CHAPTER II THE PROTESTANT ETHIC STUDIES

1. The Protestant Ethic and the «Spirit» of Capitalism of 1904/05

Basic Literature

Max Weber *The Protestant Ethic and the «Spirit» of Capitalism and Other Writings* (edited and translated by Peter Baehr & Gordon Wells) London: Penguin 2002

Max Weber «Die protestantische Ethik und der ‹Geist› des Kapitalismus» in: *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 20 (1904) pp 1-54 and 21 (1905) pp. 1-110

Max Weber noted in the «Introduction» to his essays on «The Economic Ethics of World Religions» that he assumes that the reader has knowledge of his studies on Protestantism. Let us therefore turn to these studies and start with his essay «The Protestant Ethic and the «Spirit» of Capitalism» as it appeared in its original version of 1904/05.

A glance at the occupational statistics of European countries of mixed religious composition brings to light, according to Weber, the mainly Protestant character of capital ownership and a reduced participation of Catholics in modern business life. Weber believes that the prevailing explanations of his time which underline the «other-worldliness» of Catholicism and the «materialism» of Protestantism are not tenable. On the contrary, it might be possible to see an affinity between other-worldliness and Protestant asceticism on the one hand and capitalistic acquisition on the other. Already the Spaniards of the seventeenth century knew that the «heresy» of Calvinism promoted the desire for trade, and the Quakers and the Mennonites became rich although no joy of living can be ascribed to them. Indeed, the affinity between certain aspects of Protestantism and the modern capitalistic culture does not seem to lie in its alleged joy of living but rather in certain religious characteristics.

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What is to be understood by the «spirit»[12] of capitalism? Weber does not provide a definition but rather an illustration. The writings of Benjamin Franklin are evidence of an ethos: the obligation which the individual feels to work with prudence and honesty for the increase of his capital as an end in itself. The *summum bonum* (the highest good) of this ethic, the acquisition of more and more money while avoiding all spontaneous enjoyment of life, is completely devoid of any hedonistic or eudaemonistic aspects.

The outer form of an economic order and the spirit which lives in it or in the people can find themselves in some sort of adequate relationship to each other (but not in a relationship of necessary interdependence). When Weber used the expression «spirit of capitalism» to describe that style of life which seeks profit rationally and systematically (like Benjamin Franklin), he felt that this was justified by the historical fact that this attitude or spirit has found its most adequate form in the capitalist enterprise.

But the capitalistic spirit and the capitalist form or order may well occur separately. At the beginning of modern times capitalistic enterprises were often led in a traditionalistic spirit. When this spirit, in some cases, turned into a capitalistic one, this was interpreted by others as the result of the *auri sacra fames* (greed for gold). For the idea of money-making as an end in itself, as a calling, was contrary to the ethical feelings of the Middle Ages and, in fact, of most epochs; money-making was at best considered as ethically indifferent, it was tolerated, but *deo placere vix potest* (it was not thought to be pleasing to God).

How, then, did the idea of gain in Franklin's sense grow out of traditionalism and how can the affinity between the spirit of capitalism and certain religious characteristics of the Reformation be illustrated? The de-

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12 The term «spirit» was fashionable in Weber's time. One of Nietzsche's books was entitled *The birth of tragedy from the spirit of music,* and v. Ihering had written *The Spirit of the Roman Law.* The use of the term can be traced to the eighteenth century when the French *esprit de siècle* turned into Herder's *Volksgeist.* (spirit of a people) and then, in the nineteenth century, into Hegel's *Weltgeist* (world spirit). *Geist* (spirit) was for Weber the quintessence of values, motivations and goals of the dominating strata of a society and also something related to style. In the PE:17 Weber described the capitalistic spirit as an «ethos in the sense of an ethically coloured maxim for the conduct of life» and in his so-called anticritical writings (AC: 64) he added that it is a habitus or a conduct of life within the orders of the world (as opposed to an ethos of monks) which is characterized by matter-of-factness, calculability, rational consequence and specialization.

