Alienation: Some conceptual developments in present day sociology*)

George Simpson, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York

Like some other concepts which are claimed to have universalistic, holistic implications, alienation has become a cliché which sometimes borders on travesty of the human situations presumably being interpreted. Indeed, an instructive history of sociology, certainly of sociology in the United States, could be written in terms of concepts which have become clichés and have come to stand for everything under the sun.

And alienation is a concept which is easily abused. Before entering upon an analysis of the importance it can have, it is necessary to review some of the recent discussions surrounding it since these discussions are trying to face up to real human problems but use the wrong frame of reference and surround human behavior involved therein with an aura of obfuscation.

We may well begin with the discussion of the abuse of the concept of alienation in a somewhat scathing but learnedly written essay by Lewis Feuer printed in the book Sociology on Trial. Feuer points out that alienation has been used to characterize 1) a class society based on exploitation of man by man; 2) a competitive society which deprives man of satisfaction in his work; 3) an industrial society which makes man an appendage of the machine; 4) a segregated society which deprives so-called inferior peoples of their heritage as human beings; 5) generational struggle between age-groups relative to opportunity, values, and life-goals. Feuer might well have mentioned a sixth meaning derivative from psychoanalysis which finds man inherently alienated from his instinctual underpinnings but which in sociology is generally debased by misinterpreting psychoanalysis or by ignominious use of it.

If we were to accept all of these meanings of alienation, then it becomes not a key concept of modern sociology but tends to overcome the entire field of sociology. Alienation is, I believe, an indispensable concept but must be given precision and not bandied about.

To add to the confusion of tongues concerning alienation it has been taken over by modern theologians too to betoken what happens when man is divorced from God.

*) Portions of this essay were presented originally at the Seminar in Philosophical Sociology of the University of Leyden in May 1966.
And without sacrilege I think we can say that this load is one that is too heavy for even God to carry, or even some sociological Atlas who carries the world around on his brawny but sagging shoulders. But insult is added to conceptual injury in such a book as that edited by Eric and Mary Josephson called *Man Alone* and subtitled “Alienation in Modern Society”. This book is divided into nine main sections following an editorial introduction. These sections are in order: Alienation and Anxiety; Work and Leisure; Mass Culture; Politics; Science and War; Social Isolation; Rebels, Deviants and Retreatists; Integration; and finally an allegorical Epilogue. Indeed as far as the concept of alienation is concerned I consider the whole book an allegory. Another book of readings on alienation edited by Gresham Sykes, hardly even qualifies as sociology even though Sykes is a sociologist. One must resist the attempt here to propound a Gresham’s law of sociology to the effect that bad sociology tends to drive out good sociology.

The conceptual miasma is not relieved by such an article as Mizruchi’s in the book edited by Irving Horowitz and titled *The New Sociology* where Mizruchi mashes together the concepts of anomy and alienation to raise finally the problem whether a society built upon the American Dream of Success, opportunity, and social mobility can continue to exist or whether it must set new goals for itself.

I scarcely need pile Pelion on Ossa by giving further examples of what I consider promiscuous misuse of the concept of alienation. But one further example I cannot forbear offering from the sociology of literature. It occurs in an otherwise learned and very informative book titled *Bohemian versus Bourgeoisie* and subtitled “French Society and the French Man of Letters in the Nineteenth Century”. The book is by Cesar Graña of the University of Chicago and contains some fetching and highly enlightening studies of Stendhal, Flaubert, and Baudelaire. It ends with a fairly long conclusion called “The Heritage of Alienation: Productivity, Social Efficiency, and Intellectual Gloom”. To Graña alienation means “a sense of distance from the surroundings which represents to the person experiencing it both a burden and a necessity”. And its main characteristic for him is isolation which he explains through a quotation from Georg Simmel’s essay on the stranger. It involves boredom and a running away from what Baudelaire called the ecstasy of life. The literary man of the nineteenth century in France sought to achieve this ecstasy through hedonism, dandyism, or escape, an escape which in Baudelaire I suppose could be illustrated by his addiction to drugs. But Graña’s use of the concept of alienation does little to clarify it for us and validate its right to a central place in sociological theory. In his final chapter, with is beautifully written, Graña seeks to show that the alienation of the modern man of letters is a revolt against the philistinism of the bourgeoisie, against their lack of taste, against the imprisonment of man’s intellectual life within the realms of science and technology, and against the bureaucratization of life inherent in modern large-scale organization. This delightful and searching denunciation is certainly aesthetically intriguing and highly readable but does it really cast any definitive light on the concept of alienation? I think not. It is descriptive but not analytical, appraising but not truly illuminating, and certainly gives us no precise hook on which to hang our sociological garments. But it is nevertheless a pleasure to read sociology written in such good English.
How did we get into such a conceptual and theoretical predicament concerning the idea of alienation? Norman Birnbaum holds that alienation has become central in sociological thinking today because of the failure to solve the ethical problems of bureaucratization of personality, the Christian (or he might better have said the Calvinist) doctrine of man's inherent evil and sinfulness in conjunction with the necessity of Christianity to come to terms with psychoanalysis, and in specifically modern political terms with the crisis in the Communist movement and through the failure of welfare capitalism to come up to pledged expectations, and finally because of the attempt of Christianity to meet the growing process of secularization. Birnbaum is astute and acute enough to defend the fact of the multiplicity of meanings relative to alienation on the ground that it opens up sociological reflection to problems which raw or refined empiricism cannot but fail to ignore by the strictures placed upon it by its attempt at rigorous methodology. He thinks that alienation can be counteracted by forging social policy which will relieve self-estrangement and that it helps to keep empiricists in touch with the actual daily problems of living men rather than with the rarefied abstracted form of them in that empirical scientism which has overrun sociology.

But I believe that the rehabilitation of the concept of alienation today is incorrectly premised. The first of the incorrect premises aims to undermine Marxism as revolutionary and the second aims to denature psychoanalysis so as to make it palatable by basing it less on the unconscious and its instincts, less on infantile sexuality (orality, anality, genitality), and not at all on the polymorphous perversity of the instincts. This distortion of premise seeks to bring Marx and psychoanalysis together by a conceptual *tour de force*. But I hope to show that no such *tour de force* is necessary and that alienation can have both a truly Marxist meaning and a strict psychoanalytical meaning and further that the combination of viewing the so-called social structure as impersonalized and modern personality as debasedly socialized is really what we are striving for in concentrating on the concept of alienation. Indeed, I would hold that viewed in this combined (and inextricable) way it renders to us a type of illumination of what we call society and culture such as we cannot get in any other way and that this illumination holds the greatest store of light for sociology's future.

