

ALIENATIONAL NORMLESSNESS, ISOLATION, AND ESTRANGEMENT: A NEO-THOMISTIC APPROACH

(Continued article)

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Abstract

Most modern research in social alienation was based upon the factors identified by Seeman (1959, 1967, 1971, 1975, and 1983) as powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, estrangement, and cultural estrangement. Postmodernism reevaluated and redefined the factors within the postmodern paradigm. It was observed neither set of definitions included a spiritual component. It was proposed a redefinition of the *self*, as *individual* and *personality*, within the Neo-Thomist position of Jacques Maritain could assist researchers of social alienation in a deeper understanding of the alienational factors of normlessness, isolation, and estrangement.

KEYWORDS: alienation, social alienation, normlessness, isolation, estrangement, Maritain, Aquinas

Normlessness

Normlessness was defined as the “third variant of the alienation theme, ... derived from Durkheim’s description of ‘anomie’ and refers to . . . a situation in which the social norms have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behavior” (Seeman, 1959, p. 787).

The sociological debate regarding the nature of norms was substantial, and several theories emerged (Collins, 1981; Coleman, 1990; Bicchieri, 2006). The Functionalist position attributed the existence of norms to social consensus and unity. Conflict theory assigned the existence of norms as the social means of resolving the repetition of social conflict. Norms, within the Control Theory paradigm, placed an emphasis on the interaction between the strength of social rules and individual choice (Hirschi, 1969; 2002). Game Theory defined norms as an acquired behavior designed to maximize reciprocity with a minimum of misperception (Axelrod, 1984; Bicchieri, 2006; Bicchieri & Xiao, 2009). Research combining equity theory and game theory proposed social norms as a means of fair, or equitable, exchange. Formal and informal, the complex systems of social norms were communally accepted unwritten conventions governing human social behavior through incentives, bargaining, and penalties (Bicchieri, 2006; Markey, 2009; Fehr, Fischbacher &

Gächter, 2002). Despite the theories regarding the definition and nature of norms, the questions of how norms arose and how socially detrimental norms could be identified and extinguished were recognized as problematic (Bicchieri & Muldoon, 2011). The relationship between norms and law, largely the domain of sociologists, became a subject of study among legal theorists; indeed, the relationship was of particular interest among legal scholars concerned with rational choice models used in microeconomics (Bandes, 1999; Ellickson, 1998; Posner, 2002). That humans were rational creatures and will act rationally to obtain a goal was fundamental to the concept of rational choice. The question emerged: what is the rationale behind the rational act?

Nomos (νόμος: *law*) and *phusis* (φύσις: *being* or *nature*), compatible terms among early Greek philosophers became incompatible by the fifth century, and were identified as exclusive and opposed (Guthrie, 2003). *Nomos*, recognized as common, conventional human belief was subject to change; however, *phusis* was a constant and universally natural force, later identified with Natural Law, which was an ordered and purposeful causation designed to bring the *kosmos* to its purpose and perfection in love (Scott, 2002). The question of how things are perceived by humans and thus acted upon, and what they actually are apart from human perception and subsequent action was a problem addressed by the ancient Greek philosophers and later by St. Thomas Aquinas (e.g., Taylor, 2007).

Aquinas observed the four types of law as the eternal, the natural, the human, and the divine.

Eternal law (*lex aeterna*) was recognized as God's mind as seen by God (Aquinas 1947, 1, 2, q. 91, a. 1). Man's knowledge of the *lex aeterna* is partial. Aquinas (1947) observed,

There is in us the knowledge of certain general principles, but not proper knowledge of each single truth, such as that contained in the Divine Wisdom; so too, on the part of the practical reason, man has a natural participation of the eternal law, according to certain general principles, but not as regards the particular determinations of individual cases, which, are, however, contained in the eternal law (1, 2, q. 91, a. 3)

Natural law (*lex naturalis*) was identified as where

all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as, namely, from its being imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends. Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others. Wherefore it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end: and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law (Aquinas, 1947, 1, 2, q 91, a 2).