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velopment of this new conduct of life and of a calling which is completely irrational from the point of view of purely eudaemonistic self-interest, needs to be traced.

Before the development from traditionalism to the modern capitalistic spirit is analysed, Weber interjects some methodological remarks. The founders of the Protestant religious movements did not intend to promote what has been called the spirit of capitalism. To the extent that they contributed to it, it was the unforseen and even unwished-for result of their labours.[13]. Besides, Weber's inquiry is limited to the question of what in modern culture which is itself the result of innumerable different historical factors, can be imputed to the influence of the Reformation. Therefore, there is no intention of maintaining that the spirit of capitalism (or even the capitalistic system) could only have arisen as the result of certain effects of the Reformation; rather, it will only be ascertained whether and to what extent religious forces have taken part in the qualitative formation and in the quantitative expansion of that spirit throughout the world. This will be done first by ascertaining at what points certain elective affinities between forms of religious beliefs and practical ethics (*Berufsethik)* can be recognized. In this way it may be possible to clarify the manner and the general direction in which the religious movements have influenced the development of economic life. Afterwards, one could attempt to estimate to what extent modern culture can be attributed to religious motives.

The German word *Beruf* as well as the English word calling, in its modern meaning among the Protestant people, has its source in the Bible translations as the result of the spirit of the translators, not that of the original text. The meaning of the word – a life-task, a definite field of work –, took on a new colour: the valuation of the fulfilment of duty in worldly callings as the highest goal which the moral activity of the individual can achieve. The Catholic division of ethical precepts into *praecepta* (commandments for lay people) and *consilia* (supererogatory recommendations for monks) was discarded. To surpass worldly actions in monastic asceticism had become impossible: for Luther, the fulfilment of innerworldly duties was the

13 Here, as quite often in Weber's writings, the reader is reminded of an aphorism of the German writer and poet J.W. Goethe whom Weber knew well: «Everything that we do has a consequence. But wise and just actions do not always produce something favourable. and wrong actions do not always produce unfavourable consequences; on the contrary, just the opposite sometimes happens.» Goethe to Eckermann, 25 december 1825.

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only way of living acceptably to God. But as Luther insisted on the *sola fide* (justification can be achieved only by faith), his concept of calling remained traditionalistic, and one's calling and status were things which man had to accept as a divine ordinance, to which he must adapt himself. Moreover, mystical influences played a role in Luther's thought. The idea of calling in the Lutheran sense is, therefore, of questionable importance for the development of the conduct of life which concerns Weber in his *Protestant Ethic.*

A very different relationship between religious life and worldly action in a calling can be found in Calvinism to which Weber now turns. Here, without any doubt, the doctrine of predestination was of particular cultural and historical significance. By God's absolutely free decree, and without human merit or guilt playing a role in it, one part of humanity is saved, the rest is damned. To apply earthly standards of justice to God's double decree is meaningless in the context of this doctrine. In this situation nobody can help, no priest, no sacraments, no Church and no God (Christ had died only for the elect) and the individual is torn away from the close ties with which he was bound to the community. The consequence of this doctrine was a disillusioned individualism and it would have led to fatalism without the development of another doctrine and other ideas and motivations. Weber can show these motivations as he is less concerned with the question of what was theoretically and officially taught in the ethical compendia of the time than with the psychological motivations which originated in religious belief and practice.

It seems at first an enigma how the superiority of Calvinism in social organization could combine itself with this tendency to tear the individual away from the closed ties which bound him to this world, but a comparison with Luther's thought can clarify the issue. In Calvinism the Lutheran *unio mystica*, in which the soul is thought to be the vessel of the Divine, was impossible. Because of the absolute transcendency of God (*finitum non est capax infiniti*, i.e. finite man is incapable of grasping the infinite), the community with God could only take place to the extent that man's actions were influenced by God, that man felt himself to be the tool of God, a tool *in maiorem Dei gloriam* (to the higher glory of God), God's tool to dominate the world by work in one's vocational calling.

