In the 1920s, along with the ascent of the Frankfurt School, Marxian thought experienced a revival that had far-reaching effects. The revival occurred in a political atmosphere that, to say the least, was quite pluralistic. The Weimar Republic, despite its short life-span (1919-1933), presented a stage on which, as Remmling (1973:3-43) has pointed out, marginal characters in the society could suddenly become socially accepted major characters (see also Meja, 1975). Thus, very unlike the situation during Weber’s imperial Germany, Marxists were suddenly found at the university. This increasingly “tolerant” environment also provided fertile ground for thinkers like Mannheim who drew heavily from Marx and whose intellectual questions pertaining to the sociology of knowledge might easily be viewed as socially threatening (Remmling, 1975).

Given the revival of Marxism and the interest in the sociology of knowledge in Weimar Germany, it is therefore not surprising that renewed attention was also paid to Marx’s theory of estrangement. In fact, this theory must be considered a central element in the evaluation of his contribution to the sociology of knowledge (Remmling, 1967). Outside the particular sphere of the sociology of knowledge, Marcuse (1964, 1970, 1972) and Fromm (1961, 1968)—
both members of the Frankfurt School—made extensive use of Marx’s concept of estrangement in their writings.

Given this initial momentum, many social scientists became interested in further employing Marx’s theory of estrangement in their social analyses. In retrospect, it has become apparent that many questions concerning the applicability and interpretation of Marx’s theory have not been resolved. If there is to be a common discourse, and if Marx’s theory of estrangement is to be employed fruitfully, it is essential that sociologists share a common understanding of the nature of this theory. This study addresses itself to some of these still unresolved questions and represents an attempt both to give a logically consistent interpretation of Marx’s theory of estrangement and to point out the scope of its applicability. In short, the questions addressed here can be stated in the following way.

- What is Marx’s concept of human nature?
- Is there only one theory of estrangement in Marx?
- Is estrangement measurable: Does what Marx calls estrangement cause certain behavior, feelings, or attitudes?
- Is Marx’s theory of estrangement also applicable to noncapitalist societies?
- Is estrangement as Marx views it a historically specific phenomenon, or is it an existential predicament?
- What role does the division of labor play in Marx’s theory of estrangement?

Unfortunately, students of Marx writing in the English language (and many in French) have generally not made a distinction between “estrangement” and “alienation.” One of the latest examples of this tendency can be found in Ollman (1976:47, 132), in which “estrangement” and “alienation” are synonyms. Unlike the work done by the Italian scholars (see Bedeschi, 1968, and Chiodi, 1976) who are more precise, both the translations and the use of Entfremdung and Entäusserung in the English-speaking world are inexact. As one translator points out:

There can hardly be said to be any very common practice among English translators. Thus, M. Milligan (Economic and Philosophical MSS of 1844; cit.) translates Entfremdung as “estrangement” and Entäusserung as
“alienation” (or “externalisation”); T. Bottomore (Karl Marx: Early Writings) claims that Marx does not distinguish between the two terms and translates both as “alienation” (or “estrangement”). D. McLellan (Karl Marx: Early Texts) and L. D. Easton and K. H. Guddat (Writings of the Young Marx) translate Entfremdung as “alienation” and Entäusserung as “externalisation” (Chiodi, 1976:124).

As will become clear in the course of this study, Marx does make a distinction between Entfremdung and Entäusserung. This distinction, though fine, is an important one and will be discussed later in this work. One qualification is necessary here. The distinction is not, of course, injected into those primary and secondary sources quoted which lack such a distinction, in order to preserve the authenticity of the sources. Hence, in all quotes, except those from the Collected Works, the reader should know that whenever the word “alienation” appears, it may actually mean “estrangement.”

Social scientists and philosophers generally agree that if someone is said to be estranged, he/she must be estranged from something or somebody. What is less often understood is the basis upon which Marx can say that someone is estranged, that is, the element distinguishing Marx’s theory of estrangement from, say, a purely nominalist use of the concept of estrangement, according to which individuals are arbitrarily said to be estranged from all sorts of things. On the basis of his concept of human nature, Marx can say that individuals are estranged. Because Marx uses his concept of human nature as a basis for determining why man is estranged, he avoids making only tautological statements¹ and having to give reasons of only a relativistic nature. Thus, Marx’s theory of estrangement rests on a concept of human nature that allows for statements about man’s estrangement, statements that are neither tautological nor relativistic.² This concept can be termed “human nature in general.” Generally, the literature dealing with Marx’s theory of estrangement (or with his concept of human nature) either fails to make this crucial distinction or fails to make it clearly (for example, Marković, 1974:217-218). The present study shows that such a distinction can be made, and even must be made, if Marx’s theory of estrangement is to be properly understood and interpreted.