Directed by absolute causes to specific ends which are naturally sought, God's creatures, according to type, attempt to attain the predetermined purpose. From Natural Law, human law "was given to them [humans] not arbitrarily, but for a purpose" (Schall, 1998, p. 83). Man's innate habit to know reasonable action [*"habet naturalem inclinationem"* (Aquinas 1947, 1.2, q. 91, a. 2)] in accord with Natural Law, termed *synderesis* by Aquinas, was a "'deep' conscience, by contrast with *conscientia* or 'surface' conscience" (Budziszewski, III, 3). *Synderesis*, equated with St. Paul's statements in II Corinthians 3:2, Romans 1:20, and Romans 2:14-15, drew attention to the human detection of that which was good and evil (e. g., Greene, 1991).

Divine law (*lex divina*) was God's will, written in the Scriptures, for the purpose of directing humans to attain eternal beatitude. *Lex divina* was unable to be in discord with the *lex aeterna* for the reason that it was God's will expressed to and for humans, nor could it be confused with *lex naturalis*, which was directed to human purposeful ends and behavior on Earth. *Lex aeterna*, *lex naturalis*, and *lex divina* are constant, universal laws always in accord.

Human laws (*lex humana*), developed by human reason within a given historical and cultural context for the welfare of the community, were based upon Natural Law (Aquinas, 1947, 1.2, q. 91, a. 3). The most basic natural law for man, of acting reasonably, was a distinguishing feature of man over the rest of God's creatures (Schall, 1998). Acting with reason provided humans with moral autonomy and responsibility, a "freedom to accept or reject his own nature, but only on the condition that he can give a reason for his choice; he never escapes this latter condition" (Schall, 1998, p. 82). The ability to rationalize the reason for an action, and determining whether an action was reasonable, implied a standard of measure; therefore, the human's actions were judged by *lex natura*, corresponding to the *lex aeterna*, in which the human's purposeful end is defined. As Maritain (1942b) noted,

Cela veut dire qu'il y a, en vertu même de la nature humaine, un ordre ou une disposition que la raison humaine peut découvrir et selon laquelle la volonté humaine doit agir pour s'accorder aux fins nécessaires de l'être humain. La loi non écrite ou le droit naturel n'est pas autre chose que cela. (pp. 79-80).

Recognizing the human ability, as a rational being, to propose human reason as the measure of the law, Maritain observed that metaphysics was an imperative element of moral understanding (Maritain, 1995; Schall, 1998). The knowledge of what one *ought to do* engaged a "self-reflective use of his reason" and the use of a standard for behavior (Schall, 1998, p. 84). Additionally, the problem of natural rights placed an emphasis on what is owed by others instead of what is owed to others. As Schall (1998) stated,

Right conduct is stated in terms of what one ought or ought not to do in various situations and relationships. Clearly, if everyone has a duty not to murder me, and

everyone obeys the law expressing this duty, I will not in fact be murdered. I will not be safe because I have a 'right' to life but because everyone else has and observes a duty to recognize what I am (p. 85).

Finally, Maritain realized the modern approach to law, as rights, would cause difficulty because human will would become the foundation for law. "In this view, rights are not objective, but subjective. They are rooted not in nature, but in will" (Schall, 1998, p. 85). In this scenario, the strongest will would decide the law. There would be no right or wrong, and on this point Maritain called for a "revolution" to restore human rights and dignity. "C'est une sorte de révolution intellectuelle et morale qui nous est demandée, pour rétablir dans une philosophie vraie notre foi en la dignité de l'homme" (Maritain, 1942b, p. 87). Various *lex humana* may be found to be unjust and "conducive, not to the common good, but rather to his own cupidity or vainglory" (Aquinas, 1947, 1, 2, Q 96 a 4). Such laws would be at variance with the *lex natura*, and, therefore, with the *lex divina* and *lex aeterna*. One would not be obliged to obey them except to avoid social disorder; "if a law does not bind morally, it does not bind legally" (Pope, 2002, p. 181).

