

cated a principle of tolerance and neutrality, valued independent convictions, and limited its political activities to purely academic matters.<sup>97</sup> In this way it was able to unify under one roof students of the most diverse world views and political orientations. It also demonstrated marked differences from university to university. In particular, the Munich Free Student Association, which invited Weber to give the two lectures, had its own distinctive image.<sup>98</sup> Of course, all groups were united in their dedication to the classical idea of the German university, above all, to the idea of education through scholarship and to academic freedom as freedom in teaching and studies.<sup>99</sup> For this very reason, one of the moot questions was how these ideas should be interpreted and how they were to be realized in a university system whose student population figures had dramatically risen since the establishment of the German Empire,<sup>100</sup> and whose structure had undergone far-reaching changes under the pressure of growing specialization of the academic disciplines, especially in the natural sciences. Weber reacted to these discussions: he took up these developments in detail in "Science as a Vocation."

The Free Student movement reached its high point before the First World War, as did the Free German movement, which initially has to be distinguished from the former movement. In contrast to the Free Student movement, the Free German movement arose out of the merger of several associations from the youth movement in October 1913 at a meeting atop the Hohen Meißner near Kassel. The most important of the student associations represented was the German Free Academic Youth,<sup>101</sup> which, although it opposed corporate student life as much as the Free Student Association, also initially opposed that group. There were fissures in the Free German movement from its very beginning in 1913. Open conflict soon arose between participating associations, especially between those to whom this youth movement was primarily a cultural movement and those to whom it was above all a community movement. In spite of their differences, which soon led to splinter groups, the associations were initially linked by their common emotive nationalism.<sup>102</sup> Especially among the Free Academic Youth, pacifist trends gained acceptance with the continuance of the war. This facilitated a rapprochement with the Free Students Association, which had meanwhile largely lost its old, admittedly never very secure "unity."<sup>103</sup> It also experienced the spread of pacifist thought in its ranks after the onset of the war.

The increasing importance of just this tendency in this part of the student body is made clear by the Foerster case. Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster, professor of philosophy and education at the University of Munich, had long advocated, in print and in speech, a Christian pacifism.<sup>104</sup> In 1917, he came out in his lectures for an immediate peace of mutual understanding. In order to counteract his supposedly defeatist influence, "A committee was formed among Munich students that protested against Foerster's propaganda and organized disturbances of his lectures. A countercommittee came to the defense of the lively preacher of peace."<sup>105</sup> The countercommittee was also supported by the Munich Free Students Association. Other Free Student Associations, such as those in Breslau and Königsberg, but also the Free Academic Youth, defended Foerster in public declarations.<sup>106</sup> In both speeches, Weber took a position on the Foerster case so fiercely discussed by the Munich Free Students. In "Science as a Vocation" it served to help him explain the logical principle of the freedom from value judgments, and its institutional correlate, the freedom of teaching and learning. In this way, he was able to make statements on the task of the university and the role of university instruction. In "Politics as a Vocation," the case facilitated his depiction of Christian pacifism as an ethic of conviction with a supposedly illusionist perspective and a lack of a sense of reality.

This reference to the Foerster case alone shows that despite the sympathies that Weber clearly manifested for the Free Students Association, in contrast to his feelings for the fraternities, he also noted that it "moves in the wrong direction." Thus, many of his arguments in both speeches must have provoked members of this circle and were certainly intended to be provocative. This intention held for Weber's *principled* antipacifism that, then as now, shocked many. It held even more for his diagnosis of the "illness" of academic youth that had also befallen parts of the Free Students Association. Most of all, however, it held for his prescribed therapy. Weber saw this "illness" manifested in the longing of academic youth for a liberation from scientific rationalism by means of "direct experience," in its "fashionable 'cult of the personality,'" and in general in its "extremely pronounced disposition to overestimate its own importance."<sup>107</sup> Where, as in the case of Foerster, the teacher lay claim to the role of leader or, even worse, where colleagues with less honorable convictions carried on a "professional type of prophecy,"<sup>108</sup> this destructive tenor, instead of being challenged, was only strengthened. In fact, "Science as a

Vocation"—with its sharp attacks against "direct experience," the primary idol of academic youth, and its restrictive view of the task of the university and the role of the teaching academician—brought forth a coalition between two otherwise warring camps of the Munich Free Students: between the Friends of *Bildung* ("Bildungs"-Freunde) and the Enthusiasts for the "Scientific Use of the Mind" (Schwärmer für den "wissenschaftlichen Verstandesgebrauch"). Immanuel Birnbaum wrote to Weber that after the "Science as a Vocation" lecture only a small circle adopted his position without qualifications. It was made up primarily of those who had been "prepared by Prof. Husserl's essay in *Logos* ('Philosophy as a Pure Science') and by the historians' *Methodenstreit* [debate on methods] and the economists' debate on value judgment."<sup>109</sup>

It was in fact the case that with his understanding of science and politics and with his view of the tasks and educational value of the university, Weber could reckon with undivided agreement from neither the students nor his fellow professors. Given the trends of the time, his was a minority position. As shown in Birnbaum's remarks, it was a position deeply interwoven with the histories of science and politics in imperial Germany. Husserl's critique of naturalism and the Methodenstreit and the debate on value judgment did in fact form part of the background to this position.<sup>110</sup> As I mentioned earlier, even before Weber gave the lecture "Science as a Vocation" he had his revised report on the value-judgment debate published in *Logos*. The report contains arguments brought forth in the two speeches, especially in "Science as a Vocation." It is thus worthwhile to pay some attention to this text. It will also provide us with more insight into the negative reactions to the position of Weber that Birnbaum had described.

