

Sociology Teaching as a Vocation

A.W. Metcalfe

School of Social Sciences,

University of New South Wales,

Sydney, 2052,

Australia

a.metcalfe@unsw.edu.au

Andrew Metcalfe teaches in the School of Social Sciences in the University of New South Wales.

The author of many papers and five books, four of which he wrote with Ann Game, he has written widely on the sociology of education. He and Ann are currently finishing a book on Bondi Beach and a book on relational sociology entitled *What is a Social Relation?*

Abstract

Important issues are obscured if people assume that describing sociology as a vocation is talking of it as a career. Drawing on Max Weber and Martin Buber, I argue that a vocation only exists when there is a shift in the space, time and ontology of ordinary purposive life. When manifesting a vocation, the sociologist is not an acting subject but part of an unfolding presence. Understood vocationally, then, sociology should not be taught as an object with which students are to identify; it must be taught through ascetic practices that suspend the student sociologist's subjectivity and allow them to find their potential through their relation with an other that is different but not outside. The emphasis should be not on the student's comprehension of sociological content but on the ethics of their encounter; the discipline of vocational sociology is not based on the desire of subjectification but on love.

Sociology Teaching as a Vocation

The weekend began with the expectation that there would be a series of lectures and informative discussions with emphasis on content. It gradually emerged that something more important was actually involved – the awakening of the process of dialogue itself as a free flow of meaning among all the participants. (Bohm 1985: 175)

Introduction¹

Vocation is a theologically-laden word that requires careful attention, because it challenges sociology's orthodox assumptions about subjectivity, space, time and world.² Because of Weber's lectures on science and politics as vocations, there is a large secondary literature on 'sociology as vocation'³, but most of it has no ear for the theoretical implications of vocation or its synonym, calling. Generally, the literature speaks loosely of sociology's vocation, meaning its defining purpose or mission, or it treats vocation as a synonym for career, apparently oblivious to the distinctions upon which Weber based his argument.

One exception to this neglect is provided by Alan Wolfe. Weber's account of vocation, Wolfe says, 'emphasised the inner discipline of an ascetically orientated personality sublimating, through heroic will and self-control, both his passions and his interests' (1990: 138). By contrast, Wolfe says, 'the professional model of social science ... consistently stressed the judgment of the other' (1990: 138). Wolfe is here linking the professional model to an outer-determined concern with the maintenance of a reputational and disciplinary identity.

Wolfe's attention to the social relations of vocation is welcome, but I am not convinced by his understanding of calling as a heroic inner discipline that sublimates passion. The language of inner discipline is certainly prominent in Weber, but I think there are also indications in Weber's work of a more interesting and plausible account. What strikes me about the lectures on vocation (see also Weber 1976: 79ff) is the existential strain in Weber's writing. He seems to want to say what he lacks the words to say.

For one thing, Weber strains to describe a contemporary sense of vocation that has somehow resisted what he insists is 'the fate of our times', which he characterises as 'rationalisation and intellectualisation and, above all by the "disenchantment of the world"' (1948: 155). At its key moments, his argument relies on the existential urgency of such non-disenchanted ontological conditions as devotion, passion, soul and spirit. For another thing, Weber's account strains at the binary Euclidean language of inner *or* outer directedness, suggesting instead that vocation is important precisely because it makes it impossible to say what is inside or what is outside.

These strains point to certain parallels between Weber's sense of calling and the sense being contemporaneously developed by Martin Buber (Friedman 1993: 249). On the surface, their arguments diverge, for Buber (1958) does not accept Weber's claim that there is an overall trajectory toward disenchantment, but perhaps, at a deeper level, the strains in Weber's lectures endorse Buber's insistence on the necessary ongoing importance of vocational states of being.

