was thus religiously based and therefore controlled by the religiously dominant strata, the Brahmans (Weber, 1958, p. 44). A caste was positively or negatively determined by its relation to the Brahman caste.

39 Weber based his analysis of the caste system on the Census Reports conducted in India by the British, especially those of 1901 and 1911 (Weber, 1958, p. 344).
40 Having said that, Weber was also acutely aware of the complexities of the caste system and the often blurred boundaries which existed within it (Weber, 1958, p. 15).
(Weber, 1958, p. 30). The four main castes outlined by Weber were the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras.

Originally the Brahmans acted as spiritual and administrative advisers to the politico-military elite, the princes and lords that ruled the many realms across India. Indeed the highest position a Brahman could attain was 'purohit', spiritual adviser to a prince or group of princes (Weber, 1958, p. 61). With the Islamic conquest of India, however, the power of these princes was broken and the Brahmans remained as the main source of social cohesion (Weber, 1958, p. 125). This contingent historical event had a major effect on the makeup of the Indian social order and the direction of its cultural history.

The social position of the Brahmans rested on their monopolisation of administrative posts, education, and knowledge in a similar manner to that of the clerics of the Occidental Middle Ages. The knowledge they monopolised was magical in origin and orientation, and was attained through an intensive literary education in magical formulae. This revolved around a study of the sacred magical books, the Vedas. They monopolised this magical knowledge and passed it onto their progeny, closing themselves off as a hereditary status group (Weber, 1958, p. 59). In this way they developed from a group of magicians 'into a hierocratic caste of cultured men' (Weber, 1958, p. 58).

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41 For Weber, Hinduism was a 'book religion' because of this emphasis on the Vedas which a Hindu must never question. The Vedas maintained their power and authority because they were believed to be magically powerful. Originally orally transmitted, they were codified by the Brahmans. The knowledge of the Vedas was thus monopolised by the Brahmans, who disseminated partial information from them to the other castes (Weber, 1958, p. 26). They therefore controlled the magical formulae within them. The Vedas did not contain a rational ethic, but stories of the heroism and powers of the gods. They were primarily written for warriors and were this-worldly in orientation (Weber, 1958, p. 28).
This magical knowledge was based on ritualism. Since social relations, that is, the caste system, were defined by ritual obligations, those controlling knowledge concerning the correct conduct of such rituals obviously held great power. The power of the Brahmans, therefore, was based on the increasing significance of magic in all spheres of life (Weber, 1958, p. 59). Success in life was perceived as being dependent on sorcery and magical manipulation of spirits and demons. One needed to seek the knowledge and magical powers of a Brahman to achieve various ends. In return for success, the Brahmans accepted 'gifts', not payment, for their services. Usually gifts were in the form of land, cattle, money, jewellery. The right to receive land grants was a Brahman's monopoly and their most important economic privilege (Weber, 1958, p. 60). Not giving a gift brought evil revenge on the recipient of Brahman services (Weber, 1958, p. 60). Thus the Brahmans increasingly became a hereditary prebendary group (Weber, 1958, p. 60).

The material interests of the Brahman caste thus became tied to the maintenance of traditional social relations, along with the dominance of magic and ritualism as the basis of those social relations. In this way, they were instrumental in perpetuating the magical view of agency and causality which we shall examine in more detail later.

The Kshatriyas were the politically dominant caste of India, made up of kings, princes, and the strongmen of villages. The main ritual obligation (dharna) of the Kshatriyas was to conduct war and rule correctly (Weber, 1958, p. 64). Their duty was to provide political and military 'protection' for the populations of their domains. Military success was a sign of magical favour and charisma, but if famine or other misfortunes hit
his people, the ruler was seen to be the blame and needed to do penance (Weber, 1958, p. 64). Very often they retained alliances with the Brahman caste who legitimised and advised them on their rule.

The third caste Weber examined, the Vaishyas, were free commoners who could own their own land, but were excluded from the ritualistic activities of the upper castes. They were primarily peasants, although some adopted trade occupations when the burden of debt became too great and when increased urbanisation made city life more attractive (Weber, 1958, p. 77). As we shall see below, however, the logics of the caste system checked the growth and autonomy of the urban merchant strata. The majority of Vaishyas thus remained tied to the land.

The Shudras, the final caste Weber included in his analysis, were primarily serfs, village workers and artisans who could not own land and were therefore generally dependent on peasants (Weber, 1958, p. 93). The ritual laws stated that a shudra was to provide labour to a higher caste member (Weber, 1958, p. 94). As such, their social position depended on who their patrons were and how powerful they were.

**The Logics and Effects of the Caste System**

How this caste system, with its stringent social divisions, spread across India, let alone survived, intrigued Weber. This was made even more problematic given the fact that an individual could not be 'converted' to Hinduism since religious qualification was set by birth.
Though Hindu propaganda was important in the spreading of Hinduism from a small religion in India's northwest to the entire sub-continent and beyond, socio-economic and political factors were also vital. It was the social and political message of Hinduism which made it particularly favourable for adoption by the dominant strata, and it was this which allowed it to triumph against animistic magical beliefs, as well as the highly organised salvation religions which also existed in India (Weber, 1958, p. 9).

The process was usually as follows. The ruling strata of an area began to imitate Hindu customs and purification rituals. Eventually restrictions were placed on contact between higher and lower groups (such as in the areas of marriage and eating) and a caste system developed (Weber, 1958, p. 9). This obviously benefited the dominant group, providing a 'theodicy of good fortune' which legitimated their position.

Soon after, the local priest was replaced by a Brahman who took control of the conduct of rituals. Through money and marriage links, the newly Hinduised dominant strata established peerage with the older Hindu regions (Weber, 1958, p. 10). At the same time, the Brahmins had a material interest in providing status for the new Hindu area. They received 'gifts' for their provision of proof that the ruling class of a newly Hinduised area had always been Hindu (Weber, 1958, p. 16).

The Brahmins, with the aid of princes who suppressed rivals for them, thus maintained their monopoly on magic and education, while the princes received divine blessing in return (Weber, 1958, p. 128). This alliance between the religious/cultural elite and the political/military elite was one of the most powerful forces which preserved the social order of Indian society (Weber, 1958, p. 130). It also prevented the rise of
independent cities and was therefore crucial in suppressing the emergence of a bourgeois urban class.

From the seventh century BC until AD 400, capitalism in India expanded (Weber, 1958, p. 86). The cities developed from what were primarily princely fortresses into trade centres. The Vaishyas merchants financed the princes' projects and war campaigns. As a result, the Brahmans, princes, and merchants all vied for social power (Weber, 1958, p. 88). The Vaishyas soon lost out in this social struggle, however:

Added to their weaknesses in numbers certain peculiarly Indian conditions had fateful consequences for the bourgeoisie in their struggle against the patrimonial princes: first, was the absolute pacifism of the salvation religions, Jainism and Buddhism, which were propagated, roughly, at the same time as the development of cities... Second, there was the undeveloped but established caste system. Both these factors blocked the development of the military power of the citizenry; pacifism blocked it in principle and the castes in practice, by hindering the establishment of a polis or commune in the European sense (Weber, 1958, pp. 88-89).

Thus the princes and the Brahmans often used the caste system to check the power of the middle classes and trade guilds (Weber, 1958, p. 90). Indian cities thus lacked political and military autonomy, in marked contrast to the West. As a result, an independent urban merchant class did not develop to a significant extent.

The effects of the caste system on the direction of the rationalisation of Indian culture were enormous. For Weber, the caste system was a social order aimed at the maintenance of traditional ways of living and power relations. The 'point is that this order by its nature is completely traditionalistic and anti-rational in its effects' (Weber, 1958, p. 111). The dominant castes, the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas, had material and ideal

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42 In most Indian cities, the king and his staff always remained dominant no matter what consideration they might have made in the single case to the power of the guilds. As a rule, guild power remained pure money power, not backed by an independent military organisation' (Weber, 1958, p. 90).
interests in maintaining the existing social order. As part of this, no middle urban strata with its focus on practical rationality was able to emerge.

This caste system and alliance between the Brahman and Kshatriya also affected the lower castes. Since each caste was given a ritual duty which they monopolised as the basis of their status position, the lower castes gained a monopoly over particular economic and work practices as part of their ritual obligations (Weber, 1958, p. 18). These industries could only be legitimately undertaken by them and this gave them considerable economic benefits. Hinduism thus met the material interests of the lower strata, which, for Weber, explained why they accepted a religious system which maintained their lowly social position.43

Since the lower strata were tied to the obligatory rituals of their caste, any change to ritualised and stereotyped techniques was seen as dangerous and often led to the innovators being expelled from the caste or creating a sub-caste (Weber, 1958, p. 104). The lower and occupational (such as handicraft and industrial) castes were therefore strictly conservative, stifling innovation (Weber, 1958, p. 106).

The core of the obstruction [to the development of a rational capitalistic culture] was rather imbedded in the 'spirit' of the whole system ... A ritual law in which every change of occupation, every change in work technique, may result in ritual degradation is certainly not capable of giving birth to economic and technical revolutions from within itself, or even of facilitating the first germination of capitalism in its midst (Weber, 1958, p. 112).

The logics of the Hindu caste system thus imbued Indian culture with a particular 'spirit', one which was highly conducive to the maintenance of the life-conduct of the Brahman strata, and one which rationalised life-conduct and economic conduct in a manner almost antithetical to that of the Western experience. Central to this process was

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43 It also provided them with a means of meeting their ideal interests also, as we shall see later.
the socio-political position of the Brahmins and the material and ideal interests that this position promoted (Weber, 1958, p. 131). The Brahmins succeeded in establishing their worldview and ontology (which they had 'electively' developed over several hundred years), as the dominant one in Indian culture, thus shaping the direction of rationalisation within that culture. It is to that ontology and the power with which it was able to give meaning and cohesion to Indian society, that we now turn.

**Hindu Ontology: Dharma, Samsara, and Karma**

As we have seen, Hinduism, as shaped by the Brahman virtuosi, placed a heavy emphasis on ritualism. This stemmed from the concept of *dharma*, the eternally valid and obligatory rituals which must be performed by members of a caste (Weber, 1958, p. 24). This *dharma* was defined and maintained by the religious virtuosi, the Brahmins (Weber, 1958, p. 25).

The profound importance of the concept of *dharma* in maintaining the caste system and ritualism within Indian culture was due to its relation to two other fundamental presuppositions in Hinduism - *samsara* and *karma* (Weber, 1958, p. 118).

*Samsara* was the concept of the transmigration of souls, that is, the constant reincarnation of the soul in new states. Those states could encompass anything from divinity to animality. As Weber notes, 'the world and its cosmic social order was eternal and an individual life but one of a series of lives of the same soul. Such lives occur *ad infinitum*' (1958, p. 132).
With the concept of *samsara*, according to Weber (1958, p. 22), Hinduism offered three forms of salvation: firstly, rebirth to a temporary life on earth in as good as circumstances as the present life; secondly, unlimited admission to the presence of Vishnu, the supramundane god; and finally, the cessation of individual existence and either or union of the soul with the All-One, or submergence in nirvana. All three holy ends are sacred, but only union with the All-One was valued by the Brahman (Weber, 1958, p. 22). Which one of these rebirths one attained was determined by *karma*.

*Karma* was the doctrine of compensation, that is, the belief that the individual's *samsara* rebirth was determined by their actions in this life. Thus, '... man was bound in an endless sequence of ever new lives and deaths and he determines his own fate solely by his deeds - this was the most consistent form of the *karma* doctrine' (Weber, 1958, p. 120).

Actions in this life were judged by the criteria of *dharma*. This had the effect of making *dharma* the most important consideration in spiritual matters. The individual's fate in the next life depended on consistently following correct rituals in this life (Weber, 1958, p. 119).

Individuals therefore could not escape this-worldly castes and hence had to concentrate on correctness if they were to move to a higher existence with their next rebirth. To fail to meet one's ritual obligations, one's *dharma*, could mean being reborn as a 'worm in the intestine of a dog' (Weber, 1958, p. 122).

Most importantly, the individual alone was responsible for their fate in the next life (Weber, 1958, p. 120). Their social position and social honour (or lack of it) was therefore seen as the result of the individual's actions. This explained and legitimated the
social order to a degree unsurpassed by any other theodicy. Thus, for Weber, *karma* doctrine transformed the world into a strictly rational, ethically-determined cosmos; it represents the most consistent theodicy ever produced by history' (1958, p. 121).

Hinduism therefore offered the lower castes a coherent and meaningful way of meeting their ideal interests in salvation and explaining why they suffered. They suffered in the present life due to ritual transgressions against *dharma* in a previous life. This suffering, however, could be alleviated in the next life if they lived in *dharma* in this life. The emphasis on stability and traditionalism is clear. The religious promises of Hinduism meant that the lower strata were unlikely to rebel (Weber, 1958, p. 17):

So long as the *karma* doctrine was unshaken, revolutionary ideas or progressivism were inconceivable. The lowest castes, furthermore, had the most to win through ritual correctness and were least tempted to innovation (Weber, 1958, p. 123).

It was this strong emphasis on *dharma* as the basis of salvation for all castes, that explained, Weber believed, why 'Hinduism is characterised by a dread of the magical evil of innovation' (Weber, 1958, p. 122).

For Weber, the rationally consistent combination of the concepts of *dharma*, *samsara* and *karma* prevented the rise of a universally valid ethic which could ethically rationalise life-conduct (including economic conduct) in a particular direction towards an ultimate value (Weber, 1958, p. 147). The reason for this was as follows,

The doctrine of *karma* deduced from the principle of compensation for previous deeds of the world, not only explained the caste organisation but the rank order of the divine, human, and animal beings of all degrees. Hence it provided for the coexistence of different ethical codes for different status groups which not only differed widely, but were often in sharp conflict (Weber, 1958, p. 144).

For this reason, men were not equal, but forever unequal. No conception of 'absolute sin' in the Christian sense could exist. The definition of wrong-doing and human
failing depended on one's social and cosmic position, since there was only ritual offence against the *dharma* of one's particular caste. This cosmic inequality, according to Weber (1958, p. 144) excluded the development of social criticism, rationalistic speculations, abstractions of natural law and the development of 'human rights'. The concepts of 'State' and 'citizen' were unknown as *dharma* was the sole criteria for defining an individual's identity.

**Hindu Virtuosi: the Brahmans and Contemplative Mysticism**

The traditionalism and stability that the Hindu ontology promoted obviously benefited its virtuosi, the Brahmans. The dominant social position of the Brahmans, based on their monopolisation of ritualism, meant that they, as the intellectual strata of Indian society, rationalised understandings of life and life-conduct in accordance with *dharma*, that is, in a magical direction (Weber, 1958, p. 149). This meant that techniques for the attainment of magical powers and ritual correctness were the main focus of intellectual concern. This led to a form of magical asceticism (primarily through yoga), which was believed to provide the individual with control over spirits. While the Confucian literati rejected magic as suitable only for the masses, the Brahmans embraced it as the basis of their spiritual and social power.

This emphasis on the maintenance of the social order and traditional rituals increasingly pushed Brahmanic thought in the direction of the belief in the unchanging and divine unity of the cosmos. This in turn meant that contemplative union with this divine
All-oneness came to be seen as the main path to salvation. This path could best be achieved, it was believed, through strict adherence to rituals and contemplation.

The union with the godly came to the fore because the development of Brahmanical gnosis increasingly moved in the direction of depersonalising the supreme godhead. This occurred partly in correspondence with the inherent tendency of all contemplative mysticism, partly because Brahmanical thought was moored to ritual and its inviolability, and hence saw divine majesty in the eternal, unchangeable, impersonally lawful order of the world (Weber, 1958, p. 152).

Increasingly, the Brahmanic understanding of salvation became concerned with the ways in which an individual's soul could escape the endless wheel of rebirths and join with the All-One (Weber, 1958, p. 167). Mystical knowledge of such ways, gnosis, became the most highly valued knowledge for Indian intellectuals, and their search for it led cultural rationalisation in an other-worldly direction.

The Hindu Masses: Shiva, Vishnu, and Gurus

The restoration of Brahmanic dominance in the religious sphere which came about with the Islamic conquest of India, forced a number of changes to Indian religion. The Brahmans, attempting to meet their material interests and defeat their competitors (Buddhists and Jainists) by incorporating many ancient magical elements back into Hindu thought, developed the Shiva and Vishnu cults to meet the needs of the religious masses (Weber, 1958, p. 297).

The neo-Brahmanist movement gave a name to the impersonal divine order of the cosmos - Brahma (Weber, 1958, p. 299). Shiva became the personal representative of this divine order, encompassing the masses' needs for fertility rituals and orgiasticism. Over time, Brahma receded in importance for the masses in favour of Shiva.
Shivaism succeeded in meeting both the intellectual and common religious needs. The sexual and blood orgies of the cult satisfied the masses (Weber, 1958, p. 302), while the fact that Shiva was the representation of Brahma made it attractive to the Brahman intellectuals (Weber, 1958, p. 304). This magical and orgiastic element to the cult of Shiva was strongly linked to traditionalism. The Brahmins had a vested interest in allowing the lower strata to remain engaged in magic and rituals (Weber, 1958, p. 305).

Vishnuism, the other product of the Hindu restoration, rejected orgiasticism, however, and worshipped Vishnu as a redeemer and god of love (Weber, 1958, p. 306). It was mainly a religion of the middle bourgeois classes, and revolved around the worship of Krishna, an earthly incarnation of Vishnu (Weber, 1958, p. 306). Central to this worship was the rejection of traditional paths to salvation, such as yoga, asceticism, and holy knowledge. The only path to salvation was 'bhakti' - passionate devotion to the redeemer (Weber, 1958, p. 307).

Along with the development of the Shiva and Vishnu cults, the Hindu restoration witnessed the rise of the guru as a Hindu virtuoso (Weber, 1958, p. 318). Gurus were primarily Brahmins orientated towards mass needs, and they received fees in exchange for meeting those needs (Weber, 1958, p. 321).\(^4^4\)

The rise of the gurus and the Shiva and Vishnu cults did not alter the traditionalism of Indian culture, but rather reinforced it. It left the masses concerned with rituals and

\(^4^4\) The gurus emerged when a monastic system was established by the Brahmins aimed at competing with the heterodoxies by developing self-control and saving souls. After twelve years as a wandering missionary, the Brahman became a monk and settled in a monastery headed by a swami. Only a full monk could then serve the laity as a guru (Weber, 1958, p. 300). The guru received huge sums from the masses and was seen by them as a living god (thakur) to worship. Among the masses, worship of the guru replaced all other redemption religions (Weber, 1958, p. 320).
magic, not an ethically rationalised life, and encouraged the religious virtuosi to seek
salvation through contemplative mysticism (Weber, 1958, pp. 326-27). Thus:

It would occur to no Hindu to see in the course of his economic professional integrity the signs of
his state of grace or - what is more important - to evaluate and undertake the rational constitution
of the world according to principles as a realisation of God's will (Weber, 1958, p. 326).

Though Hinduism esteemed money and riches, it did so in a traditional manner, not
in the direction of economic rationalism. This was because accumulation was used to pay
for magicians, gurus, and mystagogues:

Instead of a rational accumulation of property and the evaluation of capital, Hinduism created
irrational accumulation chances for magicians and soul shepherds, prebends for mystagogues and
ritualistically or soteriologically oriented intellectual strata (Weber, 1958, p. 328).

Within the intellectual strata, however, there emerged two alternatives to the
Hindu religious rejection of the world, namely Jainism and Buddhism.

**Jainism**

The importance of Jainism to Weber lay in the fact that it was a specifically merchant sect
(Weber, 1958, p. 193). It did not promote a systematic and ethically rationalised life-
conduct of world transformation, however, primarily because it saw salvation as freedom
from rebirth. This could only be attained by detachment from the world of imperfection,
from in-the-world action, and from *karma* associated with action (Weber, 1958, p. 194).

Further, its idea of *ahimsa* (the prohibition of killing any living creature) excluded Jainists
from industrial production and agriculture where insects and animals would be killed
(Weber, 1958, pp. 198-99). Instead, they acted as 'middleman' traders. There was also an
ethical demand for a strict limitation on possessions (Weber, 1958, p. 199). All of this
added up to a rejection of economic rationalism in the Western sense, as well as the
production of a life-conduct which was not conducive to the development of modern Western capitalistic culture.

**Buddhism**

Buddhism presented a much more serious threat to the religious dominance of Hinduism on the sub-continent than Jainism. A product of urban development,\(^{45}\) Buddhism was solely concerned with the bliss of a world-detached life, and was 'a specifically unpolitical and anti-political status religion, more precisely, a religious "technology" of wandering and of intellectually-schooled mendicant monks' (Weber, 1958, p. 206).

For Buddhism, the cause of suffering and misfortune was life itself. Life was believed to be based on desire - 'the thirst for life' - and it was this desire which brought suffering (Weber, 1958, p. 220). The avoidance of suffering, therefore, could only come about through bringing one's will and desire under control.\(^{46}\)

Following the Hindu ontology of *samsara* and *karma*, Buddhism believed the wheel of rebirth was part of the source of suffering because of its perpetuation of life. For this reason, 'what is sought is not salvation to an eternal life, but to the ever-lasting tranquility of death' (Weber, 1958, p. 207).

To be trapped in worldly entanglements was an attachment to life and attachment to life prevented salvation, according to Buddhism. To escape the wheel of rebirths one must break from the will to life (including eternal life in an other-worldly paradise) and

\(^{45}\) Its founder, Gautama, was born in Nepal and belonged to the Kshatriya nobility (Weber, 1958, p. 204).

\(^{46}\) This was accomplished through the 'eight-fold plan' (see Weber, 1958, p. 221 for more details of this plan).
from a thirst for this-worldly things (Weber, 1958, p. 211). The means to achieving this salvation from life, rebirth, and suffering, was a withdrawal from this world and its temptations, embracing instead a contemplative existence. Thus,

active virtue in conduct recedes more and more into the background as against *cīla*, the ethic of non-action, for the purpose of eliminating *rajas* (drives) in the interest of pure contemplation (Weber, 1958, p. 217).

The result was that,

assurance of one's state of grace, that is, certain knowledge of one's own salvation is not sought through proving one's self by any inner-worldly or extra-worldly action, by 'work' of any kind, but, in contrast to this, it is sought in a psychic state remote from activity (Weber, 1958, p. 213).

Thus all aspects of this world (and a future perfect world) were rejected, being seen as the basis of desire and suffering. According to Weber (1958, p. 208), this meant a cool detachment from friends and enemies alike. This therefore excluded the possibility of an ethic of brotherliness emerging in Buddhism. Furthermore, attachment to knowledge was seen as a form of this-worldly desire and hence considered to block salvation (Weber, 1958, p. 209).

Economic rationalism in the Western sense was thus very unlikely to develop from this religious worldview. Salvation in Buddhism was attained through the leap into the psychic state of illumination which came from methodical contemplation, not inner-worldly asceticism (Weber, 1958, p. 220). Therefore, the main aspect of Buddhism that concerned Weber was its complete elimination of any motivation for in-the-world rational action to control nature (Weber, 1958, p. 222).
For Weber, Buddhism was the most radical of salvation religions because it excluded any notion of a deity, a saviour, religious grace or predestination, resting the accomplishment of salvation totally on the individual (1958, p. 206).47

Buddhism became a missionary religion because Buddha believed there were many men who were uncertain of their religious qualifications. In addition, there was an element of 'professional monkdom' in that it was necessary to gain the material benefits provided by the laity in order to survive (Weber, 1958, pp. 228-29). In the struggle with other religions, especially Hinduism, Buddhism thus transformed itself into a world religion. In the process, a schism broke out within the religion, with a division between Hinayana Buddhism (the ancient orthodoxy), which dominated the south of India, and Mahayana Buddhism, which dominated the north (Weber, 1958, p. 243-44).

Mahayana Buddhism was oriented towards meeting the needs of the masses (Weber, 1958, p. 244). It developed the Trikaya principle which saw Buddha as a supernatural saviour. He was believed to have been on earth for the sake of men and was his duty (Upaya) to teach others enlightenment in order to stop suffering. This, according to Weber (1958, p. 248), met the masses' need for a living redeemer (Weber, 1958, p. 248). Buddha was seen to save men by his example, not by his sacrifice (as was the case with Christ), and was thus an 'exemplary prophet' (Weber, 1958, p. 249).

The missionary zeal of Mahayana Buddhism saw it extend across India and surrounding regions, including Sri Lanka (Weber, 1958, pp. 257-64), China (Weber, 1958,

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47Buddhism supported no social movement or political goal. However, its rejection of the Brahman rituals and charisma gained support from the princes as it strengthened them in relation to the hierocracy. Early Buddhism was thus adopted mainly by positively privileged social strata rather than negative ones (Weber, 1958, p. 227).
As with the contemplative mysticism of the orthodox Hinayana Buddhism, Mahayanaism did not bring about an ethical rationalisation of life-conduct. Instead, it maintained the masses' fascination with magic:

Mahayanaism, first through formalistic prayers, finally, through the techniques of prayer mills and prayer ships hung in the wind or spat-upon idols, attained the high point of cult mechanism and joined it to the transformation of the entire world into an immense magical garden (Weber, 1958, p. 255).

Thus Buddhism, in both its orthodox Hinayana and Mahayana forms, did not have an ontology which rationalised life-conduct in the direction of rational mastery of the world.

Conclusion

48 For a critique of Weber's writings on Japan, see Golzio (1985). Golzio argues that Weber failed to take account of the development of castle-towns (jokamachi) under the Tokugawa regime, a development which facilitated the emergence of an urban class of merchants. He further argues that Weber ignored the development of an ethic of inner-worldly asceticism in some Buddhist sects of the same period. Yet Golzio's analysis misses the mark in a number of ways, distorting many of Weber's important points on Japan. Firstly, Golzio's (1985, p. 95) description of the urban merchant class sees them engaging in money-lending and usury to the politically dominant samurai class, as well as living increasingly luxurious lives. For Weber, this would make such merchants 'political capitalists', engaging in the pursuit of wealth for traditional reasons, namely, consumption rather than production. Golzio's analysis of the Buddhist sects also reveals a lack of understanding of the importance of the ethic of world transformation which Weber pinpointed in Puritanism and the religious factors involved in the development of this ethic. Golzio's critique ultimately falls short because he fails to show how Japan would have independently created a modern rational capitalistic culture and, despite seemingly favourable urban and political conditions, why Japanese religions did not develop an ethically regulated life-conduct aimed at transforming the 'internal' and 'external' human worlds. This is precisely what Weber does.

49 For an analysis of Weber's writings on Nepal and Sikkim, see Ling (1985). Ling impressively illustrates how Weber's analysis does not involve the moncausality of religion associated by many with the 'Weber thesis', and shows how Weber's work can be used as a multifactoral model to understand the economic and political culture of Nepal.
Weber's empirical analysis of Indian culture reveals a number of issues relevant to this thesis. It shows how values can operate in social life as a mechanism for social reproduction, as demonstrated by the valuing of social stability and order. It shows how intellectuals and their values have a major impact on the direction taken by cultural rationalisation within a society. It shows how dominant strata attempt to gain 'distinction' by imposing their values as the naturalised yardstick for measuring status and lifestyles. It shows how dispositions within life-conduct are created by the internalisation of material and ideational structures, and how these dispositions imbue life-conduct with a particular 'ethos'. It shows how Hinduism confined economic action to traditional techniques by promoting the dominance of religion over the economy and thus preventing the rise of an autonomous economic sphere operating according to its own logic and values. It shows different understandings of the relationship between human freedom and determinism than that of the modern sociological understanding. Perhaps most importantly of all, however, it shows how moral reflexivity operates in human life, and how moral reflexion on the meaning of suffering and death creates ontologies with their own logics, logics which led the rationalisation of Indian culture in a direction far removed from that of the West. It is these differences in the direction of religious rationalisation which reveal some of the reasons why Bourdieu's science of practice, firmly located in Western cultural rationalisation, exhibits a tension between moral and epistemological reflexivity, a theme developed in Part III of this thesis.
Part III

Paradoxes of Rationalisation in the Works of Weber and Bourdieu

In Part I of this thesis, I outlined Bourdieu’s attempt to develop a reflexive ‘science of practice’ and the various ‘fields’ he has investigated with this science in his empirical works. I also indicated, by detailing his critique of Weber’s sociology of religion, the ways in which he attempts to differentiate his work from that of Weber. Part II focussed on Weber’s investigations into the world religions in a bid to understand the complexity of Weber’s analysis, and the importance of religious rationalisation in shaping the cultural history of the West, China, and India.

In this, the final Part of the thesis, I argue that, despite Bourdieu’s comments and critique, Weber’s work on religion is not subjectivist, and is in fact remarkably similar in many ways to Bourdieu’s own empirical works. I do not, however, argue that Bourdieu is a Weberian. Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus and his epistemological reflexivity contain complex understandings of areas not examined in any detail in Weber’s work. Chapter 8 thus examines these complexities and their implications for a reflexive sociology.

Despite this epistemological sophistication, however, a number of critics have raised substantial problems with Bourdieu’s science of practice. These critiques are also outlined in Chapter 8, and lead me to argue that Bourdieu is not a Weberian for another, arguably more important reason: his work does not contain an understanding of the paradoxes of rationalisation, paradoxes which directly effect his science of practice. Weber’s work, by examining the role of moral reflexivity and ethical rationalism in social
life, is able to indicate why a paradox exists between a science of practice and a completely reflexive sociology. In Chapter 9, I therefore detail Weber’s writings on the paradoxes of rationalisation and self-defeating agency. In Chapter 10, I show the ways in which these paradoxes affect Bourdieu’s work, Weber’s own intellectual endeavour, and any attempt at a reflexive social science.
7

Weber’s Subjectivism or Bourdieu’s Reductionism?

