ALIENATION IN EDWARD HOPPER’S AND JACKSON POLLOCK’S PAINTINGS:
A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

A Thesis by

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ALIENATION IN EDWARD HOPPER’S AND JACKSON POLLOCK’S PAINTINGS:
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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in Liberal Studies.

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DEDICATION

To my lovely mother, my dear husband,
and the memory of my father.
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I would like to extend my gratitude to committee chair, Dr. Dorothy Billings, for encouraging me to develop my ideas, and my advisor, Dr. Soles, who supported me during my degree program, and also Professor Foster for serving on my thesis committee and for her valuable comments.

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Finally, I would like to express my exclusive appreciation to my beloved husband, Ruhola, who supported me from the beginning to the very end.
ABSTRACT

In this thesis I study alienation in Edward Hopper’s and Jackson Pollack’s paintings. Each of these American painters expressed alienation in his art in a distinctive way. The source of their alienation is different, too, yet they share some personality traits. While alienation in Pollock’s paintings is mainly derived from his psychological characteristics, the source of alienation in Hopper’s paintings is mostly sociological.

The alienation in Hopper’s paintings is the manifestation of man’s new status in the world, which is defined by Modernity. He is warning about the situation, in which despite the superficial achievements, man is alone. And, I believe, Pollock is the offspring of that situation.
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CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW: ALIENATION

The popularity of the concept of alienation as a research project has slumped, it seems. The peak of its popularity was in the 1950s, when the concept was restored again, and in the 60s; the time of its analytical outstanding precedence (Seeman 1983). However, the alienation topic still exists in the fields of studies, but in a different way. The concept of alienation has mostly flourished in social sciences, but in a parallel manner, philosophers, psychologists, writers, and artists have concentrated on the subject as well.

Most papers related to this thesis are not current as they were written decades ago. This might be due to the fact that alienation, especially in its sociological meaning, initially appeared in that time period—1950s and 1960s—; although some scholars, including Gwynn Nettler, believe it has a long history, and was only revived in those days for academic purposes (Nettler 1957).

In earlier decades, alienation was a new concept for an academic approach. Scholars were trying to define, describe and clarify the concept, and; therefore, in every single disciplinary, especially sociology and philosophy, many intellectuals contributed to the debate. Those discussions shaped the basic general academic approach toward alienation which is now useful as the subject is investigated here. Today’s researches, however, are more case studies of alienation in different areas- including education, political science, sociology, and so on- which are based on early developments of the concept. Recent papers apply the theoretical studies of alienation on proper cases which is the purpose here.

Generally, alienation is best known as the consequence of Modernity; nevertheless, its history goes back beyond that era. In the 19th century the problem of alienation was specifically
noticed by philosophers (Murchland 1969). The concept of alienation is much older than the term alienation (Overend 1975). Fromm believes that the concept can be drawn around the period of the Old Testament prophet in denouncement of ‘idolatry’: “Idolatrous man bows down to the work of his own hands. The idol represents his own life-forces in an alienated form”. (Fromm 1990: 122) Lichtheim follows the concept history track even further to Neo-Platonism around third century CE (Lichtheim 1968). Moreover, Overend finds that in original Greek texts of New Testament, not only the concept, but also the term alienation- “apollotrioomai” in Greek-was used: “I am being alienated from citizen body.” Overall, the history of the concept of alienation goes back to Old Testament while the term is much younger and goes to New Testament (Overend 1975: 306).

From the time man found that his life has a sociopolitical aspect, especially after the Industrial Revolution, individuals or groups have experienced alienation, a situation in which one person or a group is in substantial disagreement with the rest of society (Sinari 1970). Alienation- either concept or term- used in Bible is a more philosophical and religious attitude in which the relationship of man and God is concerned. Since its rediscovery in 1950s, alienation is mostly applied to the contemporary society, Modernity, Industrialization, “mass society” of urbanization, and the “decline of community” (Fischer 1973) decline of traditions and supremacy of urbanization. Modern Western civilization, Nisbet describes, is swamped in “an Age of Pessimism- an age of uncertainty, social disintegration, and spiritual isolation” (Nisbet 1953). He continues, missing traditionalism and communalism of the Middle Ages, modern society now has to use political state to battle with the confounded ‘intermediate associations’ in regular life, and as a result of its foundation to “produce the alienated, the disenchanted, the rootless, and the neurotic” (Nisbet 1953: 19). General knowledge of “modern civilization” and special attention to
Western and Eastern societies are essential components in studying the alienation of contemporary man (Sinari 1970). “The concept of the naked self, beyond institutions and roles as the *ens realissimum* of human being, is at the very heart of modernity” (Berger, et al. 1973: 190). Philips and Manser ask a truly thoughtful question about Berger’s statement: “is this "self" the liberated man or the alienated rootless man?” (Philips and Manser 1979: 111). They believe that Berger means to propose that there is “a humanity behind or beneath the roles and norms imposed by society, and that this humanity has profound dignity” (Berger, et al. 1973: 83). Philips and Manser believe that this “profound dignity,” in Berger's opinion, will be obtained by “individual's choice” (Philips and Manser 1979: 111). Matao Noda, Professor of philosophy in Kyoto University, suggests that industrialization, accelerated urbanization, and the extension of science and technology are the new façade of the same darkness of old "slavery and decadence" (Sinari 1970: 126).

In defining alienation, Berger proposes two polar explanations. First, he said that alienation is to acquire self identity through relationships and institutions, and believing that these two are essential in life. Then, he suggests that escape from this alienation is to realize that those relationships and institutions are not crucial, and that that rescue from alienation calls for absolute choice. Finally, the freed from alienation individual discovers his/her true individuality which is beyond all the relationships and institutions. Berger concludes then that “alienation is the price of individuation” (Berger, et al. 1973: 175).

Industrialization influenced not only economy and social structure, but the life style as well; from the relationship of individuals and their work, families, and society. Furthermore, it changed the relationship of man with himself and how he sees and perceives himself. As the

* A Latin term for God, meaning the “most real being.”
matter of fact, man became lost in this new situation which has no sign of the past life and was led to feel alienated.

In addition to these contexts, the Great Depression also is considered a susceptible base for alienation for many people thorough 1930s and after. It caused major hopelessness, stress, and different modes of alienation for many people. Alienation in contemporary life has been part of the culture (Horowitz 1966), and now, along with many classified and non-classified reasons, Great Recession in our time is alienating thousands of people. Apparently, people today do not need to search for alienation in books and papers; in fact, we all have experienced it, or at least have seen it up close in our modern life. And what could be more accessible than personal experience?

1.1. Definitions of Alienation

There has been extensive confusion regarding the definition of alienation. Too many definitions and descriptions of the concept have contributed over the decades, in different disciplines of the humanities and science, all trying to come up with a unified result. This difficulty, which seems never to be solved, is the immediate problem in studying the concept of alienation. Most, if not all, papers related to this topic at least indicate such confusion and try to focus on one definition and/or criticize the others. This inconclusive debate about definitions divides authors into three groups. Above all, there are those who believe that alienation is not definable. Second, there are those few who are still trying to formulate a true meaning. And finally, there are many others who face the problem moderately and do not make a fuss about the delicacy of the definition since they know that other concepts they use in social sciences, such as “social class” or “social norms,” are also not precise, but still have a central meaning and are useable (Seeman 1983: 172). However, aside from the general meanings, each discipline- as
examined here, philosophy, psychology, and sociology- has provided a specific perspective toward alienation.

According to the Oxford dictionary, alienation is “the action of estranging, or state of estrangement in feeling or affection.” The word “estrangement” is fastened to the concept of alienation and mostly carries a negative meaning. “The condition of alienation itself,” Rosenstock and Kutner describe, “is a negative form of involvement in a social system: an individual is present within, cognizant of, or somehow implicated by the system, although he perceives that it cannot fulfill his goals or provide the outcomes he values” (Rosenstock and Kutner 1967). Regularly, alienation describes a situation in which someone separates from something (Fischer 1973: 398). This “something” is a point where the specific perspectives toward the main concept diverge. Peter L. Berger believes that: “The essence of all alienation is the imposition of a fictitious inexorability upon the humanly constructed world” by which “Choices become destiny” (Philips and Manser 1979: 109). Aside from general conception of alienation, each interdisciplinary of the humanities, including philosophy, psychology, and sociology, has a specific approach toward alienation which follows.

1.2. Philosophical Approach

Hegel is known as the first one who used and developed a philosophical expansion of the term alienation (Horowitz 1966; Nettler 1957; Overend 1975). However, some others believe that Rousseau used the concept of separation of man from nature, before Hegel (Fromm 1990; Lichtheim 1968; Meszaros 1970). Hegel believes that the history of human alienation is as long as human history. Hegel thinks “what the mind really strives for is the realization of its own notion; but in doing so it hides that goal from its own vision and is proud and well satisfied in this alienation from its own essence” (Fromm 1966: 47). For Hegel, in his idealist philosophy,
alienation is an experience of the mind, or in Overend words, “a separation of the mind from its essence into an alienated spirit” (Overend 1975: 307). Erich Kahler thinks the same: “The history of man could very well be written as a history of the alienation of man” (Kahler 1957: 43).

However, it has been a very long time in philosophy that the idea of man being always alienated is universally common. As Tillich says: “the whole state of our life is estrangement from others and ourselves, because we are estranged from the Ground of our being, because we are estranged from the aim of our life” (Tillich 1984: 160).

Krishna, also believes that alienation is a profoundly innate trait of the human being’s situation, which taking it away from man is “as to take the negative sting out of it” and transforming him into something completely different (Krishna 1970: 43).

In spite of all the efforts to formulate a unified definition of alienation, Sinari believes that facing so many different types of responses to a specific human situation, makes any single definition of the concept of alienation insufficient. He calls for “introspective analysis” and personal studies of literature, artists, social reformer, so on, and countless alienated individuals and groups to attain a general, yet divergent definition of alienation (Sinari 1970: 124-25).

1.3. Psychological Approach

Alienation is an important concept in psychology. It may be known as a “syndrome,” a disease like schizophrenia, or considered as a symptom of an intense sickness; yet, distinguishing alienation from insolence, pride, and apathy is very difficult due to various indications (Bronfenbrenner 1973). However, within psychological perspective, Rosenstock and Kutner introduce two different manners: psychosocial concept, and clinical approach (Rosenstock and Kutner 1967). The first distinction is that, alienation, in the clinical fields of psychiatry and psychoanalysis, applies to an extensive individual pathology; a situation in which neurotic
developmental process causes personality dysfunction (Horney 1950). On the other hand, sociological approach within psychology, concerns with the reactions of individuals to a specific social structure or context and does not deal with individuals’ personal conditions (Rosenstock and Kutner 1967).

The second major difference between the clinical and the psychological and uses of the concept of alienation is that although alienation from any specific group or structure is, in some opinions, a subjective experience, it is not essentially related to pathology, nor dysfunctional personality; in fact, an alienated person from one group or structure may improve the content or position, or reinforce the importance of his role in other groups or organizations. Furthermore, alienation in this context may be a smart and mindful decision by a person to find his true self-satisfaction (Rosenstock and Kutner 1967).

The classic definition of psychological alienation is offered by Fromm: “By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself” (Fromm 1990: 120-21).

In defining alienation, Brin fenbrenner feels closer to Freud rather than Marx, and suggests “alienation as frustration writ large-as psychosis is neurosis writ large-so that, to repeat: Alienation: Frustration:: Psychosis: Neurosis”(Bronfenbrenner 1973: 270).

But, Seeman criticizes the notion of alienation as a psychological “trait” as it “allows for the curious persistence of the idea that the use of alienation concepts involves insensitivity to “structure” and implies irrationality, impulsiveness, frustration aggression, or otherwise unrealistic responses” (Seeman 1983: 172).

