

max weber science as a vocation

max weber science as a vocation represents a foundational exploration of the nature and ethical responsibilities inherent in the pursuit of scientific knowledge. This seminal lecture by Max Weber delves into the intrinsic motivations driving scientists, the challenges they face, and the broader societal implications of scientific work. It remains highly relevant in understanding the professional ethos of researchers and intellectuals across disciplines. This article will thoroughly analyze Weber's key arguments, the historical context of his work, and its lasting impact on the philosophy of science and academic vocation. Readers will gain insight into Weber's perspective on objectivity, the role of values, and the balance between science and politics. The discussion will also include practical considerations for contemporary scientists inspired by Weber's ideas.

- Historical Context and Background of Max Weber's Lecture
- Core Themes in Max Weber's Science as a Vocation
- Weber's View on Objectivity and Scientific Ethics
- The Role of Values and Neutrality in Science
- Implications for Modern Scientific Practice

Historical Context and Background of Max Weber's Lecture

Max Weber delivered "Science as a Vocation" ("Wissenschaft als Beruf") in 1917 during a period marked by significant political, social, and intellectual upheaval in Germany. This lecture was part of a broader discourse about the role of intellectuals and professionals in society, especially amid the turmoil of World War I and the shifting landscape of modernity. Weber, a prominent sociologist and political economist, sought to articulate the nature of scientific work in contrast to other vocations and to clarify the ethical and existential dimensions of pursuing science.

The lecture was originally presented at the University of Munich, targeting a young audience of aspiring academics and intellectuals. Weber's reflections were deeply influenced by his concerns about the increasing bureaucratization of society and the growing specialization in academic disciplines. This context is crucial to understanding his critique of the romanticized notion of science and his emphasis on the sober realities scientists face.

Core Themes in Max Weber's Science as a Vocation

The lecture centers on several fundamental themes that define Weber's view of science as a profession. First, he distinguishes science from other vocations by its commitment to rigorous, systematic inquiry and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Weber emphasizes that science is not a means to an end but an end in itself, motivated by a passion for understanding the world.

Second, Weber highlights the inherent difficulties and limitations of scientific work. He warns against illusions of certainty and the expectation that science can provide absolute answers or solutions to all problems. Instead, science is characterized by continuous questioning, critical thinking, and an acceptance of ambiguity.

The Nature of the Scientific Vocation

For Weber, a vocation in science requires a deep personal dedication and a willingness to endure uncertainty and hardship. The scientist must be committed to objective inquiry, resisting external pressures such as political ideologies or personal biases. This vocation demands intellectual rigor and an ethical stance that prioritizes truth over convenience or popularity.

Challenges Faced by Scientists

Weber also discusses the social and economic challenges scientists face, including precarious career prospects, competition for resources, and the tension between scientific ideals and institutional constraints. He portrays the scientific career as demanding and often solitary, requiring resilience and a strong sense of purpose.

Weber's View on Objectivity and Scientific Ethics

A cornerstone of Weber's lecture is his analysis of objectivity in science. He argues that while complete objectivity may be unattainable, the scientist must strive to minimize subjective influences and adhere to methodological rigor. This ideal of objectivity is central to the credibility and progress of science as a disciplined enterprise.

Weber cautions scientists against conflating their personal values with empirical findings, emphasizing that scientific conclusions must be based on evidence rather than ideological commitments. This ethical stance underpins the integrity of scientific research and its role in society.

Methodological Neutrality

Weber advocates for methodological neutrality, whereby scientists conduct their investigations without letting personal beliefs dictate outcomes. This neutrality is essential to maintain trust in scientific knowledge and to facilitate constructive dialogue across diverse perspectives.

Science and Truth

Although science seeks truth, Weber acknowledges that scientific knowledge is provisional and subject to revision. He stresses the importance of intellectual humility and openness to new evidence as vital characteristics of the scientific vocation.