And now to a little history of ideas (not complete but representative, I hope) as prolegomena to my theme. The by now numerous writers on modern alienation all agree that it has its origin in the work of Hegel. As one who was trained by arch-Hegelians at Cornell University more than three decades ago I find that few of those who begin their historical surveys of this concept seem to have actually read Hegel. And even when you read him he is not very easy to understand. I shall try to bring him down from the world of complicated German metaphysics to the real world which contemporary sociologists are trying to analyze and interpret. Hegel's concept of alienation can only be understood within the confines of his total philosophy and it is no easy job to discuss that in short compass. But I shall try. Beginning with his *Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel was trying to discover how man could achieve a consciousness of himself which would break down the separation of his subjective side from his sensuous activity in the material world. That is, man might reach his ultimate
ideal form when the dichotomy — subject-object — was broken through. In his search for self-identity as a fulfilled human being man for Hegel goes through various preliminary stages of consciousness which he must overcome and assimilate on his way to true self-realization. For example, one of these stages Hegel calls contrite consciousness. He is enabled to complete this process of ideal self-identity where he realizes full human potentiality by the fact that every non-ideal state of consciousness contains the seed of its own destruction by setting an antithesis to its mental state. This antithesis calls forth a demand in him for a new synthesis of subject and object and leads on to higher forms of consciousness, and as the process goes on man tends to reach conscious perfection and dwells in the realm of Absolute Ideas where he can realize his full potential. But this process never ends since every approximation to the realm of Absolute Ideas pushes man further into new realms of thought. Consequently, the most educated and intelligent of men are always in process of intellectual growth and mental stagnation betokens an alienation of man from absoluteness.

But for Hegel man is an historical being in two senses: first, in the development of his life-history, and second, relative to his place in the historical development of society. He approximates ideal self-consciousness when the dialectic of inner consciousness and the dialectic of historical movement through thesis-antithesis-synthesis complement and fulfill each other. He is then in tune with himself and his historical period. Thus, alienation is ever present in man in one form or another but when ideal historical self-consciousness has been approximated alienation is at a minimum. Alienation is persistent in every stage of antithesis and can only be overcome by a new synthesis. In the struggle for ideal consciousness man is always on the way to a higher state and in this sense alienation is inherent in man’s estate but the degree and intensity of the alienation is dependent upon its distance from the approximation of ideal historical self-consciousness which is possible to man. So there is always some degree of alienation in Hegel’s sense in every stage of man’s struggle to reach the perfection of pure reason and the perfection of pure morality in historical action. What is non-alienation for learned man in one historical phase of human evolution becomes alienation if persisted in at a higher stage of human evolution. Hegel was a philosopher of human and historical and social development and the view that Hegel saw alienation only in pessimistic terms — a view held by those who stress that he found the concept inherent in earlier Protestant theology — is erroneous. Only if man gets stuck in the subject-object dichotomy either because of internal incapacity to achieve his ideal personal identity or because of inability of this conscious identity to become compatible with the stage of history in which he finds himself or both combined, should we speak of alienation in Hegel’s sense. The human condition is one of alienation for those incapable or rendered incapable by social obstacles from achieving the closest approximation to the Absolute Idea pregnant in consciousness and in human history.

Thus for Hegel alienation would be present in man if Kant’s distinction between pure reason and practical reason could not be overcome. But Kant’s difficulty for Hegel is that Kant took the subject-object dichotomy as unavoidable and thought that human society could become ideal only through the workings of practical reason-
through the performance of one's duties in cooperation with his fellow-men and not through the use of other men as instrumentalities for one's own narrowly selfish aims and goals. For Kant pure reason alone could not find the essence of man since it never could achieve union with the sensuous world.

Now, though it is to Hegel that we owe the concept of alienation in its modern sense, the present controversies and expatiations on the concept derive from Karl Marx. As a revolutionist Marx was critical of the possibility of ever achieving full self-consciousness without aggressive and powerful organizations ready to struggle for man's rights and in economics and politics Marxism became the ideology of militant modern revolutionists. As usual, the best way to find out what a thinker has said is by letting him speak for himself.

Marx begins as early as 1844 by announcing that alienation appears in the relation which man postulates between himself and other men and between himself and the external world of Nature. Thus in Marxism (and to reiterate, I mean by Marxism here what Marx said and not what so-called Marxists say he said or meant) alienation from oneself occurs at the practical level in the economic world through labor's being alienated from the object. It produces under capitalism and alienation as a general phenomenon and a continuous social process occurs through the capitalist mode of production which produces hostility among men and especially among men as class-members. Alienation is a produced human condition and self-estrangement occurs through imposed, forced labor not through voluntary labor. The worker is alienated because his work is not his work but work for someone else and in this work for someone else the worker does not belong to himself but to another person. Spontaneous activity can result in non-alienation but if one's activity in work belongs to another, spontaneity is necessarily lost. As Marx wrote in 1844: "The worker puts his life into the object, and his life then belongs no longer to him but to the object. The greater his activity, therefore, the less he possesses. What is embodied in the product of his labor is no longer his. The greater this product is, therefore, the more he himself is diminished. The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, takes on its own existence, but that it exists outside him, independently, and alien to him, and that it stands opposed to him as an autonomous power. The life which he has given to the object sets itself against him as an alien and hostile force". Thus, for Marx, the worker's product under capitalism is an objectification of labor. The worker is thus vitiated as a human being and this objectification is a loss of his self-identity; he becomes the servant of the object (that is, of the commodity). The appropriation of the fruits of the worker's labor by someone else completes the process of alienation. Apologists for capitalism, such as Adam Smith, make political economy an alienated form of social intercourse and men come to believe that this alienated form is its true and original form, inherent in human nature. Marx denies this assertion and holds that human nature is what a given type of economy and its social institutions permit it to be. Money, which has been presumed to be a medium of exchange, is really only the symbolic representation of the alienated activity of man as a hired hand. Money stands between man and his true self, his spontaneous being. Money is the alienated power over humanity and turns man's higher faculties of intellect and reason into something which it is not,
into its opposite. Thus capitalism turns the worker into an antithesis (in Hegelian terms) of what he might be. The division of labor under capitalism in manufacture accentuates this process of alienation by removing the worker still further from the fruits of his labor since these fruits are now still further removed from his spontaneous activity. Finally, commodities (the fruits of labor) become the basis for secular worship and salvation — this worship becomes in Marx's famous phrase "the fetishism of commodities", a return to primitive forms of religion where the object is broken away from its subject and the subject comes to worship what causes him to lose his self-identity. In this way capitalism causes the worker to accept and even to do obeisance to his own alienation. Only through the emancipation of the working classes through their own efforts and their own political organizations can alienation be overcome and this emancipation can be brought about only through social revolution.

This short discussion should give some idea of what Marx was getting at and of how he used the Hegelian dialectic materialistically and not for the purpose of showing how to achieve absolute abstract consciousness. The breakdown of the subject-object dichotomy can occur only socially, through the organization of men reasserting their humanity.

But the Marxist theory as put into practice through Leninist revisionism has not ended the discussion of the meaning of alienation even in countries that call themselves Marxist. Rather has it turned out that alienation inheres also in Communist economies and Communist societies and so the problem of alienation becomes even more acute. By discussing a very good little book by Franz Pappenheim propounding the Marxist position I shall try to show how it remains acute even for Marxists. Then I shall discuss the distortion which the concept of alienation has undergone in the hands of contemporary sociologists. Following this excursion I shall turn to Erich Fromm's discussion of alienation where psychoanalysis is distorted in order to bring it into line with Fromm's supposed Marxism. Finally, I shall try to throw out some ideas concerning alienation which do not blunt Marx's or Freud's revolutionary meaning by showing how Marxism and psychoanalysis seen as intertwined give us a way out of our impasse and a way into a new broad area for theory and research on alienation.