The psychological study assumes that cooperation or rejection of participation in a social structure can be either “constructive” or “destructive”. Therefore, as Wegner discusses, the
concept of alienation is close to “deviance,” and not to “disorganization” (Wegner 1975: 175-76). He argues that alienation is more a perception of “marginality”-- advisedly or unknowingly-- than a synonym for mental disorder or mania. Alienation comes from misunderstanding the conception of the norms than attempt to violate them.

Significantly, the psychological discipline of alienation contributed to the concept in three ways: 1) expressing the universality of the concept of alienation, 2) proving that alienation is related to the personality as well as the social system, and 3) declaring the presence of alienation in socialist societies as well as capitalist ones (Schaff 1963).

In the psychological approach; however, unlike the sociological one, Marx’s perspective toward alienation does not help. He is not attentive to the everyday problem of recognizing alienation from other characteristics even supported by the alienated person (Bronfenbrenner 1973). In criticizing Marx, Brinfenbrenner believes that Marx idea of alienation obviously is rooted in the situation of workers and intellectuals like himself in Germany of 1840s; however, he did not clarify which part of the industrialized economy is basically accused of alienation.

1.4. Sociological Approach

Rotenstreich supposes when a person feels or thinks that he is not able to accomplish his social role, he becomes alienated from society (Rotenstreich). Many scholars of different branches of the humanities associate alienation with various “states” of human beings, such as powerlessness, apathy, loneliness, and a loss of values (Twining 1980). Eric Josephson and Mary Josephson notice that alienation is “an individual feeling or state of dissociation” (Josephson and Josephson 1962). Kohn suggested the most comprehensive definition: “Despite its ambiguity of meaning, alienation is an appealing concept, standing as it does at the intersection of social-structural conditions and psychological orientation” (Kohn 1976: 111). Wegner declares his
notion of the concept that “Alienation is a negative orientation involving feelings of discontent and cynical beliefs toward a specific social context” (Wegner 1975: 177).

However, the most accepted, and discussed, definition of the concept of alienation is Melvin Seeman’s social-psychological definition offered in his paper *On the Meaning of Alienation* (Seeman 1959). He offers five major components, or modes, of alienation, which are: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self estrangement. Here explanation of each follows (Seeman 1959; Seeman 1975):

1. Powerlessness: the individual’s feeling of helplessness and loosing control over one’s life, and that his efforts do not positively influence the outgrowths.
2. Meaninglessness: the uncertainty of the individual on his beliefs, decisions, and actions; a state of hopelessness about future events.
3. Normlessness: an individual’s feeling that socially unaccepted behaviors are the means of reaching likely goals.
4. Social-Isolation: assuming less value for socially and normally praised aims, or beliefs which leads one to be separated from a group or the society.
5. Self-estrangement: a disconnection between the actualized self and the ideal, or ought to be, self; a state of loosing natal meaning of self.

Later, Seeman talked about “cultural Estrangement” which may be considered related to social –isolation as society is the place where the culture is practiced (Seeman 1975).

In sociology, sometimes “alienation” and “anomie” are considered close to each other that may imply they are synonyms. Albeit “anomie’ and “alienation” are certainly related to each other, as Nettler claims, anomie is most likely to result in alienation (Nettler 1957), they are different.
Shortly, the concept of alienation reveals a notable discrepancy between the person and his social structure in which he feels estrangement, or powerlessness, or normlessness, or meaninglessness which are related to his minor social status, such as failure in controlling his life and unwillingness to reach society’s goal (Martin, et al. 1974).

It is important not to confuse the concept of “alienation” with “anomie.” The concept of anomie was introduced into sociology by Durkheim to criticize industrialization (Durkheim 1947). In Wegner’s word, “anomie is a condition of society, a breakdown in social integration, which occurs during periods of rapid social change” (Wegner 1975: 180). Human satisfaction, as Durkheim suggests, is attained when one can connect to the society he lives in and through social relationships and the collection of norms which directs his performances and ambitions. When the traditional social structure becomes weakened due to the speedy changes, industrialization and urbanization of society, anomie or lack of social integration, leads to extensive feeling of depression which can be ended in suicide (Durkheim 1951).

American sociologists revised the concept of anomie to be distinguishable from the concept of alienation. Srole suggests that anomie is the state of being emotionally distant from society and sensing that social order is falling apart, actions are unexpected, and relationships between individuals are crumbling (Srole 1956). For Merton, anomie is the conflict between “the cultural goals” and the efficient possibility of reaching those goals (Merton 1957). This concept of anomie is very much like Marx’s perception of alienation in which the structure of society disappoints underprivileged people who are liable to involve in different types of abnormal behavior (Wegner 1975).

Furthermore, once one takes alienation as anomie, he gives the credibility and rationality to the society which has all the norms, meanings, and power, which is in contrast with the
individual’s characteristics, which is basically supposed to be irrational personality (Seeman 1959).

1.5. Alienation: Negative or Positive

Generally, alienation is known as a negative trait (Horowitz 1966; Rosenstock and Kutner 1967; Seeman 1983; Wegner 1975). Compared to “anomic”—by Durkhiem and his followers (Dean 1961; Nettler 1957; Overend 1975; Wegner 1975)—and “disease” or “syndrome”, like a mental disorder, and “sickness” as in psychopathology (Bronfenbrenner 1973; Faris 1934; Rosenstock and Kutner 1967; Sinari 1970; Ziller 1969), alienation is estrangement from publicly accepted facts. In alienation studies, scholars basically suppose alienation as a psychological, or sociological, or any other kind of problem, and try to find the causes and analyze the quality of alienation. Moreover, alienation is usually equal to loneliness which is naturally a disturbing state for an individual.

In addition, Daya Krishna, the Indian philosopher, who believes alienation is capable of being both negative and positive trait depending on the individual’s response, admits its negativity by remarking that alienation exposes “what is ought not to be, or at least is felt as what should not be” (Krishna 1970: 42). He explains that since alienation illustrates the situation of an individual, it means that this “situation ought not to be as it is;” thus it represents a negative situation.

However, alienation is not necessarily a negative trait; in fact, in some cases it is a very thoughtful decision. How intellectuals see their roles in society, Horowitz claims, is the conjunction of psychological approach of alienation and ideology where alienation is a conscious positive decision (Horowitz 1966).
“A great deal of contemporary thought finds a state of alienation precisely in those ideologies which profess to predict with high confidence the outcome of people's behavior. Intellectuals especially find themselves alienated in a world of social determinism; they wish for a world in which the degree of social predictability would be low” (Feuer 1963: 127-47).

Feuer’s notion of alienation is also positive while he implies to defeat the integration to reach the truth, instead of defeating alienation (Horowitz 1966).

Moreover, Sinari argues that once one recognizes his “purpose and process of all existence,” alienation is no longer a problem. He contently declares that “transcendental enlightenment” has achieved this point, at least in a philosophical concept. In contrast, if the alienated person takes a drug to disconnect himself from the real world in order to overcome alienation; then it is a negative attitude (Sinari 1970: 127).

Furthermore, as Krishna argues, “the problem, thus, is not so much one of alienation but one of what type of alienation, and of what one does with alienation. There is alienation and alienation, and there is also a creative, positive response to it as well as a negative one” (Krishna 1970: 43). One may commit a suicide, or murder others, or amuse himself with creative activities.

1.6. Human Nature and Personality

Prior expending on the definition of alienation, considering the essence of ‘human being’ is the key to the concept in depth. While alienation is described as being estranged or separated from something, not only this status and from what are substantial, but the fact that human essence has an assumed basic characteristic. Recognition of man’s basic needs is essential to understand alienation. Alienation occurs when human nature is discordant with the situation he is experiencing. Marx, trying to make humans being distinct from animals, recognizes free, conscious labor as the fundamental difference, and believes that denying or violating this nature results in alienation of humans (Fischer 1976). He also emphasizes the true desire of man for
“fulfillment of his potential” which, according to him, a goal toward which the social order is biased (Wegner 1975). Borrowing from German romanticism, Marx, influenced by his master Hegel, imagined man with an intrinsic substance whose potentiality to be active and creative would be actualized in suitable conditions of freedom. Such essence is ideal for both the individual and society. However, the rules of bourgeois capitalism change the individual from that ideal state to a “passive object” dealing with production, products and others. As a matter of fact, he is estranged from his own basic need of being active and creative (Israel 1971a). Fromm has perfectly elaborated this idea proposing that the basic needs of human being stem from the condition of his existence: relatedness, a sense of identity, rootedness, transcendence, and a guidance of orientation and devotion (Fromm 1990: 22-66). He believes that a right rational society allows its members to fulfill their basic needs in a healthy way, without any mental pressure. However, Wegner in his *The Concept of Alienation* criticized Fromm’s viewpoint of alienation for putting “normative judgment” in the place of “objective fact,” and that it is about what an individual should be rather than what he is. Moreover, he questioned the credibility of the five basic needs that Fromm introduced, stating that there is no evidence to prove their accuracy (Wegner 1975: 175). Also, Wegner rejects the concept of human nature and implies agreement with Szasz’s idea that concepts of “basic needs” and “mental health” (Szasz 1984) supersede what constitutes a meaningful or fulfilling life; which is related to the field of psychiatry (Wegner 1975: 175-76). Expressions like “mental illness” and “alienation” are also considered as moral judgments within psychiatry. The whole concept relies on acknowledging, as Wegner claims, that the nature of humans is not extremely pliable and able to adapt to every condition, and that this is the starting point for feeling alienated.
Fischer, reviewing Marx’s “essential human nature”, points out three major problems. The first issue is the confusion concerning “essence” and whether or not it is a real sociological need. He believes this normative approach in philosophy is reasonable, wherein scholars define what humans should do based on what they were originally expected to do. But in sociology, “essence” is acceptable if it refers to a need or, in Fischer’s words, “a drive, the expression or the frustration of which has consequences” (Fischer 1976: 38). However, Marx does not seek to prove whether this “essence” is a need or that rejecting it may cause consequences.

Second, on the occasion that “human essence” is accepted as the suitable base for studying alienation, then the essential question is what is exactly this essence? Is it concurrent with human nature and is it “essence” that leads to alienation? There are way too many answers to that question; philosophical, biological, sociological, religious, and so on. Emphasizing activity as a unique trait that no other creature than the human being accomplishes, Marx adopts philosophical anthropology. This very important attribute is outstanding in the evolution of the human being's significant characteristics. Rooted in Hegel’s ideas, Marx introduced labor as the essence of man which is “freely-chosen, pre-conceived”, and “conscious production” (Fischer 1976: 39). Fischer explains that “freedom” and “consciousness” are descriptive and differentiate man from animal and “production.” But logically, those adjectives are the real distinguishing characteristics of the human being, which makes man’s activities, like eating, playing, and making love, exceptional and not like an animal act. So labor, or production, is not the exclusive trait of humans. Fischer suggests using the anthropological approach in finding human nature, by considering “culture, language, erect posture, cranial capacity or absence of a mating season”(Fischer 1976: 39).
The third problem is revealed when one accepts Marx’s definition of human nature and admits that labor as the essence of this nature. Fischer argues that because the assumptions of Marx are not appropriate, what he concludes is a mistake as well. Moreover, Marx states that the essence of the worker is embedded in “the object of production.” The more he works the less essence he keeps in himself. Fischer believes that human essence is not a liquid mass, nor is it a manifold-able subsistence by production (Fischer 1976). The argument here is more related to the way Marx established his theory of capitalism, which is not relevant to this thesis.

