Weberian sociology. It focuses upon an "interpretive understanding" of the social conduct of individual human beings, a conduct which is measured against the "ideal type" of "a purely rational course of action". It is this sociology that has often been criticized for its "individualistic" and "rationalistic" approach. It should be remembered, however, that Weber's method helps reveal the basic economic relationships and processes of the capitalist economy (money, market, capital, etc.) as the indispensable embodiments of highest "formal rationality" which only the laissez-faire economy can produce. A "substantively rational" economy oriented towards public welfare or social justice, so Weber concludes, would necessarily fall short of the degree of rational calculation that is attainable only in a competitive wage-labor economy. Similarly, in developing the three ideal types of authority which form the core of his sociology of politics (legal authority with a bureaucratic administrative staff, traditional authority, and charismatic authority), he stresses the high degree of rationality typical of the modern "legal-bureaucratic" authority. Hence whereas for Marx all institutions of capitalism are but the embodiments of the greatest substantive irrationality and debasement of Man, for Weber they become symbols of both loss and achievement, frustration and potentiality. The growth of formal rationality, he sees, takes place at the expense of the uomo universale - at the same time it challenges men to prove their humanity by transcending their specialized workaday existence through the intensity of their efforts.

Since a critical evaluation of this imposing system is out of the question, we can only intimate that Weber underestimates the real possibility for the evolution of new institutions. In interpreting institutions as expressions of unchanging "human nature" he overlooks the alternative of a new combination of "formal" and "substantive" rationality evolving out of further scientific progress, increased productivity, and greater control over nature (both human and non-human nature). Though the rise of new totalitarianisms seems to have borne out his misgivings about "new servitudes", ohne should not mistake a spatially and temporally limited phenomenon for the final chapter of human history. Weber's plea in defense of the nation-state is even less tenable than his rejection of the idea of a rational socialism. We know today that the continued existence of great powers is incompatible with the survival of Western Civilization. Finally, National Socialism has refuted Weber's thesis on the special cultural mission of a German empire in Europe: The German Herrlichkeit has proved the greatest single factor in the decomposition of European and World Civilization.

These critical comments are not meant to minimize the theoretical achievement of Weber. Perhaps even more than in the case of Marx and Freud, the bulk of his concrete historical and sociological investigations transcends the limitations of methodology and personal bias. Much of it demonstrates the enduring value of an approach which stands out because of its felicitous accomodation of oftentimes contrasting procedures. To a remarkable degree Weber combines qualitative and structural definiteness in his principal categories with quantitative and plastic elaboration of the detail. His abstract "ideal types" take on life