Franz Pappenheim seeks to show how Marxist doctrine is also basic to the thinking of two leading eminent sociologists of the past, Georg Simmel and Ferdinand Tönnies, the latter of whom was Pappenheim's teacher in the Germany of halcyon days. In discussing Pappenheim I shall add comments of my own as I proceed. Pappenheim's book is titled *The Alienation of Modern Man* and is divided into five parts after a short introduction. The five parts bear the following titles: The Mood of Our Age: Awareness of Man's Alienation; Technology and Alienation; Politics and Alienation; Social Structure and Alienation; Retrospect and Outlook: Can Alienation Be Overcome? Though I do think that Pappenheim does not probe deeply enough into these topics, nevertheless I think he has hit upon the right areas for surveying the worth of alienation. Pappenheim's general aim is to find a predominant contemporary trend in human existence by showing how the specific forms of alienation are interrelated in order to understand the human condition in the latter part of this century. He begins most intelligently by pointing out that alienation is not just a modern
phenomenon but existed in previous historical periods. But he emphasizes that our concern with the problems of alienation is based on the fact that alienation "predominates" in our era. He holds that alienation has gained greatly in intensity and significance in the modern world and is rooted in the social structure of modern society. I must immediately retort that perhaps something far worse than alienation existed in earlier societies and also that we think it has gained in intensity and significance in our day because we mistake the intensity and significance of our present advanced knowledge of man for the intensity and significance of his alienation. The very fact that we are so preoccupied today with the problem of alienation is a proof to me that we are overcoming it, just as in psychoanalytic therapy a person begins to get well when he understands the dynamics of the family and parental situations which made him sick to the point where his repressive system leads him to regress and he manifests the symptoms of a person falling apart. So modern society looks as if it were falling apart as a result of the alienation of man but actually modern society for the first time makes it possible to come to an appreciation of man's inherent alienation both in the sense of self-estrangement and in the sense of reification (Marx's term for the process by which men are turned into things and labor becomes a commodity). In addition, I would add to Pappenheim's remark about the relation of alienation to the social structure of our times the important relevancy of its relation to the personality structure of modern industrial man and its basis in emotional life as channeled by family rearing.

With good sense Pappenheim begins by turning back to Marx's early writings on alienation which we have already discussed above. But as a former student of Tönnies he seeks to show that man's alienation can be well seen in Tönnies' theory of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft as well as in Simmel. Nor does Pappenheim refuse to admit that he has not written his book in a spirit of detached neutrality but rather that "he believes that a society dominated by the forces of alienation stifles the fulfillment of human potentialities, that in such a society respect for the individual and for the dignity of man cannot be implemented but will remain in the realm of ideas and philosophic pronouncements".

In his discussion of alienation as the mood of our age Pappenheim points out that the turn towards pessimism and towards nihilism today is nothing but a new expression of the mood of doubt regarding man's greatness, social progress, and the supremacy of reason. But I would suggest first that man has never been greater than he is today but that his difficulty is that he can never be as great as he once deluded himself he could be. Second, I would emphasize that sociologists of human progress in earlier sociology mistakenly stressed the perfection possible to man rather than his perfectability. Finally, I must stress that the ideology of the supremacy of reason of the Enlightenment and of nineteenth and twentieth century science failed completely to understand man as an emotive animal governed fundamentally by his polymorphously perverse instincts and that no social structure and no cultural regulations will ever undermine this fundamental character of man but that it is possible to establish a social structure and a culture which, while recognizing man as a repressed animal, can also establish avenues for sublimation of his repressions. Indeed, to a degree we are today heading in the direction of such a society and culture precisely by spreading...
abroad a self-understanding in man based on psychoanalysis combined with an understanding of the social forces which stand in the way of such understanding. We cannot negate man's instinctual life but we can come to grips with it and with the social problems which serve to accentuate its frustration in work and play and the use of leisure. Rather than believing with Freud that civilization necessarily leads to discontent I would posit the thesis that civilization can lead to contentment or better yet to that progressive discontent which leads to social changes which will emancipate man without recourse to totalitarian ideologies or mythological pseudo-religions which tend to grow up against the possibility of true aesthetic experience in art or in religion. There is nothing wrong with religion except man’s misunderstanding of how it can make him compatible with his instinctual life through high symbolism and creative artistic illusions which can be understood as an attempt to change reality from sordidness and philistinism to creative self-expression and honesty in the face of the hypocrisy with which he has permitted himself to be surrounded.

Writing of Simmel on alienation, Pappenheim stresses that Simmel held that the divorce of life from living occurs because of the stress on formalism rather than on content. Or put another way, Simmel is saying that we have permitted technique to conquer content and have become mastered by our techniques. But it is precisely such criticism as Simmel’s which can help to lead us out of the wilderness of alienation through form into the clear air of self-understanding through analysis of content and not least the content of our existent society and culture. Man fears that he is losing his individuality because the common man does not know how he has lost it and we are not telling him how to regain it. As for Husserl’s claim that the essence of the world is alien to man’s type of existence in it, I consider this contention to be sheer nonsense despite Husserl’s fame.

Man’s essence lies in understanding of the conditions of human existence and of its elements that are hostile to his self-expression through creation. Failure to realize this hostility and build upon it is the cause for the absurd forms of art which are appearing and the weird type of sociology which attempts to explain man without regard to what kind of psycho-biological animal he is and has been compelled to continue to be. Indeed, I would even suggest to you that a leading trend in sociology (particularly the technicians’ triumph in the United States) is a prime example of man’s alienation from himself.

In the field of technology we have been accepting Marx’s thesis that man has become an appendage of the machine, indeed that under automation he identifies himself with the machine, and that he has become depersonalized by making even his leisure time into a mechanic’s holiday. Now there is no doubt in my mind that to no small degree man has overtechnologized his culture and his social relations by being led away from the personalized arts and crafts which give him a sense of creation and by his present role in the total picture of Creation which does not make him feel at home in the inherently estranging world into which he has been put down as a self-conscious primate. Nor that the bureaucratization of personality which occurs in modern large-scale organizations has led him to mistake procedures for vital processes and the assembly-line as a spuriously spontaneous organization of work. But neither must we forget that there are certain types of fundamental character
structure such as the anal-erotic or the oral-sadistic which may find satisfaction in what we as sociologists may look upon as depersonalization and impersonalization. We must not mistake what we as sociologists could not be able to tolerate for what the common man is not able to tolerate. He may be happier in his instinctual gratifications through repetition-compulsion in modern technology and through paper-processing in modern bureaucracy than we would be. The truly alienated are those who in such a world of repetition-compulsion and processing are genital and flexible and yet doomed to having their talents atrophied by being placed in jobs which they hate. Such unfairness will undoubtedly exist to some degree but that there is too much of it today we are all aware of. But let us not overestimate what we want for the common man for what the common man wants for himself. We tend to feel sorry for the wrong people. Not everybody has the talents which can be seriously alienated and alienation may thus be the lot of only certain strata of the population. Freud made the same mistake when he thought of the general population as mostly rabble and riff-raff but that is because he seems to have mistakenly thought that they should all be able to penetrate the depths of psychoanalysis. He was wrong. They all should be permitted to benefit from the therapeutic and self-releasing aspects of psychoanalysis through education but that is a different matter.

