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Science and Critique in Nietzsche and Max Weber

M.A. THESIS. PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICS AND THE ECONOMY.

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INTRODUCTION

In his famous lecture *Science as a Vocation*, delivered in 1917, Max Weber remarked about science the following:

> Thus a naive optimism had led people to glorify science, or rather the techniques of mastering the problems of life based on science, as the road to happiness. But after Nietzsche's annihilating criticism of those "last men" "who have discovered happiness," I can probably ignore this completely. After all, who believes it- apart from some overgrown children in their professorial chairs or editorial offices?[1]

In this passage, three issues stand out:

(1) Weber goes against the identification of science with life – meaning and happiness (*Glück*);
(2) Weber seems to base his views against scientific optimism and science's glorification on Nietzsche's annihilating criticism of the Last Men for whom science entails happiness;
(3) Weber detects this attitude mainly in university and academia in general.

These propositions are striking enough for every reader, since they can be read as an overt acknowledgement by Weber of Nietzsche's criticism of modernity and science. They are striking, first, because of Nietzsche's open hostility to sociology of his day (hostility directed towards both authors and methodology) and second, because of

[1] Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures* (Indianapolis Cambridge: Hackettt Publishing Company, 2004), 17. Throughout the thesis, for all Weber's methodological writings I follow the *Max Weber Collected Methodological Writings*, ed. by H.H. Bruun and Sam Whimster (London and New York: Routledge, 2012). For Weber's texts on world religions (*Introduction to the Economic Ethics of World Religions* and *Intermediate Reflections on the Economic Ethics of World Religions*) I rely on *The Essential Weber. A Reader,* ed. by Sam Whimster (London and New York: Routledge, 2004). For Nietzsche I use the following editions: *Beyond Good and Evil. Preclude to a Philosophy of Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) = BGE. *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,2006) =GM. *The Gay Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) = GS. *Human All Too Human* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) = HAH. *Daybreak. Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997) = D. *The Antichrist, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and other writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006) = AC, EH and TI. I will refer to *Nachlass* passages in the footnotes as NF, year, number of KSA notebook, the number of the note in brackets, KSA volume and page. Underlinings refer to Nietzsche's own underlinings, bold text to his double or multiple underlinings.

what has been called Weber's "overall silence" regarding Nietzsche;[2] that is, the absence of any extended engagement with Nietzsche's positions. On top of that, any comparative study of Nietzsche and Max Weber has to start from the fact that each author represents disciplines which at first glance stand in opposition, namely philosophy and sociology. How viable is it, then, to argue for similarities between Nietzsche and Weber? On what criteria should the discussion be based? The abovementioned passage from *Science as a Vocation* indicates that there are good reasons for investigating the relationship between Nietzsche and Weber more closely. However, this passage alone does not suffice for a systematic comparison. How then should one proceed in order to demonstrate that the relationship between Nietzsche and Weber is not limited to some brief quotes and sparse references?

In this thesis I will argue that Nietzsche and Weber have indeed common points, or to put it precisely, that in Max Weber's thought Nietzsche's presence can be detected. Specifically, and in light of the passage from *Science as a Vocation*, my focus will be on the critique of science they both articulated. My thesis is that Weber's attitude towards science bears similarities to Nietzsche's despite the grave differences separating their thought. I will argue that both rejected the idea of scientific objectivity as well as the belief in science's capacity to generate ultimate values. The reasons for this rejection lie in fact that in their accounts science stands as the main force which carried forward the Death of God and the process of disenchantment (*Entzauberung*) in modernity. However, for both science still retains its instrumental importance and hence neither Nietzsche nor Weber relapse into positions that disregard science as such. In effect, I argue, Nietzsche and Weber affirm science although they do not ascribe to it anything more than its instrumental value. However, the heterogeneity of their critiques as regards to science and philosophy in general arises from Nietzsche's commitment to a contestation of values aiming at the enhancement and affirmation of life itself, whereas Weber insists on the character of vocation (*Beruf*).

Besides a famous phrase published by Baumgarten (but not found in Weber's collected works), which has long been seen as a possible entrance into the riddle of

[2] Roger Häußling, *Nietzsche und die Soziologie: Zum Konstrukt des Übermenschen, zu dessen anti-soziologischen Implikationen und zur soziologischen Reaktion auf Nietzsches Denken* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000), 165.

the Nietzsche-Weber relationship, in which Weber allegedly admits that "[d]ie Welt, in der wir selber geistig existieren, ist weitgehend eine von Marx und Nietzsche geprägte Welt"[3], it is mostly in post-war literature that we find some approaches to the issue. For example, Leo Strauss identifies Weber with a (noble) nihilism, which bears, even latently, a Nietzschean flavour and culminates in the belief in science's deficient character in modernity[4], while for Wolfgang Mommsen Weber stood at a "dialectical standpoint between Marx and Nietzsche".[5]

The recent resurgence of the interest in Nietzsche's philosophy, especially in the English- speaking world, coupled with the task of examining Nietzsche's relevance for post-war democratic theory, has also offered us some crucial but similar insights. Part of this renewed interest in Nietzsche has led to some thought-provoking remarks on our topic: for some writers, Nietzsche and Weber are the first who gave an account of modernity as "pluralism of values",[6] while others have gone further by stating that Max Weber is essentially the official successor to Nietzsche's legacy in the field of German intellectual sphere.[7] Moreover, a quite impressive account of precise affinities between Nietzsche and Weber regarding science has been offered by Bruce Detweiler.[8] For Bryan Turner, Weber's connections with Nietzsche can be summarized in two broad points, namely the process of secularization and the conception of history as a struggle for social domination.[9] Finally, David Owen's study on Nietzsche, Weber and Foucault represents a groundbreaking account regarding the relationship between Nietzsche and Weber. Owen offers an alternative discourse of modernity, different to that of Habermas'. Taking as starting point Nietzsche, instead of Hegel, Owen shows how the works of Nietzsche, Weber (and Foucault) can be understood as central moments of post-Kantian critique. The three thinkers are characterized by their genealogical approach to crucial issues of

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[3] Eduard Baumgarten, *Max Weber. Werk und Person*, (Tübingen 1964), S.554f.

[4] Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 42, 48.

[5] Wolfgang Mommsen, *The age of bureaucracy: perspectives on the political sociology of Max Weber* (New Jersey: Blackwell, 1974), 91.

[6] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London/Brooklyn NY: Verso, 2005), 133.

[7] Friedrich Apel, *Nietzsche contra Democracy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 160.

[8] Bruce Detweiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism* (Chicago and London: The Chicago University Press, 1990), 83. Also, Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and the Political Thought* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1989), 167.

[9] Bryan S. Turner, *Max Weber: From History to Modernity* (London/New York: Routledge Publishers, 1992), 188.

modernity such as the concept of maturity.[10]Another more interesting as well as more systematic way of unlocking the Nietzsche-Weber question has been proposed by those who seek to show either the role of sociology in Nietzsche's thinking or the crucial place of Nietzsche's philosophy in Weber's sociology. As far as the first group is concerned, authors like Runciman have tried to argue for a Nietzschean critique of sociology which ends up as a meta-sociology.[11] Aspers, perhaps on a different note to Runciman's, has underlined what he calls "socio-ontology" in Nietzsche's thinking.[12] Runciman's position has been directly disputed by Solms-Laubach in his study *"Nietzsche and the Early German-Austrian Sociology"*, one of the few monographs on the issue. Solms-Laubach argues that although Nietzsche's criticisms transformed (or at least: affected) the way thinkers such as Tönnies, Max and Alfred Weber[13] developed their projects, to speak about a "meta-sociology" might distort Nietzsche's original account.[14] Recently, Piazzesi argued that Nietzsche's critique of sociology rests on a critique of sociology's non-reflexive character; that is, as a positivistic science, sociology does not understand itself as an interpretation but as a fixed system.[15]

Regarding the second way of setting up the discussion, the most elaborate account is perhaps Eden's monograph *"Political Leadership and Nihilism"*. Eden tries to detect commonalities at both political *and* philosophical levels, arguing that Weber tried to incorporate Nietzsche's criticisms, while remaining committed to his liberal convictions.[16] Warren also detects elements of Nietzsche in Weber's cultural critique when describing *"Weber's Liberalism for a Nietzschean World"*, arguing that the latter's conception of "nihilism" takes an institutional form, that is, bureaucracy.[17] It

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[10] David Owen, *Maturity and Modernity. Nietzsche, Weber Foucault and the ambivalence of reason* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 3-4.

[11] W.G. Runciman, "Can There Be a Nietzschean Sociology*?", European Journal of Sociology* 41, no. 1 (2000): 3-21.

[12] Patrick Aspers, "Nietzsche's Sociology*", Sociological Forum* 22, no. 4 (2007): 494.

[13] Solms-Laubach, *Nietzsche and the Early Austrian and German Sociology*. (Berlin and New York: Walter der Gruyter), 10.

[14] Ibid., 23-28.

[15] Chiara Piazzesi,''Nietzsche and Sociology'', in *Handbuch Nietzsche und die Wissenschaften*, ed. Helmut Heit and Lisa Heller (Berlin: Walter der Gruyter, 2014), 343, 349.

[16] Robert Eden, *Political Leadership and Nihilism, A Study of Nietzsche and Weber* (Tampa: University Press of Florida, 1984). Here I cannot do justice to the whole book of Eden, which comprises an original and pioneering account for the study of Nietzsche and Weber relationship.

[17] Mark Warren, "Weber's Liberalism for a Nietzchean World*", The American Political Science Review* 82, no. 1 (March 1988): 33-34.

should also be mentioned that Karl Jaspers was one of the first scholars who promoted and stressed Weber's philosophical side, an interpretation which of course underlined the importance of Nietzsche's philosophy in his thought.[18] In his classic study, Arthur Mitzman noticed the impact of Nietzsche's perceived anti-modernism on the first generation of German sociology, including Weber.[19] A similar position can be found in Scaff's argument, which analyses Nietzsche's influence on Weber by way of Simmel's book *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche.*[20]

In this thesis I will tackle the problem by a different route. Instead of attempting to detect sociology's importance for Nietzsche or philosophy's importance for Weber, I will treat both authors as members of the *Bildungbürgertum*, i.e. Germany's distinctive educated class. The aim of this shift is to show first that the two thinkers are indeed comparable, and secondly, that by and large the same set of problems regarding the status of science in Germany is to be found in their works.

Nonetheless, to argue that Nietzsche and Weber should be treated as members of a larger common framework does not diminish the problem raised when one considers what other German scholars, many of whom were in the academic circle of Max Weber, actually thought of Nietzsche. From Windelband, a scholar close to Weber, in whose writings we find a rather generic treatment of Nietzsche[21], to Rickert, who, in the 4th edition of his book "*The Concept Formation*" after Weber's sudden death, points out the "imitative idolization of Nietzsche" as sign of romantic excess and insipid aestheticism in Germany[22], Nietzsche's reception was more than problematic. In general, as Ascheim has noted, around the turn of the century Nietzsche's ideas became all the more popular, a process which was met with skepticism and dissatisfaction by many intellectuals in Germany, such as Ferdinand Tönnies.[23] Even

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[18] Dieter Henrich, "Karl Jaspers: Thinking with Max Weber in Mind", in *Max Weber and his Contemporaries,* ed. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2006), 530.

[19] Arthur Mitzman, *Sociology and Estrangement. Three Sociologists of Imperial Germany* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 34.

[20] Lawrence Scaff, *Fleeing the Iron Cage* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1991), 132-133.

[21] Wilhelm Windelband, *A History of Philosophy* (London: McMillan, 1901), 676-680.

[22] Heirich Rickert, *The Limits of Concept Formation in Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 8.

[23] Steven Ascheim, *Nietzsche's Legacy in Germany* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994), 39-44.

though this problem is acknowledged in my study, one of the basic claims governing it is that no overall rejection of Nietzsche can be detected in Weber's texts. This non-rejection of Nietzsche is all the more surprising given Weber's well-known obsession with clarity when using concepts and scientific terminology.

For understanding Weber's attitude to Nietzsche, we can begin with a basic sketch of Nietzsche's appearance in his texts. Nietzsche is encountered:

a) in Weber's fragmentary notes regarding lectures on the issue of *National Economics* from 1898 where he applies Nietzschean vocabulary when discussing ancient Greece:

„Erschütterung der Tradition – {Skepsis} Entstehung der polit[ischen] "Übermenschen" (...)

„Also: G[e]g[en]satz der Herren- un Heerden-Moral" (...)[24]

b) In *Economy and Society*:

α) in *Sociology of Religion* when discussing resentment and theodicy.[25]

β) In *Communities* where, again in reference to the concept of resentment, it describes Nietzsche's construction in *Genealogy of Morals* as "much-admired".[26]

γ) In *Sociology of Power* (Charisma and its Transformation), where again he uses Nietzschean formulations.[27]

c) In the text "*Suffrage and Democracy in Germany*" where elaborates on Nietzsche's view of "aristocratic politics".[28]

d) In the famous *Protestant Ethic*, where, in its closing remarks about the future, a reference is made to "Last Men" (Letzte Menschen).[29]

e) In the *Introductory Remarks* where again the *Genealogy* is characterized – again – as a "brilliant essay".[30]

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[24] Max Weber, "Allgemeine ('theoretische') Nationalökonomie. Vorlesungen 1894 – 1898", in *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* III/1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 679. I follow the punctuation used in the MWG edition for Weber's notes regarding his lectures on national economics.

[25] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978), 494, 499.

[26] Ibid., 934-935.

[27] Ibid., 1134.

[28] Max Weber, "Suffrage and Democracy in Germany", in *Weber: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 122.

[29] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 128.

[30] Max Weber, "Introduction to the Economic Ethics of World Religions", in *The Essential Weber. A Reader*, ed. Sam Whimster (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 59.

f) In the abovementioned passage of *Science as a Vocation.*

Seen in this light, Weber's interest in Nietzsche's philosophy seems to revolve around problematics formulated during 1880s (especially in the *Genealogy*). Despite the grave difference separating the two projects, it will be argued that Weber found in Nietzsche a critique of modern culture, where a basic component of this critique was the role of science and its relationship with values.