Rhonheimer (1998, 2008) proposed Aquinas did not direct attention as much to the teleological aspect of human laws as towards the integration of body and spirit reality- a point reinforced by Maritain's *Personalism*. Considering Maritain's approach to the nature of being, the individual's freedom of choice to act in accord with law through *synderesis* guided reason was not an end in itself but an extension of the will longing to find a fuller expression in the other-directed ought of law as well as to attain its purposeful end (Aquinas, 1947; Maritain, 1942a, 1945, 2003). When laws obstructed the moral actions of the human to fulfill recognized obligations in accord with the *lex aeterna*, *lex divina*, and *lex natura*, those laws dismissed the dignity and rights of the human person. Where such laws existed, humans were obligated to fulfill their destiny nonetheless. Maritain (1942b) noted,

Si l'homme est moralement obligé aux choses nécessaires à l'accomplissement de sa destinée, c'est qu'il a le droit d'accomplir sa destinée ; et s'il a le droit d'accomplir sa destinée, il a droit aux choses nécessaires pour cela. La notion de droit est même plus profonde que celle d'obligation morale, car Dieu a un droit souverain sur les créatures et il n'a pas d'obligation morale envers elles (encore qu'il se doive à lui-même de leur donner ce qui est requis par leur nature) (p. 85).

Maritain's insistence on the dignity of the human person, individual and personality, in relation to Natural Rights was constructed upon the principle that the rights were the result of the person's relationship with "sacred things, and God, rather than being conferred upon the person by the community or mediated by the community" (Klassen as cited in Aguiar & Auer, 2009, p. 167)

While not all norms were laws, laws were codified norms. Recent attempts at defining social norms revealed a nebulous characterization directing researchers instead to the conditions where norms were obeyed (Bicchieri & Muldoon, 2011). This was an attempt to define norms not by essence, but by function and purpose. Gilbert (2002) suggested norms are divided into *actual* and *prescribed* patterns of actions. In the former, specific patterns of behavior were done with regularity among a population. In the latter, patterns of behavior were expected by the population as “the thing to do” (Gilbert, 2002, para. 1). *Prescriptive* norms were commonly coupled with two types of expectations: *predictive* (what will be done) and *deontic* (what ought to be done). Questions arose. First, if norms were the expectation of the thing to do, how was the thing to do initially known? Second, if norms could be subject to change what initiated change? Third, if deontic norms implied what ought to be done, how is the ought initially identified? The human sense of what is fair, right, and good was within man’s being. Humans had a natural propensity towards social order and predictable outcomes (Schall, 1998; Maritain, 1995). Maritain (1951) argued

Human reason does not discover the regulations of natural law in an abstract and theoretical manner, as a series of geometrical theorems. Nay more, it does not discover them through the conceptual exercise of the intellect, or by way of rational knowledge. I think that Thomas Aquinas’ teaching, here, should be understood in a much deeper and more precise fashion than is usual. When he says that human reason discovers the regulations of natural law through the guidance of the *inclinations* of human nature, he means that the very mode or manner in which human reason knows natural law is not rational knowledge, but knowledge *through inclination* (p. 91).

Norms, like laws, were based upon an accepted truth; otherwise, the norms and laws would not exist. “Without trust in truth, there is no human effectiveness” (Maritain, 1971, p. 13). Society was natural for humans- the result of reason and freedom; however, just as one would be subordinate to the social laws for the common good, one would be the recipient of that good as well (Maritain, 1971).

Neal and Collas (2002) defined normlessness as no longer the lack of identified viable social norms, but the result of circumstances relating to the “complexity and conflict in which individuals become unclear about the composition and enforcement of social norms. Sudden and abrupt changes occur in life conditions, and the norms that usually operate may no longer seem adequate as guidelines for conduct” (p. 122). Such a definition, or similar definitions of normlessness, identified a symptom of the problem, but failed to identify the underlying causes of how one became “unclear” and how one determined the norms were “no longer adequate guidelines for conduct”. Maritain noted the human is an *individual* of the society, but is a *person* with a purpose. The nature of the human, from the Thomistic perspective of Maritain, as