The Role of Values and Neutrality in Science

One of Weber's most influential contributions in "Science as a Vocation" is the distinction between facts and values, often summarized as the separation of the "is" from the "ought." He recognizes that while science can describe and analyze reality, it cannot prescribe moral or ethical norms.

Weber argues that scientists must maintain a clear boundary between empirical inquiry and normative judgments to preserve the credibility of their work. However, this does not mean that values are irrelevant; rather, they belong to the domain of personal conviction and political discourse, not scientific analysis.

The Fact-Value Distinction

This distinction clarifies the limits of scientific authority and the importance of other social institutions in addressing ethical and political questions. Weber's perspective encourages scientists to be aware of their own value commitments without letting these interfere with their research.

Implications for Scientific Responsibility

Despite advocating value neutrality in methodology, Weber also emphasizes the responsibility of scientists to engage with society thoughtfully. Scientists must communicate their findings accurately and consider the potential impacts of their work, balancing objectivity with social awareness.

Implications for Modern Scientific Practice

Max Weber's insights into science as a vocation continue to resonate in contemporary discussions about the role and responsibilities of scientists. His emphasis on intellectual integrity, methodological rigor, and ethical awareness informs current debates about scientific objectivity, public trust, and the social impact of research.

In an era of rapid technological advancement and increasing societal challenges, Weber's reflections encourage scientists to maintain a clear sense of purpose and ethical commitment while navigating complex institutional and political landscapes.

Key Lessons for Today's Scientists

- Maintain commitment to objective and rigorous inquiry despite external pressures.

- Recognize the provisional nature of scientific knowledge and remain open to revision.
- Separate empirical research from normative judgments to uphold scientific credibility.
- Balance scientific neutrality with social responsibility and ethical awareness.
- Prepare for the challenges of a scientific career, including competition and uncertainty.

Weber's Enduring Influence

The continued relevance of "Science as a Vocation" lies in its comprehensive portrayal of the scientist's professional and ethical landscape. It serves as a foundational text for scholars interested in the sociology of knowledge, the philosophy of science, and the vocational dimensions of academic work.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of Max Weber's 'Science as a Vocation'?

The main theme of Max Weber's 'Science as a Vocation' is the exploration of the nature, purpose, and ethical challenges of pursuing a career in science, emphasizing the role of scientific work as a vocation or calling.

How does Max Weber define 'science as a vocation'?

Max Weber defines 'science as a vocation' as a professional calling where individuals commit themselves to the pursuit of knowledge with passion and discipline, despite uncertainties and lack of absolute truths.

What challenges does Weber identify for scientists in 'Science as a Vocation'?

Weber identifies challenges such as the emotional detachment required, the absence of ultimate meaning or absolute truths in science, and the tension between scientific objectivity and personal values.

According to Weber, can science provide ultimate answers to life's meaning?

No, Weber argues that science cannot provide ultimate answers to life's meaning; instead, it offers empirical knowledge and understanding, leaving existential questions to

philosophy or religion.

What role does 'disenchantment' play in Weber's perspective on science?

Disenchantment refers to the process by which scientific rationality removes mystical and magical explanations from the world, leading to a more rational but less emotionally fulfilling understanding of reality.

How does Weber view the relationship between science and ethics?

Weber distinguishes between 'ethics of conviction' and 'ethics of responsibility,' suggesting that while science itself is value-neutral, scientists must navigate ethical responsibilities in their professional and personal lives.

What advice does Weber give to young scientists in 'Science as a Vocation'?

Weber advises young scientists to pursue their work with dedication and passion, recognizing that success is uncertain and that scientific work demands both intellectual rigor and personal sacrifice.

Why does Weber emphasize the importance of passion in scientific work?

Weber emphasizes passion because scientific inquiry often involves long periods of uncertainty and lack of immediate rewards, making passion essential to sustain motivation and commitment.

How has 'Science as a Vocation' influenced modern views on academic careers?

'Science as a Vocation' has influenced modern academic careers by framing scientific work as a calling that requires dedication beyond material rewards, highlighting the intrinsic values and challenges of scholarly life.