On the subject of alienation and politics Pappenheim well points out that man’s estrangement (which is for him a synonym for alienation) makes itself felt in contemporary political life but does not actually result from it. Continuing the procedure of amplifying Pappenheim’s discussion, I would say that we have expected too much of man as an Aristotelian political animal under modern democracy by failing to see that democracy is an ideal which we are always seeking to approximate but which we never achieve. Indeed, its achievement would be the end of man. What modern man needs to overcome his feeling of alienation in political life are avenues of rebellion against it and these avenues he has if he can be led to take them. To be sure, he may become so bizarre in his alienation that he will take those crack-pot avenues such as those that have been offered to him in McCarthyism, the John Birch Society, and the Ku Klux Klan where one seeks to find himself by his hatred of others. Society and culture are not neat and tidy phenomena and they will not become neat and tidy even if we help the common man overcome what we think of as his political alienation. He must become more learned but especially must he become more learned in his self-understanding of the deep founts of irrationality which underlie his character-structure and of course which underlie the character structure of all of us. The only way to avoid the organization of the mentally ill into a political movement is to lead men to understand that the way to mental health is through the recognition that being human is a disease.

In the heart of his book — much the longest section — Pappenheim deals with social structure and alienation. He bases himself on Tönnies’ distinction between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft or to use Cooley’s term between primary groups and secondary groups. In a society dominated by Gesellschaft such as contemporary western society Tönnies saw that “everybody is by himself and isolated, and there exists a condition of tension against all others”. This movement towards Gesellschaft is irreversible and to find Gemeinschaft in modern society man must seek to form
his own primary groups within the larger structure of Gesellschaft. This process is not an easy one because man becomes secondary-group minded through his work and tends to carry over into his family and leisure time the bureaucratic type of thinking typical of a society organized in vital economic activities in this way. That is, in Marxist terms, it is difficult not to reify other men and to find in them ends and not means.

Finally, Pappenheim comes to the crucial question: Can alienation be overcome? He does not think it can be fully overcome by theology, philosophy, or education (though he does hold out great hope in this last area), nor through active political participation on the local level so as to make it more Gemeinschaftlich. Rather does he hold that to be overcome there must be a radical transformation of the social order which will affect all of these areas. For him this transformation would clearly appear to be through socialism but here I think he deludes himself. But I suspect that socialism is not the sole or exclusive way of transformation. Rather must it come about through man's steady understanding of the relation of his instinctual life to social structure and culture. To this topic I shall return later in a discussion of Fromm, Erik Erikson, and Norman O. Brown.

But first it is necessary to say a few words about two technically sociological articles — one by Melvin Seeman and one by Marvin B. Scott.

In his essay, Seeman lists and attempts to analyze the various meanings which have been attached to the concept of alienation. He finds five different meanings: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and selfestrangement. Powerlessness is organizational in its signification; an individual is powerless when he finds himself unable to bring the organization or organizations of import to him within the ambit of his desires to achieve through them. Meaninglessness betokens to Seeman that the individual has little or no comprehension of what the consequences for him will be of some course of action upon which he has decided. Normlessness has the same meaning as Durkheim's anomie has been given — conflict occurs between moral canons of behavior culturally co-existent and the individual is torn between them; he may be saved by hypocrisy but that only increases his alienation from the culture. Isolation means that the individual can find no camaraderie and is a lone wolf divorced from the main stream of the culture, and selfestrangement means that the subject-object relationship is not integrable but schizoid. I must admit that the way I have stated the meanings that Seeman gives to alienation is in straight-forward English and not in that strange language that passes for scientific terminology in sociology. Yet Seeman's taxonomy of the meanings of alienation is helpful because it shows us that we have no universal agreement in sociology, social philosophy, or the new theology on just what it is that we are talking about when we refer to alienation. Here again I would stress that this confusion comes about through trying to avoid both the revolutionary Marxist meaning and the psychoanalytic one as too revolutionary for modern sociology.

Feuer in his essay already mentioned here on the career of alienation as a concept subjects Seeman to some severe criticism in the statement: "Alienation has a way of eluding a fixed set of dimensions because it is as multipotential as the varieties of human experience." Thus, a multitude of persons who may be thought of as alienated
would be such precisely because they were in possession of power which they did not know how to use, or because meaningfulness would unearth their inadequacies, or ability to adapt norms to each other would deprive them of the right not to let their left hands know what their right hands are doing, or involvement would overstrain their capacities, or self-acknowledgement would lead them to feelings of inadequacy. In the previous sentence I have gone somewhat beyond Feuer’s criticism by spelling out his summary statement that some people would feel alienated by power-possession, meaningfulness, norm-orientedness, involvement, and self-acknowledgement. If Feuer’s contention that alienation is as multipotential as the varieties of human experience were accurate, then the concept is worthless by itself since it involves a total theoretical system concerning human live in general, a Lebensphilosophie in the sense of that term given by some German philosophers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and not a means for interpreting a process which occurs as a result of a structural order of organization and a cultural series of disjunctions. If it means so much as a concept, then it means nothing at all as an heuristic tool for interpreting man’s condition in contemporary society. And indeed Feuer himself comes around to the realization that alienation would thus become worthless when he concludes: “Whether ‘alienation’ however provides an adequate basis for the definition of human good seems to me doubtful”. As far as political purposes are concerned, Feuer ends by writing: “‘Alienation’ remains too much a concept of political theology which bewilders rather than clarifies the direction for political action”.

Marvin B. Scott in his essay “The Social Sources of Alienation” begins with the statement that such a typology as Seeman’s gives alienation a chameleon character; that is to say, it changes color while you look at it. Yet he rather approvingly quotes Robert Nisbet’s remark that alienation has reached an extraordinary degree of importance. “It has become nearly as prevalent as the doctrine of enlightened self-interest was two generations ago. It is more than an hypothesis, it is a perspective.” But if, as Nisbet holds, alienation has a future in store for it similar or identical with that of enlightened self-interest in past social theory, then it will turn out to be a sorry sight indeed. Scott goes on to say that he does not intend to delve into the inner workings of the psyche but to take a distinctively sociological perspective; that is, he will be concerned with the social conditions that bring about the mental states associated with alienation. Before saying a few words about Scott’s analysis of the social sources of alienation, let me say straightaway that this separation of the psyche from the social conditions which bring about its externalization in action is a major error, in fact the major error which has made alienation into a catch-all basin rather than an heuristic concept for understanding the human condition in our times. It is to lose sight of the fundamental problem of sociology — how man makes society and culture and how society and culture make man.