individual and personality extended the concept of normlessness beyond a social problem and into a spiritual problem as well. In addition, such an understanding of normlessness as related to *anomie* (ανομία: without law), a term with considerable sociological usage, could be apropos (Goode, 2008; Mestrovic & Lorenzo, 2008; Puffer, 2009; Zhao & Cao, 2010; Skiba, Smith, & Marshall, 2009). Durkheim's concept of anomie recognized two social structures: mechanic and organic solidarity. The substantial unity in mechanic societies was based upon shared beliefs, customs, religion, and values. As societies become organic, a division of labor resulted, reducing the collective conscience, increased Individualism, and lost shared values. The relationship of the human, as person and individual, and society was essential to understanding Maritain's neo-Thomist approach. Maritain discarded individualism that would entirely "subordinate the common good to individual freedoms"; likewise, he rejected "any form of statism or of collectivism which would sacrifice the human person to social imperatives" (Allard, 1982, p. 25). As an individual coexisting with fellow individuals for the social common good, the human was subordinated to the good of the group with the mutual understanding that each was also a person with a purpose (Maritain, 1970). As utopian as it may appear, Maritain's point was when a society rejects the spiritual element of the human it denigrated the fullness of what it meant to be human. Such a society was self-destructive (Maritain in Anshen, 1942). As Maritain (1995) stated, "what we need is not truths that serve us but a truth we may serve. For that truth is the food of the spirit. And, for the better part of ourselves, we are spirit" (p. 4).

Isolation

Not all social isolation must be conceived negatively. It was suggested positive social isolation, or solitude, could provide an opportunity for spiritual reflection and change in the self-concept without social distractions. In some cases, isolated individuals seek out other experiencing similar feelings of isolation (e.g., Brooks, Hughes, & Brooks, 2008; Long & Averill, 2003). Dąbrowski's (1964, 1967) Theory of Positive Disintegration suggested angst and psychological anxiety could result in personality growth, the result of which was compared to an opportunity for increased spiritual awareness (e.g. Mendaglio, 2008). Negative social isolation, Kupers (2008) observed, could have negative effects including increased anti-social behaviors. Social beings finding satisfaction in social interactions (Biordi, 1995), negative isolation was a component of alienation. Isolation was experienced by "those who . . . assign low reward values to goals or beliefs that are typically highly valued in the given society" (Seeman, 1959, pp. 788–789). As Cacioppo (2008) noted, "loneliness diminishes the feeling of reward we get from interacting with other people" (p. 217). Zielinski and Hoy's (1983) research regarding isolation within the context of alienation examined the objective and subjective definitions of alienation, and noted a relationship between objective isolation and subjective alienation. Brooks, Hughes, and Brooks (2008) repeated Seeman's (1959) observation that isolation was not a physical

separation but an emotional experience, “where one can feel isolated in the middle of a crowd, if they do not authentically share the group’s cultural values, beliefs, and/or norms” (p. 48). While communication was a means of contravening the barriers of isolation, the lack of effective communication in decision-making brought the possibility of alienation. Eriksson-Zetterquist, Lindberg, and Styhre (2009) cautioned that the use of technology created a layered bureaucracy that promoted a distancing between individuals at work. Hair, Renaud, and Ramsay (2007) provided an illustration of technologically induced alienation, noting the increased use of e-mail among various layers of a bureaucracy created amplified stress and distancing. Isolation could be caused by individual choice or by external social factors. The former could be positive; the latter could be negative.

The human desire to live in the community and actively seek a social existence promoted personal growth and perfections and contributed to the greater social wellbeing (Maritain, 1942b). Society provided the person with the indispensable environment necessary for the improvement of the human’s life (Maritain, 1947). How the human related to society prompted a multifaceted problem in social philosophy for Maritain, who noted that it “gives rise to the conflict of individualism and personality” (Maritain as cited in Allard, 1982, p. 25). “An individual’s self esteem and sense of purpose in life reflect the individual’s perceived intimate, relational and collective connectedness” (Cacioppo, Hawkey, Rickett & Masi, 2005, p. 153).