Calling is important to Buber, and perhaps Weber, precisely because it cannot be characterised as inner- *or* as outer-directed, because it is a state that is inner-*and*-outer. This is why, Buber says, it is impossible to distinguish call from response: the call only exists as response, as part of the mutual implication of dialogue. It follows that the *demand* of calling is ascetic, rather than heroic, as Wolfe would have it: every activity of speaking is also the receptivity of listening. Indeed, according to this spatial logic, the demand of calling requires the *suspension* of the putative innerness of self-control.

This non-Euclidean understanding of vocation decisively changes how we think about the priorities and appropriate means of teaching and learning sociology. If the abstraction of the format of first year sociology textbooks⁴ offers a glimpse of how the discipline is taught, I see evidence of a teaching style that aims to have students *identify* themselves as sociologists. It is a style that matches Foucault's account of the role of subjectification in disciplinary power (e.g. 1979; 1983). But identification and subjectification are not the point if vocation involves ascetic disciplines that suspend identity in order to allow the call-and-response of dialogue. If we approach sociology as a vocation, it must be taught through dialogue that is not distracted by identification. As Weber says, identification is a vanity, 'the deadly enemy of all matter-of-fact devotion to a cause, and of all distance, in this case, of distance towards one's self' (1948: 116).

What is a vocation?

Rather than trying to establish what Weber 'really meant', my primary aim is to develop with his help a plausible understanding of calling. I begin with two passages from Weber which seem to justify Wolfe's interpretation of calling as inner discipline.

He who lives 'for' politics makes politics his life, in an internal sense. Either he enjoys the naked possession of the power he exerts, or he nourishes his inner balance and self-feeling by the consciousness that his life has *meaning* in the service of a 'cause'. In this internal sense, every sincere man who lives for a cause also lives off this cause. (1948: 84)

In the fields of science only he who is devoted *solely* to the work at hand has 'personality'. And this holds not only for the field of science; we know of no great artist who has ever done anything but serve his work and only his work. ... [T]he man who makes himself the impresario of the subject to which he should be devoted, and steps upon the stage and seeks to legitimate himself through 'experience', ... such a man is no 'personality'. ...

Instead of this, an inner devotion to the task, and that alone, should lift the scientist to the height and dignity of the subject he pretends to serve. (1948: 137)

These passages exemplify the existential strain in Weber's writing. Weber talks of an 'inner devotion', which makes vocation sound like the determination of a self unflinchingly fixed upon a cause. But Weber also says that what matters about devotion is that it lifts a person from their self-absorption and out of their vain desire to be a hero or impresario: in serving 'others', people escape their self-consciousness and discover what matters more. On this second reading, the 'object' of their devotion is not locatable in the Euclidean terms of inside or outside: it is at once inside *and* outside. The way inside is outside, and, at the same moment, the way outside is inside. These two readings represent the strain I see in Weber's lectures.

My reason for preferring the second and non-Euclidean model of vocation is that only it allows me to understand the characteristics that Weber consistently associates with calling. Most important of these are devotion and passion, but also important are patience, service, enthusiasm, proportion and an 'ethic of responsibility' that involves 'heart and soul' (see, e.g., 1948: 127, 135). This is a collection of words whose social significance is largely lost to twenty-first century sociology. Let me take one of them, passion, to make a point applicable to all.

In his lecture on politics, Weber deliberately pauses to distinguish passion from 'sterile excitation' (1948: 127). He does so, I think, because he does not want it understood as desire, as the product of the self-preoccupied subject, as an apparently inner force directed toward an apparently external object with which the subject is identified. Instead of treating passion as desire, Weber links it with devotion, patience and the suffering of enduring. The person directed by passion has suspended choice and justification and the pursuit of ends; according to Weber, their motto is Luther's bottom line: 'Here I stand; I can do no other' (1948: 127).