In the essay on freedom from value judgments, Weber conceives of "value freedom" as a logical principle and as a maxim of action (in university politics). As a logical principle it refers to the heterogeneity of the spheres of cognition and evaluation (*Wertungssphäre*). It is thus positioned in the context of a radical critique of naturalism. Weber did battle against the naturalization of consciousness and against the naturalization of ideas and ideals, and consequently, against the naturalization of the sphere of evaluation. An act providing meaning cannot be equated to a physical phenomenon, he argued, nor can validity be equated to success. Where these equations occur, naturalistic self-deceptions are un-

avoidable. On this score, Weber finds himself in agreement not only with Rieker, Simmel, and many others, but with Husserl as well.<sup>111</sup> In order to defend his own antinaturalistic claims, Weber followed a value theory with three premises: the heterogeneity of the spheres of cognition and evaluation, the enlargement of the evaluative sphere to include nonethical values, and the collision of values irresolvable by scientific means.<sup>112</sup>

Weber thus demanded from the university teacher that for reasons of principle he keep two things separate: the objectivity of judgments of fact, on the one hand, and the subjectivity and objectifiability of value judgments, on the other. Only one who is aware of the heterogeneous quality of these two problems, and makes this quality clear, will not miseducate his audience "to confuse these different spheres with one another." Only that person avoids the danger of handling the establishment of fact and the adoption of a stance on the great issues of life "with the same cool dispassionateness."<sup>113</sup> It is the task of university teachers to handle and present questions of scientific knowledge in an unbiased, sober, and objective manner. They have qualified themselves to fulfill this duty. Whether they should also treat the second category of problems in their role as teacher is for Weber himself a practical question. The position one takes on this question therefore sheds light on the educational value one attributes to the university. Only by presupposing the comprehensive educational value of the university can one expect the university to take up the latter problem as one of its tasks. This position can be defended without internal contradiction as long as one recognizes the heterogeneity of the spheres of cognition and evaluation. In this case, one decides that university teachers, on the strength of their qualifications, are still allowed to lay claim to "the universal role of moulding human beings, of inculcating political, ethical, aesthetic, cultural, or other attitudes."<sup>114</sup> One could add that the founders of Berlin University had thought something to this effect. If one rejects this position—and according to Weber, the premises upon which the classic ideal of the German university rested have crumbled under the increasing weight of subjectivism in modern culture<sup>115</sup>—then it only remains to limit university education to "specialized training by specially qualified persons."<sup>116</sup> Weber expressly states that this is his standpoint.<sup>117</sup> The task of the university in his time is, accordingly, clearly no longer to educate students to become self-cultivated generalists (*Kulturmenschen*), but to become only specialists (*Fachmenschen*).<sup>118</sup>

By relating these reflections to the negative reactions described by Birnbaum, one suddenly sees clearly why the "Friends of *Bildung*" were not able to adopt Weber's line of argument. They obviously considered the university an institution of learning in the classical sense. What in contrast is less clear is why the "Enthusiasts for the Scientific Use of the Mind" also rejected his position. Only by further studying the latter group does this rejection become less of a mystery.

Without doubt, Weber viewed the university as a place primarily for specialized training. This view, however, does not imply that he, presumably like those enthusiasts, spoke out in favor of a naive, unreflective world of specialists. He had already made critical remarks about this world of specialists in his famous study of ascetic Protestantism. There he used the expression of Nietzsche's Zarathustra to characterize those who do not see the inner limits of modern specialists as the last of mankind, as those who had invented happiness. For them, he chose the formulation "specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart."<sup>119</sup> Specialized training should definitely take place, but only in a way that produced intellectual honesty and, above all, a simultaneous consciousness of one's limitations. Such specialized training is, however, specialized education and cultivation (*Bildung*) in the true sense of the words. It sharpens the awareness of the limits of the world of specialists as such, and of the fact that life's problems of meaning cannot be resolved by specialized training alone.<sup>120</sup>

Weber hence no longer considered the universities capable of bringing forth generalists in the old style. Here, too, the ideal of "full and beautiful humanity," on which German classicism had rested, was irretrievably lost.<sup>121</sup> But he also sought to prevent students from becoming narrow-minded specialists, from becoming specialists without spirit. He desired the cultivated specialist, who had learned three things:

First . . . to content himself with the humble fulfillment of a given task; second, to first recognize facts—even, and especially, those that he finds personally inconvenient—and then distinguish between stating those facts and taking up an evaluative position toward them; and third, to subordinate his own personality to the matter in hand and so, above all, to suppress the need to display his personal tastes and other feelings where that is not called for.<sup>122</sup>

Weber wanted a cultivated specialist who, in addition, has ideals that he freely and openly advocates. The university should mold

self-determined human beings committed to a cause. In order to do this, it needs teachers who know the connection between activity and renunciation and practice it credibly in their own lives before students.