If social isolation was intended in the positive sense, it was possible that the *person* was selecting isolation to facilitate a personal evaluation of the social norms and the efficacy of the individual’s role. Aquinas proposed such alienation as a condition prior to an experience of God ecstasy (as reported by Ludz in Geyer & Schweitzer, 1981). If the isolation was in the positive sense, then it could be the result of a personally induced phenomenon in which the human was unable to equate the significance of the highly valued goals, beliefs, or rewards of the society to the fulfillment of the personality aspect of the being through the social actions of the individual. If the isolation was in the negative sense, then it could be the result of a socially induced phenomenon in which the human was unable to equate the significance of the highly valued goals, beliefs, or rewards of the society to the fulfillment of the personality aspect of the being through the social actions of the individual.

Estrangement

Estrangement was defined as the perception of the self as an alien instrument of another, and “the loss of intrinsic meaning or pride in work...One way to state such a meaning is to see alienation as the degree of dependence of the given behavior upon anticipated future rewards, that is, upon rewards that lie outside the activity itself” (Seeman, 1959, p. 790). In addition, estrangement was the lack of an “intrinsically rewarding activity” (Seeman, 1967, p. 285). While Seeman (1971) admitted the term was vague, the operational continued to be used in alienational

research (e.g. Dworkin, 2009; Rayce, Holstein, & Kreiner, 2009; Yilmaz & Sarpkaya, 2009). Blauner (1964) opined that any work in which the individual was unable to fully express the “unique abilities, potentialities, or personality” could contribute to self-estrangement (p. 26). Self-estrangement was not limited to being a dimension of alienation, but was the result (Faunce, 1968; McKinlay & Marceau, 2011).

Recent theories concerning the definition of the self emerged; however, all agreed that an individual’s self-concept was comprised of numerous self-perceptions that were acquired throughout life (e.g., Reinecke, 1993). Four schools developed regarding self concept: the Pragmatic, Dramatic, Humanistic, Postmodern (Doyle, 2005). The Pragmatic view position maintained that the human self-concept was the result of the sum total of the many parts in which humans participated in life. The self-concept was dependent upon which role was being played at any given time, and the role changed each moment. The self-concept was dependent upon the roles others played as well, as humans communicated through the symbols of language (e.g., Campbell, 1995; Elliott; 2001; Mead, 1934). Humans judged actions and formed opinions about the self through the responses of others (e.g., Gergen, 1993; Mead, 1934). Therefore, the self-concept was socially determined. The self concept was created in childhood with the recognition of being as separate from others. As Giddens (1991) observed, “to be is to have ontological awareness” (p. 48) Not to be confused with self-identity, but a self awareness that created reference points in others, Giddens (1991) observed the connection to Heidegger’s *Dasein* and Tillich’s ‘existential awareness of non-being’ which prompted humans to realize mortality and the relationship between existence and non-existence. Despite the problem of irremediable solipsism, which Wittgenstein resolved through the argument that language promoted the creation of subjectivity through intersubjectivity, one gained trust and faith through the actions of others (Giddens, 1991).

Developing largely upon the works of Mead and Burke, the Dramatic school was developed by Goffman (1959). As Goffman (1959) noted,

We are all, in our compartmentalized responses, like the man who is a tyrant in his office and a weakling among his family, or like the musician who is assertive in his art, and self-effacing in his personal relationships. Such dissociation becomes a difficulty when we attempt to unite these compartments (p.136).

The various roles are what one was, and the effective use of communication skills assisted the individual in managing the “on stage” behaviors. As Courtney (1991) observed, “we think and act dramatically” (p. 11). The self concept was based on the very act of acting out the parts effectively.

The Humanistic school, associated with the works of Maslow’s concept of self actualization, maintained humans are intrinsically good, and that those things that were evil arose from a frustration of human basic needs and emotions (Maslow, 1999). On that premise, Maslow

constructed the hierarchy, or scaffolding, by which the individual reached self-actualization. The instinctual needs must be reached before moving on to the next level. Failure resulted in a frustrated and incomplete individual exhibiting behavior that was often termed evil, unbalanced, or personality problems. At the fundamental level, the human being needed to have the basic biological and physiological needs met. Once those needs were met, the human being progressed. Belongingness and love needs were layered upon the former levels, followed by esteem needs ultimately resulting in self-actualization. The human being had a philosophy of the future, or goal, which was known. This was the driving force that urged the individual progressively through each level until the individual was self-actualized. One became self-actualized through the experiences and the adoption of those experiences to the self concept one had (Maslow, 1999).

