BOOK REVIEWS

Max Weber's Insights and Errors (International Library of Sociology), by Stanislav Andreski. London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985. 147 pp., $27.50.

On the strength of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and the vast literature surrounding this founding father of sociology, William Stephenson, in his *Newton's Fifth Rule* manuscript, concluded, as have many others, that the German-born intellectual giant was the "foremost sociologist of the past century." For this reason alone, Andreski's compact volume on Weber should be of some interest to all concerned with the methodological, experimental, and philosophical forerunners of Q. And, indeed, it was specifically the hope that Andreski could add to my understanding of Weber's central concept of "ideal types" that drew me to the work since I had been long aware of and familiar with Stephenson's 1962 paper of the same name.

Andreski doesn't disappoint but puts forth an astonishing amount of information so well organized and so well written that the structure and accomplishments of the turgid, convoluted, mind-numbing prose of the profound Weber become exceptionally clear in very few pages. As Joseph Conrad--who did not learn English until well into his 20s--was able to do something similar with British literature, one wonders whether émigré Poles have some special facility for translating the Anglo-Saxon mind to itself? Perhaps somewhat more to the point, Andreski gives us a full framework for both the few translated and many untranslated Weberian volumes, a nearly complete catalog of the inductive generalizations for which Weber is famous, as well as a critique of both framework and inductions. It is an effortless-appearing familiarity, having its roots reaching back four decades to Andreski's opening to Weber at the University of London by

Morris Ginsberg and Karl Mannheim.

After introducing Weber's background and style, Andreski divides the body of writings stretching from 1889 until 1920 into seven genre, characterized not so much by chronology as by approach. In the chapter on "Presiding Substantive Ideas," Andreski examines Weber's fundamental acceptance of open-ended causation, non-predetermined evolution, and "rationalization." Although Weber has often been presented as the spiritualistic contrapuntal of Marx, Andreski makes clear that while Marx generally identified economics as the substructural, primordial cause of social life, Weber awarded no priority to economics, politics, or religion. This view of open-ended causation places Weber--as a Q methodologist might say--not on the opposite end of a bipolar Karl Marx factor but rather on one orthogonal to it. Such a factor would also contain Paul Lazarsfeld, William Stephenson, and the quintessential expounded of that 20th century idea, Werner Heisenberg. In the same vein, the standpoint of non-predetermined evolution lifts Weber from the company of Pareto and his recurrent historical cycles, from Spencer with his proto-type "general systems theory," and from Marx. Chance--Heisenberg would later call it "uncertainty"--is crucial to Weber's approach. Finally, the last 25 pages of this 32-page chapter are consumed by the presentation and criticism of what Andreski believes to be Weber's most flawed conception, i.e., the "rationalization" of social life.

If we must thank Andreski for helping locate Weber and his presiding substantive ideas in the main trunk of the evolutionary-quantum science pioneered by Charles Peirce and Werner Heisenberg, then a greater debt still is owed for the chapter on Weber's contribution to philosophy and methodology of social science. What Andreski does to bring comprehension to the long-debated and misunderstood methodological rules of "objectivity and ethical neutrality," "understanding or *Verstehen*," "social actions and methodological individualism," and "ideal types" truly invites respect.

So familiar with German and so at home with Weber is Andreski that the great "objectivity" (*Wertfreiheit*)

muddle is shown to have been unnecessary. *Wertfreiheit*, Andreski suggests, might better have been translated as the "paradigm of non-valuation," referring to an attempt at non-hortatory semantic neutrality, not neutrality in actual situations. Moreover, when Weber's tortured German is translated and transformed by Andreski, "objectivity" is clearly not an attribute of knowledge but an attitude of the reasoner, simply requiring attempts at control of wishes and feelings and a willingness to test one's own opinions.

Seeking a method apart from that employed in the physical or natural sciences, Weber proclaimed *die verstehende soziologie* in order to study society. There could be no immediate experience of what others feel, concluded Weber, and thus he sought to locate the knowing person at the center of social science. Calling *Verstehen* Weber's least commendable innovation, Andreski takes this tack partly because of the confusion the term has engendered, partly because *Verstehen* does not go far enough to become scientific method. To rectify the first problem, Andreski would substitute "empathic comprehension." As for the other, he identifies *Verstehen* as pre-scientific in its effort to comprehend individual actions, thoughts, and feelings with the aid of empathy. Science, he concludes, only begins when it goes beyond "empathic comprehension" and discovers facts, theories, and explanations. As a consequence of the two problems, Andreski argues, *Verstehen* is today being used for the "obscurantist and parasitic proclivities of sub-standard academics," particularly Oxford and Cambridge philosophers and babble-bantering ethnomethodologists.

Always searching for what Weber is actually getting at in his Scrabble-like German, Andreski shows that while Weber defines sociological concepts in terms of individual actions, he is not, strictly speaking, in favor of "methodological individualism." While believing themselves to be carrying Weber's colors, methodological individualists solve the individual/group --psychology or sociology--dilemma by coming down exclusively on the side of the individual. Despite *Verstehen*, Weber will have none of this since his own "methodological individualism" is a methodological

rule, not an ontology. The "methodological individualism" of Weber's modern day "followers" is a social science kin to the "reductionism" of the natural sciences, whereby the laws of a complex organism's behavior are inappropriately believed deducible from the laws of cells. Choosing between individualism and holism, says Andreski, is a false dilemma. For Weber, neither choice is acceptable as the final cause; this chicken-or-egg problem has to be endured, not dispatched.