Introduction

Weber's empirical research into the religious rationalisation of Judaism, Protestant Christianity, Confucianism, and Hinduism, as outlined in the previous chapters, reveals a complex and multi-causal analysis of social transformation and reproduction. I argue in this chapter that this complexity seriously undermines Bourdieu's accusations of subjectivism, as it contains an intricate understanding of the concrete interaction of objective and subjective factors in social life. Furthermore, I argue in this chapter that Bourdieu's critique of Weber's sociology of religion blurs a number of important affinities which exist between Weber's and Bourdieu's works. These affinities include a concentration on practice, an awareness of the struggle over values within 'symbolic violence', and a common epistemological reflexivity which is aware of the dangers inherent in abstraction from empirical reality. This chapter explores these similarities, and the contributions they make to a reflexive sociology.

Charisma and Subjectivism

Bourdieu's main criticism of Weber's work, as most potently expressed against the latter's sociology of religion, is that Weber is concerned only with the subjective construction of the world, and therefore creates a theory based on the symbolic interaction of a number of
'free-floating' subjects. Weber, according to Bourdieu, explains social phenomena by examining the interpersonal relations between subjects (Bourdieu, 1987a, p. 121). The weakness in Weber's work, Bourdieu argues, is therefore to be found in his overlooking of the objective conditions in which agents confront one another, and which structure the religious field (1987a, p. 121). According to Bourdieu, the best example of this 'subjectivism' which lies at the heart of Weber's work, is the latter's characterisation of prophets as 'charismatic' (1987a, p. 125). Bourdieu argues that Weber saw charisma as a 'natural' or innate talent of the individual, when in fact, the abilities of individuals are dependent on the socio-historical circumstances in which they exist (1987a, p. 131). For Bourdieu, 'charisma' is a relational phenomenon based on the harmonious tuning of a habitus with a field, and it is therefore necessary, he believes, to see the prophet in relationship to the laity for which he acts as a mobilising force (1987a, p. 131). It is, afterall, this relationship which brings about the initial accumulation of symbolic power for the prophet and gives him such influence in the religious field (1987a, p. 132). Without followers, the prophet cannot wield religious capital.

This criticism, however, belies a misunderstanding of Weber's use of the term 'charisma'. This term was used by Weber in two ways, referring both to a specific form of legitimation, and to a phenomenon of limited creativity which effected the direction of rationalisation processes. In contrast to Bourdieu's understanding, both of these usages are based on a relational understanding of charisma. Charisma, in Weber's work, is not an

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innate 'gift' of the individual, as Bourdieu constantly asserts. It is a socially constructed
and socially endowed phenomenon.

Charisma as Legitimacy

Weber argues that all ruling and dominant powers, whether religious or secular, must have
legitimacy (1991, p. 295). Religion, like other institutions, has three types of legitimacy:
charismatic, traditional, and legal-rational.² Weber sees charismatic legitimacy as based
on the followers' belief in the abilities of the dominant. It is believer's ideas about who the
dominant 'are', their 'essence', which allows them to dominate:

> in the following discussions the term “charisma” shall be understood to refer to
> an extraordinary quality of a person, regardless of whether this quality is actual,
alleged, or presumed. “Charismatic authority”, hence, shall refer to a rule over men,
> whether predominantly external or predominantly internal, to which the governed
> submit because of their belief in the extraordinary quality of the specific person

The last sentence of this statement, 'a rule over men .. to which the governed
submit because of their belief in the extraordinary quality of the specific person', could not
be any closer to Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, a concept which emphasises
that often the governed submit to their own domination, and that belief in the 'essence' of
the dominant is the basis of this submission (1992a, p. 167). According to Weber, this
belief usually comes about in times of distress and disillusionment with the existing routine
and order:

> this means that the 'natural' leaders - in times of psychic, physical, economic,
ethical, religious, political distress ... have been holders of specific gifts ... and
these gifts have been believed to be supernatural, not accessible to everybody

² See Weber (1978a, pp. 212-301) for details of these different forms of legitimacy and the distinction he
makes between them.
This statement shows how similar Weber's and Bourdieu's conceptions of charisma are: Weber refers to the 'natural' in inverted commas in much the same way as does Bourdieu; Weber emphasises that charismatic leaders come to the fore in times of distress, as Bourdieu does; Weber stipulates that the 'gifts' that make an individual unique depend on the belief of others, as does Bourdieu. Weber argues, therefore, that these gifts have to be socially recognised to become influential, and that people are more likely to do so in times of turmoil, a position very similar to that of Bourdieu (1987a, p. 130):

the subjects may extend a more or less passive 'recognition' to the personal mission of the charismatic master. His power rests upon this purely factual recognition and springs from faithful devotion. It is devotion to the extraordinary and unheard-of, to what is strange to all rule and tradition and which therefore is viewed as divine. It is a devotion born of distress and enthusiasm (Weber, 1991, p. 249).

For Weber, therefore, charisma is defined by the belief of the followers. Why followers come to believe the dominant are charismatic, however, is a completely different, and historically variable, situation. In 'Ancient Judaism' for example, Weber shows that the charisma of the prophets came about in a time of distress, an analysis which is quite compatible with the views of Bourdieu and Mauss (Bourdieu, 1987a, p. 130). Weber understood that it was the relationship between the prophets of doom and their followers which gave them religious, and thus social, influence. He makes it clear on a number of occasions, however, that without the political threats facing Israel, the prophets would not have gained adherents to their messages (Weber, 1952, pp. 307-308). It was the seemingly correct foretelling of political events, along with the masses' demand for this-worldly salvation, which imbued the prophets with charisma and their messages with authority. The belief in the charisma of individuals can thus arise, according to Weber,
through changing material conditions and historical contingency, a view which brings him very close to Bourdieu's own position.

A further example of the ways in which followers can come to see individuals as charismatic is found in Weber's work on China. According to this work, the Confucian education undertaken by the literati imbued them, in the eyes of the peasant masses, with a magical charisma which kept evil demons at bay and maintained the natural and social orders. Stemming from the ontology of the Tao promoted by the literati, this belief in the charisma of the dominant strata was perpetuated by the symbolic system itself. Once again, this analysis has echoes in Bourdieu's work. It is no coincidence, for example, that in his work on education, Bourdieu draws an analogy between modern Western society's education systems and Confucian China (Bourdieu, 1990d, p. 148). Both Confucianism and modern education systems see the existing social order as the 'best of possible worlds', and are thus this-worldly affirming ontologies. Both therefore act as mechanisms for social reproduction, rather than social transformation. Both stress examinations as the basis of status and allocation of social position. Both see successful graduates of such examinations as imbued with 'charisma'. In the case of the Confucian literati, this 'magical charisma' allowed them to maintain their dominant position by presenting education to the masses as the basis of their 'gifted' ability to keep demons away. In an analysis very similar to Bourdieu's work on modern education therefore, Weber's work on China reveals how education, through 'charisma', operates as a mechanism for the control of status and knowledge (what Bourdieu would term 'cultural capital'), and thus the social order itself.
Hence, although it is true that Weber saw charisma as being based on the belief of subjects that an individual was extraordinary, it is not true that Weber held a subjectivist view that this extraordinariness was an innate talent of the individual. Weber was very much aware that belief, including the belief in charismatic individuals, always occurs in particular constellations of social conditions. Charisma is thus not a form of subjectivism in Weber’s work, but a relational understanding of one way of maintaining and legitimating social dominance, an understanding very similar to Bourdieu’s.

If there is any real difference between the two thinkers, and a site of innovation in Bourdieu’s analysis of charisma, it is that Bourdieu shows how charisma still operates in Modernity as a form of legitimacy, through institutions such as education and art, whereas Weber had thought it had become much less important. The originality of Bourdieu’s empirical work lies in his investigation of charisma as a legitimating force in modern societies. This does not invalidate Weber’s conception of charisma, it merely problematises the fact that he did not apply such a conception to his own society which he believed had become dominated by legal-rational legitimation.

**Charisma as Limited Creativity**

The term ‘charisma’ in Weber’s work, also refers to the change in direction of historical movements. For Weber, the charismatic leader was one who broke with the everyday, who broke the routine and the ordinary, and in this sense became ‘extraordinary’. Yet the charismatic individual did not single-handedly change the direction of history. For Weber, it was precisely because of the extraordinariness of certain socio-historical situations that
the individual could become the 'mid-wife of history', not simply through their individual talents, but through the relation between the charismatic individual, their followers, and the material and ideational circumstances in which these agents interacted. In other words, Weber showed in his sociology of religion, as does Bourdieu in his sociology of education, that there are sociological reasons for the rise and demise of charisma.

Weber's interest in charisma stems from its seemingly extraordinary character, that is, its disruption of routine. It is for this reason that he began his discussion of it by comparing it to patriarchal and bureaucratic institutions, both of which are institutions based on calculable routine (1978a, pp. 217-40). Charisma is unstable and disruptive, and is the opposite of institutional permanence. Weber saw this charisma as challenging the taken-for-granted, in a similar manner to the way in which Bourdieu sees such challenges as the beginnings of changes to doxa and the emergence of new social ideas (1977a, p. 168). Weber was thus acutely aware that charisma was a socially constructed phenomena and that it emerged in times of crisis. When Bourdieu states, 'in sum, the prophet is less the "extraordinary" man of whom Weber spoke than the man of extraordinary situations' (1991h, p. 35), it is clear that Weber believed both dimensions to be important. The prophet must be recognised, that is, believed, to be extraordinary by his followers, but furthermore, the prophet was individually important as the one who did creatively articulate the new discourse. For Weber, the prophet, to use a phrase coined by Bourdieu, was 'creative within limits'. The creativity and disruption brought into existence by charisma could profoundly re-direct the course of rationalisation and thus the course of history, by providing new values, new worldviews, and new solutions to old problems. It
was primarily for this reason that charisma interested Weber in his sociology of religion, and it is a reason completely neglected in Bourdieu’s critique.

Though both Bourdieu and Weber see sociological factors involved in the rise of charisma, there are substantial differences between the two. The primary difference is that Weber also considered agents’ perspectives of the situation. Weber analysed the material circumstances and the relation between the charismatic individual and the follower, but he also went beyond Bourdieu to explore the followers’ subjective experiences of the prophet as a miraculous individual who held extraordinary abilities. In contrast to Bourdieu’s arguments that Weber went to subjectivist extremes to avoid the economic reductionism of Marxism (1987a, p. 119), I would argue that Bourdieu goes to objectivist extremes to avoid what he sees as the ‘ideology of charisma’. This is no doubt connected to his historical situation. Writing in a period dominated by the ‘end of ideology thesis’ and the corresponding emphasis on meritocracy, he attempts throughout his work to emphasise the objective relations which this ideology masks. The mistake in his analysis of Weber’s work is that because the latter writes of charisma, Bourdieu tars him with perpetuating this ideology. In this way, Bourdieu is guilty of the very act of intellectual abstraction that he accuses objectivists of indulging in, namely, of constructing objective relations which forget the perspective of the agent being examined.
Bourdieu's Reductionism of Weber's Work

Bourdieu’s critique of Weber’s conception of charisma is part of his wider rejection of Weber’s sociology of religion as subjectivist. This characterisation, however, is in fact a reductionist understanding of Weber’s work on religion. As I have shown in the previous two chapters, Weber was very much aware of the objective and material factors which shape religion, having observed that:

of course, the religiously determined way of life is itself profoundly influenced by economic and political factors operating within given geographical, political, social, and national boundaries (Weber, 1991, p. 268).

In his empirical work, which Bourdieu does not mention at all, Weber spent most of the first part of his analyses of various processes of religious rationalisation, examining the objective and material circumstances in which they occur. He did not adopt a crude materialism which sees such material conditions as simply causing religious rationalisation, but instead saw a complex interaction of both ideal and material factors. As Schluchter poignantly observes:

Weber's procedure can be described as the attempt to demonstrate the limitations of the materialist as well as the idealist interpretation of history, without denying the relative justifications of both views (1979, p. 16). 3

Weber’s empirical work does, in Bourdieu's terms, show how the 'religious field', and the various positions within it, emerge, and how objective and material relations shape the views of these groups and strata occupying such positions. These empirical works

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3 Bourdieu’s accusations of subjectivism and idealism in Weber's work are not new. See, for example, Turner (1977 and 1981, pp. 29-60) who defends Weber against similar claims made by Althusserian Marxism by showing the complexity of Weber's understanding of the relation between material and ideal conditions. See also Scaff (1984) for an analysis of the 'structuralist Weber' found especially in Weber's early works, and Fulbrook (1978) for an examination of how Weber emphasises structural elements in his historical works, despite his supposed 'interpretative sociology'. For an indepth analysis of Weber's understanding of the interrelation of material and ideal factors in social change, see Mommsen (1992, pp. 145-65).
demonstrate the ways in which, as Bryan Turner has observed: 'Weber's sociology operates as a series of analytical tensions between choice and determinism, subjectivity and objectivity, contingency and logic' (1981, p. 11). I want to now look briefly at the ways in which each of Weber's empirical works on religion contain a complex multi-causal analysis which incorporates subjective and objective factors.

As demonstrated previously, within ‘Ancient Judaism’ Weber examined the ways in which material and ideational factors interacted in Hebrew history. One such material factor was the way in which the geographical position and environment shaped the economy and culture of the Hebrews. Another was the effects of urbanisation on the social relations of Israelite society, most notably the increasing power of the monarchy and Gibborim at the expense of the peasants and plebeians. He showed the effects these changes in turn had on the religious needs of the various social strata, and the relations and nature of the religious ‘field’. He demonstrated how, in the period of political and military dominance associated with the early kings, the prophets and their understanding of the Berith held little influence. With the decline of Israel, however, and the changing material environment, the lower strata became 'predisposed' to listen to the prophets and their versions of the meaning of these events. According to Weber, these events were explained with reference to the ontological presupposition at the heart of the Judaic worldview, a monotheistic deity who had made a Berith with the Hebrews. The dominant groups dismissed the calls of the prophets, and established their own school of Nebitim which could legitimate their social position and provide them with the religious message they sought, namely, that their dominant position was deserved. The dominated groups,
on the other hand, increasingly accepted the messages of the prophets as valid explanations of the decline in their social position, and of Israel's decline as a nation.

Thus, according to Weber, Judaism was affected by the struggle between dominant groups for power and influence, the prophets with their dominance of the religious sphere on the one hand, and the kings and Gibborim with their dominance in the political sphere on the other. This struggle was a struggle over values, or 'symbolic capital' as Bourdieu would term it, as well as material prerogatives. The prophets resisted the 'symbolically violent' attempt by the monarchy and urban elite to impose a new 'doxa' (based on Egyptian and Mesopotamian beliefs) and status hierarchy upon the lower classes which transgressed the ethics of the Berith. The changes in material conditions, that is, the objective social order, brought conflict with existing values, setting up an existential tension. The prophets promised that the values of the lower strata, especially peace and political domination of the world, could become material reality, if traditional values and faith were restored. Hence, changing material and objective conditions were emphasised and investigated by Weber in this work.

He did not only examine such conditions in this study of ancient Judaism, however. Weber also incorporated the subjective view of agents, including peasants, kings, Gibborim, and prophets of doom, not as the basis of some form of monicausality, but as an expression of the changing nature of Judaism. Weber's analyses, for example, of Amos, Ezekiel, and Elijah, are based on examinations of their position in society, their position in the religious sphere, and their internalisation of the scriptures, all of which 'pre-disposed' them to see the world in a certain way. Weber argued that they each had different
personalities and different passions, but that the logics of the Judaic worldview led them to similar conclusions: 'all these [personality] contrasts may be grasped and still they change nothing in the prophecies of doom' (Weber, 1952, pp. 305-306). Such an analysis is very similar to Bourdieu's writings, for example, on Flaubert or Manet, and is remote from some sort of individualist and subjectivist explanation.

'Ancient Judaism' is not only a prime example of Weber's understanding of the interrelation of objective and subjective factors, it also highlights the mistake of using 'Economy and Society' alone as the basis for understanding Weber's sociology of religion, a mistake Bourdieu unfortunately makes. As Marianne Weber notes in relation to Weber's conception of the prophet:

Weber shows that the prophets always appeared when the great powers threatened the homeland and when it was a question of the existence or non-existence of the Jewish national state ... When Weber had a few years previously concerned himself with the type of the old prophet in the framework of his systematic sociology of religion ['Economy and Society'], he had not yet employed these concepts. Evidently, only the experience of the war and political activity had suggested them to him (Marianne Weber, 1975, p. 593).

This point is reinforced by Tony Fahey, who argues that Weber's analysis of the relationship between priests and prophets is much more complex and sophisticated, and thus more 'careful', in 'Ancient Judaism' than it is in 'Economy and Society' (Fahey, 1982, p. 71).

Like 'Ancient Judaism', Weber's Protestant Ethic essays present problems for Bourdieu's claims that Weber's work is subjectivist. In these works, Weber examined how the 'spirit of capitalism', the methodical pursuit of wealth as an end in itself, which had such a strong elective affinity with capitalism that it was able to dominate over other forms of life-conduct in capitalism, may have originated in ascetic Protestantism. He did not, in
an idealist manner, argue that Calvinism caused capitalism, but that a certain type of life-conduct, highly conducive to capitalism and its structural principles, had its origins in Calvinism. It was this type of life-conduct which interested him most in these essays:

The progress of an expanding capitalism was not my central interest; rather, it was the development of humankind as it was produced through the confluence of religiously and economically determined factors. This was clearly articulated at the end of my essay (Weber, 1978b, p. 1111).

His works on Protestantism thus show how particular practices and life-conducts, which have a particular 'ethos' or 'spirit', were more conducive to success in particular socio-economic arrangements than others. Such an analysis proceeds along very similar lines to Bourdieu's empirical investigations of the ways in which a particular habitus can operate in a particular 'field' like a 'fish in water', allowing it to dominate the 'game', whereas others suffer from a 'hysteresis effect'. Indeed, Hennis has suggested that Weber's theme in the 'Protestant Ethic' essays may have been better summed up by the title - 'The Protestant Ethic and the Capitalist Habitus':

... the whole investigation does not involve a "spirit" at all, but rather a \textit{Habitus}, in concrete terms, the unfolding of a particular kind of Lebensführung "within the orders of the world: family, economic life, social community" (Hennis, 1988, p. 31).

Hennis points out that Weber's concern in these essays was with the ability of one particular life-conduct or habitus to operate within the socio-economic structural logics of capitalism. These essays therefore reflect a concern not with 'habitus' as a universalist principle or generic concept, but with the historical content of a particular habitus and its relation, through elective affinity, with particular socio-economic matrices.\footnote{This concentration on a particular habitus is no doubt due to Weber's reluctance to engage in abstract universalising, and his attempt to understand human agency and social structures in concrete historical terms, themes I shall return to shortly.}
As I showed last chapter, Weber’s work on China and India was also concerned with the objective and material factors in which the religions of these cultures developed. In the case of China, Weber highlighted the ways in which the social order reflected a balance of power between the central imperial court, the rural villages, and the provincial mandarins. He also explored the way in which the Period of Warring States in China gave way to a pacified empire with no autonomous cities, no autonomous priesthood, no unified legal or monetary systems, but which was controlled by an intellectual strata with specific ideal and material interests. In his studies of Indian religion, Weber examined the way in which the caste system structured Indian society, and how the alliance between the Brahman priesthood and politically dominant Kshatriyas shaped the relations between social groups and individuals. He also stressed the importance of the historically contingent Islamic invasion in directing the development of Indian religion.

All of Weber’s works on the world religions therefore take into account the influence on social life of the material environment, and the objective factors it helps to produce. Bourdieu’s allegations of subjectivism made against Weber’s sociology of religion must therefore be seen as reductionist at best. This is certainly not to say that Weber believed material conditions determined history in any monocausal sense either. What these empirical works reveal is a complex understanding of religious rationalisation, and how objective and subjective factors interrelate to produce it. I will now attempt to outline that complex understanding at a general level, in order to show the way in which charisma and routinisation, objectivity and subjectivity, interact in Weber’s work.5

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5 The following outline of Weber’s general approach to the interaction of subjective and objective elements must be seen as a rational abstraction from Weber’s empirical work. Much as I am reluctant to engage in such rationalisation, I find it necessary to contrast his approach to that of Bourdieu in order to address the
Weber believed that the logic of material structures (for example, institutions and socio-economic systems) promotes action in certain directions and shapes life-conduct to conform with this logic. These material structures are usually produced by agents' pursuit of their material interests. These material structures are objective and beyond individual subjective will.

He also believed that ideational systems (cultural worldviews, religious beliefs) have internal logics which unfold based on their original ontological premises. These systems are structured in an objective manner also, and promote the development of life-conduct in particular directions. Such ideational structures are developed out of, and pursued by, the attempt to satisfy ideal interests. These ideational structures have to find a 'host', that is, they have to be adopted by a carrier strata and thus they must fit into that strata's experience of their life-conditions. This is the process of 'elective affinity' - a process marked by an affinity between the content of ideas and the experiences of the adopting social strata, but also containing an elective element in that strata must choose from the myriad sets of ideas that exist in any culture. This election is not due to the internalisation of material conditions alone, as it is often dependent upon a host of contingent factors.

Once located in a social strata, the internal logics of these ideational structures unfold, with all their consequences for life-conduct and cultural rationalisation. Usually, the ideational and material structures mutually support each other, as I have shown was the case in India and China. At certain periods in history, however, the emergence of

latter's criticisms. Like all agents in the modern intellectual life-sphere, I too am bound by its internal logics and the seduction of rational abstraction. Resistance to this seduction is found, I believe, in providing detailed examinations of Weber's concrete works, as was done in the previous two chapters.
these ideas/ideational structures act like a 'switchman', and switch the material interests of their host strata, and consequently, eventually, the rest of society, in new directions (this usually occurs when a traditional worldview cannot explain a crisis, and is facilitated by the efforts of charismatic figures with new interpretations of the world). Then, of course, the material structures set up by these new ideational structures or worldviews to meet these material interests begin to operate under their own logics which then undermine the ability to satisfy ideal interests through the original ideational structure. The subjective meaning of that worldview is lost to the objective demands of the material socio-economic system.

This process is not an inevitable or mechanical movement, but a dialectic which can be altered by a number of contingent events. History, for Weber, is open-ended, as it is for Bourdieu:

as long as we escape the retrospective illusion and this sort of loose teleology which leads one to believe that everything that happened had to happen, history is a powerful means of breaking with the obviously of the established order (Bourdieu, 1993d, p. 41, italics added).\footnote{For Weber's understanding of the relationship between the disciplines of history and sociology, see Bendix (1946), Roth (1976) and Whimster (1980). For Weber's influence on the development of historical sociology, see Turner (1992, pp. 22-37) and Kalberg (1994a).}

With the dominance of material structures, rationality and life-conduct are oriented towards meeting the demands which the system has imposed on the individual. This we might call 'objective rationality'. In other conditions, however, usually at the cross-tracks operated by switchmen, agents can orientate their life-conduct towards 'ultimate values' which are believed to be 'within' them. This is 'subjective rationality' which allows people to redirect the 'tracks' of history. In Modernity, according to Weber, only a few people
are able to defy objective rationality, and take up subjective rationality, thus turning
themselves into 'personalities'.

Not only must new worldviews (produced by the limited creativity of charisma)
find a 'host' strata, they must also be routinised if they are to survive for an extended
period of time and influence the direction of rationalisation. As we have seen, for Weber
charisma refers to the establishment of new ideas and new forms of domination in history
such as, for example, new answers to the problem of theodicy. Charisma is the result of
rationalisation, but then rationalisation proceeds to routinise that charisma, as the aim
becomes to maintain the worldview and achieve its goals. Charisma is the creative force
that comes out of a period of rationalisation, yet it is also rationalisation which leads to its
routinisation.

It is thus creative agency, produced within ideational and material limits, and the
denial of that agency by the material and ideational structures it creates, which concerned
Weber in his work on religion. This point is clearly expressed by Bryan Turner:

Weber has a clear conception of the structural constraints which determine individual
behaviour and of the way in which a system of constraints has a "logic" or "fate" which
overrides individual intention and consciousness. His sociology is not subjectivist and
individualistic. At the same time, Weber rejected any attempt to establish general laws of
history which stipulated certain inevitable outcomes of developmental tendencies within
society. The logic or fate of a social system or process was subject to particular, contingent

Though Bourdieu is correct to highlight that Weber stresses subjective meaning and the
subjective point of view, he misses the fact that Weber was simultaneously concerned with
the objective limits on subjects, many of which have been produced by subjects. Bourdieu

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7 For details of Weber's concept of 'personality' and its connection to freedom and meaningfulness, see
8 For an analysis of the interaction of charisma, routinisation, and rationalisation, see Mommsen (1987).
neglects the way in which what we might term ‘subversive subjectivity’ operates in Weber’s work. This subjectivity has been produced when human efforts to achieve subjective meaningfulness unintentionally deny such meaning. Further, it is precisely the loss of subjective meaning and its moral and human costs which Weber saw as the true concern of social enquiry, and what made such enquiry worthwhile, that is, morally valuable.

**Neglected Affinities**

Bourdieu’s neglect of Weber’s empirical works, and thus the latter’s complex understanding of the concrete interaction of objective and subjective factors, causes him to minimise the similarities between his work and that of Weber. Despite divergences, these similarities or affinities, reveal common contributions to a viable reflexive sociology. They include a common concern with: ‘non-material’ interests; the struggle over beliefs and values; the activities of agents; life-orders; perspectivism; theoretical and practical rationalities; and abstract models. I shall examine each of these in turn.

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9 A detailed examination of this process, and an exploration of some of the major examples of it, are undertaken in Chapter 9.
Ideal and symbolic interests

Weber's concern with the connection between material and 'non-material' or ideal interests, is very similar, as Brubaker (1985, p. 751) has observed, to Bourdieu's analysis of material and 'symbolic' interests. Neither sociologist sees humans as beings with material interests alone. Both see the importance of culture and ideas in social life. This being said, their respective understandings of why culture and ideas develop tends to diverge markedly. Though both see the logics of economics operating in the cultural sphere, Weber had a different understanding of the motivation behind non-material interests to Bourdieu. Weber's concern was primarily with human attempts to comprehend the meaning of, as well as overcome, suffering and death. He saw such attempts as forms of 'ethical rationalism' or what I term 'moral reflexivity', whereas Bourdieu sees symbolic interests being predominantly motivated by the need of agents for power and the enhancement of social being. These differences profoundly affect their respective ontologies of human being, their different understandings of religion, and their contrasting views on science and morality. I shall return to these issues in the final chapter.

The Struggle over Values - Misrecognition in Modern and Pre-Modern Societies

Following from their common concern with 'non-material' interests is the two sociologists' analysis of the struggle over, and within, belief-systems. They are both concerned with the ways in which the values of different social strata are often in conflict, and how strata attempt to impose their values as universally valid. As we have seen, Bourdieu believes that the symbolic system is dominated by the economically dominant,
that is, by those holding large amounts of economic and cultural capital. These groups define culture and impose their values as the norms by which other values and cultural practices are judged. When such norms are recognised by the lower classes as legitimate and 'natural', they simultaneously 'misrecognise' the arbitrariness and class-based nature of such norms.

Once again, there are distinct similarities here with Weber's work. As I have shown, each of Weber's empirical investigations of the world religions examines how a social strata manages to impose its worldview and values as the dominant one (but not the only one) by which all other strata are judged. Importantly, however, in those societies strata dominating material production did not always dominate cultural production:

In the past the significance of stratification by status was far more decisive, above all, for the economic structure of the societies. For, on the one hand, status stratification influences the economic structure by barriers or regulations of consumption, and by status monopolies which, from the point of view of economic rationality are irrational, and on the other hand, status stratification influences the economy very strongly through the bearing of the status conventions of the respective ruling strata who set the example (Weber, 1991, p. 301).

In pre-modern societies, status affected economic life because it regulated consumption by shaping who could eat what, or dress how, or marry whom. Bourdieu's own work on the Kabyle reveals similar processes at work in traditional Algerian society. Brubaker has also observed these similarities:

Bourdieu's general approach to the study of class structure as a structure of power and privilege is distinctly Weberian ... The notion of a hierarchy of prestige or honour that is irreducible to any economic base; the notion that positively privileged status groups tend to develop a distinctive style of life; the notion that this stylization of life often requires an inhibition of strict or blatant economic calculation; and the notion that positively privileged status groups tend to legitimise their privilege through the cultivation of a sense of "natural" dignity and excellence - these and other ideas articulated by Weber in the seminal essay "Class, Status, and Party" are appropriated and developed by Bourdieu (1985, p. 761).
Bourdieu himself recognises the similarities between Weber's analysis of the
operations of 'misrecognition' in pre-modern societies and his own analysis of its
operations within the education systems of modern societies:

Better than the political religions whose most constant function was, as Weber says,
to provide the privileged classes with a theodicy of their own privilege, better than the
soteriologies of the hereafter which helped to perpetuate the social order by promising a
posthumous subversion of that order, better than doctrine like karma, which Weber saw
as the masterpiece of the social theodicies, since it justified the social quality of each
individual within the caste system by his degree of religious qualification in the transmigration
cycle, the School today succeeds, with the ideology of natural "gifts" and innate "tastes", in
legitimating the circular reproduction of social hierarchies and educational hierarchies
(Bourdieu, 1990d, p. 208).

Weber was thus aware of the process Bourdieu refers to as 'symbolic violence',
where one group imposes its values and ideas of status, and 'naturalises' them as the basis
of distinction by controlling consumption and social interaction. Like Bourdieu, therefore,
Weber analysed how culturally dominant strata (in Bourdieu's terminology, strata rich in
'cultural capital') succeeded in influencing their society's cultural history. As Bourdieu's
work on Kabylia reveals how in precapitalist societies, social power and influence were
dependent just as much on knowledge and information as economic and military
resources, so does Weber's work on religion. The extension of this is their common
concern with aristocracies, and the ways in which aristocracies 'essentialise' themselves by
making their dominance 'natural'.

The clearest example of such 'symbolic violence' in Weber's empirical works is
seen in the ways in which the Brahman priesthood of India maintained its social position
through the control of 'cultural capital'. By monopolising knowledge of the correct rituals,
the sacred texts, and the methods of contemplation, the Brahmans were able to dominate
the cultural sphere by regulating consumption and lifestyle. They were able to 'distinguish'
themselves by marking a 'social distance' from lower strata, 'naturalising' this through the ideas of dharma and karma as eternal and intransmutable. For Weber, the caste system thus became the means of 'symbolic violence' and 'distinction' par excellence.