The Postmodern view developed into a wide array of thought including Constructivism to Identity theory. Based upon the initial work of Berger and Luckmann (1966), Constructivism maintained an individual's actions were interpreted through the societal constructs. The self developed as a result of the society and those within it interacting with the individual. As Inrona and Ilharco noted, "Whenever we take note of ourselves, we find ourselves already engaged in practical everyday activity in which things show up as 'possibilities for' our practical intentions" (Inrona & Ilharco as cited in Mingers & Willcocks, 2004, p. 69). Identity Theory contended that the mind and brain are one (Smart, 2011). Bernard, Gebauer, and Maio (2006) found that discrepancies between personal and societal values did not create a subjective sense of estrangement, and suggested that estrangement resulted from a feeling of being unique or special. Postmodernists had difficulty with the distinction between estrangement and social isolation, and the identification of self (e.g., Costas & Fleming, 2009; Gergen, 1996; Senekal, 2008). It appeared a consistent problem within the alienation paradigms was with the identification of self and self-reward identification.

Several related ancient Greek terms were foundational to the modern sociological problems related to self-alienation. *Oikeiōsis* (οἰκείωσις), a term utilized by the Greek Stoics, was a term defined with considerable difficulty due to early translations and the dominance of the Cartesian definition of self (Martin, 2006). *Oikeiōsis*, defined as self-appropriation, acceptance, and love, was derived from Cicero's translation and, as Martin (2006) observed, the original concept was made unclear in translation. *Oikeiōsis* was a self consciousness, awareness, and "a fundamental attribute of human psychology, particularly insofar as it serves a condition on the possibility of perception and action" (Martin, 2006, p. 3). Some of the problems with alienation research regarding self-estrangement were the result of a rejection of pre-Cartesian concepts of self with no alternatives to explain the rationale behind reasons of the acts of human beings other than those offered by Cartesian and post-Cartesian philosophy. It was a rejection of ultimate causality and rational natural order.

The key lies in understanding the distinctive structure and function of Stoic self-consciousness, and particularly the role it plays in providing an organism with normative

orientation in its environment. To desire or 'have an appetite' for something presupposes that we have some way of distinguishing between what seems worth pursuing and what is to be avoided -- predator from prey, nourishment from toxin, even pleasure from pain. Without some such capacity for discrimination desire could have no determinate content and could provide no guidance in action. On the Stoic view, such distinctions are essentially kind-relative, hence the capacity to draw them must be grounded in an incipient understanding of one's distinctive mode of being. As we have seen, it is just such a self-understanding that the Stoics see as the central deliverance of self-consciousness (Martin, 2006, pp.21-22).

Martin (2006) observed while the term *oikeiōsis* was an obscure concept to current society, the opposite of *oikeiōsis*, *allogriosis* (αλλοτριώσης: self-alienation), was not. Instead of identifying what should be the human condition, alienation research examined the opposite; this is comparable to examining the symptoms of a disease without identifying what would be considered healthy. To examine the qualities of *oikeiōsis* would have demanded researchers to discuss the self from a paradigm that would not be compatible with Cartesian thought that influenced modernity. *Allotrios*, "a state of withdrawal from one's own self as constituted by the tension toward the divine ground of existence" (Voegelin, 2006, p. 150), was the result of a being not being "well disposed toward unless it understands its position in the world...to put this another way, a rational being cannot be acquainted with itself unless it understands itself to be a part of the rational order" (Henrich, 2003, p. 90).