Moreover, Calvinism added to the doctrine of predestination the idea of proving one's faith and election in worldly activity and it thus provided a positive incentive to innerworldly asceticism. Although good works and an ascetic lifestyle were not considered to be the means of attaining salva-

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tion, they were indispensable as a sign of election – on condition that they were not simply individual good works but the result of a unified and systematic conduct of life. This idea of proof as a psychological basis for a methodical way of life can be studied in its purest form in connection with the doctrine of predestination, but it is a recurring framework for the understanding of the connection between faith and ethical conduct not only in Calvinism, but also in other Protestant denominations.

The monastic rules of the Benedictines, the Cistercians and even more the Jesuits had all rejected any planless otherworldliness and had developed a systematic method of rational ascetic conduct; they had brought the monks' actions under constant self-control and had turned them into workers in the service of God. And, as Weber mentioned, it is the paradox of all rational asceticism that it creates the very wealth that it rejects, that monasteries become the very loci of rational economies and occidental monks the first men of vocation (*Berufsmenschen*). But what was new after the Reformation was the fact that one was now forced to work in a calling and to pursue ascetic ideals within mundane occupations. Christian asceticism had slammed the door of the monastery behind it and strode into the world (PE: 101). While the monks had practiced an outworldly *ascesi*s in conformity with the *consilia evangelica* (in Catholicism the recommended ascetic life-style of monks), now every Protestant had to lead an ascetic life in the world.

Lutheranism did not yet create the same motivations for a methodical regulation of one's life and the non-Calvinistic ascetic movements, considered purely from the view-point of the religious motivation of an ascetic and methodical conduct of life, formed an attenuation of the inner consistency of Calvinism. In Pietism, one finds a greater emphasis on the emotional side of religion; it practically led its followers to strive for the enjoyment of salvation in this world rather than to engage in the ascetic struggle for certainty about the future. The doctrine of predestination was tempered by the doctrine of «terminism» (grace is offered by God once only). In comparison with Calvinism one finds a lesser intensity of the methodical conduct of life. The dogmatic theory, for instance in Spener, lacked consistency, as he was influenced by mysticism.

Also the Methodist ethic appears to have rested on a foundation of uncertainty and inconsistency. The aspiration to the «second blessedness» served as a sort of substitute for the doctrine of predestination. The Baptist movement, finally, and the sects which adopted its religious thought (the

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Baptists, Mennonites and Quakers) is an independent source of Protestantism.

On the whole, in the non-Calvinistic Protestant movements the religious community was no longer looked upon as a sort of trust foundation, including both the just and the unjust, for supernatural ends, whether for increasing the glory of God (Calvinistic) or for bringing the means of salvation to men (Catholic and Lutheran), but solely as a community of personal believers and of the reborn. In other words, not as a church but as a sect. All Baptist communities desired to be pure in the sense of the blameless conduct of their members. They could also be characterized by the expectant waiting for the «inner light», but with time an accommodation took place to worldly activity in a calling. Their attitude implied a weakening of the Calvinistic conception of the calling although the intensity of interest in economic occupations was considerably increased by their refusal to accept office in the service of the State.

The decisive point in all Protestant denominations was the conception of the state of religious grace which could not be attained or guaranteed by any magico-sacramental means, by a confession or by any individual good works but only by proving oneself in a specific type of conduct. From this followed for the individual the incentive methodically to verify his own state of grace in his practical conduct, a rational planning of the whole of one's life in accordance with God's will.

After having shown the religious foundations of the Puritan idea of the calling[14], Weber examines the effects of this idea in the business world. Since English Puritanism which grew out of Calvinism gives the most consistent religious basis for the idea of the calling, he places the writing of one of its representatives, Richard Baxter's «Christian Directory», at the centre of the discussion.