Furthermore, Hinduism spread mainly because this symbolic violence met the ideal and material interests of the dominant strata by legitimating their social position as 'deserved':

Legitimation by a recognised religion has always been decisive for an alliance between politically and socially dominant classes and the priesthood. Integration into the Hindu community provided such religious legitimation for the ruling stratum. It ... secured their superiority over the subject classes with an efficiency unsurpassed by any other religion (Weber, 1958, p. 16).

In exchange, the Brahmans received material rewards. For the lower strata, Hinduism explained their suffering and social position in terms of a previous life and offered salvation in the next rebirth if they maintained correct ritual behaviour in this life. In this way, it was a politically and socially conservative sociodicy which 'naturalised' and divinely legitimated the differences between social groups as externally intransmutable.

Thus, both Weber and Bourdieu share a concern with the process of misrecognition, that is, how the cultural order is affected by, as well as affecting, the struggle between various groups for social power. There is a difference between them, however, in that too often Bourdieu's work reads as if this is all there is to culture. As I shall show in a later chapter, this can lead to a reductionist understanding of the meaning culture can provide agents with, and seriously undermine our understanding of the moral reflexivity agents engage in.

Life-conduct and Practice
Weber's understanding of 'life-conduct' is analogous to Bourdieu's conception of 'practice'. Both Weber and Bourdieu concentrate not only on the individual agent or structures of society, but also on the activities of agents within objective and material structures which transform and reproduce those structures of society. Both see the conduct of agents as product and producer of social history. Both see such practice as containing a particular 'ethos' which is an expression of social position. Both believe that particular life-conducts are more conducive to success in certain socio-economic matrices than others. The clearest example of this in Weber's work is his analysis of the 'elective affinity' between ascetic Protestantism and the socio-economic structures of nascent modern capitalism.\(^\text{10}\)

**Life-Orders and Fields**

For both Weber and Bourdieu, the conduct of agents takes place in objectively structured spheres of social life. Both Wacquant (1992a, p. 17) and Lash (1990, p. 238) have identified the similarities between Bourdieu's conception of 'fields' and Weber's 'life-orders'. Both concepts have agents engaged in specific spheres of social life, and both see objective structural demands on the practice of an agent within such spheres. Both believe that if an agent values something in a value-sphere, for example, salvation in the religious sphere, or wealth in the economic sphere, they must act in certain ways to achieve it because of the structural nature and logics of the sphere/field. Much of Weber's attention in his works on the world religions is focussed on examining the relationship between the

\(^{10}\)This concentration by Weber on life-conduct further places into question Bourdieu's interpretations of Weber's work as symbolic interactionist and subjectivist.
religious sphere and other spheres, most notably the economic and political spheres, in different cultures, and the effects this relationship has on the life-conduct of agents.

There are differences between the two sociologists in their analysis of life-spheres, however. Bourdieu believes an agent's habitus is sensitised to the capital ('value') in the sphere, and this lies at the base of their 'investment' into the game, whereas Weber argues an agent must confront the 'demons within', this being the mark of 'personality'. The latter is thus a much more 'decisionistic' and limited approach.\(^{11}\) On the other hand, whereas Weber historically traces how the life-spheres became differentiated, Bourdieu does not provide a general history of fields. These differences strike at the heart of the detour between the two sociologists, and I shall explore them in greater detail below.

**Perspectivism**

Stemming from this concern with life-conduct within particular life-spheres, Weber's work shares with that of Bourdieu an emphasis upon perspectivism.\(^{12}\) Both sociologists believe agents see reality from particular points of view which are provided by life-conduct positioned in particular social spheres. Although it may appear that they differ in their perspectivism in so far as Weber believed such points of view are determined by the values the agent/observer holds, while Bourdieu argues that points of view are determined by the agent's habitus, that is, the agent's objective social position, which is in turn determined by

\(^{11}\) I shall outline the reasons why I believe this is the case, and the consequences it has on the relation between Weber's and Bourdieu's works, in the next chapter. For a critique of Weber's 'decisionism' see Habermas (1971, p. 63). This criticism has been challenged by Schluchter (1979, pp. 65-116). See Factor and Turner (1984, pp. 47-50) for a coverage of this debate.

\(^{12}\) This perspectivism in Weber's work most probably stemmed from the influence of Nietzsche on the former. For links between the work of Nietzsche and Weber in terms of perspectivism and other issues, see Schroeder (1987), Hennis (1988, pp. 146-62), Turner (1992, pp. 184-208), Stauth (1992), and Eden (1983).
the amount and type of capital they hold, such an appearance in misleading. It gives the impression that Weber held a subjectivist view of agents' perspectives, while Bourdieu emphasises the interaction of subjective and objective factors. As I have shown, Weber's empirical works ground values in agents' social positions and worldviews, although not in any causal sense. Thus, for example, his analysis of ancient Judaism examined the conflicting values produced by the social positions of the prophets, the monarchy, and the Gibborim, and how these social positions affected the respective strata's' interests in the religious sphere. Weber's work on China likewise examined the interests pursued by the Confucian intellectuals as opposed to the Chinese peasantry, and how these affected their views in the religious sphere (the Confucians valuing knowledge which perpetuated the social status quo, the peasantry valuing magic which 'soothed' nature). Weber's empirical works thus explore the ways in which objectivity and subjectivity operate as a matter of perspective: the 'objective' existence of values within a culture does not negate the fact that such values are 'subjective' when viewed from the perspective of the values of another culture, or the perspective of someone with different values within that culture.

Practical and Theoretical Rationalities/Logics

One of the most important influences on the perspectivism of an agent in both Weber's and Bourdieu's works is the type of logic or rationalism the agent employs. In this regard, there are obvious similarities between Weber's conception of practical and theoretical rationalities, and Bourdieu's idea of practical and theoretical logic. Weber made a distinction between theoretical rationalism, the drive towards consistency and abstract ordered thought, and practical rationalism, the concern for outcomes, an often inconsistent
and situational type of thinking which pragmatically accepts something if it works in practice (1991, p. 284). The difference between these rationalisms is the emphasis on consistency. This distinction corresponds to Bourdieu's emphasis on the 'fuzziness' of practical logic. For Weber, as for Bourdieu, theoretical and practical rationalism are separated by 'social distance', that is, dominated by different strata. For Weber, it is the life-conduct and ideal interests (the need for a meaningful, consistent order) of intellectual strata which gave them their particular theoretical view of problems, whereas the life-conduct of civic strata predisposed them to practical rationality. For Bourdieu, resources such as time and cultural capital which are accrued when occupying particular social positions, allow an agent to be an intellectual who engages in 'logical logic'.

The analyses of the two theorists diverge, however, in so far as Weber traces and emphasises the historical conditions which allow one form of rationality/logic to become dominant over the other in a culture. As I will show in the next chapter, Weber's understanding of the operation of theoretical and practical rationalities is more historicised than Bourdieu's.
Epistemological Reflexivity and Anti-Positivism

Both Weber and Bourdieu see a number of epistemological problems and distortions stemming from the theoretical rationality of the intellectual. For both, positivistic abstraction leads into methodological tail-chasing. It is clear from Weber's concept of ideal-types that he was very much aware, as is Bourdieu, of the 'constructed' nature of intellectual work and research, as well as to the danger of imputing models of reality to an agent's own perspective. He was aware, in other words, of the gap between how the intellectual sees the world, and how the practitioner engages in it.\(^\text{13}\) This is clearly indicated in Weber's 'Grundisse', written in 1898 for a series of lectures at Heidelberg University, in which he wrote:

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

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

\(b\) assumes as existent, qualities that empirical man does not possess, or possesses only incompletely, i.e.:

i) complete insight into a given situation - economic omniscience;

ii) unfailing choice of the most appropriate means for a given end - absolute economic rationality;

iii) complete dedication of one's powers to the purpose of acquiring economic goods - "untiring acquisitional drive" (Weber, cited in Hennis, 1988, p. 121).

Weber is illustrating in this text the ways in which the theoretical constructions of abstract theory are imposed on, and mistaken for, concrete empirical reality. He succinctly points out that \textit{Homo Economicus} is not a complete view of mankind, but a construction imposed on reality from a certain point of view - that of abstract economic theory.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{13}\) Hennis (1988) has argued that Weber inherited this view from the Historical School of German Political Economy which saw Economics as a branch of Political and Moral Theory.

\(^{14}\) Bourdieu, to his credit, is aware that Weber saw the difference between how the observer and practitioner relate to practice: By pointing out that rational action, "judiciously" oriented according to what is "objectively valid" (1922), is "what would happen if the actors had had knowledge of all the
For Weber, the drive towards abstraction, and the distortion in theory and methodology it produces, results from the fact that the cultural sciences emerged under the shadow of the natural sciences (1949, p. 85). With the triumph of biology and its emphasis on evolutionary laws, Weber argued, the definition of science was reduced to the search for universal laws. An interest in individual phenomena was not seen as scientific, but instead merely as a representation of such laws (1949, p. 86). This 'naturalistic viewpoint' also dominated the cultural sciences and they too became concerned with the positivistic search for universal laws and concepts which could detect such laws. As part of the Methodenstreit ('methodological debate') over positivism in the cultural sciences, Weber explicitly rejected the idea that the search for universal laws and concepts should be the basis of the cultural sciences. He believed that such a search was not only worthless, it was impossible.\(^\text{15}\)

As we have seen, Weber argued that the cultural events analysed by scientists are 'historical individuals', that is, unique constellations of events containing an infinite number of elements. He believed that the value of the cultural sciences lay, not in the search for universals, but in their ability to shed light on such unique occurrences. For Weber, the aim of the cultural sciences should be to understand 'the qualitative aspect of phenomena',

\(^{15}\)For an analysis of Weber's 'methodological writings' and the historical context of the Methodenstreit in which they developed, see Cahnman (1964), Simey (1966), Oakes (1977a), Eliaeson (1990), Hennis (1994), and Hekman (1983).
that is, to understand how a particular and unique configuration of empirical factors comes to have cultural significance (1949, p. 74).\textsuperscript{16}

Weber believed that the search for universal laws and concepts could tell us little about the \textit{significance} and \textit{uniqueness} of 'historical individuals' for a number of reasons. One of the main reasons was that:

For the knowledge of historical phenomena in their concreteness, the most general laws, because they are the most devoid of content are also the least valuable. The more comprehensive the validity - or scope - of a term, the more it leads us away from the richness of reality, since in order to include the common elements of the largest possible number of phenomena, it must necessarily be as abstract as possible and hence devoid of content. In the cultural sciences, the knowledge of the universal is \textit{never valuable in itself} (Weber, 1949, p. 80, italics added).

Thus, for Weber, if the value of science lies in its revelation of specific cultural phenomena which have become culturally important, the analysis of abstract universal laws and the construction of abstract generalisable concepts are vacuous because they cannot tell us anything \textit{specific} about concrete reality.

A further reason why Weber rejected the search for universal concepts and laws as the aim of cultural science was because he believed that any 'laws' about cultural reality are arrived at from a certain perspective which values only part of the infinite complexity of empirical reality:

We have designated as "cultural sciences" those disciplines which analyse the phenomena of life in terms of their cultural significance. The \textit{significance} of a configuration of cultural phenomena and the basis of this significance cannot however be derived and rendered intelligible by a system of analytic laws (\textit{Gesetzebegriffen}), however perfect it may be, because the significance of cultural events presupposes a \textit{value-orientation} towards those events. The concept of culture is a \textit{value-concept}. Empirical reality becomes culture to us because and insofar as we relate it to value ideas. It includes those segments and only those segments of reality which have become significant to us because of this value-relevance (Weber, 1949, p. 76).

\textsuperscript{16} Weber observed also that 'the natural sciences do not proceed without qualitative categories' (1949, p. 74). For an analysis of Weber's understanding of the relation between the natural and social sciences, see McLemore (1984).
Thus a cultural phenomena is only investigated and chosen for examination out of the vast complexity of reality because it means something to the scientist: 'perception of its meaningfulness to us is the presupposition of its becoming an object of investigation' (Weber, 1949, p. 76). Like all human beings, scientists studying cultural reality imbue certain areas of that reality with meaning and importance. In other words, the practice of science depends upon values. For this reason, 'all knowledge, as may be seen, is always knowledge from particular points of view' (Weber, 1949, p. 81). Weber's epistemology was thus based on the belief that infinitely complex and chaotic reality is ordered and made sense of, by the observer. This ordering occurs through the cultural and social matrix of the observer's meaning-structures. Since knowledge of reality is thus 'constructed' and not simply 'reproduced' as is assumed within positivistic frameworks, there are always presuppositions shaping what is 'real' and what is 'known'. Worldviews, whether scientific or religious, and the values which are part of them, thus make sense of the world by ordering it:

There is no absolutely "objective" scientific analysis of culture - or put perhaps more narrowly but certainly not essentially differently for our purposes - of "social phenomena", independent of special and "one-sided" viewpoints according to which - expressly or tacitly, consciously or unconsciously - they are selected, analysed and organised for expository purposes (Weber, 1949, p. 72).

In this way, Weber believed that all scientific 'objectivity' rested ultimately on forms of 'subjectivity'. As Lowith (1982, p. 31) observes, Weber never wrote of objectivity without using quotation marks. Weber believed that if values and meaning were involved in the identification of an aspect of socio-historical reality as worthy of nomination as 'culture' and therefore of study, then this meaning must also be analysed and
understood in the intellectual endeavour. He thus expected a very high level of epistemological reflexivity.

As part of this analysis, he believed it necessary to show how these 'subjective' values were 'objectively' located. Weber did not assume a 'free-floating' intellectual subject, as Bourdieu's accusations of subjectivism would lead us to believe, but a socially and historically located individual operating within the intellectual sphere and the culture of which this sphere is a part. Demonstrating a form of 'objective idealism', Weber was aware that all scientific interest emerges out of the scientist's location in their cultural milieu, a milieu which is a unique combination of concrete historical processes, and which developed out of preceding unique constellations (1949, p. 84). For example, Weber made it clear that all scientific interest presupposes the value of scientific truth, a presupposition which is itself the product of a particular (modern) culture (1949, p. 110). This 'objectification' of subjective values is thus something shared by the reflexive sociologies of both Weber and Bourdieu.

Stemming from this is a further reason why Weber believed the search for universal laws and categories is unsuitable for the cultural sciences, namely that the values from which cultural reality is studied are forever changing. For Weber, developing a closed and synthesised hierarchy of concepts which can deduce events in reality is meaningless because definitions of what is valuable are always changing in relation to changing empirical reality:

The cultural problems which move men form themselves ever anew and in different colours, and the boundaries of that area in the infinite stream of concrete events which acquires meaning and significance for us, i.e., which becomes an 'historical individual', are constantly subject to change. The intellectual contexts from which it is viewed and scientifically analysed shift (1949, p. 84).
New questions, new priorities, and new ways of seeing reality constantly emerge since reality is itself always changing. Static laws are therefore of limited use to the scientist.

The final, and perhaps most important reason why science should not be based on the search for universal abstract laws is found in Weber's posing of the question - why, scientifically, should these recurring events or laws be valued? Of what use are they? He was at pains to point out that this valuing of universal laws is part of the intellectualisation of Western culture and is based on the valuing of the control and world mastery it provides (1949, p. 87). Outside the scientific/intellectual sphere, Weber believed such knowledge to be limited in its usefulness because, as we have seen, he argued that science could shed little light on questions of morality and ethics.

These reasons for rejecting the idea of science as based on the search for universal laws and concepts did not mean for Weber that general concepts were not useful, since: 'clear concepts and the knowledge of (hypothetical) "laws" are obviously of great value as heuristic means - but only as such' (1949, p. 76). For Weber, nomological concepts were valuable and important, but they were limited in their application and were certainly not the end of knowledge, but a possible means to that end (1949, p. 79). This position is remarkably similar to Bourdieu's emphatic claim that his concepts are only heuristic devices to be used in empirical research.

The closest Weber would go towards constructing such generalised concepts was the use of the ideal-type. As we have seen, the ideal-type is constructed from a position, that of the intellectual, and is therefore a theoretical representation of reality:

Nothing, however, is more dangerous than the confusion of theory and history stemming from naturalistic prejudices. This confusion expresses itself firstly in the belief that the "true" content and the essence of historical reality is portrayed in such theoretical constructions (1949, p. 94).
Weber was thus aware of the danger of 'slipping from the model of reality to the reality of the model', as Bourdieu puts it (1977a, p. 29). He realised that the ideal-type never leads to the meaning of reality, but simply to different understandings of how it works and its causes. It therefore can only be used as a means of clarifying certain ends. This, he believed, is the case with all science - it can show the best means to achieve certain ends, but it could never show which ethical end/value is superior or should be adopted, a point I shall return to in a later chapter.

Weber also believed that if the absence of laws was a sign of scientific 'adolescence' in a discipline, then the historical and cultural sciences have been granted eternal youth (Weber, 1949, p. 104). The construction of ideal types would be a never ending process due to the changing nature of the historical reality with which they dealt. No ideal-types could exhaust the infinite richness of cultural reality because what is seen as a problem and valued as such, changed from period to period. The 'result is the perpetual reconstruction of those concepts through which we seek to comprehend reality' (Weber, 1949, p. 105).\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{17} Weber's concept of the ideal-type raises the question of whether 'habitus', 'capital', and 'field' are ideal-types in the Weberian sense. The answer must be in the negative. Bourdieu's totalising epistemological concepts are more akin to the generalising abstractions which Weber saw as leading to methodological circularity. The habitus is not an ideal-type because it is not a 'historical individual' or 'developmental process', but a template which can be universally applied by the observer to social reality. It tells us little on its own about the reality to which it is applied, in contrast to the ideal type, and is a universal category, not a unique constellation of empirical events.

Having said that, however, Weber also tended to be seduced by the construction of ahistorical epistemological concepts which led him away from his argument that only ideal-types of unique historical constellations were worth pursuing. His four-fold typology of social action found in the beginning of 'Economy and Society' is a case in point (Weber, 1978a, pp. 24-26). Within this understanding of ideal-types, Bourdieu's concept of habitus could be seen as an ideal-type of social action. As I will show below, it is a detailed and sophisticated elaboration of Weber's concept of 'traditional action'.

I contend in this thesis, however, that Weber's empirical works, not his later methodological works, provide a richer and more elaborate scheme with which to compare and critique Bourdieu's work. I also see Weber's later methodological writings, and particularly his typology of social action, as being
Weber thus believed that the value of the cultural sciences lay not in the search for abstract universal concepts in pursuit of recurring 'laws', but in understanding why particular events or practices have come to have value and moral significance for humanity. Weber's own valuing of science was thus based on his argument that knowledge had to be put towards an end, and the end he nominated was understanding the cultural significance of particular historical individualities. He thus attempted to limit the autonomy of the intellectual sphere from other areas of life by advocating that it focus on important moral and social issues. The creation of concepts with wide applicability was only a small step in that direction, and one he considered should never in itself be the focus of knowledge.¹⁸ Weber's position is not one of value nihilism, but, as Hennis (1994, p. 113) has observed, an affirmation that science cannot replace values. The cultural sciences cannot evaluate value positions and important cultural problems. Weber believed, however, that open-minded scientific analysis could aid self-clarification on these issues, and may be able to provide information on the best means to pursue ends. Only by being directed towards these problems and contemporary issues could the cultural sciences achieve something of value and worth. Thus: 'science follows, or rather, according to Weber, ought to follow the true problems of culture' (Hennis, 1994, p. 120). The problem with this position, of course, lies in how the scientist is able to determine a 'true problem of culture'. For Weber, this cannot be objectively imposed, but is ultimately a subjective

¹⁸ For evidence that Weber's 'methodological essays' and 'Science as a Vocation' were linked, and were concerned with the much broader issue of the fate of modern humanity and scientific knowledge, rather than a value-free social science, see his contemporaries, Kahler (1989), Salz (1989), Rickert (1989), Troeltsch (1989), Landshut (1989) and Wolf (1989).
decision produced by one's objective position within worldviews and the problems detected within such a location.

This view of the constructed nature of theoretical concepts, and the vacuousness of abstract debates over them, is echoed in Bourdieu's work:

... constant attention to the details of the research procedure ... should have the effect of putting you on notice against the fetishism of concepts, and of "theory", born of the propensity to consider "theoretical" instruments - habitus, field, capital, etc. - in themselves and for themselves, rather than to put them in motion and to make them work (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 228).

Both Weber and Bourdieu are therefore aware of the dangers of theoretical abstraction, and propose epistemologically reflexive means of dealing with this danger. Yet the very fact that Bourdieu must make such comments indicates that sociology since Weber's death has become quagmired in struggles over methodological and epistemological questions in the pursuit of universal laws and concepts for their own sake. Many sociologists have moved from a concern with wider cultural and moral issues to 'smaller-scale' concerns over correct methodology and ontology, the example most relevant to this thesis being the agency versus structure debate. This may have occurred, one could suggest, because the taxing effort involved in practising the cultural sciences as Weber envisaged them, did not prove 'cost effective' in relation to the accumulation of scientific capital as the rationalisation of the autonomous intellectual sphere advanced. The logics of the intellectual sphere, based on valuing the accumulation of knowledge for its own sake, have unfolded in such away as to make specialisation inevitable, along with the building of careers out of many circular epistemological and ontological debates.
Bourdieu's Epistemological Reflexivity and its Limitations

Introduction

The affinities between Weber's and Bourdieu's works, as outlined in the last chapter, should not obscure important differences between the two, nor their respective achievements. Bourdieu's work moves beyond Weber's, I believe, in four important ways: it elaborates, through the concept of habitus, Weber's ideal-type of social action, 'traditional action'; it shows how charisma is institutionalised in modern societies; it develops an indepth analysis of the way in which the 'inner demons' that Weber observed shape subjects' thoughts and actions; and it expands our understanding of the struggles that occur in contemporary intellectual life. All of these insights are important contributions to a reflexive understanding of social life, and are examined in this chapter.

Despite these insights, however, there are serious problems with, and limitations to, Bourdieu's work, problems which have been identified by a number of critics. In this chapter, I outline the comments of these critics, and suggest that the problems in Bourdieu's science of practice can be traced to a tension between moral and epistemological reflexivity, a tension that an analysis of Weber's empirical work can (indirectly) shed light upon.
Bourdieu's Reflexive Insights

Traditional/Habitual Action and the Habitus

One substantive area in which Bourdieu elaborates a theme introduced by Weber but not developed by the latter, is that of habitual social action. Although Weber was aware, as Hennis (1988) has shown, that agents hold a set of dispositions and strategies produced by the subjective internalisation of objective socio-economic and ideational structures, and that these subjectivities reproduce or transform these structures while simultaneously reproducing or transforming themselves, Bourdieu's understanding of 'habitus' implies more than this. For Bourdieu, the habitus is 'unconscious history', strategies and dispositions creating a 'feel for the game' which are not consciously constructed. It is an embodied state produced by experience and practice. If one accepts as valuable Weber's later methodological works, and the conceptual framework developed within them,¹ then this understanding of social action can be seen as a welcome extension to Weber's understanding of the types of social action.

Despite the four-fold typology of social action outlined at the beginning of 'Economy and Society', Weber tended to concentrate in his major works on the conflict between instrumental-rational action and value-rational action, neglecting to a great degree habitual/traditional action and affective/emotional action. He tended to emphasise

¹ I am thinking here of the concepts and definitions developed in Part I of 'Economy and Society' (Weber, 1978a, pp. 3-307). It is, of course, a matter of debate as to how far Weber intended these concepts to be immutable and universally applicable (as they have generally been seen in Anglo-American sociology), or as provisional ideal-types describing 'historical individualities'. Only if the former interpretation is accepted does the following point hold validity. As mentioned, I believe more is to be gained from the concrete analysis of socio-historical reality found in Weber's empirical works rather than further debate over the accuracy of particular ideal-types of social action. Nevertheless, Bourdieu's contributions to such ideal-types should be noted.
conscious, rational socialised selves, while Bourdieu’s focus is on the unconscious, practical, but equally 'logical', socialised self, found in the habitus.

Having said that, it is clear that there are similarities between Bourdieu’s conception of the habitus and Weber’s understanding of traditional action. In Weber’s (ideal-typical) typology of social action, 'traditional action' is:

very often a matter of almost automatic reaction to habitual stimuli which guide behaviour in a course which has been repeatedly followed. The great bulk of everyday action to which people have become habitually accustomed approaches this type. Hence, its place in a systematic classification is not merely that of a limiting case because, as will be shown later, attachment to habitual forms can be upheld with varying degrees of self-consciousness and in a variety of senses (Weber, 1978a, p. 25, italics added).

The emphasis here on the 'automatic' indicates that Weber believed that traditional action was not consciously regulated action, unlike rational action, but a pre-reflexive and habitual response to a familiar environment. This has obvious parallels to Bourdieu’s conception of the habitus.² Bourdieu's substantial development of the concept of habitus, and his investigation of its operation in many areas of social life, dramatically improves our understanding of this ideal-type of social action.

There are two caveats to this improvement, however. Too often in Bourdieu's work, the habitus seems to be produced almost exclusively by material conditions of life, with the influence of ideational structures being overlooked or minimised.³ A comprehensive understanding of the habitus must allow an understanding of the complex interaction of material and ideal factors which produce it, and the ways in which the habitus is developed in particular worldviews. This stress on the internalisation of ideas

² An obvious difference between the two is the lack of attention Weber gives to the body in social action.
³ A clear example of this is seen in Bourdieu’s (1987a and 1991b) understanding of the religious habitus, which is, according to him, the product of social position and material existence.
and their logical consequences is one of Weber’s most important themes, and it tends to be overlooked in Bourdieu’s work. I shall return to this point shortly.

Secondly, Weber’s analysis of the extension of instrumentally rational action at the expense of value-rational action is fundamentally important in understanding the moral conflicts and costs of the expansion of the scientific view of the world. The tension between the two provides the framework within which the Western rationalisation process, a process of which Bourdieu and his science of practices are a part, can be analysed. Though habitus and traditional action need to be incorporated into a reflexive sociology, this should not occur at the expense of examining instrumental-rational and value-rational actions, as often seems to be the case in Bourdieu’s work.

Charisma in Modernity

Another major difference between the work of Weber and Bourdieu is the latter’s analysis of charisma as a form of legitimation in modern societies. As mentioned previously, although Weber saw charisma as an important type of legitimation, he did not believe it held much influence in contemporary societies, believing that it was replaced by the legal-rational legitimation of the bureaucratic iron-cage. Although Weber saw education acting as a form of ‘institutionalised charisma’ in the Confucian literati’s domination of Chinese society (an education which led the peasantry to see the literati as possessing ‘gifts’ of magical powers), he did not examine whether a similar situation existed in modern societies. Bourdieu has done precisely this.
Bourdieu's analysis of education and the 'ideology of charisma' is, I believe, where his work is at its most innovative. His analysis of the relationship between cultural capital, social reproduction, and the individualist doxa of the 'gift', reveal how education operates through a charismatic form of symbolic violence. It is able to show the ways in which charisma, as a form of domination, is maintained in Modernity. This charismatic domination, in many ways paralleling the Confucian educational system examined by Weber, is a form of institutional charisma which consecrates individuals who successfully meet its criteria, as 'gifted'. This paralleling of Weber's writings on Confucianism, however, highlights that Bourdieu's analysis builds on, rather than refutes, Weber's work on charisma.

'Inner demons' - externality at the heart of internality

Another area in which Bourdieu's work extends ideas developed by Weber is his attempt to make sociology a means of 'freeing' subjects by showing them the social which exists within them:

By forcing one to discover externality at the heart of internality ... sociology does more than denounce all the impostures of egoistic narcissism; it offers perhaps the only means of contributing, if only through awareness of determinations, to the construction, otherwise abandoned to the forces of the world, of something like a subject (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 21).

The epistemological reflexivity of Bourdieu's work, centering on the concept of habitus, offers the possibility of a greater understanding of this 'externality at the heart of internality'. This reflexivity aids our understanding of the ways in which objective structures are internalised by subjects at the same time as being shaped by them. Bourdieu's concepts can make conscious, unconscious aspects of agents' practices, and
thus allow them the possibility of greater control and autonomy over them. Indeed, what he terms 'socioanalysis' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 116) may allow agents to gain a greater understanding of their 'inner demons', a project which Weber also saw as a valuable aspect of social science (Weber, 1991, p. 152). When empirically applied and not abstractly constructed, Bourdieu's concepts can assist in providing the self-clarity which Weber argued science should be dedicated to.

There are limits to its promise, however. As I will show in the following chapters, such an epistemologically reflexive understanding of 'inner demons' cannot tell an agent which demon should be obeyed and which rejected. Its inability to reflect on moral issues and values limits its ability to understand the nature and meaning of these 'demons'. Furthermore, given the narrow understanding of human beings which lies at the heart of Bourdieu's science of practice (a point I shall return to shortly), only some demons can be epistemologically understood. Many aspects of human life and practice which lay outside the philosophical anthropology of Bourdieu's work, areas such as compassion, justice, and the role of ideas, would be neglected by such a reflexive analysis. I shall return to these issues in more detail below.

**Struggles in the Scientific Field**

A further strength of Bourdieu's work is its analysis of contemporary intellectual life and the struggle within it over 'intellectual capital', that is, 'truth'. Although Weber was very much aware of the constructed nature of truth, he did not to any significant extent engage in an analysis of the effects of one of the most important dynamics in the modern
intellectual life-sphere, namely, the struggle between intellectuals and scientists for the prestige, influence, and economic benefits, which come with discovering/constructing a truth. His focus was predominantly upon the history and effects of the modern intellectual sphere. Bourdieu, by contrast, has reflexively turned the analysis of power, truth, and struggle, back onto the intellectual realm. He examines the objective structures operating in the intellectual field, the benefits at stake within it, and the ways in which these are contested. He shows that the intellectual struggles to accumulate resources, and is therefore just as much a part of a 'game' as any agent they might observe. This reflexive analysis places the sociological observer and theorist firmly in a web of structural relations which shape what they see, seek, and analyse. As such, it is an essential contribution to any reflexive sociology.