In addition to human nature, personal characteristics are another base for studying one’s alienation. However, these approaches are very different from each other: the former is an objective approach toward the concept and the latter is subjective. Regarding the subjective point of view, not all people in the exact same social condition become alienated. In fact, if alienation occurs when the discrepancy between an individual and the social conditions occurs, and if everybody has the same situation, it is the personal traits which alienation relies on. Here, the essential effort is to recognize the characteristic that explicates pessimistic feelings toward the social situation (Wegner 1975). Moreover, the self-image is very momentous. Unlike what is supposedly “human nature,” every person’s self-image is different. Based on this image, individuals create goals for themselves. As Faunce argues, alienation is the result of conflicts between an individual’s principles of self-esteem and the conditions of the group in which he is participating (Faunce 1968). Based on their flexibility, people are different in coping with this problem. Hence, alienation is a result of the relationship between personality and social structure. Industrialized societies are responsible for such conflicts (Wegner 1975).

In short, although basic human nature and personality traits are both a platform from which to identify alienation, they are extremely different in their view toward the concept. The
first belongs to the subjective view considering the person and the second belongs to an objective attitude valuing social structure.

1.7. Alienation: Subjective or Objective

Whether one takes a subjective or objective approach toward the concept of alienation is a fundamental debate in the history of alienation studies. Those scholars who believe in basic needs of all humans usually have an objective perspective for assuming a set of needs for all human beings. Objectivists define alienation when basic needs do not achieve satisfaction as the result of social conditions. As in Marxism, which is fundamentally objective toward society, human nature which is supposed to be fulfilled, is in contrast with some kind of social structures, such as capitalism and the bourgeois. Marx blames society for not letting a person be creative and active, thus meeting his essential needs: and transforming him into a passive object in connection with the means of production, the products of production, and others; therefore, he becomes an estranged person from his true self.

Wegner criticized the objective approach in which a person’s traits or feelings are not appreciated; even if he does not feel alienated, according to such an approach, he is alienated. The social structure and the situation outside the individual is the matter to which attention is given in the objective perspective. Marx’s definition of human nature is a “normative system of ideal state” in Wegner’s opinion, which is created from the outside; and it is more of a philosophical approach, like alienation of man from God -an ideal base- and is not applicable to the real world (Wegner 1975: 174).

Moreover, in the objective view, one may see and feel himself to be a normal person in a society, and others see him as normal as well; but in Fromm’s objective idea, since he is estranged from his nature, he is truly alienated in depth (Fromm 1990).
On the contrary, the subjective approach to alienation is concerned with actual human
c Characteristics rather than ideal attributes or states. According to the subjective definition,
alienation is an “existential reality” in an individual’s life, far from the judgmental observation of
outsiders (Wegner 1975: 174). Regarding Faunce’s description of alienation as the result of
disparity between an individual’s self-image and his social role (Faunce 1968), a person’s
individuality is crucially considered. If we recognize alienation as a human feeling, it is
necessary to pay attention to the root of emotions. The subjective perspective especially makes
sense in a situation where only some people, not all, become or feel alienated in the same social
condition. One situation could be convenient, satisfactory, and proper enough to let a person’s
potential be realized. Both society and individual are congruent; therefore, alienation does not
occur. The same situation, however, is improper and disappointing for another individual
because it is not in harmony with his needs. So, beside personality, what else could be effective
when the situation is the same for everybody? The subjective approach tries to find out why
people feel alienated, or why they find a situation alienating (Wegner 1975: 176). In the
subjective view, learning about one’s alienation is intensely related to the study of his
characteristics and to identifying those negative affections toward the social condition, and to
finding out which is crucial to the alienation; condition or traits.

The fair way, Twining suggests, is to combine both subjective and objective approaches.
In this context, the mutual relationship of objective factors, such as social structure, and the
individuals’ situation, including personality, is examined to find the true cause of alienation.
From this point of view, the individual’s experience is significant because it is rooted in both
his/her perception and the genuine base of the activity which encourages his/her collaboration.
Understanding this situation is more complicated than asking questions about satisfaction, however (Twining 1980).

1.8. Alienation from What?

The very first fundamental question to be asked about alienation is alienation ‘from what?’ Different types of alienation are identified by from what separates an individual. Nathan Rotenstreich suggests two major types of alienation which while interconnected, are still distinct: first, alienation between individual and his actual life and second, alienation between individual and social organizations (Rotenstreich 1963). Horowitz recognized three kinds of separation: “first from objects in a world, second from other people, third from ideas about the world held by other people” (Horowitz 1966: 231).

In *The Problem of Human Alienation*, Ramakant Sinari distinguished the 7 types of “alienation-situation” (Sinari 1970: 125):

1) Alienation from object(s) which an individual used to be tied to.

2) Alienation from society when an individual is a member of any type of minority, while the society is run by the majority.

3) Alienation of a discontented person from society when his/her values and ideals are in disagreement with the ones of society. This situation may lead to social or ethical rebellion.

4) Alienation of an individual who is not happy with his/her character and so that he/she goes through uncommon self-estrangement which may result in either mild mental disorder at its worst or genuine creativity at its best treatment.

5) Alienation of individuals in extremely technological and industrial societies where they stop using people’s body and replace it with buttons. This holds people back from natural physical activity and thus creates separation of man and nature.
6) Alienation of an individual from his/her own original culture. This kind of self-estrangement usually happens in those countries which are influenced by Western culture and, therefore, people become alienated from their native beliefs and habits.

7) Alienation of an individual or a group of people who have been misused or their passions and needs have been ignored by other individuals or groups. This type of alienation is very important for Marx, Engels, and all socialists.

   In Marxism, the most important thing to be alienated from is ‘human nature’ which is supposedly the basic needs of individuals; and any slight opposition to these needs would be known as alienation (Israel 1971b). In addition to that, Marx introduced three more kinds of alienation regarding the work situation which are: “an alienation of the worker from the process of work, from the product of work, and from others” (Twining 1980).

   On the contrary, Martin refuses to classify many contexts in which alienation occurs. He believes that an acknowledgement of an alienation situation should focus on the case particularly and comprehensively because, although alienation has been frequently discussed as a matter of communities and groups of people, still it is the problem of individuals. After all, he declares there are some alienating situations in today’s complicated society where individuals feel “lack of power or of values worth identifying with, or self-integration” (Martin, et al. 1974: 267).

1.9. Linguistic or Empirical Definition

   One of the problems in finding a perceivable unified definition for alienation is conceptual. There are two approaches, theoretic/linguistic, namely a philosophical one; and an empirical one. The linguistic aspect, from a theoretical perspective, is about explaining what the word alienation means and engaged with “theory of meaning in analytic philosophy” (Overend
1975: 302). An empirical definition, on the other hand, is more concerned with the sociological approach to issues of the concept alienation.

The theoretical concept is not relatively functional in practice, as it is intensely philosophical but under the mask of sociology. This perception of alienation, as Fischer claims, is either applicable to their world or is concerned with “intellectual history” or it is a way to express their vexation (Fischer 1976). Moreover, he castigates the vagueness of terminology from this perspective, which is dysfunctional, relying on the implicitness of criteria.

Empiricists, however, on the one hand try to test the hypotheses derived from theories, and, on the other, associate their dubious estimations with each other and suggest their obscure result; alienation (Fischer 1976). The empirical concept is unclear even among sociologists themselves, and although they are allowed to ignore the philosophers’ concern, their study may result in confusion and dissension about a universal meaning of alienation (Overend 1975).

To resolve the problem, scholars suggest combining these two views, a cogent philosophical one and a useful sociological one, to come up with a ‘valid empirical generalization about alienation’ (Fischer 1976: 36).

1.10. Alienation: General or Context Specific

Many debates in the history of alienation studies are about whether alienation has a set of general causes or each case has some contextual specific causes. Also, considered is whether alienation is a general response or a context specific response.

1.11. General or Context Specific Response

Several sociologists support the idea that alienation, originating from traits of society, is a negative feeling of an individual toward the whole society. It is a general response to the social order all together. To prove this, they say people who are low status, - sociologically or
economically, - unmarried, and old; and also those who belong to minority groups- religious or ethnical, are the most discontented and unhappy with the society. Supposing alienation stems from economic affairs, Marx believes that alienation from the work situation is not limited to that context, and would spread to the whole life of the individual. It affects his/her relationship with others, family, and also his/her own state of mind (Wegner 1975).

On the other hand are those scholars who value alienation as a specific situation response. Wegner justifies sociologists in evaluating the society; nonetheless, he does not believe that it is the most helpful way of studying alienation. He offers two reasons why alienation is not a general response, but a context specific one. First, people have various images of their ideal society. Obviously, negative feelings mostly come from unfortunate people. But is it society’s fault that some people are not satisfied? Keeping in mind that society is about all people, not every single individual’s situation; it is inevitable to find groups of people unhappy. Not individual oriented, society can not make all of its members satisfied. Moreover, most of the discontents people express are concerned with news and happenings in the society and not about the fundamentals of social structure which influence everybody’s life.

Second, according to Seeman’s examination, alienation from the work place does not affect the general feelings of individuals toward society (Seeman 1967). It does not spread to their whole life as claimed in sociology. Moreover, people find various kinds of satisfactions in different situations. One alienated at his work place is still happy with friends and other social activities; and vice versa for another individual. Therefore, the fair approach in studying alienation is to examine it in its specific social context rather than generalize it as an inclusive feeling toward the whole society.
After all, although alienation is considered a context specific response, Wegner admits that there are some social situations in which alienation is most likely to occur. In general, it happens when there is conflict between an individual’s private traits and the social context he/she is associated with. Nevertheless, some people have authority over their attendance in some social situations; otherwise, specific parts of social relationships or situations would be disappointing. Under these conditions alienation is most likely to occur: (a) Individual has no free-will control over his participation and cannot leave the group without any conflict, and (b) Participation in a situation is not based on individuals’ characteristics, such as work condition, schools, communities, and so on (Wegner 1975).

Twining suggests that alienation is relatively likely to occur where a person does not have authority over his/her ‘immediate activities’ (Twining 1980: 425-26).

1.12. General or Specific Context Cause(s)

A very essential component of an alienation analysis is to identify the cause of alienation. Most papers in sociology suggest a set of defined causes which result in this issue; most well-known components are defined by Melvin Seeman. These formalized causes of separateness are applicable to literally all situations. “Low status” is the nature of many of the supposed sources and the threshold of alienation, such as misuse of labor in Marx, or failure in accomplishing cultural ambitions in Merton, and feeling powerless about what is influencing life in Seeman’s scheme (Wegner 1975: 183-84).

Despite the reasonableness and practicality of considering low status as the general cause of alienation, there are some problems. First, defining one or a set of general causes for all types of alienation is not logical. Low status does not necessarily bring into being alienated persons; in fact, alienation should be examined in relation with other aspects of personality. Second, not all
alienated people are low status. Indeed, middle class people struggle to achieve their improbable aims (Mizruchi 1964). Even more, although advantages of high status seldom lead to alienation, successful people too feel alienated. Moreover, alienation is not one single mode, but a set of different experiences originating from various bases which may not be related to the person’s status at all (Wegner 1975).

In contrast, there are those sociologists who believe in examination of each specific context of alienation to find out its particular causes. Classification of all types of alienation with a set of designated causes is unacceptable to them. Twining insists that alienation is a process and its starting point is situationally specific (Twining 1980). Scholars of this party suggest studying both individual’s personality and specific social context in order to reveal the cause(s). However, they leave the door open for general causes when social structure is capable of alienating individuals. In this approach, sociologist is expected to observe and study the situation extensively rather than applying the available general causes, and to try to understand how social structure affected people in that specific case. Finally, not only should they concentrate on individual’s dissatisfaction, but also study the case in terms of social structure to find out the total causes (Wegner 1975).

1.13. Alienation: Unidimensional or Multidimensional

Scholars, who support the idea of unidimensionality of alienation, believe that alienation has a general influence on an individual’s life. That is, if someone feels powerless – a mode of alienation- he/she eventually is more likely to feel meaningless. To prove their claim, they illustrate with modern society as a mass society in which many forces, embodying alienation, put pressure on everybody. Nonetheless, they admit various dimensions of alienation, but the
differences which divide dimensions are very delicate. Hence, every dimension presents the general issue of alienation (Travis 1986).

