

Editorial

How do *you* read *Economy and Society*? There is no collective 'we' in this matter. Opinions vary enormously. Stuart Hughes in his *tour d' horizon* of European social and intellectual thought consigned it to the dry as dust box labelled 'legalistic casuistry'. Friedrich Tenbruck regarded it as a minor form of encyclopaedism clearly outranked by the cultural nimbus of the 'Economic Ethics of World Religions Project'. And when one talks to fellow social scientists and raises the question of what Weber was trying to achieve in 'Basic Sociological Concepts' (Chapter 1 of *Economy and Society*) many throw up their hands in resignation and declare it impossible to integrate with the 'Sturm und Drang' of Weber's warring *Stände* and their role as carriers of crucial elements in the dynamics of a civilization.

Yet *Economy and Society* may be regarded as the most important work in the social sciences since Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive* in its aspiration to provide a unity of knowledge and science. In place of Comte's tacit metaphysics, his belief in progress, and a science that can unify the other sciences by virtue of its generality, Weber's *Economy and Society* is grounded in an epistemology of social reality, in the explicit limitation of its scientific ambitions, and a clear articulation of the general to the particular. *Economy and Society* admits the need of what would now be called behavioural sciences like physical anthropology, cognitive psychology, demography, and economics, for these disciplines would explain regularities of social phenomena. The place of an interpretative science of social action would allow the role of cultural significance of people's actions to be gauged, what Schumpeter summarized as the effects of 'meant meanings' on society. Economic historians might seek to explain the industrial revolution as a combination of trends in population growth, the improvement in technology, the expansion of trade, and the emergence of a more scientific and secular mentality. By contrast, Weber's Protestant ethic thesis turns this last factor into a counter-intuitive hypothesis: strong ideas of predestination and calling instituted in the associational form of the sect had a decisive impact on everyday life. The empirical social scientist might deal with trends and social statistics, but sociology, for Weber, is a science that interprets behaviour

within the context of its cultural meaning and thereby attains a causal explanation of the verified outcomes of the reasons for acting. He demonstrates this method systematically through the orders and powers of society that are considered in comparative world-historical terms; so for instance, the structure of rulership should be interpreted according to the meanings people attach to their 'objective' subordination.

Was it for these reasons that in the year 1998 at the World Congress of Sociology *Economy and Society* was voted the most influential book of the twentieth century? Or did they regard its influence as pervasive because it offered a huge conceptual 'tool-box' whose value was to be judged according to the standards of instrumentalism. I suspect the straw-poll reflected a commonality of choice not a commonality of reasons. Polls, notoriously, do not ask: 'when you meant that, what did you mean by it?'

The work in question was never completed. Weber died after revising for publication the first four chapters of what we now refer to as Part 1 of *Economy and Society*. We do not have extant an overall plan for the revised version. The manuscripts Weber was revising date predominantly from before the summer of 1914. Marianne Weber collected the manuscripts that she assumed to belong to the *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (*WuG*) project and published them in 1922 as Parts 2 and 3. The majority of these manuscripts no longer exist and there is no absolutely clear rationale for their placement within the project of *WuG*. Part 2 and 3 became one Part 2 under Winckelmann's editorship, a decision reflected in the Roth and Wittich English edition. Publication, especially elegant publication, makes whole what is at best partial. If the reader ignores that illusion and concentrates on the details of Part 2, problems of continuity, varying levels of preparedness of the text, and titles become apparent. The other large assumption, encouraged by Marianne Weber's original publication decisions, is that Part 2 represents a more historical working of themes that become more ideal-typically treated in Part 1; it is assumed that Part 2 is a more illustrative version of Part 1. It is equally reasonable to imagine that Weber would not have permitted the publication of the pre-war manuscripts, certainly not in their present format.

This set of issues is now confronting the editorial team of Max Weber Gesamtausgabe. They have made the decision to publish 'Part 2' of *WuG* as volume 22 of the *Schriften und Reden*, but sub-divided into five separate sub-volumes (see below, p. 131). The editors' rationale for this was translated and published in this journal ('Overview of *Economy and Society* in the Gesamtausgabe', 1.1, 2000: 104-114). In an important article Hiroshi Orihara questions the reasoning behind this editorial decision.

Orihara argues that the old pre-war manuscript has an integrity and order and this is advertised – literally – in the prospectus for the *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik* (see below, pp. 162-66). Orihara also complains about the exclusion of what he takes to be its conceptual introduction – the essay ‘Über einige Kategorien der verstehenden Soziologie’ which Weber published separately in 1913 in *Logos*. Orihara is now reconstructing the 826 paragraphs of the old ‘manuscript’ and placing the ‘Kategorien’ essay at its head. If it coheres, this reconstruction will be a major event in *WuG*’s long history. While Part 1 was designed to supersede the older version, we don’t have its overall plan as Weber intended it. Part 2, the old manuscript as a coherent entity, could then demonstrate the original plan. It should also be remembered that Weber had, prior to the start of the war, also drafted his major studies on the economic ethics of world religions. The old ‘manuscript’ could display, therefore, the same complementarity to the economic ethics project that Weber clearly emphasizes in Chapter 1 (‘Basic Sociological Concepts’, i.e. the start of Part 1) of *Economy and Society*.