In what context did Max Weber deliver 'Science as a Vocation'?

Max Weber delivered 'Science as a Vocation' as a lecture in 1917 at the University of Munich, addressing the role of science and intellectual work in a rapidly modernizing and bureaucratized society.

Additional Resources

1. *Max Weber: Science as a Vocation and Other Essays*

This collection includes Weber's seminal essay "Science as a Vocation," where he explores the nature and purpose of academic work in modern society. It highlights the challenges and responsibilities faced by scientists and scholars, emphasizing the tension between objective knowledge and personal values. The book offers insight into Weber's broader sociological and philosophical ideas.

2. *Max Weber's Science as a Vocation: A Critical Introduction*

This book provides a thorough analysis of Weber's famous lecture, unpacking its key themes such as intellectual honesty, the ethic of responsibility, and the role of science in modern culture. It situates the essay within the broader context of Weber's sociology and the early 20th-century academic environment. Readers gain a clearer understanding of the implications of Weber's thought for contemporary scientific practice.

3. *The Sociology of Max Weber: Interpretations and Critiques*

Focusing on Weber's contributions to sociology, this volume dedicates substantial discussion to "Science as a Vocation." It examines how Weber's ideas about vocation relate to his theories on rationalization, bureaucracy, and authority. The book also presents various critiques and interpretations, encouraging readers to engage critically with Weber's legacy.

4. *Max Weber on the Methodology of the Social Sciences*

This text delves into Weber's methodological approach, including themes from "Science as a Vocation," such as value neutrality and the pursuit of objective knowledge. It explores Weber's concept of *verstehen* (interpretive understanding) and its significance for social science research. The book is essential for those interested in the philosophical foundations of Weber's work.

5. *Science as a Vocation in Modern Society: Max Weber and Beyond*

Exploring Weber's essay in the context of contemporary academic and scientific challenges, this book discusses how the concept of vocation has evolved. It connects Weber's ideas with current debates on the role of science in society, funding pressures, and the ethics of research. The text bridges historical and modern perspectives on scientific work as a calling.

6. *Max Weber: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Science*

While primarily focused on Weber's analysis of religion and capitalism, this book also draws connections to "Science as a Vocation." It investigates how the Protestant ethic influenced the development of scientific rationality and professional dedication. The work offers a comprehensive view of Weber's thoughts on culture, economy, and science.

7. *Passion and Profession: The Dual Nature of Science in Max Weber's Thought*

This book examines the duality Weber presents in "Science as a Vocation" between passionate commitment and disciplined professionalism. It discusses the psychological and ethical dimensions of pursuing a scientific career. The analysis provides insight into the personal and societal implications of scientific vocation.

8. *Max Weber and the Ethics of Scientific Work*

Focusing on the moral responsibilities highlighted in "Science as a Vocation," this text

explores Weber's views on ethics, neutrality, and the limits of scientific knowledge. It addresses the dilemmas faced by researchers in maintaining integrity while contributing to societal progress. The book is valuable for scholars interested in the philosophy of science and academic ethics.

9. *The Legacy of Max Weber's Science as a Vocation in Contemporary Thought*

This volume traces the influence of Weber's essay on modern social theory, philosophy of science, and higher education. It features essays by leading scholars who discuss how Weber's insights continue to shape understanding of academic life and scientific inquiry. The book highlights the enduring relevance of Weber's reflections on vocation and science.

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max weber science as a vocation: The Vocation Lectures Max Weber, 2004-03-15 Originally published separately, Weber's *Science as a Vocation* and *Politics as a Vocation* stand as the classic formulations of his positions on two related subjects that go to the heart of his thought: the nature and status of science and its claims to authority; and the nature and status of political claims and the ultimate justification for such claims. Together in this volume, these newly translated lectures offer an ideal point of entry into Weber's central project: understanding how, as Weber put it, in the West alone there have appeared cultural manifestations [that seem to] go in the direction of universal significance and validity.