Marx’s theory of estrangement cannot be understood without an understanding of why man is estranged. When discussing this theory, students of Marx usually focus on wage labor and the accompanying production of
commodities. Estrangement is usually, and correctly, said to result from the fact that man must sell his labor power and that he controls neither the product of his labor nor the act of production. However, Marx also speaks of the propertied class as being estranged, even though this class need not sell its labor power. The selling of one's labor power is therefore not the sole explanation for man's estrangement. As this study demonstrates, for Marx the existence of an involuntary division of labor ultimately determines why man is estranged. Conversely, the voluntary division of labor under communism creates a condition of nonestrangement. Thus far, scholars have pointed out only that there is a connection between Marx's theory of estrangement and what he considered to be an involuntary division of labor (Remmling, 1967:152; Mészáros, 1972:140-143). This present investigation, however, shows in more detail not only that the "division of labor" is of central importance in Marx's theory of estrangement, but also how it must be understood. In the process, it will become obvious that for Marx "division of labor" has a much broader meaning than most writers on estrangement have assigned to it. In Marx, division of labor is not exclusively identified with the tendency to divide work into more and more minute tasks. Neither can it be identified only with what some might call the "man as cog in a wheel phenomenon." The discussion in this work of the importance the division of labor plays in Marx's theory of estrangement will also enable the reader to systematically deal with the question as to whether or not, according to Marx, one can speak of estrangement under feudalism and present-day socialism, a topic also addressed by Ota Šik (1972) and Schwarz (1967:82). Schwarz maintains that once the private ownership in the means of production is abolished, it is no longer possible to speak of estrangement, while Šik tends to take the opposite point of view.

This analysis will also show that Marx does not require the abolition of all division of labor if man is to live free from estrangement. Marx's aim is not so much to do away with all division of labor as to create a society that allows individuals to engage in a division of labor voluntarily. This is not to say that a voluntary division of labor would not be different along various dimensions from an involuntary one. Rather, individuals are not estranged, even if they should engage in a certain division of labor, as long as they can do so voluntarily.

Any study dealing with the interpretation and application of Marx's theory of estrangement must address the question as to whether it is
legitimate to speak of only one theory of estrangement. This topic has been under discussion for a considerable length of time, whereby some (such as Mészáros, 1972; Petrović, 1967; E. Fischer, 1970) represent the point of view that there is no difference between Marx's early and later writings. Others maintain that Marx abandoned his theory of estrangement in favor of a theory of reification in his later writings (Israel, 1971). (For a similar argument, see also Swingewood, 1975: 95-97.) Bell (1967: 365) states that "the historical Marx had, in effect, repudiated the idea of alienation," a proposition that Mészáros (1972) vigorously counters. Based on the view that the division of labor plays a central role in Marx's theory of estrangement, it will be shown how the issues raised by this rather fruitless debate can be "resolved" and in what sense it is possible to speak of only one theory of estrangement in Marx.

In his excellent review essay on estrangement, Ludz (1973: 27) mentions that, in the contemporary use of Marx's theory of estrangement, different "ideological realms as well as divergent methodologies confront one another." Ludz correctly states that some authors believe that "[f]rom Marxist and neo-Marxist points of view, alienation in the hands of empirical-analytical researchers has become merely 'a concept of accommodation' rather than a means of cultural criticism." It is legitimate to ask for the basis of this belief. One source of contention lies in the fact that in contemporary usage of Marx's theory of estrangement, the attempt is made to operationalize "estrangement" in order to make it "accessible" to measurement. The operationalization has frequently been based on social-psychological concepts, implying that if individuals did not perceive their existence and social environment in certain ways, they would not be estranged. Estrangement thus came to be viewed as a function of the individual's state of mind. Others contended that for Marx estrangement was at least in part, if not totally, also a function of certain social-structural conditions (see Schacht, 1971: 172; and Israel, 1971). According to this latter view, it follows that if estrangement is to be abolished, basic social-structural changes must occur. This demand for social change is not necessarily implied in the position which holds that estrangement is only a function of whether individuals perceive their social environment in a particular way. In view of this debate, this study investigates whether, according to Marx, estrangement must be viewed as a function of social structure or as one of the individual's states of mind.

Contemporary application of Marx's theory of estrangement raises other crucial issues. Thus, many students of Marx who interpret and apply his
theory of estrangement view estrangement as occurring to a greater or lesser extent. It is also very common to view estrangement as a cause for certain behavior, feelings, or attitudes. Both of these views are discussed in detail, and it will become apparent how the application of Marx’s theory of estrangement is intrinsically linked with its interpretation. It will also become apparent that any attempt to measure estrangement, that is, to view it in quantitative terms, is problematic. The problem with measurement, as will be shown, does not lie with the multidimensionality of estrangement as Feuer (1963:139-140) seems to think, but with the implicit danger of misinterpreting Marx once estrangement is perceived to be a quantitative phenomenon.

