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Alienation – In Marx and Modern Empirical Sociology*

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Entfremdung – Marx und die moderne empirische Soziologie*

Inhalt: Die Arbeit nimmt die Diskussion zu MARX' Konzept der Entfremdung wieder auf und kommt zu dem Ergebnis, daß zwischen den Ansichten des „jungen“ und des „alten“ MARX keine grundsätzlichen Unterschiede bestehen. Sie behauptet, daß MARX' Konzept sich ausschließlich als objektive Definition verstehen läßt und es unter der Voraussetzung, daß dieses Konzept aufrechterhalten werden soll, unmöglich ist, in Entfremdung als solcher die Ursache jeweils bestimmter Verhaltensweisen, Erfahrungen, Einstellungen und Gefühle anzusetzen. Die genannten Schlußfolgerungen werden auch hinsichtlich des MARXschen Konzeptes des „wahren Bewußtseins“ geltend gemacht, wobei hier wie dort auf unangemessene, ja inkorrekte Übersetzungen von MARX hingewiesen wird. Die Arbeit versucht zusammenfassend zu zeigen, daß Forschungsdesigns, die von Entfremdungsdefinitionen subjektiver Art ausgehen oder Entfremdung als Verhaltens-, Erfahrungs- etc.ursache postulieren, im Gegensatz zu älteren Untersuchungen jeden theoretischen Bezug zu MARX vermissen lassen.

Abstract: This paper reviews MARX's concept of alienation, suggesting that there is no radical difference in the views of the 'young' and the 'old' MARX. It is argued that MARX's concept of alienation can only be defined objectively. It is further argued that it is impossible to postulate alienation as such as the cause of certain behavior, experiences, feelings and attitudes if MARX's concept of alienation (as well as his concept of "correct consciousness") is to be preserved. In this, as in other contexts, some inadequate translations of MARX are pointed out. In conclusion it is suggested that studies which employ subjective definitions of alienation or which postulate alienation as a cause of behavior, experiences, feelings and attitudes – contrary to passed studies – omit any theoretical link to MARX.

The voluminous literature and the many interesting empirical studies on the topic "alienation" are proof of the importance given to this concept. In these primarily empirical studies one often finds an theoretical link to made to MARX's concept of alienation and his social theory (see DEAN; BARAKAT; SEEMAN 1959, 1971a, 1971b). This is not surprising, since – as, e.g., SEEMAN says of his work – they represent an attempt to "make more organized sense of one of the great traditions in sociological thought; and to make the traditional interest in alienation more amenable to sharp empirical statement". (SEEMAN 1959: 511) In his paper "The Urban Alienation: Some Dubious Theses from MARX to MARCUSE" SEEMAN says:

"To speak of dubious theses about alienation is to suggest an interest in secularizing this more or less 'sacred' concept; it is to suggest that there is something here about which an empirical demonstration has to be made – the critical, evocative, and even romantic spirit that has infused the literature on alienation, whatever its very valid uses in some respects, being no substitute for clarity and rigor." (SEEMAN 1971a: 135)

And in his "Alienation: A Map" SEEMAN remarks:

"This examination of just one aspect of alienation suggests some of the benefits of redefining the concept. We are no longer bound by the mystique of alienation." (SEEMAN 1971b: 95)

However, the authors just mentioned generally do not discuss in detail the extent to which their concept of alienation deviates from that of MARX. SEEMAN remarks only that his "construction of 'powerlessness' clearly departs from the Marxian tradition by removing the critical polemic element in the idea of alienation." (SEEMAN 1959: 512). At the same time, however, SEEMAN thinks that to use 'powerlessness' as an expectancy is not "as radical a departure from the Marxian legacy as it may appear." (SEEMAN 1959: 513). Nevertheless, referring to empirically oriented sociology, ISRAEL, in his book on alienation, states that there are "important differences between MARX and those who have today taken up the discussion regarding alienation" (ISRAEL 1971: 205). This author thinks that these "important differences" are so great that, for reasons of clarity, it is better for empirical sociology to omit drawing theoretical links to MARX's concept of alienation. This suggestion is based on the following two postulates

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developed later in this paper: 1. MARX's concept of alienation must be defined objectively, and 2. alienation, in the Marxian sense, cannot be seen as the cause for certain behavior, experiences, feelings and attitudes.