That said, my intention is to avoid as much as possible fixed interpretations of Weber as a theorist of – say – sociological systems[31], and to examine instead to what extent his intellectual anxieties and orientations are settled in proximity to those of Nietzsche's. As a matter of fact, only months before his death, in a letter to Robert Leifmam, Weber stated that:

> If I have become a sociologist (according to my letter of accreditation) it is mainly in order to exorcise the specter of collective conceptions which still lingers among us.[32]

Seen in this light, the Weberian "sociology" is not to be understood as yet another system of rules and principles aimed at understanding how society functions, but can be viewed instead as one of the last phases of Germany's *Geisteswissenschaften,* in which the problematic symbiosis of value and *Wissenschaft* reached an irreconcilable point. As I will argue later on, it is on this point that the reference to Nietzsche's "annihilating criticism" can be used as hermeneutic tool for Weber's considerations *without* implying any identification of their thought as a whole.

It is not a coincidence then that Mommsen noted that "Max Weber's view of history was not unrelated to that of Nietzsche"[33], while Wolfgang Schluchter has argued that Weber's "*Hauptwerk*" (as his wife, Marianne Weber, named it), *Economy and Society*, had the same fate as Marx's third volume of *Capital* and Nietzsche's *Will to*

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[31] For example, see Günter Roth and Richard Bendix, *Scholarship and Partisanship* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1971), 43-44. Roth illuminatingly mentions the simple fact that after Weber's death in Germany, his reputation spread to various disciplines (e.g. in the thought of Müller-Armack, Otto Hinze or Otto Brunner) but not to "sociology". The reason is that, unlike France, sociology did not exist as an academic discipline.

[32]"(...) wenn ich jetzt nun einmal Soziologie geworden bin (laut meiner Anstellungsurkunde!) dann wesentlich deshalb, um dem immer noch spukenden Betrieb der mit Kollektivbegriffen arbeitet, ein Ende zu machen". Max Weber, *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* II/10 Briefe 1918-1920 2.Halbband (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 946.

[33] Wolfgang Mommsen, *"*Max Weber's political sociology and his philosophy of world history*",* *International Social Science Journal* XVII (1965): 23.

Power[34], that is, the partial distortion of the authors' genuine intentions. Although the debate around *Economy and Society* is complex, attention should be drawn to Weber's remarks about the gloomy future dominated by those "last men". Revealing his major concern, i.e. the advent of instrumental rationality in the field of society as capitalism's derivative, his *Kulturpessimismus* is evident even in passages from *Economy and Society*, since the modern individual becomes "only a small cog in a ceasessly moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route of march".[35] This pessimism, I will argue, had its roots in a particular point of view in German philosophy concerned with individual autonomy and maturity and was sharpened through the debate between *Fachmenschen* and *Kulturmenschen.*[36]

My line of argument will be as follows. First, I will examine Nietzsche's hostility to sociology of his day as found in his *Nachlass* as well as in his published texts. I will explain this incompatibility by arguing that Nietzsche's philosophy is opposed to sociology's central ideas of a) progress and b) objectivity. Next, I will claim that Weber's demand for a science of the reality (*Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*) goes against a) and b) as well. It will be argued that Nietzsche and Weber were part of a tradition in which the basic methodological principles of sociology were completely absent. On the contrary, both understood reality as non-graspable in its entirety through scientific means.

In the second chapter I will show how both understood science as the main force that brought about the disenchantment of the world (in Nietzchean terms: Death of God), thus setting out how both proceeded to a reading that points to religion, and to the ascetic ideal in particular, as the locus of the modern scientific attitude. As Stauth has

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[34] Wolfgang Schluchter, *Individualismus, Verantwortungsethik und Viefalt* (Göttingen: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2000), 140.

[35] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 988.

[36] Also see Owen, *Maturity and Modernity. Nietzsche, Weber Foucault and the ambivalence of reason*, 123-139. I am here referring mainly to Weber's estimation of the future of education and culture in relation to the advent of bureaucracy and capitalism and the imperative of the latter for technical knowledge. In *Economy and Society* this estimation clearly takes the form of struggle between two types of persons: "Behind all the present discussions about the basic questions of the educational system there lurks decisively the struggle of the "specialist" type of man against the older type of the "cultivated man" […]. This struggle affects the most intimate aspects of personal culture". Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1002. As I hope I will show, these estimations are quite close to (or: to a certain degree affected by) those of Nietzsche's. I would contend that Weber's deliberate usage of the image of "Last Men" can be read as the result of the above diagnosis. A basic requirement for understanding these remarks is the concept of *Bildung*, which I discuss in chapter 1.

shown, for both Nietzsche and Weber, science, with its focus on constant methodization, in the end denies its own foundation.[37] By comparing the texts of *GM III* and "*Intermediate Reflections of World Religions*", it will be shown how the "Will to Truth" and the concept of "theodicy" contributed to the loss of transcendence.

Finally, in the third chapter, by relying on *"We Scholars"* from BGE and *"Science as a Vocation"* I will trace their criticism of modern science, as well as their responses to the issue of value in modernity (as discussed in chapter 2). This will be done on the basis of a typology I will set out, namely, a) criticism of modern science; yet b) affirmation of science and method; and finally, c) their different responses.

1 – NIETZSCHE, WEBER AND THE QUESTION OF SOCIOLOGY

From the 1880s onwards Nietzsche, in proceeding to his philosophy of Will to Power, becomes extremely interested in various contemporary scientific disciplines, including sociology. Undoubtedly, his overall assessment of sociology is negative. However, it is more interesting to examine the reasons that lie behind Nietzsche's rejection. As I will argue, Nietzsche's philosophy is incompatible with the concepts of a) objectivity and b) progress held by sociology.

That said, I am less concerned in finding to what extent sociology indeed plays a crucial role in Nietzsche's philosophy (i.e. sociological aspects), since this task requires a further reconceptualization of what is actually meant by the term sociology in Nietzsche. It suffices to say that existing studies have already shown that his philosophy of Will to Power can be given some sociological contours, as Gerhardt has argued[38], and that he upholds a conception that highlights the social origins of morality and consciousness, as Siemens and others have shown.[39] Another telling example is Jörg Salaquarda's view that Nietzsche, especially in the field of religion, "initiated a kind of criticism that is now associated with depth psychology and

[37] Georg Stauth, "Nietzsche, Weber and the affirmative sociology of culture", *Archive of European Sociology* XXXIII (1992): 220.

[38] Volker Gerhardt, *Vom Willen zur Macht. Anthropologie und Metaphysik der Macht am exemplarischen Fall Friedrich Nietzsches* (Berlin, New York: Walter der Gruyter 1996), 233-236. See also GS 354 on the origins of conscience from the need to communicate.

[39] Herman Siemens, "Nietzsche's Socio-Physiology of the Self", in *Nietzsche and the Problem of Subjectivity,* ed. Constâncio, João, Maria João Mayer Branco, and Bartholomew Ryan (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 640-643.

sociology"[40], a statement which holds true and perhaps is best seen, as will be argued later, in Weber's sociology of religion.

a) Nietzsche and Sociology

(1) *Nachlass*

Through a reading of *Nachlass* it can be inferred that Nietzsche became acquainted with sociology during 1880s. It seems that Nietzsche came across sociology, e.g. Spencer and Comte, as his intellectual attacks on the Christian morality along with western metaphysics were intensified. Thus, quite schematically, references to Spencer start appearing steadily during 1880s, while there are references to "*Soziologie*" until 1888, although mainly negative. In a nutshell, it can be stated that in the *Nachlass* Nietzsche altogether rejects sociology, since it represents nihilism, decadence and the belief in altruism, a sign of the herd-morality he despises. As is the case with Nietzsche usually, all these criticisms appear intertwined in his notebooks making any proper classification difficult.

One of the most illuminating passages can be read in a note from 1880, where Nietzsche speaks of Spencer and his scientific point of view:

Die Voraussetzung des Spencerschen Zukunfts-Ideals ist aber, was er **nicht sieht**, die allergrößte Ähnlichkeit aller Menschen, so daß einer wirklich im alter sich selber sieht. Nur so ist Altruismus möglich! Aber ich denke an die immer bleibende Unähnlichkeit und möglichste Souveränität des Einzelnen: also altruistische Genüsse müssen selten werden, oder die Form bekommen der Freude am Anderen, wie unsere jetztige Freude an der Natur.[41]

It is of crucial importance, I believe, to underline that Nietzsche accuses sociology of striving for altruism on the basis of the "similarity"[42] (*Ähnlichkeit*) of all humankind, a move which, as I will try to argue later on, violates the basic premises of Nietzsche's philosophy. In this light, Solms-Laubach's remark that sociology for

[40] Jörg Salaquarda, "Nietzsche and the Judaeo – Christian Tradition", in *Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche,* ed. Bernd Magnus and Kathleen M. Higgins (Malden Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 91.

[41] NL 1881, 11 [40] KSA 9.455-456.

[42] I believe that textual evidence allows us to propose that Nietzsche tends to equate modern sociology with democracy (see below), i.e. to see sociology as part of the democratic movement. Integral to critique of democracy is that the claim that it promotes "similarity". See BGE 242 where Nietzsche describes the "process of increasing similarity between Europeans".

Nietzsche was nothing else than a "part" and "symptom" of modernity and therefore nihilistic is spot on.[43] Another important remark is that sociology of 19th century seems to be categorized as yet another utilitarian science, an attitude of Nietzsche's that can be explained since, as Montinari has shown, he was introduced to Comte's sociology via Mill's interpretations to a certain degree.[44]

Another indicative passage belonging to the unpublished texts reflecting Nietzsche's ultimate thoughts on sociology is a note named "*Die unbewußte Wirkung der décadence auf die Ideale der Wissenschaft*" from late *Nachlass*:

> Unsere ganze Sociologie kennt gar keinen anderen Instinkt als den der Heerde, d.h. der summirten Nullen… wo jede Null „gleiche Rechte" hat, wo es tugendhaft ist, Null zu sein… [...] Herr Herbert Spencer ist als Biologe ein décadent, — meist auch als Moralist (— er sieht im Sieg des Altruismus etwas Wünschenswerthes!!!). Das Leben ist eine Folge des Krieges, die Gesellschaft selbst ein Mittel zum Krieg.[45]

Furthermore, similar to the above note where the identification of sociology with herd-morality and decadence is crystal-clear, there are also passages where we can see how the Comtean conception of science and society contravenes Nietzsche's perfectionism. Perfectionism, properly understood, is central to Nietzsche's thinking. Following Daniel Conway, we can read Nietzsche's perfectionist ideal as a demand for the "continued perfectibility of the species as a whole".[46] The task is to elevate humankind instead of merely succumbing to its decadent form brought about in modernity. For Siemens, Nietzsche's perfectionism is articulated from a standpoint of pluralism aiming to enhance, intensify and overcome "human life as it is".[47] An

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[43] Solms – Laubach, *Nietzsche and the Early Austrian and German Sociology*, 67. Also on the necessity to wage war on sociology (along with socialism etc.) see NL 1888 14 [6], KSA 13.220.

[44] Mazzino Montinari, "Kommentar zu Band 3: Morgenröte", in *Nietzsche, Kommentar zu Band 1-13, KSA 14*, 227. Also see NL 1887 10 [170] KSA 12.558. where Comte and Mill are cited together.It has been shown that Nietzsche read Alfred Fouillée's *La science sociale contemporaine* in 1887 where many references to Mill and Spencer are made, see Thomas Brobjer, *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context, An Intellectual Biography* (Urbana and Chicago: Illinois University Press, 2008), 102.

[45] NL 1888 14[40] KSA 13.238.

[46] Daniel Conway, *Nietzsche and the Political* (London: Routledge, 1997), 7. For a different interpretation on the issue of perfectionism see Paul van Tongeren, "Nietzsche as Über-Politischer Denker" in *Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche's Legacy for Political Thought*, ed. Herman W. Siemens and Vasti Roodt (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 71-73. Van Tongeren doubts whether the question of what humankind should become is the foundation for politics, insisting that Nietzsche's question bears moral imperatives.

[47] Herman Siemens, "Yes, No, Maybe So…. Nietzsche's Equivocations on the Relation Between Democracy and 'Grosse Politik'", in Siemens and Roodt, *Nietzsche, Power and Politics,* 235.

aspect of this perfectionist demand I believe is seen when he criticizes sociology for having as its aim (*Ziel*) not the *Übermensch* but "*Menschheit*" in general[48] Moreover, he also criticizes Comte for mistaking scientific method for philosophy itself.[49]

It comes as no surprise, then, that Nietzsche, when talking about the "critique of modern values" mentions "sociology" as belonging to "liberal institutions" along with notions such as the "altruism of morals"[50], while it is telling that in another note from 1888 sociology is treated as part of the "false liberal ideal" with other key concepts like "*Volks-Bildung*", "*die Nation*", "*Civilization*" and "*Utilitarismus*".[51] Much of what Nietzsche understood of Spencer's sociology took the form of attacks on his works as they embodied the complete opposite of what Nietzsche called "*Vornehm*": Spencer's thought is governed by the spirit of "*Glück als Frieden der Seele, Tugend, comfort*"[52] and by an insistence on "altruism".[53] Therefore, in Nietzsche's philosophical program, sociology is deemed insufficient. On the contrary, Nietzsche underscores the need for a "theory" of society that is concerned not with morality but rather with the different forms of power that exist: "An Stelle der "Sociologie" eine Lehre von den Herrschaftsgebilden".[54]

(2) Published Texts

It can be argued that there is continuity between the comments in *Nachlass* and the references made in published texts. Of course, it is hardly the case that Nietzsche performs a head-on attack on sociology as in *Nachlass*, which is more often than not coupled with quite degrading remarks about Spencer or Comte. Nonetheless, there is no substantial shift in his views, except that sociology appears far less frequently in published texts during 1880s than in the *Nachlass*.

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[48] NL 1884 26 [232] KSA 11.162.

[49] NL 1887 9 [47] KSA 12.359. This is something that represents 19th century as a whole for Nietzsche, that is, the problematic hierarchy between scientific method and *Wissenschaft*. See, NL 1888 15 [51] KSA 13.442.

[50] NL 1888 15[1] KSA 13.401.

[51] NL 1888 16 [82] KSA 13.514.

[52] NL 1888 15 [115] KSA 13.475.

[53] NL 1887 10 [188] KSA 12.525 on Spencer as "Krämmer Philosophie" and NL 1888 14 [48] KSA 13.242 where Nietzsche criticizes Spencer's philosophy using the title "Überschriften über einem modernen Narrenhaus.". In NL 1884 [26] 303 KSA 11.170 Nietzsche mocks Spencer since for him there might be altruism even in urine. See also, NL 1887 10 [147] KSA 12.548.