max weber science as a vocation: Max Weber's 'Science as a Vocation' Peter Lassman, Irving Velody, Herminio Martins, 2023-05-31 Max Weber's lecture 'Science as a Vocation' is a classic of social thought, in which central questions are posed about the nature of social and political thought and action. The lecture has often taken to be a summation of Weber's thought. It can also be argued that, together with the responses of its admirers and critics, it provides a focus for discussion of the nature of modernity and its political consequences, and of the philosophical and political implications of the social or human sciences. This volume provides a full, clear, revised translation of the lecture, together with translations from the German of key contributions to the lively debate that followed its publication. The book concludes with a substantial essay on the current significance of the lecture, which discusses its relevance to the debates about the nature of science as a cultural phenomenon; the disjunction between science and nature; Weber's conception of the disenchantment of the world; the division of scientific labour; and the fundamental nature and place of sociology.

max weber science as a vocation: Max Weber's 'science as a Vocation' Peter Lassman, Irving Velody, Hermínio Martins, 2015 Max Weber's lecture *Science as a Vocation* is a classic of social thought, in which central questions are posed about the nature of social and political thought and action. The lecture has often taken to be a summation of Weber's thought. It can also be argued that, together with the responses of its admirers and critics, it provides a focus for discussion of the nature of modernity and its political consequences, and of the philosophical and political implications of the social or human sciences. This volume provides a full, clear, revised translation of

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max weber science as a vocation: From Max Weber's 'Science as a Vocation (1917)' to 'Horizon 2020' Karl Ulrich Mayer, Max Weber Programme, 2013 In this lecture, I reconstruct the position of Max Weber in Science as a Vocation with regard to the motivation of scholars. I will contrast Weber's position with the current debate on basic vs. applied science and offer a critical review of the European research policy. A particular focus will be on Horizon 2020 and the role of social sciences and the humanities therein.

max weber science as a vocation: Seeking Reconciliation Sarah Kaiser, 2010

max weber science as a vocation: Classical Horizons George E. McCarthy, 2012-02-01 2003 CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title This work relocates the origins of nineteenth-century social theory in classical Greece and focuses on three figures: Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim, all of whom wrote dissertations on the culture and structure of ancient society. Greek philosophy, art, and politics inspired their ideas, stirred their imaginations, and defined their intellectual horizons. McCarthy rediscovers the forgotten dreams and classical horizons of these European social theorists and uncovers the close connections between sociology and philosophy, offering new insights into the methods, theories, and approaches of modern social science.

max weber science as a vocation: The Enchantment of Modern Life Jane Bennett, 2016-11-22 It is a commonplace that the modern world cannot be experienced as enchanted--that the very concept of enchantment belongs to past ages of superstition. Jane Bennett challenges that view. She seeks to rehabilitate enchantment, showing not only how it is still possible to experience genuine wonder, but how such experience is crucial to motivating ethical behavior. A creative blend of political theory, philosophy, and literary studies, this book is a powerful and innovative contribution to an emerging interdisciplinary conversation about the deep connections between ethics, aesthetics, and politics. As Bennett describes it, enchantment is a sense of openness to the unusual, the captivating, and the disturbing in everyday life. She guides us through a wide and often surprising range of sources of enchantment, showing that we can still find enchantment in nature, for example, but also in such unexpected places as modern technology, advertising, and even bureaucracy. She then explains how everyday moments of enchantment can be cultivated to build an ethics of generosity, stimulating the emotional energy and honing the perceptual refinement necessary to follow moral codes. Throughout, Bennett draws on thinkers and writers as diverse as Kant, Schiller, Thoreau, Kafka, Marx, Weber, Adorno, and Deleuze. With its range and daring, *The Enchantment of Modern Life* is a provocative challenge to the centuries-old "narrative of disenchantment," one that presents a new "alter-tale" that discloses our profound attachment to the human and nonhuman world.

