

CHAPTER THREE

Ludwig Feuerbach, David Hume, Sigmund Freud and Religion

Whatever type of
denominational religion

(Feuerbach's anti-theological tone) "...was more theological than that of many theologians".

humans choose, each needs to understand the criticisms of two occidental thinkers, the German, Ludwig Feuerbach and the Englishman, David Hume. Yet, both the caution of Aquinas and the criticism of Xenophanes apply to Feuerbach and Hume. Not only did Feuerbach and Hume analyze occidental Protestant Christian religion, but each did so in so far as he understood "religion", namely, as Christian. Yet, notwithstanding the intention of Hume to debate whether or not natural religion was possible and relevant to human beings, Hume's understanding of religion was confined to his reaction to Protestant Christianity, specifically the denominational war being waged between Lutheran and Calvinistic practices of Christianity. Feuerbach, as Hume, viewed religious practice as emanating from Protestant Christianity, applied and practiced by the Lutheran and Calvinist princes within the Germany of his time. Feuerbach and Hume stand as two thinkers who rejected the relevance of denominational Protestant Christianity to the world of their times, but neither asked the basic question necessary, namely, a reasonable question: whether or not reason can arrive at the fact *that* God exists and therefore, practice a "natural religion", yet, both criticisms are taken as the model philosophic criticisms of "religion" of whatever kind.

Karl Barth states that Feuerbach's attitude of the anti-theologian "...was more theological than that of many theologians". (From a lecture by Karl Barth, given in Munster in 1926, now found within *Die Theologia und die Kirche; Zollikon-Zurich, Evangelischer Verlag A.G., 1928*) Feuerbach's avowed anti-theological purpose is stated at the conclusion of his Heidelberg lectures:

...to change the friends of God into friends of man, believers into thinkers, worshippers into workers, candidates for the other world into students of this world, Christians, who on their own confession are half-animal and half-angel, into men - whole men...theologians into anthropologists...religious and political footmen of a celestial and terrestrial monarchy and aristocracy into free, self-reliant citizens of earth. (Cited within *The Essence of Christianity*, Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Row, Publishers, New York, N.Y., 1957, p. xi)

Again, with Feuerbach as with Hume, the purpose in seeking whether or not God exists and the meaning of religion is not academic, or even philosophical; the purpose is personal, political and polemical. He is more interested in destroying a self-perceived evil than in asking a philosophic question. Feuerbach, the German Lutheran is on a holy crusade whose purpose is to save human beings from denominational protestant Christianity.

Feuerbach
studied philosophy and
theology at

Atheists like Feuerbach are more interested in destroying what they think an evil than in asking the question: whether or not God exists.

Heidelberg, then later under Hegel at Tübingen; both universities were strongholds of Lutheran and Calvinist forms of Protestantism. Both Hegel and then Feuerbach, as a teacher of philosophy at Erlangen sought to liberate human beings from what they considered and Feuerbach stated to be "...the monarch in the place of the Pope", a surprisingly accurate criticism of what we call the "Reformation". Indeed, the saying of this period of time was *ejus regio, ejus religio*; translated this means: the region of the ruler was the religion of the ruler. Thus, were the ruler of a given canton of Germany was Lutheran or Calvinist, then that canton's religion respectively was Lutheran or Calvinist; so were a Catholic Christian caught in either canton, the result was death.

History refers to Feuerbach as a "Young Hegelian", a "left wing" Hegelian, literally anti-Hegelian because these "Young Hegelians" turned Hegel's contention that "Absolute must be defined as Spirit" upside down, defining the subject, Spirit through its material predicate, and thus, paving the way for Karl Marx's atheistic materialism. In other words, Feuerbach contended that the subject speaking was defined through the object predicate because the predicate, or what was spoken by the subject is actually the subject projecting itself through an object statement.

The Reformation destroyed religious Catholicism, but in its place the modern era set political Catholicism. (W., II, p. 221)

Whereas Hume, in 1776, sought to free human beings intellectually from what he termed the "superstition" of Christianity, Feuerbach, in 1843, intended to free So Feuerbach, as Hume, is not concerned with the existence or non-existence of God, but only about the status and effect of denominational protestant Christianity. Yet, given the pivotal place Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* holds, both in reference to his use of the anthropological knowledge of so-called primitive religion of his time and in reference to the use of his criticism of denominational religion by Frederick Engels and Karl Marx in developing so-called dialectical

materialism and the now infamous "dictatorship of the proletariat", as rejected by Poland, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania and East Germany, we will discuss God, primitive religion and denominational Christianity as Feuerbach describes them. Paragraph 5 of the "Appendix" provides both perspective to and foundation for Feuerbach's analysis of denominational Christianity:

Nature, the world, has no value, no interest for Christians. The Christian thinks only of himself and the salvation of his soul.
(*Essence*, "Appendix", p. 287)

This statement results from a quotation Feuerbach read, falsely attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux of the twelfth century (born 1153). Yet, this statement provides a window through which we can view Martin Luther's so-called "reformation". Luther, then, Calvin down to contemporary so-called "fundamentalists" contend that human beings who believe in Jesus Christ are "saved". These believers contend belief in Jesus Christ alone secures personal salvation and all other "believers" are damned, or, in the language of contemporary literature, "left behind"; this view is prevalent in the so-called "born again" in the United States. Protestant Christianity, thereafter took "good works" out of the salvation formula and this is witnessed by the fact that Martin Luther, and Calvin after him, disclaimed the *Epistle of James* as being a part of the inspired works within the *New Testament*.