[54] NL 1887 9 [8] KSA 12.342.

Perhaps the best known reference is the one located in the first section of *GM* where Nietzsche opens the book by referring to "those English psychologists who have to be thanked for having made so far the only attempt to write a history of the emergence of morality".[55] Although this remark can be interpreted as signifying a positive gesture towards English sociology (here meaning: Spencer), comments throughout 1880s on sociology do not ratify this belief. As a matter of fact, later on Nietzsche will accuse Spencer of mistaking the concept of "good" for "usefulness".[56] In a crucial passage on the notion of "progress" (to be discussed in another section), Spencer is cited as an example of modern democratic "misarchism", which diminishes life by adapting the latter to external circumstances.[57]

In a similar vein, in *BGE* Nietzsche refers explicitly to Spencer, Mill and Darwin as "mediocre Englishmen" who are best-suited to modern, mediocre times.[58] At this point, Nietzsche's view of sociology in *Nachlass* as a decadent, utilitarian science, is reaffirmed. In *Gay Science* Nietzsche criticizes Spencer for desiring the reconciliation of "egoism and altruism"[59] , a belief which, as Nietzsche states, resembles scientific accounts relying on mechanistic conceptions. Once again, it should be noted that Nietzsche tends to place his concept of "life" in complete opposition to Spencer's scientific views, which are based on the pursuit of altruism and happiness.[60] August Comte is viewed as symbolizing "life weariness" as well in *Daybreak*. In the same book he is referred to as the one who managed to "outchristian Christianity"[61] while in *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche goes on to describe him as "Jesuit".[62]

b) "Un-German" Sociology

After having briefly explained how Nietzsche reacted to the sociology of his days, it is, I believe, equally crucial to observe what the basic pillars of the sociology Nietzsche attacked were. Nietzsche himself wrote in *BGE* that the sociology of his days was "un-German"[63], a statement which, as I will try to show, holds true. The

[55]GM I 1.
[56] GM I 3.
[57] GM II 12.
[58] BGE 253.
[59] GS 373.
[60] EH Destiny 4.
[61] D 132, 542.
[62] TI Skirmishes 4.
[63] BGE 48.

reason for this is that sociology, as a scientific discipline, was in effect the product of a different environment where different scientific (and philosophical) conceptions defined the context. Clarifying the character and the origins of 19th century sociology paves the way for acknowledging Weber's project as situated inside the tradition cultivated in German universities. This will help to understand why the basic scientific premises of sociology were totally absent from his thought.

Sociology emerges with the advent of industrial society; in particular, it has as its main object the new kind of society promoted by the two great revolutions of modernity, the French and the industrial. Integral to this science was the view that society was a functioning mechanism that followed specific rules of development, a mode of thought clearly evident in the writings of Comte and Spencer. The concept of "organicism" was used to describe the way modern, industrial societies were formed, implying an analogy between the natural world and society. This was further based on a "raw" empiricism which was part of the large movement of positivism. The latter was the bedrock of Anglo-French sociology declaring that the changes brought about by the two revolutions in society can be clearly observed through mechanistic, scientific means.[64] The above can be summed up as the two main traits of i) evolutionism, in the sense that society follows a specific progress, and ii) objectivity.

However, in the German context, the dissemination of the ideas of sociology was rather weak. Without elaborating more on the specific trajectories that these two notions took from 19th century onwards in Europe, it can be said that concrete and detailed arguments in favor of Comte's and Spencer's formulations in Germany were rather unpopular. As I will try to argue, this was not the product of mere chance but an outcome of a broader evolution which separated German "*Wissenschaft*" from Anglo-French "science". To name but one example, according to Georg Jellinek, a renowned legal scholar and member of the close circle of Max Weber, Comte's sociology came to replace previous attempts at a philosophy of history, but still lacked a strict methodology.[65]

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[64] Alan Swingewood, *A History of Sociological Thought* (New York: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1984), 29-51. For example Swingewood mentions how "Saint-Simon coined the terms 'social physiology' and 'social physics' and, following Maistre and Bonald, defined society as an organic unity", Swingewood, *A History of Sociological Thought*, 37.

[65] Georg Jellinek, *Allgemeine Statslehre* (Berlin: Verlag von Julius Springer, 1929), 68 – 70.

In general terms, it can be argued that sociology remained remarkably "un-German" until World War II, since in Germany a completely different process regarding both education and science had taken place. This process can be illustrated by following Fritz Ringer's distinctions between Enlightenment and *Aufklärung*, and between *Kultur* and *Civilisation*[66], which will lead us to important insights regarding the role of science in each case. These distinctions help to understand the way terms such as "Enlightement", "culture" and "science" were articulated in Germany. By employing this typology, I want to support the claim that sociology was part of a completely different context than the one existed in Germany in the period of Nietzsche and Weber.

For Ringer one of the traits that shaped the German concept of Enlightenment or *Aufklärung* was the rejection of rationality in the form of utilitarian thinking; instead, the emphasis was placed on the concepts of maturity and autonomy. Essentially, this translated into an orientation where "knowledge" was less related to empirical formulations but was seen as part of cultivation. The latter notion is best seen as integral component of the German word "*Bildung*", that is, a concept of "learning" and "education" denoting inner unity.[67] On top of that, contra to 19th century sociology, *Bildung* was focused on the individual and his/her formation of a distinctive personality, which is seen as an "actualization of his/her preexistent tendencies".[68].

In this light, the uniqueness of the German conception of learning can be seen through the idea of the German "*Kultur*" as opposed to the French "civilisation".[69] While the

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[66] I find Ringer's typology as useful since I think encapsulates quite well what were the basic distinctions between Germany and Anglo-French environment. I understand that the term "Anglo-French" is rather misleading, but my aim here is merely to highlight what shape the concepts under discussion here took in Germany. For example, Ringer points to how the German *Aufklärung* evolved from attempts to modernize Protestant theology. Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of German Mandarins, The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), 82. See also Elias' relevant distinction in Nobert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Maiden, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1978), 9-11.

[67] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London and New York: Continuum), 8 – 16.

[68] Fritz Ringer, "Bildung: The Social and Ideological Context of the German Historical Tradition", *History of European Ideas* 10, no. 2 (1989): 197.

[69] As regards "Kultur" and "civilisation", Ringer points out that the first term can be traced back to Cicero and was introduced to Germany mainly through Pufendorf and Herder denoting the sphere of "personal culture". On the contrary, the French "civilisation", originating in the work of Marquis de Mirabeu, stood for "the totality of man's social and intellectual creations and arrangements". Ringer, *The Decline of German Mandarins, The German Academic Community, 1890-1933*, 87-88.

latter implies the achievements of humanity as a whole, resounding mainly in France, the former is concerned with the realm of the mind and spirit. Relying on *Der grosse Brockhauss*, Ringer argues that *Kultur* is identified with "ennoblement" (*Veredelung*) and is separated from *civilisation*, which is only concerned with the external, limited, conditions of knowledge. In other words, *civilisation* denoted ideas of "outward progress", e.g. in terms of economy, whereas *Kultur*, a much more inclusive term, stood for "inner cultivation"[70].

The real importance of the distinction above is seen when it comes to understanding the meaning of *Wissenschaft* and its incompatibility with the science and sociology. In the German case, through science (*Wissenschaft*) the individual had to acquire a general worldview (*Weltanschauung*). Science's (*Wissenschaft*) primarily role was not to be concerned with strict methodological or epistemological issues, as was the case in the Anglo-French concept of science, but to cultivate an attitude towards the world. Again, of crucial importance is the emphasis on the aim of the unfolding of a personality. Of course, this is not to say that *Wissenschaft* rejected stringent methodology, but that it was less concerned with or affected by positivistic ideas eminent in other parts of Europe.[71] In the first years of 20th century, however, this "distinction" as regards the idea of education and science in each environment begin to fade already, a process which of course included "*Bildung"*. As a matter of fact, similar remarks had already been made by Nietzsche[72] thus reflecting what was named as the crisis of "educationalization"[73], namely the end of the educational ideal sketched above.

Sociology, with its basic premises in the concepts of evolutionism and objectivity, was therefore part of a tradition quite alien to Germany. Such a discipline did not exist

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[70] Ibid., 89. Peter Ghosh, when commenting on the translation of Weber's "methodological" essays, argues that in fact "Kultur" is a concept which cannot be efficiently translated from German to English because of the different connotations between *Kultur* from *Civilization*. Peter Ghosh, "Classic Wine in a New, Bigger and Better Bottle: Max Weber's Methodological Writings", review of *Max Weber Collected Methodological Writings, Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews, 41 (6),* 2012, 773.

[71] See for example, Ernst Troeltsch, ''The Ideas of Natural Law and Humanity in World Politics" in *Natural Law and the Theory of Society vol. 1* by Otto von Gierke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 201-222. Troeltsch begins by sketching what he terms as "the contrast between German thought and the thought of Western Europe". Of course, this account has to do less with sociology than with the ideas of the philosophy Natural Law and their absence in Germany. Although not directly related, I take this issue as another characteristic of the formation of German culture.

[72] TI Germans 5.

[73] Ringer, "Bildung: The Social and Ideological Context of the German Historical Tradition", 194.

in Germany, nor are there are tangible proofs that it could have been the case, at least during the first decades of 1900. What was called sociology in Germany was, as Liebersohn has remarked, a discipline placed in a framework defined more by Baudelaire and Nietzsche, thereby pointing out modernity's fragmentation in contrast to the unity of bygone eras.[74]

c) Objectivity and Progress

(1) Nietzsche

As stated above, the point of departure for understanding Nietzsche will be his conception of life as Will to Power, since much of his work in 1880s had to do with the sketch of a future philosophy in and through which modern nihilism[75] would be overcome. Already in *BGE* the reader can come across moments where life itself is characterized as Will to Power[76]. It should be stressed that, as Müller-Lauter has shown, Nietzsche does not aim at showing that the world can be "rooted in the will to power as in an actually existing ground of being".[77] The reason for this is that according to Nietzsche life is characterized by plurality. In regard to philosophy (and science) this amounts to a thesis completely opposed to modern sociology as Nietzsche sees it: the radical pluralization of reality means that it cannot be subsumed under a unifying ground, doctrine or idea. As we saw above, in the *Nachlass* sociology is accused of striving for "*die allergrößte Ähnlichkeit aller Menschen*". In Nietzsche's philosophy, by contrast, the "world is in all eternity chaos".[78] The "cause and effect" interpretation cannot provide an adequate account of reality since we, as humans, are only faced by a continuum in which we fix and select pieces, which we call "things", "objects", "causes" and "effects".[79] In Nietzsche's philosophy, Will to Power stands as the only adequate principle for interpreting reality; again, no "first

[74] Harry Liebersohn, *Fate and Utopia in German Sociology 1870-1923* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), 2-4.

[75] A reference to nihilism will be made in chapter 2 as regards the loss of values in modernity. For an overview of the term "nihilism" and "skepticism" in Nietzsche see Andreas Urs Sommer "Nihilism and Skepticism in Nietzsche", in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. K.A. Pearson (Maiden MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 251-258.

[76] BGE 13, also BGE 36, 259.

[77] Wolfgang Müller-Lauter. *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy* (Urbana: Illinois University Press, 1999), 141.

[78] GS 109.

[79] GS 112.

things" are to be found in this account since power is intrinsically relational and plural.[80]

If we ask how the concepts of objectivity (i) and progress (ii) are treated in Nietzsche's philosophy, we see that both are rejected, since they are life-diminishing and contravene Nietzsche's view of life as Will to Power. As regards (i) a good example is found again in GS 373. There Nietzsche rejects the belief that the natural world has an equivalent in human measure and thought, given that a mechanistic belief translated in the "world of truth" is nothing but meaningless.[81] According to Nietzsche, to uphold a definite, fixed account of reality by the means of science, as the belief in objectivity does, is to violate the perspectival character of life and the corresponding interpretations promoted by it.[82] The "willing to be objective" (*Das „Objektiv-sein-wollen"*) can do no more than produce a "description without perspectives" which Nietzsche parallels with a "photography".[83]

The same holds for the second notion as well, that of "progress". In TI Skirmishes 37 we see how Nietzsche treats this idea in a section where, once again, Spencerian sociology makes its appearance.[84] From this passage it seems that Nietzsche denies the alleged "moral superiority" of our age when it comes to the "ethical judgement", as well as the belief that takes modern humanity to represent a "positive progress" compared with the past. Progress thus appears to be connected with the topic of morality. Contrary to a conception of progress tied up with the ideal of humanity, I believe that Nietzsche puts forward a naturalistic[85] account of progress. As Schank[86]

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[80] Ciano Aydin, "Nietzsche on Reality as Will to Power: Towards an "Organizational – Struggle" Model", *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 33, no. 1 (2007): 26.

[81] GS 373. Also on materialism see BGE 12. Also see HAH 2 and how Nietzsche emphasizes that there is no *aeterna veritas* but even man, and his faculty of cognition, "has become". Also: GS 57.

[82] See Paul van Tongeren, *Reinterpreting Modern Culture* (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2000), 158.

[83] NL 1884 25 [164] KSA 11.109. For Nietzsche, objectivity is possible only if it is grounded on the plurality of the perspectives: " […] the *more* affects we are able to put into words about a thing, the *more* eyes, various eyes we are able to use for the same thing, the more complete will be our 'concept' of the thing, our 'objectivity'" GM III 12. I will return to this issue in chapter 3 when discussing the section 'We Scholars'.

[84] TI Skirmishes 37.