Now, this motto can be given two divergent meanings. It is often read as the staking out of a moral position, nowadays called a subject position. In other words, Weber's 'here' is seen as a location that defines a self. There is, however, another reading that fits Weber's overall argument. This reading sees 'here' as a matter of lively *presence*, a living breathing space which *is*, but cannot be represented by a location on a map. The person who stands in the here and now of presence, without a self-conscious sense of location in space or time, is a person who is not in the ontological form of a subject or object. On this second reading, the motto is not an identity claim but testimony of unbounded vulnerability and availability.

Only the second reading of Weber's motto touches the deeper implications of passion, which is, its etymology reminds us, an energy that involves passivity, humility, suffering and acceptance. True passion does not emanate from the heroic will of a subject or agent, and is not a choice, or an end, or a means to an end. It is suffered and yet it gives life meaning; as Weber puts it, with characteristic existential tension, 'every sincere man who lives for a cause also lives off this cause' (1948: 84).

Although Weber uses the terms inner and outer, then, his account of vocation suggests a call-and-response that is only possible when there is a suspension of the finite boundaries of Euclidean space. Making this spatial point is not enough, however, for there are also important ontological and temporal implications. The ontology of separate things no longer holds once we have suspended Euclidean space. The person with a vocation cannot say where they end and their cause begins; they cannot conceive of either the 'I' or 'the cause' as identifiable entities with defining boundaries. More particularly, the person who serves sociology cannot identify the mission of sociology as if it were an external thing; sociology is not an object but a presence, existing in the Here where I stand, which cannot be represented. If this is the case, time is also altered, by the suspension of goals and expectations and sense of progress. The time of passion is Now, the temporal equivalent of Here. Now is characterised by the patient openness of 'I can

do no other'. According to Weber, then, the mission of a discipline and its devotee 'depends upon destinies that are hidden from us, and besides upon "gifts"' (1948: 136). In other words, Weber talks of 'scientific inspiration' not through the future orientation of desire but through the causeless logics of grace and gratuity.

These two readings of Weber's account of vocation, as either expression of inner force or as passion, align with Buber's distinction between the logic of identifiable things, which he names the *I-It*, and the logic of call-and-response, which he names the realm of *I-Thou*. Consider, for example, the spatial, ontological and temporal implications of this passage from Buber's *I and Thou*:

The *Thou* meets me through grace. ... But I step into direct relation with it. Hence the relation means being chosen and choosing, suffering and action in one I become through my relation to the *Thou*; as I become *I*, I say *Thou*. (1958: 11)

Or consider the implications of Buber's description of the logic of call and response. Awaited answers, he says, cannot be received. The answer comes

not from a distance but from the air round about me, noiselessly.... Really it did not come; it was there. It had been there – so I may explain it – even before my [question]: there it was, and now, when I laid myself open to it, it let itself be received by me.... If I were to report with what I heard it I should have to say 'with every pore of my body.' (2002: 3)

These passages involve the patient passion of Here and Now. The faith they describe is neither faith in any locatable thing, nor faith in any future outcome. Nonetheless it is a faith that is necessary if you are to meaningfully accept and suffer the gratuity of what just is.

Meaning is to be experienced in living action and suffering itself, in the unreduced immediacy of the moment. ... Only he reaches the meaning who stands firm, without holding back or reservation, before the whole might of reality and answers it in a living way. (Buber 1966: 62)

This ‘answering’ is evidence of calling. As Weber might put it, the call-and-response are only possible when we can say ‘Here I stand; I can do no other’.

Before concluding this section, I need to point out that *I-It* and *I-Thou* are not binary oppositions, because the vocational *I-Thou* includes everything that can be known from the logic of identity. When in the world of *I-It*, Buber as a subject can see an object, and he can classify it as a species, or see it as an example of a scientific law, or turn it into a number, but in all of these cases it ‘remains my object, occupies space and time’ (1958: 7). According to Buber, however, it can ‘also come about’ that the I becomes ‘bound up in relation to’ what may have seemed an object (1958: 7). This *I-Thou* relation brings about a direct meeting that involves neither subject nor object.