However, there is a relationship between modes of alienation, such as powerlessness and normlessness, whether one believes in the unidimensional or multidimensional approach (Dean 1961). As such, Dean deduces that this correlation brings the possibility that all these components are parts of the general concept. Moreover, Middleton finds very close links among different types of alienation (Middleton 1963). According to their study, also, Neal and Retting argue that unidimensionality and multidimensionality are not necessarily contradictory with each other if they are acquired from different components of the abstract concept of alienation in which “common elements” of the lower-order structure connect to each other (Neal and Retting 1967). Finally, Clark winds up logically the unidimensional approach by assuming that all dimensions of alienation share an ‘isolable feature’ which is deficiency of authority to solve the conflict of reality and idealism (Clark 1959: 849).

Other sociologists suggest the multidimensionality of alienation. The most accepted definition of multidimensionality, even by American Sociology, is Melvin Seeman’s five types of alienation: powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement (Wegner 1975). He and his supporters declare that alienation should not be considered unidimensional. Indeed, alienation occurs due to a variety of causes and it is experienced by many people from different times, different generations, and different contexts in different ways. Even more, two persons with apparently the same score of alienation are not experiencing the same feeling because their context and mode are not the same (Martin, et al. 1974). Having a context specific approach toward alienation leads to supporting a multidimensionality understanding of it, because what makes alienation a unique experience for
each individual, and therefore makes it multidimensional, is not only different causes of alienation, but also, even in the same situation, different types of personality (Wegner 1975).

1.14. Alienation in Art

Art, in many views, is a creative and positive response to alienation (Krishna 1970). In other words, art is a genius expression of alienation. It is like taking advantage of an unpleasant situation. There is a belief that alienation has always been present in arts. Many scholars and artists have such a philosophical approach toward the alienation of art which indicates man’s loneliness from the very beginning (Tillich 1984). In every type of alienation there is a hole between the individual’s self and the actual world, one's inner self and the outer self, one's own preferred concepts and the possible situation (Sinari 1970). Therefore, the artist, like every single human being, is alienated, and what he/she offers is in some way the expression of this alienation. Roy McMullen in the Art, Affluence, and Alienation claims that alienation is harmonious and helpful to artists as they can bring a new world within the actual world (McMullen 1968). Alienation is connected to creativity. In fact, there is an assumption by some that creative artists and scientists are alienated persons (Nettler 1957). Furthermore, Herbert Read, English poet and art critic, points out art is alienating in its nature; and thus, the role of the artist in society is alienating (Read 1967).

For some intellectuals, alienation is an artistic problem, as the problem is more related to dealing with the ideas than the production of merchandise. Believing so, Moravia argues that alienation is basically different, that the alienation of an artist is different from the alienation of a worker. He argues that the alienation of the worker derives from the fact that he is dependent on the market, and that he is a piece of merchandise: in short, his life is affiliated to the economy. The work of an artist, however, does not have a market, or at least it is not essential as is the one
of the worker; thus, the artist is not dependent on the market/economy. The value of the work of art is in creating it, so the artist has already earned what is essential, and what more he gets by selling is an extra profit. Therefore, the alienation of the artist consists of either his real relationship with society, or of the total or partial blockage of his expression (Moravia 1965-66).

The sociology of art, particularly of modern and contemporary arts, rooted in a 19th century perspective, accentuates the psychological and social alienation of the modern artist and the adversarial position of modern art. Sociological hypotheses of modern art and modernity generally derive from the dominant sociological ideas of Marx, Durkheim, Mallarme, Artaud, and others. Having a European traditional background, LaChapelle explains "the unique and radically changed imagery of the modern visual arts is generally understood to be a product of a social situation around the turn of the century in which an avant-garde existed as a minority culture to attack and deny the values of a dominant culture that was bourgeois in nature" (LaChapelle 1984: 37). Poggioli, who introduced this view, believes that the modern artist, or in his word "avant-garde", struggles with psychological and social alienation because of developing a culture contrary to the dominant culture of the society (Poggioli 1968).

In seeing art from Hegel’s and Feuerbach’s —Marx’s forerunners-- point of view, Fischer brings out their concept of "externalization" and "objectification" which says: a person acts upon his/her environment in which he/she makes social or physical or cultural objects that are distinct from him-or herself, which express objectively this activity, and thus, the individual's subjectivity. Fischer uses visual art, for example painting, which stands separate for the artist and 'objectifies' his feelings. A social relationship also is a fact recognizable from the person of the group, but still depicts his/her personality. According to the "Externalization" concept, which differentiates between “I” and the created object of “I”, alienation is the process of disconnection
between a person and his/her externalization (Fischer 1976: 41). Marx, however, sees everything in relation to labor, and not surprisingly, criticizes the arts as “ivory-tower” and escapism (Jarrett 1972: 186).

For Jarrett, art is the means for us, alienated people, to respond to the disturbing phenomena of our lives such as discrimination, snobbishness, exploitation, and more (Jarrett 1972).

Sinari argues that an alienated person swings between the emotional state of desolateness, and rational feelings of belonging to somewhere. When the former feeling is stronger, in an intense neurotic situation, the individual feels extremely alienated. In contrast, tending more to the rational part shows that the individual’s mental state is not everlasting, and also proves that the alienated person is capable of creating and expressing his experience of alienation through art (Sinari 1970).

For psychologists, as well as sociologists, there are two types of aliened people: “sick” or destructive, and “healthy” or artistic. The former is considered a social problem, while the latter is the cultured people of society. In fact, as Sinari believes, creative alienated people are the “overgrown” “outsiders”, wisely alienating themselves from the majority by their miraculous insights and exceptional genius, who make the progress of a healthier society possible. Moreover, history would have been insignificant without great souls that illuminated the world and peoples and created new beliefs, such as Socrates, Buddah, Gandhi, and more. Indeed, as Sinari continues, every single social and cultural transition in the world owes, at least, one creative “alien” without whose offering of new values the transition is not possible (Sinari 1970: 128).
In studying art works, and examining the alienation embedded in them, Elizabeth Bird emphasizes the “facts” around the cultural production in order to completely understand cultural and artistic forms. She believes, that although studying these facts are not essential in understanding the piece in art criticism or art history, for sociologists the context in which art is produced is very crucial (Bird 1979).
CHAPTER 2
EDWARD HOPPER: AMERICAN REALIST PAINTER (1882-1967)

Edward Hopper is one of the most celebrated and beloved American painters in art history. His love for America is delicately shown through his oil paintings of the scenes of the country. Following Realism, his technique was not new for his time; in fact it might be old-fashioned, but the scenes and the themes he painted brought the position he has had then and now. He was a painter of modern life in America during his lifetime.

“Great art is the outward expression of an inner life in the artist, and this inner life will result in his personal vision of the world” (1959 June 17). Edward Hopper said, and he knew that it was his vision that made his paintings significant, that penetrate souls, not his Realistic style. Hopper painted from everyday life scenes, cityscapes and nature views of America in the Modern era. But, making realistic paintings for Hopper does not mean to imitate directly from reality. He painted his vision of the reality; added some elements, deleted some, to deliver the concept of reality without any redundancy. Coming from a traditional background and living in the modern time, Hopper understood the occurring transition from past to modern. He knew how people emotionally struggle with their new status as a modern man. And most of all, he could capture these ideas and feelings and express them in his paintings. But how Hopper could manage to do that impossible by that simple technique, I believe that is the mystery of art.

Hopper’s paintings are famous for carrying the feeling of “alienation”, “loneliness”, “isolation”, and “emptiness” (Boyd 2004; Crewdson 2008; Haskell, et al. 2009; Koob 2004; Levin 2006; Nemerov 2008; Nochlin 1981; Read 1933; Renner 2002; Theisen 2006; Troyen, et al. 2007; Tyler 1957). Such a feeling in Hopper’s world is connected to the modern life. In still
scenes of city, in empty rooms, in lonely figures, and even in crowded compositions, alienation is the prominent feeling or concept of Hopper’s painting.

Despite his silence and isolation in life, Hopper was an aware man of his surroundings and he cared for the culture and the society. He read a lot; in fact, some critics believe that the ideas of his paintings stem from the very famous book of the 1950s, *The Lonely Crowd* (Riesman, et al. 1950) in which examines the constriction of economically eager, consumption base, and flourishing culture on one hand, and the uncertainties and anxieties hidden under the skin of the society on the other hand.

Looking at Hopper’s paintings is an experience, not only aesthetically, but mystically. It is also personal, because as a human being in this Modern world, viewers have experienced the scene they are seeing in the frame; or at least they have seen someone in this situation. One may feel he/she was witnessed by the painter when having that moment. The paintings take the viewer deeper than the surface of the canvas, to unspeakable moments of everyday life, to the beneath layers of personalities, to the depth of humanity. Indeed, Hopper leaves his technique to the frame and goes beyond the frame, to the souls, by his vision.

But to know how much of alienation in Hopper’s paintings is rooted from his social and cultural concerns, and how much of it is originated from his private life and personality, requires learning about both.

2.1. Biography

Edward Hopper was born on July 22, 1882, in Nyack, New York to a middle class wealthy enough family. Coming from a Dutch lineage, his parents were Garret Henry Hopper who was a dry-good merchant, and Elizabeth Griffiths Smith. Edward’s only sibling was his two year older sister Marion Louise. His maternal grandmother and a maid, also, lived with them;
thus, the atmosphere of the house was more feminine, especially that his father was not that patriarch. The Hoppers were a conservative family and belonged to the Nyack Baptist Church (Levin 2006).

Early, as a young child, he showed his talent to his family who then provided him with art supplies and instructive books. Edward shared the love of art with his mother, who had experienced art in her youth and motivated her children to do arts, and shared the passion for American history with his father who had a big library at home and believed of himself as a cultural man rather than a merchant. Since his childhood, Edward wanted to be a painter; evidently he had a paint box on which he made and taped a “would-be artist” label (Goldman Rubin 2007). Having extraordinary talent and perseverance, Edward Hopper was comfortable working with many different medium, such as charcoal, pen and ink, watercolor, and oil painting by his adolescence.

By the age of twelve, he suddenly started to grow taller up to six feet five inches. His schoolmates made fun of him for that and called him “Grasshopper” (Goldman Rubin 2007). Consequently, he felt awkward, different from other peers, and thus, spent most of his time alone, reading or drawing. Obviously, he felt alienated by his height; as a matter of fact, he expressed his feelings on his *The Great Eastern* painting: “Alone Alone All, All Alone Alone on a Wide Wide Sea” (Goldman Rubin 2007:5-7).

Along with the theme of loneliness, Hopper took the love of boats from his childhood to his paintings. Growing up in a yacht building area, boat was a favorite subject for Hopper. He was interested in making and working with boats, too. Even, in his teens, for a quite short time, he decided to work on boats instead of doing arts.
The teen age Hopper drew several self-portraits representing him realistically although he did not like his appearance. Despite his quietness and unhappiness with his body, he was humorous, a great sense which helped him to express freely his obsessions of his height, features, and loneliness.

By the age of seventeen, Edward Hopper was determined to pursue art. His parents were supportive to his decision; however, regarding future, they asked him to study commercial arts to have a safe and regular income. Correspondence School of Illustration was the first art school Hopper attended by making daily trips to New York City. But a year after, he transferred to a better and well known school; New York School of Art. He stayed there for six years where he had brilliant teachers, such as William Merritt Chase, the founder of school and oil painting teacher, and deeply influential Robert Henry, along with great fellows who then became famous painters, such as George Bellows, Rockwell Kent, and Guy Pene du Bois, Hopper’s lifelong friend. Although art was very serious to him, Hopper made the school more fun by using his humor.