[85] For Nietzsche and naturalism, I refer to Richard Schacht, "Nietzsche's Naturalism", *The Journal of Nietzsche's Studies* 43, 2 (2012). Schacht argues that although Nietzsche drew on natural sciences of his era this does not classify him as scientifically naturalist.

has argued, one central problem Nietzsche raised already from the *Birth of Tragedy* is the extirpation of nature from the sphere of culture and morality:

Progress in my sense. – I talk about a 'return to nature' too, although it is not really going-back as much as *coming towards*[87]

In general, as Moore has pointed out, to a large extent Nietzsche becomes acquainted with the notion of "progress" as an evolution in morals through Spencer's work "*Data of Ethics*". It has also been established that already in the 1880s, Nietzsche read two books highly critical of Spencer's moral evolutionism, Nägeli's "*Mechanisch-physiologische Theorie der Abstammungslehre*" and Rolph's "*Biologische Probleme*".[88]

A more coherent image of Nietzsche's philosophy of Will to Power and his rejection of the notion of "progress" is found in GM II 12. For Nietzsche, the development of a tradition, or even an organ, should not be seen as a "progressus towards a goal". This is so because life is in a constant and non-telological motion of re-interpretation, a feature which, as Nietzsche states in the same section, differs sharply from Spencer's idea of life's adaptation to external circumstances.[89] In this light, instead of a linear concept of progress indicating an increasing development in the field of society and morals, Nietzsche argues that the origins of a phenomenon and its final usefulness or purpose should be kept apart:

that anything in existence, having somehow come about, is continually interpreted anew, requisitioned anew, transformed and redirected to a new purpose by a power superior to it […][90]

The concepts of objectivity and progress then, in the form utilized by the European sociology of the 19th century, contradict Nietzsche's belief that life is essentially pluralistic, dynamic and non-teleological. As I will argue later on, Nietzsche will attempt to disentangle life from the dominant values in order to establish a terrain

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[86] Gerd Schank, "Nietzsche's „Blond Beast": On the Recuperation of a Metaphor", in *A Nietzschean Beastiary,* ed. C.A. Acampora and Ralph A. Acampora (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1994), 141.

[87] TI Skirmishes 48. See also BGE 230: "To translate humanity back into nature; to gain control of the many vain and fanciful interpretations and incidental meanings that have been scribbled and drawn over that eternal basic text of *homo natura* so far".

[88] Gregory Moore, "Nietzsche, Spencer and the Ethic of Evolution", *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 23, no. 1 (2002): 4. For Nietzsche's reading see Thomas Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Reading and Private Library 1885-1889", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58, no. 4 (1997): 679.

[89] GM II 12.

[90] Ibid.

where it would be possible to envision a conflict between different perspectives and valuations through which the richness of life would be affirmed.

(2) Weber

In this section it will be shown that the notions of (i) objectivity and (ii) progress, as advanced by 19th century sociology, have no resonance in Weber's methodological writings either. Weber's thoughts were developed in an environment marked more by Nietzsche's cultural critique than by Comte's or Spencer's accounts. For example, in his book "*Der Historismus und Seine Probleme*" Ernst Troeltsch classified Max Weber as one of the major figures of the neo-Kantian movement,[91] thus highlighting Weber's intellectual background. As I will show below Weber's methodology follows the questions raised by neo-Kantians regarding the separation between natural sciences and humanities.[92]

Weber first mentions the term "sociology" in a letter to Paul Siebeck in 1913[93] , a usage which reflects the convenience of the term rather than a scientific identification with the evolutionist and mechanistic schemas of Comte and Spencer or with the organistic analogies of Schäffe.[94] On the contrary, it can be argued that Weber's thought matures in a period when academic life in Germany is marked by a cultural

[91] Ernst Troeltch, *Der Historismus und Seine Probleme* (Tübingen, 1922), 565. For an account dealing with Weber and the neo-Kantian Rickert see Guy Oakes, *Weber and Rickert Concept Formation in the Cultural Sciences* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1988). For a view which differs from that of Oakes' see H.H. Bruun, "Weber on Rickert: From Value Relation to Ideal Type", *Max Weber Studies* 1, no. 2 (2001). H.H. Bruun, by relying on the Nervi fragment which contains Weber's remarks on Rickert's view of the issue of value, highlights how Weber diverged from Rickert's conceptualization of value. See Bruun, "Weber on Rickert: From Value Relation to Ideal Type", 145-149.

[92] Frederik C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 412-414.

[93] *Max Weber-Gesamtausgabe* Band II/8: Briefe 1913–1914 Hrsg. v. M. Rainer Lepsius und Wolfgang J. Mommsen (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 349. Illuminating are the remarks made by Mommsen on the issue of Weber's "sociology" and the development of Economy and Society from the textbook Grundriss der Sozialökonomik. See Wolfgang Mommsen "Max Weber's "Grand Sociology": The Origins and Composition of Wirtschaft und Gesselschaft. Soziologie", *History and Theory* 39, no. 3 (2000): 364 – 383.

[94] Roth and Bendix, *Scholarship and Partisanship*, 37.

pessimism strongly influenced by Nietzsche as well as by Germany's social-political problem expressed in Weber's writings as the "*Arbeitsverfassung*".[95]

The basic impulse governing Weber's thought is the insistence on a science of reality (*Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*). Echoing Windelband's distinctions between Nomological and Idiographic sciences, but, as Ringer has argued, resembling more Heinrich Rickert's formulations concerning the difference between law-like sciences (*Gesetzeswissenschaften*) and sciences of the reality (*Wirklichkeitswissenschaften*)[96], Weber's view of science can be described as the opposite of naturalistic or positivistic accounts of his era.

On this account, the task in the field of cultural studies can be the knowledge of a historical phenomenon which is "significant in its distinctive character", accepting the fact that only "a finite part" can ever be grasped due to reality's "infinite multiplicity".[97] This conception of reality, highly influenced by Emil Lask's concept Hiatus Irrationalis, runs counter to law-based theories, as well as theories claiming general validity resting on abstractions, while, at the same time, underlining the limits of causal interpretations. Weber points out, in a fashion similar to Nietzsche, how cause and effect approaches cannot do justice to the field of cultural studies in their own right, since that would amount to "pure mechanics".[98] Furthermore, it would not be an exaggeration to state that Weber's conception of science involves a critique to metaphysics. For example, much of his criticism of Wilhelm Roscher's scientific views had to do with the latter's emanationist ideas, which, according to Weber,

[95] Lawrence Scaff, "Weber before Weberian Sociology", *The British Journal of Sociology* 35, no. 2 (1984): 196, 200.

[96] Fritz Ringer, *Max Weber's Methodology: The Unification of the Cultural and Social Sciences* (Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 124.

[97] Max Weber, "The"Objectivity" of knowledge in social science and social sciences", in *Collected Methodological Writings* ed. H.H. Bruun and Sam Whimster (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 114, 117

[98] Weber, "Roscher and Knies and the logical problems of historical economics", *Collected Methodological Writings*, 6.

translated essentially into a covert Hegelianism,[99] thus leading him to openly state that "*Zwei Wege stehen offen: Hegel – oder unsere Art die Dingen zu behandeln*".[100]

Turning now to examining to what extent (i) objectivity, as defined previously, is met in Weber's writings, it is important to understand two notions that are the pillars of his scientific point of view: the concept of value-relation (*Wertbeziehung*) and value-freedom (*Wertfreihet*). Conceding that there is no science without presuppositions, since "all knowledge of cultural reality is always knowledge from specific and *particular points of view"*,[101] Weber's effort was to disentangle science from personal value-judgements. As he put it:

> Certainly, the problems addressed by the empirical sciences must be solved in a "value-free" way. They are not "value problems". But, within our disciplines, they are influenced by the relations of elements of reality "to" values. […]. Suffice it to recall that the term "value relation" simply represents the philosophical interpretation of the specifically scientific "interest" which governs the selection and formation of the object of an empirical inquiry.[102]

This passage is instructive because, besides the reference to the much-discussed value-freedom, it illustrates that for Weber values play the primary role in the selection of the object of an empirical inquiry. As Wilhelm Hennis has argued, Weber maintained a distinction between ideals (*Seinsollen*) and reality (*Seiendes*), arguing explicitly against the positions and the strong moral tones of the *Kathedersozialisten* who casually mingled personal values and facts when lecturing in university. For Weber scientific integrity should compel the scholar to leave aside his own values when *proceeding* to the scientific discussions.[103] In that way, Weber strove to resist the instrumentalization of science by a so-called value-free scientific attitude. As for the very notion of objectivity itself, in his seminal article Weber states:

> *There is no* absolutely "objective" scientific analysis of cultural life – or (to use a term which is perhaps somewhat narrower but which, for our purposes, does not have an essentially different

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[99] Ibid., 14: "While Roscher's position is in principle distinct from Hegel's, the general character of his concept formation shows that he nevertheless makes use of metaphysical ideas which, to be consistent, could only fit into Hegelian emanationism.".

[100] Max Weber-Gesamtausgabe, Band II/6: *Briefe 1909–1910.* Hrsg. v. M. Rainer Lepsius u. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, unter Mitarb. v. Birgit Rudhard u. Manfred Schön (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 173.

[101] Weber, "Objectivity", *Collected Methodological Writings,* 119-120; emphasis in original.

[102] Weber, "The meaning of "value – freedom" in the sociological and economic sciences", *Collected Methodological Writings,* 317.

[103] Wilhelm Hennis, The Meaning of 'Wertfreihet' on the Background and Motives of Max Weber's ''Postulate'', *Sociological Theory* 12, 2 (July 1994): 119.

meaning) of "social phenomena" – *independent* of special and "one-sided" points of view[104] [emphasis in original]

Of course, this is not to say that Weber is cultural relativist. Schematically, it can be argued that Weber upholds a "logical divide" between the value preferences of the interpreter which guide him to the selection of the material and the way the material is being treated[105]. This tension is perfectly described when Weber mentions how the logical method of a scientific analysis must be accepted as correct even by a Chinese, although the latter might reject the 'ethical" valuations that spring from the value preferences of the interpreter.[106]

Things are no different when considering the idea of (ii) progress. As life amounts to an infinite multiplicity of events presented "within and outside ourselves", the term progress could not mean a law-like process since this would amount to an abstract philosophical idea. What progress does mean, however, is simply the increase of the means for attaining specific ends, that is, technical rationality. To employ the term "progress" without clarification is to enter the domain of ultimate valuation, a move prohibited in the Weberian methodology:

In our disciplines, the *legitimate* concept of progress will always and everywhere be connected with the "technical" – which, as we said previously, should here be understood as the "means" for attaining an unambiguously *given* end: it never rises to the level of "ultimate" valuations. To sum up: in my opinion, the use of the expression "progress" is extremely *inopportune (...)*[107][emphasis in original]

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[104] Weber, "Objectivity", *Collected Methodological Writings,* 113.

[105] Ringer, *Max Weber's Methodology. The Unification of Cultural and Social Sciences,* 125.

[106] See the passage in Weber, "Objectivity", *Collected Methodological Writings*, 105: "For it is, and continues to be, true that a methodically correct proof in the field of social science must, in order to have reached its goal, also be accepted as correct even by a Chinese – or, to put it more correctly: that goal must at any rate be *striven for*, although it may not be completely attainable because the data are lacking. In the same way, moreover, the *logical* analysis of an ideal with respect to its contents and its ultimate axioms, and the demonstration of the logical and practical consequences of pursuing this ideal, must also, if it is to be deemed successful, be valid for [a Chinese]. Even though he may not be "attuned" to our ethical imperatives, and even though he may, and most probably often will, reject the ideal and the concrete *valuations* flowing from it, this in no way detracts from the scientific value of that intellectual *analysis*." [emphasis in original] I cannot do justice to the topic of "objectivity" in this part since the relationship between value – judgements and science is quite complex. Following H.H. Bruun it can be argued that when Weber refers to "value-freedom" in scientific analysis he wants to secure the freedom of the value sphere from allegations of scientific demonstrability and not to support a "value-free" science. As I will show in the third chapter, for Weber science is incapable of defining values in modernity. Hans Henrik Bruun, *Science, Values and Politics in Max Weber's Methodology* (Burlington and Hamshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 58.

[107] Weber, "The meaning of "value freedom" in the sociological and economic sciences", *Collected Methodological Writings,* 328.

In the light of the above analysis, it is clear that the core of Weberian methodology is not at all related with the basic pillars of French and English sociology. On the contrary, Weber's methodology should be seen as partaking in the then current debate in Germany about science's relationship with values, a discussion which had philosophical connotations as well, at least for those scholars who were trained in this environment.

To sum up, Nietzsche and Weber do not adopt positions that promote belief in objectivity and progress. Consequently, neither fits in the basic contours of sociological thought in the 19th century. Both retain an account that takes reality as non-graspable in its entirety by scientific means. From Nietzsche's point of view objectivity violates the becoming of life and the perspectival charater of any interpretation, whereas for Weber objectivity is impossible as far as everything is observed from particular points of view[108] The same holds for progress. In Nietzsche's view the term progress resonates with the morality and the humanity which his perfectionism wants to overcome. For Weber, the term progress is in effect a vague concept to be avoided, since it denotes a degree of "law-like" regularity when employed. In this way, I propose, the question concerning Nietzsche's severe criticisms of sociology and their implications for Weber is left behind. At the same time, however, the above analyses open the question concerning Nietzsche's and Weber's precise positions on value and science. I will try to answer this question in chapter 3. First it is necessary to examine how Nietzsche's and Weber's diagnoses of modernity converge.

2 – SCIENCE AND RELIGION

In the last chapter I argued that sociology should not inhibit a comparative analysis of Nietzsche and Max Weber on the grounds that neither Nietzsche nor Weber followed,

[108] However, it should be mentioned that Nietzsche's and Weber's "perspectivism" are commencing from different points. Whereas for Nietzsche perspectivism is tied to his dynamic philosophy, for Weber perspectivism is translated into a sophisticated methodological device. I think it is important to note the vast differences between each author's aims: Nietzsche was indifferent to social sciences of his days while Weber, although he never rejected philosophy as discipline, builds up his methodology around social and political issues. This transition from philosophy to the field of social theory is crucial in order to not assume that Nietzsche and Weber share an identical view regarding perspectivism. Although in principle such a position would not be mistaken, I think it is more fruitful to understand the "perspectival" character of each author as taking place in different fields. The key difference, as I will discuss in chapter 3, is the issue of value.

even unwittingly, the basic epistemological premises of 19th century sociology, best described as positivism. The explanation was twofold. First, there are good reasons for thinking that Nietzsche's hostility to sociology is not related to what Weber conceived of as sociology years later: what Nietzsche criticized was an Anglo-French science, which was a cultural product of a different environment, whereas Weber belongs to the tradition of *Bildungsbürgerum* whose scientific premises reach back to Kant's philosophy. Secondly, there are reasons inherent in Weber's thought that bring him closer to Nietzsche's perception of science than to what was then known as sociology, given that both abstained from positivism and shared the view that reality is non-graspable by any scientific method. The argument of this chapter is that there is an internal point of convergence between their thoughts and critiques.

A starting point could be to attempt to show how the Death of God paves the way for Weber's idea of disenchantment, but I propose instead to look into what led them to such considerations. Instead of regarding these two broad concepts, i.e. Death of God and disenchantment, as fixed ideas on which each built his own argumentation, I think it is more fruitful to detect what the basic components of these concepts were or, to put it differently, for what reasons these concepts were employed by Nietzsche and Weber. In doing so, an internal convergence will be revealed in a common diagnosis of modernity as inherently meaningless.