Critiques

The above contributions of Bourdieu, all of which are elaborations of issues introduced by Weber, provide valuable insights for any viable reflexive sociology. This is not to say, however, that there are not problems with his work. Although most of the substantial critiques of Bourdieu's reflexive sociology which I am about to address are, on the whole, impressed by the breadth of his scholarship and accept many of his general arguments, they uncover some fundamental flaws. These flaws relate to: causal analysis of the differentiation of fields in modern societies; the origins of the modern intellectual field; the universal applicability of Bourdieu's concepts; the role of 'science' in Bourdieu's work; and the 'meaning' of capital-accumulation.
Differentiation of the Fields

One of the main flaws in Bourdieu's *oeuvre* is the lack of explicit causal analysis of the origins of modern societies. As Lash (1990, p. 248) observes, Bourdieu views modern societies as developing through the differentiation of fields arising with the move from the 'universe of doxa' to the 'universe of discourse'. Bourdieu believes that in traditional societies culture was primarily doxic, with power being mediated directly between subjects, while in modern societies, culture is contested between heterodox and orthodox positions, with orthodox culture and power being legitimated through objective institutions (such as the education system). As Lash observes, 'the Bourdieu thesis ... views modernisation as a shift from the primacy of agents to that of structures' (1990, p. 253).4

The first problem with this position is that it undermines Bourdieu's claim that the concept of 'field' is a heuristic device only. If this were the case, then presumably, such a device could also be applied to pre-modern societies. The fact that he views these societies as undifferentiated must mean there is an ontological change, an ontological development of fields, which is perceived by the social analyst, not merely intellectually 'constructed' by them. This then raises the question of why, if traditional societies were relatively

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4 There are clear affinities here with Weber's position, expressed at the end of the 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism', that the impersonal structures of capitalism and modern society overwhelm and consume the personal relations of traditional societies. Lash (1993a, p. 195) also witnesses that Bourdieu's view of modernisation and the differentiation of fields shares much with Weber's view, since '...such symbolic markets for artistic goods and their corresponding “fields” do not exist in traditional, “undifferentiated” societies, but only come to exist with differentiation in the process of modernisation. Modernisation for Bourdieu - and again, Weber's conceptions in “Politics as a Vocation” and “Science as a Vocation” and the methodological articles on the world religions serve as a model - lies in the differentiation and autonomization of fields'. This is therefore further evidence that Bourdieu's work is not as far removed from that of Weber as the former would have us believe.
homogenous, operating on the personal relations sustained by the habitus and lacking a
differentiation of fields, there are so many fields in modernity. In other words, as LiPuma
asks, 'how did the different fields get to be culturally differentiated?' (1993, p. 25). If
there is a difference between how cultural and social reproduction occurs in traditional
societies, such as Algeria, and the institutionally-based reproduction of modern capitalist
societies, how or why did this differentiation occur? As Calhoun (1993, p. 70) has
observed, although Bourdieu argues that history and sociology are linked disciplines, there
is little long-term historical analysis in Bourdieu's work, and this is seen most clearly in his
lack of historical coverage of the rise of social fields.

**Origins of the Intellectual Field**

Bourdieu's lack of analysis of the origins of the differentiation of social fields in modern
societies becomes most problematic in relation to the contemporary intellectual field.
Bourdieu is fully aware, through his epistemological reflexivity, that his personal and
intellectual development is a product of his habitus, which is in turn a product of his social
trajectory through particular locations in specific fields, one of the most important of
which is the intellectual field. His trajectory across various positions in this field had a
major effect on the development of his sociological habitus which in turn allowed him to
promote a general sociological habitus based on epistemological reflexivity.

Almost incredibly, however, Bourdieu is silent on the origins of this field and this
silence obscures a number of important questions which face any reflexive sociology which
exists within this field. For example, how did the positions and postures of the intellectual
field that Bourdieu internalised in his habitus come to be the way they were? Has the intellectual field always valued the knowledges/capital that it now does? These questions have obvious implications for a reflexive understanding of reflexive sociology and the sociological habitus. The avoidance of such questions in Bourdieu's work raises further questions as to how far he has applied his reflexivity.

**Western Sociological Dualisms**

These questions are also raised in relation to his ahistoricising of the gap between theoretical and practical logic. As we have seen, Bourdieu observes that the objective models (such as diagrams and genealogies) used by objectivists take a 'synoptic view' of social relations and detemporalises them. He believes that what the objectivist tries to understand - the truth of social relations and the social world - is lost by their abstract, de-historicised models. This is due to the fact that the abstract rationalisation involved in attempting to identify all points of view loses the point of view of practice, that is, that of the agent engaged in practice. The rationalised objectivist model, by attempting to gain a total understanding of social relations and interactions through a synchronic analysis, loses the fact that practice is constantly in flux and thus loses the reality of the diachronic nature of practice:

> The logicism inherent in the objectivist standpoint leads those who adopt it to forget that scientific construction cannot grasp the principles of practical logic without changing the nature of those principles (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 117).

In a sense, Bourdieu seems to propose here that the distinction between agency and structure or subjectivism and objectivism is a product of rationalisation, that is, of the employment of the logical logic of the intellectual/scientist. The intellectual creates
artificial categories by synchronising history into 'history objectified in things' (structures) and 'history objectified in bodies' (agents) (Bourdieu, 1981a). Against such synchronisation, Bourdieu argues that the social world is a product of the practices of agents (practices occurring at the pre-conscious level through the habitus), but that such practices are also partly produced by the pre-existing social world in which these agents were socialised. That is, they were produced, in part, by the way in which the agent has internalised, in their mental schemes of classification and their bodily hexis and posture, the social structures and conditions in which they operate. Bourdieu observes that it is only in the reproduction of society, that is, in empirical history, that one can see practices at work. In this sense, to synchronise practice, and then divide it into opposing categories of 'agency' or 'structure', is to impose an artificial and purely abstract production of the logical logic of the intellectual disposition.

Such an understanding of the paradoxes of objectivist abstraction, Bourdieu believes, is vital to a reflexive sociology because it reveals the limits of theoretical abstraction. Reflexivity reveals the limits of the theoretical (as opposed to the practical) relation to the world, a revelation necessary in order to avoid sterile abstraction which is scientifically unproductive (1990a, p. 14). A scientific understanding of social life is only possible, he argues, if theoretical and practical views are incorporated into the analysis.

What Bourdieu's reflexivity fails to examine, however, whether this division is universal, or a product of particular cultural phenomena. Indeed, he questions whether cultural differences are a factor:

Because theory - the word itself says so - is a spectacle, which can only be understood from a viewpoint away from the stage on which the action is played out, the distance lies perhaps not so much where it is usually looked for, in the gap between cultural traditions, as in the gulf between two relations to the world, one theoretical, the other practical (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 14)
By essentially ahistoricising this division, Bourdieu excludes it from further analysis. He curtails scrutiny of the ways in which different cultural histories, including that of which he and his work is a part - Western cultural history - promote or retard the development of theoretical and practical relations to the world. This ahistorical analysis is a further example of the limited application of his reflexivity.

A More 'Scientific Science'?

One of the most important attributes of his science of practice, Bourdieu (1992a, p. 194) claims, is its ability to make sociology a more 'scientific science'. This is done by placing the scientist, their view and practice, under the same scrutiny as the observed agent.

'Science' in Bourdieu's work, is based on revealing the 'reality' behind the 'appearance' of social life. This is the primary reason why Bourdieu places importance on objectivism as the basis of a science of practices - subjectivism easily slips into self-deception, while objectivism reveals the truth behind the appearance. The objectifying scientist/observer sees more than the 'player' of the game. That is, they do not fall for the illusio of the game in the way the player does, primarily because they have the luxury of time, and the intellectual resources, to construct a 'synoptic view' of the game. The scientist thus does not have the same self-deception as the player.

This lack of self-deception, however, can paradoxically produce its own form of self-deception. The scientist/observer in fact falls for the illusio of a different game, namely, the scientific game, a game which promotes abstraction and the loss of the
practical view held by the agent. A more 'scientific science’, that is, a reflexive science, is therefore only possible if the observers themselves are observed and objectified.

Dreyfus and Rabinow (1993) have criticised this need to create a more 'scientific science'. They argue that Bourdieu should abandon the pretension of doing 'scientific' sociology, since this pretension draws him into the Western scientific tradition which deludes him into believing he can escape his own culture and reveal universal truths.\(^5\) They argue that it is not possible for the scientist to stand outside their own habitus or culture and be scientifically objective. They therefore call on Bourdieu to drop the banner of objective science as the reason for promoting a reflexive sociology, and instead reveal his moral stance against social injustice. Although not explicitly mentioned by them, one possible reason for their adoption of this position is the potential for science itself to become symbolically violent.

**Science as Symbolic Violence?**

According to Bourdieu, one of the most important means of symbolic violence is the 'monopoly over legitimate naming' (1990b, p. 135). His work reveals such a monopoly at work in religion, and in art, but interestingly, not in science. In his study of the religious field, for example, Bourdieu (1991h) argues that the power of the religious specialist relies on the ignorance of the laity as to the basis of that power. He argues that such power actually stems from the construction by religious specialists of religious knowledge as 'secret' and 'rare' (1991h, p. 9). This knowledge is thus turned into a form of capital which

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\(^5\)This point is reinforced by LiPuma (1993), who questions whether the concepts of 'habitus', 'capital', and 'field' are as universally and trans-culturally applicable as Bourdieu seems to imply.
is monopolised by the religious specialists, forcing the laity into the position of religious 'consumer'. The basis of religious power therefore lies in the fact that the laity recognise the authority of specialists of religious knowledge by simultaneously misrecognising the fact that this belief in their legitimacy is precisely what gives the religious specialist power.

In his analysis of the field of art, Bourdieu argues that 'works of art exist as symbolic objects only if they are known and recognised, that is, socially instituted as works of art and received by spectators capable of knowing and recognising them as such' (1993a, p. 37). For this reason he argues that 'the sociology of art and literature has to take as its object not only the material production but also the symbolic production of the work, i.e. the production of the value of the work or, which amounts to the same thing, of belief in the value of the work' (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 37).

Nowhere in any detail in his works, however, does Bourdieu examine the potential for science to be symbolically violent by monopolising 'legitimate naming'. Although Bourdieu (1994, p. 3) warns that social science is intimately tied up in the symbolic violence undertaken by the State because it often unquestioningly takes as granted the problems and perceptions imposed by the State, as well as relies on it for economic capital in the form of research grants, he does not in any detail examine how science itself can act as a form of symbolic violence by dismissing some thoughts or practices as 'unscientific'. This is surprising given the similarities between his understanding of how religion and art become symbolically violent, with what, it could be argued, are the bases of the power held by science in contemporary society. It is even more surprising given that Bourdieu himself recognises that the scientific field operates in many similar ways to the artistic
field, as both are based on the belief in the value of what is at stake within them (1981b, p. 275). And yet he undertakes no extensive analysis of this process in his works. To be truly reflexive, should not Bourdieu investigate whether the same 'awe', 'humility', and 'respect' he identifies (1991c, p. 53) in lower class people's attitudes towards art and 'legitimate culture' in museums, exists in the attitude of the 'laity' and general public towards science? Could it not also be argued that contemporary science, in a similar manner to religion, is based on the production of 'secret' and 'rare' knowledge by 'qualified' specialists? Is it not possible that the belief of the 'laity' in that knowledge and the power of the specialist to 'discover' it, makes science as equally 'misrecognised' and therefore equally symbolically violent, as religion?

If, as Wacquant states, the whole of Bourdieu's work may be interpreted as a: 'materialist anthropology of the specific contribution that various forms of symbolic violence make to the reproduction and transformation of structures of domination' (1992a, p. 14), we have to ask why such analysis has not been applied to science. Surely such an analysis would be necessary in order to ensure reflexivity. If 'it is the whole scholarly tradition of sociology that we must constantly question and methodically distrust' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 248), should we not also distrust the 'scholarly tradition' which asserts that sociology is a science and that science is intrinsically valuable? While understanding the political divisions within science, Bourdieu does not undertake such an examination of the potential for symbolic violence within science, and instead attempts to counter false scientific 'prophets' with a more 'scientific science':

If socially accredited scientficity is such an important objective, it is because, although truth has no intrinsic force, there is an intrinsic force of belief in truth, of belief which produces the appearance of truth. In the struggle between different representations, the representation socially recognised as scientific, that is to say as true, contains its own social force, and, in the case of the
social world, science gives those who hold it, or who appear to hold it, a monopoly of the legitimate viewpoint, of self-fulfilling prophecy (Bourdieu, 1988a, p. 28).

For this reason, Bourdieu believes that:

... perhaps the only function of sociology is to reveal, as much by its visible lacunae as through its achievements, the limits of knowledge of the social world and so to make more difficult all forms of prophetic discourse, starting, of course, with the propheticism that claims to be scientific (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 17).

Thus, rather than challenging the belief in science and its power, what he terms its 'intrinsic force', Bourdieu is attempting to 'beat' the 'prophets' at their own game. There is danger in this strategy, however, in that it does not reveal the ways in which science is symbolically violent. Such a strategy runs the risk of perpetuating the belief in the power of science rather than undermining it. Furthermore, such non-reflective faith in science means that Bourdieu cannot reflexively question the meaning and value of science, nor if it actually achieves all that he expects it to. I believe science is much more limited, especially in guiding moral and existential choices, than Bourdieu's work would have us believe. By promoting this belief in the power of science, and by correspondingly overlooking the potential for symbolic violence in science, I believe Bourdieu's work is not only limited in its reflexivity, it is itself potentially symbolically violent.⁶

**Economism**

A further criticism which has been raised against Bourdieu's science of practice by, among others, Lash (1993a) and Honneth (1986, p. 56), is that it 'economises' sociology. This

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⁶Although there are some similarities between Bourdieu's concern to undermine 'false scientific prophets' with Weber's concern over the rise of academic prophets (1991, p. 153), there are major differences between their positions in that Weber was carefully attempting to understand the context and limits of science in social life. This difference is vitally important in understanding the divergences between Weber's and Bourdieu's views on science, and shall be elaborated upon in a subsequent chapter.
claim is raised because, although Bourdieu sees economic practice as only one type of practice, all practices follow the basic logic of economics. According to this logic, the more rare an object, whether material or symbolic, the higher its value, and the greater the struggle between agents for its accumulation. Any social field thus has three elements:

1. the supply side, the producers of cultural goods;
2. the cultural goods, the products themselves;
3. the demand side, the consumers of the cultural goods.

According to this model, the symbolic/cultural goods are only likely to be consumed if they meet the demands of the market, that is, if they fit into the habitus of the consumers. There is thus an ‘elective affinity’ between the habitus of the consumer and the habitus of the producer which is shown in the successful mediation of the symbolic/cultural good. The habitus thus acts as a series of dispositions which produce certain actions, as well as schemes of perception which consume symbolic goods. This is shown, for example, in Bourdieu’s work on the field of cultural production, which examines the link between the habitus of the artist and that of the consumer produced by the similarity of the material and objective conditions of their lives.

In order to understand practice in its totality, therefore, Bourdieu argues that the dichotomy between economic and non-economic realms should be abandoned. Bourdieu’s science of practice thus attempts:

- to carry out in full what economism does only partially, and to extend economic calculation to *all* the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as *rare* and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 178).

Bourdieu (1990a, pp. 112-13) criticises what he describes as an ethnocentric view of contemporary economics and sociology that believes that the logics of economics have
only become important in Modernity. He argues that pre-capitalist practice always involved economic calculation, but that such calculation was not limited to the economic sphere. Symbolic interests and goods such as honour, information, and distinction, have always been subject to the logics of economics. Thus economic practice, as defined by modern economism, is only one part of a general theory of the economics of practice.

This model of the 'economy of practice' presents two main problems, however. The first of these problems, and one that separates his work on the cultural sphere from that of Weber, is, as LiPuma (1993) and Fowler (1994) have observed, such an abstract scientific model does not show the ways in which certain goods and objects become meaningful to agents.\(^7\) Within this scientific model, Bourdieu is not concerned with the content of the symbolic product, but simply the act of transmission. He is not concerned with the meaning of the product, but how it mediates two habitus. As Weber argued, however, such a neglect of content means that any general set of categories becomes vacuous and of little value. What is the use of an abstract science of practices if it cannot show us how agents gain meaning from certain objects?

No doubt Bourdieu's response to such accusations would be to point out that this criticism emerges when his work is viewed as an ontology, rather than an epistemology, that is, if it is abstracted and ahistoricised. He would presumably argue instead that 'meaning' is achieved when a form of 'capital' comes to be valued by an agent's habitus, and thus can only be examined at the empirical level. Bourdieu realises that the only way the

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\(^7\)Bridget Fowler makes this point with reference to the artistic field: 'there is a considerable danger that within this narrow account of the artistic habitus, the meaning of art to its producers risks being lost (1994, p. 152, italics added) . . .does his intrusive stress on the competitive arena impoverish the meaning of artists' strategies by reducing them too quickly to mere games of distinction, as I believe . . . Despite the sharpness of this insight, has not Bourdieu also lost a sense of 'ideal interests'?' (p. 145).
subjective and objective can be reunified is at the empirical level, which means including
the subjective meaning. In other words, his science of practices only makes sense as an
applied set of concepts, not as abstract ontology. This realisation is the source of his
constant concern to make sure his work is applied, not simply theorised. Bourdieu has
always argued that his work is not an ontology, but an epistemological framework for the
study of modern social life. He would therefore most likely reject criticisms that his work
is economistic because it is an exercise in constructing sociological concepts, not abstract
theory. My criticism is not so much in relation to this issue, although one may wonder
what is the point of creating an elaborate universalist framework in which habitus, capital,
and the like, interrelate, if meaning can only ever be examined at the subjective empirical
level. My primary concern, and criticism, lies with the ways in which subjective meaning
is perceived within this framework. This brings us to the second problem with Bourdieu's
model of the 'economy of practice'.

Although Bourdieu argues that the concepts of habitus and practical logic are
meant to overcome the conception of *Homo Economicus* as a conscious, rational subject,\(^8\)
by emphasising that practice is 'reasonable without being the product of a reasoned design,
still less of a rational calculation' (1990a, p. 50), these concepts do not completely
overcome the problem of economism in Bourdieu's work. This is primarily because there
are two main characteristics whereby *Homo Economicus*, the philosophical anthropology
at the heart of economism, can be identified as a species. One is that it is a conscious,
rational subject, which Bourdieu overcomes with his emphasis upon the 'unconscious'

\(^8\) As seen, for example, in the 'Rational Action Theory' proposed by Jon Elster (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 46-51).
logic found in the habitus. The other is that *Homo Economicus* is motivated, because of scarcity, towards constant acquisition. Bourdieu's 'economy of practice' does not address the latter, but instead seems to be based on it, a situation observed by Honneth:

> As his mode of argument indicates, Bourdieu is guided by utilitarian motifs in overcoming structuralism. He proceeds from the assumption that symbolic constructions, which the anthropologist focuses in order to study the social order of tribal societies, should also be conceived as social activities performed from the point of view of utility maximisation (1986, p. 56).

Such a conception, I believe, limits his view of social reality (and thus the applicability of his concepts) by limiting his view of human beings and their practice. This requires further elaboration.

**The Reductionism of a Science of Practices - *Homo Potestas***

As we have seen, Bourdieu argues that non-economic goods work through a logic of economy once they have come to be valued by an agent. Material goods are to some extent 'needed' biologically for human survival, but are obviously, as Bourdieu recognises, chosen through the mediation of various values and worldviews. Why, however, are symbolic goods needed and why do they become valued? According to Bourdieu's science of practice, it is mainly because they are rare, and therefore bring to those who monopolise and accumulate them, prestige, honour, distinction, and ultimately, power. The meaning of such objects is thus essentially political. Agents gain satisfaction from the triumph of accumulation. For Bourdieu, therefore, meaning is only ever the meaning of power, the enhancement of 'social being':

> Pascal spoke of 'the misery of man without God. One might posit rather the 'misery of man without mission or social consecration'. Indeed, without going so far as to say, with Durkheim, 'Society is God', I would say: God is never anything other than society. What is expected of God is only ever obtained from society, which alone has the power to justify you, to liberate you from facticity, contingency and absurdity ... but the competition for a social life that will be known and
recognised, which will free you from insignificance, is a struggle to the death for symbolic life and death (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 196).

Thus, despite his claims to the contrary, Bourdieu's work does by necessity assume an ontological position through a particular philosophical anthropology.

Bourdieu's philosophical anthropology sees the basic meaning of human life as the accumulation of various forms of symbolic capital. Within this ontology, agents engage in accumulation not to maximise their social profit, but their social being (Bourdieu, 1993c, p. 274). Although this is a 'historical ontology' (Bourdieu 1993c, p. 273), in that the object/capital sought and accumulated changes from society to society, epoch to epoch, it is an ontology which shapes the ways in which Bourdieu applies his concepts, and to what areas of social life he applies them. This restricts his analysis by delineating what he considers as social reality. It is an ontology which limits Bourdieu's view of human beings, their practice, and the social reality they are a part of. Within this ontology, humans take the form of *Homo Potestas* - beings constantly striving for power and authority.

The first problem with seeing this notion of 'capital-accumulation' as the basis of meaning and motive in social life, is the definition of 'value' as something which is 'rare'. Though it is true that both economic and symbolic goods have to be valued to be sought after, it does not logically follow that only 'rare' objects or states will be valued. For example, it is not clear that aspects of social life such as friendship, love, caring relations,

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9 See Dreyfus and Rabinow (1993) for a similar analysis of Bourdieu's understanding of what it means to be human.
or ethics, are 'rare' social objects in the sense that possession by some means that they are denied by others. It is clear, however, that they are valued by most social agents.

Bourdieu could respond to this criticism by arguing that love, compassion, and the like, are in fact 'symbolic capital'. After all, symbolic capital is capital not seen as such by agents:

... a capital (or power) becomes symbolic capital, that is, capital endowed with a specifically symbolic efficacy, only when it is misrecognised in its arbitrary truth as capital and recognised as legitimate and, on the other hand, that this act of (false) knowledge and recognition is an act of practical knowledge which in no way implies that the object known and recognised be posited as object (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 112).

Perhaps, then, what is necessary in order to see the 'truth' about friendship and compassion, is to break with the doxa of the social world, to employ a 'radical doubt', by seeing relations of care and friendship, not in their practical sense, but as 'objects' to be 'constructed' for analysis. It would then be possible to apply Bourdieu's concepts to them, and to recognise the misrecognition which masks them as a form of capital.

I am not convinced, however, that Bourdieu's ontology of *Homo Potestas* allows us to adequately examine such relationships, as I do believe that such relationships are solely about power and acquisition, although they obviously can be. The 'economy of love' can be about gain, possession and accumulation, but unlike other economies it is also about giving. Love is as much about giving power as much as it is about seizing it. Bourdieu's understanding of human beings does not account for the self-sacrifice or the meaning involved in caring and 'brotherly' human relations. For this reason, if

Scientific theory ... is a temporary construct which takes shape for and by empirical work ..[which] has more to gain by confronting new objects than by engaging in theoretical polemics that do little more than fuel a perpetual, self-sustaining, and too often vacuous metadiscourse .... [whose] construction and use emerged in the practicalities of the research enterprise, and it is in this context that they must be evaluated' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 161),
then I believe Bourdieu's concepts would be of little value in analysing these relations and practices.

Secondly, I believe there are some ethical concerns over analysing these sort of relations in terms of capital and power. Why should it done? Will it improve such relations or merely open them up to exploitation? It is difficult to imagine the former, but easy to imagine such an analysis increasing cynicism and manipulation in such relationships. Ethical questions as to the consequences of what is constructed as an object of analysis must therefore be asked before such analysis occurs, and the construction of caring relations as forms of capital is an excellent example of why this is the case.

A second problem with Bourdieu's reduction of human beings to *Homo Potestas* is that symbolic and material objects can be valued for reasons other than scarcity. It is possible, for example, that they can be valued because they make sense of life, alleviate suffering, or make life worthwhile. Though it is certainly the case that society can act as God, it is not necessarily the case that the struggle for social being, for 'symbolic life and death', is the only way in which society provides meaning. Is the accumulation of goods/capitals, both material and symbolic, really all there is to being human? Is it all that provides meaning to human life? I would argue that relations of care or giving (what, as we shall soon see, Weber terms 'brotherliness'), are also extremely important in making life meaningful. Not only does Bourdieu not seem to deem as important the fact that society provides such relations, his ontology excludes them as possibilities.

Thirdly, the emphasis on the enhancement of social being as the basis of practice does not take into account a concern with Being itself. This is seen most clearly in
Bourdieu's near reduction of religion to struggles over social enhancement made possible by the accumulation of religious capital. For Bourdieu,

If there are social functions of religion and, consequently, if religion is amenable to sociological analysis, it is because laypeople do not - or not only - expect from it justifications for existence capable of freeing them from the existential anguish of contingency and dereliction or even biological misery, sickness, suffering, or death, but also and above all justifications for existing in a determinate social position (1991h, p. 16, italics added).

Thus, the primary function that Bourdieu apparently attributes to religion is social legitimation. After all, 'theodicies are always sociodicies' (Bourdieu, 1991h, p. 16). There is no recognition in this view of Homo Potestas Theologica of the religious subject's concern with Being and existence which in many cases, especially in forms of mysticism, explicitly led away from social life. As we saw in Weber's work on India, for example, when the mystic sought the intensity of contemplative mediation, it was not to maximise social being, but to experience the extraordinariness of 'rare' states of being.

**Conclusion**

The problems of Bourdieu's science of practice which I have just outlined, are not arbitrary ones, or the product of his idiosyncratic views of the world (such an explanation would involve the subjectivism that neither Bourdieu or Weber embrace). These problems are, I argue, the product of Bourdieu's internalisation of the logics of the contemporary Western intellectual sphere, and are thus part of a much broader phenomenon. These logics promote a tension between epistemological reflexivity and moral reflexivity, and it will be argued in the following chapters that it is this tension which limits the reflexivity of Bourdieu's science of practice, producing the problems outlined above. In order to understand how and why this is the case, it is necessary to return to Weber's works on
religious rationalisation, and the paradoxical outcomes this rationalisation produced for Western history.
Paradoxes of Rationalisation: the Hoplite and the Puritan

Introduction

The limitations to reflexivity found in Bourdieu's science of practices, as expressed through the criticisms outlined in the previous chapter, are to be attributed, I believe, to the tension in his work which exists between moral reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity. This tension exists due to Bourdieu's acceptance of the values and presuppositions which lie at the heart of the modern intellectual life-sphere of Western societies. These values and presuppositions shape his views of social reality, and are the basis of his philosophical anthropology, *Homo Potestas*.

In this chapter, I show how Weber's work on religious rationalisation provides a means of reflexively understanding these values and presuppositions, their origins, nature, and consequences. Weber's empirical work is able to do this because, despite its similarities to Bourdieu's work, it is in fact engaged in something more than the latter - a morally reflexive understanding of the **meaning** and **value** of modern Western culture, life-conduct, and science. It does this by looking at areas of social life neglected by Bourdieu, including the ways in which worldviews have logical consequences for thought and life-conduct, the means whereby human beings attempt to ethically rationalise suffering and death by making life meaningful through value-systems, and the paradoxical and self-defeating outcomes which emerge from such ethically rational meaning-
structures. This chapter details how these areas were viewed by Weber, and how he understood them in the context of Western cultural history. It therefore looks at the paradoxes of rationalisation found in the ancient Graeco-Roman world, and the paradoxes that emerged from Western religious intellectualisation undertaken by Christianity. By so doing, this chapter indicates the ways in which the values and presuppositions of the modern Western intellectual life-sphere were born. It also examines the effects of these values on contemporary intellectual practice, including that of Bourdieu.

**Inner Logics and Rationalisation**

As we have seen, Weber was very much aware that 'life-conduct', or 'practice' as Bourdieu terms it, predisposes agents to value certain things as well as shape their views of reality. He was aware that such life-conduct was determined by social position and the material conditions of life. What he placed fundamental importance on, however, in order to contrast his work from a crude form of materialism, was that such life-conduct was also determined by the presuppositions and inner logic of worldviews. For Weber, although the social position the agent occupies will shape their interpretation of a worldview, the content of a worldview and its effects on conduct are important because they will shape conceptions and logics differently to the contents of an alternative worldview. Weber therefore detailed in his empirical works the ways in which ontological presuppositions, once grounded in socio-economic contexts, have logical effects on practice and life-conduct, and thus social transformation and/or reproduction. This should not be seen as a form of subjectivism, as Bourdieu mistakenly assumes, but as a form of 'objective idealism'. For Weber, worldviews and ideas have just as much an objective existence
which shapes the thoughts and actions of agents as material conditions. They must therefore be studied in tandem with material conditions, not as a 'reflection' of them, but as an equally powerful causal factor in social life.

A clear example of this objective idealism is found in 'Ancient Judaism'. The basic presupposition of the Judaic worldview, that there existed a single omnipotent God who had placed ethical demands on His chosen people through a Berith, shaped and directed Judaic thought and action. The political and military events that befell Israel were interpreted through this presupposition as a sign of the ethical infidelity of the Hebrews towards Yahwe. This was a logical understanding of the events and nature of the cosmos, as no other explanation of the fall of the powerful Israelite Confederacy, except that it had been corrupted by 'impure' foreign elements such as Ba' al worship and Egyptian bureaucracy, seemed viable. The effects of such a worldview, along with material and contingent factors of course, were to shape Judaic ethics and life-conduct in particular directions. The Hebrews adopted strict ideas of ethical behaviour, ritual observance, and a voluntary segregation from other peoples as part of an in-group/out-group mentality.

Weber's essays on Protestantism also reveal the ways in which ideas and their autonomous logics can operate as efficacious historical forces. In Weber's view, neither was capitalism caused by, nor did it cause, the Protestant worldview. Yet this worldview profoundly shaped the disposition and life-conduct of particular social groups whose interests, both material and ideal, it met. For example, the Puritan's conception of God affected the logical development of their ideas on salvation and religious activity. Likewise, the belief that the world was creatural and needed to be transformed had major
effects on life-conduct. Weber's work on ascetic Protestantism is hence an empirical analysis of the way in which objective ideational structures produced by ontological logics are internalised by agents, thereby shaping their disposition and life-conduct.