Though the meeting does not negate species or law or number, no definition of characteristics can now exhaust the uniqueness and wholeness of this presence. Vocation, then, is this immediate response to the unique call of a *Thou*:

When *Thou* is spoken, the speaker has no thing for his object.... *Thou* has no bounds....

The relation to the *Thou* is direct. No system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy intervene between *I* and *Thou*.... No aim, no lust, and no anticipation intervene between *I* and *Thou*....

Good people and evil, wise and foolish, beautiful and ugly, become successively real to him [who takes his stand in love]; that is, set free they step forth in their singleness, and confront him as *Thou*. ... Love is responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*.’ (1958: 4, 11, 15)

Buber's point is that calling involves much more than a sense of career trajectory. Vocation changes what is known: neither subjective nor objective, vocation respects uniqueness without thereby negating the subjectifications and objectifications of the realm of *I-It*.⁵ Love is commonly understood as a person's emotion, and is therefore seen as a source of subjective bias, but, from Buber's perspective, love *suspends* the sentimentality of personal attachments and allows us to meet the world as it is, unique, irreducible, here, now. We can further examine this world by identifying and classifying, and, Buber says, we have no choice but to do so, but that which *is* cannot be reduced to our representations of 'it'.

Identification and Sociology Teaching

Any individual sociology teacher mayshift between vocational (*I-Thou*) and identificatory (*I-It*) ways of being in the course of a single class, as well as over the course of a lifetime. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish the experiences, and, to do so I must go back a step, to examine the forms of teaching that are associated with sociology as an identity or career-position. This will allow me to use issues of space, time and ontology to distinguish the self-conscious logic of *identifying* yourself as sociologist and sociology teacher from the relational logic of being *called* to sociology and sociology teaching.⁶

Whether we draw our understanding of identification from Mead (1934), Lacan (1977) or Foucault (1983), identification is based on the logic of the mirror. The not-yet-subject sees in what is apparently objectively outside them an image that they recognise as the truth of what is apparently inside them. This recognition of what has just become a representation is what *produces* the human being as a subject: subjectification relies on objectification. As Foucault says:

This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes

a law of truth on him which he must recognise and which others have to recognise in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. (1983: 212)

Another way of formulating this logic is to say that the ontology of subjecthood relies on Euclidean space, with its distinct insides and outsides, and on chronological time, with its desires and goals and expectations. The erstwhile student points to the career-role of sociologist and finds in it a subjective definition. On the one hand, this is a claim of being a sociologist, at one with sociology, the same as sociology. On the other hand, the very act of pointing shows that the thing that is desired is not where the subject is. It is an aspiration, outside them, set in the future. Because identity is always aspirational, it does not allow you to stand where you are, with Luther-like vocation: in identity terms, where you are is where you are not yet who or what you define yourself as being. Similarly, whereas vocation suspends the future of choice ('I can do no other'), identity is reliant on the fantasised future you seek through wilful and skilful strategy. Where there is the self-consciousness of identification, then, sociologists are at once distant from the object of desire and too close to it (identified with it).

Let us now see how identity plays out in the classroom teacher.

When a teacher sees their role as the maximising of content-delivery, rather than the nurturing of relationships, it is a sign that teaching is deriving from the logic of identity and being bedevilled by the representational alienation of the mirror. Sociology is being seen as a definable external thing that can be surveyed from outside and above and that can be then represented in the classroom. The lecturer taking such an approach is necessarily anxious, worried about their legitimacy-as-lecturer if there are areas of the discipline that they should but do not know well or if there are pedagogic delivery strategies they have not mastered; the students of such lecturers

likewise feel overwhelmed by anxiety when faced, for example, by a 500 page textbook upon which they will be examined.