First, however, we will give a short review of MARX's concept of alienation. In accordance with McLELLAN, AVINERI and others, it will be postulated that there is no radical difference in the view of the 'young' and the 'old' MARX.¹

Marx's concept of alienation

For MARX, man in capitalist society is alienated because in such a society it is made impossible for him to live according to his human nature. The society in which, MARX believes, it would be possible for man to live once again according to his nature (as it should be) is the communist society. However, such a society has yet to be created. Based on his assumptions about human nature, MARX proceeds to analyze the present capitalist society and points out why man in this society is unable to live according to his human nature. One way to establish what is specifically human – and therefore human nature – is to establish criteria by which man differs from animals. Thus, for MARX, man's "conscious life-activity directly distinguishes man from animal", i.e., "man makes his life-activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness" (MARX, in TUCKER 1972: 62). Furthermore, man contrary to animals,

1. produces more than he immediately needs physically,
2. "man produces even when he is free from physical need",
3. "an animal produces only itself, whilst man reproduces the whole of nature",
4. "an animal's product belongs immediately to its physical body, whilst man freely confronts his product", and
5. man "also forms things in accordance with the laws of beauty" (ibid.).

Another aspect of human nature is the fact that man is a social being. In the 1844 Manuscripts, this was expressed by MARX in the following way:

"If a man is confronted by himself, he is confronted by the other man . . . every relationship in which man stands to himself, is first realized and expressed in the relationship in which a man stands to other men"².

Why is man in capitalist society not able to live according to his human nature? Why is man, according to MARX, alienated in such a society, and from what is he alienated? MARX's answer is based on a fact of political economy (MARX, in TUCKER 1972: 63) which has as its basis an involuntary division of labor and a market in labor power. In capitalism, each individual's labor power is his own property which also happens to be alienable. It is on the labor market where individuals buy and sell labor power. The existence for a market in labor power necessitates private ownership of the means of production. In order to make a living, most people must sell their labor power at some time or other to someone who owns means of production. Once an individual has sold his labor power, this very power (and its product, i. e. objectified labor) not only becomes the buyer's property, it also is subjected to the buyer's will and is removed from the command of its former owner. However, since human power cannot be separated from the human being which is the locus of this power, it follows that, once a human being's power has been sold, the human being is being treated and used like an object when forced to execute the will of the owner(s) of means of production. Thus, although capitalism assumes that the capacity to labor is alienable, it is only alienable on the condition that human beings be treated as things.

Consequently, in his 1844 Manuscripts, MARX maintains that man is estranged (alienated) from:

- A) the product of his labor, and
- B) the act of production.

1 We will only refer to capitalist society and not discuss whether or not the same conditions exist, e. g., for Soviet society.

2 MARX, in TUCKER (1972: 63). (For further evidence see also MARX & ENGELS, Werke, Ergänzungsband, Schriften bis 1844, 1. Teil, p. 538)

This has as its immediate consequence the estrangement of man

1. from nature,
2. from himself,
3. from his species being, and
4. from man (MARX, in TUCKER 1972: 60–63).

Capitalist society, then creates a condition under which it is impossible for man to live according to – what is for MARX – his nature. Indeed MARX writes: “What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal”.³ This is not only so for these who must sell their labor power (worker); for MARX, the capitalist is equally alienated. Thus, MARX says:

“Alienation is apparent not only in the fact that my means of life belong to someone else, that my desire are the unattainable possession of someone else, but that everything is something different from itself, that my activity is something else, and finally (and this is also the case for the capitalist) that an inhuman power rules over everything”⁴ . . . , and “. . . everything which appears in the worker as an activity of alienation, of estrangement, appears in the non-worker as a state of alienation, of estrangement.” (MARX in TUCKER 1972: 67)

As stated before, it is postulated in this paper that MARX’s concept of alienation remained the same throughout his work. Together with ROSEN this paper further postulates that