Due to his satisfactory works and attendance, in 1904, the school invited him to teach drawing and painting in Saturday classes which lasted for about one year. Then, trying to earn more money than teaching income, he worked as an illustrator for advertising agencies; a job that Hopper economically remained dependent on for the next twenty years.

At the age of twenty four, with the financial help of his parents, Hopper travelled to Europe, stayed in Paris, and visited London, Berlin, and Amsterdam. He went to Paris to study the new movements of art, and although he practiced copying masterpieces and liked some, such as Degas, Millet, and Manet, he studied alone and apparently was not influenced deeply by any new art. Even, surprisingly, he said he never heard of Picasso there. Nevertheless, he always
loved French culture and art (Levin 1981). Hopper managed to travel back to Europe, especially Paris, for the next following years.

Hopper’s first exhibition took place in 1908 as a member of Henri’s circle. Along with his fellows, Hopper had three pieces in the show. It was the beginning of his many group exhibitions for the years to come, including the exclusive International Exhibition of Modern Art, known as “Armory Show” in New York City. Hopper participated in about ten group shows prior to his first solo exhibition, “Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings, and Etchings,” which was organized by his friend Pene du Bois, at the Whitney Studio Club in New York City in 1920.

Despite his reputation in school and his incredible talent in drawing, watercolor, etching, and oil painting, Hopper had to struggle for many years. Since he could not earn money from his paintings, he worked as a commercial artist asking for jobs from different agencies in New York, where he permanently moved in 1908. Moreover, in the beginning, he had difficulties with what to draw and paint. This creativity blockage made an emotionally painful situation for him; nonetheless, he did not stop trying, in fact, he spent more hours behind his easel to come up with ideas. In order to find inspiration, he travelled to Gloucester, Massachusetts, where he painted his first outdoor art works in America, especially his famous lighthouses.

In the summer of 1920, on one of his trips to New England, his favorite place for painting from nature, he meet up with his classmate from art school, Josephine Nivision who came to paint from New England scenes, too. She was a productive painter as well and supported her life by teaching art to children in New York City. Once again, in 1923 they met in Gloucester; a place where he painted many watercolors. Then, in July 1924, they got married and remained together for the rest of their life. (Figure 1)
Edward Hopper and Jo (her nickname) were very different. Unlike Hopper, Jo was short, hardly five feet one inch, and very light. She was outgoing, communicative, chatty, and liberal, whereas Hopper was introspective, shy, quiet, cryptic, and conservative. She was not only a wife, she put Hopper’s career prior to hers and become his manager, she posed for his paintings and was his main model, and most of all she was his friend. Nonetheless, they both were intellectual and cultural. They shared the passion for art and French poetry. They loved to go to movies and theaters, and enjoyed their companionship.

Regarding her social skills, Jo helped Hopper to exhibit some of his watercolors in Brooklyn Museum show. The critics liked his work and the museum bought one of them. The
following year, he sold all of his watercolors and after a while he gave up commercial art as he could afford his life by selling his artworks. Hopper was forty one years old when he received the acceptance and honor he truly deserved; however, he kept his bitter sense of his career for a long time. Hopper and Jo had a simple life. They spent their money on culture, buying books, going to theatre, and travelling to paint from the scenes; not on any extravagant furniture or clothing. They bought their first car in the summer of 1927. Beside their New York apartment, Jo and Hopper made a house in South Truro on Cape Cod, Massachusetts in which they spent almost every summer since 1934.

From the mid-1920s when Hopper’s success flourished, it has never stopped being well-known. For more than four decades, he pursued art successfully and displayed his works in hundreds of exhibitions all around the country. He had been thorough a lot in his life, but he always was the same person and never changed. He died on May 1967, at the age of eighty four. Very soon, ten months later, his wife Jo, joined him peacefully (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Edward Hopper and his wife, Jo, in a colony studio in 1957 (1957).
2.2. Hopper’s Alienation

Alienation in Edward Hopper’s art is mostly related to Modern life; especially, the cultural, and societal transition, which changed how man viewed himself, and how he related to his society. Obviously, Hopper did not like these changes, and his expressed his suspicious feelings about that in his paintings. He saw the agony of individuals of their new status; modern man in which loneliness is an inseparable part of life (Berger, et al. 1973). Hopper saw and felt this loneliness everywhere; in the privacy of bedrooms (Figure 3), in the solitude of a client at a restaurant (Figure 4), and in the absent presence of a man/woman in a crowd (Figure 5 and Figure 6). He saw the alienation of the crowded (Figure 7) and the deserted city (Figure 8).
Figure 3. Morning Sun, 1952. Oil on canvas. 71.4 by 101.9 cm. Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio (Levin 1980: 278).
Figure 4. Automat, 1927. Oil on canvas. 71.4 by 91.4 cm Des Moined Art Center, Iowa (Levin 1980: 234).
Figure 5. Nighthawks, 1942. Oil on canvas, 84.1 by 152.4 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago (Levin 1980: 270).
Figure 6. First Row Orchestra, 1951. Oil on canvas 78.7 by 101.5 cm. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (Levin 1980: 248)
Figure 7. New York Corner, or Corner Saloon, 1913. Oil on canvas, 61 by 73.7 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York (Levin 1980: 185).
Figure 8. Early Sunday Morning, 1930. Oil on canvas, 89.4 by 153 cm. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (Levin 1960: 267).
Hopper expressed the concept of “alienation” in his paintings mostly thorough the subject matter—directly or indirectly—with the help of composition, and technique. However, analyzing the alienation in the paintings is not sufficient without studying the creator, in order to see if the alienation implied in the piece comes from the deep trait of the artist or rooted in the surroundings which then influenced his ideas consciously or unconsciously. Or maybe both.

Here three important components of the alienation in Hopper’s art are examined: his personality, the subject matter, and the technique.

2.3. Personality

In his book, *Art and Alienation*, Herbert Read doubts the possibility of separating a man from his art (Read 1967). Generally the essence of the artist is so embedded in his art that identifying them separately is very difficult. However, it shows that every piece of art represents its creator in some way. Therefore, examining artworks is the way of gaining acquaintance with the personality of the artist. On the other hand, we can trace the personality of an artist in his artworks. In fact, the art and the artist feed each other.

Edward Hopper also acknowledged the relationship of personality and art when he said “Great art is the outward expression of an inner life in the artist” (1959 June 17). However, he believed that the personality of a person is very strong that almost never changes:

“In every artist's development the germ of the later work is always found in the earlier. The nucleus around which the artist's intellect builds his work is himself: the central ego, personality, or whatever it may be called, and this changes little from birth to death. What he was once, he always is, with slight modification. Changing fashions in methods or subject matter alter him little or not at all” (Renner 2002: 11-14).

Evidently, Hopper thinks personality has a huger impact on art than art on personality. This vision of not changing ego, at least, is absolutely true about Hopper himself; Hopper was a tough man.
There are some traits of Hopper that are assumed as the source, or the co-source, of the alienation in his paintings. Whether or not we believe that Hopper was an alienated person, or how we define his alienation, these characteristics of Hopper are recognizable in his works: quietness or silence, stillness, calmness, unsociability, frugality, and individualism. These qualities are usually very likely to suggest interpretation as alienation; however, according to the social and psychological alienation studies, it does not necessarily mean that a person with these traits is or feels alienated.

Despite his strong figure, Edward Hopper was a shy man. He was a child when he first felt self-conscious as a result of growing very tall, taller than every peer around who teased him for that. As a matter of fact, he left group activities and preferred solo ones such as reading and drawing. Apparently, he was not happy with his features as an adolescent either, but he used to make fun of himself and draw self-portraits (Goldman Rubin 2007). As a young man, Hopper was anxious about his baldness and wrote about his “progressive” baldness to his mother in April 1907. He was bald by the time he was in Paris and was very self-conscious about it. During those years Hopper wore a hat in photos (Levin 1980) (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Self-Portrait, 1925-30. Oil on canvas, 64.1 by 52.4 cm. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (Levin 1980: 87).
Hopper was silent most of the time. He was resistant to talk even for social purposes (Theisen 2006). In a good description, Hopper was a “man of no words” (Levin 2006). Not only uttering words, but also writing was difficult for him. He once wrote a letter to Watson, the editor of *The Arts*, in December 1926, describing his struggle with writing a note on John Sloan (American painter): "I sweat blood when I write and a thing that you could probably do in a day would take me I am sure a week or two" (McCoy, et al. 1967: 15). However, he wrote some notes or statements for his or friends’ exhibitions. In fact, he was silent as a person, but as an artist he was never silent and said what he needed to another way of communicating; in painting. “If I could say it in words there would be no reason to paint” (1959 June 17); thus, his silence, Hopper was very modest and demure in behavior; well dressed and courteous (Goodrich, et al. 1981). In practice, he was slow moving as well, which could be an equivalent for stillness in his paintings. He was not a person of excitement in any way which is reflected in his paintings; particularly, as Henkes indicates, in *Locomotive D & RG* in which in spite of the assumed speed, the vehicle looks still and quiet (Henkes 1993) (Figure 10).

![Figure 10. Locomotive D & RG, 1925. Watercolor, 31.3 by 50 cm (Geldzahler 1962: 115).](image-url)
Raphael Soyer described Hopper in his first session with him for oil study: “There is a loneliness about him, an Habitual moroseness, a sadness to the point of anger. His voice breaks the silence loudly and sepulchrally. He posed still with folded hands on the table. A few times he raised his folded hands and scratched his ear with the tip of one of his intertwined fingers. We hardly conversed” (Goodrich, et al. 1981: 130).

In spite of leaving his small town to live in New York City, Edward Hopper never became involved with the city on a regular basis, nor tied his identity with it (Theisen 2006). He was unsociable and isolated. He liked to be in a deserted spot in the parties; thus, he could watch people (Goodrich, et al. 1981). As he was alone even in the middle of parties, Hopper was an expert in depicting isolation in the crowd; loneliness within social activity (Henkes 1993). A very good example of this isolation is Soir Bleu in which specifically the clown is very lonely, and also bald (Figure 11).

However, he was not disconnected from society; he and his wife used to go to movies, theaters, and galleries quite often. He read a lot and was very aware of society. He might not like engaging in groups or social activities, but he knew and watched what was going on around him, and indeed, he cared for society and culture. Hopper was an observer of his country and people.

All together, Edward Hopper was an “inner-directed” man representing an old generation of Americans, prior to contemporary, who are not shy in their isolation and simplicity (Troyen, et al. 2007).

2.4. Subject Matter

In Hopper’s artworks, whether watercolor or etching or oil painting, it is not his technique that stuns the viewers; as for example in Michelangelo’s works. Although master in those mediums, at the first glance, they look simple and accessible; in fact, Hopper admitted having “a very simple method of painting” (1959 June 17).

Since Hopper has proved his extraordinary talent in drawing and painting, this simplicity is not due to the painter’s weakness in execution. In fact, it is a wise decision Hopper made in order to give predominance to his subject matter, his vision. In his art, technique and the style are in favor of the subject matter and the message he tries to deliver thorough his works. In other words, the technique comes after the subject in his paintings, almost respectfully invisible to provide the opportunity to see what is going on in the picture; to think about the meaning. While in Michelangelo’s works, his technique is so impeccable, so significant and powerful that at some point you do not even need to understand the subject or at least care about that. Of coarse his sculptures and paintings have stories and meanings, but Michelangelo’s style and technique overpower the subject.
Furthermore, Hopper had a purpose in his paintings. He was not a believer in “art for art’s sake.” He used painting to express his feelings in a communicative way. As he wrote in his statement, “Notes on Painting”, in the catalogue of his exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1933:

“My aim in painting has always been the most exact transcription possible of my most intimate impression of nature….I have tried to present my sensations in what is the most congenial and impressive form possible to me. The technical obstacles of painting perhaps dictate this form. It derives also from the limitations of personality, and such may be the simplifications that I have attempted…. I believe that the great painters, with their intellect as master, have attempted to force the unwilling medium of paint and canvas into a record of their emotions. I find any digression from this large aim leads me to boredom”(1959 June 17).