I will claim that for both, the crisis of meaning in modernity is a consequence of the very quest for knowledge in the form of science. The focus will primarily be on two concepts: the will to truth and theodicy. This will lay bare the interrelation between science and religion, with emphasis on the problem of suffering. Both Nietzsche and Weber trace the development of science and the problem of modernity back to religious origins and show how the transcendent context in which science operated was eroded by its development.These moves will lend support to my basic claim that Nietzsche and Weber can indeed be fruitfully thought together, leaving the question of sociology behind. At the same time, it will pave the way for an examination of how each one decided to deal with the problem of science and values in modernity.

a) The Will to Truth

It is well known that Nietzsche, especially in 1880s, becomes extremely interested in values and – most importantly – in critical historical accounts dealing with religious topics as the locus of morality. In this section, I focus on his mature thought in order to emphasize how his understanding – and criticism – of modern science is interrelated with a corresponding critique of certain religious stances and attitudes. In fact, as early as 1873, in a note from his *Nachlass*, Nietzsche will state that in order to understand the development of science, an understanding of the development of religion must take place first.[109]

Even though aphoristic comments on religion, science and morality can be found throughout Nietzsche's oeuvre, I believe that the most sustained treatment of our topic comes in the third essay of *GM*, especially sections 23-29. Given Nietzsche's dense writing and the various issues and problems he is thematizing even in one section, I will limit myself to two main questions. First, how does the ascetic ideal function and what does it mean? Second, in what way does modern science relate to the ascetic ideal? *In other words, what is the common basis of ascetic ideal and scientific thought?*

According to Nietzsche's own description in *Ecce Homo,* GM contains the first psychology of the priest. While the third essay of GM can also be read as an exposition of different characters and their relation to the ascetic ideal (priest, philosopher, scientist, artist), in GM III 11 Nietzsche hints at the priest's significance and power: suffering gains its meaning through the priest on the basis of the ascetic ideal.[110] If we now ask with Nietzsche "what is the meaning of the ascetic ideal?", one of the most thorough explanations is to be found in GM III 23 where it is remarked that:

> [t]he ascetic ideal expresses a will: *where* is the opposing will, in which an *opposing ideal* might express itself? The ascetic ideal has a *goal*, - this being so general that all the interests of human existence appear petty and narrow when measured against it; it inexorably interprets epochs, peoples, man, all with reference to this one goal, it permits of no other interpretation, no other goal […][111]

[109] NL 1873 28 [5] KSA 7.617.
[110] GM III 11.
[111] GM III 23.

What Nietzsche defines as the core of the ascetic ideal is its dominance in every part of life, which precludes any other "will" from emerging. As a "closed system of will, goal and interpretation", it denies any other goal (*Ziel*) except the one it has established. Given that, it seems that what Nietzsche criticizes is less the ascetic ideal per se, or rather that his criticism has larger implications than simply opposing asceticism as type of life. Indeed, in GM III 26 we read that "I have every respect for the ascetic ideal *in so far as it is honest*", while positive gestures towards Luther and religion can be found in GM and elsewhere in his writings.[112] What is it, then, in the ascetic ideal that Nietzsche is opposed to?

In order to answer this question, it is perhaps necessary to understand what the broader connotations of Nietzsche's genealogical criticism are. Following van Tongeren's comments, it can be argued that Nietzsche's genealogical critique aims to be a study of the origins, the evolution and a critical evaluation of moral categories, an evaluation that has physiological, psychological and sociological underpinnings. In doing so, instead of sanctioning the power of what is under analysis in each instance genealogy attacks this power.[113] In this sense, given the above-cited passage from GM III 23, it seems that what is fiercely rejected is the dominance and the power of the ideal, a power that clearly violates Nietzsche's pluralistic and perspectival understanding of life.[114] The ascetic ideal is accused of converting everything into mere tools in service of its (single) goal, since it "permitted no other interpretation". However, the "goal" of the ascetic ideal was grounded in the ability to interpret man's suffering as meaningful. In particular, it represents an answer to man's question about the meaning of suffering. In the final section of the third essay we read:

> The meaningless of suffering, *not* the suffering, was the curse that has so far blanketed mankind, - and *the ascetic ideal offered man a meaning!* Up to now it was the only meaning, but any meaning at all is

[112] GM III 26. See also BGE 61 where Nietzsche almost sociologically analyses the necessity of religions. Also compare in the same section: "Asceticism and Puritanism are almost indispensable means of educating and ennobling a race that wants to gain control over its origins among the rabble, and work its way up to eventual rule." with Weber's positions on the importance of Puritanism for the rationalization of modern life in the next section.

[113] Paul van Tongeren. "Nietzsche and Ethics", in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson. (Malden Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 390.

[114] See Salaquarda, "Nietzsche and the Judaeo – Christian Tradition", 102. Also, AC 9.

better than no meaning at all; the ascetic ideal was, in every respect, the ultimate '*faute de mieux' par excellence*[115]

In doing so the ascetic ideal created, as Constancio has remarked, a "conceptual interpretation that gives unity to an enormously vast multiplicity of individual and communal responses to "the problem of suffering""[116] by placing suffering "under the perspective of guilt".[117] On the other hand, this kept suicidal nihilism at bay.

Given that the ascetic ideal conferred meaning on suffering, the question is now how it is related to science. Nietzsche goes on in essay III to connect the ascetic ideal to science in typically polemical way by asking whether science can be envisioned as the opponent of the ascetic ideal. The answer is straightforward, since science is deemed "not the opposite of the ascetic ideal but rather the latter's own *most recent and noble manifestation*"(emphasis in original). [118]All scientific thought for Nietzsche, both "natural as well as unnatural" does not work against the ascetic ideal because, in the first place, "both of them, science and ascetic ideal, are still on the same foundation".[119] The ascetic ideal and science have as a precondition "a certain impoverishment of life", an accusation that Nietzsche refers many times to modern sociology, as we saw. Science is not fully independent, since it too is confronted with the problem of the absence of values: there is no a value ideal except the ascetic ideal. The passages where science is criticized for being in allegiance with ascetic ideal, instead of representing a counter-force, abound in the last sections of GM III. As Hatab has suggested, Nietzsche's criticisms can be encapsulated in two main points, namely that (1) science is "not driven by any ideal (and the ascetic ideal can only be opposed by a counter ideal)", and (2) "where science can achieve the level of an ideal, it is simply the most current manifestation of the ascetic ideal".[120]

But if science is merely derivative of the ascetic ideal, what then is the common basis of science and the ascetic ideal in Nietzsche's argument? The key lies in the concept of the "will to truth". In GM III 27, which offers one of the most elaborate descriptions of the will to truth, we read:

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[115] GM III 28.
[116]Joao Constancio, "A Sort of Schema of Ourselves", *Nietzsche-Studien* 41, no.1 (2012): 135.
[117] GM III 28.
[118] GM III 23.
[119] GM III 25.
[120] Lawrence J. Hatab, "How Does Ascetic Ideal Function in Nietzsche's Genealogy?", *The Journal of Nietzsche's Studies* 35, no. 1 (Spring-Autumn 2008): 111.

Everywhere else where spirit is at work in a rigorous, powerful and honest way, it now completely lacks an ideal […] *except for the will to truth*. But this will, this remnant of an ideal, if you believe me, is that ideal itself in its strictest, most spiritual formulation, completely esoteric, totally stripped of externals, and thus not so much its remnant as its *kernel*[121]

Thus according to Nietzsche the belief in truth, constitutive as it is of modern science's identity and its corresponding claim for "objectivity", is simply a development whose origins belong to the sphere of morality and religion: the will to truth in its current form should be viewed as the kernel of the ascetic ideal. Seen in this light, science is related to the ascetic ideal via the concept of truthfulness, a theoretical position of Nietzsche's with tremendous implications for understanding the nihilistic conditions in modernity. By simply posing the question "What does all will to truth mean?" the historical process that began with Christian morality and its reliance on truthfulness has resulted in the destruction of its own morality, which had long been established as the one which conferred meaning on suffering. Whereas previously the goal (*Ziel*) was defined by the ascetic ideal, now all meaning has been shattered and a new period of radical nihilism opens up where all the values appear devaluated. In a well-known note from *Nachlass* Nietzsche notes:

Nihilism: es fehlt das Ziel; es fehlt die Antwort auf das „Warum?" was bedeutet Nihilism? — daß die obersten Werthe sich entwerthen.[122]

Within the confines of this thesis, the problem of nihilism cannot be treated in any detail, but what needs to be stressed is how nihilism is a logical consequence of the quest for truth in philosophy.[123] It is no coincidence that for Nietzsche himself the development of the will to truth is characterized also as a "hidden will to death".[124] Already in GS357 (quoted in GM III 27) Nietzsche describes how the concept of truthfulness was taken on from Christianity by modern science, but taken ever more rigorously "intellectual cleanliness" and "scientific conscience", with the result of truth forbidding itself the lie of faith in God.[125] The Death of God, famously

[121] GM III 27.
[122] NL 1887 9 [35] KSA 12.350. NL 1887 10 [192] KSA 12.571. Also NL 1887 9 [41] KSA 12.354.: „Die extremste Form des Nihilism wäre: daß jeder Glaube, jedes Für-wahr-halten nothwendig falsch ist"
[123] NL 1888 15 [45] KSA 13.439.440.
[124] GS 344.
[125] GS 357.

proclaimed in *Gay Science* 125, can therefore be understood, as the process where "truthfulness turns against its own origin".[126]

b) Science and Theodicy

If the Death of God amounts to a development in which the belief in the value of truth eliminated the morality in which this value was initially cultivated, it remains to be seen how Weber stands with regard to Nietzsche's account as presented in the last parts of GM III. In this section I argue that an equivalent understanding regarding science's position in modernity can be detected in Weber's thought as well. In many ways the topic of religion constitutes one of the most efficient paths for accessing Max Weber's work in its entirety. As a matter of fact, the perennial question among scholars focused on Weber's sociology consists in indicating what the core topic of his thought was, that is, whether *Economy and Society* or his project on the studies of world religions should represent the central pillar of his writings.

Without taking sides in this debate, I will examine Weber from the perspective of his studies on religion, a legitimate move if, following Schluchter, we keep in mind that the issue of religion, especially from 1913 onwards, appears to be a central field of Weber's social science as a domain related to the sphere of culture.[127] As argued in the introduction, sociology is not an obstacle to comparative studies of Nietzsche and Weber insofar as both belong to a larger theoretical, educational and social framework (*Bildungbürgertum*), which allows for a discussion of common interests and topics. By relying on the "*Introduction*" and the "*Intermediate Reflections*", two essays written as complementary to *The Economic Ethics of World Religions* (the first placed at the beginning of the studies, the other between *Confucianism* and *Ancient Judaism*), I will highlight two issues. First, I want to show how Weber reacted to Nietzsche's GM and show an appreciation of his work. Nietzsche's genealogical exposition of the history of morality attracted much of Weber's attention. I argue that this can be explained by the fact that he was concerned with a same cultural question as

[126] Müller – Lauter, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*, 59.

[127] Wolfgang Schluchter, *Max Weber-Gesamtausgabe Band I/24: Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Entstehungsgeschichte und Dokumente Dargest*. u. hrsg. v. Wolfgang Schluchter (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 72.

Nietzsche concerning the historical origins of Christian morality and how practical stances emerged out of it. For example, what Weber famously called "inner-worldly asceticism" developed historically through a religious attitude that can be traced back to Judaism as its starting point.

Secondly, Weber's studies on religion are crucial for understanding the way he approached modernity and science. I will argue that for Weber, modern science, the force that carried out the disenchantment of the world, as stated in *Science as a Vocation*, was in effect the result of the colossal religious issue of theodicy. The meaning of the term theodicy can be traced back in Boethius' phrase *"Si Deus Justus, unde malum?"*(if God is righteous, whence evil?) and the term appears systematically in Leibniz's works during 1690s, pointing to the antinomy between a good and powerful God and the existence of evil and suffering in the world.[128] In employing this term, I want to show how the question of suffering in the context of Christianity propelled a process of rationalization in the form of science. Much like Nietzsche's Will to Truth, then, Weber's reading of theodicy points to science's proximity to Christianity in its striving to give an answer to the meaning of suffering.

To start with, Weber's *Economic Ethics of World Religions* (*EEWR*) was a multifarious project marked by a counterfactual tendency in dealing with the major world religions in detail. It would not be far-fetched to say that Weber transformed Nietzsche's demand in *BGE* for a "typology of morals" (*Typenlehre der Moral*)[129] into a systematic historical-sociological research project, given that the main question, as presented in one of his letters to the publisher in 1919, was as follows:

> The overall subject concerns the question: What are the grounds for the economic and social distinctiveness [*Eigenart*] of the Occident, as it has originated and, in particular, how it connects with the development of religious ethics[130]

For scholars such as Tyrell, all the studies of *EEWR* constitute the central part of Weber's writings, since the main characteristics that pervade his sociology can be observed there, namely the question concerning the Occident, the interplay between

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[128] Lois Malcolm, "Theodicy", in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology,* ed. Ian A. McFarland et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 499.

[129] BGE 184.

[130] Max Weber Gesamtausgabe I/19 *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen. Konfuzianismus und Taoismus. Schriften 1915–1920* Hrsg. v. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, in Zus.-Arb. m. Petra Kolonko. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 28–9.

religion and society and his comparative approach[131]. Most importantly for the topic under discussion here, it is in these texts that Nietzsche's significance for Weber is manifested.