Although such lecturers and textbooks try to be accessible to their student audience, and use entertainment and colourful graphics, they are characterised by both an alienating abstraction and an over-familiarity. In their desire to define and survey the sociological field they create the abstraction of distance, and in their desire to represent that field they are too close, disrespectfully denying the difference between the lived presence of sociology and their representation of 'it'. This combination of distance and over-familiarity is seen, for example, when teachers and textbook writers talk *about* and *for* key sociological texts and authors. Even as they hold out the fantasy of a comprehensive survey of sociological knowledge, their approach leaves students at a distance, feeling fraudulent and inadequate when compared with the fantasy. Such students never feel they have read *enough* and never feel they can read theoretical texts without putting them through the filter of what, from their lessons, they imagine they must be saying.

It is important to acknowledge that these teachers usually desire the best for their students. The problem is that, in the mirror of *I-It* relations, which reduces uniqueness to what is already known, teachers forget that students are not the same as they are. Think, then, of a conscientious teacher who is giving a summary of key arguments in some important sociological debate. Their very desire for students to gain an understanding of this debate awakens fear in them. What if they are not adequate (as sociologist and sociology lecturer) to get the students where they need to get to? This is when lecturers go into overdrive to fill the gap between what students know and what they need to know. As a lecture draws to an end, they speak faster, rushing between PowerPoint slides before students have had a chance to read them. No longer aware of the students' ability to comprehend, such teachers are focused entirely on what they need to say to fulfil their obligations. Having no confidence in the students' capacity to *develop* understanding, to creatively make

connections between the world and their own lives, teachers try to force-feed them ready-made knowledge. The lecturer in this situation is so preoccupied with the desired future of the students that they do not have the patience or courage to hear where the students are and what they need to hear. There is monologue: no dialogue, no call, no response.

To recapitulate: we have seen in this section that when teaching is based on identity, it takes place in the space and time and ontology of the representational mirror, which can also be described in terms of the logic of desire (see Hegel 1977; Kojève 1969). I want to show in the following section that when teaching is based on vocation, by contrast, it occurs in the here and now of presence, which can be described in terms of the social logics of passion or love. We have seen in this section that when teaching is based on identity, the teacher might be claiming to simply represent an external thing-like discipline, but nevertheless the needs of their own identity as a sociologist dominate each class. I want to show in the following section that when teaching is based on vocation, by contrast, the teacher is unself-conscious and yet it is through their being that students feel the living presence and authority of sociology.

Implicit in this section has been a Foucaultian understanding of discipline as the identificatory power that produces both the subjects and objects of sociological knowledge. This is not to be confused with the ascetic discipline that underlies sociology when it is lived vocationally, which will be discussed in the following section. The latter discipline is also demanding, but does not come from an inside or an outside authority: it is the responsibility of *response*, which spontaneously accompanies the hearing of the call. Weber calls this discipline vocation and passionate devotion and Buber calls it love or the *I-Thou*; it is a demand which does not allow you to stand anywhere but wherever you are, which frustrates vanity and suspends the identification of subjects and objects.

Vocation and Sociology Teaching

What is the role of the teacher who feels called by sociology? If vocation suspends subjectivity and objectivity, the teacher is not an agent. Clearly, however, this does not mean that the teacher is uninvolved or makes no difference. So what does the teacher do? Or, in more vocational terms, what is the teacher's responsibility?

One answer to this question involves a complex of tasks, many of which rely on the *I-It* responsibilities of any accountable institution, involving curricula, reading lists, learning outcomes, assessment tasks, attendance rolls, legal and administrative requirements. All this is activity potentially fit for Foucaultian analysis. But the more important answer is that the teacher's responsibility is to ensure the classroom is a safe place that allows the vulnerability and openness of *I-Thou* relations. As we will see, this is to say that teachers teach by showing the respect that comes with vocation, by responding openly to what is called for by the students and course materials and the world. Success is not an achievement but a consequence of open relations. When this responsibility is primary, the implications of the *I-It* aspects of the job will also change. Assessment tasks, for example, will not be designed as the endpoints of a course but as forms of feedback; institutional bureaucratic requirements will be, whenever possible, left outside the classroom; the teacher's disciplinary authority will not be used to examine and survey and normalise but will be used to hold students in the open relations (with texts, with the world, with other students) that will do the work of education.