When Weber vigorously insists on distinguishing the role of the university teacher who speaks to his students as a scientific specialist from the role of the citizen who addresses himself to the general public, it reminds one of Kant's essay on the Enlightenment.<sup>123</sup> As in Kant, these roles belong to institutions that differ in their respective control mechanisms and criteria of rationality. In contrast to the public meeting and address, the lecture hall and lecture stand under the "privilege of freedom from supervision."<sup>124</sup> This privilege, however, makes misuse possible. This danger cannot be averted by the "intrusion of the public, for instance in the form of the press,"<sup>125</sup> but only by the self-limitation of the university teacher, by his refraining from all propaganda on the behalf of his personal convictions. Such self-limitation caused great difficulties for Weber himself, as described earlier. Nevertheless, it was his aim in the lecture hall. Perhaps for this reason, the sober rationality that he achieved in visible struggle with his own passions had all the more effect on some of his listeners.<sup>126</sup>

To see the facts, even personally displeasable ones, and to recognize them; to place oneself completely in the service of a given cause and to meet its daily demands; and to think clearly and soberly and to feel responsible: this is what a teacher is to educate a student to do. These are unspectacular, "everyday" virtues, not "extraordinary" ones. The one who succeeds in managing everyday life without simply conforming is also a "hero." Weber repeatedly praised the virtues of "normality" in this sense to his students. Such praise could apparently hardly enthruse many of the young persons agitated by war and revolution. They sought not the common, but the extraordinary; not the sober teacher, but the hero or prophet; and not a scientific rationalism incapable of providing meaning, but a substantive morality or a religious *unio mystica* (unification with the holy) admittedly often only pseudoreligious. Weber took a stand against both substantialism and romanticism. Until today, many have been more irritated by the former opposition than by the latter one. Werner Mahholz, who, like Immanuel Birnbaum, held one of the leading positions in the Munich Free Students Association, and in conjunction with him helped organize the two public addresses, presumably voiced the innermost thoughts of many when he commented on "Science as

a Vocation" in November 1919: "Distressing is the stance of precisely those natural leaders among the professors: for more and more of them, scholarship has become a form of respectable suicide, a way to die in stoic heroism."<sup>127</sup>

Nevertheless, there was also a small circle of those who were convinced by Weber's defense of the ideal of an innerworldly asceticism freed from its religious foundations and for whom he played the role of a leader precisely because of his sober manner of teaching. This circle certainly included Karl Löwith.<sup>128</sup> Other names could also be cited.<sup>129</sup> Many of these people appear to have been of Jewish or Protestant origin and politically leftist-liberal or social-democratic, some even socialist. One who fits the picture especially well is Immanuel Birnbaum. It is primarily to his credit that the two addresses were given before the Free Students Association and were then published in revised form in its name.

Birnbaum had begun his studies in Freiburg under Gerhart Schulze-Gaevernitz, Heinrich Rickert, and Friedrich Meinecke. Coming via Königsberg, where he joined the Free Students Association, to Munich, Birnbaum was attracted chiefly by the teaching activities of Lujo Brentano and Heinrich Wölfflin. These are all figures who belong to the intellectual context of Weber's life. Birnbaum probably first met Weber later, during political discussions at the house of Lujo Brentano.<sup>130</sup> After first sympathizing with leftist-liberal groups, he joined the Social Democrats in 1917.<sup>131</sup> Birnbaum had reached the top of the Munich Free Students Association in 1913-14. Even after receiving his Ph.D. he participated decisively in its work up until the establishment of the General Student Committee (Allgemeiner Studentenausschuss) in Munich in the course of the revolution. In summer 1919 he was elected as one of the three presidents of the General Student Committee.<sup>132</sup> He thus contributed in turning those goals that the Free Student movement had set for itself into reality. At the end of its development stood the legally constituted student body.

"Science as a Vocation" and "Politics as a Vocation" were parts of a lecture series that the Munich Free Students had presumably planned since the summer of 1917. It was entitled "Intellectual Labor as a Vocation." It was provoked by the essay "Vocation and Youth" by Franz Xaver Schwab (most likely a pen name for Alexander Schwab), published in the monthly journal *Die weissen Blätter* on May 15, 1917.<sup>133</sup> In the essay Schwab termed the "vocation" (or profession) the idol that had to be smashed: it was the

idol of the day's West European-American bourgeois world: it formed the core around which everything revolved; it had come between the basic forces of existence, between the (physical) life and the spirit, even though it was "completely alien to these primal powers in their pure divinity."<sup>134</sup> Only alienation could come of this situation, the alienation of life from the spirit, and thus of each from its true essence. To produce their reconciliation represented the necessity of the times, and this could succeed only where the dominion of vocation and its accompanying world of specialists had been broken. Like the "Greeks at their time of prosperity," the youth of the day could also reach full and beautiful humanity once they had recognized the dangers for the soul that vocation represented. This recognition would force the youth into radical opposition to the bourgeois world, which was indivisibly connected to the ideology that made a moral virtue out of the necessity of enslaving vocational labors.<sup>135</sup>