The early postwar period witnessed an upsurge and popularization of existentialist thinking which did not leave the debate on estrangement unaffected. The years in which existentialism experienced its growth were also characterized by an increased interest in Marx’s early writings, particularly the Manuscripts. For many, the Manuscripts were symbolic of the “revitalization” of Marxism and a “novel” source for an attempt to provide new interpretations of and insights into Marx in view of the Stalinist experience. Marxist scholarship had become a “weapon” that could be directed against both capitalism and “Russian socialism.” Thus, it is not surprising that philosophers from socialist countries were put on alert. What produced a virtual counteroffensive, however, was the fact that existentialists like Sartre made heavy use of the concept of estrangement in their writings. Scholars like Schaff (1964), Oiserman (1965), and Schwarz (1967) subsequently accused Sartre and others of misinterpreting Marx. They claimed that the existentialists treated estrangement as if it were a phenomenon of all social life at all times, and they maintained that Marx thought estrangement should be associated with only a certain historical phase. As a result of the investigation in this volume (including the topics of scarcity and estrangement in present-day socialism), it will become clear how the issues raised above must be resolved. I do not endorse Jordan’s (1971:19) view that “Marx came to believe that estrangement (self-alienation) is an unavoidable consequence of the necessity to work.”

Focusing on the issues outlined above may give us the key to a novel interpretation of Marx’s theory of estrangement. The contribution this study makes with respect to the interpretation of Marx’s writings will be of immediate relevance to the social sciences which have traditionally
sought to employ his theory for further social analysis. It will be of immediate relevance to social science in the same way that the social scientists' application of the theory has affected its interpretation.

This inquiry seeks to give an accurate and well-documented interpretation of Marx's theory of estrangement. Hence, I rely on the Marx/Engels Werke as the source of Marx's original writings. The translations of the relevant passages are taken from the sources indicated in the list of abbreviations. As a rule, all the translations provided here have been examined for their accuracy. Whenever the translation does not accurately convey the meaning of the original, it is amended. Any such alteration is indicated, and usually the justification for making a specific change is presented.

This text deliberately excludes controversies concerning interpretations of what Marx says on certain topics in order to avoid confusion and overloading the text with too many details. In the process, it is hoped that the main theses of this book will also appear with greater clarity. This does not mean that points of controversy are not discussed. They are indeed addressed, but only in footnotes and in sections separately set aside for this purpose. The various interpretations of Marx are for the most part in those sections labeled "Introduction," "Discussion," "Comment," and the whole of Chapters 1, 9, and 10.

This work differs from similar studies in its conscious attempt to separate the account of Marx's thought from points of debate and in its use of complete quotes. In general, I refrain from quoting "phrases," and use full quotes for purposes of documentation. Seldom is there paraphrasing without subsequent documentation by quotes. There are several reasons why this procedure is followed. First, any interpretative study depends for its "data" on the texts that are being interpreted. It is therefore very important that these data be presented in an unabridged form. An interpretation documented by complete quotes presents less risk of distorting the meaning than does an interpretation based on paraphrase or quotation of phrases. Second, the reader will be directly involved in the ways Marx expresses himself, an emotional component that should not be separated from an attempt to understand Marx. Third, the reader's direct confrontation with Marx's text (as well as the reader's development of a feeling for it) facilitates a critical appraisal of the interpretation in this book, and allows a more ob-
jective debate. While this approach does not guarantee a solution to all the questions of interpretation, it is at least a step in the right direction. In order to improve the readability of the "main text," quotes that provide additional evidence for a certain argument are presented in the appropriate notes.

NOTES

1. For example, "man is estranged because he is distant from, or does not control such and such."

2. It also allows for statements that are empirically founded. Mandel (1971:161) is incorrect when he says that early writings lack "empirical foundations" and are "largely philosophical and speculative." Mandel's misunderstanding comes from the fact that he does not fully appreciate the role Marx's concept of human nature plays with respect to his theory of estrangement.

3. Feudalism is characterized by the almost total absence of a market in labor power. Ollman (1976:181, 252) points out that Marx speaks of estrangement under feudalism, but he does not elaborate on the subject.

4. See, for example, Swingewood (1975:92) and Krader (1975a:269; 1975b:437).

5. The problem, then, is not how to measure a phenomenon which some (Neal and Rettig, 1967; Tatsis and Zito, 1975) claim is multidimensional. Rather, the problem is whether what Marx called estrangement is at all accessible to measurement, if Marx is not to be misinterpreted.

6. Similarly, others can be criticized: "The glaring survival of phenomena of alienation in Soviet society serves as a basis for bourgeois ideologists to demonstrate triumphantly the absolute inevitability of alienation 'in industrial society'" (Mandel, 1971:187).

7. An exception is The Poverty of Philosophy which was translated into German under Engels' supervision (see MEW, 4, pp. 558-569, 621).

8. This does not imply that the translations are optimal with respect to clarity and style. To provide optimal translations was beyond the province of this work.