

Editorial

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This issue is mainly given over to the publication of two new English translations of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, the first English translation of Weber's replies to his critics, and a commentary from Peter Ghosh on his own ongoing translation of the *PESC*. We are no longer faced with *the* standard translation and it is only a matter of time before a choice is extended to other works in the Weber corpus. Before considering whether we are now offered a choice between English-English and American-English, we should also note that these developments extend to the received editions in other languages. The linguistic and scholarly complexity of Weber's texts means that French and Spanish editions will also be going down the road of choice. And the German situation has already seen a proliferation of different editions with differing scholarly apparatuses of Weber's works. We are entering a new era of Weber publishing, which this issue assesses.

The old world is, of course, still with us. This year Routledge re-issued in a new impression the English edition of the *PESC*. Routledge have had the rights to this work for over a decade now. But it still carries the 1976 Introduction by Giddens, which displaced that of Tawney which had graced many of the previous impressions, mostly when the rights were held by George Allen & Unwin. Routledge have taken the opportunity to correct one of the glaring misprints that has persisted over the years, which was not without consequences: namely, the fabrication through error of a new personality by the name of Benjamin Ferdinand, a hybrid descendant of Benjamin Franklin and Ferdinand Kürnberger. Beyond this Routledge have not taken the opportunity to update the Introduction or to provide new tools for the

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reader. The translation is, as we know, the classic one provided by Talcott Parsons.

So what do the new editions have to offer? All of the editions are faced with the problem of which texts to include (and what to leave out) and which versions of the texts to translate. The need to choose and its associated difficulties stem from the textual history of the *PESC* and its related essays. Most of the essays and Weber's replies to his critics were published over the years in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*. At the end of his life Weber made a final revision of the essays and published them in 1920 as volume 1 of the *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. Such an entity does not exist as an English publication (and still remains a desideratum). To remind ourselves, the contents page listed: the specially written introductory essay (*Vorbemerkung*), followed by the *PESC* in its finally revised form, the essay entitled 'The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism', and then followed by the Economic Ethics of World Religions project which took another two volumes to reach completion.

Wells and Baehr's translation of the *PESC* has the widest selection of texts. They include the original 1904–5 *Archiv* version of the *PESC*, the 'Church and Sects in N. America' essay in its 1906 version in *Die christliche Welt*, Weber's replies to his critics Fischer and Rachfahl, and the 'Vorbemerkung' essay. This is an English-English translation, though it will be published by Penguin, New York in 2002.

Stephen Kalberg's new translation of the *PESC* follows Parsons and uses the final 1920 version. Unlike Parsons the 'Vorbemerkung' essay is placed at the end. In addition, as in Wells and Baehr's edition, the Protestant sects essay is included but in its Gerth and Mills translation of the 1920 version. The book is published by Roxbury (2002, Los Angeles; forthcoming with Blackwell, 2002).

Finally there is the *Protestant Ethic Debate. Max Weber's Replies to his Critics, 1907-1910* published by Liverpool University Press (2001) from the team of Chalcraft, Harrington and Shields. This concentrates exclusively on the critiques entered by Fischer and Rachfahl and Weber's two replies to each critic.

It is one of the stated aims of Max Weber Studies to publish discussions of the state and reception of Weber's texts in major languages as well as publishing new translations of Weber's texts. We hope that this issue will encourage debate and further contributions along these themes, including issues of translation and interpretation of Weber's texts in other parts of the world, for example, Spain and Mexico, Italy, Scandinavia, Croatia and Japan. It would also be interesting to hear whether contemporary German scholars feel the

need to up-date Weber in the current situation; is there a social, historical, and cultural gap that poses hermeneutical and pedagogical issues for German scholars?

This issue of *Max Weber Studies* has invited the people involved in the production of these new texts to outline their working methods, what they saw as the issues and decisions to be made, to comment on the nature of the texts and to indicate some of the constraints under which they worked. As will be seen, sample passages have been submitted from each of the three new publications, allowing the reader some idea of their particular stylistic approach. In the spirit of openness, which is to be welcomed, the various editors and translators acknowledge that having more than one translation is a positive development.

This will raise the level of discussion about translation and textual commentary, and the journal hopes to receive further comments on the subject. Ghosh makes the point that we should move away from the division of labour that separates translators from the body of work they are translating. One consequence of this is the awareness we should expect from Weber interpreters and even our postgraduate students that texts are situated within a hermeneutic field and that this applies just as much to the original as to its translation. In the neighbouring discipline of theology, graduate students operate in a seminar context where mastering the language of sources is part of their training. In a world of international student exchanges, is this something the social sciences should be pursuing?