However, James' letter, among other things, states unequivocally that "...if good works do not go with it (faith), it is quite dead". (2:14) The exclusion, therefore, of good works, in effect took the so-called corporal works of mercy out of the Protestant Christian view of the world, laying the foundation for Feuerbach's major criticism of the irrelevance of Christianity to the human world and, consequently, of the Lutheran\Calvinist denominations as being co-opted by the political states within Germany.

Yet, this foundation became historically the story of German politics from the death of Luther in 1546 to the time of Feuerbach. This is clear from the Latin saying coined by the Protestant Reformation advocates: *ejus regio cujus religio*. As noted above a loose translation is: *the religion of the region is the religion of the king*. This saying became the battle cry for various German civil wars and the European religious, or Holy War of this period. So, to be denominationally religious was to be politically identified. (This 2004 election year relives this view, since the so-called "born again", fundamental Christians are politically Republican – here again the saying is applicable, those who do not know history

are condemned to repeat it!) Thus, as Feuerbach comments within paragraph 20 of the *Appendix*, “...*faith separates man from man...*”, making the unity of Faith more important than unity among men (Again 2004 relives this historical time, since today American is a national divided, not united and will be for the next four years.) Feuerbach decided to end the domination of denominational religion and reassert the domination of the natural human being - something the world again sees within Bosnia and which dates from 900 A.D. Feuerbach wrote two books during the same period of time, one titled *The Essence of Faith in Luther's Sense*. The second was: *The Essence of Christianity*. The date for both was 1844. Feuerbach described *The Essence of Christianity* within the "Preface" as:

Feuerbach: “Religion is man's earliest ...indirect form of self-knowledge”.

...an empirical or historico-philosophical analysis, a solution of the enigma of the Christian religion”. (p. Xxxiii)

Feuerbach claims to analyze early religion, what he interpreted as polytheism in the light of the anthropology of the nineteenth century. He interprets human development from belief in many gods to belief in one Christian God but describes God to be merely a projection of man's ideal for himself and the practice of religion to be only a temporal, yet essential stage in the development of human consciousness. (Current anthropology and, indeed, a knowledge of the history of philosophy, as in the case of Xenophanes clearly shows that Feuerbach's position is an oversimplification).

Religion is man's earliest and also indirect form of self-knowledge. (p. 13)

Interestingly enough, Feuerbach describes himself as "...a natural philosopher in the domain of the mind", yet, as more interested in defending “truth” against “error”, he is more polemical than he is philosophical - he never asks the question at issue, so he does not perform on the level of the philosopher.

I am nothing but a natural philosopher in the domain of mind; and the natural philosopher can do nothing without instruments, without material means..(p. xxiv)

This philosophy has for its principle...a real being, the true Ens realissimum - man; its principle, therefore, is in the highest degree

positive and real. It generates thought from the opposite of thought, from Matter, from existence, from the senses; it has relation to its object first through its senses, i.e., passively, before defining it in thought. (p. xxxv)

Feuerbach, Language and Religion

Feuerbach, as Hume, indeed, as any philosopher begins his

Feuerbach: "(the Christian) faith separates man from man".

criticism of Christianity by what we would term a linguistic analysis. Hegel, Feuerbach's teacher, and then Feuerbach used a grammatical model as the basis of this analysis, that is, the "speech animal's" relation of subject to the predicate. A example statement would be: Man is a symbol-using animal. The basic conclusion of Hegel and Feuerbach is that the predicate defines the subject, or, more simply, the subject, man learns something about him or herself through the predicate, namely, that he is a symbol using animal. Phrased differently, this means that the predicate reveals the subject to itself through the predication. This approach to self-definition is a practical linguistic solipsism. Predicate comes from the Latin predicare, meaning, to speak in front of, or in advance.

Grammatically, and within the discipline of logic, any subject acquires a supposition through every predicate. An

Human speech is both self-expression and self-definition.

example would be: You are a woman. An alternative would be: You are a bitch. "Woman" adds a supposition, gives a meaning to "You", as does "bitch". Both Hegel and Feuerbach viewed this relationship of subject to predicate from the perspective of a human being defining self through speech. Therefore, both held that the subject, man achieved self-consciousness through predications; human beings literally speak meaning to the human self. Hegel, his teacher, had analyzed the material world as an evolutionary projection of the Spirit, using as his model the artist who projects the creative idea through a material medium, and thereby projects himself into the artifact -- which, in turn, becomes an extension of the artist.

In the object which he contemplates, therefore, man becomes acquainted with himself; consciousness of the objective is the self-consciousness of man. We know the man by the object, by his conception of what is external to himself; in it his nature becomes evident; this object is his manifested nature, his true objective ego. And this is true not merely of spiritual, but also of sensuous objects.

