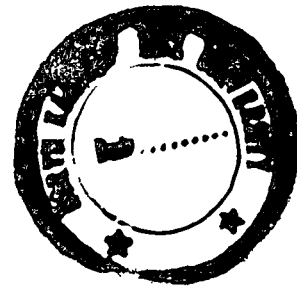


**SIGMUND FREUD ON RELIGION :
A CRITICAL APPRAISAL**

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**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF
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I dedicate this humble work to the memory of my mother who is no more in this world to rejoice even at my small achievement.

SHILLONG
THE 25th July 1990

Anupa Saha
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the father of psychoanalysis, is an undisputed celebrity in psychology. He is not merely a psychologist of eminence whose contribution is widely acknowledged, he has also become somewhat of an institution within the discipline of psychology. If he engages the attention of a student of philosophy, it is primarily because most of his concerns in psychology were primarily theoretical. Further, if he engages the attention of a student of philosophy of religion, it is because Freud had become an eye of a religious storm towards the end of his life, publicly, through his reflections on religion and, privately, through his deep involvement in religious ideas and ideals. This statement would take anyone by surprise because religion does not generally seem to have been the focus of his attention during his hectic academic career. Nonetheless, we may do well in recalling to our mind that his academic career began with an anonymous essay on a religious theme and also ended with a bold reconstruction of yet another religious theme. What is more, the six major works on religion that flowed out of his pen so absorbed his total self that his earlier successful literary career in the area

of depth psychology appeared to him, to use his own words 'a detour'. This confession of Freud alone would justify, among many other reasons, a venture like a critical appraisal of Freud's reflections on religion.

Scanning through the existing literature, I was in for a big surprise: Freud's major thesis on religion, that religion owes its origin to the Oedipus complex and that its nature is illusory, is widely known. Any textbook that aims at a history and philosophy of religion, in the context of the various theories on religion, have devoted a page or two to the Freudian thesis. Moreover, most of these books have played down the importance of his theory on the nature of religion. Philosophers have neglected it because Freud claims it to be historical-ethnological rather than conceptual. Ethnologists themselves have neglected it because they felt that Freud misunderstood the ethnological data, therefore, not worth calling into question. Despite Freud's shortcomings, I think the theory needs a reevaluation at the hands of a philosopher.

Secondly, his theory on the nature of religion, which Freud claims to be primarily conceptual-theoretical, did not receive enough attention of the philosophers. Philosophers by and large read in him Feuerbach, and this not without a

certain justification. Nonetheless, Freud has something to offer that is distinctive of him. We must not forget that he succeeds in giving the Feuerbachian theory a psychological foundation, drawing from his own philosophical construct of the unconscious. The power of rather nebulous imagination, central to Feuerbach, receives at Freud's hand a distinct contour of its own. This aspect has not been highlighted by the philosophers. In addition to this, Marx, also is yet another inheritor of Feuerbach and who gave a politico-economical foundation to Feuerbach's thesis, is much more widely studied by the philosophers, in spite of his single work on religion. And, yet here is Freud with his six works, the fruit of his mature years, but with a near neglect at the hands of the philosophers. I hope, my enterprise will have made a modest contribution towards further indepth studies on Freud's view on religion.

Any serious study of Freud's view on religion, I am inclined to believe, cannot afford to ignore the moorings of these reflections. These I categorize under three: scientism -historicism, popular religiosity and the complicated family relations.

The pioneering philosopher of modern scientism is Ludwig Feuerbach, an early nineteenth century philosopher.

Feuerbach began as a theologian, rambled for a while in the Hegelian philosophy, then accepted and the cultured philosophy of the continent for a long time, before he turned out to be the father of modern materialism through his philosophical anthropology. He can be accredited to have laid the philosophical foundation for a kind of atheism that tended to view religion as a projection of the human psyche, and the God of religion as an illusion. These views were outrageously irreligious to the continental Christian consciousness of the time. He argued that man, endowed with the power of imagination, projects his own subjective nature; he objectifies it, personalizes it and finally sacralizes it to call it his God. His God is the objectified subjective nature embellished with all the perfections, whose lack is the chief characteristic of himself, as the frail creature of nature. The motivations of this ingenious creativity on the part of man are rooted in his needs for a protective father and the dynamics of imagination itself in the context of man's efforts to negotiate with nature. Thus, God is created by man according to his own image. The implication of Feuerbach's philosophical anthropology was materialistic scientism.