For Hopper, painting is a means of revealing his vision. He once said he would not paint if he could verbalize it (1959 June 17). This approach is not appreciated in Modern art, but Hopper did not hesitate to declare his opinion; and he even criticized modern movements of art in the twentieth century for not communicating with nature, and thus called them “purely decorative”(1959 June 17).

Everyday life and nature are the main sources of subject matter for Edward Hopper. During the years of being a student at New York School of Art, Robert Henry taught life class. He turned the attention of his students to ordinary life, which he believed should be reflected in art as subject matter (McCoy, et al. 1967). Henry was full of life and his ideas were very influential for his students, especially Hopper. However, long before, in his childhood, young Hopper used to draw from his surroundings, particularly boats. Therefore, Henry made him revitalize what he had done before.

As a matter of fact, inspiration from common life is considered very genuine in arts in general. Take incidents and situations from ordinary life, Wordsworth said, and then add a cover of imagination over them, so that, the creator’s heart and mind have a greater base on which to
achieve their maturity. He also thinks that feelings and thoughts of real life are more accurate, powerful, and yet simple. Wordsworth makes clear that choosing subject matter from life does not mean exchanging information and statistics. Since these subjects come from real life, they are objects of strong influential feelings, feelings that are capable of being perceived and shared. Indeed, in this approach, matured feelings make the ordinary situation significant; situations do not make the feelings outstanding (Eldridge 2003).

This is exactly what Edward Hopper did for painting; looking around carefully, at people in different places and different situations, at the buildings, the new faces of the city, at the nature, and then capturing the atmosphere of the situations. He developed these scenes and concepts in his mind; removing unnecessary elements; emphasizing the other elements that he thinks are more useful for his aim; and that is the reality through his vision. Gail Levin, who has many publications on Edward Hopper, identifies fifteen themes in Hopper’s paintings: solitary figures, nautical, lighthouses, Gloucester, architecture, cities, traveling man, local color, restaurant, theater, offices, couples, times of day, Cape Cod, and sunlight (Levin 1980: 41-64). Interestingly, in all of these paintings, he manages to express a feeling of alienation, loneliness, or estrangement.

However, Hopper’s interest in inspiration from ordinary scenes of everyday life was not appreciated in the beginning. In the first show of his watercolors, although Hopper did a good job and critics liked his works, they found his subject matter “curious,” and not attractive. Moreover, a critic said his paintings with the subject matter of Gloucester are usually “ugly,” but still his paintings are beautiful. Nevertheless, one critic, referring to a painting of an old house as an assumed “inartistic” subject matter, said that Hopper is intelligent and original enough to break the bad opinions against his subjects and influence them. Finally, the negative critiques
turned to adoration of Hopper’s ability and eye to find and reveal the beauty in some supposedly unattractive ugly subjects, such as grotesque buildings; subjects that only a high vision can see as beautiful (McCoy, et al. 1967).

2.5. Technique

Aside from giving the priority to subject matter by using a simple style and technique, the Realism that Hopper applies is compatible with the subjects. He depicts the concept of reality in his era, in a very frank, yet mysterious way. The simplicity of style equals frankness, and the detail-less-ness of his style provides the ambiguity of the atmosphere of the image.

In addition, the detail-less-ness in the execution of painting, like in the faces, makes room for viewers’ imagination. It is as if this blurred face might be yours, or the one you saw somewhere before. Even more, it is not the face, or the exact person you are watching, but the situation he/she is in at the moment in the painting.

From another point of view, this detail-less-ness of the painting is alienating. You, as the viewer cannot get to know, or feel close to the figure in the image. You cannot be sure where it is in the picture. However, coming from real life, the scenes are familiar. This paradox—familiar stranger, or estranged homeland—implies the concept and feeling of alienation in the image perfectly. You feel something, but you don’t know, this is the immediate reaction to Hopper’s paintings.

In order to express “loneliness” and “alienation,” another technique Hopper applies is shortage of objects, and large empty spaces in the composition (Henkes 1993). Vast plain walls, unoccupied seats, large rooms with one or few figures, vacant buildings and streets, isolated lighthouses, open windows to the streets or landscapes, and so on. These deserted spaces put emphasis on the loneliness concept.
Moreover, “stillness” and the “quietness” of the paintings, brings alienation to the picture. As in *Office at Night*, the two figures are in their work place and engaged with their job. The woman, probably the secretary, is looking for something in the drawer, while the man is reading a paper. At first glance, they are working and maybe communicating, but then you will realize that they are having a special profound moment that makes them stop for a few seconds, and disconnect with their surroundings. In fact, they are individually lonely, not communicating and Hopper amazingly captures the “stillness” of this moment.

In *Ground Swell* the “quietness” quality of the picture is reinforced by the vast blue sea and blue sky and white clouds and white sail. Even in this exciting trip, the group is silently attracted to a strange bell buoy which is the only dark element in the painting threatening the calmness of the group, and the painting (Nemerov 2008).

The colors in Hopper’s paintings are tinted; therefore, they are not very bright and exciting. It is like a sheer white curtain over the paintings which keeps the colors, but reduces the shine. This technique brings a quality of calmness to the picture, and makes the whole painting express a cold atmosphere. Again, this style is very harmonious with what Hopper intends to say. Modern life, with all the technological achievements, looks very glamorous; flashlights in the streets, colorful store, and so on, but under the skin of all these dazzling scenes, loneliness, and alienation is streaming; it is not a warm environment to live in. This tinting technique which reduces the saturation and brightness of the colors brings a vague sadness, ambiguity, and uncertainty of the time to the picture.

Ultimately, we can not precisely separate a subject matter from the style, and the art from the artist’s personality. No one can exactly say which elements and qualities of an artwork have been originated from personality or environment. But we all are welcome to think, guess, and
analyze art works, and the best and fair way is to do it holistically. After all, “mystery” is a very intrinsic trait of art: taking it away would reduce the “beauty” of it.
CHAPTER 3

JACKSON POLLOCK: AMERICAN ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONIST (1912-1956)

Jackson Pollock is a much praised and universally well-known, influential, and very successful American Modernist painter in the Abstract Expressionist movement. His uniqueness in expressing his feelings, respecting his own ideas, and more importantly, pursuing his goal in art while he was struggling with some serious personal problems in his life, make him an icon of the Modern era. He is among those few visual artists who enjoyed honors and appreciations in their lifetime.

Despite the attractive façade of his success, Pollock had a difficult life. Perhaps, the biggest problem in life was himself, his tough personality, his depression, and his addiction to alcohol which was never solved, and caused him an untimely death.

Pollock believed "Every good artist paints what he is" (Rodman 1961: 84-85). In that sense, knowing the artist is essential to understand the artwork; especially in the case of Pollock whose paintings neither have subject matters, nor names.

3.1. Biography

Paul Jackson Pollock was born on January 28th, 1912 in Cody, Wyoming. He was the fifth and the youngest son of the family. His ancestors were Scotch and Irish. His mother was Stella nee McClure, who believed all of his sons, especially Jackson, are potential genuine artists, and unlike her husband, she strongly recommended them to get as much education as they could, because that’s what no one can take away from them (Potter 1985). A woman who once had a dream of being an artist, Stella was a strong woman, the most powerful figure of the family, and hopeful about her children (Wysuph 1970). His father, Le Roy Pollock was originally a farmer, and then became a surveyor. He was a quiet, easygoing man, with no
significant accomplishment in life. As a result of the Depression, which plunged the family into a never improved poverty, he was a sad man.

Because of his father’s job, the family moved several times within the United States, mostly in Arizona, and North California where they settled down in 1925. As a matter of fact, Jackson made few friends outside the family. Similar to his father, Pollock was a quiet boy, did not like to talk. He had periodical depression and withdrawal (Wysuph 1970).

Apparently, Jackson was a trouble-making student. Frank Pollock (his brother) said that he and Jackson did not learn anything at school. Jackson had a hard time in school, was not expressing what was in his mind. His brothers were very active, having girlfriends, but he was doing nothing, with no girl. He was around fifteen, almost a kid, when his brother caught Jackson drinking beer. Allegedly, his wild behavior caused him to be expelled from school after a fight with an ROTC officer (Pollock 1978).

Following his oldest brother Charles, Jackson became interested in art. In the Fall of 1928, pursuing his dream, he enrolled at Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles where he first started to draw in art class. Initially, Pollock hated his drawing, and was disappointed. He doubted his ability of drawing in a letter to his successful brother, Charles. However, under the influence of his unorthodox art teacher, Schwankovsky, Pollock made an artistic identity for himself at school, and tried to look like his teacher (Solomon 1967). Schwankovsky acquainted Pollock to theology and Krishnamurti’s ideas; hence, since Pollock had not been raised in a religious family, it was his first experience of that knowledge (Pollock 1978). Then, Pollock was expelled again from school; this time for participation in a written protest against the faculty of the school, asking for “fair treatment” and not too much emphasis on sport (Pollock 1978).
the help of his favorite teacher, Schwankovsky, the school permitted Pollock to attend again for spring semester part time, not full time.

However, Pollock left the school without being graduating. He moved to New York with his two brothers, Charles and Frank to attend Art Students League where he met with Thomas Hart Benton (American Painter), Benton taught murals, and if one looks at his paintings, Pollock was influenced by him. For the next year, he received student aid and tuition loans. He was very interested in mural classes and was successful in that; he received free tuition. He attended more drawing and sculpture classes later. In February 1935 he displayed his work in a group show for the first time in the Brooklyn Museum, in which for the first time, thanks to the secure income from the exhibition project, he started developing his personal style. Jackson and his brother moved to an apartment where he stayed for ten years.

During the following years he went through some serious personal problems. In January 1937, following his brother’s recommendation, he started psychiatric treatment for his alcoholism. In July of the same year, Pollock was arrested for breaching the peace and being drunk, while staying with Benton’s family. It was a very difficult time of his life: drinking too much; and, thus, feeling more unstable and insecure, and making trouble for himself and his family (Pollock 2002).

Once again in his life, in 1938, Pollock was expelled from the Federal Art Project for his extensive nonattendances. Then, he, acting decisively, checked in to New York Hospital to clean his body from alcohol. With Benton’s encouragement, Pollock made many hammered copper bowls and plaques, while having treatments. He was hired again for FAP, but with less money (Pollock 1978).
Pollock continued his therapy in 1939, using his drawing as a means of therapy. The pressure on him was tenser when, along with other artists, he lost his job due to the political ideas behind the art project; apparently, because of the Communistic ideas and artistic project related to the project, politicians considered it a “left-wing organization” (Duffy 2009). That caused further social and political pressure on Pollock for having sympathy with Communism. Meanwhile, his brother was very hopeful that Jackson’s work would get attention in the future; especially since, at that time, he had freed himself from the influence of Benton’s style.

In 1941, Lee Krasner realized that Jackson Pollock, whom she met five years earlier at a party, was living in the neighborhood. She met him in his studio, and they established their relationship which lasted until Pollock’s death (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Lee Krasaner and Jackson Pollock at his studio, in Long Island, 1950 (Landau 1989: 84).
In 1942 John Graham invited Pollock to display his work at the McMillan Gallery where many other artists, including Lee Krasner, were exhibiting as well. Pollock’s relationship with Lee was very important for him. She introduced him to significant teachers, promoted his paintings, arranged interviews for him, supported and encouraged him. Lee moved in with Pollock in the summer. Pollock worked as Lee’s assistant in some art projects for a while, including European Modernists, Surrealists at Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of This Century Gallery, which he was expelled from for abuse of alcohol.