Even the objects which are the most remote from man, because they are objects to him, and to the extent to which they are so, are revelations of human nature. (p. 5)

The predicate of any statement, according to Feuerbach, "objectifies" and,

Feuerbach reasons that the human idea of dependence upon God robs the human of dignity and self-determination.

therefore, makes real the nature and characteristics of the subject. This analysis derives from the traditional Jewish, then European craftsman's model according to which the person's name, or identity was united with the trade which one practiced. An example would be Buckenmeir, literally, book-maker. Thus, the name a person was given objectified the person's subjective self; people were known and named through the works they produced.

Thus in the first part I show that the true sense of Theology is Anthropology, that there is no distinction between the predicates of the divine and human nature, and, consequently, no distinction between the divine and human subject: I say consequently, for wherever, as it especially the case in theology, the predicates are not accidents, but express the essence of the subject, there is no distinction between subject and predicate, the one can be put in the place of the other...(p. xxxvii)

Feuerbach seeks a synthesis between the subject who thinks and speaks and the predicate spoken. The human being, he reasons, recognizes that he is imperfect, indeed, recalling the Lutheran theological position, he observes that the human being, as did Adam, has corrupted self and thus, feels dependent. Luther stated that man's dependence is upon God through Christ for salvation. But, Feuerbach argues: the origin of human dependence historically speaking is nature, something which early religious people recognized in their worship of God within nature. So, Feuerbach claims that natural religion moves from the deification of objects, such as trees and fountains up to the idea of a Deity conceived as a separate cause of natural things. Any deity, he reasons, is, therefore a projection of human thought, thus, a projection of the human being. Christianity, reasons Feuerbach, moves from the idea of a Deity separate from nature to Christ, as the God-man. Whereas the origin of matter is spiritual nature to Hegel, the origin of spirit is material nature to Feuerbach:

Being is subject and thought is predicate...Nature is thus the ground of man. (W, II, p. 239-240)

But, since the foundation of natural religion in all its phases is man's feeling of dependence upon external sensible reality, reasons Feuerbach, then, if the human being merely realizes that this need for nature and God is resolved when the human being realizes that it, as the subject has the power and the control which it projected into this nature and Deity as a predicate, then man becomes the god and possesses the power which he has heretofore projected as objects because he thought he was dependent.

So, human becomes perfect by being human.

The divine essence which manifests itself in nature is nothing else but nature which reveals and manifests itself to man and imposes itself on him as a divine being.

The human being, says Feuerbach, can "objectify" nature only by distinguishing himself from it, so man needs to return to himself and contemplate his own essence and discover his own power. If we strip from the idea of God all that is due to this projection, contends Feuerbach, we are left simply with Nature. Therefore, though religion is grounded on man's feeling of dependence on Nature, the most important factor in the formation of the idea of Deity is man's projection of his own essence. But, what is the essence of man?

Reason, will, heart. To a perfect man belong the power of thought, the power of willing, the power of heart.(p. 3)

Historically, therefore, the human being objectified his own essence in the idea of God and through this process became aware of his meaning or essence. Then, Christianity made humanity an attribute of God in Christ, the God-man, observes Feuerbach, and human beings discover that they, as will and love, are social and are literally salvation to each other.

The new philosophy has, in accordance with the truth, made this attribute (humanity) the substance; it has made the predicate the subject. The new philosophy is...the truth of Christianity. (W, II, p. 244)

Feuerbach quotes Martin Luther:

No one will taste of God but as he wills, namely - in the humanity of Christ; and if you do not find God thus, you will never have rest. (The Essence of Christianity, p. 45)

Feuerbach criticizes what he terms the Christian scorn of the pagan philosophers, saying that Christians (more precisely

Feuerbach's "new philosophy" makes human subjects perfect through reason's predication or self-expression.

Protestant Christians, namely, Lutheran and Calvinist at Feuerbach's time) scorn them only because "they had thought only of things out of themselves". Feuerbach claims that Christians do worse because they are "thinking of themselves, of their own salvation". (Ibid., p. 46) Human beings, as Feuerbach view them, have the dual power of intelligence and love and, thus, are capable of moral perfection, of being holy. Christianity, as Feuerbach understands it, has based worship on the corruption of nature and dependence of man and, consequently predicated this perfect God-Man of this dependent subject man.

Of all the attributes which the understanding assigns to God, that which in religion, and especially in the Christian religion, has the pre-eminence, is moral perfection. But God as a morally perfect being is nothing else than the realized idea, the fulfilled law of morality, the moral nature of man posited as the absolute being; man's own nature, for the moral God requires man to be as he himself is: Be holy for I am holy; man's own conscience, for how could he otherwise tremble before the Divine Being, accuse himself before him, and make him the judge of his inmost thoughts and feelings? (Ibid., p. 46)

The Essence of Christianity is in one sense a compelling, in another a revolting book. The analysis and rhetoric compel the reader by its apparent logic and persistent method. Obviously, Feuerbach's position implies the rejection of any "original sin" or act of disobedience; and his statements overtly deny that human nature is corrupt resulting from the Lutheran contention that the devil entered into Adam as a result of the "original sin". The reader continually must remind him or herself that these two elements are distinct and different. Whatever the meaning of the "fall", the fact is that humans are somehow flawed; yet, a corresponding fact is that human beings seek the good and human nature must be good in order to seek the good.