For Scott, the sources of alienation from a sociological point of view are to be found in certain lacks: 1. a lack of commitment to values; 2. a lack of conformity to norms; 3. a lack of responsibility of roles; and 4. a lack of control of facilities. He lists them originally in that order but discusses them in a different order. To avoid further
confusion I shall discuss these so-called lacks in the order in which Scott discusses them and not in the order in which he originally lists them.

He begins by first discussing the lack of control of facilities and instances Marx's claim supported by others that the worker suffers psychologically because of his separation from the means of production. Even after having criticized Seeman severely Scott here turns around and holds that alienation arising from lack of control over the means of production leads to a sense of powerlessness. Scott then goes on to discuss a lack of responsibility of roles as a social source of alienation. Here he limits his discussion to what he calls the 'primary status-carrying role'. In the case of the husband this type of role is occupational, in the case of the wife her role as mother. Occupationally the man is presumed to suffer from frustration because under an advanced division of labor he is not responsible for his role but merely an employee responsible to somebody else. But everybody in every job is responsible to somebody else if he performs it well. Indeed, he finds responsibility precisely in doing his job well. He may, however, really feel frustration if his talents unrecognized but in this sense we are all to one degree or another frustrated. And there may be some who feel frustrated because the occupational role they are performing is beyond their powers of performance. We all know, in fact, that a modest, honest man who attains high position always feels himself somewhat beneath the role he is playing and we praise him for his humility. Not for slight reasons does the Catholic Church require that a priest who has been elected pope prostrate himself immediately upon election before the throne of St. Peter and declare his unworthiness. For who, indeed, can act really as the vice-regent of the Lord and the empowered spokesman for the ideals of Jesus?

Scott's discussion of the frustration of mothers which amounts to alienation because they feel that marriage and motherhood involve them in a lack of responsibility misses the mark and shows what happens when the sociological point of view is divorced from the psychoanalytic. All women who are emancipated feel this restlessness but that is because their emancipation can only be civil or economic but never genital. Every man feels frustrated because he is not a woman and every woman feels frustrated because she is not a man. But this frustration is not alienation; it is the human condition of the incapacity to satisfy the basic instinctual desire to be bi-sexual, a denial of our innate androgy. But then alienation is not due to a lack of responsibility in roles but a fundamental fact of the human unconscious which no society and no culture is ever going to abolish but which an enlightened sophisticated society, psychoanalytically literate in general, is going to be able to attenuate by making available to the population at large education in mental hygiene and the facts of man's instinctual life.

Alienation as a lack of conformity to norms is to Scott rooted in a mistrust of other because of a conflict of ethical codes. But every ethical code in every culture consists of conflicts between and among moral commandments. Indeed, the basic code of western civilization enshrined in the Ten Commandments is as a whole in conflict with instinctual desires. They tell us not to do precisely what we unconsciously want to do. There would be no reason for cultural proscriptions such as 'Thou shalt not kill' or 'Honor thy father and mother' unless we all had homicidal instincts which
are repressed and dishonorable attitudes towards our parents which by their very repression make human culture possible and social organization acceptable. Prohibitions are instituted to keep men from acting the way they instinctually want to act. So the very fact of living in a society and participating in a culture alienates man from his instincts. But then alienation means something very different from what Scott and his sociological cohorts would have it mean. Indeed, lack of conformity to certain basic norms is absolutely indispensable to human progress by calling into question the avenues for sublimation of instincts which they demand.

Lack of commitment to values is the last social source of alienation which Scott discusses although it is the first he lists originally. Whatever it is we mean by 'values' we must first understand that they are never in a state of integration. Durkheim's concept of the abolition of anomy in this sense is a completely utopian notion. No society or culture is in a state of equilibrium with regard to values except stagnant ones or those kept stagnant in order to further the vested interests of those in power. Indeed, conflict in values is precisely the basis for modern democracy and compromise of conflicting values is its essence though sometimes this compromise is bought at so high a price for man’s instinctual underpinnings that it becomes a retrogressive force. Disequilibrium is the condition of all so-called advanced societies and when it is abolished we are well on the way to totalitarianism which really is an alienation of man by depriving him of his right to revolt and rebel. Men do not live together in neatness and tidiness with regard to values except at the expense of dull lives or atrophied ones. Discontent is the prime mover in the direction of change but this is progress not alienation. Monolithic value-systems are the hobgoblins of little minds and sociology is no subject for little minds who do not realize that it is the very pluralism of values in a society and culture that gives them an occupation and which pluralism man has fought for through the ages. Those who would like rigid Calvinists impose a uniform code of values upon all men and women in a society are detractors from that very anomy which makes for changes — in sexual relations, in economics, in politics, in education. Thus in this sense of alienation as enunciated by Scott it is not disruptive of the stability of a society but indispensable to the continuance of a democratic one.

Very prominent pronouncements today on the subject of alienation have been coming from Erich Fromm who has claimed that his notion of alienation is psychoanalytically grounded and at the same time is Marxist. But what Fromm has done, I hope to make clear, is to bemean both psychoanalysis and Marx in order to achieve a conceptual mariage de convenance which will arouse man to the dangers of a life without love. Fromm distinguishes his so-called psychoanalysis from Freud’s by calling it a humanistic psychoanalysis. By humanistic here he seems to mean 'social' psychoanalysis and he finds the source of all psychic forces in the necessity of man to find ever-new solutions for the contradictions in his existence, to find ever-higher forms of unity with nature, with his fellowmen and with himself. These searchings are the basic motivations of man to Fromm, of all his passions, affects and anxieties. But unfortunately such a statement of the sources of psychic forces is inherently non-psychoanalytical. Man never finds so-called solutions for the contradictions in his
existence, he seeks at the level of the unconscious ever lower forms of unity with nature, with his fellow men and with himself. It is upon the contradictions in his nature that he builds society and culture and every society and culture manifest these contradictions no matter how advanced its politics, its economy, and its technology. A lower form of unity of nature can be far too creatively anal a preoccupation for the overwhelming majority of men and they return to nature only under the rationalizing influence of modern technology. When man seeks for higher unity with his fellow men and himself he does so under conditions of severe repression of instinct. He hates his fellow men and the doctrine "Love Thy Neighbor", as Freud pointed out, is an absurd doctrine since it conceals man's inherent hatred of other men, it conceals the warfare of men with women, and the antagonism of man towards, socialization and his enculturation. It is when we recognize what man is instinctually that we may be able to build a humanistic society and culture but not by imputing motives to him which are mere efflorescences of society and culture. When Fromm writes: "The understanding of man's psyche must be based on the analysis of man's needs stemming from the conditions of his existence" he is caught away off of a psychoanalytic base. Rather does the understanding of man's psyche stem from an understanding of the way in which man's instincts are channeled and repressed by the conditions of his social existence. In that way we lay a foundation from psychoanalysis which will lead us to deep comprehension of the phenomenon of alienation and enable us to intertwine it with Marx's analysis.