The use of *habitus* was used by sociologists to explain the routine behaviors and socially acquired schema (e.g. Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). A Latin term derived from the Greek word *hexis* (ἕξις: habit), Aristotle's use of *hexis* went beyond the idea of mimicking behaviors. *Hexis* was an action within the soul, providing a moral stability (Sachs, 2005). *Habitus* implied determinism, a problem brought into question by Hilgers (2009), who observed the necessity of a pre-existing concept of self and free will. None of the other dimensions of social alienation exposed the problem of the self as much as self-estrangement. Regarding *habitus*, Maritain (2003) stated,

"we must not for this reason confuse *habitus* with habit in the modern sense of this word, that is to say, with mere mechanical bent and routine; *habitus* is exactly the contrary of habit in this sense. Habit, which attests the weight of matter, resides in the nerve centers. Operative *habitus*, which attests the activity of the spirit, resides principally in an immaterial faculty, in the intelligence or the will. (Maritain & Scanlan, p. 8)

While Maritain explored the concept of self in a depth well beyond the scope of this research, it was essential to observe the spiritual aspect when attempting to understand human social activity (Maritain, 1940, 1995). The concept of self, as individual and personality

inseparable, was the foundation for understanding Maritain's neo-Thomist position. Personality and individual were not two separate realities (Maritain, 1947). The individual and personality were dependent upon each other; to separate the individual and the personality would lead to errors in understanding the nature of the human (Maritain, 1940). For the human, such a separation would be a form of self estrangement. Maritain (1971) realized when the individual and personality were divided; the human became isolated and fragmented. "Self integration constitutes authentic existence: self estrangement constitutes inauthentic existence" (Bultmann cited in Grundy, 1987, p. 205). Existentialists, too, recognized the disintegrated human lacked authenticity (e.g. Fromm, 1942, 1973; Kierkegaard, 1983; Sartre, 2007; Schmitt, 2003). The personality meant the "internal selfhood" that developed, through reason, and dominated "the life of instinct and sensual desire" with the goal of "self sacrifice, striving toward self-perfection and love" (Maritain, 1971, p. 34). Conversely, if individuality was dominant, the unreasonable desires of the ego would become unbridled and insatiable leading to paranoid and narcissistic disorders (Maritain, 1971; Stein, 2010). Seeman's (1959, 1967) observations, while based upon a material reward, could relate to Maritain's notion of the inherent rewards desired by the personality. "Il reste que ce royaume de la vie éternelle correspond, en vertu d'un don qui dépasse toutes les mesures de la nature, à une aspiration naturelle de l'esprit en nous" (Maritain, 1942, p. 96). Furthermore, "the value of the person, his dignity and rights, belong to the order of things naturally sacred which bear the imprint of the Father of Being, and which have in him the end of their movement" (Maritain, 1942, p. 215).

Estrangement, as the lack of an "intrinsically rewarding activity", connected the concept to an economic understanding (Seeman 1967, p. 285). The definition failed to integrate the essence, or subject, perceiving the intrinsic reward as well as how such a reward would be judged as rewarding. Estrangement was the result of the separation of the human individual and personality. Incapable of an authentic experience of self through the integration of individual and personality, the human being became self-estranged.

Conclusion

An understanding of alienation and three of its prominent factors as defined by Seeman (1959, 1967, 1971, 1975, and 1983) as normlessness, isolation and estrangement prompted an understanding of the self. It was suggested that the concept of self was redefined since the Enlightenment, where the concepts of individuality and personality were confused. The modern definition of self was incomplete (Vitz, 1977), as it did not address the spiritual aspect of the human being and confused the distinction between the two parts of the self. It was posited that a Thomistic definition in the tradition of Maritain could assist researchers of alienation with the addition of the spiritual component.

Normlessness, defined as anomie and the realization some social norms no longer appeared to serve the intended purpose for which they were designed, was indicative of the