The revolting aspect of Feuerbach's analysis is the common sense awareness that notwithstanding

Feuerbach assumes that each and every human predication is univocal: our being is our speech and our speech is our being.

Feuerbach's intelligence his analysis flounders on twin rocks as he seeks to guide his understanding through the narrow straits of truth: first, he identifies the predicate with the subject in the sense that the predicate is univocal in meaning with the subject. Take the statements: This human being is a woman and this woman is a bitch or this man is a bastard. That "woman" tells us something about human being is true, but equally true is the fact that identifying a woman with a bitch and a man with a bastard tells us more about the subject speaking than it does about the subject spoken about! In neither case is the predicate statement a univocal, single and same meaning of the subject. We use language analogically and we understand a person's statements, even if the same person made all the three statements above. Furthermore, we adjust our understanding of the statements by our understanding of the speaker. Any of us would be comfortable hearing the statement: This human being is a woman. All of us would understand, yes, woman also describes human being, as does man and both tell us something different and similar about human being: women and men have intelligence and can love; but women and men are different physiologically.

Yet, when the same speaker goes on to say that this woman is a bitch and this man is a bastard, we adjust our understanding. We then turn our focus from the meaning of the statements from a subject and predicate relationship to the speaker and question "why did he or she say that?" Or, simply, "What's wrong with him or her?"

Secondly, Feuerbach's analysis lacks consistency. On the one hand, he says that the predicate reveals the meaning of the subject and that this meaning is univocal: Man is God. Yet, on the other hand, he implies that certainly all Christians, and possibly all primitive peoples were guilty of saying that this meaning is equivocal, namely, it means something different than it states. An example would be: This is a pen. "Pen", one word, depending upon the context, can mean at least three different things: a place where pigs are kept; a writing instrument; a place where criminals are incarcerated. But, if predicates reveal the meaning of the subject to itself, how could primitive people think that the deity or deities they identified with nature were different and separate from them and how could Christians think that this Jesus Christ, having a complete divine and complete human nature was different and separate from them? If Feuerbach's insight is valid, his use of it is invalid. As we will see, not even the Greeks,

specifically Heraclites was foolish enough to commit such a linguistic oversimplification.

David Hume Language and Religion

David Hume, a Scottish Calvinist and philosopher, born 1711,

Hume wrote "...to eliminate the strange superstition, Christianity".

died 1776, might be construed as the "Joseph Campbell of his day". He began writing the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* about 1750 and completed it in 1776, as his last act while ill and dying. The *Dialogues* purports to trace the historical development of religion from polytheism to monotheism, thereby assuming that mythic cultures were exclusively polytheistic and that Christianity "evolved", if you will, into monotheism. Adam Smith, his friend, stated that the one reason Hume wanted to complete the *Dialogues* was that he wanted to see the "elimination of the strange superstition, Christianity from the world" before he died. So obsessed was Hume with the *Dialogues* that he made elaborate provision in his will to guarantee its publication because reaction to this work was very negative during his lifetime, given the Episcopalian and Congregational character of the England where he lived.

In addition, two other essays, *On Suicide*, and *Of the Immortality of the Soul* were published posthumously and these three essays comprise what is considered his criticism of the "strange superstition, Christianity". At thirteen, Hume enrolled at Edinburgh University where he studied for two years, read the works of John Locke extensively and later became librarian. Hume's views about Christianity occasioned resentment and prevented Hume from achieving the teaching position he sought at various British Protestant Christian universities.

Hume calls the dispute about God a "verbal dispute" and takes the side of the skeptics.

A footnote, number 27, added to the *Dialogue* by Hume provides a fitting introduction to his criticism of "natural" and Christian religion; this footnote was added

in 1776, perhaps only two days before he died:

It seems evident that the dispute between the skeptics and dogmatists is entirely verbal, or, at least, regards only the degrees of doubt and assurance which we ought to indulge with regard to all reasoning; and such disputes are commonly, at the bottom, verbal and admit not of any precise determination. No philosophical dogmatist denies that there are difficulties both with regard to the senses and to all science,

and that these difficulties are, in a regular, logical method, absolutely insolvable. No skeptic denies that we lie under an absolute necessity, notwithstanding these difficulties, of thinking, and believing, and reasoning, with regard to all kinds of subjects, and even of frequently assenting with confidence and security. The only difference, then, between these sects, if they merit that name, is that the skeptic, from habit, caprice, or inclination, insists most on the difficulties; the dogmatist, for like reasons, on the necessity. (*Dialogues Concerning*

Natural Religion, David Hume, edited by Richard H. Popkin, Hackett Publishing Co., Indianapolis, Indiana, 1988, pp. 81-82.)