It is unlikely that Schwab's romantic anticapitalism caused much excitement among the Munich Free Students. Such tendencies were not unusual among various youth and student movements of the period. What must have caused some agitation was Schwab's remark that none of the appropriate youth and student groups had as yet treated the problem of vocation seriously, and this included the Free Students.<sup>136</sup> At the same time, Schwab pointed to a way out of this regrettable situation: one should have a good look at the works of Max and Alfred Weber, because "the only persons in our time who have said something important about vocation in a conspicuous way are the brothers Max and Alfred Weber in Heidelberg."<sup>137</sup>

We do not know when Birnbaum or another member of the Bavarian Free Students Association first approached Weber with the request that he speak, in the framework of a lecture series planned in response to Schwab's provocation, on "Science as a Vocation" and then on "Politics as a Vocation."<sup>138</sup> What is of interest here, however, is not the external course of events, but the controversies on the level of ideas. And it is in this context that we note that in "Science as a Vocation" Weber at least indirectly takes a stand on Schwab's provocation. Weber mercilessly destroys the myth of full and beautiful humanity to which Schwab subscribed.<sup>139</sup> He also shows that vocation and a life with meaning are not necessarily opposed. Admittedly, everything depends on a proper understanding of the connection of the two. The two are linked not by removing the limits of vocational work, but by the very limitation

of this work that Schwab finds so deplorable. It holds not only for scholarship that "a really definitive and good accomplishment is today always a specialized accomplishment."<sup>140</sup> Only those who are in the position to surrender themselves completely and continually to a limited subject and to meet the daily demands that arise out of it can grasp "the only part of [the] meaning [of calling] which still remains genuinely significant today."<sup>141</sup>

Now such a "sense of vocation" may appear to be plausible for the scholar and university teacher. Is it also plausible for the politician? Does not the latter have to provide answers to the great collective problems of life, answers unobtainable by either specialized training or specialized education and cultivation? Admittedly, according to Weber, modern democracy, which certainly does not give politicians the "privilege of freedom from supervision," is subject to bureaucratization in large states. It is a "bureaucratized democracy."<sup>142</sup> In such a system one has to reckon with the "necessity of specialized training of many years, ever increasing specialization, and direction by a corps of specialized officials trained in such a way."<sup>143</sup> This bureaucratization does not mean, however, that this trained corps of specialized officials, as indispensable as it is, should also be entrusted with political leadership. The modern "large-state democracy" as a mass democracy also needs political leaders. And for Weber, they represent in practice the counterpoint not only to those officials but to scholars as well.<sup>144</sup>

Admittedly, just as there are different conceptions of scholars and university teachers, there are also different conceptions of political leaders. Weber discussed them in his second public address, "Politics as a Vocation," drawing up a picture of the "responsible" politician, in contradistinction to the "principled" politician on the one hand and the power-obsessed politician on the other. The responsible politician must be able to formulate political positions capable of winning approval and be willing to advocate them at his own risk. He also must get involved with the "internal powers" that lie in wait for him in every form of force, even the legitimate control and use of it,<sup>145</sup> and withstand their corrupting influence. He has to serve a given cause passionately, take responsibility for it, and practice a "disciplined dispassionateness" when viewing "the realities of life."<sup>146</sup> One can follow such a leader. One does this not out of "romantic sensations"<sup>147</sup> or out of the "worship of power,"<sup>148</sup> but out of educated conviction or, when the leader's exalted passions are an expression of his charismatic gift, out of a spontaneous "awakening."

The scholar as self-critical specialist and the politician as leader, in the sense of acting on an ethic of responsibility, thus appear to stand irreconcilably opposed to one another. Here we have sober recognition of the facts, there, the passionate profession of taking a stand, here, the demonstration of the possible, there, in addition, the effort to attain the apparently impossible.<sup>149</sup> Nevertheless, it quickly turns out that this is not Weber's final word on the matter. Although they display differences, both figures also have traits in common.

It should not be overlooked that Weber put forth an argument in "Politics as a Vocation" (as indeed in "Science as a Vocation") that was capable of creating a coalition between two otherwise antagonistic camps— analogously, to paraphrase Birnbaum: between the "friends of a politics of conviction" and the "enthusiasts for the use of pure power." Weber severely took to task those politicians of conviction and their followers among the Free Students who "intoxicate themselves with romantic sensations,"<sup>150</sup> thus deluding themselves. The most serious delusion of all is represented by the belief that any serious and important political activity could ever take place that does not entangle the political actor in the vicissitudes of power. Weber saw such self-delusion chiefly in pacifists, syndicalists, and in Spartacists at work; above all, however, he found it among the political literati who had gathered in Kurt Eisner's revolutionary government. (Indeed, Eisner himself was temporarily considered by radical members of the Free Students as speaker for the address on "Politics as a Vocation."<sup>151</sup>) All these groups tended in Weber's view either to deny the inescapable reality of all politics, namely, force with an inner logic all its own, or to call for the use of force "for the last time, so as to bring about a situation in which *all* violence will be abolished."<sup>152</sup> In this faith in the creative power of force, however, they come close to the "enthusiasts for the use of pure power" for whom power is a value in itself. Admittedly, these "pure power politicians" are unable to commit themselves to a cause beyond the personal. They thus act in a "meaningless void,"<sup>153</sup> whereas self-deluding politicians of conviction, at least those of the radical Left, are guided by the hope of a liberation that can be produced by direct actions.<sup>154</sup>