The word *Thou* is simply a translation of Buber's German *Du*, which is the intimate form of 'you'. This intimacy should not be understood, however, as the product of subjectivity and personal expression: this would be a misunderstanding of the logic of a supportive environment (see Metcalfe and Game 2008). Because subjectivity is just the other side of objectification, the encouragement of subjectivity makes people too self-conscious to learn; people become defensive, not talking about the issues directly at hand but using them to represent themselves.

For this reason, it is in fact the interested impersonality of open dialogue that allows students to truthfully explore the intimate aspects of their lives that cannot be contained within identity (see Murdoch 1970: 65; Game and Metcalfe 2009). By setting aside their desires and serving the needs of the sociological dialogue in the classroom, students learn to see the world in new ways, and the difference they notice in the world teaches them of their difference to their own identity. They learn about the world as they learn their own potential.

The safety of this environment relies on classroom authority. Rather than the *teacher's* authority, though, this arises from the teacher-student *relation* and the teacher-discipline *relation*: it is only trustworthy if teachers too are responsive to its demands. The teacher can change students, then, because they do not set out to do so. Gaita has made this point well:

Only something like the concept of vocation ... will enable one adequately to characterize the importance of love to a deepened conception of what it is to care for a subject for its own sake.... [T]eachers who set out to inspire have their attention in the wrong place and are too distracted from their subject to be able to offer anything deep no matter how many hearts they set afire. Just as charity is corrupt unless it is motivated by the needs of another rather than by the desire to do something charitable, so teachers inspire their students into a proper love of what they are doing by the manner of their attention to their subject rather than by setting out to inspire them. A teacher's vocation, her privileged obligation, is, as Plato saw, and as [my teacher] taught me by his example, to initiate her pupils into a worthy love. There is nothing finer that one human being can do for another. (2001)

Teachers must show that their love of students and their love of sociology is such that they would never think to show off or to interpose themselves between the students and the sociological texts. It is this loving service that allows students to feel not only in the presence of

the teacher but in the presence of sociology. This is no longer sociology as a thing; this is a living sociology that would be disrespected if reduced to a defined thing.

An important implication of this trustworthy authority is that it protects teachers as well as students. The identified teacher is under stress, because they, like students, are being challenged on their adequacy; they feel drained, because they are always giving out content and energy, because it is their job to get students to a certain pre-conceived end point. Teachers who serve the discipline and students they love have only to be whole heartedly present, as whomever they are. The success of the class is not all their responsibility and, because of the non-locational logic of dialogue, they are as much the recipients as the suppliers of ideas and energy. Moreover, as a *sociology* teacher, the teacher has a great advantage over teachers of other disciplines: whatever happens in the classroom relations, whatever goes wrong, offers material for sociological reflection, so that the students' relational sensitivity and sociological education develop together.

If the classroom's trustworthy authority protects students from threat, it is nonetheless clear that the teacher's devotion is to the students' potential and not their vanity. Teachers must help students become aware of times when, by not taking sociology seriously, they are not taking their potential seriously. In this way, teachers show students how to stay in relation with the world, how to live with uncertainty, how to notice their defences. While this role as honest witness ensures that teachers are demanding and disconcerting, it is a crucial part of the classroom's trustworthiness. Students don't need to take searching questions personally, because the questions don't reflect the teacher's personal opinions and favouritisms; the questions arise from a love that clearly includes students.

It follows from this that the sociological texts set for class should be ones that teachers love, rather than ones that dutifully cover a field. And, of course, they should be available directly. The pedagogic problem is not that texts are too hard for students; it is that students who desire comprehension do not know how to read respectfully. The teacher shows how to read by doing

it in front of students, by showing how you talk with and ask questions of a text, how you learn by playing with a text until you get a sense of how it works. In this way teachers establish a set of trustworthy practices that protect them and students from the desirous preoccupation with goals. They show by example that good reading is not an exercise in showing off but is a devotional practice of patience, respect and attention; they show that texts are not of the past, to be mastered and represented, but are alive and able to speak to teacher and student. Sociology is a living presence in the patience of a classroom.