Yet the essays on Protestantism also reveal that this internalization is not the result of a simple 'injection' of ideas into the minds and bodies of agents. As Bourdieu demonstrates in his critique of the abstraction found in objectivism, Weber's work on Puritanism shows the relationship between practical agents and intellectuals, and how the interests produced through practice affect the interpretation of ideas. It shows that the ideas of theologians or intellectuals are not accepted by followers in their entirety, but are mediated and shaped by practice and its needs. Thus, for example, Weber (1985, p. 220) made it clear that the religious system developed by Calvin was different, but not separate, from the practical life-conduct of his followers.

A further example of Weber's interest in the role of the contents of worldviews in cultural history is found in his work on China. He traced in this work, to borrow terms from Bourdieu, the development of the Chinese 'symbolic system' (worldview) and the dominance over it of those rich in 'cultural capital' (the Confucian literati). He analysed the material, economic, and contingent factors which were conducive to this dominance. He examined how the literati, through its ontological presuppositions, are able to establish an incredibly powerful and stable doxic system. He showed that by adopting the ontology of the Tao, not as a 'reflection' of material circumstances, but through a complex 'elective affinity', Confucianism was able to provide a coherent explanation of the world. Although there remained a heterodoxy - Taoism - with which to compete, it never challenged the
basic Confucian conception of the world, the 'magical garden'. In this sense, the stability of Confucian China was underlain by its rationally consistent worldview which excluded to a great degree the questioning of its own doxa, or more precisely, excluded the development of a social strata with a material or ideal interest in doing so. Without the existence, for political and cultural reasons, of a priesthood or group of prophets that could challenge the Confucian literati, and the belief-system it developed, the religious and political spheres operated as one in China. Weber's work on China therefore provides a clear example of how the different rational orientation of intellectuals, based on their social position and practice, has a profound influence on the direction of cultural rationalisation within a society, and thus on life-conduct.

All of the above examples make it clear that Weber was fascinated with the ways in which ontological presuppositions and worldviews are constructed by, as well as construct, the social world, through the life-conduct of agents. Bourdieu, given the following comment, would seem to agree with Weber on the importance of worldviews:

Sociology has to include a sociology of the perception of the social world, that is, a sociology of the construction of worldviews which themselves contribute to the construction of this world (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 130).

Yet on inspection of his work, there is in fact little analysis of the contents of belief-systems and how they shape the social order. In neither his work on education, nor the intellectual sphere, nor the field of cultural production, does Bourdieu examine the development and logical consequences of worldviews by comparing them with alternative belief-structures. There are a number of possible reasons for this. Firstly, Bourdieu's desire to create a universally applicable and all-encompassing set of interrelated concepts in his methodological writings excludes the possibility of dealing with detailed and specific
worldviews. Secondly, and more importantly, Bourdieu is concerned in his empirical works to point out the material basis of ideas. He does this by emphasising that ideas only exist if they fit into the habitus of an audience, and that any habitus is formed by internalising material conditions of existence. This is seen most clearly in his work on religion, and his criticism of Weber's alleged subjectivism and idealism (Bourdieu, 1987a, 1991h). As I have shown, however, Weber was very much aware that religious ideas must have an 'elective affinity' with the experiences of their addressees, just as he was aware that material conditions are an incredibly influential part of agents' experiences. He did not believe, however, that material conditions were the ultimate basis of all experience, arguing instead that material conditions were just as much interpreted through ideational structures as they were shaped by them. By seeing the habitus as the product of objective material conditions, and as the basis of all interpretations and experience, Bourdieu's work stresses the material bases of ideas often at the expense of an analysis of the contents and logics of ideas. This, I believe, profoundly limits his understanding of cultural life because it forecloses the possibility of examining the rationalisation of ideas, and the effects on life-conduct and thought of such rationalisation.
Human Beings as Morally Reflexive

The origin of worldviews and their logical presuppositions and contents could be traced, according to Weber, to two main causes. Firstly, like Bourdieu, Weber was aware that 'symbolic systems' were often set up for reasons of power, legitimation, and social maintenance. As I have mentioned previously, Weber was very much aware of the 'symbolically violent' nature and origin of many worldviews.

Yet there was another reason for the existence of worldviews which Weber was much more concerned with, and which he seems to have placed greater emphasis upon. This was the ability and desire of human beings in all societies and at all times to create a meaningful framework within which to make sense of suffering, death, and thus life. As Brubaker states, 'at the heart of Weber's philosophical anthropology is the concept of meaning' (1984, p. 92). For Weber, worldviews and symbolic systems were ultimately systems of meaning. They were expressions of the ideal interests of humans to provide a meaningful framework within which to live. For Weber, humans are morally reflexive beings which, through what he terms 'ethical rationalism', attempt to understand the cosmic order in its totality as a meaningful order by making sense of the 'senseless', that is, death and suffering (Weber, 1991, p. 281). This is done through the construction of 'values', areas of life which are imbued as meaningful and significant through ideas and belief-systems. An example of such a value could be power and legitimation which certainly provide a meaningful life, but they were not the only forms of meaning Weber was concerned with. Weber saw more to human beings than Homo Potestas and more to human culture than 'distinction'.
This ethical rationalism was the basis of religious rationalisation - the movement from magical ritualism to ethical purity. Religious and ethical rationalisation maintained this problem of suffering at its core. It was the attempt at 'knowing' about 'suffering' but also attempted to unite them in practice.

In 'Ancient Judaism', for example, Weber makes it clear that the concern of religious intellectuals and laymen alike was with why Yahwe had forsaken the Hebrews. This abandonment was seen as the source of national and individual suffering, and thought and action were redirected away from the glorification of the Davidic monarchy towards an ethical life in accordance with the will of Yahwe. The Hebrews were attempting to fathom the mystery of why their existence had become wretched and their nation cast down from the heights of political power. Morally reflecting on the meaning of their situation, they were able to explain it within the logics of their worldview as based on the presupposition of the Berith. They developed an ethically rational framework in the Torah and Decalogue which made sense of the suffering and misfortune their nation was experiencing, and offered an ethical means of overcoming this suffering. The elaborations of the Judaic worldview were therefore connected to the attempt to gain a meaningful understanding of existence and the suffering that accompanied it. The prophecies and promises extolled by the prophets could only make sense in relation to the values established by this Judaic worldview, that of peace and prosperity - 'when swords become ploughshares'. In this way, the values which provided a meaning to Judaic life and which explained the meaning of suffering and death were at the centre of religious rationalisation within Judaism.
Weber's work on Protestantism also examined the operation and effects of ethical rationalism and the ways in which attempts to understand the meaning of suffering and death shape human values. The overwhelming desire for salvation from evil, Hell, and the uncertainty of one's ultimate fate, drove the Puritans to value certain conduct and discipline as the means to making sense of the afflictions of existence. Facing an ontology of predestination and the state of nature, only particular forms of behavior made sense of the senseless, and thus became significant to the Puritans. Furthermore, these works on ascetic Protestantism clearly demonstrate the way in which values can come into conflict with one another. Thus, for example, the methodical, disciplined conduct valued by the Puritan as a means to an end - salvation - increasingly became valued as an end in itself in early modern Europe, helping to establish the 'iron cage' of capitalism and new problems for meaning within Modernity. Such an outcome Weber saw as a sublime example of the paradoxes of rationalisation.

**Paradoxes of Rationalisation**

The above examples of the ways in which Weber saw humans as morally reflexive and ethically rational beings are clear indications that Weber's philosophical anthropology diverges from that of Bourdieu. This philosophical anthropology should be seen in relation to Weber's emphasis on the internal logics of worldviews, for together these factors produce (along with other factors of course) rationalisation processes containing paradoxical and self-defeating outcomes.\(^1\) The identification and explanation of such

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\(^1\) For one of the earliest investigations of these paradoxes, see Roth and Schluchter (1979).
processes are a hallmark of Weber's work, and are perhaps where the most fruitful and profound divergence of his work from that of Bourdieu lies. It is also within such processes that an explanation can be found as to why a tension exists between moral and epistemological reflexivity in Bourdieu's work, and in the modern intellectual sphere generally.

One such process of rationalisation, that begun in ancient Judaism and culminating in Puritanism, was marked by Weber for special treatment, for 'in the Occident the development of theology has had by far the greatest historical significance' (Weber, 1991, p. 153). Weber believed that this religious intellectualisation established a unique relationship between human beings and the world, in both its 'external', material form, and its 'internal', spiritual form. This relation was one of world-mastery and transformation, and it had a number of paradoxical effects. These effects included the dominance of science, the 'disenchantment' of the world, and the marginalisation of an ethic of brotherly love. All of these effects profoundly influence, albeit unconsciously, Bourdieu's science of practice. Before examining these effects, however, I want to turn to a work of Weber's which has been largely neglected in debates on rationalisation and its paradoxes. This work is the 'Agrarian Sociology of the Ancient Civilisations'.

**Weber on Antiquity: Military Rationalisation**

Of all his systematic works on the world's major civilisations, Weber's 'Agrarian Sociology of the Ancient Civilisations' has undoubtedly received the least treatment.\(^2\) Neither

\(^2\)This work is actually the combination of two pieces by Weber: 'Die sozialen Grunde des Untergangs der antiken Kultur', first published in 1896, and 'Agrarverhältnisse im Altertum', first published in 1909.
sociologists nor historians of Antiquity have engaged with it in any comprehensive manner. This is surprising, given that in 1891, Theodor Mommsen, whose work remains one of the foremost investigations of Antiquity, allegedly said after heated debate with a young Max Weber, 'when this burden I carry grows heavy for these weary shoulders, I know no one more capable to carry my spear, than the highly esteemed Max Weber'. Despite Mommsen's view of Weber as his 'natural successor', his work on Antiquity has largely been neglected due, in part, to the ways in which this work has been perceived.

While 'Agrarian Sociology' has usually been taken as an analysis of why rational capitalism did not develop in Antiquity, it is in fact, I believe, part of the wider examination by Weber of the different processes of rationalisation that have occurred in history, and the effects that these processes have had on different societies' cultural histories. The worldview created by Confucianism in Weber's work on Chinese civilisation, and the logics of the Hindu worldview in his work on India, show that different civilisations rationalise life-conduct and the relationship between agents and structures differently, and that this fact affects their historical development. In a similar manner, Weber's concern in 'Agrarian Sociology' is with the ways in which the military worldview of polis-based Graeco-Roman civilisation affected its historical and cultural development. This work shows that the rationalisation of Graeco-Roman culture and life-conduct was not religious in nature and orientation, but was, in fact, a process of military rationalisation. The great paradox of Antiquity with which Weber grappled in the

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3 For an analysis of the relationship between Mommsen and Weber, and how the former affected Weber's writings on Antiquity, see Mueller (1986).
'Agrarian Sociology' was with the ways in which the polis carried within its economic, political, and socio-cultural framework, the seeds of its own destruction.

**Antiquity, Capitalism, and the Political Sphere**

The 'Agrarian Sociology of the Ancient Civilisations' has been seen by some as 'an overgrown encyclopedic entry' (Hirst, 1976, p. 409) and by others, such as Kasler (1988), Parkin (1982), and Andreski (1983), as simply another comparative analysis of the world's civilisations undertaken by Weber in order to show why 'rational capitalism' emerged in modern Europe and not other times or places.⁴

Ancient historians, most notably Moses Finley (1977, 1985) and Arnaldo Momigliano (1982), have scrutinised 'Agrarian Sociology' for details on ancient capitalism and the ancient city. Their analyses have concentrated on the 'consumer city', the socio-economic repercussions of slavery, and the role of the state bureaucracy in Antiquity.

The basic point of agreement between all these commentators is that Weber's main theme in this work is why Antiquity was dominated by booty capitalism aimed at luxurious consumption, rather than rational modern capitalism aimed at production, and why even this 'primitive' capitalism was eventually extinguished with the establishment of the bureaucracy of the Later Roman Empire. Finley best sums up this position:

> The Pax Romana put an end to extensive territorial expansion and to the accumulation of booty, including vast quantities of human booty.... The decisive blow fell in the political sphere: the absolute monarchy replaced city administration by the dynastic professional army and bureaucracy, ending in a liturgy state (Finley, 1977, p. 321).

⁴John Love (1986) has shown how it is the most comprehensive and detailed analysis of political or 'booty' capitalism undertaken by Weber.
Though it is certainly correct that Weber saw the political sphere as dominant in Graeco-Roman society, the argument by Finley and others that the failure of rational capitalism to emerge in Antiquity is the central theme of the 'Agrarian Sociology' is ultimately superficial. The question left begging in this approach, a question which interested Weber but not these secondary commentators, is why the political sphere remained dominant.

Guy Oakes (1977b) and Guenther Roth (1977) have challenged the view that Weber's work on Antiquity is part of the 'Weber Thesis', but unfortunately neither have shown how 'Agrarian Sociology' fits into Weber's wider concerns. I believe this can be done, and that similarly, an explanation of why the political sphere remained dominant can be found, by examining the process of military rationalisation of Graeco-Roman culture outlined by Weber in this work. This military rationalisation was embedded in the material and ideational structures of the polis, the foundation of that culture.

Material Structure of the Polis

Weber believed that the Graeco-Roman polis was a unique historical entity (1988, pp. 337-47). He suggests that this was the case for three main reasons: firstly, it was founded on citizens, not subjects and thus a community of citizens first and foremost;  

5 Though agreeing that the polis was unique, Finley has questioned Weber's analysis of the polis (1985, pp. 88-103). Finley questions Weber's statements in 'Economy and Society' that domination in the polis was based on charisma. The problem with Finley's analysis of Weber's analysis of the polis is that it relies solely on 'Economy and Society', and does not take into account 'Agrarian Sociology'. This provides Finley with only a limited view of Weber's understanding of the polis, a view which misses the focus on militarisation of the polis involved in his understanding.

6 This important point as been reiterated by contemporary ancient historians, such as Ian Morris, who writes: the polis was a community of citizens, not a mass of subjects under a differentiated elite' (Morris, 1992, p. 48).
secondly, its social order was defined not so much by economic ties, but by military ties, since its main producers owned the economic means of production as well as the military means of warfare; and finally, relating to the first two points, the polis was essentially a military community, giving birth to a distinct society and a distinct worldview. Weber’s ideal-typical polis was therefore defined by one essential attribute - its military character. As he puts it:

in Antiquity, everything about a polis, from its foundation onwards, was motivated by political and military considerations; the development of every polis depended on military events and this factor shaped ancient capitalism (1988, p. 358).

As we have seen previously, rationalisation processes are directed towards particular values and ends. Weber makes it clear that the dominant value/end towards which everything in the polis was rationalised was military efficiency. The rationalisation of the social organisation and culture of the polis towards increasing military efficiency, meant, the militarisation of all spheres of life:

Militarism affected all aspects of the polis, and indeed military service and citizenship were inextricably linked. Trade monopolies, mortgage rates, and - above all - land ownership, depended on military victories. Each city was in a state of war with all other states. The polis of the classical period was the most fully developed military organisation produced by Antiquity. It was essentially formed for military purposes, whereas the great majority of medieval cities were founded for economic reasons (Weber, 1988, p. 346).

One reason why this value of military efficiency came to dominate polis life was the obvious material benefits. An efficient military brought conquests of land, booty, and slaves. Primarily, however, this value was imposed by external circumstances. The material reality of Graeco-Roman civilisation was one of chronic warfare. There existed an environment of constant military struggle over land, booty, and political independence. This was mainly the result of the geographical conditions of Greece and Italy. Their mountainous and rugged terrain promoted the development of small, isolated city-states
which could be easily fortified and defended. This made political unification nearly impossible and the attempts by different city-states to achieve such a unity under their hegemony led to a constant state of war between the poleis. Thus, 'the main reason for the formation of the polis, and the main significance of synoecism in Antiquity was that it created an army suited for the chronic warfare henceforth deemed normal by international law' (Weber, 1988, p. 163).

The need for military efficiency consolidated the warrior class as the rulers of the polis. What was unique about the Graeco-Roman polis, however, was that this ruling class was not a feudal aristocracy based on cavalry, but was instead a middle strata of heavily armoured infantrymen called hoplites, whose ranks were made up of yeoman farmers. This social fact profoundly affected the cultural history and rationalisation of the polis.

The main reasons why a mounted cavalry did not come to dominate Graeco-Roman culture as was usually the case in military societies, were, Weber suggests, geographical and technological. The mountainous and rugged geography of Greece and Rome negated the effectiveness of chariots and cavalry, the traditional arm of the aristocratic warrior. It therefore promoted the emergence of the hoplite footsoldier (Weber, 1988, p. 161).

Furthermore, the introduction of iron weapons caused corresponding changes in military organisation. Iron was much stronger, but also much cheaper than bronze. This meant arming oneself became cheaper, and thus warfare was not the preserve of the aristocrats. Thus,

The development of outlets for cash crops along with fundamental changes in military technology caused an expansion in the class of landowners with economic resources sufficient for them to
purchase hoplite armour and weapons. Because of the constant danger from abroad the state was forced to call upon this class for military service (Weber, 1988, p. 164).

The environment of chronic warfare between city-states, added to geographical and technological factors, brought about the social dominance of the hoplite footsoldier. The material interests of the hoplite were therefore military survival and conquest (with all the booty and material benefits it brought).

This dominance of the hoplite also affected the development of Graeco-Roman warfare. As the conditions of Greek geography negated cavalry, and the weight of iron discouraged the use of long distance weaponry (as used in the Near East) in favour of close formation combat, a new means of organising armies was rationally developed (Weber, 1988, p. 161). This was the hoplite phalanx, a disciplined mass of soldiers fighting in close combat. This development, along with the fact that iron weapons were cheap, meant that the emphasis was on mobilising as many men as possible to increase the mass of the phalanx. The result was a drastic increase in the number of soldiers available to a city-state (as most of the population were yeoman farmers). Since enrolment in the army meant citizenship, this growth in the size of the army meant a corresponding increase in the size of the citizen population.

Landed wealth (the ability to sell surplus and to buy armour and weapons) thus became the basis for being a hoplite and receiving citizenship. Along with military power came political power. The threat of military extinction (the driving material interest behind the polis) forced every qualified man available to be mobilised into the army. The polis became a society of disciplined footsoldiers, citizens and warriors merged into one:

Political power necessarily passed to this [hoplite] class, and therewith started to emerge that purely secular civilisation which characterised Greek and Roman society, as well as ancient capitalist development (Weber, 1988, p. 158).
The history of Ancient Greece was determined by the phalanx. The invasion of the Persians, and the hegemonies of Sparta and Thebes, rested and fell on this military organisation. Even Athens, though its position was based on naval power, saw the hoplite as its ideal citizen and saviour (Weber, 1988, pp. 182-83). This is clearly seen in the epitaphios of Pericles during the Peloponnesian War, as Plato makes clear in his 'Menexenus'.

In Italy, the history of the city-state of Rome was also determined by the phalanx. Rome, also based on a hoplite yeomanry, had one notable difference to its Greek counterparts:

In general it resembled similar Greek cities in its basic military and political institutions, the main difference being that at Rome hoplite discipline was maintained with extraordinary vigour (Weber, 1988, p. 262).

Rome's expansion into the mountain regions of the Volscians and Samnians made cavalry useless, and so disciplined infantry tactics based on the hoplite were introduced. As in Greece, with the importance of the hoplite phalanx came the need for as many men as possible to be economically able to equip themselves for war (Weber, 1988, p. 228).

This brought a whole new power balance into the state. The Comitia Centuriata (the assembly based on military divisions) became the most powerful body in the state. The plebeian victory in the Struggle of the Orders was a result of the fundamental importance of the peasant hoplite in the Samnian Wars. The plebeians were able to withdraw from the army en masse and refuse to fight unless the patricians would grant them political rights. Military necessity bred political changes: 'it was as members of the
hoplite army that the plebeians became more and more indispensable to the state's military system and gained corresponding privileges' (Weber, 1988, p. 264).

Paradoxically however, the land won by the hoplite soldiers ruined them, but enriched the nobility who bought up the Ager Publicus (state land) and used slaves from the wars to establish villa plantations. As the yeoman farmers went to war, their farms were left unattended and soon fell into disrepair, impoverishing their owners. The result was a decline in the numbers of yeoman, and thus a decline in the number of self-equipped hoplites:

It was becoming apparent that lengthy wars could not be waged with a self-equipped citizen army, and now this became even more difficult because the increasing intensity of cultivation meant, as always, that the yeoman could not leave his farm without suffering serious economic losses (Weber, 1988, p. 319).

This decline in the yeomanry and in the size of the army brought a crisis to the Roman state. The result was the 104 BC reforms undertaken by Marius to develop a more efficient army. The new army was recruited from the homeless proletariat and was equipped by the state. Thus a professional army replaced the self-equipped citizen-farmer: 'now it was the veteran, not the citizen, who had a claim on land redistribution' (Weber, 1988, p. 322).

The Roman dominions had become too vast to be controlled by a citizen militia and new material conditions brought about new rationalisation processes. The material interest of the Roman polis now switched from conquering a vast empire to maintaining a vast empire:

A dynastic professional army with a dynastic professional bureaucracy took the place once occupied by the hoplite and the polis administrations, establishing a system modelled on that of the Ptolemaic monarchy, for polis institutions were completely inadequate for the problems of an empire (Weber, 1988, p. 361).
As the military success of any polis brought into being an empire, new problems of administration had to be rationally addressed. When a new foreign military threat emerged (as the German tribes did in the case of Rome), it was imperative to co-ordinate resources in a rational way. Diocletian thus re-organised the Roman state into a bureaucratic liturgic state in order to carry out such a co-ordination. This centralised state system controlled the administration of the empire, the military power of the empire, and eventually, the economy. As a result, this centralisation strangled the development of booty capitalism. It is therefore with this process of military rationalisation that Weber pinpointed the reasons why the political sphere extinguished political capitalism. This analysis stands in contrast to the reading of Weber's work on Antiquity offered by Finley.

The paradoxical result of this process of military rationalisation was that the material drive of the polis - military survival and conquest - helped transform the polis into its antithesis - a bureaucratic monarchy.

The monarchical state of Antiquity was or became a bureaucratic state....This bureaucracy, along with theocracy, throttled the free polis in the Ancient Near East and the same happened in the Later Roman Empire (Weber, 1988, p. 346).

Essentially, the political sphere, while maintaining its cultural dominance, was internally transformed, moving from a concern with military efficiency to a concern with bureaucratic efficiency. This change in values was the logical outcome of successful military rationalisation.7

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7Ian Morris supports Weber's view that the state only gradually increased its control over the political sphere and from there, the rest of society. Like Weber, he argues that it was not until the Hellenistic period that the state came to dominate the polis (1992, p. 49). Yet Morris fails to show why this was the case, overlooking the logics of military rationalisation and how the state increased its power with the successful military expansion of the polis.
The result of this was that the hoplite lost his status as a citizen of the polis, becoming instead a subject of the empire, and his material interests were no longer met through conquest and military activity, but through welfare supplied by the bureaucracy:

When the bureaucratic state and then the Empire invaded the sphere of civic freedoms and the polis citizen was transformed into a subject, then the worker demanded his customary "daily bread" when he found it reduced, and the tenant complained of his landlord's exactions, and all joined in complaining against the burdens imposed by taxes and publicans (Weber, 1988, p. 258).

Ideal Interests and the Graeco-Roman Worldview

Military rationalisation not only had material effects on the hoplite. It also changed the way he met his ideal interest of a meaningful life. Weber was acutely aware that the military nature of the polis met the ideal interest of the hoplite an entirely secular way - through warfare.

Weber noted that warfare provides a meaningful life primarily in two ways, namely, it creates a form of 'brotherliness', and it allows the soldier to face death with the belief that this death has a purpose.

By the term 'brotherliness', Weber referred to the process whereby '...war creates a pathos and a sentiment of community ... [and] thereby makes for an unconditionally devoted and sacrificial community amongst the combatants and releases an active mass compassion and love for those who are in need' (Weber, 1991, p. 335). Thus warfare and the military worldview associated with it, provide a sense of comradery and brotherliness, which is devoid of religious content. This lack of religiosity is vital. It is not through a religious ethic, or divine commandment to love thy neighbour that this warrior
brotherliness emerges, but through the actual experience of seeing another suffer in warfare. A soldier relies on his 'brother in arms', just as he is aware that they rely on him.

For Weber, this brotherliness was enhanced by the nature of phalanx fighting. A hoplite held his body-length shield in his left hand, and his spear in his right. This meant that his right side and rear were unprotected. It was thus vital that a hoplite (trapped with limited vision in a helmet and restricted by heavy body armour) knew that his right side and rear were protected from the enemy by his fellow hoplites to his right and rear. Weber argues that this mutual dependency in phalanx battle bred a spirit of 'warrior communism' militarily, politically, and culturally. As Weber (1988, p. 167) shows with his examination of Sparta, it was thus the very nature of hoplite fighting itself which bred the spirit of solidarity among its warriors.

The other primary component of the meaning found in warfare which Weber examines, stems from the soldiers' belief that he is dying for something:

Moreover, war does something to the warrior which, in its concrete meaning, is unique: it makes him experience a consecrated meaning of death which is characteristic only of death in war....Death on the field of battle differs from the death that is only man's common lot...Death on the field of battle differs from this merely unavoidable dying in that in war, and in this massiveness only in war, the individual can believe that he knows he is dying "for" something (Weber, 1991, p. 335).

In this way, warfare provides a meaning to life, and thus a form of salvation, albeit secular. The hoplite gains meaning from warfare itself, and thus the ideal interest of understanding the purpose of life and death is met in war. The need for organised or theocratic religion diminishes in relation to this. It is primarily for this reason, Weber believed, that the secular character of Greek and Roman civilisation emerged out of the conditions of the polis (1988, p. 185). Gaining meaning from war in a secular sense
denied a seedbed for the theocratic religious worldview. Therefore, military rationalisation replaced religious rationalisation:

The explanation is that these phenomena were the results of the political subjugation of the priesthood by the military power of the aristocratic clans and then of the citizens of the polis, with their entirely secular orientations (Weber, 1988, p. 187).

In this way, the political sphere dominated and prevented the emergence of an autonomous religious sphere. The reason for this was that Graeco-Roman culture, concerned with the practicalities of military life, remained this-worldly in orientation.\(^8\)

The military successes of the hoplite which allowed the establishment of an empire, however, eventually denied him the secular means of meeting his ideal interests. Replaced by a professional army aimed at maintaining an empire, not conquering one, and thus reduced from the status of citizen to that of subject, the hoplite no longer fought in battles, and thus lost the comradery and meaningfulness of death in battle which came with this. Whereas the hoplite gained a meaning in warfare from a brotherly love for his comrades, and from the feeling of dying for a cause, he lost this when he was reduced from citizen-soldier to a dependent on the state. Paradoxically, the success of the hoplite in achieving his material interests (military conquest) eventually came to engulf the attainment of his ideal interests - a meaningful life through warfare.

\(^8\) Joseph Bryant (1986) has used Weber's analysis to investigate the uniqueness of the absence of an organised theocracy in Graeco-Roman society. He shows that the 'civic religion of the Greeks', as Bryant terms it, was run by the political functionaries of the polis. The main aim of this, he argues, was to avert this-worldly problems by appeasing the gods. The Greek religious tradition (as represented by the aristocratic Homeric poems, and the peasant-orientated works of Hesiod), was aimed at meeting utilitarian practical problems and lacked a drive for understanding a coherent, meaningful cosmos. Bryant's work is a ground-breaking essay and reinforces Weber's view that the religious sphere was controlled by the political sphere, and thus militarism. It does not, however, adequately explain why and how this secular rationalism spread across the Greek world. In other words, it fails to see that the lack of religious rationalisation in Graeco-Roman culture was a product of the larger process of military rationalisation which occurred in the ancient polis. The main reason for this failure is that Bryant draws only on Weber's writings on religion, thus overlooking the thesis of 'Agrarian Sociology'. 
Weber notes that, with the triumph of the 'world-monarchical bureaucracy' over the polis under the Roman Empire, the basis for secularised salvation within Graeco-Roman culture was destroyed (1988, pp. 258-59). The lack of freedom and meaning under the bureaucratic empire increasingly produced a tension with the world, pushing the search for meaning in an other-worldly direction. It provided, in other words, the basis for an ethical rejection of this world, and thus the basis for the emergence of an autonomous religious sphere. This autonomy was achieved with the establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Later Roman Empire.

Conclusion: The Paradoxes of Military Rationalisation

Weber's work on Antiquity in 'Agrarian Sociology of the Ancient Civilisations' contains an understanding of the complex interrelation of material and ideational forces at work in producing the cultural rationalisation of Graeco-Roman society. As in his works on religion, material existence interacts with ideal and material interests to form a certain worldview which contains its own internal logic. Rationalisation occurs as the logics of this worldview are pursued, in accordance with material and ideal interests. Rationalisation processes are paradoxical, however, because they begin to define and limit the ways in which material and ideal interests can be met. The worldview and social structures created by agents, come to incarcerate social action in logically limited 'iron cages'.

The main focus in Weber's 'Agrarian Sociology' is one of these 'iron cages', one produced by military rationalisation. The logics of military rationalisation produced the
following development: the polis expanded, driven on by material needs (the land, tribute, and commercial monopolies that accrued from military victory) and ideal needs (the need of the hoplites for a sense of meaning). Each polis expanded until it met a stronger power (Weber, 1988, p. 353). If it became the strongest power, as in the case of the Roman polis, it would establish an empire. Finally, this empire would require a new form of administration, and so a rational re-organisation of the state would occur, transforming it from a state of politically equal citizens, into a liturgic state based on bureaucratic regimentation. On the material level, this would mean the formation of bureaucratic administration aimed at defending the empire which would thus choke political capitalism (Weber, 1988, p. 233), and on the ideational level, would involve a loss of the meaning that was found in warfare and a loss of freedom that came with citizenship.