“the idea of emancipation from alienation constitutes the central idea of the Manuscripts . . . while the empirical analysis – which is so characteristic of Marx in his later historical works – is aimed at proving the justice of the aim. This, incidentally, is also the reason for Marx’s view on the relations between alienated labour and private property, where private property is not regarded as the cause of alienation of labour, but rather the contrary: it is the consequence of alienation, since, as has already been stated, alienation takes first place both as regards general significance and historical significance.” (ROSEN 1970: 67–68)

Joining WALTON et. al. this paper also proposes that

“. . . the presuppositions and assumptions of Marxism,

- 3 MARX, in TUCKER 1972: 60. This is not to say that capitalism, according to MARX, is the only form of social organization within which man is alienated.
- 4 MARX & ENGELS, Werke, Ergänzungsband, Schriften bis 1844, 1. Teil, p. 554 (translation mine).

which are anthropological, provide us with the clearest conceptual apparatus with which to render Marx’s work . . .” (WALTON et. al. 1970: 84)

Support for this position comes from MARX himself when he states that

“To know what is useful for a dog, one must study dog-nature. This nature itself is not to be deduced from the principle of utility. Applying this to man, he that would criticise all human acts, movements, relations, etc. by the principle of utility, must first deal with human nature in general, and the with human nature as modified in each historical epoch.” (MARX, Capital, Vol. I, p. 609n)

Finally, the position taken in this paper, would contradict ISRAEL’s understanding of MARX’s concept of alienation. Thus, ISRAEL writes:

“. . . the theory of alienation developed by young Marx presupposes a special anthropology which became obsolete when Marx later on changed his point of departure (Ausgangspunkt) for a historical-structural analysis. Not only became his anthropology obsolete, but also the concept of ‘alienation’ and the theory based upon it. It was substituted by the concept of ‘fetishism of commodities’, later on further developed into the concept of ‘reification’”. (ISRAEL 1974: 2)

and

“In the 6th of his ‘Theses about Feuerbach’ he explicitly rejects this anthropological position by asserting that Man’s nature is the totality of his societal relations”. (ISRAEL 1974: 7, see also ISRAEL 1971: 56)⁵

- 5 In particular, the author of this paper does not think that “Wesen” as used by MARX in the 6th thesis on FEUERBACH refers to anthropological categories (i. e., human nature in general as referred to in Capital, Vol I, p. 609n) but to social-historical categories. To interpret “menschliches Wesen” as “human nature” in the anthropological sense as ISRAEL does, seems to me, in view of the context of the text, is not warranted. It also must be remembered that the word “Wesen” has a much broader connotation than the English word “essence” which is usually used in translating “das menschliche Wesen” (i. e., “the human essence”) in the 6th thesis on FEUERBACH. Thus, in the 1844 Manuscripts, MARX speaks of “sein menschliches Wesen” (i. e., “his human being”) (TUCKER 1972: 63); or of the product as “ein fremdes Wesen” (i. e., “something alien”) (TUCKER 1972: 57); or of “Wesen der Arbeit” (i. e., “nature of work”) (TUCKER: 59); or of “seinem Wesen” (i. e., “his essential being”) (TUCKER 1972: 60); or of “Gattungswesen des Menschen” (i. e., “man’s species being”) (TUCKER 1972: 63); etc.

The operationalization of Marx's concept of alienation

The operationalization of MARX's concept of alienation involves basically two issues.

1. to what extent is alienation according to MARX an objectively defined concept, and to what extent can it be said to be subjectively defined.
2. to what extent, if at all, is it possible – according to MARX's understanding of alienation – to infer certain attitudes and kinds of behavior from the state of alienation.

It is these particular issues which the author would like to address in this paper. It will not be concerned with the internal consistency of the operationalization as such or with other related technical aspects of operationalization.

