

Philosophy of Alienation in Melvin Seeman's Vision

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Abstract

This study examines Melvin Seeman's vision of the philosophy of alienation with Karl Marx's view, who see capitalism as a force that degrades humanity. Seeman investigates alienation in a broader range of social settings, but not limited to the workplace, university, school, home, and other locations, in contrast to Karl Marx and other Marxian academics who have traditionally illuminated workplace alienation through economic and social variables. Melvin Seeman identified six distinct features or interpretations of alienation: feelings of powerlessness, normlessness, social isolation, cultural estrangement, and self-estrangement. This study aims to discuss the opinions on verity. A number of scholars have linked the idea of alienation to economics, while others have linked it to a decline in political influence. Seeman was one of them. In his essay (1959) "On the Meaning of Alienation," he categorized six different interpretations of the term: a lack of control over one's own life, a lack of purpose, a lack of social connection, a lack of cultural affinity, and a sense of being apart from one's own culture. The study's main goal is to offer a critical understanding of alienation in all its forms, causes, and demoralizing effects.

Keywords: alienation, self-alienation, Seeman, adaptations, Isolation

فلسفة الاغتراب في رؤية ملفين سيمان

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خلاصة

تتناول هذه الدراسة رؤية ملفين سيمان لفلسفة الاغتراب مع وجهة نظر كارل ماركس الذي يرى في الرأسمالية قوة تحط من قدر الإنسانية. يدرس سيمان الاغتراب في نطاق أوسع من البيئات الاجتماعية، على سبيل المثال لا الحصر في مكان العمل والجامعة والمدرسة والمنزل وغيرها من المواقع، على عكس كارل ماركس وغيره من الأكاديميين الماركسيين الذين سلطوا الضوء تقليدياً على الاغتراب في مكان العمل من خلال المتغيرات الاقتصادية والاجتماعية. حدد ملفين سيمان ستة سمات أو تفسيرات مميزة للاغتراب: الشعور بالعجز، وانعدام المعايير، والعزلة الاجتماعية، والاضطراب الثقافي، والاضطراب الذاتي. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى مناقشة الآراء حول الصدق. وقد ربط عدد من العلماء فكرة الاغتراب بالاقتصاد، بينما ربطها آخرون بتراجع النفوذ السياسي. كان سيمان واحداً منهم. في مقالته (1959) "حول معنى الاغتراب"، صنف ستة تفسيرات مختلفة للمصطلح: عدم سيطرة الفرد على حياته الخاصة، وانعدام الهدف، وانعدام التواصل الاجتماعي، والافتقار إلى التقارب الثقافي، والافتقار إلى الهدف. الشعور بالابتعاد عن ثقافته الخاصة. الهدف الرئيسي للدراسة هو تقديم فهم نقدي للاغتراب بجميع أشكاله وأسبابه وآثاره المحبطة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاغتراب، اغتراب الذات، السيمان، التكيفات، العزلة

Introduction

Melvin Seeman and other empirically-oriented sociologists provide a more eclectic descriptive stance, while Marxist-oriented sociologists portray capitalism as a demeaning force for human species. The concept is defined differently in the sociological literature. Karl Marx and other Marxian scholars traditionally shed light on workers' alienation in the workplace in reference to economic and social variables; however, subsequent scholars like Seeman examine alienation in a wider variety of social contexts, but not limited to the workplace, university, school, home, and other places.

To understand alienation through a Marxist lens, one must place it within the broader social and economic framework of capitalism. In light of this, Marxist-oriented thinkers argue that liberating alienated workers requires a shift away from capitalism and toward a new social order. They brightness over gender, age, racial, and ethnic marginalization practices as well as other types of exclusion that have nothing to do with economic output. Regarding Seeman and others more empirically oriented sociologists, by contrast, alienation in the workplace seems to despite the fact that they have extended the study of contemporary alienation to include additional social contexts, remain a major area of scientific interest. Because their major focus is on discovering patterns in human behavior, whether at the individual or societal level, they study these patterns in relation to larger socioeconomic systems.

Although these two schools of thought diverge in their specific focuses, they do share the view that alienation is problematic on both an individual and societal level. To rephrase, it is essential for people to stay away from alienation because it has detrimental effects on both them and their relationships.