Weber's great insight into Antiquity, as presented in the 'Agrarian Sociology', therefore, was that it was the agency of the hoplite with his military victories which brought about his downfall and the downfall of the polis he created. Military victories led to expansion beyond the administrative capabilities of the polis and its citizens, eventually reducing them to subjects of a monopolical bureaucracy. Thus, just as the Puritan, through his religious rationalisation created the modern world and its 'iron cage', so the citizen-hoplite, through his military rationalisation and agency, gave birth to a world in which he had no place.
The Death and Resurrection of Polytheism

According to Weber, the hoplite was not the only agent to produce self-defeating outcomes in their rationalised pursuit of ideal and material interests. Weber spent most of his empirical works investigating how religious intellectuals also unintentionally produced paradoxes of rationalisation. The most important of these unintended outcomes was the process of disenchantment, a process which paralleled the intellectualisation of Western culture, gave rise to modern science, and helped to 'resurrect' the gods of Antiquity in the guise of impersonal value-spheres. It is within this process of disenchantment that clues to the origins of the tension between moral reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity within the modern Western intellectual sphere, and within Bourdieu's science of practice, can be found. In order to understand how and why this is the case, it is necessary to return to the earliest period of Western religious history.

According to Weber (1991, p. 329), with the establishment of an autonomous religious sphere, emissary prophets demanded the creation of communities dedicated exclusively to religious relations. This entailed the breaking of other forms of communal relations, especially those of the sib and family. What Weber termed the ethic of 'brotherliness', became the basis of these new relations (Weber, 1991, p. 329). This ethic had its origins in the ethic of neighbourliness found in communal living, which argued for the care for one's neighbours since 'your want of today may be mine of tomorrow' (Weber, 1991, p. 329). This ethic of neighbourliness, however, was restricted, to the local
community, to the 'in-group' and not the 'out-group'.\(^9\) As such, this ethic was limited in its application.

This situation changed, Weber believed, with continued religious reflection on the world, particularly on the existence of suffering and death. These afflictions came to be viewed as having a 'levelling effect' (Weber, 1991, p. 354), and the existence of suffering became the basis for a new view of human relations:

The principle that constituted the communal relations among the salvation prophecies was the suffering common to all believers. And this was the case whether the suffering actually existed or was a constant threat, whether it was external or internal (Weber, 1991, p. 330, italics added).

In this way, awareness of the universal experience of suffering led to the transcendence of traditional community boundaries. The ethic of brotherliness, with its 'charitable realisation of the natural imperfections of all human doings, including one's own' (Weber, 1991, p. 330) thus moved from an ethic shared by neighbours, to a religiously sanctioned universalist ethic of love which went 'beyond all barriers of societal associations, often including one's own faith' (Weber, 1991, p. 330).

Externally, such commands rose to a communism of loving brethren; internally, they rose to the attitude of caritas, love for the sufferer per se, for one's neighbour, for man, and finally for the enemy (Weber, 1991, p. 330).

Religious rationalisation in the West, in an attempt to understand the meaning of suffering and death, thus moved increasingly toward a position of 'ethical absolutism'. This ethical absolutism unified the various spheres of life into one ethically rational value-position, that of the ethic of brotherliness, and pushed the pantheon of gods and demons that shaped life under the magical worldview into the abyss of cultural history. Ethical rationalism unified life in one ethical direction, and life-conduct and thinking were to be

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\(^9\)This was clearly expressed, as we have seen, in ancient Judaism with its ritual separation from gentiles.
oriented according to that ethical direction. From the position of this ethical absolutism, one could reject this world and its temptations as imperfect and 'irrational', and instead concentrate on what was provided by the monotheistic God of the religious sphere (in exchange for an ethically lived life-conduct), namely, salvation. At the same time, individuals could be confident in the knowledge that the demons of the past no longer possessed the living. In Weber's terminology, ethics had triumphed over ritualism.

Like the myth of Jason, however, the means created to achieve glorious ends instead rebound on their creator.\textsuperscript{10} The means used by religion to slay the magical entities of the past, intellectualisation, also led to the destruction of the all-powerful deity of the religious sphere. The main effect of this intellectualisation was to resurrect the supernatural powers of the polytheistic age, not as gods, but as impersonal logics of the various life-spheres (Weber, 1991, p. 149). This resurrection of polytheism was an unintended consequence of the attempt by salvation religion to understand the world in order to control it. Magical views of the world and cosmos were increasingly intellectualised so that more was known about the workings of the world in order to counter them with the central sacred value of religion. In this way, theoretical rationalism became the tool of ethical rationalism.

The theoretical rationalism employed by ethical rationalism, however, brought into awareness the internal logics of these different value-spheres and the logics according to which they operated:

For the rationalisation and the conscious sublimation of man's relation to the various spheres of values, external and internal, as well as religious and secular, have then pressed toward making

\textsuperscript{10} According to Greek legend, Jason, after having achieved great glory and power by attaining the Golden Fleece, was killed by the Argos, the ship he had built in order to undertake the journey to gain the Fleece, when a plank from its bow fell upon his head (see Graves, 1960, p. 257).
conscious the internal and lawful autonomy of the individual spheres; thereby letting them drift into those tensions which remain hidden to the originally naive relation with the external world (Weber, 1991, p. 328).

The intellectual attempt to understand the cosmos and how it operates in order to avoid suffering, brings about, in a paradoxical manner, value-spheres, such as the economic, political, and intellectual spheres, which stand in opposition to the ethical value religion advocated. It does this by making conscious, through intellectual reflection, the internal logics of these spheres and the ways in which they work. Thus, just as the Hellenic gods burst from the stomach of Chronos who had swallowed them in an attempt to become the sole supreme god, so too did the values-spheres of Modernity erupt from their ingestion by the religious sphere.

The result of this new polytheism is tension not only between these value-spheres and the sacred values of religion, but also between the values of each other. Agents move in and out of the different spheres of life, each sphere with its own demanding ‘god’, its own impersonal laws which must be obeyed. For one god, that is, from the perspective of someone within one value-sphere, a particular action and thought-process is 'rational', but from the perspective of another, it is 'irrational'. Defining 'rationality' becomes a matter of perspective, a matter of which god one is serving:

According to our ultimate standpoint, the one is the devil and the other the God, and the individual has to decide which is the God for him and which is the devil. And so it goes throughout all the orders of life ... Figuratively speaking, you serve this god and you offend the other god when you decide to adhere to this position (Weber, 1991, p. 148).

As the life-spheres of this world gain their own logical autonomy and thus stand in tension with religion, religion is forced more and more to reject this world, which becomes increasingly 'irrational' from religion's ethical standpoint. In this way, religion increasingly looks for other-worldly salvation and is forced to retreat from its position of cultural
dominance into its own sphere, which, from the perspective of the this-worldly salutations of the this-worldly life-spheres, seems increasingly irrational (Weber, 1991, p. 357).

Thus, the intellectualisation which allowed religious rationalisation to understand the world, unintentionally differentiated the economic, political, and intellectual spheres, each with their own sacred value, and brought those spheres into tension with the ethic of universal love and brotherliness. Seen from the perspective of someone following the internal logics of one of these spheres, the ethic of brotherliness, and its associated life-conduct, must seem 'irrational' (Weber, 1991, p. 330). This delegation of the ethic of brotherly love to the realm of the irrational was a paradox of religious rationalisation within which, Weber believed, were borne heavy moral costs for modern humanity. The main life-orders Weber examined in relation to these costs were the economic, political, aesthetic, erotic, and intellectual (Weber, 1991, pp. 331-50). It is the intellectual sphere, with its values of ‘truth’, order, and knowledge, which is of most concern to this thesis, for it is within this sphere that Bourdieus’s science of practice is located.

The Autonomy of the Intellectual Sphere

Of all the life-spheres, Weber (1991, p. 350) believed that religion is most conscious of its tension with the intellectual sphere. Early in Western history, as I have just mentioned, intellectual life and the pursuit of knowledge were subservient to other, mostly religious, values (Weber, 1991, pp. 141-42). Religion sought an objective meaning to the world which made sense of suffering and death, and was universally valid. Theoretical rationalism was merely a means to achieving this objective.
Ethical rationalism's control over theoretical rationalism was fraught with a number of paradoxical tensions, however, tensions which eventually shattered the bindings encasing the intellectual sphere.

One of these paradoxical tensions was produced by the agency of priesthoods. Throughout most societies, usually in tandem with administrative bureaucracies, the priesthood have been the bearers of intellectual culture. That is, they were primarily the group which were literate, educated youth, conducted administration, and monopolised particular forms of socially valued knowledge. Yet the more a religion was dominated by priests, the more it depended on written doctrine. This, as Weber notes, carried its own paradoxical logics, since ‘the more religion became book-religion and doctrine, the more literary it became and the more efficacious it was in provoking rational lay-thinking, freed of priestly control’ (1991, p. 351).

The paradox of the agency of priests as religious intellectuals, therefore, was that this agency provided the means whereby new intellectuals were created, intellectuals who rejected this religious tradition. Formerly, this had meant that those intellectuals rejecting one religious heritage constructed a new one. These were the prophets and mystics who turned their back on or rejected the routinised and institutionalised teachings of the priesthood. Eventually, however, the priesthood and religious intellectuals gave birth to a generation of intellectuals who dismissed the presuppositions of any religious framework,

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11 According to Weber (1991, p. 352), of the world civilisations, only Confucian China and Graeco-Roman Antiquity have not seen this development, and correspondingly not seen the development of bureaucratic priesthoods. This obviously influenced their unique historical developments and the absence of systematic application of natural science.
in which the attainment of knowledge was subservient to the religious goal of understanding the meaning of the cosmos.

Once again, the inner worldly asceticism of Protestantism played a crucial part in this development. As we have seen, the Puritans believed that predestination meant humanity could never understand the meaning of suffering and death because God's ways were beyond human comprehension. Instead, humanity's role was to master and transform the world and everyday life through ethically rationalised conduct. Whereas knowledge of the workings of the world, which had accumulated in Western thought through the activities of the Greeks, Renaissance and early modern science, had never been systematically applied or institutionalised, the Puritan ethic of world mastery provided an impetus toward such systematisation. Scientific and rational knowledge of the world and cosmos came to be sought by the ascetic Protestants as a means to achieving their religiously derived end - mastering and changing the world. Rather than the religiously useless speculations of metaphysics and philosophy on the meaning of the cosmos, which for them could never be known by mere humans, inner-worldly asceticism valued knowledge of the processes at work in the world which could then be controlled and ethically directed.

Thus, not only did Puritanism help give birth to the 'spirit of capitalism', it also provided a major impetus for the application and advancement of natural scientific knowledge. In the interests of religion, it advanced the development of technologies with which individuals could master the world and themselves:

For the attitude of Protestant asceticism the decisive point was ... that just as the Christian is known by the fruits of his belief, the knowledge of God and His designs can only be attained through a knowledge of His works. The favourite science of all Puritan, Baptist, or Pietist Christianity was thus physics, and next to it all those other natural sciences which used a similar
method, especially mathematics. It was hoped from the empirical knowledge of the divine laws of nature to ascend to a grasp of the essence of the world, which on account of the fragmentary nature of the divine revelation, a Calvinistic idea, could never be attained by the method of metaphysical speculation. The empiricism of the seventeenth century was the means for asceticism to seek God in nature. It seemed to lead to God, philosophical speculation away from him (Weber, 1985, p. 249).

For this reason, while 'the first foundations of modern natural science emanated from Catholic regions and Catholic minds.... the first attempt to apply science methodically to practical objectives is primarily Protestant' (Weber, 1978b, p. 1129).12

The paradox of this religiously motivated valuing of worldly knowledge was that such knowledge came to deny this motivation. This was due to the fact that the empirical research conducted by science transformed the view of the world, via a process of 'disenchantment' (Entzauberung) which provided new understandings of causality, from a realm of magical spirits to a self-regulating mechanism (Weber, 1991, pp. 350). Whereas salvation religions had argued that the world existed for ethical and meaningful reasons, that is, it was part of the wider purpose and meaning of the cosmos, modern science came to see the world and cosmos as being produced by their own natural laws. Events in the world and cosmos, and even the world and cosmos themselves, came to be viewed as caused by the laws of physics, not by the ethical commandments of the divine or, as in the case of the magical worldview, by the manipulations and machinations of demons and spirits (Weber, 1991, p. 355).

And today? Who - aside from certain big children who are indeed found in the natural science - still believes that the findings of astronomy, biology, physics, or chemistry could teach us anything about the meaning of the world? ... If these natural sciences lead to anything in this

12Having said this, Weber was also aware that objective and material conditions were involved in this process. Bryan Turner (1987) has shown that Weber emphasised a number of structural factors, many of which were historically contingent, rather than simply Protestantism as the basis for the Western application of science and technology. Most importantly, the environment of war which existed between the competing states of Europe was a major factor in the application of technology there (Weber, 1951, p. 103). For an analysis of the mutual reinforcement and then separation of science and religion, see Siedman (1983, pp. 270-71).
way, they are apt to make the belief that there is such a thing as the “meaning” of the universe die out at its very roots (Weber, 1991, p. 142).

The result of this process has been that ‘every increase of rationalism in empirical science increasingly pushes religion into the irrational realm; but only today does religion become the irrational or anti-rational supra-human power’ (Weber, 1991, p. 351). Religion has countered this attack from intellectualism by arguing that religious knowledge is different to that of scientific knowledge and can only be understood and known through faith. This serves only to reinforce its irrational status and lack of 'objectivity'. The result, as Brubaker (1984, p. 80) observes, is that 'it is intellect that rules the disenchanted world'.

Thus, religion used the techniques of natural science to understand the meaning of the cosmos, but these techniques became a denial of the ends they were enacted to meet. Natural science, unleashed from its religious ties, turned against its former advocate. The intellectual slave became the intellectual master. Theoretical rationalism, freed from its subserviency to ethical rationalism, established the search for knowledge as an end in itself, and the value/meaning to be sought in the newly liberated intellectual sphere.

For Weber, the scientific knowledge at the base of this sphere is not, and cannot be, possessed by all in society. It thus creates a new status hierarchy which stands in tension with the universal love of the ethic of brotherliness. Increasingly, individuals are judged on their rational intellect and their knowledge, rather than their ethical qualities. As Weber (1991, p. 355) makes clear: ‘the aristocracy of intellect is hence an unbrotherly aristocracy’.
The Paradoxes of the Modern Intellectual Sphere

For Weber (1991, pp. 140-43), intellectual endeavour, freed from its former tutelage as merely a means to achieving particular ends - the good life, true art, access to God, the meaning of the cosmos - has become an end in itself. Yet this valuing of the rational intellect pursuing knowledge as an end in itself has its own paradoxes, paradoxes which result from the internal logics of the modern intellectual life-sphere. Firstly, its questioning of all presuppositions means it must eventually question its own presuppositions, a situation which raises questions regarding the very meaning of science. Secondly, the moral worth of science become problematic because its stress on objectivity prevents it from dealing with the question as to the meaning of suffering and death which religion originally addressed. As I shall show in the next chapter, both of these paradoxes profoundly effect Bourdieu’s science of practice.

Presuppositions and Scientific Limits

Science, like the world religions it succeeded, has its own presuppositions about the world. These include the presupposition that its rational methods are valid, but also, and more importantly, the presupposition that the knowledge revealed by science is worth being known. These presuppositions, however, cannot be scientifically proven:

Science has created this cosmos of natural causality and has seemed unable to answer with certainty the question of its own ultimate presuppositions. Nevertheless science, in the name of “intellectual integrity”, has come forward with the claim of representing the only possible form of a reasoned view of the world (Weber, 1991, p. 355).

Science can provide answers to questions about how something can be done or achieved, but is silent when it comes to the question of why something should be done in the first
place. Science can demonstrate and calculate the most technically efficient means to achieve particular ends, but it cannot supply these ends in themselves:

Natural science gives us an answer to the question of what we must do if we wish to master life technically. It leaves quite aside, or assumes for its purposes, whether we should and do wish to master life technically and whether it ultimately makes sense to do so (Weber, 1991, p. 144)

For Weber then, the scientist analyses a problem and attempts to solve it, but cannot estimate the value of the problem or why it should be considered in the first place. Science, unlike prophecy or politics, must negate values, precisely because it cannot address them. Herein lie its limitations.

As we have seen, the values of different spheres have become 'warring gods'. The opposing moral positions and value perspectives at the basis of the different value-spheres 'stand in irreconcilable conflict with each other' (Weber, 1991, p. 147). This conflict creates a problem as to the usefulness and value of science, because, as Weber observed, one cannot decide which god is right or which god should be obeyed with the use of science. Science can merely clarify what the god wants and the best way to achieve its demands (Weber, 1991, p. 148). How do we, for example, scientifically decide whether liberty or equality is superior, or if intellectual pursuits are superior to political pursuits?

What man will take it upon himself the attempt to "refute scientifically" the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount? For instance, the sentence, "resist no evil", or the image of turning the other cheek? And yet it is clear, in mundane perspective, that this is an ethic of undignified conduct; one has to choose between the religious dignity which this ethic confers and the dignity of manly conduct which preacher and the other image quite different; "resist evil - lest you be co-responsible for an overpowering evil" (Weber, 1991, p. 148).

So what good is science? What is the value of it and why should someone dedicate themselves to it? For Weber (1991, pp. 150-52), science has a number of practical benefits. Firstly, science aids the control of external objects by knowing what they are and how they work. This can aid well-being. Secondly, science provides tools and methods
for thinking. Thirdly, it helps to gain clarity so that 'if you take such and such a stand, then, according to scientific experience, you have to use such and such a means in order to carry out your conviction practically' (1991, p. 151). Science can, for example, help to identify situations in which the means are counter-productive to the end. One then has to decide whether the means justify the ends. Fourthly, science can aid self-clarification by allowing an agent to see why they have made the choices they have. Science can give an agent 'an account of the ultimate meaning of his own conduct' (1991, p. 152).

Though practically useful, Weber believed that when it comes to morality, science is much more limited. He argued that, from a moral point of view,

> Science is meaningless because it gives no answer to our question, the only question important to us: “What shall we do and how shall we live” (1991, p. 152).

Since Weber considered the warring gods of the different value-spheres can never be brought into harmony, he believed that agents needed to choose their god. As we have seen, science cannot make that decision because it must remain objective. Science and the intellectual sphere it reigns, can, however, be one of the gods chosen because they themselves can provide a sense of meaning. And though it can be a worthwhile choice, this is purely a subjective matter, not a scientific one. Weber himself chose this god. The choice of science as a value-position when reflexively pursued to its logical conclusion, however, must entail knowing the limitations of science and intellectualism, and for Weber, this is where the 'prophets of the lectern' become 'unscientific':

"Mind you, the devil is old; grow old to understand him". This does not mean age in the sense of a birth certificate. It means that if one wishes to settle with this devil, one must not take flight before him as so many like to do nowadays. First of all, one has to see the devil's ways to the end in order to realise his power and his limitations (Weber, 1991, p. 152).
As I shall show in the next chapter, I am not certain that Bourdieu has sufficiently examined the limitations of this 'devil'.

The Question of Suffering and Death

Besides science's inability to scientifically support its own presuppositions, Weber believed that another important paradox has been brought about by the separation of the intellectual sphere from the religious sphere. This is the paradox that the success of the modern scientific conception of causality in understanding the cosmos is achieved at the cost of losing the question that vexed ethical rationalism - what is the meaning of suffering and death?

According to Weber, (1991, p. 140) science and the meaning gained from the accumulation of knowledge as an end-in-itself, leads to infinite 'progress' and the never-ending accumulation of knowledge. In this context, death can only be seen as 'senseless', that is, as an arbitrary and meaningless interruption to this pursuit. The paradox lies in the fact that one seeks meaning through an infinite end, but with only a finite means. The gaining of meaning through the infinite progress of knowledge (the intellectual's goal) stands in obvious tension with the finiteness of biological life (the intellectual's means): ‘and because death is meaningless, civilised life as such is meaningless; by its very “progressiveness” it gives death the imprint of meaninglessness’ (Weber, 1991, p. 140).

Weber considered that, unlike Abraham or the peasant of traditional society, the modern intellectual does not have the 'organic cycle' of life which allows them to die 'satiated with life', due to the fact that their life has no meaningful end-point (1991, p.
356). Unlike Abraham, the intellectual cannot achieve all that she or he wishes to in this life because their ambitions are directed towards an ungraspable end. Therefore, the modern intellectual will die ‘tired of life’.

Viewed in this way, all “culture” [intellectualism] appears as man’s emancipation from the organically prescribed cycle of natural life. For this very reason culture’s every step forward seems condemned to lead to an ever more devastating senselessness (Weber, 1991, pp. 356-57).

In this way, science and intellectualism, and the culture they have produced, make life ‘provisional and not definitive’ (Weber, 1991, p. 140). If this is the case, this raises the fundamental question: what is the value and use of science? As Weber asks: ‘why does one engage in doing something that in reality never comes, and never can come, to an end?’ (1991, p. 138). This question cannot be answered by science, but in the most devastating paradox of all, it cannot even be raised by science, for so would be ‘unscientific’.

**Intellectualisation and Faith**

Weber's analysis of the modern intellectual sphere thus reveals that when science began to examine the validity of the presuppositions of religion, it found religious theories regarding causality unsustainable. These presuppositions were not based on empirical knowledge but on 'faith', on the possession of divine truth. The acceptance of such divine truth involved 'intellectual sacrifice' - the ceasing of the asking of questions beyond a certain point, a point defined by the presuppositions of religion, and a faith in the truth of these religious presuppositions. Science eliminates this presupposition of faith in a meaningful cosmos, redefining knowledge as this-worldly and empirical, and thus denies the sacred
knowledge of religion the status of 'knowledge' at all. The latter is instead redefined as 'irrational faith'.

Weber demonstrates, however, that science runs into a paradoxical situation when it confronts its own presuppositions. The questioning of all presuppositions meant science eventually questioned its own, and to its dismay, found the 'unscientific' basis of them. Because there is no 'intellectual sacrifice' within science, that is, no limits to the questioning gaze of science, nothing which is accepted simply as 'given', the intellect runs rampant, encroaching more and more on its own presuppositions, until eventually it turns upon itself. Having no border of faith that defends presuppositions about the world from its dissecting lens, unrestrained intellectualism must eventually ask questions about its own presuppositions and, paradoxically, finds it has no scientifically objective answer. The silence that greets the question 'what is the meaning of science' becomes the new border of rational inquiry. Science, therefore, like religion, is also based on faith. Furthermore, the fundamental presupposition of theology, that the world and cosmos are meaningful and that suffering and death can be explained, are lost to science precisely at the point of the realisation of its own lack of inherent meaning.

Thus for Weber, in a tragic irony of human history and agency, the religious attempt to understand the meaning of suffering and death, and thus life, have led to an increasing 'intellectualisation' of the world, which in turn has created 'culture', a rationally autonomous intellectual life-sphere. This 'culture', however, once rejecting religion as 'irrational', as unsustainable in light of contemporary understandings of causality, discovered the original senselessness of death and suffering which religion had struggled
to overcome. Yet it could not address this senselessness without making itself senseless. That is, it could not return to the religious understanding of the problem of meaning precisely because to do so would mean becoming ‘irrational’ and giving up the meaning that stemmed from modern rational science. Isolated in the hollow cocoon of its own making, the contemporary intellectual life-sphere senses its own senselessness, but cannot give meaning to this meaninglessness. In this way, to paraphrase a famous quote from Weber, the Age of Reason has given rise to the Cage of Reason. Thus we witness the paradoxical outcomes of ethical rationalism and the theoretical rationalism it spawned.

**A Comparison of Eastern and Western Intellectual Spheres**

According to Weber, religious intellectualisation in Asia did not lead to the emergence of the same religion-denying life-spheres as it did in the West, largely due to the different value placed on different types of knowledge there. He believed that by examining the history of the intellectual spheres of China and India, it was possible to gain a greater understanding of their Western counterpart. Such a comparison, I believe, helps to clarify why a tension between science and moral reflexivity exists in contemporary Western culture.

As I showed previously, Weber believed that the Chinese and Indian cultures took religious rationalisation in different directions to that of the West. The basis of religious rationalisation, a tension with the world due to its imperfections, did not occur in Chinese culture, which instead 'affirmed' the world as the best of all possible worlds. For this reason, an autonomous religious sphere did not emerge, as religion remained intertwined
with the political sphere. In India, a religious rejection of the world did occur, but led to
different conclusions in relation to salvation from those developed in the West. Under
Indian religion, world rejection was marked, not by mastering and transforming the world
to ethical ends, but by distancing from the world.

Much of the reason for the differences in these directions of rationalisation can be
attributed to the Chinese and Indian intellectual strata. Despite some differences between
the Brahman priesthood and the Confucian literati, both had similar impacts on attitudes
towards knowledge in their respective societies. Most importantly, they both, as
intellectual strata, placed a similar importance on knowledge as the means of salvation:

In both we find a status group of genteel literati whose magical charisma rests on "knowledge". Such knowledge was magical and ritualistic in character, deposited in a holy literature, written in a holy language remote from that of everyday speech. In both appears the same pride in education and unshakeable trust in this special knowledge as the cardinal virtue solely determining all good. Ignorance of this knowledge was the cardinal vice and source of all evil (Weber, 1958, p. 139).

Confucianism defined knowledge as knowing the classical texts, as this knowledge was seen as the basis of correct administration, and therefore as vital to the stability of the Tao. Intellectual knowledge was consequently tied to the political and cultural spheres, not as a culturally valued end in itself, but as secondary to the valued end of social maintenance. In India, knowledge was based on rituals and magical formulae, and sought within contemplation. Rather than knowledge of the world and its processes (which was seen, especially in Buddhism, as perpetuating worldly entanglements), gnostic knowledge of the extraordinary was valued:

This is a knowledge, it may be noted, not of the things of this world or of the everyday events of nature and social life and the laws that they both hold. Rather, it is a philosophical knowledge of the "significance" of the world and life,... this "knowledge" is not a rational implement of empirical science such as made possible the rational domination of nature and man in the Occident. Rather it is the means of mystical and magical domination over the self and the world: gnosis (Weber, 1958, pp. 330-31).
Therefore, the intellectual sphere in Indian culture remained secondary to the religious sphere and its end - salvation through contemplation. In both India and China, therefore, 'knowledge, be it literary knowledge or mystical gnosis was finally the single absolute path to the highest holiness here and in the world beyond' (Weber, 1958, p. 330). In both, the search for knowledge as an end in itself was never sought, since the intellectual sphere remained subservient to other spheres of life.

In the West also, the search for knowledge remained embedded in the religious sphere. As we have just seen, however, a different type of knowledge was valued and sought - knowledge of the workings of the world and everyday life. With the development of the inner-worldly asceticism of Puritanism and its ethic of world transformation, knowledge was seen as a means to transforming the world, not as an end in itself.\(^{13}\) It was thus the nature of the knowledges valued and sought by the different religious spheres which was vital in shaping the direction of religious rationalisation within their respective cultures. As I have previously discussed, why each culture came to value what it did depended upon a complex constellation of ideational, material, and contingent factors, including the identity of its culturally dominant strata, whether it promoted theoretical or practical rationality, the conception of the divine it held, the particular political problems and conditions it faced, and the logics of its worldview. For these and numerous other reasons, Chinese and Indian culture did not come to value the same type of knowledge as that sought after in the West. Weber believed those cultures never attempted to develop a fully systematic understanding of the workings of the natural

\(^{13}\) For an analysis of the links between knowledge, control, and rationalisation, see Brubaker (1984, pp. 30-35).
world, and thus their conceptions of causality remained predominantly at the level of magic.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, '... rationally evaluated, the "lack of causality" was the thing, which in the East restricted, the so-called "progress" to professional rationality' (Weber, 1958, p. 388).

In the West, science and the intellectual sphere gained its autonomy through the world mastery ethic of inner-worldly asceticism. This ethic saw science and the intellectual spheres as means of transforming the world.\textsuperscript{15} In a paradoxical manner, however, just as the accumulation of economic capital became an end in itself and released the economic sphere, so scientific means came to replace ethical ends. As Alexander states, the modern scientific worldview became 'Puritan epistemology without Puritan ontology' (1989, p. 78).

Conclusion

Weber's analysis of the paradoxical outcomes of Western religious rationalisation reveals the ways in which the search by Western religion for objective meaning, the objective of religion, was carried out by what we might turn 'subversive subjectivity', which in fact revealed that the objective of religion was, at its root, subjective. Human agency in the West has created, through its subjectivity, objective structures such as capitalism and

\textsuperscript{14} Though Weber (1951, p. 287) was very much aware of the technological innovations of the Chinese, he argued that they lacked social incentives to apply them militarily and economically to the same extent as Europe. Rationalisation of Chinese culture saw the political and religious-cultural spheres intimately intertwined. From their steel-hard grip, no other value-spheres could gain autonomy. Most importantly, the intellectual value-sphere could not become internally dynamic, seeking its own values, as occurred in the West. In terms of technology and empirical science, this meant that no rational science seeking empirical universal laws and technologies as ends in themselves emerged. Though magic and technological science often existed side by side in China, as Joseph Needham's (1954) work shows, what is vital to Weber's analysis is the absence of a separation of religious and intellectual value-spheres despite its technological inventiveness.