max weber science as a vocation: Max Weber's Complete Writings on Academic and Political Vocations Max Weber, 2008 Annotation This is the first edition in any language of all of Max Weber's writings on academic and political vocations. The translation is new and liberally annotated, including a look at Weber's personality and what it was that made him such a phenomenon. Max Weber made many significant interpretations of both academic and political vocations in his two lectures on Science as a Vocation (*Wissenschaft als Beruf*, 1917) and Politics as a Vocation (*Politik als Beruf*) 1919), as well as in a series of newspaper articles including those written between 1908 and 1920. Since these writings are of more than historical interest, there was a need to bring them all together in a single volume. Newly translated and annotated, this collection comprises both lectures plus 32 articles which Weber wrote on academia. Most of these have not been translated before. In the Introduction, Prof. John Dreijmanis relates the academic and political vocations to each other conceptually, showing that there is considerable overlap and some

convergence: the need for passion, an inward calling, as well as career insecurity both vocations. Dreijmanis then examines the person of Weber and provides a new view of him, in part through the lens of Carl C. Jung's theory of psychological types as further developed by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). As an extravert with a powerful thinking function and intellect, he was driven to take an interest in events outside himself and to speak his mind. Coming after a long line of introverted German philosophers, he was a phenomenon. The new translations, by Gordon C. Wells, are more faithful to Weber's style of expression, and they correct an accumulation of errors of previous translations in the oft-translated essays on Politics and Science. Contains Glossary, Bibliography, Names Index, Subject Index.

max weber science as a vocation: The Subject of Modernity Anthony J. Cascardi, 1992-03-19 The question of modernity has provoked a vigorous debate in the work of thinkers from Hegel to Habermas. Anthony J. Cascardi offers an historical account of the origins and transformations of the rational subject of self as it is represented in Descartes, Cervantes, Pascal, Hobbes and the Don Juan myth.

max weber science as a vocation: Science, Values and Politics in Max Weber's Methodology Hans Henrik Bruun, 2016-04-01 First published in 1972, this book on Weber's methodological writings is today regarded as a modern classic in its field. In this new expanded edition, the author has revised and updated the original text, and translated the numerous German quotations into English. He has also added a new introduction, where he discusses major issues raised in the relevant secondary literature since 1972. The author traces the relationship between values and science in Max Weber's methodology of its central aspects: value freedom, value relation (Wertbeziehung), value analysis, the ideal type and the special problems which pertain to the sphere of politics. Weber's thought is presented and discussed on the basis of a meticulous analysis of all available, published or unpublished, original material. The book is indispensable for all serious Weber scholars and provides the general student with a clear, accessible and authoritative exposition of major aspects of Weber's methodology.

max weber science as a vocation: The Postmodern Significance of Max Weber's Legacy: Disenchanted Disenchantment B. Koshul, 2005-03-01 One of Max Weber's contemporaries described him as 'a child of the Enlightenment born too late' whose work is a 'vitriolic attack on religion'. Subsequent Weber scholarship has largely affirmed this valuation of Weber and characterized his scholarship as a manifestation of the very disenchantment that Weber describes. In *The Postmodern Significance of Max Weber's Legacy*, Basit Koshul challenges this idea by showing Weber to be a postmodern thinker far ahead of his time.

max weber science as a vocation: The Life and Times of Post-modernity Keith Tester, 1993 Postmodernity has been dubbed the great transformation in society and culture, yet in this book Keith Tester casts a cautious eye on such grandiose claims. Drawing on a range of themes and stories from European sociology and literature, Tester shows how many of the great statements about postmodernity are misleading. Tester argues that postmodernity is not so much the harbinger of new world expression as it is a parasite of modernity, feeding off its predecessor's unresolved paradoxes and possibilities. This book provides a wealth of sources which are usually denigrated or ignored in the debates on postmodernity. As such, it sheds light on old claims, yet never fails to acknowledge the profound insights of sociologists and other authors. *The Life and Times of Postmodernity* is an elaboration of the themes which Tester raised in his earlier books, *The Two Sovereigns* and *Civil Society*, both published by Routledge.