Just as he abhorred pure specialists, Weber also found those advocating pure power loathsome. They embodied all the qualities he detested in politics: lack of objectivity, irresponsibility, and vanity. He considered them the play-actors of politics, whose "inner weakness and impotence is concealed behind their ostenta-

tious but totally empty posturing."<sup>155</sup> This posturing is not the case with the "principled" politicians who serve a cause beyond the personal. They seek an inner point of orientation, an inner support. Admittedly, they all too seldom stand up to the realities of life. Nevertheless, wherever they are able to prove objectively the value of their "mission" and to cope with the entanglement in power relations, Weber is willing to recognize their vocation for politics, for they are aware of "the tragic element with which all action, but especially political action, is in fact intertwined."<sup>156</sup> They are thus also aware of the limitations of political action, and that it demands a specific type of self-limitation.

This awareness of the tragic nature of political action is also characteristic of the "responsible" politician. But in contrast to the "principled politician," he draws from that tragic nature a further-reaching consequence. He does not content himself with taking on the responsibility for the convictional value of his political action, but instead extends this responsibility to cover that action's foreseeable effects. However, he can do justice to this broadened responsibility only if he possesses those virtues that Weber says students should learn from their teachers in the lecture hall. These are the virtues cited earlier: to content oneself with the fulfillment of a given task, to recognize personally displeasurable facts, and to subordinate one's own personality to the matter at hand.<sup>157</sup>

### *The Key Terms: Vocational Duty, Self-Limitation, and Personality*

Both times Weber addressed the Munich Free Students, he advocated the same basic idea: that one robs vocation of all meaning "if there [is] no exercise of that specific form of self-restraint which it demands."<sup>158</sup> Although the kind of self-limitation required differs, it is required in both scholarship and politics. Weber's message to the Free Students is that intellectual labor as a vocation means a life full of renunciation, not of reconciliation; it means "confining oneself to specialized work," not "Faustian omniscience."<sup>159</sup> Many did not want to hear this insistence on an ascetic basis of action. "Politics as a Vocation," just like "Science as a Vocation" before it, generally prompted feelings of uneasiness among the Free Students. This uneasiness was certainly not only because Weber made judgments, for example, of Foerster, Eisner, and the soldier and worker councils, with, as one partici-

pant put it, "calm disrespect."<sup>160</sup> It was much more because Weber brutally confronted the idealism of politicians of conviction with the entanglement of all political action in questions of power, and thus gave the impression that political action had nothing to do with values. There is no doubt that Weber did not argue this way. But one had to listen in an unbiased manner in order to grasp the complex mesh of relations among power, ethics, and truth in which he placed the form of politics that he undoubtedly advocated, the politics of responsibility.

Vocation and self-limitation, vocation as self-limitation, this is Weber's message to academic youth. He who seeks to give meaning to intellectual labor as a vocation, who—unlike Schwab—does not simply consider it an economic necessity, must affirm this ascetic basis of action. For Weber, vocation belonged from the very beginning to the bourgeois mode of conduct. And if conduct is to avoid degenerating into a mere technique of managing life, it cannot be allowed to simply disappear. Undeniably, the Christian spirit that once gave it inner support has long since given way. Weber had already demonstrated this in his studies on ascetic Protestantism. For this reason, this mode of action can no longer be valued on the basis of religious faith; a secular foundation must be established for it. This is precisely what takes place in Weber's two speeches.

In order to provide this foundation, Weber places the two concepts of vocation and self-limitation in an intrinsic relation to a third concept, that of personality. First the term is divested of all "romantic" implications. Early on, in his critique of Knies and the problem of irrationality, Weber had come out against that romantic-naturalistic concept of personality that "seeks the real sanctuary of the personal in the diffuse, undifferentiated, vegetative 'underground' of personal life."<sup>161</sup> In the two speeches, he directed his opposition against a romantic-aestheticist concept of personality that discovers this sacred core in direct experience or even in the effort of shaping one's life into a work of art.<sup>162</sup> Neither the naturalist nor the aesthetic variant captures what is crucial for Weber, namely "the constant and intrinsic relation to certain ultimate 'values' and 'meanings' of life"<sup>163</sup> that a person achieves in the unfolding of his fate, a process that at the same time is one of *Bildung*. Ascetic, humanistic individualism represents the closest approximation to the concept of personality: ascetic, because continuous action in the service of a cause is demanded; humanistic, because this cause presupposes the constant commitment to

ultimate values; and individualistic, because this constant commitment has to be chosen through a series of ultimate decisions. Where these conditions are satisfied, a person has become a personality without necessarily intending to. He has, in the concluding words of "Science as a Vocation," found his daemon and learned to obey him by satisfying the demands of the day that this daemon makes.