\textsuperscript{15} Brubaker (1984, pp. 33-35) has pointed out that this idea of transformation was aimed at controlling the environment, other human beings, and the individuals themselves.
bureaucracy, which are in fact meaningless from the point of view of the religious intellectual searching for the objective meaning of the cosmos. These objective structures compel subjects to act in particular ways, and develop a meaning of their own, preventing forever the hope of a unified, systematised understanding of the objective meaning of the world. The search by religious intellectuals for an objective meaning, therefore, tragically and paradoxically reveals that one's meaning in Modernity can only be found subjectively. Even science, the god which comes forth to claim a true and systematised understanding of the world through its objective of complete objectivity, is ultimately subject to subjectivity. It is within this paradox, as I show in the next chapter, that we can find the reasons as to why modern science is confronted with a tension between moral and epistemological reflexivities, and why Bourdieu's science of practice is ultimately limited in its capacity for reflexivity.
Weber, Bourdieu, and Reflexivity

Introduction

Weber's analysis of the paradoxes and moral costs involved in the dominance of science in modern intellectual life, as outlined in the previous chapter, has been compared to Galileo's contribution to physics (Jaspers, 1953, p. 191), while Weber himself has been labelled 'the sociologist' (Aron, 1967, p. 245) and 'the last universal genius of the social sciences' (Wrong, 1970, p. 1). Whether such laudatory characterisations are fair is clearly a matter of debate, but what does seem assured is that, as Wolin (1985, p. 220) has observed, Weber's work lies between the modernist glorification of science and the post-modernist despair at its consequences.\footnote{This position has been expressed succinctly by Lassman and Velody: 'Weber is a spokesman for "modernity" who, in taking the "modernist" project to its limits, becomes the first major social theorist to perceive the true nature of the post-modern condition' (1989, pp. 183-84). For an analysis of the similarities between Weber's work and post-modernism, see Holton and Turner (1989), Bryan Turner (1992, pp. 3-21), Charles Turner (1990).} This straddling of modernist and post-modernist worldviews provides a highly reflexive understanding of the potentials and limitations of the scientific Weltanschauung. As such, it helps us understand the reasons for the limited reflexivity found in Bourdieu's science of practice. As I show in this chapter, it does this in two ways. Firstly, it contains a much broader historical vision, especially of the intellectual field which Bourdieu, sociology, and the subjectivist/objectivist debate are part of, than Bourdieu's work. Secondly, Weber's work shows the moral problems and paradoxical outcomes of modern scientific rationalisation, problems and paradoxes which Bourdieu's own science of practice is subject to.
This chapter therefore details the ways in which these insights of Weber aid our understanding of why a tension between epistemological and moral reflexivity exists in Bourdieu's science of practice and the wider intellectual sphere. It shows the effects of this tension on Bourdieu's understanding of practice, including his own scientific practice, by highlighting his inability to examine agents' motivations for morality, cooperation, and care. It also shows the ways in which this tension is the main source of many of the problems that critics have seen in Bourdieu's sociology. Finally, it suggests that Weber's emphasis on ethical rationalisation can be used as a means for overcoming many of these problems.

**The Paradox of a Reflexive Science of Practice**

Bourdieu (1992a, p. 194) believes that one of the main strengths of his reflexive science of practice is its ability to transform sociology into a more 'scientific science'. He is obviously aware, through his epistemological reflexivity, of his immersion in the intellectual 'game', and that one of the prizes at stake in this game is the furthering of science. He is therefore probably also aware that he is pursuing this prize via his attempt to develop a reflexive science of practice. It is not so clear, however, that he is aware that this pursuit has moral and intellectual costs, and that it creates a tension with his other main intellectual pursuit - an understanding of practice in its totality.

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As mentioned previously, Dreyfus and Rabinow (1993) have questioned this ability, and the virtue on which it is based, arguing that the willingness to create a more scientific sociology positions Bourdieu within the Western scientific tradition. They argue that this tradition is limited, and its search for universal laws and concepts, fruitless, since it is impossible for anyone to step out of their habitus and cultural milieu.
Weber's work on the paradoxes of science sheds light on why these tensions exist, because, as Wolf (1989, p. 136) has observed, it shows simultaneously the scientific problems of sociology and the sociological problems of science. Weber was concerned with the meaning and value of science, and especially of the cultural sciences, within modern society. He found the presupposition that science is self-evidently valuable to be 'unscientific' because it could not be objectively proven by science. Bourdieu by contrast, holds this presupposition, and his lack of moral reflection on it creates serious problems for his work.

The fundamental moral paradox that Weber investigated in his work on religion and science, and which he believed cast a shadow over the value of modern science, was that science could not explore issues of the meaning of suffering and death in its analysis, precisely the issues religion examined. Therefore, science could not view human beings ontologically as suffering and meaning-seeking beings, without, paradoxically, limiting its own importance. If science was to see humans as ethically rational beings seeking to understand the meaning of suffering and death, it would then logically be faced with the problem of examining such issues. Yet as Weber's work highlights, it cannot provide such examinations for it makes 'the belief that there is such a thing as the “meaning” of the universe die out at its very roots' (Weber, 1991, p. 142). From this perspective, Weber argues, science is meaningless and valueless. Science is therefore faced with the paradox that it cannot consider such an ontology of humans without revealing its own valuelessness, meaninglessness, and limited potential. The demon/god of science - the
logic of the contemporary intellectual sphere - thus demands an ontology which excludes suffering and ethical rationalism as the basis of what it means to be human.

This paradox stems, as I detailed last chapter, from the particular interrelation within Western cultural history between three different forms of rationalism: theoretical, practical, and ethical. These rationalisms correspond to an ontology of human beings as ‘knowers’, ‘doers’, and ‘meaning-seekers’, an ontology which is at the heart of Weber’s philosophical anthropology. Weber’s analysis of the interaction of these three rationalisms in Western history examined the ways in which ethical rationalisation gave birth to an ethic of ‘brotherliness’ which tried to deal in practice, through everyday life-conduct, with the problem of suffering. This interaction also, however, placed increasing importance upon theoretical rationalism, or ‘logical logic’. The drive, especially by the Puritans, to create an ethically ordered world, resulted in a high value being placed on knowledge of the workings of the world, as well as on empirical science which came to be seen as the best means of accessing such knowledge. As such, theoretical rationalism, its definition increasingly reduced to ‘scientific knowledge’, became an end in itself. As theoretical rationalism gained greater autonomy from both ethical and practical rationalism, it separated itself from practice (as Bourdieu’s critique of objectivism shows), but it also separated itself from ethics, suffering, and the question of meaning. Paradoxically, therefore, the attempt to ethically order the world created an ethically irrational world where the intellectual pursuits of an ‘unbrotherly aristocracy’ (Weber, 1991, p. 355) were dedicated to gaining autonomy from ethical questions concerning the meaning of life, suffering, and death.
This paradoxical situation is encapsulated in Bourdieu's science of practice, for in its attempt to be more scientific, Bourdieu's reflexive sociology has excluded a philosophical anthropology which sees humans as ethically rational, caring and cooperative beings. Within his work, humans are 'knowers' and 'doers', but they are 'meaning-seekers' only insofar as they are *Homo Potestas*, that is, in that they seek to accumulate various forms of capital. Bourdieu's science of practice, the aim of which is to understand practice in its totality, rests on an ontology which ironically loses the fact that much of what agents do in practice is based on ethical rationalism. It loses the fact that people understand and act in the world in moral and ethical terms, that is, they attempt, through ethical rationalism, to maintain a meaningful life in the framework of suffering and death, and to care for and support each other in a form of 'brotherliness'. Like all science, it sees the struggle for meaning as subjective and 'irrational'. Yet from the position of ethical rationality and moral reflexivity, such a science itself is almost completely valueless, meaningless, and 'irrational', since it can shed no light on which values to live by, or on how to maintain such values in the face of competing values.

Bourdieu seems to maintain this limited ontology of *Homo Potestas* primarily because his immersion in the intellectual field and his playing of the scientific 'game' has heightened his unwillingness to question its presuppositions, and thus limited his reflection on the values at the heart of it. That is, his pursuit of science has limited his moral reflexivity. His concern with 'scientificity' forces an 'internal censorship' (to use his term), which leaves certain things, such as ethical rationalism and the meaning of suffering,
'unthinkable'. These concerns are internally censored through the doxa, that is, the dominant values and presuppositions, of the scientific field. As Weber's work shows, the loss of the question of meaning and reflection on how humans can make sense of suffering and death, is part of the doxa of current intellectual life. As such, Bourdieu's reflexivity cannot go so far as to examine the history of theoretical rationalism and the origins of the separation between knowing, doing and suffering, because his reflexivity is only epistemological in nature. Although this epistemological reflexivity alerts Bourdieu to the fact that his social trajectory and habitus have been profoundly affected by his position in the intellectual sphere/field, it has not alerted him to the ways in which he has been affected by the logics and values of the wider sphere of Western intellectual culture. This is primarily because prioritising objectivity demands the suppression of issues of meaning and values, precisely those issues which lay at the heart of the logics of the Western intellectual sphere.

Weber, by contrast, was very much aware of the values at the heart of the modern intellectual sphere, and what they meant for contemporary life. He was perhaps the first social scientist to announce the death of a demiurgic social science which aimed at omniscience in relation to cultural reality and history, and omnipotent control over its future. He realised that progressive rationalisation did not end in its triumph over irrationality, but merely the elaboration of the tension within their symbiotic embrace. Such an embrace exists because, ultimately, rationalisation can only take place in relation

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3 As Bourdieu himself observes, 'among the most rigorous censors, among those which are the most difficult to get around, there are the internalised censors, the categories of thought which make a whole collection of things unthinkable, the categories of thought which determine that there is only black and white, and that grey areas do not exist' (Bourdieu, 1992b, p. 49).
to 'irrational' decisions in the realm of values. Rationalisation and irrationalisation are intrinsically connected, that is, in Bourdieuan terms, relational.\(^4\) This is seen in both the religious view that the world is 'ethically irrational' and requires ethical rationalisation, and the 'scientific rationality' of Modernity which gives momentum to the 'irrational' choice between value-spheres. This relational connection means that rationalisation is ultimately Janus-faced: dehumanising and disenchanting at the same time as liberating and powerful.\(^5\)

Part of the dilemma of this condition is the realisation that the issue of which of the warring gods (values) to serve can never be answered by rational science. For this reason, as Saran has noted, Weber was well aware that sociology cannot replace theology (1992, p. 15). Ultimately, for Weber, people must choose which god to serve without the benefit of rational science. Weber's own 'irrational' and subjective objective was to ground scientific work in the domain of ethics and morality (Wolf, 1989, p. 122). This was a subjective push precisely because it could not be justified scientifically and objectively.

Weber realised that science could only be valuable and retain some form of meaning in modern life if it was made the servant of moral and ethical ends. Yet such a position created tension with the dominant definition of science because, as his work on Western rationalisation makes clear, Western intellectual culture, due to particular historical constellations, had come to value certain objectives and forms of knowledge (what Bourdieu would call 'capital'), over others. Knowledge of the workings of the

\(^4\) Julien Freund (1970, p. 25) has observed in relation to Weber's work that: '.. rationalisation and intellectualisation have made no inroads on the empire of the irrational. On the contrary, as rationalisation increases, the irrational grows in intensity'.

\(^5\) "Rationality" is ambiguous because it expresses the specific achievement of the modern world and at the same time the questionable character of this achievement. Did not Weber, thus, in the same breath, both acclaim and decry this fateful process of rationalisation? (Lown, 1982, p. 51).
'external' and 'internal' states of nature came to be highly valued, and this, along with other factors, promoted the rise of science and the belief that science was valuable in itself. From this, science emerged as the definitive and 'true' way of seeing the world, and thus came to dominate the modern worldview (Weber, 1991, p. 355). According to Weber, science aspires to know the world in its totality, to become an all-encompassing truth, and thus a total worldview. It therefore searches ontologically for universal laws, and epistemologically for categories which can be used to detect such laws. Weber knew that his attempt to make science the servant of ethical ends was blasphemous in relation to such a view because, like Yahwe, the god of the intellectual sphere is a jealous god who demands ethical fidelity. In the case of the god of science, ethical fidelity means suppressing and negating ethical and moral issues which could cloud the worship of objectivity. Weber, unlike Bourdieu, reflected morally on the meaning, relevance, and value of science, and thus refused to fully bow down at the altar of objectivity. It is this moral reflexivity which is the primary strength of Weber’s work, and what separates it most profoundly from that of Bourdieu.

The Reductionism of a Science of Practices - Homo Potestas Theologica

Nowhere are the differences between Weber’s and Bourdieu’s reflexivity, and their respective philosophical anthropologies, brought into sharper focus than in their respective analyses of religion. Bourdieu’s work sees religion as the product of the unconscious strategies developed by a sub-species of Homo Potestas, Homo Potestas Theologica. For Bourdieu,

The religious message that will be most capable of satisfying a group's religious demand, and therefore of exercising its properly symbolic function of mobilisation upon that group, will be the
one that provides it with a quasi-systematic set of justifications for its existence as the occupant of a determinate social location. The quasi-miraculous harmony between the content of the religious message that ultimately wins out and the most strictly temporal interests of its privileged addressees - namely, their political interests - constitutes an essential condition of its success (Bourdieu, 1987a, p. 124).

Thus, the primary social function that Bourdieu attributes to religion is social legitimation. After all, 'theodicies are always sociodicies' (Bourdieu, 1991h, p. 16). Bourdieu argues that religious needs are almost completely determined by agents' social position, and therefore, material conditions. Indeed, he contends that contemplation of the meaning of suffering and death depends on favourable material conditions:

> The questions of personal salvation or the existence of evil, or the agony of death or the meaning of suffering ... all these have for their social condition of possibility a development of interest in the problems of conscience and an increase in the sensibility to the miseries of the human condition, which is itself possible only in a defined type of material condition of existence (Bourdieu, 1991h, p. 16).

Bourdieu believes that the religious field which develops under such material conditions is dominated by the struggle between religious specialists, or *Homo Potestas Theologica*, to maximise their control over the laity and religious capital. The influence, distinction, and power that stems from such control is what motivates those in the religious field to invest in playing the 'game'.

As we have seen, Weber also believed that social legitimation, and the power which religious knowledge gave priests, prophets, and mystics, was an important reason for the existence of religion in a society. Weber never suggests, however, that social legitimation is the primary function of religion, as Bourdieu does in the above passage. Weber was aware that theodicies can be sociodicies, but he was also aware that they are not always such, and that they are never this alone. He did not see any of the areas dealt with by religion as paramount over the others, instead believing that religion met the
interests of different social strata in different ways. Neither did Weber believe that suffering, and contemplation on the meaning of it, stem from social location or material conditions. He believed that such afflictions as the loss or death of a loved one, or emotional heartbreak, were examples of suffering which were not reducible to objective social positions and material conditions, but still required meaningful explanation:

> it is not our thesis that the specific nature of a religion is a simple "function" of the social situation of the stratum which appears as its characteristic bearer, or that it represents the stratum's "ideology", or that it is a "reflection" of a stratum's material or ideal interest-situation. On the contrary, a more basic misunderstanding of the standpoint of these discussions would hardly be possible.

> However incisive the social influences, economically and politically determined, may have been upon a religious ethic in a particular case, it receives its stamp primarily from religious sources, and, first of all, from the content of its annunciation and promise. Frequently the very next generation interprets these annunciations and promises in a fundamental fashion. Such reinterpretations adjust the revelations to the needs of the religious community. If this occurs, then it is at least usual that religious doctrines are adjusted to religious needs (Weber, 1991, pp. 269-70, italics added).

Certainly Weber believed that different material conditions would shape suffering and therefore what people would desire from religion. He did not believe, however, that the desire for meaning or meaning itself came from material conditions alone. Certainly the lower classes are more prone to material suffering and therefore demand from religion a means to overcome it or overcome the world that causes such suffering, but this does not mean that all suffering, and therefore all religious interests, in both dominant and dominated strata, stem from material circumstances. Of course religion must give attention to social location and its meaning since this is an important dimension to life, but it is not the entirety of life and so it is not the only area of life that is relevant from a religious point of view. Agents' religious interests are based not only on their social location, but also on other aspects of life such as mortality and the attempt to gain a meaningful framework from which to live and gain a sense of belonging. Exclusion of
these aspects produces a reductionist understanding of religion, and a neglect of the importance of meaning in human life and social interaction.

Weber thus argued that a religious ethic or message is not the product solely of material, political or economic factors. The fundamental flaw of Bourdieu’s analysis of religion is that it is based on just such a reductionism. Bourdieu argues that what is at stake in the religious field is religious ‘capital’ - the religious specialists’ influence over the lives of the laity through religious ideas. With such a definition of religious interest, it is logical and inevitable that Bourdieu would maintain a view of religion as essentially a power relation. Weber makes it explicit that there are many contexts in which religion does function in this way, but it cannot be reduced to this. He observes that:

As a rule a prophet or saviour have legitimised themselves through claiming the possession of a magical charisma. With them, however, this has been merely a means of securing recognition and followers for the exemplary significance of the mission or the saviour quality of their personalities (Weber, 1991, p. 327).

Thus, Weber clearly states that it is the message itself and the religious specialist's fundamental belief in the correctness and righteousness of their vision which is important to them, not the meeting of the religious needs of the masses in order to maximise distinction and power. Weber saw that from the subjective view of the prophet/priest/mystic, what is at stake in the religious field is not meeting the needs of the masses, but meeting the needs of God or the divine. The religious specialist demands that people orientate their life-conduct towards a sacred value which he has been blessed with knowing. Bourdieu loses this subjective component of religious life through the application of his scientific model, however. He thereby loses exactly what he argues Structural Anthropology loses by imposing its objectivist model of the agrarian calendar
on reality - the practical relation to practice (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 105). Bourdieu loses sight of the fact that religious subjects do not have the same understanding of their practice as that which his model imposes. He neglects to include in his analysis the fact that he is asking questions about, and dealing with, the religious sphere in ways which would almost never occur to the agent engaged in practice within it. Weber, by contrast, shows that from the subject's perspective, from the practical relation to religious practice, religious needs based in providing a meaning for suffering are fundamentally important. The practical religious agent is attempting to gain a meaningful life and explain suffering and death, and their actions and thoughts need to be seen within this context. Weber's and Bourdieu's respective analysis of religion thus reveal the substantive differences between their philosophical anthropologies and reflexivities.

**Bourdieu's Unreflexive Morality**

Perhaps the most powerful testimony to Bourdieu's limited moral reflexivity, and the inadequacies of a science of practice brought about by a view of humans as *Homo Potestas*, is not in his work on religion, but in the way in which it fails to provide an adequate understanding of his own moral and intellectual efforts.

There is a distinct tension between the aims of Bourdieu's intellectual work and the fruit of this work. On the one hand, having dedicated himself to the god of science, he embraces the notion of objectivity, and values scientific knowledge. On the other hand, it is clear that Bourdieu does not value such knowledge for its own sake, but for reasons related to the moral and ethical commitments he holds. The tension in Bourdieu's work
lays in the fact that his science of practices cannot reveal the latter. This is because, as Martin Fuchs has observed, Bourdieu's view of the intellectual and the scientist is a reductionist one: 'he reproduces the image of the scientist as a pure observer' (1993, p. 122). According to Bourdieu's 'reflexive sociology', the scientist/observer is not a moral being. This view compromises and limits our understanding of Bourdieu's own work.

It is most certainly the case that, by partaking in the 'game' of science, Bourdieu is seeking to accumulate scientific capital and the renown that comes with it. Yet apparently more important to him, as witnessed in his writings on the Algerian sub-proletariat and the French lower classes, is his moral concern (perhaps, one could argue, as an expression of an ethic of 'brotherliness') over the suffering of other human beings. His care and sense of 'brotherliness' are not forms of capital, but provide the underlying meaning to his work - by helping others deal with their suffering through the revelation of 'symbolic violence' and by aiding in the 'collective conquest of freedom' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 15). Yet the scientific values of the scientific field he upholds, deny him validity in talking about such moral concerns.

The scientific field's demand for 'objectivity' makes a statement such as 'this is an important moral position' unscientific and subjective. Commitment to such a position would involve challenging the dominant values of the intellectual sphere, values which Bourdieu has already committed himself to. As Weber's work has shown, the distinction between ethical rationalism and theoretical rationalism has provided the basis for a separation of the intellectual sphere from the moral sphere, and allowed the former to react against attempts to bring it under moral control. Any attempt to impose an ethically
rational ethic of 'brotherliness' as the basis of intellectual and scientific endeavour thus faces the counterveiling force and logics of the intellectual sphere which deny such an ethic 'scientific' status. Both Bourdieu's and Weber's work have shown that the intellectual sphere operates as an 'intellectual aristocracy'. This is exactly the tension which is at the heart of Bourdieu's work.

Bourdieu is thus caught in a paradox: to be more scientific, that is, 'reflexive', he would have to reveal his presuppositions and the reasons why he does what he does, that is, to reveal his values and morals. However, to do so would be considered, by him and by others, to be 'unscientific'. Coming from a lower social stratum, gaining material and ideal rewards from his 'mission' - science - Bourdieu apparently sees his task as revealing the workings of symbolic violence, and it seems likely that it is from this that he gains much of the meaning in his work.\(^6\) This cannot, however, be scientifically defended or even spoken about by him.

This brings us to a further tension within Bourdieu's work, in that the science of practices he proposes can never know if the 'truths' it reveals to be symbolically violent are 'true' or not. Though it can reveal how and why particular values and 'truths' arise, it can never question their validity. To do so would be 'unscientific'.

To take Bourdieu's vehement attack on Kant's principles of taste in 'Distinction' as an example:

What is at stake in aesthetic discourse, and in the attempted imposition of a definition of the genuinely human, is nothing less than the *monopoly of humanity* (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 491).

\(^6\) Such a view is supported by Wacquant (1992a, p. 14), who argues that we can see Bourdieu's entire work as a hunt for the varied forms and effects of symbolic capital, and the ways in which it operates in symbolic violence.
Although Bourdieu can scientifically show that such an attempt is occurring, he cannot show scientifically that those areas addressed in such an aesthetic discourse are not 'more human'. He cannot state scientifically that it is not something higher or 'better' in humans that Kant is trying to encapsulate. Obviously such judgements about what is 'better' or 'worse' in humanity are made on the basis of a hierarchy of values, but how scientifically can we dismiss such a hierarchy or the values it is comprised of as 'wrong'? Bourdieu cannot scientifically reveal that the art of 'high culture' promoted by museums or education systems is not 'superior', or, for that matter, 'inferior' to popular culture. Nor can he scientifically demonstrate the way in which the meaning that art critics, or those with sufficient cultural capital, imbue into a work of art, does not deserve such meaning. Certainly, symbolic goods are made 'rare' by dominant groups to maximise their own distinction, but it cannot be proven scientifically that this is immoral or 'wrong'. It cannot be stated scientifically that the object which is made 'rare' is not worthy of being made rare, or that it is not important just because the dominant class appropriates it. Although Bourdieu reveals how various 'aristocracies' maintain themselves through symbolic violence, misrecognition, and the accumulation of forms of capital which place them at an advantage in the social order, this tells us almost nothing about the actual meaning and value of that capital. Such judgements are made in the realm of morals and values, not science. That realm also apparently contains the reason for Bourdieu's concern with revealing the operation of symbolic violence - he holds a moral position which values equality and justice, a position, one could suggest, which is descended from the ethic of brotherliness that Weber believed had been expunged from the intellectual sphere.
The Value of Science

Within the realm of morals also lays Bourdieu's belief in the value of science. However, as Weber argues in 'Science as Vocation', one cannot scientifically prove the validity and value of science, except in terms of technical superiority for calculating means to ends. In the case of Bourdieu's science of practice, it is not possible to use the concepts of habitus, practice, field, and the like, to demonstrate their own validity. Although such an application of these concepts would show that this science of practice has meaning and value because it has been 'consumed' by a large section of the sociological audience, thereby accruing intellectual capital for Bourdieu, this tells us nothing about the meaning of this science. The consumption model at work in this science cannot tell us the value of itself, merely that a sizeable transaction has occurred. One could respond that these concepts are useful to scientists and intellectuals because they allow them to accrue greater intellectual capital, yet this returns us to the ontology of Homo Potestas, a position which does not even explain Bourdieu's own practice adequately. Ultimately, of course, these concepts are useful scientifically because they provide greater technical efficiency mainly through the improvements in epistemological reflexivity they offer. They do not, however, make it clear why scientific efficiency is valuable or worthwhile. They can, for example, provide a more rigorous understanding of the interaction of agency and structure, but they cannot explain why this is worth knowing in the first place. What then, is the meaning and significance of a science of practice? If this science aids the 'collective conquest of freedom', why is this worth doing? Most importantly, what is the
use of a science of practice if it cannot inform us on how to live, which of the 'warring
gods' to choose, or provide moral frameworks with which to guide our lives? Does it
have any meaning or significance outside the intellectual sphere? A science of practice,
and the concepts it employs, can answer none of these questions.

Perhaps Bourdieu would respond to my questioning of the ultimate value of his
science of practice with the following:

... different representations of science correspond to different positions in the scientific field, and
... these representations are ideological strategies and epistemological positions whereby agents
occupying a particular position in the field aim to justify their own position and the strategies
they use to maintain or improve it, while at the same time discrediting the holders of the
opposing position and their strategies (Bourdieu, 1981b, p. 283).

Thus he would see this thesis merely as an attempt to gain scientific/intellectual capital by
adopting a strategy of 'changing the rules' of the game, a strategy which argues for a
reconceptualisation, and thus a new definition (if in fact, a very old one) of the intellectual
and intellectual endeavour. He could thus explain this thesis' characterisation of his
philosophical anthropology and his science of practice as reductionist, by seeing it as an
attempt to discredit current holders of intellectual capital. He may even point out that
such a strategy is not new, as it was also undertaken against Durkheim's work:

as the philosophical importance of the social sciences increases, we see the
sociologists becoming more and more fully aware of the philosophical import of
what they are doing, whereas the philosophers, at one time accomplices, revert
more and more to their traditional discourse about the "reductive" nature of the
scientific explanation (Bourdieu, 1967, p. 168).

Such a rebuttal does not, however, invalidate the comments of this thesis. Although
Durkheim's and Bourdieu's works have shrugged off criticisms of reductionism made by
philosophy and social theory, this does not mean that these criticisms are invalid. It
merely means that the success they have enjoyed in the intellectual sphere is due to the fact that this sphere has continued to overlook the importance of the question of meaning which is often at the base of such criticisms. This thesis follows in the vein of such criticisms. It is not simply the product of a strategy aimed at accumulating intellectual capital, but an attempt to draw attention to the ethical concern over the loss in the intellectual sphere of, on the one hand, values, both in theory (the theoretical examination of them) and practice (the moral reflection by the intellectual of how they effect their practice), and on the other, what I consider (along with Weber) to be the questions facing humankind: what is the meaning of life and death, and what is the best way to live. It is a thesis that attempts to highlight the fact that the loss of these things produces a paradoxical situation whereby scientists such as Bourdieu who advocate greater reflexivity in order to improve science, can only be truly reflexive by examining that aspect of social life, and of their own lives, which science deems as 'irrational' and subjective - the search for meaning.

**Religious Rationalisation and Bourdieu's Shortfalls**

Not only do Bourdieu's philosophical anthropology of *Homo Potestas* and his unquestioning acceptance of the value of science stand in a tense relationship with his attempt to fully understand practice, it also explains why his work is plagued by a number of problems which various critics have highlighted. Ironically, Weber's analysis of ethical rationalisation and the ways in which humans attempt to understand life through making
sense of death and suffering, often provides a means of overcoming or explaining such shortfalls.

**Differentiation of Fields**

As mentioned previously, commentators such as LiPuma (1993) and Calhoun (1993) have drawn attention to the lack of analysis in Bourdieu's work of the reasons why the modernisation of Western societies witnessed a differentiation of fields. Such an analysis would provide a greater understanding of why Modernity is the way it is, and thus aid in the self-understanding of the sociologist which is the aim of a reflexive sociology. Although there is the hint of such an analysis within Bourdieu's discussions of the relation between doxa, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy, nothing substantial is developed by him in his empirical works. In these discussions, Bourdieu argues that heresy and heterodoxy, usually brought about through a crisis of some kind, function as a critical break with doxa, and force dominant agents to produce the defensive discourse of orthodoxy, the right-thinking way aimed at restoring doxa (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 73). To follow Bourdieu's thinking here, one would have to explain why 'doxa' was subverted by 'discourse'. This can be understood with reference to his argument that new conditions of existence produce new habitus, and therefore heterodox messages compliment the subjective aspirations/dispositions of adherents who are experiencing changing material conditions.

The critique which brings the undiscussed into discussion, the unformulated into formulation, has as the condition of its possibility, *objective crisis*, which, in breaking the immediate fit between the subjective structures and the objective structures, destroys self-evidence practically (Bourdieu, 1977a, pp. 168-9, italics added).
This argument essentially implies a materialist explanation for the 'competing possibilities' of heterodoxy, yet no such explanation or analysis of such changing conditions is provided by Bourdieu. The furthest his work goes in this direction is to observe that the emergence of a 'universe of discourse' is historically linked to the emergence of cities which allow a concentration of different groups with different practices, as well as a body of specialists to analyse and rationalise worldviews.

Weber's work tends to indicate, however, that it was neither a crisis nor material factors alone which brought about this process, but a complex combination of factors. Weber also placed a heavy emphasis upon the city in the development of worldviews, but did not see this as the only factor involved in such development. His analysis includes an examination of historical contingency, material and geographical factors, as well as the internal logic of worldviews, in order to explain these changes and the corresponding differentiation of fields. Weber's examination of the processes of religious rationalisation in the East illustrates the ways in which a magical view of the world, the unquestionable 'doxa', was sustained in China and India due to a myriad of material and ideational forces. In the West, however, the emergence of ethical prophecies and the process of 'disenchantment' begun in ancient Judaism, along with particular material circumstances, including the emergence of autonomous cities and competing nation-states, brought into being the de-magicalisation of the world and the belief that the world could be changed. This belief in alternative possibilities promoted the emergence of an ethical discourse on the state of society and the cosmos, which included what Bourdieu terms 'heterodoxy'.

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7 For analysis of Weber's writings on the city and its relationship with capitalism and rationalisation, see Holton (1986).
This ethical discourse considered the morally correct and incorrect ways to live and organise society, and produced an opposition between, on the one hand, a rejection of this world as ethically irrational and creatural, and on the other, an ethical embracing of the status quo. The emergence of such an ethical discourse meant that 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' positions were forced into confrontational positions which required defending, and thus rationalisation. For Weber, this contest between orthodoxy and heterodoxy took the form of a dialectic between charisma and routinisation, found particularly in the struggle between prophets and priesthoods.