Man never loses his primitive instincts; they may be tortured into channels of severe repression and overworked sublimation or, on the other hand, they may be constructively sublimated in the highest realms of thought but they are the basis of his energy and they lie ever ready and waiting to turn upon the so-called adjustments and adaptations which he has made. But since the basic instincts (the stimuli from within) are polymorphously perverse, Fromm is able to take some of their forms and turn them into a psychology which he calls humanistic by neglecting their other, more perverse and contradictory forms. By taking only their deflection onto humanitarianism, Fromm neglects the fact that humanitarianism is a turning-around of the instinct of self-love, of aggression, and of rivalry into its opposite. Thus the dynamics of anti-humanitarianism are rationalized and hidden by intellectualizing humanitarianism. Man becomes humanitarian by recognition of his inherent inhumanity and making an asset of this shortcoming. His strength then lies in the recognition of his weaknesses as a social animal.

From the standpoint of psychoanalysis Fromm's discussion of love borders on the preposterous. It assumes that love can exist without its counterpart, hatred. Thus Fromm surrenders the fundamental psychoanalytic concept of the superego which partakes of the socialized ego and the unsocialized and indeed unsocializable id. He keeps employing psychoanalytic terms promiscuously, tears them out of context, and loses sight of their everlasting, internal, self-contradictory dynamics. He gives man the choice of loving or hating. But his early life-history determines — indeed overdetermines — any such choice. Love is filled with ambivalence.

Fromm talks as if we could overcome our incestuous desires, as if our self-identity were not a compromise that is at the level of the unconscious an open wound. Man does
not emerge from the clan or tribe, as Fromm holds, but rather finds new ways of forming a clan or a tribe, as we see so clearly among adolescents today. He discusses reason versus irrationality when the problem is the transformation of our irrational energies into rational ones precisely by recognition of their irrationality and so seeing the aberrant behavior to which we are prone and thus being able to use our irrational energies for rational ends. Reason is the most superficial aspect of the human mind and we mistake the surface for its foundations when we pose the problem as Fromm does. And in a truly remarkably erroneous statement he claims that the psychoanalytic view which sees a conflict between human nature and society implies a defense of contemporary society and is thus a one-sided distortion. In fact, psychoanalysis is the severest critique of contemporary society and of the discontents of civilization. Instead of propounding a one-sided distortion, psychoanalysis envisions contemporary society as a two-headed monster which tears man from his instinctual moorings without giving him an adequate anchorage in satisfactory substitute-gratification, that is, sublimation.

Fromm is then led to a discussion of man in capitalistic society and sees the central issue of the effects of capitalism on personality as the phenomenon of alienation. In alienation the person experiences himself as an alien. Man thus loses his self-identity and his acts are a result of servitude and not of spontaneity. Fromm then claims that the modern concept of alienation is only a contemporary form of an idea that is at least as old as the Old Testament but he fails to realize that if such is the case alienation is not just a result of capitalism but of the instinctual human situation. He proceeds to show how modern man is alienated as a bureaucrat or as bureaucratized, alienated through reification, alienated as a consumer through the intermediary of money and as a political being through being divorced from the fountainheads of power. Man uses other men as a means not as ends and in his relationship towards himself suffers from what Fromm calls “marketing orientation”. Modern man never gets out of the realm of man-made conventions and things; he is enmeshed in routine and becomes a joiner of lodges and fraternities which help him to lose his self-identity. He is ensnared by conformity to anonymous authority and by seeking to overcome frustration through further frustration he surrenders to the forces which strap him in. The machine and uncreative work further alienate him and he is an abject receptacle of mass media like radio and television and the movies. Public opinion is a fiction since it is manipulated and man's sense of security is factitious since it is built upon passivity.

To be sure, Fromm recognizes that there are counter-agents to alienation and he spells them out: a living humanistic tradition, dissatisfaction and disappointment with modern society and culture, a growing desire for fulfillment.

Fromm's road to sanity (by which he means non-alienation) lies not in choosing between capitalism and communism but between robotism (mechanical man) and what Fromm calls in capital letters Humanistic Communitarian Socialism. We can reach either a society of non-alienation or the destruction of civilization by continuance and increase of the forces of alienation. By building his ideal society Fromm thinks we have it in our power to overcome alienation.

Now, what From has done is jammed psychoanalysis and Marx into one compressed
piece of sociological plywood. Alienation is part and parcel of the human condition and the problem is not how to overcome it but what kind of alienation is worth living with. Capitalist alienation is only one of the inadequate forms of creative sublimation. The real problem concerning contemporary alienation is first to recognize the roots of its present form and to seek to make them less formidable and subversive of human aspirations. Furthermore, the recognition of alienation as inherent in the human condition is one of the greatest discoveries of modern psychology and should also be of modern sociology. It cannot be overcome but can be re-done in a form befitting it through new social institutions and new cultural arrangements. Fromm has taken both the name of Marx and the name of Freud in vain and has blunted the cutting edges of their views. Indeed, Fromm's Humanistic Communitarian Socialism sounds to me like a kind of reactionary utopianism. What we are really faced with as sociologists, at least as psychoanalytic sociologists, is the making of man dissatisfied with his dissatisfaction so that he can recognize himself for what he is and what he can be in contemporary society and culture. To help in this onerous task of dissatisfaction I should like to refer to the works of two authors both of whom truly understand psychoanalysis and have as a result something significant to say about alienation. The two authors in question are Erik H. Erikson and Norman O. Brown. Erikson's discussion appears in his book titled *Insight and Responsibility* especially in parts of two chapters of that book, the first of which is called "Identity and Uprootedness in Our Time" and the second "Human Strength and the Cycle of Generations". Here is the first quotation:

... Much of what we ascribe to neurotic anxiety and much of what we ascribe to existential dread is really only man's distinctive form of fear: for as an animal, for the sake of survival scans near and far with specialized senses fit for a special environment, man must scan both his inner and outer environment for indications of permissible activity and for promises of identity. Is he more "at home" in some environments and less in others? Romantic yearning and superficial travel make us overestimate the inner security as well as the outer safety of past times or of foreign conditions. But it certainly seems as though man has always been estranged both from nature and from his inner world, and that he has always attempted and periodically succeeded in making his impossible predicament livable and productive. There is no reason to insist that a technological world, as such, need weaken inner resources of adaptation which may, in fact, be replenished by the good will and the ingenuity of a communicating species. Was predatory man not alienated?... Take agricultural man: certainly the peasant's tortured superstitions should convince us that nature figures in his imaginations not only as a benevolent mother and familiar abode, but also as a fickle enemy to be coerced with bitterly hard work and to be appeased with cunning rituals. The inner dangers of the mercantile world are by now familiar to us. He who sells and buys, loans and collects, soon will make competitors, commodities, and slaves out of all men — and out of himself, his women, and his children. To that extent, he will become inhuman and will lose all capacity for empathy. Finally, we come to industrialization where man turns other men and himself into tools and the machines he runs into machinery which runs him. Here, obviously, man reaches the impasse of
his existence as a species, for he learns to perfect and to be blindly proud of the machinery of selfextermination.