Acquaintance with Peggy Guggenheim in 1942, which he obtained thorough Lee’s relationships with her, was very important in Pollock’s life. She invited Pollock and his colleague, Motherwell, to display his works at the Art of This Century Gallery in 1943.

In the same year, after his show, Pollock got a job as an attendant at the Museum of Non-Objective Painting (now the Solomon Guggenheim Museum). At the same gallery, Pollock engaged in the Spring Salon for Young Artists with *Stenographic Figure*. The jury included famous artists: Duchamp, Putzel, Sweeney, James Thrall Soby, Peggy Guggenheim, and Piet Mondrian; who was very interested in Pollock’s stenographic figure, and praising it as “the most interesting work I’ve seen so far in America” (Pollock 2002: 239).

Encouraged by others, Guggenheim offered Pollock the opportunity to display his first solo exhibition of drawings and paintings at her gallery, Art of This Century. She also offered him a year-long contract, letting Pollock devote himself to full time painting; and commissioned a six meter long painting of whatever he desired for the entrance of her house. Again Pollock became a full time painter, doing murals and other paintings. It was the beginning of his good fortune, his success in his life. It was followed by purchase of his work, *The Self-Wolf*, by the
Museum of Modern Art. This was his first painting that a museum obtained. Always financially struggling, it was a breakthrough.

On October 25, 1945, in a religious ceremony, Jackson Pollock married Lee Krasner at the Marble Collegiate Church. They moved into their new house with a barn on Long Island, NY, which had a view of Accabonac Creek that Pollock loved. It was a time when he was not working on any painting.

He started painting in 1946 again, using a top floor bedroom as his studio. He was working on his collection for his third solo exhibition at Art of This Century. He also designed the cover of *Out of This Century*, Peggy Guggenheim’s book of memoirs. Pollock received affirmative comments from critics. He turned the barn into his studio, leaving the inside one for Lee. According to her, Pollock’s schedule during this time period was staying up too late, sleeping until noon, spending two hours over a cup of coffee, getting to work in the afternoon until dark. Although unhappy with his schedule, she praised what he could create in those few hours (Pollock 2002).

For the next few years he was honored and respected very much as “the greatest living painter in the United States” (Seiberlling 1949: 42). Not only in America, but also in Europe, Pollock was admired. He had a solo exhibition in Italy in 1950 and in Paris in 1952. In fact, he was the first American Abstract painter who was taken seriously in Europe. During the last three years of his life, Pollock became very inactive in painting. He declared to his therapist that he was uncertain if he had anything to say (Pollock 2002). Unlike Pollock, who was having his down periods in painting, Lee started to pursue her success, and in 1955 she displayed her works of collages in a one-woman show at the Stable Gallery. However, Pollock still received honor;
this time from the Museum of Modern Art, which was preparing a series of exhibitions devoted to Pollock.

In July 1956, Lee left for Europe, while their marriage was in a critical situation, due to Pollock’s alcoholism and depression. Moreover, he was having an affair with a model who moved in with him during his wife’s absence. On the night of August 11, 1956, Pollock and his mistress and her friend were on the road. He was drunk and driving. In an intense accident, his car crashed into a tree. The mistress’s friend and Pollock were killed. Pollock was forty-four when he died. Lee came back from Europe right away for his funeral. She tried to keep Pollock’s reputation alive in the world as much as she could, although she had been about to revaluate their relationship (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock in front of Number I, 1949 (Landau 1989: 156).
3.2. Pollock’s Alienation

Jackson Pollock was an alienated man. He was an unsociable person with difficult characteristics. During his lifetime, since a school boy, he was struggling with his personality. Pollock suffered from depression and alcoholism his whole life, from his teen years onward. His style reflects his mental problems; in fact, his therapists used his drawing as a device to examine his problems (Vernon and Baughman 1972). However, his alienation has a very creative expression: painting. Regarding this, Pollock’s paintings are tied to his personality, as I believe that without knowing Pollock as a person, appreciation of his art is difficult (if not impossible).

Moreover, studying Pollock’s technique is important in order to find out how he expressed his feelings, including his severe depression, through paintings.

3.3. Personality

Jackson Pollock was a creative person. He did not hesitate to show his ideas and feelings in his art, which for many people could be a barrier. When he was painting, he was completely committed to that:

“When I am in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after a sort of 'get acquainted' period that I see what I have been about. I have no fear of making changes, destroying the image, etc., because the painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through. It is only when I lose contact with the painting that the result is a mess. Otherwise there is pure harmony, an easy give and take, and the painting comes out well” (Robertson 1960: 194).

Jackson Pollock was spontaneous in doing art. He did not practice or sketch to develop his paintings. He just did it when it emerged from him. Indeed, Pollock’s art owes his personality more than any other artist. The affect of his characteristics is clearly traceable in his art as well as in his life.
The most significant characteristic of Jackson Pollock is his rebelliousness. This is a crucial trait in his life, art, and popularity. If it was not for this trait, he would not have many of his troubles, such as being expelled from school, in his life; which led him to more troublesome characters and situations (Pollock 1978). Moreover, breaking the most commonplace rule of painting, which is no longer a rule, calls for a risk-taking person. He rebelled against brush, easel, and all painting tools, using simple objects of everyday life. He was even against the rules of art (Solomon 1967). Furthermore, rebelliousness made him stand out among other artists, in the time when being different was essentially valuable.

However, rebellion is an alienating trait by its nature. It shows that the person is not satisfied with whatever he is rebelling against. And Pollock was a rebel.

Another alienating characteristic of Pollock was that he was unsociable. He was bored among his classmates at school, and did not talk much. In fact, Pollock was a quiet man, which was the reason he liked painting as a means of expression without utterance. He did not hesitate to be egotistical (Solomon 1967).

Affected by the Depression and struggling with financial problem since his childhood, Pollock was frightened and insecure about the future. Even his famous signature style, action-painting, did not happen until he found a financial supporter. As a teen, a couple of times, he stole food and gasoline (Pollock 2002).

Moreover, he was afraid of the future, because he did not believe in his talent and ability (Pollock 1978; Pollock 2002; Solomon 1967). He had big ambitions, but could not see that he had the capacity of reaching them inside him. Once, despite his not very promising art abilities, he told his friend that he was going to New York to become an artist like Michelangelo (Solomon 1967).
Pollock had been unstable since his childhood. At high school, under the influence of his art teacher, he grew his hair long to his shoulders, like the teacher; and changed his name, unofficially, to Hugo, in order to look like European artists (Solomon 1967).

Depression had been with Pollock since he was very young. That might be due to the frequently changing environment due to his father’s job, or their poverty, or all the traits counted above. In addition to his depression, Pollock was an alcoholic from the age of fifteen. The more he became depressed, the more he drank. Depression might be the source of his paintings, but he did not paint while intoxicated. For his whole life Pollock was under treatment for depression, voluntarily, or with the encouragement of his family. He had ups and downs, but never completely healed.

After all, it is a blessing to be able to transform problems into art works, and Pollock was very strong in expressing his emotions through art. His style, Abstract Expressionist, comes from his idea that: “The modern artist is working with space and time, and expressing his feelings rather than illustrating” (Pollock 1978: 250).

3.4. Technique

From the beginning, Jackson Pollock was not interested in drawing realistically from his model, whatever it was, at school. Unlike other students who were trying to bring out the details, he was impatient about that. He wanted to be free from formal traditions of art (Solomon 1967). However, he was not a talented student. Controlling his paint and making a good drawing was very difficult for him. Nevertheless, there was something special about his art work; they were full of energy and emotion (Greenberg and Jordan 1995).

In the beginning, Pollock was most influenced by his art teacher at the Art Student League in New York, Thomas Hart Benton, who was a famous American painter and muralist.
Benton was a Regionalist, a naturalistic and used a representational style. He taught his student a method of composition, in which the emphasis was on the rhythmic shapes and lines designed around the assumed vertical axis lines. Although Pollock did not continue realistic painting, the concept of such a composition stayed with him (Figure 14).

![Figure 14. Going West. 1934-35 (Landau 1989: 38)](image)

Pollock, however, did not like representational painting: “I want to express my feelings rather than illustrate them”; thus, he painted in the style of Abstract Expressionism, in which artistic elements, such as line, shape, color, and texture, rather than recognizable objects, are used to express the feelings or ideas, without emphasis on, if existing, the subject matter (Figure 15).
Figure 15. Male and Female, 1942. Oil on canvas, 186 by 124 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art (Landau 1989: 108)
Pollock declared that technique is essential to art, as much as tools, brushes, canvas are. However, he did not like to be captivated by style: his manner was expressing through it, and expanding the possibilities (O'Hara 1959).

Pollack’s most famous technique was “allover” poured paintings in which he laid out his canvas on the floor and poured liquid color on it (Figure 16).

![Figure 16. Jackson Pollock during action-painting (Namuth 1980: 25).](image)

His technique of pouring and dripping paint is known as an original one, which then later led to creating the term ‘action painting.’ The origin of this invention went back to 1936, at an “experimental workshop,” where they painted murals with new techniques, including liquid
paint. They were studying the spontaneous use of color and the problem of controlling accidents. The floors were covered by splashes and spots of color. This experience had a huge impact on Pollock (Pollock 2002). He started practicing action painting, after moving to Long Island, NY, where he was economically safe and felt free to do whatever was close to his heart (Figure 17).

![Image of Jackson Pollock during action-painting](image_url)

Figure 17. Jackson Pollock during action-painting (Namuth 1980: 36-37).

The advantage of action painting was its direct means of creating art, in which the tools were chosen completely by the artist. Moreover, he had access from every dimension to his canvas. Once he said about his strange tools: “I continue to get further away from the usual painter's tools such as easel, palette, brushes, etc. I prefer sticks, trowels, knives and dripping fluid paint or a heavy impasto with sand, broken glass or other foreign matter added” (Robertson 1960: 194).
Spontaneity is the strongest characteristic of action painting, a trait that exactly matched Pollock’s personality. Moreover, it requires a physical action, engaging the whole body to paint. Pollock described his technique:

“My painting does not come from the easel. I prefer to tack the unstretched canvas to the hard wall or the floor. I need the resistance of a hard surface. On the floor I am more at ease. I feel nearer, more part of the painting, since this way I can walk around it, work from the four sides and literally be in the painting” (Robertson 1960: 193).

Inventing this technique, Pollock was celebrated as the most original painter in America (Figure 18). Alfonso Ossorio, his patron and friend, described Pollock: "Here I saw a man who had both broken all the traditions of the past and unified them, who had gone beyond cubism, beyond Picasso and surrealism, beyond everything that had happened in art..."(Chavis 2009)

Regarding the “accident” aspect in this painting style, noted by some critics, Pollock strongly disagreed, and claimed that: “When I am painting I have a general notion as to what I am about. I can control the flow of paint: there is no accident”, which is in contrast with his other statement: “The painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through” (Robertson 1960: 194).

However, in the style where the liquid paint pours on the horizontal canvas and the whole body is moving around, as if dancing, I believe there is a good chance of accident in details, but for the whole painting, there could be a plan.

However, in a scientific study of Pollock’s painting, Taylor, Micolich and Jonas claim that Pollock’s drips have a fractal-like shape which obtained throughout his career (Minkel 2007). They also assumed that Pollock’s movement in creating action painting was “chaotic motion” which he followed intuitionally (Taylor, et al. 1999).
This free style of painting reflected Pollock’s manic-depressive illness. In the violent themes in his paintings, Pollock reveals his regression and internal anger which are vital formulates of the disease. In addition, his exceptional and original painting techniques such as action-painting, in which his canvas is on the hard floor which could endure the physical force of his attack, is another reflection of his depression (Vernon and Baughman 1972).