There is a continually repeated passionate preaching of hard, continuous bodily or mental labour; waste of time is the deadliest of sins; the real moral objection is to the relaxation in the security of possession; what God demands is not labour in itself, but rational labour in a calling, although a change of calling is not objectionable. While successful work is proof of salvation, to strive for riches in order to live well is sinful.The spontaneous enjoyment of life is rejected whereas the specialized division of

14 Only in passing Weber mentions another cultural influence of Puritanism: It is, according to him, one of the fathers of modern military discipline (PE: 196).

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labour is ethically justified. The ascetic compulsion to save while living frugally leads to an accumulation of capital. Weber also underlines the pharisaically good conscience of the Puritans in the acquisition of money. Every trace of the *Deo placere vix potest* (the Catholic idea that the accumulation of wealth cannot please God) has disappeared.

Although the ascetic literature of almost all religions is saturated with the idea that faithful labour is pleasing to God, the Protestants deepened this idea and created the psychological motives for it which alone are decisive: the conception of labour as a calling and as the best, often the only means of attaining certainty of grace. It may therefore be said that one of the fundamental elements of the spirit of modern capitalism: rational conduct on the basis of the idea of the calling, was born from the spirit of Christian asceticism.

Already Goethe expressed the idea that the limitation to specialized work and the renunciation of the Faustian universality of man is a precondition of any valuable work in the modern world. The Puritan, as Weber said, wanted to work in a calling while we are forced to do so. Routinization has set in and the spirit which was under discussion here, today has left the «iron cage» of the capitalist system; the victorious system no longer needs its support in order to determine with irresistible force the lives of all those who are born into it. At the end, Weber asks with Nietzsche whether mechanized petrifaction is about to paralyse us or whether we are about to become specialists without spirit or sensualists without heart.

2. *The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Basic Literature

«The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism» in *From Max Weber. Essays in Sociology.* (translated and edited by H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills) Oxford 1958 pp. 302-322

«Die protestantischen Sekten und der Geist des Kapitalismus» in Max Weber *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* vol. 1 Tübingen: Mohr 1920, pp. 207-236

While in the essay on the Protestant Ethic Weber had considered only one of the factors which had contributed to the conduct of life in the worldly activity of a calling, the essay on the Protestant sects provided the opportunity to consider another factor: the influence of religious institutions and

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communal forms, i.e., the external conditions rather than the inner motivations, which contributed to the conduct of life of the Protestants.

The distinction between church and sect is relevant here. A church is an institution of sacramental grace, membership is obligatory for all and does not prove anything with regard to the members' qualities; a sect is a voluntary association which one can only join after a religious probation. Membership in a sect signified that the person involved had certain moral qualifications and it especially certified a certain level of business morals. It was particularly important for the conduct of life of the members of a sect that the congregation as a self-governing and sovereign local community was jointly responsible for keeping unworthy individuals away from participation in the Holy Communion, that the congregations were small enough in order to guarantee church discipline and that the administration of church discipline was vested in the hands of lay people. A member, before he was allowed to join, had to have certain qualities which happened to be important for the development of modern rational capitalism, and then he had to prove repeatedly within the circle of his sect that he was endowed with these qualities, that he was worthy of being a sect member. There is, according to Weber, no stronger means of producing a desired conduct of life than through the necessity of holding one's own in the circle of one's group if one's whole existence in this world depends on «proving» oneself to its members, certainly much stronger than if in a church one can obtain forgiveness.

Membership in a sect had an influence on credit-worthiness, for the «children of the world», so it was said, distrusted one another in business but they had confidence in the religiously determined honesty of the pious, controlled by sect discipline.

The predominance of clubs in American society is largely the product of a process of secularization of these voluntary religious associations, the sects. Until relatively recent times it has been important, if one wanted to succeed in business, to be recruited by ballot as a member of a sect, a club or an association.