As mentioned in the introduction, Nietzsche's GM attracts Weber's attention to the point that he refers to it as a "brilliant essay" in the introductory essay of his *EEWR*[132]. His appreciation concerns Nietzsche's "fruitful" concept of resentment. Although Weber will refrain from employing this concept in a *systematic* manner in his examination of religion and classes, for him Nietzsche was the first who observed that a reversal in morality took place in the period of ancient Judaism. Another source for the importance of the two-type distinction introduced by Nietzsche in his *Genealogy* for Weber can be found in a letter to Otto Gross. There Weber accuses Gross of conflating the meaning of Nietzsche's ideas without being able to single out what was the important, needful part of his writings, that is, the distinction between the two moralities in GM.[133] There should be no doubt, as Eckart Otto has shown in detail[134], that Nietzsche's contributions were of profound importance for his religious writings, along with the pioneering works of Gunkel and Wellhausen. For Weber, ancient Judaism was of great importance for tracing the origins and the traits of what later came to be regarded as Occidental rationality. Specifically, the "inner-worldly" asceticism of Protestantism has its roots in the religion of Judaism:

> Where an ascetic sect was fully successful, then it led to the disenchantment of the world and the transference of the path to salvation from "contemplative" world-flight to actively ascetic "working-in-the-world". […] this was only achieved in the great formations of churches and sects of ascetic Protestantism in the Occident. […]. Its religious character was given by a transcendental god and the exceptionality of its means and paths to salvation, which were historically defined at their inception by Isrealite prophecy and the teachings of Torah.[135]

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[131] Hartmann Tyrell, "Introductory Remarks on Max Weber's *The Economic Ethic of World Religions", SOCIETAMUTAMENTOPOLITICA* 5, no. 9 (2014): 49.

[132] Weber, "Introduction to Economic Ethics of World Religions", 59.

[133] Max Weber Gesamptausgabe, II/5 *Briefe 1906-1908* Hrsg. v. M. Rainer Lepsius u. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, unter Mitarb. v. Birgit Rudhard u. Manfred Schön (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 463.

[134] For Otto, Nietzsche, along with Marx, Sombart and Troeltsch are the main influences on Weber regarding the topic of ancient Judaism in particular. Eckart Otto, "Max Weber's Sociology of Ancient Judaism as Part of his Project on the Economic Ethics of World Religions", in *Max Weber's Economic Ethic of the World Religions: An Analysis,* ed. Thomas Ertman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 319.

[135] Weber, "Introduction to the Economic Ethics of World Religions", 78 – 79.

However reluctant Weber was to use the concept of resentment in a generalizing way, it seems that he adopts more easily a connection between the former and the concept of theodicy. In various passages in his *Introduction to the Economic Ethics of World Religions* Weber accepts a broad identification of resentment with a process he names as "the valuing of suffering", while theodicy itself, as he notes, "can be colored by resentment"[136]. As noted above, theodicy is the attempt to reconcile an omnipotent God with the unjust suffering in the world.[137]

As Adair-Tottef has remarked, "theodicy" and "salvation" (*Erlösung*) are used interchangeably in Weber's writings, a motif that he may have adopted from Troeltsch's usage of the terms.[138] In a scholarly volume dedicated to the concept of theodicy, Troeltsch defined it as the search for the "final sense and reason of the world", while for Otto Lempp theodicy was translated as the quest for determining the "reason, sense, or purpose of evil in the world".[139] Thus, in broad terms it can be argued that theodicy in Weber corresponds to what Nietzsche described as the meaning of the ascetic ideal.

To what extent, then, does science fit in this schema according to which the concept of theodicy facilitates the quest for ultimate meaning in a cosmos full of evil? My belief is that an answer to this question can emerge if we follow closely Weber's central questions in his investigations into the religious ethics that defined the West. In his 1920 *Author's Introduction* for the new edition of the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (first published in 1905) Weber remarks that, although various types of science have existed elsewhere, it is only in the West that the type of

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[136] Ibid., 59-61.

[137] Weber in the Introduction proceeds to a novel distinction between "theodicy of suffering" and "theodicy of good fortune" which I will not discuss here. Of crucial importance is I believe his focus in the *Introduction* on the question of suffering and the different forms that it took. See esp. when he connects the transformation of the question of suffering with the Israelite people: "Because of the very particular circumstances of the Israelite people, this had the unique result that it was the suffering of the people as a *community,* rather than the individual's suffering, that became the object of the hopes of religious salvation". Weber, "Introduction to the Economic Ethics of World Religions", 61-62.

[138] Christofer Adair-Tottef, *Fundamental Concepts in Max Weber's Sociology of Religion* (New York: Palgrave, 2005) 112 – 119. See also 118 where Adair-Tottef rightly remarks that theodicy as a concept presupposes a doubting subject who realizes the unjust suffering in a world created by God. This had already been remarked by Gunkel with reference to Book of Job. Lemp on the same case remarked how the Book of Job was designed to show how God's justice "smashed against reality".

[139]Otto Lemp, „Grund, Sinn oder Zweck des Übels in der Welt", in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart Band V* (Tübingen: Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck]), 1186–1192.

"specialized and trained personnel (*Fachmenschentum*)" makes its appearance.[140] The question is, then: what distinctive reasons led to the emergence *of Fachmenschentum* only in the West?

If we turn to *Intermediate Reflections* (*Zwischenbetrachtung*), the most theoretical piece ever written by Weber, we are presented with a thesis that religions, understood as salvation-religions, are pushing towards rationalization:

> The consciously pursued need for salvation, which is the substance of religiosity, has originated always and everywhere as the result of the efforts for a systematic and practical rationalization of the realities of life. This universal need […] can be alternatively expressed as the demand that the course of the world [*Weltverlauf*], as it touches upon the interests of human beings, is in some way a *meaningful* process. At this level this demand is the presupposition of every religion[141]. [emphasis in original]

On this account, the process of rationalization emerges as the outcome of the continuous religious need for providing a final meaning (*Sinn*) for the world. It seems then that Weber indicates that religion, being essentially salvation-religion, articulated the demand for the world to have a "meaningful" process and character, thereby paving the way for the "practical" rationalization of the life as a whole. For Weber, the less a religion is mystical but based instead on codified doctrines, the more it is in need of "rational apologetics".[142] In the same text the reader come across the following:

> […] religion often considers purely empirical and also scientific research as more in line with its interests than philosophy; this is especially so for ascetic Protestantism. But where rational empirical knowledge has consistently carried through the disenchantment [*Enzauberung*] of the world and its transformation into a causal mechanism, there emerges a tension with the claim of ethical postulates – that the world, for religion, is ultimately willed and ordained by God and is therefore, in whatever way oriented, an ethically *meaningful* cosmos[143] [emphasis in original]

It is through this schema then that science's role can be understood. As Friedrich Tenbruck has noted in his seminal article, it was the compulsion of that particular logic, namely, the need to "possess a rational answer to the problem of

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[140] Max Weber, "Prefatory Remarks to the Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion" in *The Essential Weber. A Reader*, ed. Sam Whimster (London and New York: Routledge, 2004, 102.
[141] Max Weber, "Intermediate Reflection on the Economic Ethics of World Religions", in *The Essential Weber. A Reader*, ed. Sam Whimster (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 241.
[142] Ibid., 239.
[143] Ibid., 238-239.

theodicy"[144]which set the basis for the disenchantment of the world. In that sense, religions are "forced to provide comprehensive images of the world and articulated theodicies, which present the most consistent forms of rationalization of the world from the viewpoint of a comprehensive explanation of these specifically meaningless aspects of reality and according to the viewpoint of supramundane salvation".[145]

This tension, sketched above in the quoted passage from *Intermediate Reflections*, was translated into an "ever greater devaluation (*Entwertung*) of the world", which in Weber's thought takes the form of the "tragedy" of the *Kulturmensch* in modernity:

> The meaninglessness of the purely innerworldly perfection of the self of the cultural person [*Kulturmensch*]- that is, of the final values to which 'culture' appeared to be reducible – already followed from religious thought and its innerworldly presuppositions from the obvious meaninglessness of death. So, under conditions of 'culture' this appeared to give the meaningless of life its definite accent. The peasant could die "sated with life" like Abraham. […] the "educated person'' […] could indeed be "tired" of life but not "sated with life'' in the sense of the completion in the course of life. [146]

Rational knowledge, then, is produced by the growing conceptualization of the ethical demand by salvation-religion to give a coherent account of the meaning of the world. This demand, by steadily transforming the world into a causal mechanism, resulted in the emergence of specialized knowledge in the West. One core element of this great process of rationalization was, as I argued, the issue of theodicy, that is, the question regarding the relationship between worldly suffering and an omnipotent God. A brief look at Weber's *Sociology of Religion* leaves no doubt that he established a typology of different forms of theodicy in world religions (and thus attempts to solve the abovementioned central question). Nonetheless, I believe that when it came to the question under discussion here there is no doubt that the form of theodicy encountered in the West was decisive for the loss of transcendence. As he said, the "belief in providence was the consistent rationalization of magical divination […]. No other view of religious relationship could possibly be as radically opposed to all magic, both in theory and in practice".[147]

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[144] Friedrich Tenbruck, "The Thematic Unity of Max Weber's Work", *British Journal of Sociology* 31, no. 3 (1980): 334.
[145] Ibid., 339.
[146] Weber, *"*Intermediate Reflection on the Economic Ethics of World Religions*",* 243.
[147] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 523.

Interestingly enough then, it seems that for both Nietzsche and Weber the modern scientific attitude, and rationality in general, evolved from primarily theological questions and problems. This gives us an important clue to their rejection of scientific objectivity: with the Death of God/Disenchantment science has lost also the framework in it which was operating as the world become meaningless. For Nietzsche, as we saw, this takes the form of an extreme nihilism, while the same, in milder terms, holds for Weber. However, key differences remain: in Nietzsche's genealogy of the ascetic ideal, the Will to Truth turns against the morality that gave birth to it and ultimately against itself (GM III 27). This is absent in Weber, for whom it is the individual who is responsible for giving meaning to his/her life through science. Weber's position is understood, I think, if we keep in mind that, unlike Nietzsche, he is not engaged in a philosophical program focused on the problem of value in the name of life. This difference is also evident in the way in which they respond to the problem of nihilism: instead of accepting it, Nietzsche's transvaluative task will be the creation of new values. The next question we must ask is therefore how both orientated themselves in relation to this devaluated world.

3 – WE SCHOLARS AND SCIENCE AS A VOCATION

So far it has been argued that there is fertile ground for a comparative analysis of Nietzsche and Weber as thinkers with common points of interest. A factor giving strength to this view was, I argued, the fact that both were cultivated in a certain cultural environment which was broadly defined by a set of fundamental positions. In chapter two I attempted to give an account of what this common cultural environment essentially meant, arguing that Nietzsche's and Weber's views intersected in an interesting way with each other in their efforts to understand modernity. The famous ideas of the Death of God and the Disenchantment of the World can be seen by and large as similar *diagnoses* of the character of modern life. These diagnoses were based, in both cases, on a critical understanding of the relationship between science and the sphere of morality promoted by religious stances towards the world. As I tried to show, although Weber cannot be classified as "Nietzschean" per se, his views on how the continuous rationalization of the problem of theodicy led to the

disenchantment of the world were based on (or at least resembled), to a certain degree, positions first put forward by Nietzsche. This process, in each account, contributed to the problem of devaluation of the world.

In this chapter, I will move away from an exposition of how Nietzsche and Weber interpreted the loss of transcendence historically and science's role in this movement. Instead, I want to focus on the way they tackled the problem of science and values in their era. If the form of science today is a result of particular religious attitudes attempting to give meaning to life, what is the role science in a world where all the ultimate values have been erased? Can we think of a value promoted by modern scientific thinking?

By relying on the chapter "We Scholars" from BGE and the lecture "*Science as a Vocation*" I will try to sketch an account of how Nietzsche and Weber conceptualized the issue of science of their days, negating in their criticisms any glorification of modern science (in terms of objectivity, positivism etc.) (1). However, in doing so they did not relapse into scientific relativism either. On the contrary, both accepted the instrumental value of science (2). The ways in which Nietzsche and Weber sought to avoid both positivism and relativism was, I argue, the point where different views on science and value manifested most clearly between them (3).

For the sake of clarity, I will limit the discussion to these 3 points.

a) We Scholars

The sixth chapter of BGE is called, perhaps half-ironically, "We Scholars". In this chapter Nietzsche, identifying himself with scholars of his days (we), will build a line of argumentation that starts from a severe criticism of science of his days and goes on to delineate the ideal of the philosopher of the future, whose presence will solve the problem of the reversal between science and philosophy. As we shall see below, for Nietzsche philosophy's task is to be understood as establishing new values, something that science is incapable of doing, given its identification with the ascetic ideal as Nietzsche went on to show in GM III.

The section "We Scholars" can, I suggest, be divided into three sections. Aphorisms 204-206 can be read as representative of Nietzsche's criticism of scientific thought of his days. I take the next three aphorisms (207-209) to depict a less harsh view of

science, which at times allows for a reading that values the modern scholar in appreciation of science's instrumental utility. Finally, from 210 to 212 Nietzsche sketches his future philosophers-legislators. This division does not of course cover all the topics raised in "We Scholars" (such as the problem of the concept of "law"), but it will enable me to pick out this argumentative line.

(1) Regarding Nietzsche's criticisms of science and the philosophy of his days we come across the following problem: there has been a "harmful shift in the rank order between science and philosophy"[148]. What this shift reflects is that science, in its current form, claims to be independent from philosophy. For Nietzsche this claim can be directly attributed to a larger social phenomenon, namely, "democratization", which is the heir to Christian morality.[149] In this light, science, which, as Nietzsche notes in a fashion similar to the last sections of GM III, was the handmaiden of theology, can now be seen as identified with the masses and democracy, whereas philosophy has been reduced to a mere epistemology unable to command or create values. Another element contributing to philosophy's incapacity to create new values is what Nietzsche names the "tower of science", which has grown enormously, giving rise to the problem of "specialization".[150] It seems then that democracy and the role of the masses are factors of profound importance in Nietzsche's understanding of status of science in modernity.