The religion of the ruler has become the religion of his subjects and, thus, political.
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The "dispute" concerns the certainty humans can have; the necessity is the factual necessity that human beings have to sense, think and reason. The "difference" is that the skeptics, among whom Hume places himself, "insist on the difficulties" of obtaining certainty; the "dogmatists" take the side of "God". Interesting is the fact that Hume claims the dispute to be "verbal". again underscoring the need to understand the words we use, as well as the importance to distinguish between "saying" and "being", or the "way we think" and the "way things are".

That Hume identifies with Cleanthes within the *Dialogue* is clear from the fact that Cleanthes represents a self-styled scientific believer which would include Isaac Newton, Adam Smith and others whom Hume respected. A letter of Hume, dated 1751 to Sir Gilbert Elliot states that "Cleanthes is the hero of the Dialogue" and anything that Sir Elliot can do in "strengthening Cleanthes' position will be most acceptable" to Hume. Yet, Hume would seem to write Philo as the spokesperson for the skeptics, with whom Hume agreed. Demea, on the other hand, seems to be a "rigid inflexible" orthodox person within the Dialogue. However, Hume speaks through Demea precisely because she seems to represent the demos, or average person, seeking direction and, if anything, Hume sought to present the opinion of the average person, not the opinion of the churchman, the academician, the professional.

To the Calvinist Hume Christianity was superstition and superstition was institutionalized by the British government as Episcopalianism, the enemy of Calvinism and Calvinism itself, beginning with Martin Luther's search to "free" supposedly freed the believer from the repression of Roman Catholicism. Hume contended that the Christian world misuses human reason and philosophy because

Curious that Hume's skeptic, Pamphilius claims two truths while stating that no truth is possible.

Christians place both in the service of theological doctrines. (Even today, Mormon theology actually dominates Mormon thinking such that Philosophy based on and in human reason is impossible.) Then, Christian political governments, such as the British and German, institutionalize theology as a weapon to dominate its citizens. The Latin phrase some Reformation, Catholic scholars used to describe this reality is: *ejus regio, ejus religio*, literally, the religion of whoever is the region of whomever - so, if a citizen lived in post Henry the VIII England, his or her religion was Episcopalianism, or die, and so forth for the provinces within Germany, whether ruled by a Lutheran or a Calvinistic prince. Ancient Greece, on the other hand, allowed philosophy to be free to develop with a belief in God and practice of religion.

Pamphilius' opening remarks set the stage for the *Dialogue*:

Any question of philosophy...which is so obscure and uncertain that human reason can reach no fixed determination with regard to it...seems to lead us naturally into the style of dialogue and conversation. (Ibid., p. 1) Happily, these circumstances are all to be found in the subject of NATURAL RELIGION.(Ibid., p. 2)

Clearly, Hume is taking what is called a skeptical position. The Greek word *skeptesthai* means to look at, to consider, that is, to place under the scrutiny of reason and to question it; in this sense Socrates himself was a skeptic. However, the classical skeptics, such as Zeno and Epictetus, advocated that humans look at the world and issues, yet, withhold judgment concerning the things at which they look. The skeptic claimed to have no position as to truth or falsehood, emphasizing the difficulties of achieving truth and maintaining that humans should withhold judgments as to what is or is not truth - Augustine comments in his dialogue *On The Skeptics*: "this is the skeptics one claim to truth!".

Clearly, Pamphilius advocates looking at the issue of natural religion, but what is the issue? Again, Pamphilius offers two truths, notwithstanding Hume's skeptical position:

What truth so obvious, so certain, as the being of God, which the most ignorant ages have acknowledged, for which the most refined geniuses have ambitiously striven to produce new proofs and arguments? What truth so important as this, which is the ground of all

our hopes, the surest foundation of morality, the firmest support of society, and the only principle which ought never to be a moment absent from our thoughts and meditations? (Ibid., p. 2)

The first truth is past and

Hume's view of the world (of himself) merely reflects the mechanical reality of industrial England at his time – Hume's thought is caused by his industrial environment!

present, the

historically accepted fact that God exists. The second truth is that on this fact of the being of God rests "all our hopes", the "foundation of morality" and the "support of society".

Philo counters with the need to "become thoroughly sensible of the weakness, blindness and narrow limits of human reason". (p. 4)

Let us duly consider its uncertainty and endless contrarities, even in subjects of common life and practice: Let the errors and deceits of our very senses be set before us; the insuperable difficulties which attend first principles in all systems; the contradictions which adhere to the very ideas of matter, cause and effect, extension, space, time, motion; and, in a word, quantity of all kinds, the object of the only science that can fairly pretend to any certainty or evidence. (p. 4)

The British pendulum clock was the symbol of their industrial reality, so it became the model for all comparisons.

This basic assumption and prevailing attitude permeates the entire *Dialogue* and all the disputants because it is Hume's

fundamental tenant. However, a second assumption and attitude is just as pervasive, one which results from Hume's acceptance that "...only science...can fairly pretend to any certainty or evidence". This second assumption again is stated by Philo:

Nature, we find, even from our limited experience, possesses an infinite number of springs and principles which incessantly discover themselves on every change of her position and situation. (p. 20)

Hume's central argument against the conclusion **that God exists** is the fundamental assumption of protestant Christian theology – the corruption of nature.