The production of new editions takes place within a market context. As Ghosh wittily remarks at the close of his piece, 'To be sure, none of those responsible (for the translations) is likely to make much money, but then translation is commonly an ascetic act, and one which is rarely, the argument of the PE notwithstanding, imbued with the spirit of capitalism'.

Chalcraft, Harrington and Shields had the benefit of working with a University Press (and being funded by departmental money), but the case to publish Weber's *Replies and* the critiques to which they responded was not considered persuasive. In an effort to correct this situation Chalcraft publishes in this issue a related article that demonstrates just how important the critiques of Rachfahl and Fischer became for Weber and the ways in which Weber utilises linguistic strategies to render his opponent incompetent.

Peter Baehr and Gordon Wells bring out the commercial constraints that effected their work. They make the welcome decision to publish the 1904–5 essays, which, even though a German version exists, might

have appeared less attractive to a commercial publisher. Their additional selection of texts more than makes up for any perceived disadvantage of working with the first version. In addition they supply in appendices long footnotes Weber wrote on Brentano and Sombart for his 1920 edition.

Stephen Kalberg's new edition makes many changes and improvements to the edition that was previously introduced by Randall Collins. Kalberg acknowledges the needs of students who, of course, will be the main purchasers. To this end he provides a glossary of terms, foreign phrases and historical personages and movements, which have often served as a barrier to new readers—as any teacher of the work will testify. Perhaps one day there will be a concordance to supplement the glossaries of Weber's German. This could, for example, enable the reader to locate each occasion where *Verwandtschaft* is the source rather than the more neutral *Beziehung*. Kalberg's edition indicates clearly those sentences and paragraphs that were added to the second edition of the *PESC*, although it will be still the reader's responsibility to assess the significance of these changes.

All agree that Talcott Parsons made an enormous contribution with his pioneering translation of the *PESC*. It is difficult not to think about the meaning of passages, and the quality of a translation, without having Parsons in mind and it will be interesting to see whether his 'iron cage' translation will fade from our vocabulary. Even when Parsons is acknowledged to be inaccurate, flawed or misleading, aspects of his legacy will be retained. In a period of social science that is a little complacent in regarding the Parsonian legacy as largely negative, Ghosh maintains a healthy attitude to his contribution. 'The only serious critical approach to Parsons' translation...originates in a consideration of Parsons' own historical formation and conceptual world'. This is a topic on which Weber researchers might wish to contribute. Kalberg presents his translations of the *PESC* alongside those of Parsons to illustrate the changes he has made. Indeed, it would be an interesting seminar exercise to present Parsons, Kalberg, and Wells and Baehr alongside the original German as a way of getting students to think about the complexities and meanings of Weber's text.

The difficulty of Weber's German is now proverbial, even for the modern German reader. Each of the translators offers some brief comments on how they dealt with long sentences and how they tried to remain faithful to the original German. Good German and good English in the case of Weber do not often coincide in form and structure. To achieve a balance between these opposing forces, translators sometimes insert their own paragraph breaks, and more often than

not, shorten sentences. Weber frequently surrounded his writing with quotation marks and italics and used a full range of punctuation. Kalberg is clear that remaining faithful to Weber's markings was a central consideration for him when seeking to improve upon Parsons. Translators are forced to pay close attention to Weber's words. As Keith Tribe states:

Max Weber was a writer who chose his words carefully. So much so that this was more important to him than stringing them together in a sentence which was easy to understand (Tribe, 2000: 205).

Further, there is a difference to be kept in mind between saying that Weber did not care about the form of his writing and saying that he had little care for style, or quotation, or little knowledge of the workings of rhetoric and other strategies.

The proof of the pudding, so they say, is in the eating, and all readers will want to see for themselves, especially if they too have struggled with the original German, how particular passages have been rendered. Beyond this, the reader will also be concerned with how particular concepts have been rendered and how consistently such rendering has been adhered to. These new translations will take some time to sink into the social science consciousness. They will encourage all readers to seriously consider language, translation, meaning and interpretation, so bringing the text back in ways that could be considered more preferable to the mass of secondary exposition.

Chalcraft, Harrington and Shields thought the best indication of their way of working would be to publish the first of Weber's replies to Fischer. This also means that subscribers of this journal acquire a new and complete Weber translation for their money! Peter Ghosh chose not to join the beauty parade (if that's the correct term). He argues that there is no tradition in Weber studies of such a mode of comparison. Maybe, yet it is also the case that the closing passages of the *PESC* have exercised considerable rhetorical force. And outside of the *PESC* there are surely passages—for example, the switchmen metaphor, or the definition of social action, that have a stature that places all translators on their mettle.