The greater flexibility of modern society has been proven in numerous studies to have the effect of isolating individuals from one another. According to Martin's "Self-alienation and the loss of leisure," modern man has gained a great deal of his most recent and ultimate freedom—free time—thanks to the fast development of technology and the increase in longevity. Humans are emotionally and psychologically unprepared for the sudden and severe change, thus they are temporarily maladapted as a result. Numerous indicators in both ordinary life and psychiatric practice point to self-alienation as the most prevalent maladaptive behavior, according to Martin's writings. Antisocial behavior was not created by humans.

During times of social and personal disasters, he has relied on it for a long time. It has recently come to light as a result of man's struggle to adjust to tremendous cultural shifts. Disconnection from one's own identity is a sign and symptom of the emotional unreadiness for leisure time, which in turn leads to its elimination from one's life (156).

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2- Seeman's Understanding for Alienation Concept

"Alienation" means "a transfer, surrender" or "separation" in Latin, which is a loanword from the English word "alienation" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015). From the Latin verb alienate, which means "to transfer (goods, property) to another, estrange, remove or cause a separation to occur," comes the term alien. In the social sciences, the phrase is described as "the state of feeling estranged or separated from one's milieu, work, products of work or self" (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013). A common phrase, "alienation" "is used to refer both to a personal psychological state and a type of social relationship" (Roberts 346), which makes the concept difficult to pin down and makes it seem imprecise.

Karl Marx's Economic and Philosophical Manuscript, published in 1932, provided the theoretical groundwork for comprehending the issue of social alienation. Marx's thesis on alienation is that under a capitalist system, the worker ceases to exist; he becomes cut off from his humanity, his sense of self, and the outside world. Being a part of a social class and residing in a capitalist society. (Marx, 398). Simply said, alienation is not seen as an experience but as an objective fact according to Marx's theory of alienation, which focuses on alienated labor under capitalism person goes through many forms of estrangement due to.

Seeman 1959 in his article "On the Meaning of Alienation" in the American Sociological introduce clear explanation about alienation idea. Seeman "spoke of the task as being to produce a specific and unique social indicator (rather than global indicators) of the individual's feelings of happiness or despair, well-being or discontent, futility or optimism" (Ludz 21).

To offer "a better understanding" about alienation idea from "a socio-psychological perspective," Seeman proposes six different kinds of alienation to examine: social isolation, powerlessness, normlessness, self-estrangement, meaninglessness and cultural estrangement "Weldon's taxonomy would challenge the longstanding conceptualization of alienation as a general: unidimensional phenomenon" (1), according to Warren Ten Houten's argument the analytical model has more than one dimension. These dimensions are not independent because we've divided the notion into six groups doesn't mean we can't find it in a single person. It's quite probable that more than one, or even all six of these dimensions can coexist in a single human.

- **Powerlessness:**

It is the first alternate meaning of alienation. In the first it emerged in Marx's analysis of the working class in capitalist society, in which worker is alienated to the degree that the ruling capitalists seize their privilege and

decision-making power. Melvin Seeman notes in "On the Meaning of Alienation" that Karl Marx initially brought up this "phenomenon" when he spoke about it "in terms of lack of control" (784). Seeman defines it as "the expectation or probability held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements sought in relation to society" (784-85), labeling it as a sort of alienation.

Regardless of the fact that the idea inherently. Comprises three primary assumptions, namely, an inability to resolve issues, an incapacity to influence outcomes, and a feeling of powerlessness; as a result, it appears to be relevant to a great many circumstances and events; however, Seeman argues that its implications should be limited to events pertaining to society and politics alone. He blatantly says, "I would limit the applicability of the concept of expectancies that have to do with the individual's sense of influence over socio-political events" (786) when he discusses this branch of alienation.

In other words, Seeman centers his research on the societal factors that cause these forms of estrangement and the ways in which they manifest behaviorally. Actually, the most common interpretation in contemporary literature is that of alienation as a state of Powerlessness. "The expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements, he seeks" (784). Therefore, this form of alienation is described by Seeman in "On the Meaning of Alienation" (784).

By removing the primary component of alienation, the idea of "powerlessness" blatantly breaks with the Marxian tradition. Furthermore, this definition of helplessness fails to account for the dissatisfaction that may arise when a person's imagined level of control does not match his actual level of control. It doesn't take the person's perceived worth of the control into consideration.