Hume was confronted by a scientific

view that the world, universe, planet earth and all living beings were nothing more or less than a machine, composed, as every other machine, of springs, screws, and so forth. The human world contemporary to Hume exploded with the industrial revolution and seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers based all analysis upon a mechanical model. This is precisely why Hume did not allow validity to the so-called argument from design, or final causality in concluding to the fact that God, as designer, or Supreme Intelligence exists. Initially, Philo, then finally Demea rejects the validity of such an argument for two reasons. Philo claims the first is:

Thought, design, intelligence, such as we discover in men and other animals, is no more than one of the springs and principles of the universe, as well as heat or cold, attraction or repulsion, and a hundred others which fall under daily observation. It is an active cause by which some particular parts of nature, we find, produce alterations on other parts. But can a conclusion, with any propriety, be transferred from parts to the whole?
(p. 19)

The British clock fetish reflected their view of controlling the world through the proper use of time.

Later, Philo reasserts this comparison:

Mind and body they knew because they felt both; an order arrangement, organization, or internal machinery, in both they likewise knew, after the same manner: And it could not but seem reasonable to transfer this experience to the universe, and to suppose the divine mind and body to be also coeval and to have both of them, order and arrangement naturally inherent in them and inseparable from them. (p. 40)

Finally, Cleanthes uses this assumption within his final arguments:

The comparison of the universe to a machine of human contrivance is so obvious and natural, and is justified by so many instances of order and design in nature, that it must immediately strike all unprejudiced apprehensions, and procure universal approbation. Whoever attempts to weaken this theory cannot pretend to succeed by establishing in its place any other that is precise and determinate...(p. 79)

Thus, one spring within one part of a watch argues only to one immediate effect related to that spring and, given the mechanical nature of the watch, we cannot use that part to part relationship to

argue to the ultimate relationship of that one part to the watch as a whole. If, however, we do, then the cause must assume the same parts and relationships between and among parts as perceived by the effect. In other words, the relationship is a mechanical one, since the effect is mechanically related as part to part for the production of time. Applying this mechanical view of Hume to psychology we even use this British clock analogy of human beings. We frequently ask ourselves and others, for instance, "what makes him or her tick?" Or, again, as Philo states within his last argument, the fourth circumstance, because of which the argument from design is invalid is "the inaccurate workmanship of all the springs and principles of the great machine of nature". (p. 73)

Furthermore, the fact of the "weakness" of reason adds an additional doubt about the validity of any such argument:

But allowing that we were to take the operations of one part of nature upon another for the foundation of our judgment concerning the origin of the whole (which never can be admitted), yet why select so minute, so weak, so bounded a principle as the reason and design of animals is found to be upon this planet? What peculiar privilege has this little agitation of the brain which we call 'thought,' that we must thus make it the model of the whole universe? (p. 19)

Demea provides the second reason against the argument from design:

...still it must be acknowledged that, by representing the Deity as so intelligible and comprehensible, and so similar to a human mind, we are guilty of the grossest and more narrow partiality, and make ourselves the model of the whole universe. (p. 27)

The interesting thing about this second argument is that fundamental to it are the differences between Ptolemy's and Copernicus' scientific theories of the universe, namely, whether or not the earth or the sun is the center of the solar galaxy. Hume argues that man should no more be the cause and measure of how God is and acts than the earth should not be of how the universe is and acts.

However, threading its way throughout Hume's *Dialogue* is the assumption

Although it is possible to prove THAT God exists, it is impossible to disprove the existence of God!

that the words used within the argument from design are both univocal as to application and defective as to meaning. These words must be applied univocally because the identity of meaning is necessary and operable within science; the validity of scientific experimental procedures and results depend upon a one-to-one applicability. Philo repeats this requirement throughout the *Dialogue*:

That a stone will fall, that fire will burn, that earth has solidity, we have observed a thousand and a thousand times; and when any new instance of this nature is presented, we draw without hesitation the accustomed inference. The exact similarity of the cases gives us a perfect assurance of a similar event, and a stronger evidence is never desired nor sought after. But wherever you depart, in the least, from the similarity of the cases, you diminish proportionably the evidence; and may at last bring it to a very weak analogy, which is confessedly liable to error and uncertainty. (p. 16)

Philo also emphasizes the contribution which defective meanings make to invalidate any reasoning to the existence of God as a cause for the design within the universe:

...but, having found in so many other subjects much more familiar the imperfections and even contradictions of human reason, I never should expect any success from its feeble conjectures in a subject so sublime and so remote from the sphere of our observation. (p. 20)

But, the final argument of Philo against any valid argument to God as being the cause of the world and man, true to the fundamental theological principles of Martin Luther, mentor of John Calvin, the founder of Hume's Scottish Calvinism, is a fourfold set of circumstances, all based on this same Protestant Christian principle, namely, the corruption of human nature and consequent evil within the world. (pp. 69-75) Philo thereupon offers his own "four hypotheses" or conclusions to the argument from design:

...that they (the first causes of the universe) are endowed with perfect goodness; that they have perfect malice; that they are opposite and have both goodness and malice; that they have neither goodness nor malice. Mixed phenomena can never prove the two former unmixed

principles; and the uniformity and steadiness of general laws seem to oppose the third. The fourth, therefore, seems by far the most probable. (p. 75)

Is the *homo religiosus*, human being most religious of Eliade's findings nothing more than "...an infantile need for parental assurance..." as Freud contends?