As for the crucial disquisition on "ideal types," Andreski warns the reader away from conceptualizing Weber's dual-usage, central explanatory principle as an outgrowth of Heinrich Rickert's "historical individual." No matter how painstakingly undertaken, argues Andreski against the unnamed Rickert, not even a grain of wheat can be completely described; accordingly, science must not be simply descriptive, but theoretical. A Weberian "ideal type" must rather be a generic built up from general attributes and expressing genuine empirical possibilities, the other sense in which Weber uses the term. Although Weber was not the earliest to employ "ideal types," a distinction attributed to Augustin Cournot or Leon Walras, he is seen by Andreski as being the first to insist that ideal--or pure--types must be relied upon in all of social science. Finally, Andreski lays out the legion of shortcomings inherent in the seminal but contradictory concept of "ideal types," shortcomings that have led inexorably to the reigning, reified classificatory sociology of Talcott Parsons. Weber's errors are seen as the careless fracturing of accepted methodological rules for classes, the proclaiming of numerous "ideal types" without resort to evidence, the evocation of an operationally defined Ben Franklin as the Protestant ethic stand-in, and the ignoring of his own methodological pronouncements on "ideal types" in his substantive studies.

In the closing chapters on "Systematic Comparative Sociology" and "Historical Comparative Sociology: The Explanation of the Rise of Capitalism," Weber's insights and intuitions are brought out to examine all the major ideal--and pseudo-ideal--types, including

law, religion, power, bureaucracy, charisma, feudalism, and patrimonialism, as well as to compare predatory with productive capitalism, to relate capitalism to the religious factor in social change, ethics to economics, and the rise of commercial cities to the mode of military organization. Where "ideal types" and inductive generalizations hold up and where they fall apart under modern evidence then becomes the focus of a concept-by-concept critique.

Summing up, Andreski has waded through all of Weber's German language originals, allowing the reader to deal with substantive problems rather than semantic noise; placed Weber in his appropriate evolutionary, philosophical, and methodological context; investigated the fundamental concepts of Weber's forward-looking strivings for a genuine methodology of social science; flushed out the contradictions and shortcomings in the methodology and its application; and showed that even a genius of Weber's unparalleled breadth of knowledge could follow intuition off into barren and confused directions.

Everything Andreski has packed into this slender volume could probably have been said in 800 or 1,000 pages, and to have accomplished all that he has in only 147 is remarkable. Yet this does not mean that Andreski has succeeded in creating a genuine social science where Weber, unaided by the discoveries of modern analysis, came up short. Turning away from the scientific need for dependable operations, Andreski ultimately gets no farther past Weber's "logical experimentation" than the comparative study of history.

Observing his plight, it can be said that an *independently* arrived at scientific method of dependable operations, meeting all of Weber's requirements and the noted objections of Andreski, already exists. It is of course Stephenson's Q, wherein "methodological individualism" can be represented by centrality-of-self Q sorts; "ideal types" by operant Q factors; "*Verstehen*" by understandings and interpretations (with all their *Newton's Fifth Rule* implications) of empirical Q sorts and Q factors; and the "paradigm of non-valuation" by the process of collecting and con-

structing a Q sample and the later reporting of both "me" and "mine" factors.

A somewhat differently-worded and much fuller accounting of this methodological correspondence is available in Stephenson's 1962 "'Ideal' Types," and perhaps it would even appeal to Andreski. After all, he represents a tradition and a voice that would like to forestall a complete domination of social science by the categorical and Aristotelian "mumbo-jumbo of Talcott Parsons and the obscurantist, anti-science Oxbridge philosophers; as well as by the ethnomethodological sociologists who say that sociology is impossible and prefer to report the drivel and minutia of morons and drunks; by the Popperian falsifiers who invoke a demarcation rule that falsifies itself; and, finally, by the students of the 'new' *Verstehen*--Hermeneutics."

Q needs thinkers like Andreski, and such thinkers need Q.

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Data, Instruments, and Theory: A Dialectical Approach to Understanding Science, by Robert John Ackermann. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985. 216 pp. $25.00

"The progress of science [according to Ackermann] is really the progress of instruments and techniques" (p. 50). Taking on the partiality of both rationalism (Kuhn) and empiricism (Popper), Ackermann notes that theories and even data themselves are mediated by "data domains" (bordered data sets produced by scientific instruments) and that instrumentation breaks the dependency of observation on theory. Facts and theories need one another, each to give the other significance, but facts change with instrumental refinements

which in turn produce "data texts" with problematic ties to reality. "When new data are produced by new kinds of instruments," therefore (as with Q methodology), "a new domain may be created for which quite different kinds of theories are needed" (p. 31). Hence, "the succession of scientific ideas must be related to the succession of scientific instruments..." (p. 49).

Ackermann argues that the natural and human sciences cannot be separated in terms of explanation in the former and understanding in the latter; rather, explanation and interpretation enter both enterprises, but at different points: The human sciences have low prior understanding of the phenomena they study, and so treat their *data* mathematically to determine whether they are consistent with a theory (e.g., Marxism, psychoanalysis), whereas the natural sciences treat *theory* mathematically to see whether it comports with the available data--which is why data from new techniques (cyclotrons, radio telescopes) can have such large effects on physical as compared to social theory (p. 168). What is required for more dramatic progress in the human sciences, therefore, "is not simply more data (of the same kind)..., but new instrumentation" (p. 169) which can produce new observations capable of breaking the hold that intuitive theorizing has on data interpretation. When left on its own, theorizing in the human sciences frequently becomes progressively divorced from data constraints, to the detriment of human science, for as Ackermann concludes, "science is absent where the borders of data domains are not clearly posted" (p. 186).

Q methodologists will find much to agree with in Ackermann's essay, for Q's foundation in subjectivity often produces data quite at variance with those produced by "objective" methods; moreover, its operant instrumentation relieves the scientist of premature theorizing. Instruments are not the *sine qua non* of science, of course, but Ackermann clearly shows why they must be taken into account.

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