The rationalisation that each position undertook, and the dialectic between them, profoundly shaped the direction of cultural and religious rationalisation. The ontological presupposition of a supramundane God making ethical demands on humans which was at the heart of the Judeo-Christian tradition, promoted a reassessment of the status quo through the ethical rationalism of such religious virtuosi as the Judaic prophets. This was because such a God had to be obeyed and most importantly, understood, not 'absorbed' through contemplation, as was the case with the impersonal God of the Asian religions. This attempt to understand the meaning of God's will and demands, and the dialectic between charisma and routinisation it produced, pushed the direction of religious rationalisation towards de-magicalisation. It also produced, by increasingly intellectualising Western humanity's relations to the world and various areas of life, a resurrection of polytheism in the form of impersonal life-orders. In other words, ethical rationalisation, and the intellectualisation it spawned, were some of the main factors which produced the differentiation of the life-spheres or fields which Bourdieu detects in his
analysis of modern society. This suggests, that by overlooking ethical rationalisation and the attempt to understand the meaning of suffering and death, Bourdieu has limited his ability to trace socio-historical change, which in turn limits his historical and reflexive vision. His argument that an objective 'crisis' which is produced by a change in material conditions is the only way doxa can be challenged and brought into the domain of discourse and discussion, shows the limits of his materialist view, and the extent of his reductionism.

**Origins of the Intellectual Field**

Bourdieu's lack of analysis of the origins of the differentiation of social fields in modern societies becomes most problematic in relation to the contemporary intellectual field. Though his epistemological reflexivity alerts him to the influence that the modern intellectual sphere has over contemporary society, and over himself, Bourdieu fails to examine how this field emerged in its present form, and why it values the particular knowledges/capital that it does. Such issues are central to the development of a self-understanding of modern intellectualism, and therefore of the sociological habitus. They are also, as we have seen, at the forefront of Weber's analysis of the modern intellectual life-sphere. Weber was concerned with the origins of this sphere, its autonomy, and the moral and intellectual costs it wrought.

It is probably fair to say that if Bourdieu emphasises habitus and the ways in which practical logic operates in different spheres of life, Weber's work traces how intellectual and theoretical rationalism has developed and shaped social life. As we have seen, Weber
considered that the separation of the intellectual and religious spheres was largely due to the process of religious rationalisation in Western cultural history. The increasing intellectualisation of Western culture in search of an objective meaning to the problem of theodicy - the meaning of human suffering and death - had the paradoxical effect of helping to produce a culture in which the notion of such an objective meaning is viewed as nonsensical and irrational. This process was accompanied by the legitimation of a particular type of knowledge, that which promoted world mastery or transformation, as valuable. As I showed in the last chapter, this was in strict contrast to the types of knowledge which were valued in China and India, that is, knowledge concerned with maintaining the harmony of the status quo or gnostic union with the divine All-One.

Tracing the history of the intellectual spheres produced by Western, Confucian, and Hindu rationalisms, allowed Weber to reflexively understand how these different histories led to the development or absence of the Western idea of 'science', and its unquestioned presuppositions about knowledge and the world. It showed him how the modern Western intellectual sphere has produced a Dauerhabitus internalised by scientific Berufsmenschen, which in turn engaged in a particular form of intellectual or theoretical rationality. As Saran states, these histories allowed Weber to see the losses and gains associated with the change from ' Intellectual as Metaphysician' to 'Intellectual as Scientist' (1992, p. 14). Weber's analysis of the origins of the Western scientific worldview was both reflexive and self-critical because it placed the observer/intellectual within the field of observation by analysing the presuppositions produced, not just by their position in the intellectual field, but also, and perhaps more importantly, by their position in the wider
process of cultural and intellectual rationalisation. He thereby achieved a 'rupture' with the 'doxa' of the scientific sphere, effectively revealing what Bourdieu calls a 'cultural unconscious' (1971a, p. 183) in a manner suggested by Bourdieu, but not undertaken by him:

One of the prime ways of achieving this 'rupture' is historical analysis, that is, analysing the history of the object but also the history of the observer's relation to the object. This 'de-naturalises' both situations (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 238).

By examining the ontological presuppositions at the heart of Western religious history, and the logical consequences for thought and life-conduct such presuppositions promoted, Weber was able to show, on the one hand, the reasons why modern science values particular types of knowledge, and on the other, the process of intellectualisation which gave rise to such knowledge. His analysis of religious rationalisation highlights the ways in which the inner-worldly asceticism of Puritanism promoted an ethic of world- and self-mastery which provided the main values of the modern intellectual sphere, while simultaneously allowing this sphere to liberate itself from, and turn against, the religious sphere. Thus, Weber's work shows that the origin of the contemporary intellectual sphere and its valuing of universal truths which promote world mastery can be paradoxically found within religious attempts to ethically understand the meaning of death, suffering, and life. This analysis of ethical rationalisation provides a more reflexive understanding of the origins and nature of contemporary intellectual life than the analysis supplied by Bourdieu which, while observing a differentiation of fields, does not explain this

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8 This constant pushing of the boundaries of presuppositions has also been recognised by Lassman and Velody: 'Weber virtually alone in his generation was driven by an almost self-destroying "intellectual honesty" that sought relentlessly to expose the presuppositions of his own thought' (1989, p. 176).
differentiation. Once again, Weber's emphasis on, and Bourdieu's neglect of, humans as morally reflexive and ethically rational beings, produces a profound difference in the theoretical fertility of their respective works.

**Western Sociological Dualisms and Religious Rationalisations**

A further weakness of Bourdieu's science of practice is its ahistorical understanding of practical and theoretical logics. Although Bourdieu points out that the theoretical abstraction of intellectuals creates artificial divisions and categories of reality, the most important of which identified in his work being that between subjectivism and objectivism, agency and structure, it fails to examine how and why different cultural histories promote or retard the development of theoretical and practical understandings of the world. This once again limits the self-understanding of the sociologist of the historical and cultural context from which they view social reality.

Weber's work on religious rationalisation deals precisely with the historical processes whereby these practical and theoretical 'relations to the world' (rationalisms) arise and become the basis of different cultural traditions. Weber demonstrated the ways in which Western rationalisation promoted the separation of theoretical rationalism from other areas of life, bringing about the kind of dualism between practical logic and logical logic which is identified by Bourdieu. In other words, Weber's work can be used to explain why the increasing disenchantment and rationalisation of the world in Western culture causes modern Western intellectuals to divide empirical history into the categories of 'agency' and/or 'structure'. As we have seen, Weber argued that within the magical
worldview, all things were understood as interconnected. There was no conception of separate categories of 'agency' or 'structure' or even 'history'. Time itself was tied to the recurrent cycles of nature and the seasons. The process of disenchantment begun by the ancient Hebrews transformed this in Western cultural history. As Wax, with reference to Weber's work, comments:

"... ancient Judaism introduced a new type of time perspective, one which may be labelled "historical" or "linear" or "developmental"... In the Jewish version they and Yahwe are seen as actors in a cosmic drama proceeding through a sequence of actions toward a grand, foreordained conclusion (1960, p. 453).

The notion of linear time and 'history' brought into being the question of where history was headed, and, as we have seen, the Hebrews responded with the belief that ethical conduct shaped the direction of social history. This particular conception of history also lay at the basis of the Christian understanding of time. Only in the West, however, was the idea of linear time ('history') considered a separate arena in which humans have agency, rather than something constituted in their interrelations with nature. This idea of history depended, in other words, on the disenchantment of the world, and the removal of humans and their actions from the interconnectedness of the magical worldview, a process initiated by the Israelites. In the magical view of the world, the future was 'closed' in that it was considered a continuation of the past. In this context, the question of 'who makes history' would never arise because there was no 'history'/open-future' to be made. Thus, the conceptions of the individual and society were completely different in Chinese and Indian cultures where magic maintained a dominant position.

Weber believed that the process of de-magicalisation begun by the Hebrews reached its logical fulfilment in the Puritan conception of predestination, that is, the belief
in the omnipotence of one transcendent, causal Agent - God. Puritanism also emphasised a specific form of individualised agency. The individual was seen as alone in the world, acting as a tool of the Lord. In an incredible paradox, however, and in the starkest contrast to contemporary sociological understandings of human agency (such as, for example, that found in Bourdieu's work), the Puritans embraced a complete and profound determinism as the basis of human agency. They saw themselves as completely 'unfree', at the same time that, from a sociological point of view, they were completely 'free', that is, able to change social structures and the course of history. They believed that the agentic transformation of the natural and human worlds they undertook was the product of God's determinism working through them, not their own agency. Paradoxically, it was this determinism which gave them an almost unrivalled agency to transform and rationalise the world.

An unintentional outcome of this unrivalled agency was that Puritanism gave birth to the modern scientific understanding of the cosmos and society, which undermined their idea of a great causal Agent, bringing about the 'death of God'. Science destroyed the presupposition that there was an objective meaning to the cosmos and that God was the cause of events in history and nature. Disenchantment was brought to its fateful conclusion while simultaneously becoming the precondition for a sociological understanding of the world. In such a situation, the question inevitably arose - how does 'history' occur if it is not determined by God? Western thought, reflecting upon the new, post-theocentric social reality, was faced with the dilemma of whether humans make history through their agency, or if structures move history in an inevitable direction.
The structure/agency dualism which Bourdieu attempts to overcome is therefore a product of the rationalisation and disenchantment of Western culture. It is dependent on a specifically Western conception of time, that is, an idea of 'history' which has to be 'made', and is dependent on the dissection of reality undertaken by intellectual rationalisation into categories labelled 'agency' or 'structure' or 'history'. This process is identified, but not explained by Bourdieu. Only in the West do intellectuals see agency and structure as separate categories which need to be explained and reconciled, because only in the West does intellectual abstraction undertake the carving up of empirical reality into such categories and classifications. The agency/structure, objectivism/subjectivism dualisms are not only solved by Western rationalism, but are also produced by it. This is in sharp contrast to the processes of religious rationalisation found in China and India. Both of those cultures and their distinctive rationalisms gained meaning not through transforming the world, but through other types of relations to it. Agency was not about world control and transformation, but about stilling the self so that it could be absorbed into the greater whole.

In contrast to the individualistic conceptions of agency of the West, Chinese understandings of agency, as shown in Weber's work, involved reinforcing social structures. It was not the case that agency was lacking in China (and that social change never occurred - the Orientalist account), but that a different conception of agency predominated. The place of historical agents in society, and their organic connection with its maintenance, became the dominant conception of the role of human action. The opposition between the individual and society never arose as a problem since the
individual was not conceived of as separate to society, but as part of it, as expressed through the doctrine of the Tao. This emphasis on the order of the Tao meant that the problem of agency versus structure, the question of 'who makes history', did not and could not arise. Questions about how social change occurs never became problematic since social reproduction was the basic orientation of Chinese social thought. An individual feeling out of alignment with society was expected to employ their agency to 'adjust' to it, not change it. Agency was directed at the minimisation of individuality, not its glorification. Thus the idea of 'history' and social change remained relatively foreign to Confucian rationalism. Any question of who made society likewise remained foreign.

Similarly, Indian religious intellectuals believed that the divine order was connected to this world and its social order, neither of which could be changed or altered by human effort. Consequently, the question of who made history was likewise nonsensical. Belief in the eternal social/cosmic order meant that salvation could only be achieved through integration with this order. Contemplation and the severing of this-worldly ties came to be seen as the best means of achieving such salvation. Salvation was not achieved through mastering and transforming the world in accordance with God's will because, firstly, there was no supra-mundane God to impose a divine will, and secondly, such a project would be considered futile since change was viewed as ephemeral and transitory. As in China, the affirmation of agency in Hinduism was expressed through negating individuality by joining with the All-One.

What the comparative cultural analysis of religious intellectuals undertaken by Weber thus reveals is that the sociological understanding of agency and structure, and of
how they interact to produce history, is tied to a process of disenchantment and de-
magicalisation. Such an analysis provides a more extensive reflexive understanding of the
dualisms of agency/structure and subjectivism/objectivism than that provided by Bourdieu,
by identifying their origins and contextualising their cultural significance. In this way,
Weber’s work not only identifies the separation between theoretical and practical relations
to reality which has come to dominate the modern Western intellectual sphere, but also
helps to explain why this is the case. This provides a greater reflexive understanding for
the intellectual of their historical and cultural context, and the reasons for their particular
view of the world. In comparison, although Bourdieu’s analysis of the paradoxes of
objectivism is a sophisticated example of epistemological reflexivity, its explanatory power
is limited.

Science as Symbolic Violence?

One of the main effects of the limited moral reflexivity of Bourdieu’s science of practices is
its inability to see the potential for symbolic violence which exists within science’s
domination over the modern intellectual sphere. Although Bourdieu is aware that there
exist ‘false’ scientific ‘prophets’, and that science can be caught up in the symbolic
violence conducted by the State, he does not view science itself as symbolically violent.
He argues instead that his version of reflexivity not only makes science more ‘scientific’, it
has favourable political implications:

By helping the progress of science and thus the growth of knowledge about the social world,
reflexivity makes possible a more responsible politics, both inside and outside of academia
(Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 194).

For this reason, Bourdieu’s work and his reflexivity are dedicated to maintaining science:
I need not say that the obsessive reflexivity which is the condition of a rigorous scientific practice has nothing in common with the false radicalism of the questioning of science that is now proliferating (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 246).

Yet surely a truly reflexive science must question the material and symbolic foundations of its existence. If not, a ‘frontier’ of faith is established which can never be rationally scrutinised or reflected upon, and which must be accepted as valid. Reflexivity would therefore only be possible upon issues on the ‘accessible’ side of that frontier. This in fact seems to be the case with Bourdieu, who appears unwilling to question the value and existence of science. If he were to do so, that is, if he were to question his own values and engage in moral reflexivity, he would most likely see that science operates, as Weber has indicated, according to similar forms of symbolic violence to those found in religion and art. Science, in order to maintain its social position as the basis of ‘truth’, and thus dominate the modern worldview, is dependent upon the belief of the State, general public, and ‘laity’ in its abilities. Modern intellectuals and scientists are just as dependent upon the belief that their claims to truth are legitimate as religious intellectuals once were. Science is dependent on particular cultural values, such as those of order, calculation, and control, in order to maintain its own value. If Bourdieu is ‘scientifically’ revealing the arbitrary nature of the worldviews and presuppositions of certain strata which are imposed on other strata in society through symbolic violence, Weber is moving in the same direction when he identifies the ways in which science is a socially and historically located, and therefore arbitrary, worldview with its own presuppositions which cannot be supported scientifically, and which depends on the ‘misrecognition’ of this fact in order to maintain its dominance.
Indeed, it is possible that Bourdieu’s work itself is symbolically violent, since it imposes its arbitrary nature as ‘objective’ and ‘superior’ knowledge without revealing its own socio-historical and cultural location, and the presuppositions stemming from this location. Bourdieu marks a ‘social distance’ between, on the one hand, himself and the science he proposes, and on the other, the subjectivist and ‘unscientific’ pole of knowledge. He gains ‘distinction’ by allowing what is arbitrary, to be ‘naturalised’, that is, to become the yardstick of ‘valuable’ knowledge. For Weber, by contrast, the objectivity of the scientist rests ultimately on subjectivity. Moral values and particular beliefs are at the heart of scientific objectivity, none of which can be proven or defended scientifically. To some extent then, Weber is challenging the ‘symbolic violence’ of science which masks value-judgements as ‘scientific knowledge’ and ‘objectivity’, by showing that in fact they are just as much subjectively and morally based as other forms of ‘irrational’ knowledge, such as religion. Furthermore, he reveals that science is in fact more limited than many scientists and the ‘laity’ would believe precisely because it is unable to address the moral and value-positions which guide life. Those believing otherwise are, to his mind, merely ‘big children’ (Weber, 1991, p. 142).

In this sense, Bourdieu’s valuing of science as the basis of a more responsible politics becomes problematic since he never makes it clear why scientific ‘progress’ has this effect. Presumably, science watches the watchmen and guards against the abuses and distortions of truth committed by politicians. Yet, if Bourdieu’s analysis of the scientific sphere is correct, then the numbering of opposing opinions make it possible for politicians to draw on an ‘expert’ to legitimate any position they may undertake. If the history of
sociology, just to take one example, has shown anything, it is that the 'progress' of
science equals the progressive differentiation of theories, positions, and 'truths'. It has also
shown that the 'growth of knowledge' about the social world has included ways it can be
made more economically 'rational', or reproduced with existing social inequalities, rather
than transformed or challenged. It is hard to see the unquestionable 'truth' about the social
world within social science that seems to be the premise of Bourdieu's view that science is
politically beneficial.

By not examining the limitations of science in contrast to the expectations of the
public and many intellectuals, and thereby not questioning the dominance of science in
modern life, Bourdieu is maintaining a form of symbolic violence. He does not use his
reflexivity or concepts to examine the power science has come to have in modern society,
and takes this as granted. If we argue, as Bourdieu does, that religion only has a relative
autonomy, the same observation must be made of science, in that it depends on social and
lay recognition in order to maintain its dominance in the intellectual sphere. By not
explicitly addressing this issue, Bourdieu has failed to be morally reflexive, unlike Weber
who realised that science was not the Promethean power it promised to be. Although
there are superficial similarities between their positions regarding the 'false' prophets of the
lectern, the latter saw very clearly science's limitations, especially in terms of values and
morals, and thus offered simultaneously a more reflexive and less symbolically violent
scientific understanding of Modernity.

**Conclusion**
Bourdieu's science of practices is therefore faced with the paradox that its epistemological reflexivity, pursued in the name of a more 'scientific science', limits its moral reflexivity. His valuing of science and objectivity leads him to reject reflection on the meaning of these things, and their relation to other values in social life. Yet the choice to pursue a more 'scientific science' is made in the moral realm, the arena of struggle between the warring values/gods, and thus can only be revealed through moral reflexivity. Bourdieu has accepted the modern Western scientific worldview, as witnessed by his attempt to overcome the agency/structure, subjectivist/objectivist dualism, which is itself a product of the scientific, post-theocentric cosmology of the West. His attempts to overcome the subjectivist/objectivist dualism, suggest that he sees such a solution as valuable. Yet he cannot scientifically defend or explain why this is valuable. Certainly, as a Bourdieuan analysis would most likely argue, its value is a product of the nature of the scientific field, and Bourdieu's internalisation of that field via his habitus has given it value to him. This does not aid us, however, in exploring its value in relation to other areas or spheres of life. Since it is a product of objective science, such a solution is practically useless in terms of what it can tell us about how to live. In terms of assisting us to decide what moral positions to take and what values to live by, it is also unhelpful. Only moral reflexivity can decide which of these positions is most important, and whether overcoming the subjectivist/objectivist dualism in Western sociological thought is valuable or not. Epistemological reflexivity does not provide answers to such questions because it does not reflect on, and must presuppose, the value of such a solution.
By defining 'reflexive sociology' according to the reflection on the epistemological stance and position of the observer to improve their scientific objectivity, Bourdieu negates reflection on the moral positions and values of the scientist, presupposing that they value objectivity and science. This presupposition, however, limits his ability to achieve that which his reflexive science of practice set out to achieve, namely, an understanding of practice in its totality. Practice and agency cannot be understood in their totality unless some understanding of how meaning is attained is included in any examination of them. Human beings are not *Homo Potestas*, but malleable beings just as capable of compassion and cooperation as of competitive struggle. I would argue, therefore, that an understanding of practice must start with the observer engaging in moral reflection on their own practice, the values they hold, where they have internalised them from, and how such values shape their views of reality. I am not arguing for the 'complacent and intimist return upon the private person of the sociologist' (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 72), but for a reflexive analysis of where the values and conceptions of the intellectual sphere originate, how these shape the practice of intellectuals within that sphere, as well as for the individual to examine if such values and the consequences for their practice that such values hold, are worthwhile and meaningful to them. Only when such moral reflexivity is made the basis of sociology can we truly talk of a 'reflexive sociology'. Only then will it be possible that 'through the sociologist, all social agents [will be] able to know a little more clearly what they are and what they are doing' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 186). Such a position can only be reached, however, by reflecting
on the meaning and value of a scientific sociology, a path first trodden by Weber, but since overgrown by the thick foliage of the desire for a 'scientific science'.

In summary then, Bourdieu's science of practices is limited in its moral reflexivity, and thus its reflexivity in general. His concepts applied empirically do not explain his own practices and motivations adequately. While not necessary arriving at the same conclusion as Rabinow and Dreyfus (1993), that Bourdieu should reject the label of 'science' and explicitly reveal his moral position, I would argue that Bourdieu should at least show his awareness of the limitations of science, one of the most important of which is its inability to be morally reflexive. This is important because, like Bourdieu, I believe that there are very important reasons for attempting to display the misrecognised workings of symbolic violence in contemporary society. Unlike him, however, I believe that these reasons are moral, not scientific, in nature. To believe the latter is to potentially establish a form of symbolic violence through science itself.

Paradoxically, therefore, just as with the Puritans, hoplites, and religious intellectuals that Weber examined, Bourdieu's chosen means defeat his objective. His attempt to establish a completely reflexive sociology which understands practice in its totality, is undermined and negated by the means he employs to achieve this - a scientific understanding of practice. Such an understanding forces him to abandon a view of humans as sufferers and carers, and it forces him, in the name of objectivity, to cease reflecting on values and morality. The limited view of practice which results is another example of the tragic workings of self-defeating agency. Ironically, only within the context of Weber's writings on such agency and its moral effects, writings overlooked by
Bourdieu in his rush to dismiss Weber as a subjectivist, is it possible to understand why Bourdieu's means defeat his ends, and why his 'reflexive sociology' is limited in its reflexivity.
Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to highlight the costs involved in valuing objective science in relation to the development of a reflexive sociology. By using the 'science of practice' developed by Pierre Bourdieu as an example, it has attempted to show that perhaps the most important of these costs is the way in which contemporary conceptions of reflexivity in sociology often implicitly reduce the definition of reflexivity to a form of 'epistemological reflexivity' at the expense of 'moral reflexivity'. This is not a thesis for or against science, but one merely attempting to highlight the paradox produced by valuing science and reflexivity simultaneously. In the process, it shows the ways in which this paradox exists in Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, leaving it less reflexive than he believes.

In order to present this argument, as well as show the ways in which Bourdieu's science of practice is part of the scientific Weltanschauung and thus subject to its presuppositions, its values, and its moral costs, I have detailed the concepts of ‘habitus’, ‘field’, ‘capital’, ‘doxa’, and the like, and the way in which they fit together in a coherent and systematic manner. I have also shown the result of Bourdieu's application of this epistemological ‘toolbox’ to a number of ‘fields' in social life, including those of education, art, and science. While highlighting the insights and contributions of Bourdieu's work, such as the development of the concept of habitus and a form of 'socioanalysis', I have also shown its shortcomings, including its failure to take account of the differentiation of spheres in modern societies, the importance of subjective meaning in human life, and areas of social existence (such as compassion and ‘brotherliness’) which are not ‘rare’ or valued
as means to increase social power, but as meaningful ways of relating to other human beings. I have argued that these failures stem from Bourdieu's embracing of the values and presuppositions of the scientific sphere.

Bourdieu has assumed in his reflexive sociology that science is valuable, and that the pursuit of it is objectively valid. This thesis has argued, however, that such assumptions are a limit to reflexivity, and that to be a truly reflexive sociology, Bourdieu's work would have to examine why he values science, from where this valuing has originated, and if this valuing of science is worthwhile in relation to other values in social life. In other words, to be truly reflexive, Bourdieu would need to reflect, not just on the epistemological position from which his work views the world, but also, and perhaps more importantly, on the moral and value-positions which are at the base of his work. Bourdieu's work, however, does not contain such an analysis, and is therefore limited in its reflexivity.

For example, one apparent reason why Bourdieu values science is its ability to reveal the misrecognised operations of 'symbolic violence' in an 'objective' manner. Yet a completely reflexive analysis would have to include why such an objective revelation is valuable, and why revealing symbolic violence is valuable in the first place. This, of course, cannot be stated scientifically. Nor can Bourdieu state scientifically why a position which argues that social science should be dedicated to the maintenance of social order and the status quo, rather than revealing symbolic violence, is invalid. Only in moral terms can such a position be rejected.
Why, then, does Bourdieu not engage in a moral reflection upon the meaning of the values at the base of his science of practice? This thesis has argued that the primary reason is precisely because he espouses a science of practice. Bourdieu's valuing of scientific objectivity runs counter to, and in tension with, the revelation of his moral positions. Such a revelation would be subjective and 'unscientific'. It is the valuing of one value, the validity and worthwhileness of science, which causes him to exclude other values from his work, such as why morally and politically it is important to reveal the operations of symbolic violence. The God of one value-sphere demands monotheistic rejection of the others.

By contrast, I have argued that a morally reflexive analysis of the value and meaning of the modern intellectual sphere, and thus a profoundly important contribution to any truly reflexive sociology, is to be found in the work of Max Weber on religious rationalisation. Weber's work examines why and how the valuing and pre-eminence of science has come about in modern Western societies. It examines how the 'self-evident truth' of objective science was produced historically and culturally through Western rationalisation and its attempt to master and transform reality. Most importantly, this work is engaged in a moral reflection upon the meaning of science, and argues that, in relation to what Weber considers to be the most important questions facing humanity - 'how best to live' and 'what meaning does death have' - science is meaningless. Weber's work shows that the Western intellectual sphere was once dominated by religious ontologies and worldviews which, in a form of 'ethical rationalism', valued the search for an objective truth about the meaning to life, that is, a solution to the problem of theodicy -
why humans suffer and die. This 'ethical rationalism' was increasingly replaced as the basis of knowledge, however, by the theoretical rationalism which it had once merely employed as a means to knowledge. Within the theoretically rational ontology of the modern intellectual sphere, answers to problems raised by the theories of science became valuable and sought after, and what was formerly, under the religious hegemony of the intellectual sphere, the central question of life, is lost or ignored. Theoretical rationalism has come to produce questions, such as 'who makes history - human agency or structures' which interest it alone, and which, from the position of ethical rationalism, are 'irrational'.

In my view, such a morally reflexive work offers insights not found in the work of Bourdieu and which must be incorporated into any truly reflexive sociology. It contextualises the origins of the values and ontology of the modern intellectual sphere which any reflexive sociology would be a part of, and therefore allows for a greater self-understanding of the position of the sociologist, the aim of reflexive sociology. For example, Weber's work, by examining the historical configurations of the Post-Theocentric Western worldview and its need for new conceptions of causality, historically and culturally contextualises why a solution to the subject/object debate is valued by Bourdieu and other sociologists, but not by other cultures. It also indicates how Bourdieu's values are a result of his internalisation and experiences of Western culture and its scientific relation to the world. It therefore aids in the clarification of the reasons why Bourdieu's valuing of science to reach his ethical values forces him to sacrifice to the Apollonic god of science, that is, conform to the logics of the scientific field that determine what knowledge is given the status of 'capital' and 'value'. 
Weber's work offers these insights because, unlike Bourdieu, he did not assume that science was valuable, but instead set out to examine whether or not this was the case. In a powerful example of moral reflexivity, Weber questioned the values he and his contemporaries held, and attempted to understand them in relation to the values of others, as well as to the major questions facing humanity. The result of this attempt was that he realised that modern science had not been a cost free achievement, but one which brought serious losses to human existence, including the loss of a sense of meaning and enchantment with the world. This is almost in complete contrast to Bourdieu, who does not see any loss involved in the development and furthering of science. Because of such losses, Weber believed that science could only be of value if it were placed at the service of moral agency. He did not value science as an end in itself, but saw its usefulness lying in its ability to clarify attempts at 'knowing thyself' in a spirit of Socratic determination. Reflexivity was valuable to him because it helped maintain human dignity and freedom, as well as meaningful relations with other human beings. The struggle to maintain these values was fought out in the realm of moral reflexivity, not epistemological reflexivity, and this is why Weber explicitly rejected the search for universal laws and concepts in the pursuit of methodology for methodology's sake. Weber realised that this position was not scientifically defensible or scientifically necessary, but this only reinforced his argument that science rested upon an 'irrational' base, that is, upon value-judgements. For Weber, therefore, the concept of ethical rationalism, and reflection on it, must be maintained in social life, even though it is scientifically 'irrational'. It must be maintained because it retains the possibility of understanding an important dimension of the practice of human
beings, their attempt to understand and overcome suffering, but also because it retains the possibility of understanding one’s own practice as intellectual and carer of other human beings. For Weber, it was an act of moral defiance of the internal logics of the intellectual sphere to include in social analysis an ethic of ‘brotherliness’ along with the concept of ethical rationalism. Weber’s work allows us to see that, despite what Bourdieu’s analysis of the intellectual sphere would suggest, many intellectuals, including Bourdieu himself, do not operate in the intellectual sphere to accumulate scientific and academic capital, but to aid other human beings by making sense of the world in order to make it better in some way. The meaning of intellectual endeavour for many intellectuals does not, therefore, come from accumulating capital, but from relating to other human beings through attempting to fulfil in their intellectual practice an ethic of ‘brotherliness’.

Due to these numerous, morally reflexive insights, I believe it is more fruitful to see Weber’s work on religion, not as an ethnocentric judgement about the ethical and developmental ‘failures’ of other cultures, but as an attempt to better understand the position and meaning of his contemporaneous Western culture, an attempt which highlights many of its failures, encapsulated in the metaphor of the ‘iron cage’. Weber’s work is an attempt to gain a better understanding of the modern Western perspective by comparing it to other cultural and historical perspectives. It is an attempt, I believe, which is largely successful, and adds to our understanding of the world precisely by its concentration upon how we understand the world. As such, it offers perhaps the best start for a reflexive understanding of the limits and possibilities of a sociological habitus based on reflexive sociology.
Therefore, if Roger Brubaker (1993) is correct and reflexivity must be made a greater part of sociology, we must allow Weber equal status with Bourdieu in the pantheon of its founders. Much of his work is echoed in Bourdieu’s science of practices, but more importantly, it is Weber’s work which stoically warns us of the cost of our Faustian desires. If it is the case, as he warns, that for every God there is a Devil, then the cost of dedication to the demon/god of science is a purging from our souls the influence of the demon/god of moral reflexivity. One demands the questioning of values, the other attempts to serve them as faithfully as possible. Which to choose? Ultimately, perhaps the greatest success, and the greatest failure, of Bourdieu's science of practice lies in the fact that it can never answer such a question.
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