Therefore, according to Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, "the perception that one's own action will not significantly affect an outcome; a perceived lack of control over a current situation or immediate happening" (386) is the definition of powerlessness. Those who are alienated often feel helpless and unable to take charge of their lives, which contributes to their feelings of helplessness. This is why, according to Rahel Jaeggi, these social outcasts "do not take any decisions and actions and, therefore, do not act as agents in their lives, but rather follow developments that are offered to them" (474). Taken together, feelings of powerlessness can be described as an incapacity to influence or prevent one's immediate environment and the outcomes it brings. A lack of control can lead to discontent and irritation since it makes it hard for people to make and act on their own free choices.

• **Meaninglessness**

A second dimension of the alienation may be outlined under the idea of meaninglessness. Seeman asserts that meaninglessness results "when the

individual is unclear as to what he ought to believe—when the individual's minimal standards for clarity in decision-making are not met"(786). This type of alienation means the individual's sense of understanding the events in which he is engaged it. We may speak of high alienation. The individual's focus among alternative beliefs has low "confidence limits": he cannot envisage with confidence the impacts of acting on a given belief.

One might operationalize this feature of alienation by concentrating upon the fact that it is categorized by a low expectancy that acceptable predictions about future outcomes of behavior can be completed. Simply, where the first sense of alienation discusses the sensed ability to control outcomes, this second sense states essentially the sensed ability to predict behavioral results. This form of alienation is reasonably independent of the first, for under some conditions, expectancies for personal control of events may not correspond with the understanding of these events, as in the popular interpretation of the alienation of the intellectual.

- **Normlessness**

The third variant of the alienation theme is originated by Durkheim's description of "anomie," and stands for a condition of normlessness. In traditional usage, anomie signifies a situation in which the social norms regulating individual conduct are no longer effective as rules for behavior. As mentioned above, Merton accentuates this kind of rulelessness in his analysis of the importance of the "sincerity" theme. The importance of this aspect reveals a social disorder "anomie" is the sociological term-in which common principles have been plunged in the welter of private interests looking for satisfaction by effectively any means which are active.

In another section of the influential book "Social Structure and Anomie," Merton discusses the "adaptations" (different forms of conformity and deviance) that might emerge when the constraining effect of collective norms is diminished. Merton discusses this issue in Social Theory and Social Structure. It occurs when culturally established goals do not align with the tools that are available to achieve them. His argument is that in this kind of setting, "The technically most effective procedure, whether culturally legitimate or not, becomes typically preferred to institutionally prescribed conduct" (189), which leads to a state of normlessness or anomie.

Merton's comments on this kind of anomic situation intend to renew the discussion of the expectancy creates developed above the idea of meaninglessness and the idea of powerlessness. For Merton notices, first, that the anomic situation results in low predictability in behavior, and second, that the anomic situation may well go with the belief in luck.

It is clear that the general idea of anomie is both a central part of the alienation literature and that it bears upon our expectancy views. Unfortunately, the idea of normlessness has been prolonged to contain an extensive variety of both social conditions and psychic states: personal inefficiency, cultural

collapse, mutual distrust, and so on. Following Merton's lead, the anomic state, from the individual view, may be described "On the Meaning of Alienation", as one in which there is a "high expectancy that socially unapproved behaviors are required to achieve given goals"(788). This third meaning of alienation does not rely on the previous two. Expecting to achieve one's goals using unlawful means is unrelated to the expectation that one's actions would determine one's success or failure. Moreover, it denotes the state of mind that a person enters when they are unable to find significance in the activities in which they participate.

3- Alienation and Isolation are Two Faces for the Same Coin

Alienation means being alone. In this sense, the intellectual is central; nevertheless, this variation denotes the intellectual's separation from popular cultural norms, as he or she has grown apart from his or her society and the culture it represents. This usage clearly does not demonstrate social isolation in the sense of a lack of "social adjustment" - of the comfort, security, or intensity of one's interpersonal relationships. In terms of reward values, this kind of alienation might be helpfully described: Someone who, like the intellectual, "assigns a low reward value to goals or beliefs that are typically highly valued in the given society" (Seeman 789), is seen to be isolated and estranged.

Social isolation is described by Seeman in "Alienation and Engagement" as "the individual's low expectancy for social inclusion and social acceptance, expressed typically in feelings of loneliness or rejection or repudiation." People who identify as "strangers" or "minority members" are more likely to experience this type of isolation, which is "usually accompanied by loneliness" (492). But it's important to note that being lonely and not having any friends are two different things. These are two distinct ideas that might (but probably won't) have some connection.