The critique of scholars can be exemplified if we pay attention to two specific images which are offered as counterexamples to the scholar in BGE 206. These are the figure of "genius" and the metaphor of the "tensed bow".[151] Starting with the former: for Nietzsche the modern scholar, who echoes the democratization of *Bildung* and thereby the demand for specialization, is contrasted with the genius. The latter figure, unlike the scholar, is the one that can give birth to new ideas because for Nietzsche this figure is characterized by an energetic surplus, conflicting impulses and multiplicity.[152] Contrary to that image, the modern scientific man bears qualities, all of which can easily be attributed to the democratic movement: an "ignoble type", an "industrious" and "moderate" type of man, whose presence prohibits the creation of

[148] BGE 204.
[149] BGE 202.
[150] BGE 205.
[151] BGE 206.
[152] Herman Siemens, "Agonal Communities of Taste", *Journal of Nietzsche's Studies* 24 (2002): 86.

conditions that will pave the way for the appearance of the philosopher or the "exceptional individual".[153]

Furthermore, this "mediocrity" of modern scholars in Nietzsche's account is identified with a loss of tension, as is seen in the metaphor of the tensed bow at the end of the same section. The metaphor of the tensed bow is first mentioned in the preface to BGE, as the result of the "struggle against the Christian-ecclesiastical pressure of millennia"[154], which has now been put in danger by the conditions promoted by modern democracy, and in BGE 206 science is openly accused of trying to "unbend" the bow[155]. A good example of how "genius" and tension" are related I think is found in the in the section "My Concept of Genius" in TI.[156] There Nietzsche refers to the accumulated tension needed to bring a "genius" into the world. Moreover, for Nietzsche the great individual is fertile only in being "rich in contradictions", which is completely opposed to the masses' longing for peace and happiness.[157] Happiness (*Glück*) in this sense is for Nietzsche nothing but a sign of exhaustion, i.e. *loss of tension* and signifies energetic depletion, a typical trait of modern nihilism.[158] In a *Nachlass* note from 1888, happiness is attributed to "great numbers" and consequently to Spencer's philosophy.[159]

(2) Despite the fact that modern science contravenes Nietzsche's perfectionism, we should be careful not to assume that he negates the field of modern science altogether. Moving to section 207 of "We Scholars" we come across remarks that allow a reading which holds that a limited acceptance of science's instrumental character is in place. Nietzsche, by disentangling science as part of the democratic phenomenon (which is after all nihilistic), from its method, will go on to describe the modern scholar as "one of the most precious tools". Instead of taking the objective spirit as being a "goal in

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[153] BGE 206.
[154] BGE Preface.
[155] BGE 206.
[156] TI: Skirmishes, 44.
[157] TI: Morality, 3.
[158] NL 1888 14 [87] KSA 13.265: "Wege zum Glück: Zeichen, daß alle Hauptkräfte des Lebens erschöpft sind."
[159] NL 1888 15 [115] KSA 13.474-475.: „Was ist vornehm? Daß man sich beständig zu repräsentiren hat. Daß man Lagen sucht, wo man beständig Gebärden nöthig hat. Daß man das Glück der großen Zahl überläßt: Glück als Frieden der Seele, Tugend, comfort (englisch-engelhaftes Krämerthum à la Spencer) (…)". See also BGE 225. For a positive notion of happiness see AC 2: "What is happiness? - the feeling that power *growing*, that some resistance has been overcome".

itself" Nietzsche will state that he is "the most sublime type of slave" and "an expensive measuring instrument and piece of mirror art that is easily injured and spoiled and should be honored and protected" – even if he is not a "conclusion, a begetter or a first cause".[160] How can we explain this shift in Nietzsche's criticism, given what himself remarked about modern science in the previous sections of "We Scholars"?

The position I would defend is that Nietzsche's proposal of a vision of philosophy, whose task will be the creation of new values, does not entail that modern scholars, that is science, will be totally excluded. To give just one example, Brobjer[161] has shown how Nietzsche, especially during the 1880s, takes an almost affirmative stance towards modern science while his criticisms are directed to cases where science is done badly, such as sociology, where the effort to eradicate value-judgments and stick to the facts in effect hides the personal preferences of the scholars[162]. In this light it can be argued that science, while it surely is not to be taken as "end in itself", as Nietzsche notes, takes the form of "precondition" for his project of "transvaluation". In a *Nachlass* note from 1882 we read:

> Alle Ziele sind vernichtet. Die Menschen müssen sich eins geben. Es war ein Irrthum, daß sie eins hätte: sie haben sie sich Alle gegeben. Aber die Voraussetzungen für alle früheren Ziele sind vernichtet.
>
> Die Wissenschaft zeigt den Fluß, aber nicht das Ziel: sie giebt aber Voraussetzungen, denen das neue Ziel entsprechen muß.[163]

Here we see that, despite the loss of goals in modernity, Nietzsche still believes in the utility of modern science and scholars in general; in particular, even Kant and Hegel are classified as "noble philosophical laborers"[164], not to mention how objectivity in historiography is praised in GM III 27. These remarks allow for a reading which Nietzsche accepts the instrumental / limited character of science.

(3) How, then, does Nietzsche envision the overcoming of the modern reversal between science and philosophy, and what does he mean by that? Without any doubt,

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[160] BGE 207.
[161] Thomas Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Last View of Science", in *Nietzsches Wissenschaftsphilosophie,* ed. Marco Brussoti, Günter Abel, Helmut Heit (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 43-45.
[162] NL 1884 26 [348] KSA 11.174.
[163] NL 1882 4 [137] KSA 10.126.
[164] BGE 211.

in “We Scholars” Nietzsche, by employing the image of the philosophers of the future, delineates a future where philosophy will be again the discipline that will be generating new values. Nonetheless, Nietzsche’s future philosopher-legislators will not be a mere repetition of old traditions, but rather individuals in whose existence different and multiple traits have been gathered:

> Perhaps the philosopher has had to be a critic and a skeptic and a dogmatist and historian and, moreover, a poet and collector and traveler and guesser of riddles and moralist and seer and “free spirit” and practically everything, in order to run through the range of human values and value feelings and *be able* to gaze with many eyes and consciences from the heights into every distance, from the depths up to every height, from the corner onto every expanse. But all these are only preconditions for his task: the task itself has another will, – it calls for him to *create values*.[165]

These traits, however, appear not to be fixed, definite properties, but rather take the form of mere preconditions (*Vorbedingungen*) in light of the main task, which is value-creation. In the last lines of the same section Nietzsche refers to the *instrumental* utility of everything that “is and was” while connecting philosopher’s “will to truth” to “will to power” explicitly:

> True philosophers reach for the future with a creative hand and everything that is and was becomes a means, a tool, a hammer for them. Their “knowing” is *creating*, their creating is a legislating, their will to truth is – *will to power*. – [166]

However, one may ask how this will to truth differs from what we examined in chapter two, namely the will to truth cultivated in Christianity. At this point I think it is crucial to underline again that in Nietzsche’s philosophy metaphysics is displaced in favor of perspectival seeing corresponding to the becoming of life. Nietzsche’s “future objectivity” is exactly the opposite of “contemplation without interest”: it is rooted in the ability of “engaging and disengaging our ‘pros’ and ‘cons’” and in using “the difference in perspectives and affective interpretations for knowledge”.[167] Given that the world is subject to ever-changing configurations of different wills to power, I think we can assume that for Nietzsche the essence of interpretation and perspectival knowledge consists in their agonal character. Thus, Nietzsche attacks every philosophy that begins to “believe in itself”[168], that is, when it attempts to establish its

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[165] BGE 211.
[166] Ibid.,
[167] GM III 12.
[168] BGE 9.

own views as firm and undeniable, thereby negating the pluralistic character of life. Consequently, the philosopher will be able to find "greatness" in the variety of the humanity, "in its unity in multiplicity".[169]

In this sense, the will to truth of philosophers of the future will be of life-enhancing value since it will promote the openness of interpretations without reaching a standstill[170]. This seems to be the criterion for Nietzsche when it comes to truth and philosophy. For example, in a fragment from 1888 named „*Wille zur Macht as Erkenntniss*" Nietzsche will remark that in effect reason helps us in regulating and schematizing for the purposes of understanding and calculating, and that our categories are "truths" only in the sense that they are life-enabling (*Die Kategorien sind „Wahrheiten" nur in dem Sinne, als sie lebenbedingend für uns sind*).[171]

Nietzsche's call for the creation of "new values" is inseparable from his pluralistic and agonistic concept of life. Following Paul van Tongeren's remarks, it can be argued that Nietzsche's ideal of knowledge as will to power rests on a crucial insight: it is an absolute form of knowledge which, at the same, time understands itself as another interpretation among others.[172] In other words, it understands its being as will to power (their will to truth is – *will to power* -). A good example of this is further reflected in Nietzsche's description of his ideal philosophers as being engaged in experiments[173], whose distinctive feature will be the feeling of the responsibility of "*Versuchen*" and "*Versuchungen*".[174] This reference to the experimental nature of the philosopher-legislator goes against the domination of fixed accounts of science; at the

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[169] BGE 212.

[170] At this point, crucially important is the issue of "legislation" given that Nietzsche refers to his ideal philosophers as "legislators". Although I cannot delve into this here, I believe that Nietzsche's demand for legislation should be read as part of his transvaluation project. As Siemens has shown, Nietzsche develops a pluralistic mode of (self-) legislation which is marked by an anti-teleological character and a responsiveness to the diversity of life, see Herman W. Siemens, "Nietzsche and the Temporality of (Self-) Legislation", in *Nietzsche on Time and History*, ed. Manuel Dries (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2008), 205. For an account dealing with the concept of immanent law in Nietzsche and his effort to pose a pluralizing model thus serving the plurality of nature see Herman W. Siemens, "The Problem of Law and Life in Nietzsche's Thought", *CR: The New Centennial Review* 10 No.3 (Winter 2010): 207.

[171] NL 1888 14 [152] KSA 13.334. Furthermore, in another note from the same year, Nietzsche points out that "truth" is not produced by "motives of truth" but rather out of "motives of power". See NL 1888 15 [58] KSA 13.446.

[172] van Tongeren, *Reinterpreting Modern Culture*, 167. Also, the crucially important remark made by van Tongeren on the same page "(…) the combination of an almost dogmatic absolutism on the one hand and an almost relativistic perspectivism on the other.".

[173] BGE 210.

[174] BGE 205.

same time, it precludes a relativistic reading since it hints at the agonal foundation on which Nietzsche's thought operates. As Daniel Conway has shown, the philosopher's *Versuch* takes the form of a sign which generates similar stances and provocations towards others to become part of this "sphere of culture", thus delineating a potential community (but not a society).[175] An essential part of this culture is the concept of a form of contestation that attempts to undermine all dominant values, while seeking an equal "play of forces" that will generate "measure".[176]

Given these remarks, I think that Nietzsche's response to the question of science and *Bildung* of his days should be seen through his critical project of transvaluation, in which life, in its multifarious character, stands as the central value, since for Nietzsche philosophy is always "in the service of growing, struggling life".[177] What Nietzsche sketches, then, in "We Scholars" concerning the overcoming of science's dominance over philosophy and the tuning of the latter towards the task of value-creation, represents a critical move that reopens the question of normativity.[178] This concept however is not to be found in abstract, metaphysical ideals. Nietzsche's attempt or "*Versuch*" is to speak from an immanent standpoint and to affirm life in its pluralistic character – contrary to views that promote "*die allergrößte Ähnlichkeit aller Menschen*", as does sociology.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that Nietzsche is not implying that the philosophers of the future are physically present and palpable. Nietzsche, finding himself caught up in the acedia of modernity, defers the emergence of free spirits to the future yet to come. What he claims he has done is merely to accelerate their coming:

> […] 'free spirits' of this kind do not exist, did not exist - but as I have said, I had need of them at that time if I was to keep in good spirits while surrounded by ills (sickness, solitude, unfamiliar places, *acedia*, inactivity) […]. I see them already *coming*, slowly, slowly; and perhaps I shall do something to speed their coming if I describe in advance under what vicissitudes, upon what paths, I *see* them coming? – [179]

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[175] Conway, *Nietzsche and the Political*, 77.
[176] Herman Siemens, "Nietzsche's Agon with Resentment", *Continental Philosophy Review* 34 (2001), 77.
[177] GS 370.
[178] "The problem I am posing is not what should replace humanity in the order of being (-the human is an *endpoint*-): but instead what type of human should be *bred [züchten],* should be willed (…). AC 3. The word "züchten" bears educational connotations in 19th century German.
[179] HAH Preface 2.

b) Science as a Vocation

Science as a Vocation stands as one of the best-known pieces of Weber's oeuvre. Although not an academic piece *stricto sensu*, in this lecture Weber's thoughts and concerns about the condition and the fate of the university, along with the meaning of education, are reflected perhaps in the most coherent way. The lecture was given at the request of "Free Student Movement" on 7 November 1917, which was situated in Munich. As Tribe has shown, this lecture can be seen as representative of the general crisis in which the famous Humboldtian educational system had been in at least since 1900.[180] That said, Weber's remarks in this lecture should not be taken only as a description of the actual conditions of Germany's universities at that time but should also be read as a more general reflection on the problem of *Bildung* and the role of science in the age of (bureaucratic) specialization. I argue that by posing the question in *Wissenschaft als Beruf*: "what can science achieve positively for our "lives" at a personal and practical level?"[181], Weber stands as one of the last thinkers who considered the concept of education as *Bildung* and values, thus putting him in dialogue with Nietzsche.

Before reaching Weber's final positions on this question, I will go through the lecture following the same format as in the reading of "We Scholars", that is, by focusing on Weber's criticisms of science (1), his affirmation of its instrumental character (2), and finally how he deals with the question of values in the age of specialization (3). Again, my focus here is determined merely by what I want to shed light on and not on further aspects of Weber's lecture.

As many authors have already pointed out, *Science as a Vocation* is Weber's most "Nietzschean" moment.[182] Generally, it seems that Weber occasionally resorts to Nietzsche's criticism when it comes to express himself about the present or future cultural developments, as Giouras has argued[183], a move which can be partly

[180] Keith Tribe, "Science as Vocation: Context, Genesis and Structure", *Sociologica* 12, no. 1 (2018): 6.
[181] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 25.
[182] David Owen has called "Science as a Vocation" a lecture which bears a Nietzschean ethical form. See David Owen, "Of Overgrown Children and Last Men: Nietzsche's Critique and Max Weber's Cultural Science". *Nietzsche-Studien* 29, 1 (2000): 261-265.
[183] Thanassis Giouras – Max Weber and Modernity [Ο Μαξ Βέμπερ και η Νεωτερικότητα], in Κοινωνική Σκέψη και Νεωτερικότητα, ed. S. Koniordos (Athens: Gutenberg, 2009): 121-122.

explained if we take into account Troeltsch's remarks about Weber's "heroic skepticism" during his last years, that is, before his death in 1920.[184]

However, I think is important to underline the context in which this reception of Nietzsche is taking place, for it might be misleading to ascribe a vague "Nietzscheanism" to Weber. Of great help is one of the most well-known instances of this Nietzschean cultural criticism that appears in the closing paragraphs of the *Protestant Ethic*:

> For of the last men [*letzte Menschen*] of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved.[185]

In this light, Weber seems to use the allegory of last men (and Nietzschean vocabulary in general) when confronting the topic of *Fachmenschentum* in particular. As mentioned in the introduction, Weber used the image of last men in *Science as a Vocation* in order to criticize the "overgrown children" for whom science is "a way to happiness".[186] Therefore, what I want to point out is this: a central aspect of Weber's abovementioned critical remarks (1), as in Nietzsche's case, departs from a similar realization: the ongoing democratization or in Weber's terms "bureaucratization" of science and universities in Europe and United States.