Now, somewhere between the exploitation of nature and the selfexploitation of mercantile and mechanized man a gigantic transformation has taken place which first was the subject of Marx’s passionate attention: it is the creation of middlemen between man and nature. And it dawns on us that the technological world of today is about to create kinds of alienations too strange to be imagined. All this, however, must not becloud the universality of the problem of technical estrangement which started with the creation of tools and the development of a self-conscious brain at the beginning of mankind. Nor should we overlook the fact that workers of the mind, who are apt to distantiate their own awareness and “humanness” from what they call the alienated blindness of the mechanized masses, at times only indulge in selfdeception. For the work of the mind has its intrinsic technical alienation, too, employing as it does methods which must cause guilt, even where the pursuits seem otherworldly and peaceful: methods of analyzing existence into verbal bits, of abstracting experience into concepts, of forcing reality into experiments, and of taking — by calling them alienated — magic revenge on those who un-selfconsciously wield the power of the existing technology. No wonder that the worker of the mind senses alienation all about him. The question is only, to what extent he, in addition, learns to become a responsible balance to the temporal forces which he studies, exploits, and deplores.

The search for tools, then, has taken on ever-new forms in the mercantile and industrial eras. Mercantile man’s eagerness to ascribe to the fluctuations of the market a lawfulness analogous to the cycles of nature helped create a mercantile kind of genius but left many men with a sense of victimization in the face of inhuman and ungodly chance. Industrial man’s attempt to identify with the machine as if it were a new totem animal leads him into a self-perpetuating face for robot-like efficiency, and yet also to the question as to what, when all adjustments are made, is left of a human “identity”. To worry about the unchanging roots of human identity, then, may be as intrinsic to an age of ruthless change as a widespread sense of guilt was to the agricultural age, the technology of violated nature.

Guilt and fear for one’s identity belong, of course, to the built-in human equipment. Yet, particular forms of epidemic apprehension seem to be period bound. And so it comes about that in this era of fantastically expanded mobility we are preoccupied with roots and beginnings and first elements...

The sense of rootlessness... has contributed much to what is discussed so widely as the alienation of technological man. But man’s relation to nature, whether he trapped and slaughtered wildlife or bent plant life and animals to cultivation and domestication, was always a most complex one; because together with the capacity to invent tools goes that inner split of conscience which must do for man in his cultured and invented world what instinct does for the animal in its ecology. As psychoanalysis has verified, this process has created in man a sense of being uprooted from his own animal nature, and of being abandoned or expelled by his own conscience. In his fear and his guilt he tends to “make like” a tree, or an animal, or a machine. And indeed, why should not man, a locomotor being, equipped with an inventive brain as well as
a sensitive conscience, create a mechanical world reasonably well fitted to his striving for a cultural and technological identity? Why should he not be at home (as much as it is his lot to be at home in any technology) managing whatever energies he can extract from nature to create whatever synthetic products he can fuse into a new style? For his identity as a tool-using creature is always a condition (if only the condition) of his spiritual search of a transcendent identity...

Our professional struggle is with the magic thinking, the social exploitation, and the thoughtless destructiveness which always have a hand in man's mastery of tool and weapons. We challenge man-made patienthoods, regardless of the exalted theories or ideologies which mask them as inevitabilities.

Thus runs the first quotation from Erikson. The second quotation, considerably shorter, runs as follows:

What begins as hope in the individual infant is in its mature form faith, a sense of superior certainty not essentially dependent on evidence or reason, except where these forms of self-verification become part of a way of life binding technology, science, and new sources of identity into a coherent world-image. It is obvious that for the longest period of known history religion has monopolized the traditional formulation and the ritual restoration of faith. It has shrewdly played into man's most child-like needs, not only by offering eternal guarantees for an omniscient power's benevolence (if properly appeased) but also by magic words and significant gestures, soothing sounds and soporific smells — an infant's world. This has led to the interpretation that religion exploits, for the sake of its own political establishment, the most infantile strivings in man. This it undoubtedly does. Yet at the height of its historical function it has played another, corresponding role, namely that of giving concerted expression to adult man's need to provide the young and the weak with a world-image sustaining hope. Here it must not be forgotten that religious world-images have at least contained some recognition (and this is more than radical rationalism could claim until the advent of psychoanalysis) of the abysmal alienations — from the self and from others — which are the human lot. For along with a fund of hope, an inescapable alienation is also bequeathed to life by the first stage, namely, a sense of a threatening separation from the matrix, a possible loss of hope, and the uncertainty whether the "face darkly" will brighten again with recognition and charity.

So much from the wisdom of Erik Erikson. I turn now to a book of the utmost importance in relating psychoanalysis to sociology and anthropology. It treats of the problem of alienation in a way that advances its meaning and its importance for analysis and interpretation of contemporary society and culture. This book is Norman O. Brown's Life Against Death, The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History. I shall follow some of Brown's order of comments but I shall add some of my own as I proceed. If it becomes difficult to disentangle my thoughts from Brown's, so much the better for my discussion since I believe Brown is on the right track.

Being human is a disease in the basic sense that man is the only animal that represses its own instincts in the name of social institutions and cultural regulations. This disease is seen not only in those clinically typed as neurotic or psychotic but is part of the universal conditions of all men. Hence, without fuss or feather about the
social sources of alienation or even about capitalist alienation we can flatly say that conscious man is aboriginally alienated from his instinctual life through repression and that such alienation persists despite the veneer of the ego and the moralizing of the superego. What man originally desires is the satisfaction of his instincts and he achieves this satisfaction socially and culturally by displacement or deflection or transformation of the instincts sometimes even into their opposite to make them palatable for living with others. It was Nietzsche who coined the phrase “the disease called man” but it was Freud who first found out the ingredients of the disease and their manner of expression. Religion, for example, is in psychoanalysis not “the opiate of the people” as it for Marx and Engels, but a substitute-gratification which on its highest western levels involves high symbolic abstraction and even leads on into science. History is the story of the way in which man works through and with his universal neurosis. In thus working through substitute-gratifications (that is, through sublimations) he finally arrives at the high estate he has now reached — modern science — and particularly that part of modern science called psychoanalysis.

Through psychoanalysis we have discovered that work arises from the infantile desire for play and for the manipulation of the reality-world as the ego develops. Marx himself as a young man saw this fact when he considered that work under capitalism is a hindrance to spontaneity. But he made a colossal error by thinking that man wanted to be completely emancipated from it. Liberation from work for a short time permits man to return to it biologically refreshed but it is significant that he returns to it with zest if it is the kind of work he wants to be doing. The true alienation through work occurs when men is doing the kind of work which is out of harmony with his core personality, that is, with his instinctual drives as shaped by society and culture or when he is driven into a type of work contrary to the arrangement of his polymorphously perverse instincts. Thus the comment by Kahler that the history of man is the history of the alienation of man is sheer nonsense; the history of man is the history of the discovery of man and in that discovery no two figures loom larger today than Marx in economics and politics and Freud in psychoanalysis, sociology and anthropology.