Clearly, the "isolation" form of alienation means something distinct from the three variants mentioned above. But these various interpretations can be useful when combined for a more thorough examination of a particular situation. To illustrate how people may adjust when ends do not justify methods, Merton employs the terms "normlessness" and "isolation" in his "Social Structure and Anomie" article. In his book *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Merton mentions one of these adaptations—the "innovator"—as an example of normlessness and alienation, where the person uses socially unacceptable methods to achieve their aims. But another adjustment pattern—that of "rebellion"—more carefully approaches what have been called "isolation." "This adaptation [rebellion] leads men outside the environing social structure to envisage and seek to bring into being new, that is to say, a greatly modified, social structure. It presupposes alienation from reigning goals and standards"(209).

These appear to be seen as obviously subjective. It is just as well that the arbitrary be nothing since it is unable to demand loyalty or claim legitimacy on its own. It would appear that organized revolt in our society is trying to proclaim

a new social order in which success is defined differently and where there is a clearer correlation between work and pay.

Lastly, it's important to note that those who don't have many social connections do not believe in the normative system. The ideals they hold differ from the prevailing ones in society and from what most people share. Their individual wants and needs go unfulfilled, and they are cut off from the outside world in terms of communication. When it comes to literature, the "outsider" is the "perfect personification of that term" (46), says Burgert Adriaan Senekal.

The final variant in the literature is alienation in the sense of self-estrangement. The most appropriate elaboration of this form of alienation is found in *The Sane Society*, Fromm says that alienation is a mode of capability in which the individual finds himself as an alien. He has become estranged from himself (117). Two things stand out about the widely held belief in alienation as self-estrangement. The first is that it's not often easy to tell which of the five meanings of the practice is at work when there is no overlap (though this is far from always the case). Unlike "alienation from popular culture," for instance, the term "alienation from the self" is merely a metaphor. It would appear that the individual is being asked to conform to an idealized version of human condition. Example: "The human way of acquiring would be to make an effort qualitatively commensurate with what I acquire..." This is blatantly shown in Fromm's portrayal of production and consumption excesses in capitalist society in *The Sane Society*. Our insatiable quest for material goods, however, is unrelated to what people actually need (128-130). In the end, being self-alienated reveals that one is insecure, conformist, and prone to appearances, all of which are traits that one may ideally cultivate if societal conditions were different. This understanding of alienation is consistent with Riesman's research on other-direction; the key is for the child to realize "that nothing in his character, no possession he owns, no inheritance of name or talent, no work he has done, is valued for itself, but only for its effect on others" (48).

Second, as Riesman points out, the concept of self-alienation raises some serious concerns. Evidently, this concept gives rise to some human ideal, either overt or covert. And I've learned that such analogies between contemporary man and an idealized human situation are nothing more than rhetorical demands to nature—important rhetoric for some ends, but ultimately lacking in value when it strives to avoid analysis.

Increasing the aspect of self-alienation which is generally regarded as the lack of intrinsic meaning or pride in work, a loss which Marx and others have described as an essential part of modern alienation. This concept of the loss of essentially meaningful fulfillments is exemplified in a number of ways in current discussions of alienation.

Despite the difficulty of establishing this definition of alienation, the core concept was present in the rhetoric of self-estrangement: the possibility of

recasting the idea of the inherently meaningful process into terms more amenable to social learning. The term A possible definition of "alienation" is "the degree to dependence of the given behavior upon anticipated future rewards" (Seeman790), suggesting that the advantages of the activity are unconnected to it. A self-estranged person acts in ways like a worker who is just concerned with his paycheck, a housewife who cooks merely to ensure that there is food for the family, or an other-directed person who works "only for its effect on others" (at different levels, again). At the core of what has been called self-estrangement is the incapacity to discover engaging activities that are personally rewarding and satisfying.

Conclusion :

Summing up the key point, Attempts at resolving these five forms of alienation (especially with regard to the concept of "self-estrangement" and the concept of "meaninglessness") are glaringly unclear and fraught with significant difficulty. But we must first identify the many definitions of alienation and then develop more practical understandings of each of these definitions. The terminology utilized, which is centered around expectations and rewards, could appear weird, if not completely wrong, at first glance. To rephrase, the language is actually more conventional than it first appears. Having said that, it seems like expectations, conduct, and values are all interdependent forms. The current definition of alienation is based on the idea that emphasizes three main features: behavior, reward value, and expectation. Maybe when we look more closely, the reader will simply see the initial perplexity that comes with turning a sentimentally understood concept into a secular inquiry. If a person's personality doesn't mesh well with the group dynamics in which he finds himself, we might say that alienation has taken place.

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