A) Alienation as an objectively defined concept

SEEMAN (1972: 387) states that there are “six brands of alienation” or “basic ways in which alienation has been used” (SEEMAN 1959: 511). These brands are referred to and operationalized in the following way:

1. Powerlessness – There is not much that I can do about most of the important problems that we face today.
 2. Meaninglessness – Things have become so complicated in the world today that I really don't understand just what is going on.
 3. Normlessness – In order to get ahead in the world today, you are almost forced to do some things which are not right.
 4. Cultural estrangement – I am not much interested in the TV programs, movies, and magazines that most people seem to like.
 5. Social isolation – I often feel lonely.
 6. Self-estrangement in work – I really don't enjoy most of the work that I do, but I feel that I must do it in order to have other things that I need and want.
- (SEEMAN 1972: 387)

How well do these “brands of alienation” really

(The German terms were taken from the textually corresponding places in: MARX & ENGELS, Werke, Ergänzungsband, Schriften bis 1844, 1. Teil). The word „Wesen” can, therefore, take on many meanings.

match MARX's concept of alienation? SEEMAN does not tell us in detail where his “brands of alienation” diverge or converge with MARX's concept of alienation, although he thinks of “alienation in the sense of powerlessness” as a Marxian tradition (SEEMAN 1959: 511–12). There are two exceptions, however. One of these concerns “powerlessness”. Thus, SEEMAN notes that:

“. . . this (his) construction of ‘powerlessness’ clearly departs from the Marxian tradition by removing the critical, polemic element in the idea of alienation. Likewise, this version of powerlessness does not take into account, as a definitional matter, the frustration an individual may feel as a consequence of the discrepancy between the control he may expect and the degree of control that he desires – that is, it takes no direct account of the value of control to the person. In this version of alienation, then the individual's expectancy for control of events is clearly distinguished from a) the objective situation of powerlessness as some observer sees it . . .”(SEEMAN 1959: 512)

SEEMAN further remarks:

“I do not think that the expectancy usage is as radical a departure from the Marxian legacy as it may appear. No one would deny the editorial character of the Marxian judgment, but it was a judgment about a state of affairs – the elimination of individual freedom and control. My version of alienation refers to the counterpart, in the individual's expectations, of that state of affairs.” (SEEMAN 1959: 513)

The other exception concerns self-estrangement in work. Concerning self-estrangement SEEMAN states that

“Self estrangement can refer to at least three quite different things: a) the individual is painfully aware of the difference between his self-image and his real-self; b) he has failed to realize his fully human potential; c) (Marx's view) he becomes alienated while carrying out unfulfilling or uncreative work. This Marxian view offers the best definition for our purposes. Self-estrangement is dissociation that occurs between unrewarding activity and the person” (SEEMAN 1971b: 84) and

“. . . we are focusing on what is commonly called alienation in work: for Marx, lack of control over the work process was a crucial element in alienated labor, and lack of control is the hallmark of routinized work – i. e., work in which the individual cannot try out his own ideas, or make independent decisions about the work process.” (SEEMAN 1971c: 431)

It is clear that SEEMAN does link his research on alienation to the Marxian tradition. The

same is true of a number of other sociologists who have done conceptual and/or empirical work concerning alienation, and often built upon SEEMAN's work. (see FISCHER 1973: 311; BARAKAT 1969: 1; NEAL 1967: 63; DEAN 1961: 754; NETTLER 1957: 670). Although SEEMAN and others clearly link their concept of alienation to the thought of MARX, it is readily recognizable that the link is not carefully established and justified.

From SEEMAN's operationalizations (which are taken here as a representative example of much of the empirical work done in this area (see FISCHER 1973; NEAL 1967; DEAN 1961; NETTLER 1957; MIDDLETON 1963) it would have to be concluded that those individuals scoring low on each "brand of alienation" are less alienated than those scoring high. However, as SCHACHT points out when referring to "alienation from work", "Marx does not hesitate to speak of 'alienated labour' even in the absence of actual worker dissatisfaction." (SCHACHT 1971: 172) This points at the fact that alienation, according to MARX, must be defined objectively. This is in contrast to the subjective definition of alienation, since a subjective definition "involves a state of mind", while the objective definition "involves a condition of the whole or parts of society" (MIZRUCHI 1964: 46).