Demea leaves the Dialogue after this statement of Philo, thus leaving the impression that Demea is, in fact, presenting

Hume's view that any rational argument to the existence of God from sensible data is unverifiable and, therefore, invalid.

Cleanthes and Philo remain to complete the dialogue. The remaining discussion centers on the "proper office of religion". (p. 82) But, let us focus on what Cleanthes concludes not to be its "proper office":

When it (religion) distinguishes itself, and acts as a separate principle over men, it has departed from its proper sphere and has become only a cover to faction and ambition. (p. 82)

Philo emphasizes his agreement:

And so will all religion, said Philo, except the philosophical and rational kind. (pp. 82-83)

Hume assumes that the argument from design uses words univocally, in the model of mathematical language of his time.

Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* have a much less compelling end than they

had a more promising beginning. But, Cleanthes conclusion makes the end even less than compelling, and perhaps even banal:

If the whole of natural theology, as some people seem to maintain, resolves itself into one simple, though somewhat ambiguous, at least undefined, proposition, That the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence: If this proposition be not capable of extension, variation, or more particular explication: If it affords no inference that affects human life, or can be the source of any action or forbearance: And if the analogy, imperfect as it is, can be carried no further than to the human intelligence, and cannot be transferred, with any appearance of

probability, to the other qualities of the mind: If this really be the case, what can the most inquisitive, contemplative, and religious man do more than give a plain, philosophical assent to the proposition, as often as it occurs, and believe that the arguments on which it is established exceed the objections which lie against it? (p. 88)

This final statement, following the lengthy discussion, based as it was on assumed scientific certainties, including the assumption that the universe is a machine and that the human senses and reason are weak and prone to error can only be characterized as anti-climatic because it was predictable. Hume is characterized more accurately as venting his spleen than as engaging in a philosophical discussion. Hume appears to have sensed this because of his plea to Sir Gilbert Elliot in 1751 to strengthen Cleanthes' position. Hume's conclusion is tentative and inconclusive; his conclusion is at best theoretical but has no practical effect upon his or any other human's life. Hume is too negative of human potential to be an agnostic; he is too pessimistic about the human condition to be a believer; and he is too skeptical of human ability to be an atheist.

Sigmund Freud and *The Future of an Illusion*

Sigmund Freud, as a youth, read Feuerbach avidly and Freud himself admitted that the “projection theory” of Feuerbach which Freud embraced did not arise from his psychoanalytic evidence, however, reading both it is clear that Freud’s book found its inspiration within Feuerbach’s *Essence of Christianity*. Freud specified as much to his friend Oskar Pfister in a letter dated 1927 wherein Freud wrote:

Let us be quite clear on the point that the views expressed in my book (*The Future of an Illusion*) form no part of the analytic theory. They are my personal views.

Given the fact that Freud admitted quite bluntly that the thoughts within *The Future of an Illusion* as well as its conclusions came from “my personal views”. So, “my personal views” about religion had nothing at all to do with any kind of scientific evidence and found no basis within the analytic data collected from his patients. One wonders, therefore, how and why this book created out of the whole cloth of Freud’s “personal views” made such an impact and still does today on people who embrace the view that God does not exist and whatever God humans recognize exists only because humans create such a God out of their own weaknesses! Indeed, his arrogance at labeling religious humans as suffering from a

“neurosis” is evident when he differs from a friend’s view about the innate human need for religion at the end of the book:

Thus, I must contradict you when you go on to argue that men are completely unable to do without the consolation of the religious illusion, that without it they could not bear the troubles of life and the cruelties or reality. That is true, certainly, of the men into whom you have instilled the sweet - or bitter-sweet - poison from childhood onwards. But what of the other men, who have been sensibly brought up? Perhaps those who do not suffer from the the neurosis will need no intoxicant to deaden it. (Editor’s comment: this is an interesting statement given the fact that Freud was a cocaine addict!) They will, it is true, find themselves in a difficult situation. They will have to admit to themselves the full extent of their helplessness and their insignificance in the machinery of the universe; they can no longer be the center of creation, no longer the object of tender care on the part of a beneficent Providence. They will be in the same position as a child who has left the parental house where he was so warm and comfortable. But surely infantilism is destined to be surmounted. Men cannot remain children for ever; they must in the end go out into “hostile life”. We may call this “education to reality”. Need I confess to you that the sole purpose of my book is to point out the necessity for this forward step? (*The Future of an Illusion*, Revised Anchor Books edition, 1964, p. 81.)

That Freud asserts “...(the) sole purpose of my book is to point out the necessity for this forward step”, that is, convincing readers (and presumably the world) that being religious is an infantile need for parental assurance for one who “...has left the parental house where it was so warm and comfortable” is arrogantly presumptive. However, this “purpose” is more, according to Paul C. Vitz a current psychologist and former atheist both within graduate school and after graduation as a “Freudian psychoanalyst”. Vitz calls Freud’s atheistic view both as a “personal” and as a “projection” of his own family situation.