Weber will start his lecture by pointing to what he calls the external conditions of science, speaking, as he himself underlines, from the perspective of the political economist. By setting up a comparison between the conditions in USA and Germany, Weber will remark how universities in Germany are becoming "Americanized", that is, becoming more and more "state enterprises" defined by bureaucracy.[187] This realization of Weber's comes with the acknowledgment that the German university

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[184] Ernst Troeltsch, "Max Weber" (1920), in *Max Weber zum Gedächtnis. Materialien und Dokumente zur Bewertung von Werk und Persönlichkeit*, ed. Rene König and Johannes Winckelmann (Cologne and Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1963), 46. I do not mean that Troeltsch openly called Weber "Nietzschean" but rather that his reference to the "heroic skepticism" expresses a *Kulturpessimismus* on behalf of Weber which, as stated in the introduction, is influenced by Nietzsche.

[185] Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, 128. Parsons' translation of PESC defines the phrase "Letzte Menschen" as "last stage". I have deviated from that since Parsons failed to see what Weber was alleged to at this paragraph.

[186] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 19.

[187] Ibid., 4.

tradition is at a crossroads.[188] It is no coincidence that for Weber this acknowledgement of the antinomical ground on which education in Germany rests *(Bildung*) is expressed in the most direct manner possible:

> After extensive experience and sober reflection on the subject, I have developed a profound distrust of lecture courses that attract large numbers, unavoidable though they may be. Democracy is all very well in its rightful place. In contrast, academic training of the kind we are supposed to provide in keeping with the German tradition is a matter of *aristocratic spirit*, and we must be under no illusion about this.[189][emphasis in original]

This aristocratic spirit is the opposite of what Weber calls as crowd-pleasing appointments signifying his open appreciation of the tradition of Germany in the field of university training. It is even more surprising, however, when Weber does not hesitate to use the term "mediocrities" twice in order to describe the average person (or we might say: scholar) in front of an audience comprised by young people:

> Do you believe that you can bear to see one mediocrity after another being promoted over your head year after year, without becoming embittered and warped? [190]

Moreover, another inhibiting factor Weber hints at regarding the educational conditions is the rapid specialization of modern science, which in effect precludes any possibility for a person to experience the "strange intoxication" of the true vocation of science. The only way left open, as Weber notes, is if one convinces oneself that one's task is only to be "right to make precisely this conjecture and no other at this point in his manuscript".[191] It is crucial to note here that through this criticism of science Weber also touches on the problem of the formation of personality, one of the central

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[188] Here a parallel with Nietzsche's *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten* lectures I think would be more than fruitful. Even if this task cannot be undertaken in this thesis, I think the fact that Nietzsche already in 1870s described how *Bildung* and classical education have lost the ground on which they rested, gives strength to the view that Weber essentially follows Nietzsche criticism of education in Germany. See for example: „Zweierlei besonders betrübte unsre einsamen Denker:
einmal die deutliche Einsicht, wie das, was mit Recht "klassische Bildung" zu nennen wäre, jetzt nur ein in freier Luft schwebendes Bildungsideal ist, das aus dem Boden unserer Erziehungsapparate
gar nicht hervorzuwachsen vermöge, wie das hingegen, was mit einem landläufigen und nicht beanstandeten Euphemismus jetzt als "klassische Bildung" bezeichnet wird, eben nur den Werth
einer anspruchsvollen Illusion hat: deren beste Wirkung noch darin besteht, daß das Wort selbst "klassische Bildung" doch noch weiter lebt und seinen pathetischen Klang noch nicht verloren hat." Friedrich Nietzsche, „Über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten. Sechs öffentliche Vorträge von F. N. Vortrag III". *Nachgelassene Schriften 1870-1873* KSA 1.693.

[189] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 6.

[190] Ibid., 7.

[191] Ibid., 8.

pillars on which the concept of *Bildung* rested. Arguing explicitly against the streams of *Lebensphilosophie* of his day, reflected by the likes of Stefan Georg, Ludwig Klages and Otto Gross,[192] all of whom drew on Nietzsche's philosophy, Weber will equate the process of acquiring a personality with devotion to the scientific case, no matter how fragmentary the latter might be. To put it another way, Weber is not opting for *genius* but attempting to rescue whatever is possible from the spirit of education in the limited form of modern science.

The above leads us to Weber's positive remarks towards science (2). Even though it is the process of intellectualism which brought about the disenchantment of the world[193], Weber will offer three broad reasons for why science still has significance for today's world. Admittedly, it is hardly surprising to see Weber praising or appreciating modern scientific method; the legacy of the great sociologist of 20th century has cemented an image of Weber as one linked to elaborated scientific artifacts such as methodological individualism or ideal types after all. What I think is crucial to underline, however, is how Weber's attitude towards science is completely different from a positivistic one. As we saw in second chapter, the locus of the formation of Western rationalized thought is detected in the concept of theodicy, which, followed to its extreme, abrogated the very moral bedrock on which it operated. It follows almost logically from this position that for Weber science from now on is separated from the domain of ultimate values. In the age of specialization, the very progress of scientific thought lies in its constant evolution rendering obsolete previous scientific accounts. However, through this motion a question regarding science's meaning is raised. As Weber put it:

> What is the point of engaging in something that neither comes, nor can come, to an end in reality?[194]

I think that through this question Weber rephrases a concern already raised by Nietzsche, namely, the role of scientific thought in an era where science completely lacks any value-ideal. Like Nietzsche, the closest Weber can get to science is through

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[192] Stauth, "Nietzsche, Weber and the affirmative sociology of culture", 221. Also see Weber's comments on the essay about Suffrage and Democracy in Germany: "The universal effect produced by the conditions of commercial life today is to make our outward lives uniform by 'standardizing' production. Today 'science' as such no longer creates a 'universal personality.". Weber, *Political Writings*, 220.

[193] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 12.

[194] Ibid., 12.

affirming its *instrumental* character. Thus, what science practically can mean for man in modernity is a) calculation, that is, techniques with which we can control life, b) that offers man modes of thought, such as the tools of trade, along with the training needed to make use of them and finally c) clarity.[195] Clarity is of great importance for Weber since it seems to be connected with the overall character and value of the vocation of science in modern life. Moreover, it is through the notion of clarity that I think we move towards Weber's resolution of the problem of value and science in modernity.

Weber, echoing his *Zwichenbetrachtung* essay, refers to Tolstoy in order to sketch the fundamental problem faced by *Kulturmenschen*: as civilization is continuously becoming enriched with new ideas and knowledge, death finds man only "tired" of life and never "fulfilled" by life.[196] In ancient Greece the discovery of the concept essentially meant "a tool with which you could clamp someone into a logical vice" in order to prove that "this and nothing else was the truth, the eternal truth".[197] This was later strengthened by the discovery of the experiment in Renaissance. But in modernity science cannot provide us with ultimate values in order to navigate in the world. It is in this context where the reference to Nietzsche's last men appears in the lecture:

> Thus a naive optimism had led people to glorify science, or rather the techniques of mastering the problems of life based on science, as the road to happiness. But after Nietzsche's annihilating criticism of those "last men" "who have discovered happiness," I can probably ignore this completely. After all, who believes it – apart from some overgrown children in their professorial chairs or editorial offices? Let us return to our theme. Given these internal assumptions, what is the meaning of science as a vocation now that all these earlier illusions – "the path to true existence," "the path to true art," "the path to true nature," "the path to the true God," "the path to true happiness" – have been shattered? The simplest reply was given by Tolstoy with his statement, "Science is meaningless because it has no answer to the only questions that matter to us: 'What should we do? How shall we live?" The fact that science cannot give us this answer is absolutely indisputable.[198]

The putative meaning of science then is intrinsically connected with the person's ultimate attitude toward life. What is worth knowing is only produced by the act of interpretation on the part of the individual. In this account, there is no such thing as

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[195] Ibid., 25.
[196] Ibid., 13.
[197] Ibid., 15.
[198] Ibid., 17.

science without presuppositions. For Weber, modernity is characterized by an "irresoluble struggle" of different value systems with each other[199] and therefore, if science wants to be a *Wirklichkeitwissenschaft*, it cannot promote any practical points of view over others. As Hennis has shown, Weber's line of argumentation at this point is also directed against specific tendencies inside the university of his day which in fact, while proclaiming science's objectivity, covertly promoted their interests.[200] To let "facts speak for themselves" potentially can be yet another guise for inserting value-judgements in the lecture room.[201] In this sense, the meaning of *Wertfreiheit* on Weber's part can be understood as an effort to demarcate science from values in order to safeguard the latter.

What science can do (3) is to provide clarity about the person's action, that is, to help him by offering him clarity about the subsequent process of his action. Unlike Nietzsche's philosopher-legislators, philosophy's role for Weber can only be that of clarifying the relationship between means in view of willed ends:

> To put it metaphorically, if you choose this particular standpoint, you will be serving this particular god and will give offense to every other god. For you will necessarily arrive at such-and-such ultimate, internally meaningful conclusions if you remain true to yourselves. We may assert this at least in principle. The discipline of philosophy and the discussion of what are ultimately the philosophical bases of the individual disciplines all attempt to achieve this.[202]

Science and philosophy then remain at the level of intellectual integrity without becoming part of a normative project. Weber, in effect proceeds to what Stauth interestingly called a form of "apology", since he accepts Nietzsche's cultural criticism[203] -- without however articulating a similar life-affirmative project. Similarly, for Schluchter this entailed a move in which Nietzsche's critique is turned into an object of empirical research.[204] There are good reasons to uphold such a view. Weber certainly undertook the task of examining the historical roots of human values, comparing different religions, in detail. He was also concerned with underlining the

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[199] Ibid., 22.
[200] Hennis, "The Meaning of 'Wertfreihet' on the Background and Motives of Max Weber's ''Postulate''", 115.
[201] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 20.
[202] Ibid., 26.
[203] Stauth, "Nietzsche, Weber and the affirmative sociology of culture", 222.
[204] Wolfgang Schluchter, "The Paradox of Rationalization: On the Relation of Ethics and World", in *Max Weber's Vision of History,* ed. Guenter Roth and Wolfgang Schluchter (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1979), 59.

vast difference between the origins of a phenomenon and its later development[205]. It is for this reason that Weber declared GM a "brilliant essay" after all. This is further reflected in Robert Eden's remarks that Weber seems to materialize the Nietzschean demand for a "strict empirical inquiry hostile to traditional moral philosophy and suspicious of its metaphysical speculation".[206]

Thus, it can be argued that for Weber, contrary to Nietzsche's commitment to life affirmation through critical transvaluation, science can have only the form of vocation (*Beruf*), leaving the question regarding values open to each individual. The latter should not be interpreted as a kind of blind decisionism promoted by Weber, but rather as an attempt to keep personal values and human dignity away from the continuously industrialized science. Here I think the greatest differences between Weber's stance and Nietzsche's critical philosophy are revealed. For Weber, the question of life-enhancement and perfectionism are not options. Weber's position can be translated as one which promoted modesty, as Tracy Strong has rightly remarked[207], whereas as Bonnie Honig has argued that Weber's stance resembles a *"*nonnegotiable, principled positioning*"* in contrast to Nietzsche's self-overcoming.[208] Weber returns to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* in order to sketch his answer regarding the issue of values in modernity.[209] His closing remarks in *Science as a Vocation* indicate that if personality is possible today it is only through accepting the modern conditions and meeting "the challenges of the day", as well as encouraging everyone to find the "Dämon" which controls "the threads of his life".[210]

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[205] See D 37. Also, D 44: "(…) that formerly, when investigators of knowledge sought out the origin of things they always believed they would discover something of incalculable significance for all later action and judgment, that they always *presupposed".*

[206] Robert Eden, "Bad Conscience for a Nietzschean Age: Weber's Calling for Science", *The Review of Politics* 45, no.3 (1983): 371.

[207] Tracy B. Strong, "Nietzsche and Weber on history and ethics", *History of the Human Sciences* 5, no. 3 (1992): 10.

[208] Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 206

[209] Isher Paul-Sahni, "The Will to Act". An Analysis of Max Weber's Conceptualization of Social Action and Political Ethics in the Light of Goethe's Fiction", *Sociology* 35, no.2 (2001): 426. Also see 433 on Wilhelm's renunciation of escapism and the meaning of "calling" as being responsible and specialized in today's word. That Weber referred to Goethe's work a lot of times is also a well-known fact. An exemplary instance occurs in *Politics as a Vocation* where Weber -again speaking in front of young students- quoted the line from Faust: "The devil is old; Grow old to understand him!" Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 433.

[210] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 31.

Even though Weber essentially accepted the meaningless character of scientific thought in modernity, I think that profound theoretical positions arise from his account. As Löwith has remarked, the separation of value-judgements from science, along with the scientific open-mindedness (*Unbefangheit*), according to which there should be no transcendent prejudices, constitute Weber's idea of human freedom, namely, that human praxis, and hence personal values, cannot be the matter of technical, scientific discussion.[211]

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have argued that a considerable part of Weber's major concerns can be derived from Nietzsche's cultural criticism. I first argued that the term sociology is not a prohibitive factor for setting up a discussion between the two thinkers. Far from attempting to depict a "Nietzschean" image of Weber, I attempted to present an argumentative line according to which Weber inherits from Nietzsche certain questions. These questions, I argued in the second chapter, are based on a common diagnosis of modernity as devaluated, a diagnosis which amounts to the well-known concepts of Death of God / Disenchantment. My claim was that this diagnosis resulted from a critical examination of the relationship between religion and science, central pillars of which were the concepts of the will to truth and theodicy. In the third chapter, by employing a typology, I clarified a) their criticism of modern science, b) their affirmation of science's instrumental character and c) their responses to the problem of science in modernity. In effect, I argued, that in their responses to the problem of science and values in modernity the difference between Nietzsche's and Weber's projects are manifested: Nietzsche's philosophy aims at the possibility of normativity embedded in a pluralistic understanding of life, whereas Weber's position translates into a polytheism of values, in which each individual is responsible to cope using science, which is always only of instrumental value.

[211] Karl Löwith, *Marx and Weber* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 55 – 61.

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