The interpretation of MARX's concept of alienation presented in this paper allows only for an objective definition of alienation. Alienation, according to MARX, is to be seen as a condition prevailing over the whole society for reasons stated earlier. It is, therefore, not surprising that MARX advocated the overthrow of the capitalist system as the only alternative to change the condition and to emancipate man from the state of alienation. In addition, only with this perspective is it possible to understand MARX's concept of "false consciousness". Exactly because alienation is a social condition and not a matter of how any particular individual conceives of his or her situation at a particular moment, individuals who do not *realize* that alienation, in the Marxian sense, is a condition to which everyone is subjected have "false consciousness". To realize that alienation is a social condition, i. e. to have "correct consciousness," is, of course, to agree with MARX's

concept of human nature and analysis of capitalist society insofar as this analysis shows that man in this society is unable to live according to his human nature until capitalism is abolished.

B) The inference of behavior, feelings or attitudes from the Marxian state of alienation

In his paper "The Urban Alienations: Some Dubious Theses from Marx to Marcuse" SEEMAN discusses various hypotheses concerning the consequences of alienated work. For example, he notes that alienated work can be postulated to correlate with (cause) ethnic hostility, punitive family relations, political disengagement, status striving and display, leisure pursuits, etc. Among other things, SEEMAN concludes, however, that work alienation, in comparison with powerlessness (another "brand of alienation") explains little (SEEMAN 1971a: 137). Concerning ethnic hostility SEEMAN notes:

"I have already indicated that powerlessness consistently correlates with intergroup attitudes, while work alienation does not." (SEEMAN 1971a: 139)

These considerations are important in that the concepts of alienation used in the above postulates of SEEMAN and others are not explicitly dissociated from MARX. On the contrary, SEEMAN explicitly relates his work alienation to MARX when he says:

"I mean by work alienation something very close to what Marx meant – namely, engagement in work which is not intrinsically rewarding." (SEEMAN 1971a: 136)

And to show that his "work alienation" corresponds with MARX's thought SEEMAN quotes a passage from the Manuscripts.⁶

Referring to the title of his paper mentioned above, SEEMAN says:

"And to speak of an idea that spans a century and a quarter, from Marx to Marcuse, is to recognize that we are dealing with an intellectual tradition that has shown remarkable endurance and thus to acknow-

6 MARX wrote: "What constitutes the alienation of labour? . . . (Quoted in SEEMAN 1971a: 136)

ledge that those, like myself, who take up the task of secularization must do so without compromising either the intellectual scope or the humanistic concern that generated and sustained the idea of alienation." (SEEMAN 1971a: 135)

It was shown earlier that SEEMAN's subjective definition of alienation is different from MARX's objective definition of alienation. For the moment, however, this shall not be of interest. What is of interest is the fact that SEEMAN links his concept of alienation to the thought of MARX while simultaneously postulating alienation as such (be it – for SEEMAN – in the form of powerlessness or work alienation⁷) as a causal factor in such things as, e. g., inter-group attitudes (see also SEEMAN 1972 & 1971b: 84) As will be shown later, such a position is not consistent with MARX's theory of alienation as interpreted in this paper. The same can be said for the work of other sociologists (DEAN 1961: 753; HORTON 1964: 293; NEAL 1967: 62).

On the level of the individual, ISRAEL (1971: 83–84) makes similar inferences as do the sociologists mentioned above on the social level. ISRAEL assumes – like MARX – "that the capacity to be creative is part of human 'nature'."

"A person", writes ISRAEL, "who performs work through which he is unable to express his creative abilities ought, in that case – if he feels and thinks in agreement with his 'nature' – to experience his work as 'unnatural' and react against it."

Here, ISRAEL postulates that if individuals are unable to live according to their human nature (as MARX understands it) they will experience their state of alienation. If they react against this state of alienation, these individuals, according to ISRAEL (1971: 84), have no "false consciousness".