Dialogic reading processes also change the classroom experience of writing. Rather than treating writing as an expression of identity, students learn to trust that the teacher's ascetic disciplines will lead them to unique responses, without them having to make a show of it. Their work, in other words, becomes more truthful as it is more based on love. This is indeed the point where truth and vocation meet, for students begin to experience the calling of sociology through this trust and this demand for honesty: this is how they find they have a part to play in the discipline as a whole. No longer acting as distinct self-conscious individuals, students doing honest work are reading, writing and living more deeply than they could have done on their own, while bringing their unique qualities into play within the tradition. They find that sociology is both innermost and outermost at the same moment; it is a real presence that can never be adequately represented.

My final point, then, is that the love of lively classrooms teaches students how to love and how to live. The teacher for whom sociology is a vocation teaches the students to find their vocations. As Weber puts it, when he asks if science teaching can 'actually and positively contribute to practical and "personal" life',

if we [i.e. teachers] are competent in our pursuit ... we can force the individual, or at least we can help him, to give himself an *account of the ultimate meaning of his own conduct*. ... I am tempted to say of a teacher who succeeds in this: he stands in the service of 'moral'

forces; he fulfils the duty of bringing about self-clarification and a sense of responsibility. And I believe he will be the more able to accomplish this, the more conscientiously he avoids the desire personally to impose upon or suggest to his audience his own stand. (Weber, in 1947: 152)

Conclusion

Raimond Gaita recently argued that the reason universities fall back on mercantile terms when explaining what they do is that they have lost the language of vocation (2012). Such a claim highlights how much is at stake in the appreciation of the logic of vocation. Vocation indicates a fundamental shift in social condition, from the space, time and ontology that are characteristic of the world of subjects and objects, to the space, time and ontology that exist when there are open relations. Sociology, and the possibilities of teaching and learning sociology, are different in these different social worlds.

The main argument in this article has been that sociology is understood in a reduced, abstract, distant and over-identified way when it is taught as an external thing to be surveyed and mastered and represented. The emphasis on content in such teaching obscures the distortion that subjectivity and objectivity generate in sociological knowledge. By contrast sociology exists as an undefinable presence in the here and now of the classroom of the vocationally devoted teacher. Such a vocational approach does not preclude the knowledge available through subjective and objective orientations, but it is too respectful to reduce sociology to these definable terms. Such an approach teaches sociology by teaching students how to live well, in open relations.

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² This consideration shouldn’t simply presume the Lutheran theology of calling described in Weber’s *Protestant Ethic* (1976: 79ff); see, for example, McDonagh (1970) for a Roman Catholic discussion.

³ See, e.g., Banks 1974; Berger and Kellner 1981; Burawoy 2012; Ferrales and Fine 2005; Imber 2005; Lechner 1990)

⁴ There is a large literature on first year Sociology texts, published especially in the journal *Teaching Sociology*. Authors often comment on how similar the texts are in content, and on the curious nature of their divergences, but disappointingly there is very little comment on the fundamental abstraction of the surveys they offer.

⁵ Clearly at this point, I have followed Buber further than Weber would go, offering a different approach to the relation between vocation and Weber's key issue of value-neutrality (see Burawoy, 2012). It is worth noting that many other theorists support Buber's argument about love's cognitive work (see Murdoch 1970; Gaita 2001; Weil 2002; Arendt 1970; Williams 2005; Liston 2008; Palmer 1983; Game and Metcalfe 2008)

⁶ I am wary of linking in this way a call to sociology and a call to sociology teaching, but the scope of this article doesn't give me the opportunity to think through the difference.