quality of change found in human law (*lex humana*), a quality recognized by St. Thomas Aquinas. Norms and human laws change according to several factors; however, the need for changes reflects a human desire for laws increasingly in accord with natural law (*lex naturalis*). Where such changes occur and resulting laws are not in accord with natural law, humans recognize the laws are invalid. The human ability to distinguish between valid and invalid laws was derived from the human knowledge of natural law, or *synderesis* as opposed to *conscientia*. Prescriptive norms, coupled with expectations found in predictive (what will be done) and deontic (what ought to be done) raised questions. First, if norms were the expectation of the thing to do, how was the thing to do initially known? Second, if norms could be subject to change what initiated change? Third, if deontic norms implied what ought to be done, how is the ought initially identified? Modern and postmodern theorists admitted difficulty in responding to these questions, and addressed the purpose instead of the essence and origin of norms. Addressing the essence of norms and laws would demand a philosophical inquiry into the nature of law and society, an argument returning to Natural Law theory found in Aquinas and earlier writings. A further question arose. Do social norms and laws serve humans, or do humans serve social norms and laws? While social norms and laws were developed for social stability, such laws are subject to change. What initiated the change was the human desire to seek the personal and individual fulfillment of self and the personal and individual fulfillment of others in society. Such a mutual desire was based in mutual love and respect. Maritain's (1995) call for the recognition of a truth humans serve directed humans towards the higher truth behind human laws, a truth recognized through *synderesis* and reason. To deny the spirit of the human was to deny the human of an essential component of self. It was suggested a definition for normlessness could be a condition where the human believed a norm(s) no longer reflected truth one could morally, rationally, and purposefully serve to facilitate the fulfillment of the individual and person socially and spiritually.

Isolation could be positive or negative. A condition of alienation, isolation occurred when the human perceived a distancing from the social group. It could precede a deeper sense of social alienation, or be the result of social alienation. If the former, isolation could be a personally induced phenomenon in which the human was unable to equate the significance of the highly valued goals, beliefs, or rewards of the society to the fulfillment of the personality aspect of the being through the social actions of the individual. If the latter, isolation could be a socially induced phenomenon in which the human was unable to equate the significance of the highly valued goals, beliefs, or rewards of the society to the fulfillment of the personality aspect of the being through the social actions of the individual. The distinction between personally and socially induced alienation is important to observe. If the individual was personally inducing the perception of isolation, it could be an indication of increased spiritual awareness and a desire to fulfill one's purpose. Admittedly, it could also suggest a spiritual and personal problem related to anti-social behaviors. If the isolation was the result of social induction, it could be the result of social changes in goals, beliefs, or rewards that are no longer significant. In either case, it was

suggested prolonged social isolation was not healthy spiritually, emotionally, or physically, and could be indicative of a need for spiritual and psychological counseling. It was further suggested that isolation could be defined as a personally or socially induced phenomenon in which the human was unable to equate the significance of the highly valued goals, beliefs, or rewards of the society to the fulfillment of the personality aspect of the being through the social actions of the individual.

The concept of self was essential to the understanding of social alienation, and the implications of self-estrangement were the nexus of understanding social alienation. Any attempt to examine social alienation without a definition of self precluded the most important element—the nature of the human. At the root of society were the human person and individual in each human being seeking fulfillment through a social order while assisting others to do likewise. The fragmentation of the personality and individual in alienation research resulted in a limited understanding of the phenomenon. Furthermore, given that most societies contain a significant population with a religious belief, and those faiths contain a self-concept, it would appear any attempt to address social alienation without religious consideration would be incapable of providing a complete understanding of the problem. Even if some social researchers do not personally maintain the belief in the spiritual aspects of the human, it is suggested that to disregard that aspect of the human existence that is valued by many would provide a limited understanding of the problem of social alienation. It was not unreasonable to include the spiritual dimension into an understanding of estrangement (Rosmarin, Auerbach, Bigda-Peyton, Björgvinsson, & Levendusky, 2011). It was suggested estrangement was the result of the separation of the human individual and personality. Incapable of an authentic experience of self through the integration of individual and personality, the human being became self-estranged.

Implications for Future Research

If social alienation research could benefit from the inclusion of the spiritual component, a mixed methods approach regarding social alienation implementing Maritain's concepts of personality and individual could provide insight regarding the spiritual and physical relationship between the five dimensions of social alienation. The nature of norms and Natural Law could provide insight into the nature of norms, as well as the relationship between norms and human law. If a reliable means of identifying the differences between personally induced and socially induced isolation could be found, a comparative study between the two groups could provide information regarding behavioral differences. Such a study could be extended into an analysis of the spiritual aspects of isolation. A longitudinal study of individuals experiencing social alienation utilizing the Christian self-concept component and changes in work could provide information regarding the issue of self-fulfillment. Approaching social alienation as the result of a moral dilemma could provide opportunities for an enhanced understanding of this human condition.

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