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3. The Anti-Critiques

Basic Literature

The Protestant Ethic Debate. Max Weber's Replies to his Critics 1907-1910 (edited and translated by D. Chalcraft, A. Harrington & M. Shields) Liverpool University Press 2001

Max Weber *Die protestantische Ethik II. Kritiken und Antikritiken* (edited by J. Winckelmann) Gütersloher Verlagshaus 1978

In his replies to the critics of his Protestant Ethic essay during his lifetime Weber attempted to clarify once again some often misunderstood points. He underlined in particular that he had never thought of identifying the economic system of capitalism with the capitalist spirit, and he stressed that it is quite possible in the study of history to find at certain times the capitalist spirit without the capitalist economic system, while at other times one may encounter the capitalist system without a capitalist spirit (AC: 71) – just as it is possible to have an army which is organized according to the Prussian model but without a militaristic spirit (AC: 94).

The distinction between, on the one hand, a system or form and, on the other hand, a «spirit» which lives in this form, was central for Weber. When, as he said, the capitalist economic system was at its highest point of development in Italy before the Reformation, a capitalist spirit in his sense of the word was absent. Rather, among serious men there was the feeling of a profound tension between the economic system and the ethical conduct of life, or between action and conscience, with all the compromises which resulted from the conviction that economic efforts are not pleasing to God (*deo placere non potest*) AC: 74). Even today capitalism as a system may exist comfortably without a capitalist spirit as a fatalistically accepted necessity.

A historically given form of capitalism, Weber said, can be filled with very different «spirits» and can have very different levels of elective affinity with a historically given spirit. Form and spirit can be in a relationship of high or low adequate affinity or even without any adequate affinity. There is no doubt that the level of adequacy is not without influence on the historical course of development and that in those cases when a system and a spirit of high adequacy or elective affinity meet, a development of high inner homogenousness sets in (AC: 75).

Such a high elective affinity was present in the economic development of the seventeenth and eighteenth century when the great inner tensions

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and conflicts which often exist between professional life and ethics, were adjusted and reduced by Puritanism in a characteristic way and in a geographical area where the traditions of Antiquity and of the Middle Ages pointed to different directions and where today again, as Weber believed (AC: 73), we experience cultural tensions of the highest order.

Weber rejected the foolish idea that the Reformation alone has created the capitalistic spirit or even capitalism as an economic system for, as he insisted, important forms of capitalism are older than the Reformation – and Calvinist inhabitants of the Sahara do not automatically become factory-owners. He was really only interested in the analysis of one component of the capitalist spirit, a component which had a particular affinity to the capitalist system: the ethos of a bourgeois conduct of life or the rational conduct of life on the basis of the idea of the calling which gave a specific direction to the methodical conduct of life.

While during the Middle Ages the entrepreneur felt at best tolerated by God, so that an inner tie between economic activity and the ethical centre of the personality was lacking– with the consequence that money earned by usurious profiteering was often returned at the end of one's life –, Weber found among the Protestants the entrepreneur with an unbroken good conscience, the professional who felt at one with his actions. The specific characteristics of a conduct of life which was completely impregnated by the spirit of capitalism, i.e., impersonalism, a calculating spirit, rational consequence, a specialized narrowing of the outlook, a seriousness of outlook deprived of all naïveté, had found here their ethical self-justification. When elsewhere or at other times these religious motivations of the Protestants were lacking in the life-style of entrepreneurs, their capitalist activities were not normally the expression of a style of life based on the unity of the personality – and it would be an error to believe that this fact would be without consequence for the position of capitalism within the whole culture, its cultural effects and its destiny (AC: 102).

Thus, the primary purpose of Weber's anti-critiques is the differentiation between the capitalist spirit and the capitalist system[15] and, further,

15 The difference between «spirit» and «system» in Weber's writings can be interpreted in such a way that the spirit motivates people from the inside and produces an inner habitus while the system is the net of actions which people complete because of exterior circumstances.