It is certainly not a coincidence that two of Weber's most important texts, the *Protestant Ethic* and "Science as a Vocation," end with allusions to the later works of Goethe. The latter provides a preliminary formulation of the concept of personality Weber had in mind. In spite of some tendencies toward an aesthetic and cosmological humanism in Goethe's work, which Weber certainly viewed coolly, he did consider *Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years* (*Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*), subtitled *or, the Renunciants* (*oder die Entsagenden*), and *Faust II* to have validly developed the meaning of an ascetic basis of conduct not founded on Christian religion. Moreover, he found in Goethe's "Primal Words" ("Urworte") that it is made clear in describing the interplay of a person's daemon (i.e., one's individuality or character) and the "world" that the only way to avoid the danger of losing what is one's own to the merely accidental, of losing the intrinsic to the extrinsic, is by means of self-limitation. It would certainly be unfair to Weber if one interpreted his adoption of the concept of daemon in an elitist fashion, something the George follower Friedrich Gundolf did in his book on Goethe. Gundolf argued that only great men, geniuses, are capable of having a daemon and thus their own fate, whereas the normal person is only capable of "mere qualities, opinions, preoccupations, and experiences, conditioned from without, not formed from within."<sup>164</sup> In contrast, Weber strove for an aristocracy of the spirit, not a form of elitism.<sup>165</sup> All people can find their daemons, become personalities, and determine their own lives, if only they serve with total sacrifice a self-chosen cause going beyond the personal. Naturally, this presupposes that the ideas and images of the world, in terms of which one interprets one's own life, and the societal orders in which one is forced to live do not totally obstruct the ascetic basis of conduct. However, it presupposes above all that the coming generation is made aware—especially in times of crisis and radical change, when hopes and desires are great—of the interrelations among vocational activity, the self-limitation expected from without and that accepted from within, and the formation of personality.<sup>166</sup> Ul-

timately, both speeches serve this purpose of making the coming generation aware. Thus, at their core, they follow "philosophical" intentions, providing both a declaration of belief and challenge to action.

### *The Role of Science in the Modern World: A Controversy*

After Max Weber had given the second of his two addresses, Immanuel Birnbaum arranged to have them both published as soon as possible, in one volume. Although he would have liked to have included the other addresses from the series, these had not yet been presented, and it did not appear that this would happen. However, the publisher subsequently decided against publication in one volume and published the two speeches as independent brochures.<sup>167</sup> This decision was apparently the result of commercial considerations. As can be inferred from the different number of copies printed, the publisher clearly expected "Politics as a Vocation" to be more successful. We can only guess if this in fact was the case.

What we do know is that immediately following its appearance in print, "Science as a Vocation" aroused more reaction than "Politics as a Vocation." Initiated early with a short piece by Ernst Robert Curtius in August 1919,<sup>168</sup> discussion continued in longer essays by Erich von Kahler<sup>169</sup> and Arthur Salz.<sup>170</sup> The latter two were friends and members of the Stefan George circle. Salz, who also belonged to the Weber circle, considered this paper a critique of Kahler's and aimed to defend Weber's standpoint against some of Kahler's charges. Ultimately, Ernst Troeltsch<sup>171</sup> and Max Scheler<sup>172</sup> also intervened in the controversy. In contrast, "Politics as a Vocation" initially drew no response.<sup>173</sup> Thus, in both its oral and written form, "Science as a Vocation" had the greater impact of the two addresses, a disparity that has basically continued to this day.<sup>174</sup>

What was the focus of this first debate? Even though the contending parties advocated radically different viewpoints, they were united by a common source of doubt: Were the limitations Weber placed on modern science and scholarship of a compelling nature in a historical, and especially, in a systematic sense? Is modern scholarship, as Weber claimed, merely "a 'vocation' organized in special disciplines in the service of self-clarification and

knowledge of interrelated facts"? Or is it "the gift of grace or seers and prophets dispensing sacred values and revelations . . . partaking of the contemplation of sages and philosophers about the meaning of the universe" after all?<sup>175</sup> Can experience and cognition, life and knowledge in fact be ascribed to different functions in the cognitive process, as Weber implies, or is it rather the case, as Curtius puts it, that they are so closely interrelated that one practically has to demand that the scholar fulfill his "experiential obligations"?<sup>176</sup> And what is the status of the value presuppositions that Weber refers to in order to resist the notion that modern science is without presuppositions? Do they turn out to be merely subjective, or must they be philosophically developed from a "universally founded philosophy of life of existential values and their relative rankings"?<sup>177</sup>

Nevertheless, although the disputing parties were united in their common doubts concerning Weber's restrictive view of the possibilities of modern science, their respective counterproposals greatly differed from one another. Erich von Kahler went the furthest, demanding nothing less than a completely new science. By doing so, he gave voice to the sentiments of a generation marked by the war experience and a weariness of civilization. In fact, his frontal attack on Weber's position calls to mind Schwab's frontal attack on misguided West European-American humanity.