max weber science as a vocation: A Discourse on Disenchantment Gilbert G. Germain, 1993-01-01 This book is the first full-length study of the ongoing debate over the status of our disenchanted world--a world stripped of mysterious and supernatural forces by the demythologizing power of reason and modern science. It draws together for the first time the writings of various theorists on this theme, such as Georg Lukacs, Theodor Adorno, and Jürgen Habermas, providing a coherent overview of an evolving dialogue, as well as Germain's own evaluation of the disenchantment problematic.

max weber science as a vocation: *Max Weber's Economy and Society* Charles Camic, Philip S. Gorski, David M. Trubek, 2005 This book provides an indispensable introduction to Weber's *Economy and Society*, and should be mandatory reading for social scientists who are interested in Weber. The various contributions to this volume, all written by important Weberian scholars, present the culmination of decades of debates about Weber's various concepts and theories. They are sure guides in the maze of conflicting interpretations, and draw out the implications of Weber's sociology for understanding social change in the 21st century. Gil Eyal, Columbia University Many will value this as the best collection of essays on Max Weber in the English language. It surpasses prior studies in using Weber and the world of his endeavors as entry points into the central issues of social science today. Richard Biernacki, University of California, San Diego

max weber science as a vocation: *The Social Scientist as Public Intellectual* Charles F. Gattone, 2006-03-14 What is the role of the social scientist in public affairs? How have changes in the structure of the university system and the culture of academia reshaped the opportunities and constraints facing contemporary scholars? *The Social Scientist as Public Intellectual* addresses these and other questions by reviewing the ideas of seminal thinkers in Europe and the United States, and relating their conclusions to today's world. In this book, Charles Gattone examines the analyses of Max Weber, Thorstein Veblen, Karl Mannheim, Joseph Schumpeter, C. Wright Mills, John Kenneth Galbraith, and Pierre Bourdieu, tracing their perspectives through two World wars, the Cold War, and into the present. Gattone situates the ideas of these authors in historical context, showing the ways the realities of their time - fascism, totalitarianism, the rise of bureaucratic institutions, and the expansion of industrial democracy - informed their assessments regarding the place of the intellectual in the political realm. He brings their work into the current context, addressing the difficulties involved in bridging the gap between the ideas of scholarly inquiry and the practical realities of politics, and examining the ways newer factors such as the mass media relate to the character and trajectories of popular sentiment. Gattone argues that although political and economic institutions continue to influence the course of academic knowledge, opportunities remain for social scientists to act independently and develop insight that can ultimately be of value to a wide spectrum of the population in the modern order. Rather than follow the habit of striving to satisfy the narrow demands of institutional supporters, Gattone suggests that social scientists have the potential to approach their work from the standpoint of a broader orientation, and address social issues as public intellectuals.

max weber science as a vocation: *Theology of Discontent* Hamid Dabashi, 2017-07-28 Scores of books and articles have been published, addressing one or another aspect of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Missing from this body of scholarship, however, has been a comprehensive analysis of the intellectual and ideological cornerstones of one of the most dramatic revolutions in our time. In this remarkable volume, Hamid Dabashi brings together, in a sustained and engagingly written narrative, the leading revolutionaries who have shaped the ideological disposition of this cataclysmic event. Dabashi has spent over ten years studying the writings, in their original Persian and Arabic, of the most influential Iranian clerics and thinkers. Examining the revolutionary sentiments and ideas of such figures as Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Ali Shariati, Morteza Motahhari, Sayyid Abolhasan Bani-Sadr, and finally the Ayatollah Khomeini, the work also analyzes the larger historical and theoretical implications of any construction of the Islamic Ideology. Carefully located in the social and intellectual context of the four decades preceding the 1979 revolution, *Theology of Discontent* is the definitive treatment of the ideological foundations of the Islamic Revolution, with particular attention to the larger, more enduring ramifications of this revolution for radical Islamic revivalism in the entire Muslim world. This volume will be of interest to Islamicists, Middle East historians and specialists, as well as scholars and students of liberation theologies, comparative religious revolutions, and mass collective behavior. Bruce Lawrence of Duke University calls this volume a superb and unprecedented study.... In brilliant figural strokes, he arrays EuroAmerican sociological theory as the crucial backdrop of a deeper understanding of contemporary Iranian history.