To assume that individuals can experience their state of alienation presupposes that individuals can make causal inferences as to which feelings are caused by the state of alienation and which feelings are caused by something else. Thus, on both the sociological and the psychological level one encounters the assumption that it is possible to pin down "alienation" (in the Marxian sense)

as a cause for certain collective behavior as well as certain feelings in the individual. The fact is, however, that we know nothing about collective behavior or feelings in the state of non-alienation, i. e., in MARX's ideal, communistic society. Therefore, any hypothesis implying that alienation is the cause of certain kinds of behavior and feeling or attitudes in the present society (collective or individual) must be termed speculative and cannot be verified empirically because of a lack of material for comparison, i. e. a lack of variance.

This is not to say that the state of alienation is not experienced or does not manifest itself in certain kinds of behavior (collective or individual) differently than in the hypothetical state of non-alienation. In this regard, the social organization postulated by MARX to bring about a state of non-alienation differs too greatly from the one containing the condition of alienation.

This leads us to a related issue, the issue of "false consciousness". ISRAEL makes "correct consciousness" a function of whether or not the individual who experiences the state of alienation as something extraordinary reacts against this "unnatural" condition of alienation (ISRAEL 1971: 80–83). That is, ISRAEL makes "correct consciousness" a function of the individual's ability to perceive that it is alienation which causes the experiences he regards as unnatural. As was shown before, this is not consistent with MARX. But this shall not be of concern right now. What is of concern is what happens to the concept of "correct consciousness" (or "false consciousness" for that matter) if it is assumed to be dependent on the individual's assessment of what kind of experiences are caused by alienation. Since all individuals cannot be assumed to make the same causal inferences – unless one assumes that individuals have some kind of instincts constantly keeping them aware of what is "natural"⁸ – but still react against their "unnatural" experiences (e.g., work-experiences), it is not farfetched to conclude that some individuals, then, would react differently than others, since they per-

7 See SEEMAN's "On the Personal Consequences of Alienation in Work".

8 ISRAEL does not assume this, however, since he also postulates that there can be situations in which alienation is not experienced at all (ISRAEL 1971: 80)

ceive different causes as to the origin of their “unnatural” experiences. Here, two possibilities arise:

1. It is admitted that each individual who reacts against his “unnatural” experiences has correct consciousness, irrespective of how he reacts.

From a Marxian point of view, however, this is untenable, since the only thing to do – for MARX – is to abolish the capitalist system. In the Marxian view, then, individuals who do not *realize* this necessity have “false consciousness”.

2. It is possible to qualify which reactions will pass for “correct” consciousness and which will not. But then it is required that the person determining what qualifies and what does not also has to determine, for the reacting individual, which “unnatural” experiences are caused by alienation and which ones are not. But again, because nothing is known about experiences in the state of non-alienation, this cannot be done within the Marxian framework.

The only escape from this dilemma is to free the concept of “false consciousness” (or “correct consciousness”) from the assumption that it is possible to locate in alienation the cause for certain experiences. This would also guarantee the proper and consistent interpretation of MARX’s theory of alienation. Alienation and “false consciousness” complement each other insofar as the abolition of alienation is dependent on having “correct consciousness”, and having “correct consciousness” is dependent on whether or not one agrees with the theory of the origin of alienation and the necessary consequences to be drawn from this theory.

For MARX, the necessary consequences are the abolition of capitalist society. Should variations of “correct consciousness” be introduced, the necessity for variations in the theory of alienation would arise. This, however, would not be in accord with the thought of MARX as interpreted here.

There is something more which must be faced in this context. Let me quote a passage from the 1844 Manuscripts where MARX writes:

“What, then, constitutes the alienation of labour? First, the fact that labour is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being; that

in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home, when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home . . .” (TUCKER 1972: 60)

Based on this passage, it is possible to assert that MARX himself saw alienation as the cause of distinct feelings (experiences) in the individual and that, therefore, the interpretation given before is not warranted. As QUENTIN SKINNER in his excellent essay “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas” pointed out, it is often improper to assume that a writer’s thought must form a coherent whole. This would imply that the interpretation of MARX’s theory of alienation presented here is incomplete (since it cannot resolve this apparent conflict) and that MARX’s thought cannot necessarily be thought of as a logically coherent whole. However, we will argue here that this apparent contradiction is not of great importance and that, therefore, the interpretation given in this paper remains valid.