Indeed, whether or not humans can show that a God exists, no human can ever prove the non-existence of a God, certainly not Freud! Such an effort is impossible, if, that is, the term “God” has any meaning in the alleged “disproof”. If the term “God” has a meaning, then what is that meaning and how can anyone who claims the term has no existence disprove the meaning which that person assumes when he or she alleges such an existential disproof? Such a disproof would

involve a kind of mental gymnastics which not only is contradictory but impossible. As we have seen in the cases of Feuerbach and Hume and as we shall see in the case of Freud, these “disprovers” would have fared better had they remained silent since their alleged disproofs addressed only their personal definitions of and conceptions of “God” which they are disproving! Such an approach is absurd because such an approach is similar to a person thinking of a one-eyed Cyclops trying to prove that such an “animal” indeed exists - what humans may think exists may, in fact not exist. After all, Philosophy, and every other discipline is not about what humans say or think, but about the way things exist! Therefore, it behooves a disbeliever to remain silent or suffer the consequences of contradiction! This is why Vitz in his book *The Psychology of Atheism*, Paul C. Vitz, Spence Publishing Co., October, 1999) and repeats in his article “*Why Are People Atheists*”, found in the New Oxford Review, January, 2000, p. 15:

In other words, atheism is an assumption made by certain people about the nature of the world and these people have been, in the last century, extraordinary successful in controlling the acceptable view of the matter.

The fact of the matter is that these so-called atheists are projecting their belief of the non-existence of God on reality, as contradictory as that is, just as those who deny that any sound exists within a forest when a tree falls unless it is heard by a human being are doing. As Thomas Aquinas stated within the thirteenth century A.D., “Philosophy is not about what men say, but about the way things are” and the way things are can not and are not the way any given human being or group of human beings think or say “things are”, whether the existence or the non-existence of God.

In every case of the fifteen self-proclaimed atheists, “...we find a weak, dead or abusive father”.

Freud, for instance, claimed that the oldest and most urgent wishes of mankind are for the living protection and guidance of a powerful father “...born from man’s need to make his helplessness tolerable and built from the material from memories of the helplessness of his own childhood...” (Illusions, p. 25) Not only is this statement only Freud’s “...personal views”, but, worse, the statement is a projection from his own helplessness within his own family as a result of his own father!

One Paul C. Vitz, a trained Psychologist with a degree in Freudian psychoanalysis and a professor of Psychology at New York University recently

wrote two books, the first entitled Faith of the Fatherless, the second The Psychology of Atheism wherein he analyzes fifteen major atheists celebrated for their public writings claiming the non-existence of any God: Friedrich Nietzsche, David Hume, Bertrand Russell, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Arthur Schopenhauer, Thomas Hobbes, Jean Meslier, Voltaire, Jean d'Alembert, Baron d'Holbach, Ludwig Feuerbach, Samuel Butler, Sigmund Freud and H.G. Wells. Actually, the above cited article, "Why Are People Atheists?" is a synopsis of Faith of the Fatherless and adds some reflections from The Psychology of Atheism. Vitz concludes:

In every case (of the fifteen people analyzed) we find a weak, dead or abusive father.

Jacob Freud, Sigmund Freud's father was weak in two respects: first, he could not provide for his family and financial support for the family came from his wife's family as well as some other friends of his wife. Secondly, he did not stand up for his Jewish faith in response to anti-Semitism. Freud himself recounts one example when an anti-Semite called Jacob Freud a "dirty Jew" and then knocked Jacob's hat off his head. Jacob, however, did nothing but walk away. This situation mortified Jacob's son deeply. Yet, Jacob Freud had more serious deficiencies which Freud, as an adult wrote in two letters to two friends. Freud writes that his father was a sexual pervert and that the children suffered as a result. The effect of this sexual perversion on Freud is clear and deep. Freud placed hatred of the father at the center of his conclusion about what he called the "Oedipus complex". This emphasizes the fact that Freud had strong hostility to and rejection of his own father.

Jacob Freud's view of the Jewish religion was equally weak as it was erratic. Jacob did not practice Orthodox Judaism, rather, he joined a reformed Judaism and spent hours reading the Old Testament and the Talmud with his young son. Later on, within an autobiographical sketch, Freud wrote:

Psychoanalysis...daily demonstrates to us how youthful persons lose their religious belief as soon as the authority of the father breaks down.

The irony of this statement is clear when Freud explains his view of The Oedipus complex in relation to neurosis and to what he called the "un-conscious":

The Oedipus complex is the actual nucleus of neuroses...What remains of the complex in the unconscious represents the disposition to the later development of neuroses in the adult.

Therefore, the effect that Jacob Freud's weakness had on Freud and the hatred Freud later leveled against his father developed both into a deep neurosis as well as an atheism when Freud became an adult. When one understands what was behind the "personal views" Freud projected within the *Future of an Illusion*, one has an understanding of the origin and effect of Freud's atheism.

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