max weber science as a vocation: *Were We Ever Protestants?* Sivert Angel, Hallgeir Elstad, Eivor Andersen Oftestad, 2019-09-23 This anthology discusses different aspects of Protestantism, past and present. Professor Tarald Rasmussen has written both on medieval and modern theologians, but his primary interest has remained the reformation and 16th century church history. In stead of a traditional «Festschrift» honouring the different fields of research he has contributed to, this will be a focused anthology treating a specific theme related to Rasmussen's research profile. One of Professor Rasmussen's most recent publications, a little popularized book in Norwegian titled «What is Protestantism?», reveals a central aspect research interest, namely the Weberian interest for Protestantism's cultural significance. Despite difficulties, he finds the concept useful as a Weberian «Idealtypus» enabling research on a phenomenon combining theological, historical and sociological dimensions. Thus he employs the Protestantism as an integrative concept to trace the makeup of today's secular societies. This profiled approach is a point of departure for this anthology discussing important aspects of historiography in reformation history: Continuity and breaks surrounding the reformation, contemporary significance of reformation history research, traces of the reformation in today's society. The book relates to current discussions on Protestantism and is relevant to everyone who want to keep up to date with the latest research in the field.

max weber science as a vocation: *Max Weber's Theory of Modernity* Michael Symonds, 2016-03-03 This book illuminates an important dimension of the work of Max Weber. Weber's theory of meaning and modernity is articulated through an understanding of his account of the way in which the pursuit of meaning in the modern world has been shaped by the loss of Western religion and how such pursuit gives sense to the phenomena of human suffering and death. Through a close, scholarly reading of Weber's extensive writings and Vocation Lectures, the author explores the concepts of 'paradox' and 'brotherliness' as found in Weber's work, in order to offer an original exposition of Weber's actual theory of how meaning and meaninglessness work in the modern world. In addition to making a substantial and highly original contribution to the sociology of modernity, the book applies the theory of meaning extracted from Weber's thought, addressing the claim that Weber's work has been rendered out-dated by the supposed re-enchantment of the modern world, as well as discussing the ways this theory can contribute to our understanding of the development of specific forms of modernity. A rigorous examination of the thought of one of the most important figures in classical sociology, this volume will appeal to scholars of sociology, social theory and philosophy with interests in modernity, Weber and the concept of meaning.

max weber science as a vocation: *Law, Mystery, and the Humanities* Logan Atkinson, Diana Majury, 2008-01-01 The trans-disciplinary study of law and the humanities is becoming a more widespread focus among scholars from a range of disciplines. Complementary in several major ways, concepts and theories of law can be used to formulate fresh ideas about the humanities, and vice versa. *Law, Mystery, and the Humanities*, a collection of essays by leading scholars, is based on the hypothesis that law has significant contributions to make to ongoing discussions of philosophical issues recurrent in the humanities. The philosophical issues in question include the role of rationality in human experience, the problem of dissent, the persistence of suffering, and the possibility of transcendence. In each of these areas, law is used to add complexity and offer divergent perspectives, thus moving important questions in the humanities forward by introducing the possibility of alternative analysis. Ranging from discussions of detective fiction, Chomsky's universal grammar, the poetry of Margaret Atwood, the Great Plague of London, and more, *Law, Mystery, and the Humanities* offers a unique examination of trans-disciplinary potential.

max weber science as a vocation: *Primitive Thinking* Nicola Gess, 2022-09-06 This book examines the discourse on 'primitive thinking' in early twentieth century Germany. It explores texts from the social sciences, writings on art and language and – most centrally – literary works by Robert Musil, Walter Benjamin, Gottfried Benn and Robert Müller, focusing on three figurations of alterity prominent in European primitivism: indigenous cultures, children, and the mentally ill.

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