First, statements (like that above) implying that alienation can be seen as the cause of certain feelings (experiences) in the individual are very rare in MARX’s work, and on the whole, MARX cannot be said to have assigned great importance to the problem of how individuals feel in the state of alienation.⁹ Second, such statements are of no real consequence for the interpretation of MARX’s theory of alienation because, he takes a different position when, shortly after his

9 Should one want to consider these statements as more important in MARX’s thought than is done in this paper, one should note that MARX proceeds in a deductive way. Alienation, for him, is a condition which results in certain feelings in the individual. The conditions which produce these feelings are specified. Thus, should the feelings predicted by MARX not be observable, individuals still can be said to be alienated. This is not the case with the concepts of alienation put forth and measured by the empirical sociologists discussed in this paper. Thus, should one – on the basis of the above passage – want to operationalize and measure MARX’s concept of alienated labor, one could at best find out how many people feel unhappy as a result of the fact that labor is external to the worker.. According to MARX’s theory of alienation, however, it would never be appropriate to “label” only those alienated who felt unhappy.

1844 Manuscripts, he states in "The Holy Family", that

"The possessing class and the proletarian class represent one and the same human self-alienation. But the former feels satisfied and affirmed in this self-alienation, knows alienation as its own power, and possesses in it the appearance of a human existence. The latter feels destroyed in its alienation, seeing in it its own impotence and the reality of an inhuman existence." (MARX & ENGELS, Werke, Vol. 2, p. 37) (translation mine)¹⁰

It is clear from this passage that MARX sees the origin of certain feelings in the individual in the social class and not in the state of alienation as such. This is, of course, a completely different causal inference than ISRAEL makes (discussed above). This type of causal inference also eliminates the problem of not having the variance to explain certain feelings in the individual, since the feelings of the individuals are not said to originate in the fact that individuals are not able to live according to their nature.

With these things in mind, it is not incorrect to conclude that MARX basically did not consider the state of alienation as such as the cause of certain feelings or experiences. He did not imply that man has a quasi instinct constantly letting him know about what is "natural" (i. e. human nature as represented in the state of non-alienation as such) and causing him to experience the "unnatural" (i. e., "Non-human nature" as represented in the state of alienation as such) as something unpleasant. On the contrary, MARX emphasizes the *cognitive*, the *realization* that man is alienated irrespective of all perception, i. e., feelings and experiences deriving from alienation as such. This is evident in the following statement from "The Holy Family":

¹⁰ We found TUCKER's translation of "die erste Klasse . . . weiß die Entfremdung als ihre eigene Macht . . ." as "but the former . . . experiences the alienation as a sign of its own power . . ." (TUCKER 1972: 105) as misleading. In the same way, ISRAEL's translation of "die zweite fühlt sich in ihrer Entfremdung vernichtet . . ." as "the latter feels itself crushed by this self-alienation . . ." (ISRAEL 1971: 52) is also misleading. Both translations are misleading because they imply that alienation as such is the cause of certain feelings or experiences while, in fact, MARX did not make such an implication at all.

"It is not a matter of what this or that proletarian, or even the proletariat as a whole, presently pictures (vorstellt) as its goal. It is a matter of what it is and what, in accordance with this being, it will historically be compelled to do." (MARX & ENGELS, Werke, Vol. 2, p. 38) (translation mine)

Similarly, the above quote tells us that MARX's concept of "false consciousness" must have an emphasis on *cognition*. It is because individuals do not *know* and *realize* that they are alienated, and because they do not know and realize that the only way out of this state of being is to overthrow the capitalist system that they have "false consciousness". Arrival at this knowledge and realization is not dependent on experiencing the "unnatural" state of alienation as such in which individuals are unable to live up to their human nature in the Marxian sense. Neither is it, strictly speaking, dependent on one's social class. It is, of course, possible and proper to hypothesize, as MARX did, that one's social class (i. e., as a proletarian) will influence individuals toward the attainment of "correct consciousness". However, the acceptance of "correct consciousness" has nothing to do with individuals experiencing the "unnatural" state of being (alienation in the Marxian sense), i. e., the not being able to live according to one's human nature. Note, that, for MARX, even the *capitalist is alienated*. Yet, MARX did not consider the bourgeoisie to demand the abolition of alienation, i. e. the capitalist system.