For Kahler, Weber is a representative of old science in whom "its greatest potential" is realized. This means at the same time that Weber's indisputable ethos is in the service of a "lost cause":<sup>178</sup> the self-liberation of reason, which started with Kant. Like Kant, he pursues an anti-Platonic course that destroys "the intuitive, deeply visionary element, indeed, the visionary element per se, the simple prior claim of cosmic unity and metaphysical substance." What remains is "purely immaterial reason."<sup>179</sup> Because Weber follows this misguided course of the Enlightenment, his conception of a resurrected Hellenistic polytheism, of a battle of the gods that characterizes the existential plight of modern man, shares nothing with the polytheism of ancient man. Whereas the latter involves the specification of the recognizable and definitive "good life" in accordance with time and place, the former revolves around the choice between different lives, outside of place and time, that are of equal merit. This absence of unity, however, would imply in practice relativism, something that is simply the philosophical expression of a conflicted and fragmented inner life.<sup>180</sup>

In Kahler's view, in "Science as a Vocation" Weber offers an apology for this conflicted and fragmented life, an apology for the separation of thought and emotion, of knowledge and action, of scholarship and leadership. This apology proves that the basic way of thought and method of the old science is already in decline, for Weber's rationalism, cut off from all that is visionary, is so consequential that he is forced to show the only way out of these divisions: the return to wholeness. In Kahler's view there is nothing accidental about the fact that such a radical diagnosis could be made in Germany: as with others before him—one is reminded of the young Marx—Germany appears to him as the location of the most radical deprivation and thus, as the very place where the most radical revolution, the revolution of science, can and must start.<sup>181</sup>

It is thus the calling of the Germans to acquire this new science for Europe, and indeed, for all of humanity. Although it retains the old science, the new gives the old the lower ranking it deserves.<sup>182</sup> The new science is based on the reversal of the purely empirical labors performed since Kant; it is based on the reestablishment of the true ranking of idea and concept, of knowledge and fact, of basic foundation and cause, and on the foundational role of contemplation vis-à-vis analysis. Furthermore, it is based on passion in the sense of Platonic mania, not in the sense of mere devotion to a cause which itself is only subjectively binding, such as in the restrictive rationalism of Weberian science. The new knowledge thus exists in contemplative, "organic works of imagery," and not, as in the old knowledge, "in [isolated] shreds of facts and calculations."<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless, the new knowledge is also knowledge, and not faith or art.<sup>184</sup> However, because this new knowledge presents a vision (*Zusammenschau*) of "the living in its core, in its unity and uniqueness and according to its laws," it also resolves the value problem Weber found unresolvable.<sup>185</sup>

Thus, Kahler does not want merely to improve upon old science but to radically divorce himself from it. He seeks, as Ernst Troeltsch had already correctly observed, a revolution against the revolution brought about by the Enlightenment; in other words, his aim is a counter-Enlightenment. At the same time, he is "contemporary" enough to shy away from simply calling for the return to the humanity of antiquity. Its mode of conduct is gone forever. One must to aim to reach both before and beyond the Enlightenment. Thus, the counter-Enlightenment also appears to be a post-Enlightenment.<sup>186</sup>

In this respect, Kahler's position is symptomatic. It is part of the pursuit of "commitment [*Bindung*] and unity, dogma and law in spiritual life" that started long before the First World War and was directed not only against naturalism and its tendency toward intellectualism, but also against historicism and its tendency toward relativism.<sup>187</sup> Kahler's "revolutionary pamphlet,"<sup>188</sup> with its antinaturalistic and antihistoricist turn, is admittedly only a facet within this current of thought. Nevertheless, his countercritique makes clear that "Science as a Vocation" was perceived even by contemporaries as a defense of the continuation of the Enlightenment and as a manifesto against the new value syntheses.<sup>189</sup>

Arthur Salz clearly also perceived Kahler's attack on Weber this way. For him, Kahler's "revolution of the spirit" was a neoromantic rejection of modern European rationalism, and above all of the specific German contribution to it, Kant's transcendental philosophy, and accordingly of its political correlate, the French Revolution.<sup>190</sup> Kahler and the other neoromanticists sought to dissolve the bond between the scientific thought of the Enlightenment and republican constitutionalism. Their widespread anti-intellectual and anti-bourgeois stance required not only the seer instead of the scholar and the sage instead of the specialist, but it also demanded the circle with esoteric knowledge grouped around the genius who was ultimately outside of any external monitoring.<sup>191</sup> As much as Salz sympathized with Kahler's demand to fundamentally renew modern science after its age of routinization (he placed its charismatic age in the Renaissance and not in Greece), he did not accept Kahler's solution of how to do this. In the confrontation between the undemocratic elitism of a Friedrich Nietzsche and a Stefan George and the aristocracy of the spirit of a Max Weber that was capable of being democratized, Weber's position ultimately retained his favor.<sup>192</sup>

Ernst Troeltsch acutely observed in regard to the controversy that the younger disputants tended to assess the history of the German spirit "from Luther to Nietzsche and George," whereas the older participants viewed it as stretching "from Luther to Goethe and Helmholtz."<sup>193</sup> For Troeltsch this difference explains why there is generally a more favorable estimation of the positive sciences to be found in the older than in the younger authors' writings. What Weber says about these sciences in "Science as a Vocation" is in Troeltsch's view "in its clarity and virility the only truth" possible.<sup>194</sup> To recognize this, however, does not imply that one is in agreement with his conception of philosophy. For

Troeltsch, even those who reject<sup>195</sup> the visionary human sciences with their pursuit of the cognitive sensuality practiced in the George circle and elsewhere, who follow neither a new Platonism nor a new Catholicism regarding the problem of value, are not committed to Weber's highly restricted concept of philosophy. In this regard, he even ascribes some merit to Kahler's yearning for unity. It comes closer to the truth "than Weber's skepticism, which I, too, find impossible, and his heroism that forcibly affirms the values."<sup>196</sup> Curtius had already made similar remarks. For him, "Science as a Vocation" was a "symptom of the value anarchy" of recent Western European culture.<sup>197</sup>