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the accentuation of a high elective affinity[16] of one component of the capitalist spirit, created by Protestantism, with the modern capitalist system. At the same time, though, Weber mentions – just as in his essay on the Protestant sects – that besides the religiously induced motivations for economic action there were also those motivations which were supported by the religious and social institutions created by the sects. This becomes particularly apparent in the central sacrament of the Eucharist. For, on the one hand, every Protestant asked himself whether he was qualified to participate in the Eucharist – and this question was not answerable by a precise accounting of particular sins and merits, but only by an evaluation of the ethical conduct of life as a whole, the total personality –, but, on the other hand, he was under the constant control of his equals, the members of his congregation who, as the guarantors of congregational discipline, had the responsibility to see to it that the Eucharist would not be desecrated by the unworthy who bore the visible signs of rejection, and thus to maintain the *ekklesia pura*. This congregational discipline had a considerable influence on the conduct of life, particularly if one adds to it the ethical training which was given to the members and also the necessity for businessmen to legitimize themselves and to prove their ethical standards by their membership in a sect (AC: 110).

4. The 1920 Version of the «Protestant Ethic»

Basic Literature:

Max Weber *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (translated by T. Parsons with an introduction by A. Giddens) London: Routledge 1992

Max Weber *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* vol. 1 Tübingen Mohr 1920

16 The so-called «Weber thesis» has sometimes been interpreted as referring to a causal hypothesis and at other times to an «adequate relationship» between the capitalist structure and the capitalist spirit. Weber himself, particularly in AC: 95, referred to an adequate relationship, but he did not indicate whether the relationship was «meaningfully adequate» or «causally adequate» – whether the meaning relationship of the parts should be considered as typical or whether in our experience there is a chance that a sequence of events always happens in a similar way (as formulated in the chapter «Basic Sociological Terms» in ES: 11). Instead of adequacy, Weber sometimes uses the term «elective affinity».

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The essays on the Protestant Ethic and on the economic ethics of world religions which had originally appeared in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* were republished by Weber in 1920/21 with some changes and additions as parts of the Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion. The essay on the Protestant Ethic which appeared in the first volume of the Collected Essays in 1920, and on which most English translations are based, was not a verbatim reproduction of the original essay of 1904/5. This was already visible in the title, for the quotation marks which in the original version were set around the word «spirit» were omitted in 1920. Weber insisted, however, in a footnote on the first page that he had not changed, reinterpreted or softened a single assertion and that he had not added any divergent assertions.

In part the newly added passages are repetitions or continuations of Weber's Replies to his Critics (AC), sometimes without naming the addressee. Repeatedly and with much insistance Weber tried to clarify that there exist different kinds of capitalism.[17] Capitalistic phenomena in the sense of a class concept[18] can be found everywhere in the world and at all times, in China, India, Babylon and Antiquity. But this was the capitalism of adventureres, usurers, war suppliers, tax farmers and financial magnates and had no relationship whatever with the specifically modern capitalism and its particular ethos.

Secondly, it mattered to the Weber of 1920 that his readers understand the difference between simple ethical teachings and concepts and the psychological motives created by religions.[19] It was important to him to show that Protestantism put psychological premia on diligent work. In a four pages long footnote (PE: 140, fn. 12) Weber analyzed the worldly wisdom

17 In many places of the final version of the *PE* Weber inserted such comments, e.g. PE:135: fn.13; PE: 17; PE: 22; PE: 148: fn. 22 & 23; PE: 229, fn. 7; PE: 122.

18 As mentioned earlier, Weber distinguished two kinds of concepts: one kind is a class concept which describes in conceptual purity that which is everywhere the same (capitalism in general), the other is of an individual character, an ideal type, and underscores those features which are unique (e.g. modern Western capitalism).

19 These allusions to the fact that Weber was interested in religiously created psychological premia and not in ethics or wisdom literature can for instance be found in PE: 141, fn. 12 (a five pages long footnote) or in PE: 236, fn. 31. But even in the original version of 1905 Weber had said: «What a religion has sought after as an ideal and what the actual result of its influence on the lives of its adherents has been, must be sharply distinguished» PE: 137, fn. 24 or PE1: 47, fn. 17.