Conclusions

This paper has attempted to give an interpretation of MARX's concept of alienation which is based on his philosophic-anthropological categories. It suggested that his concept of alienation did not change during the course of his work. According to MARX, as we have shown above, man is alienated because he is unable to live according to his true human nature. He is unable to do so because the existing division of labor forces him to sell his labor power and serve "an alien will and an alien intelligence". (MARX, Grundrisse; translated by McLELLAN 1972: 117)

We have seen that alienation can only be defined objectively if one is not to violate its meaning in the Marxian sense. However, modern socio-

logists often define alienation subjectively, in spite of the fact that they generally link their operational definitions of alienation to MARX. As a consequence it is suggested here that it would be preferable to dissociate explicitly all subjective definitions of alienation from the Marxian tradition and thought, or else to dissociate the subjective definitions from the word alienation which by its very historical tradition is automatically associated with MARX. In the same way it would be better not to postulate alienation as the cause of certain behavior, experiences and feelings unless it is specified that alienation is not to be understood in the Marxian sense. It was shown that, should this not be done, it is impossible to interpret MARX's concept of "false consciousness" correctly and consistently.

We are left, then, with an unmeasurable concept of alienation, a concept which cannot be "secularized" (SEEMAN 1971a: 135) through empirical analysis. In addition, the problem is not, as FEUER (1963: 139–140) thinks, that alienation cannot be measured because of its multidimensionality; it is because any attempt to do so will establish a concept of alienation which deviates from MARX's concept of alienation so strongly that the very attempt to "secularize" must be termed a failure.

We have seen that "correct consciousness" is a function of *realizing* that man in capitalist society is alienated in the Marxian sense and, therefore also a function of agreeing with MARX, that the emancipation of man from this alienation can only come about through the abolition of the capitalist system. That is, what was cognitively perceived as truth (i. e., the fact of man's alienation in capitalist society) is, in MARX, directly tied to distinct requirements of action (*praxis*) (i. e., the abolition of the source of alienation, i. e., the capitalist system).

Thus, MARX emphasizes the necessity of putting theory into practice. This is exemplified in the following statements by MARX:

"Man must prove the truth, i. e., the reality and power, the 'this-sidedness' of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality of or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question." (MEGA I. 5, p. 533; as translated and quoted by ISRAEL 1971: 65)

and

"But these massy communist workers, . . . , do not believe that 'pure thinking' will be able to argue away their industrial masters and their own practical debasement. They are most painfully aware of the difference between *being* and *thinking*, between *consciousness* and *life*. They know that property, money, wage-labour and the like are no ideal figments of the brain but very practical, very objective products of their self-alienation and that they must be abolished in a practical, objective way for man to become man not only in *thinking*, in *consciousness*, but in massy *being*, in life." (MARX & ENGELS, Werke, Vol. 2, p. 55; translation mine)¹¹

As a consequence, although we emphasize in this paper that "correct consciousness" is the sole function of *realizing* (in contrast to feeling or experiencing) that man is alienated, we do not suggest that the emancipation from alienation is a function of pure thinking, i. e., one cannot simply think away the realities which determine one's existence. To suggest that alienation can be overcome by pure thinking would be to fall into the same trap as the critical critics whom MARX criticizes severely.¹² It would also completely neglect MARX's emphasis on the necessity to unify theory and practice.¹³

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11 The translation in the Moscow edition of "The Holy Family" of ". . . sehr gegenständliche Erzeugnisse ihrer Selbstentfremdung . . ." as "very objective sources of their self-estrangement" (MARX & ENGELS, The Holy Family, Moscow 1956: 73) is inappropriate.

12 See also MARX & ENGELS, Werke, vol. 2, pp. 55–56.

13 For an excellent treatment of this issue see AVINERI (1968: 134–149).

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