Arguments in this direction can also be found in Max Scheler. Even though he largely shares Weber's characterization of the positive sciences, he views Weber's combination of ascetic science and an antifoundational *weltanschauung* as the "shocking document of an entire era."<sup>198</sup> Weber's position suffers from the fact that it no longer possesses a "substantive metaphysics" or a "substantive cognition of the objective hierarchy of value," a deplorable state of affairs that can ultimately be traced back to Kant and can be remedied only by means of an anti-Kantian position<sup>199</sup> (which in reality is a pre-Kantian one). Scheler continues to say that even the Southwest German neo-Kantians, with whom Weber philosophically sympathized, were only capable of a formal doctrine of cognition and norms. However, Weber and his entire school, in which Scheler includes Karl Jaspers and Gustav Radbruch, transform even these formal remnants into a descriptive doctrine of *weltanschauung*. Thus, what Scheler ultimately criticizes is Weber's supposed abstention from philosophy in any real sense, and "not just the contemporary state of the art but as an *essential cognitive position* of man per se."<sup>200</sup>

Scheler's harsh judgment of Weber as a philosopher is hardly an isolated assessment. It is basically shared by Curtius and Troeltsch, and not only they: even Heinrich Rickert, whose logic of historical concept formation initially helped Weber develop his own position, found his position on philosophy in retrospect "negatively dogmatic."<sup>201</sup> In Rickert's view, Weber "formed a somewhat one-sided opinion about scientific philosophy and its contemporary potential." Ultimately, he only considered logic but not the effort at a comprehensive value philosophy to be scientific philosophy.<sup>202</sup> Moreover, for Rickert, in "Science as a Vocation" Weber unduly exaggerates this difference between past and present, between the Platonic and the modern idea of truth, for mod-

ern scientific philosophy, which is more than just logic, does not just demystify, it also brings "the 'mystery' of life into full consciousness for the first time." And this is because "that which is *clear* about existence, nature, art, happiness, God [is] still in principle accessible to science today."<sup>203</sup>

Thus, even one who shared Weber's antinaturalism and antimaterialism, who affirms this concept of rational and empirical sciences,<sup>204</sup> in no way necessarily agrees with his answer to the value question. Quite the opposite: the reported reactions to "Science as a Vocation" show that Weber's thesis of objectified polytheism, of the battle of the gods, was the real cause of philosophical controversy. In an age in which the most different philosophical orientations all sought commitment and unity, dogma and law in spiritual life, Weber's remarks had to appear as unphilosophical and as the expression of a simplistic relativism. Here Troeltsch's cultural Protestantism, Scheler's Catholicism, and Rickert's crypto-Platonism all seem to be in agreement. The desire for a new value synthesis was everywhere. One no longer was willing to live without it. The fact that one has to live without it, if one wants to be honest with oneself, was what Weber had taught in "Science as a Vocation."<sup>205</sup>

Of course, Weber never claimed to be a philosopher. Even during the time in which he intensively took up the methodological questions of the social sciences and studied modern logicians, he repeatedly emphasized that he studied logic not for its own sake, but only to test the utility of the insights of modern logicians, especially Rickert, for the solution of the problems of his own discipline. He conceived of himself more as a patient who was conscious of his symptoms than as a physician who knew how to cure them. His attitude toward the question of value in "Science as a Vocation" can be similarly characterized. He described the illness; he also named the remedies that had already failed or that, being mere narcotics, would ultimately fail. He showed how one can continue living in this incurable situation, but he did not present himself as the physician who knew the redeeming therapy. At most, he presented physicians, especially the theological and philosophical ones, with a difficult problem.

If one seeks to grasp the existential character of this problem that so moved Weber, one must first rid oneself of the conception that Weber advocates a simplistic relativism in "Science as a Vocation." This we can see more clearly today than was possible immediately following its publication in an atmosphere in which

new value syntheses flourished.<sup>206</sup> Nevertheless, this character really was not a question of universalism or relativism but of how Weber formulated the question of value and, more important, how he lived it. This seems to have been first and most clearly recognized by Karl Jaspers. In his commemorative speech of 1920, Jaspers commented that Weber, the scholar and politician, appeared to many as a philosopher, though admittedly not "in a sense realized prior to him." Instead, through his very existence, sense realized through the fragmentary character *and* the spirit of unity and coherence that it symbolized, he had given the idea of philosophy a presence and thus a new fulfillment. In this sense, he had lived a philosophical existence. For the "essence of a philosophical existence is . . . the consciousness of the absolute and conduct guided in its unconditionality by the living earnestness of the absolute. This is what was singular in Max Weber, that he radiated such an essence without concretely recognizing and presenting the absolute."<sup>207</sup>

The initial debate in the wake of the publication of "Science as a Vocation" has been largely forgotten today. The academic philosophies that opposed Weber's restrictive conception of modern science have also disappeared. However, the philosophical vitality that Karl Jaspers sensed in Max Weber's work, and especially in his two addresses, remains. In this sense they are indeed "philosophical" texts: in addition to rational insight and rational conviction, they also give expression to a philosophical existence.