In short, since Pollock’s technique is not planned in advance, and he acts spontaneously, it is impossible to separate the value of the technique from his personality. As he said, he is not aware of what he is doing while painting, meaning, he and his work are inseparable.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1. Comparison and Contrast

At first glance, Edward Hopper’s and Jackson Pollock’s paintings have nothing to do with each other. Except for being famous American painters, they do not seem to share anything. However, they both expressed alienation in their art in two very different ways. The source of their alienation is different, too, yet they share some personality traits. Here, according to the literature review of alienation, and the personality and the art of both painters, I compare Hopper’s and Pollock’s alienation.

4.2. Philosophical Alienation

In the only article I found that compares Pollock and Hopper, *Hopper/Pollock: the Loneliness of the Crowd and the Loneliness of the Universe*, Tyler proposed that Hopper is expressing alienation from company, while one is present in the group; whereas, Pollock, by using free, self-centered, authentic visual expression, implies universal alienation (Tyler 1957). Although I agree with Tyler’s statement about Hopper, I think Hopper’s alienation is universally perceivable as well. Looking at Hopper’s paintings, for example …., every viewer, regardless of what she/he knows of the context of the painting, the painter, or any information beyond what he/she sees inside the frame, finds the feeling of loneliness in the painting. This is my own experience as an outsider, who did not know about the general experience of this feeling in 1930s and after, and even did not know Edward Hopper when I saw his paintings.

However, I doubt if Pollock’s alienation is universally perceived without knowing the context of his paintings. To be honest, for non-artistic people who are brave enough to cite their opinions out loud, Pollock’s action-painting is the complex of colors without any planned
composition; nothing special about them. In fact, his position in art history and how he has been celebrated seems unbelievable to them. Nevertheless, Pollock’s painting expresses the alienation of the painter generally; alienation from the common painting, at first glance.

4.3. Psychological Alienation

Jackson Pollock suffered from depression and alcoholism during his lifetime; thus, his alienation is basically considered a “syndrome.” Since he started drinking from the age of fifteen, his alcoholism affected his personality, and his art. For many years he was under the treatment of different psychologists, using his drawings as a crucial means of understanding his mentality. His depression and drinking were tied to each other, affecting his career. Once he was expelled from an art project for abuse of alcohol. Moreover, when he could not work because of having “nothing to say” (Pollock 2002), or was not happy with his work, he drank more. Studies show that there is a relationship between lack of satisfaction with work, and alcoholism and drinking (Erikson 1986; Greenberg and Grunberg 1995). In this sense, Pollock was alienated universally from everything.

Unlike Pollock, Hopper did not like drinking and smoking. He was a healthy person.

4.4. Sociological Alienation

Both Hopper and Pollock were socially isolated people. While sharing this trait as their natural characteristics reportedly from childhood, once again their alienation is different. Based on Seeman’s classification of alienation (Seeman 1959; Seeman 1975), I examine their alienation:

Powerlessness: This feeling could be traced in Hopper’s paintings as he was not in favor of changing values and the cultural transition that Modernity caused; therefore, in his artworks, he tried to warn about the harm of modern life on individuals.
Pollock was powerless/helpless over his own life. In addition to his depression and alcoholism that made him feel weak, he was affected by social and political power over his Federal Art Project, within which there was suspicion of Communist activities. As a result, the project was cancelled, and he was left jobless (Duffy 2009; Pollock 2002).

Meaninglessness: Edward Hopper was an “inner-directed” man (Troyen, et al. 2007). From the beginning he knew what he wanted, and he was certain about it. During his creativity blockage period, still he tried and did not give up.

Since his childhood, Pollock was insecure and uncertain about the future. He mentioned that several times in his letters to his brother (Solomon 1967). This insecurity was reinforced by economic problems in his life. As an adult, he experienced this feeling when he was not emotionally able to paint.

Normlessness: Normlessness is the key to Pollock’s success and popularity. Breaking the norms in art by using non-artistic tools, digression from objective paintings, application of color, and his use of canvas, made Pollock stand out from the crowd of Modern artists.

On the other hand, Hopper followed norms in personal and artistic manners. Perhaps being that normal kept the genius of his paintings from being discovered for the first years of his career.

Social Isolation: Both Hopper and Pollock were quiet people, talking as little as they could, and making few friends. It would be enough not to have people around them. However, Pollock could talk, too, depending on his mood (Solomon 1967). Nevertheless, this is a tricky characteristic for both of them. Hopper and Pollock left their small towns to go to New York City, where they really wanted to become great artists. Hopper, however, never tied himself to
the city as many other New Yorkers did. He travelled a lot to paint; and, when he could afford it, bought a house in Cape Cod, where he spent summers.

For Pollock, New York, with its all hustle and bustle, was a lovely place, but he always had a special feeling for the West (Pollock 1978). He flourished when he moved from New York City to Long Island where he created most of his famous action-paintings.

Hopper never disconnected with the society; he frequently went to the movies, theaters, and exhibitions. He read a lot. He was aware of what was going on in the society, and in the world. His paintings might not be historically acceptable as social documents, but they represent and express the concept of the time. Nemerov’s analysis of *Ground Swell* notes this aspect of Hopper’s paintings (Nemerov 2008). The point is that, Hopper is a silent observer of the society, a quiet guest of a party who knows the host and the quests, and the atmosphere of the party, but does not join talking in groups. In his paintings, Hopper expresses the results of his observations, warning about the affects of Modernity in individual’s lives; the alienation.

After all, they both had sociable, warm blooded wives, who took good care of them in any way possible, and made up for their silence in crowds.

Self-estrangement: Hopper was never alienated from himself; he was what he could be, what he wanted to be. On the other hand, Pollock always expected more from himself. Despite his poorly expressed talent in the beginning, he was dreaming of becoming Michelangelo (Solomon 1967). Later in life, when he was a famous artist, society’s pressure expected him to produce more in painting, made him feel confused about his actual and ideal self.

4.5. Positive/ Negative Alienation

Regarding the dual capability of alienation, artistic outcome is positive, while personal difficulties are the negative aspect of alienation. Creativity is the healthiest way to express
alienation, which both Hopper and Pollock did differently. Although Pollock could be considered mentally ill, which is a psychologically unhealthy version of alienation, his output was not harmful; rather it was artistic. However, the negativity of his psychological alienation is obvious in his personal life.

On the contrary, regarding those characteristics of him which are likely to be interpreted as alienation, Hopper made a conscious decision. Taking an ideological approach toward alienation, Hopper wanted to mark a distance between what he liked, probably the past world, tradition; and the modern time and its features of which he did not approve. I consider this approach as positive.

4.6. Personality

The only traits Hopper and Pollock shared were quietness and unsociability. The rest of their characteristics were, if not opposite, very different.

Unlike Hopper’s stillness, a kind of quietness in action, Pollock was very energetic. He was like fireworks, exactly like his paintings. He was seemingly calm and the next moment he would jump up to do action-painting, moving around the broadened canvas, pouring colors, acting non-stop for a while; and then he would stop when he felt the painting is finished.

Hopper’s stillness, on the other hand, made him sit down behind his easel, make many sketches, and develop his ideas for the final execution on the canvas. Even in his communication, he was frugal in body language.

Hopper was conservative and old-fashioned, and was proud of that. His alienation might be rooted in his suspicion of Modernity, speedy urbanization, and so on. Despite his extraordinary talent, Hopper was an ordinary person, lived and acted like other people, while accomplishing his goals in life. Nothing was outrageous about him.
Pollock, on the contrary, was a rebellious person; from his childhood protests against the school faculty, to his early age of drinking alcohol, to his disobedience regarding art tools and style, and to breaking his vows to his wife, Lee, Pollock proved that beyond doubt.

Pollock was an impressionable man. He changed his appearance to look like his art teacher, and changed his first name to Hugo, to relate to European artists. He was very open to changes, experienced figurative painting, Regionalism, impressed by Surrealism, Mexican murals and became an Abstract Expressionist who invented action-painting.

In contrast, Hopper was not impressionable. He was never profoundly influenced, as Pollock was. Even in his youth, when he went to Paris to get to know new art movements, while most artists, especially young Americans, were influenced by new styles, he was not. He believed that man changes little from birth to death. About his art he said: “The only real influence I've ever had is myself” (Alessio 1995: 100).

4.7. Alienation from What?

Clarifying the sources of alienation is almost impossible, since the potential sources, which are personality, social situation, mental statement, ideology, and so on are delicately woven together. However, from the available evidence, I presume that Hopper’s alienation must be understood from social and cultural points of view, in which Hopper consciously and decisively expresses his dissatisfaction with the changing era, culture, and eventually new status of human being, alone man. Of course, his personality and his belief are seen in his approach.

Pollock’s alienation was partly unconscious, rooted in his mental problem, depression, and his addiction to alcohol which caused alienation from his true self and people. On the other side, he consciously alienated some rules in his life; rules of school, and of art. The former made him weak, while the latter brought success and fame.
4.8. Alienation in Art

Whatever happened in their lives, whatever quality their personalities had, the most important evidence for us is their paintings. What we see in the frame, their art encourages us to go beyond the canvas, and try to know their character and the context of art in order to understand their art.

The alienation Hopper implied in his paintings is mainly through the subject matters inspired from real life. Intelligently, Hopper took a traditional style, which is Realism, and combined it with a modern approach to subject matter to illustrate the transition between tradition and Modernity; which caused the alienation.

But the alienation we perceive from Pollock’s art is through his abstract lines and colors that do not represent anything, but expressions of feelings. Pollock was against illustrating feelings and ideas, so he was in favor of non-objective art, which is a kind of alienation from history long accepted art.

Moreover, Hopper was against the new movements of art which do not carry an appreciation of nature: “The trend in some of the contemporary movements in art, but by no means all, seems to deny this ideal and to me appears to lead to a purely decorative conception of painting” (1959 June 17). He also criticized their obsession with techniques: “In its most limited sense, modern, art would seem to concern itself only with the technical innovations of the period” (1959 June 17). Hopper disapproved of not developing ideas in Modern art: “One of the weaknesses of much abstract painting is the attempt to substitute the inventions of the intellect for a pristine imaginative conception”.

Pollock, in contrast, was in favor of Modern art. He believed that: “New needs need new techniques. And the modern artists have found new ways and new means of making their
statements... the modern painter cannot express this age, the airplane, the atom bomb, the radio, in the old forms of the Renaissance or of any other past culture” (Pollock 1978: 249). Although I agree with Pollock in this statement, I do not think that Pollock specifically expresses any identifiable feelings in his action-painting. Perhaps Pollock’s feelings were affected by modern technologies, concepts, and so on, but he expressed them in a very personal way, without any recognizable element, that I cannot understand him. In this sense, I agree with Hopper, who thinks modern artists need to develop their imaginations. Moreover, Pollock said “It doesn't matter how the paint is put on, as long as something is said”; however, understanding what his paintings say is impossible for me, since they are pure expression of feelings, without any visual hint or descriptive title to help discovering the ideas and feelings of the painter. What I, as the viewer, perceive from Pollock’s paintings are more my feelings; rather than his feelings, or sum up of both (Figure 19).

In contrast, Hopper in his paintings provide a properly purposive base for his viewers in order to think, feel, and also imagine. He does not delicately execute the details in his paintings, thus, although the concept and the subject come from real-life through Hopper’s vision, the painted scene or figure is not specifically referring to a particular situation or person, inviting viewers to use their imagination, add their personal experience to the painting, and communicate with it.

Figure 20. Chop Suey, 1929. Oil on canvas, 81.3 by 96.5 cm. Collection of Barney A. Ebsworth (Levin 1980: 235).
In conclusion, alienation in Hopper’s paintings is the manifestation of man’s new status in the world, which is defined by Modernity. He is warning about the situation, in which despite the superficial achievements, man is alone. And, I believe, Pollock is the offspring of that situation.
LIST OF REFERENCES