Marx in his discussion of a money-economy in Capital arrives at the concept of the alienated consciousness which is rooted in the compulsion to work. And this compulsion takes the form of the glorification of commodities and finally the transformation of man into a commodity in the consciousness of all other men. In psychoanalytic terms what Marx is saying here is that capitalism is anal-sadistic and deprives man of his capacity to be genital-flexible and humane. Thus man is depersonalized by his treatment of other men as impersonalized. Our vaunted rationality is all rationalization built upon the irrationality of the thinginess of man.

In a striking discussion Norman Brown quotes the young Marx seeing the money-complex as derivative from the religious complex but then shying away from the discovery. The quotation from Marx runs as follows:

“If my own activity does not belong to me, if it is an alien compulsive activity, to whom does it belong? To a being other than myself. Who is this being? The gods? Certainly it appears that at the earliest times the main production, as for example
temple-building in Egypt, India, Mexico, belonged to the service of the gods, as the product belonged to them also. But the gods alone were never masters of labor. Just as little was nature. And what a contradiction indeed would there be if, the more man subjects nature to himself through labor, and the more the miracles of the gods become superfluous because of the miracles of industry, man should renounce in favor of these powers the joy of production and the enjoyment of the product. The alien being, to whom labor and the product of labor belongs, in whose service and for whose enjoyment labor and the product of labor stand, can only be man himself. If the product of work does not belong to the worker, but confronts him as an alien power, this is possible only if it belongs to another man outside of the worker.”

Brown's commentary on this passage from Marx is interpretation of a high order. Brown writes:

Marx comes close to recognizing alienated (compulsive) work as an inner psychological necessity. He seems to recognize that if it is an inner psychological necessity, it amounts to the same thing to say that it is a necessity due to the gods; he is aware that the earliest forms of money-capital fit in with the hypothesis of the religious nature of alienated (compulsive) work. But the psychological implications of this line of thought are too bewildering... and Marx withdraws to the position that the primary datum is the domination of man over man. In doing so he contradicts his own formulations on the alienated (compulsive) character of all labor as such, as well as his formulation that private property is to be derived from alienated (compulsive) labor and not vice versa. And, of course, the domination of man over man, which itself has to be explained, particularly by one who seeks to abolish it, is left as an ultimate. The ultimate category is presumably force, the force which appropriates another man's labor.

We are here at one of the ultimate crossroads in social theory. We have seen elsewhere how Freud himself (with his Primal Father), as well as Hegel (with his Master), and Nietzsche (with his Master Race), are, like Marx in this passage, compelled in the last resort to postulate external domination and its assertion by force in order to explain repression. And we have argued that to take this line is to renounce psychological explanation (“force” being substituted for psychology) and to miss the whole point of the riddle: How can there be an animal which represses itself? And to miss the nature of the human disease is also to miss the nature of the cure.

Brown's conclusion is that it is not force but the notion of the sacred which is fundamental to a money-economy which alienates man from his work through mediating it and thus undermining its creativity. What a money-economy does it make money sacred. Indeed, what we like to call the secularization process in contemporary sociology is nothing more than the use of money as the sacred and not the withdrawal of the sacred from mundane life. We have enthroned anality as the God of Capitalism and thus thrown man back onto an infantile stage from which he finds it almost impossible to extricate himself and thus rise up to the genital-flexible mature stage. Lucre we call filthy lucre and in a pithy epigram Brown notes: “All currency is neurotic currency in this sense”. It is neurotic by causing man's eternal recurrence to infantilism rather than to maturity and use. Thus we say “Time is Money”;
"To give is better than to receive" which hides the fact that we are always looking to recieve; through the city we agglomerate men under a money-economy; through money we gain immortality; we play games built upon the concept of money; and finally we develop an excremental civilization to the narcissistic anal stage. Thus is the alienation of man completed psychoanalytically under capitalism.

The fundamental concept in Marx's sociology is oppression of man by man and the necessity for the struggle for man to emancipate himself from his oppression by revolution. But fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis are repression and sublimation of the instincts through substitute-gratifications. Now to me what Marx is really talking about in psychoanalytic terms is oppression of man through repressing his instinctual proclivities for play and spontaneous activity — an idea which fits entirely into the corpus of truly psychoanalytic thinking. The repression of spontaneity through oppression of ego-expression through work is the lynch-pin of Marxism and psychoanalysis. But it is not capitalism that has caused all of this alienation to occur; rather has what I would call social capitalism (or what is usually called the welfare state) made them clear to us. Formerly classes were much more alienated from each other than they are today, competition was not even possible under feudalism and still earlier forms of economy and politics, free labor is a phenomenon which begins in earnest only in the 19th century, mass society is in some part due to the lengthening of human life which is a good and not an evil, the uprising of the colored peoples (unappealing as it sometimes appears in its ruthlessness) is progress out of exploitation, and oedipal hostility of youth to elders is a good thing for children to be able to express and can even help to keep parents young.

In both the Marxist sense and the psychoanalytic sense we are less alienated from each other and from ourselves, less reified than ever before, precisely because Marxism and psychoanalysis have permitted us to see the foundations of alienation inherent in man and aggravated by an industrial, impersonalized capitalistic society. The way out of these aggravated forms of alienation is through struggle against the institutions which keep them alive and through education in the fundamental principles of psychoanalysis, the importance of early childhood training upon character-formation, and the self-knowledge which comes from recognition of our weaknesses — education which has hardly begun except verbosely. But to hold that aboriginal, primitive alienation can be completely overcome is the sheerest of nonsense. Man is an alien to himself because he is instinctual man underneath all his civilized trappings; capitalist man is an alien to himself because that is the emotional price he pays for the high material standard of life he is capable of under modern industrialism and mass society. Alienation is part and parcel of the human condition and its modern forms only an historical curiosity.

Furthermore, I would caution against the very broad use of the concept of alienation to cover over philosophical problems which will always be with us, in one form or another. To say, as Nisbet does, that it is a perspective is all very well provided we do not lose our perspective as to what it consists of. And to make it a cliché such as I think it has become is to lose the power of historical emancipation from it through sloughing off commodityworship as one of its bases and also to lose the power to see man clearly as an animal that represses itself and that yet through recognition of
such repression can reach heights of rationality never before attained. Alienation is so revolutionary a concept that if we go on to overthrow the present forms it is taking we shall find ourselves later dissatisfied with the new forms it will take. Dissatisfaction with alienation is the lot of educated, intelligent, sophisticated modern man and such dissatisfaction is not an evil but part of that struggle for change and progress towards making man more humane. We shall never succeed completely in this venture; Hegel was right in seeing man as always in process of approximating his ideals. He who is not alienated in some area and to some degree is not human and he who does not recognize the psychic foundations and social conditions which make this alienation inevitable will never get on the way to overcoming it. Moses was alienated, Jesus was alienated, Augustine was alienated, Aquinas was alienated, Leonardo da Vinci was alienated, Comte was alienated, Marx was alienated, Freud was alienated. But their triumphs are the triumphs of expressing their alienation as the moving forces for uncovering ways in which to cope with it.