Ghosh draws a distinction between linguistic translation and conceptual translation. It is important, to get the translation of concepts correct. For Ghosh this is only possible via a full and long immersion in the cultural and intellectual world of Weber. The best translation, therefore, will be produced by a historian of ideas. Wells and Baehr are also aware of the care required with terminology and how 'to render key words and expressions'. They provide a list of terms, showing like

Ghosh that there is a premium on conceptual translation as well as (merely) linguistic translation. Similarly Kalberg provides a listing of key words, translation errors, and notes the lack of a standardized terminology.

Beyond Ghosh's primary concern with conceptual translation, there remain questions as to where concepts begin and end, and how they are communicated. For example, if one is considering Weber's method of *Verstehen* and the notion of a *verstehende Soziologie* with all its attendant concepts, how are these located in the pages of *PESC*? They are not defined outright as such, and on occasions Weber's application, implementation and communication of *Verstehen* is through a variety of adjectival and verbal forms, whose existence, connection and meaning cannot be predetermined. In such instances, how can the literary verbal surface, to use Ghosh's phrase, be distinguished from the conceptual? This becomes more involved when we concentrate on the examples of Weber's replies to his critics. Here Weber is fully in command of language from different registers which he employs to defeat his opponents. Here also is a wealth of exact and elusive allusions to literary and cultural forms that are essential to understand and interpret if Weber's meanings are to be grasped.

The historical and cultural contexts and the discourses, which are necessary to contextualize Weber, are manifold and diverse. To pre-determine the context within a particular branch of *Wissenschaft* and in relation to a particular tradition of scholarship can lead to the types of errors about which Hennis has informed us. Harrington speaks of Weber's 'richly metaphorical vocabulary' and the 'literary qualities' of Weber's texts, and Wells and Baehr have tracked down an array of references and allusions that are not tangential to Weber's project. They seek to improve on Parsons by restoring the missed connotations, and in relation to the iron cage seeking for more appropriate literary and cultural traditions. In these ways, the soul as well as the context is put back into Weber's writing.

Richard Wellen raises the large question of whether Weber's views on value freedom can be seen as pre-figuring Richard Rorty's pragmatist solutions to the oppositions of theory and practice. Value freedom for Weber, as we should now be well aware, was a double that was determined by institutional context: freedom from value judgments and freedom to express values. Contemporary debates about post-foundationalism have found some important antecedents in Weber's thinking. So can the interrelated themes of epistemology, theory, practice and commitment be mapped between Weber and Rorty? Those who know their *Wissenschaftslehre* would say 'no'. There

are too many differences, not least on truth. The pragmatist response is to re-phrase the question. It is not a matter of validity but whether it is an *interesting* comparison.

Both Weber and Rorty counsel against epistemological obsessions as the particular way to *Wissenschaft*. Post-structuralist thought has so effectively taken apart the multiple meanings and play of words that it has lost the capacity to express the values of ideas, for example, justice. Weber was well aware of the institutional web of university, state, and society, correctly predicting a free market of ideas and the retailing of education in the USA. Value freedom in America will play entirely differently from in imperial Germany. Is freedom to express values and the probity of the social scientist a matter of contingency, as Rorty argues? Wellen's article demonstrates that the comparison between pragmatism and Weber is both interesting and fruitful.

Sandro Segre's study of the relation between Weber and Robert Michels, illustrates the good use that can be made of, and the importance of researching, the letters of Max Weber. Close scrutiny of these 'new texts' enables Segre to solve the apparent paradox between Weber's well-known esteem for Michels and the lack of references to be found to him in Weber's public writing. Michels' published work turned out to be largely disappointing for Weber.

Finally, two important books are reviewed. Paul du Gay argues against the persistent bias in sociological, managerial and political thought that denigrates bureaucracy. Evangelical managerial gurus, populist politicians and the various de-bunkers of professional knowledge have led us into the precarious situation where we no longer appreciate the functions of an impartial civil service and management and the skills and virtues of the professional bureaucrat.

Harald Homann honours his late *Doktorvater* by collecting together all of Friedrich Tenbruck's Weber essays. Tenbruck will be remembered as the most remarkable Weber scholar of the twentieth century. Visitors to his clapper-board house above Tübingen soon realized they had entered into a time-warp – the completely assured and scholarly world of a *Gelehrter*. Gruff and charming, dismayingly uncontemporary and captivately insightful by turns, Tenbruck was also the perpetual student. In seminar, the packet of Camels would appear, the offending filter would be removed and as the tip of the cigarette glowed he warmed to his theme. It was Tenbruck more than anybody who saw and delineated the larger contours of Weber's thought. Duncan Kelly's exposition makes clear to the English reader for the first time the true scale of Tenbruck's achievement.

Reference

- Tribe, Keith
2000 'Translator's Appendix to Wilhelm Hennis', in W. Hennis (ed.), *Max Weber and the Science of Man* (Newbury: Threshold Press): 205-16.