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teachings of the versatile genius of the Renaissance, Leon Battista Alberti, and he attempted to show that this kind of literary theory, quite unlike any religious ethic, did not have at its disposition any psychological sanctions of a non-economic character and did not produce a life-transforming power from within. In the case of Alberti, he said, we simply find a paradigma of immanent economic rationalism. Further on Weber mentioned some theologians of the fourteenth century who presented the profit of the merchant as a reward for his *industria* and therefore ethically justified. But the most important thing was lacking, according to him: the proof of one's own salvation in a calling and thus the psychological sanctions which Protestantism set on diligent work. In the examples discussed by Weber there was only ethical teaching or concessions to practical necessity and not religious premia.

The distinction between ethical teachings and psychological motivation was also used by Weber in regard to new examples which he had unearthed while examining the other world religions. Thus he noted that Indian religious teaching connected economic traditionalism with the chances of a favourable rebirth (PE: 236, fn. 31), an excellent example by which to show the difference between mere ethical theories and psychological motives. And with regard to ancient Judaism and its ethical dualism which permitted a behaviour towards strangers which was not permitted towards brothers, Weber stressed that success in the area of simply permitted behaviour (an ethical adiaphoron) cannot become a sign of religious proof and a motive for a methodical conduct of life, for the psychological motivations led to a different result (PE: 244).

In the already mentioned footnote on Alberti (PE: 144/5) Weber applied his distinction between ethical teachings and psychological motivations to the whole of his essays on the economic ethics of world religions[20]: «What … a religiously oriented rationalization of conduct looks like may be seen, outside of the Puritans of all denominations, in the cases of the Jainas, the Jews, certain ascetic sects of the Middle Ages … the Skoptsy and Stundists in Russia and numerous monastic orders. The essential point is that an ethic based on religion places certain psychological sanctions (not of an economic character) on the maintenance of the attitude pre-

20 While Weber did emphasize that it is not enough to study religious doctrines without considering their psychological effects in a given context, it is nevertheless true that in large parts of his essays on world religions he limited himself to the interpretation of classical texts.

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scribed by it, sanctions which merely worldly wisdom like that of Alberti does not have at its disposal. Only in so far as these sanctions work, which is often very different from the doctrine of the theologians, does such an ethic gain an influence on the conduct of life and also within the economy. This was the point of the essay on the Protestant Ethic».

The aforementioned additions in the version of 1920 may be considered as clarifications of what Weber had written in 1904/5 or as comparisons and examples drawn from the essays on the economic ethics of world religions. But one also finds in the PE version of 1920 completely new insights which would have been impossible without the knowledge of the results of the studies of the world religions. There is for instance Weber's allusion to the great historical process of the disenchantment (*Entzauberung)* of the world which had begun with the old Hebrew prophets and, in conjunction with hellenic scientific thought, had repudiated all magical means of salvation and came to its logical conclusion in Protestantism (PE: 61). The concept of religious disenchantment did not appear in the original edition of the *PE,* as it presupposes the essay on ancient Judaism, but can be found several times in 1920.[21]

Furthermore, Weber turned in 1920 to the concept of theodicy: «The complete elimination of the theodicy problem and of all those questions about the meaning of the world and of life which had tortured others, was as self-evident to the Puritan as, for quite different reasons, to the Jew» (PE: 65). Indeed, in his study of ancient Judaism he had already pointed to the economy of psychic ressources which manifests itself if all rumination about the meaning of the cosmos is precluded.

And, finally, Weber mentioned for the first time the immense tension which it was the unavoidable destiny of the Calvinist to endure as no priest and no sacrament could provide him with certainty with regard to salvation (PE: 71). This tension in which the Puritan, as opposed to the Confucian, found himself played an important rôle in the last part *(Result)* of the essay on Confucianism and Taoism.

21 The English translation by T. Parsons does not use the term disenchantment at all, but rather uses «elimination of magic from the world» (e.g. PE: 61, as translated from GARS I: 94) or «rationalization of the world» (PE: 71, as translated from GARS I: 114). Weber's terminological precision is lost in the process.

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