Chapter 1 of *Economy and Society* will still remain probably the most important key to any overall interpretation of Max Weber’s works. But a reconstructed old ‘manuscript’ will illuminate a range of important issues. As Orihara notes, the rationalization process can be seen to be conceived as an overall move from action oriented to the forms of community to that oriented to the forms of association. The so-called ‘special sociologies’ of religion, law, and rulership belong more clearly to the context of the plan for *WuG* published in 1914.

If the 1913 ‘Kategorien’ essay is to be published as part of the two methodology volumes of the Gesamtausgabe, a decision about which Orihara bitterly complains, we hope for an imminent publication of those volumes to see how the case is argued from that perspective. (This leaves aside the even keener anticipation to see Weber’s great essay, ‘The “Objectivity” of knowledge in the social and policy sciences’, published in the Gesamtausgabe.)

Klaus Lichtblau in a review of MWG I/22-1 (‘Communities’) gives his independent and judicious assessment of the publication decisions for Part 2 of *WuG*. He itemizes the division of the old manuscript under the heading of ‘Communities’, and he critically evaluates the editor’s periodization of the writing of *WuG* into three phases.

David d’Avray reviews MWG I/22-5 (‘The City’). This is a less problematic part of the ‘Nachlass’ in that it stands as one integrated piece. But it also must have had its place in the overall 1914 plan for *WuG*, most obviously counter-poising ‘illegitimate’ rulership to the three types of ‘legitimate’ rulership. D’Avray notes its distinctively ideal-

typical presentation and the comparative differences in community formation in western and oriental cities; also the issue of unseen redaction of the previous editor (Winckelmann) who 'corrected' the occasional word after its first publication in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* in 1921. English readers will be able to access the views of Wilfried Nippel, the editor of MWG 'The City', in *The Cambridge Companion to Max Weber*, reviewed below.

D'Avray expresses scepticism about whether contemporary political viewpoints can be read into Weber's academic work. This is a sentiment that echoes Honigsheim's memoir of Max Weber. Alan Sica has brought together eight articles of Honigsheim on Weber, both as a sociologist and as a person, and this is also reviewed below.

Thomas Kemple in an extensive interview with Cornelia Meyer-Stoll establishes the procedures and criteria that lie behind the editorial decisions of Max Weber Gesamtausgabe. Meyer-Stoll worked with Knut Borchardt on the 1000 page edition of Weber's writings on the bourse. (See *Max Weber Studies*, 2.2, 2002: 139-162 and 242-246.) She reveals the enormous amount of scholarly and largely unseen work that has to be undertaken in locating the context and sources of Weber's writings, the annotation of the text, the provision of glossaries, biographies, bibliographies, indexes, and the all-important editorial introduction. She points out that as overall editorial policy a strict line is drawn between editing and interpreting the text; the priority is to present what Weber wrote, not what he might have intended to say. This, it has to be said, can be a little frustrating for the reader where Weber's meaning is simply not evident – and for translators these are the points where translation is forced to become interpretation. Overall, the Kemple/Meyer-Stoll interview raises questions on just how categorical the distinction is between editing and interpretation.

Kemple's interview establishes the boundaries of the editorial guidelines of MWG. It follows from these that text immanent methods are excluded from the practice of MWG. Orihara has convincingly shown the importance of Weber's habit of cross-referring his readers forwards and backwards in the text. Cornelia Meyer-Stoll exposes the idiosyncrasies of Weber's punctuation and syntax and the importance of listening to Weber's voice in the text. Along such lines it might then be possible to establish the degree of completeness in which Weber left his manuscripts (even where they no longer exist) and perhaps the identification of posthumous and hidden editorial hands. Would this count as dry as dust scholarship? Not, I think, if the prize is the ascertainment of the intended unity and integrity of *Economy and Society*. Comte's work with its grandiose positivistic ambitions barely survived a hundred

years. It is an interesting comment on progress in the social sciences that it seems to be taking a hundred years to establish the true structure of sociology's most renowned work of the twentieth century.

Masahito Suzuki returns to the well-known interchange between Ernst Toller and Max Weber. Suzuki is persuaded that Weber is the realist with a sense of responsibility whereas Toller is the emotional conviction politician. Through an exploration of this contrast Suzuki secures a significant extension of the instrumental and value-rational action types. As Yolanda Ruano argues in *La libertad como destino: El sujeto moderno en Max Weber* (reviewed below), Weber's underlying assumption of the nature of social and political reality was a Faustian vision, embodied by Mephistopheles whose power 'Die stets das Böse will, und stets das Gute schafft'. Responsible leadership under these assumptions becomes a tragic destiny. Or, as a British politician once expressed it, all political careers are destined to end in failure.

Elisabeth Messer through her transcription and translation of Weber's letters from the summer of 1880 has resurrected the life world of the German Empire as well as capturing the exact intonation of the 16-year-old Weber. The letters document an old historical geography as Weber crosses the mountains between Bohemia and Upper Silesia (today's Czech and Polish border) and the reactions of people to the young Berliner. They also reveal that Wilhelm Dilthey, whom he visits in Breslau, must have been a family friend – Weber is confident enough to change an offer of lunch for the more substantial proposition of dinner and a boat-trip down the Oder. We are given a glimpse of Prague and its Jewish quarter. Weber also provides a foretaste of what was to develop into his own distinctive style of travel letter.

Sam Whimster