Feuerbach much rejoiced in the achievements of science. He prophesied the revolution of science that would dissolve the religious, in particular, the Christian world view, into

the^{thin} air. Inspired by the scientific discoveries of the times, Feuerbach may be said to have laid the foundation of what may be called the natural scientific materialism of the nineteenth century. Its serious philosophical target was the speculations of the idealists philosophers, Hegel and Schelling. Feuerbach attacked directly their philosophy of nature, acknowledging the primacy of matter. Its religious target however was the 'essence' of Christianity, acknowledging the primacy of man over deity. This naturally upheld the fundamental significance of human sexuality vis-a-vis a Christian morality under the garb of the Victorian prudery. To the medical man like Freud, such a philosophy sounded the breakdown of inhibitions against the scientific, in particular, medical, investigations of sexuality. It was a natural transition for Freud from scientism to materialism, and then to medical materialism. Soon he was to move from this medical materialism to a psycho-analytical atheism. He therefore took upon himself the task of providing a psychological infrastructure to the basic theory of Feuerbach.

Further, Freud is as much a child of historicism, necessarily associated with scientism. Indeed scientism goes hand in hand with the historicism of the nineteenth century. One of the positive impact of the European colonial enterprise was the expansion of historic consciousness of the western man.

It would not be altogether wrong, if it is stated that for the first time^{the} west took seriously the importance of time and history — in short, of culture. It is not that the element of history was altogether absent in the history of Western ideas but the Greek philosophy, the undercurrent of much of western culture, had played it down with its emphasis on the eternal simple, indivisible forms. Hegelian idealism had given it a further respectability.

Freud comes to continue his psychological insights with scientism and historicismⁱ. It was a time of unbounded faith in science, although science was in its inception. The physical sciences constantly questioned the constructs of metaphysics within their disciplines. To these subjects were added the fashionable subjects of the day, physiology and anatomy. Freud was an ardent devotee of the latter, but in spite of his training here, he did not practice medicine. His interests were rather theoretical right from the beginning. After the manner of scientific laws, especially of the thermodynamics and the laws of energy, he formulated his own psychic law and called it libido, interpreted largely in terms of sensuality. I view libido as basically a philosophical construct. It was not at all difficult for Freud to link libido later with the emotional stirrings of the neurotic patients. Along with the principles of libido goes his other equally important philosophical construct of the Unconscious,

the storehouse of the repressed impulses in human life. The unconscious is an interplay of forces, scarcely noticed, more often consciously denied. It is apparently unaccountable and hidden in comparison with the conscious mental life. So, explanation into the human soul meant to Freud the exploration of the complex unconscious. To these fundamental constructs he further added the subsidiary theories of the Oedipus complex to view libido in terms of pan-sexualism. His later views, that religion historically originates from the Oedipus complex, that religious rituals are obsessional neurosis and that religion is in illusion for the satisfaction of sensuality, repressed in the unconscious, are rooted in the scientism of the age, vastly modified by Freud by way of his psychological insights.

Secondly, the kind of popular religiosity that Freud confronted in his childhood also contributed to his peculiar understanding of his religion. In his childhood at least he was not deprived of religion. This is not merely because of his authoritarian father, who was an orthodox Jew, but also because of his mother's piety to whom Freud was deeply attached. He often read Bible and was strongly influenced by it. But his feelings towards religion were characterized by an ambivalence, for Freud had also strong anti-religious feelings, although he gradually acquired them due to his bitter experiences. Freud was proud of being a Jew, but

humiliation at the time of European anti-Semitism was a daily experience. The anti-Semitism that he witnessed and experienced had also its impact on his profession, too, when after many difficult years as a student and a teacher of conventional medicine, Freud painfully noticed that his patients were mostly Jews. Religion therefore had come to mean to him only the authoritarian, corrupt, anti-Semitic, Catholicism of Moravia and Vienna.

Finally, the complicated family relations, to which he was exposed to, may have also shaped his views on religion. After the death of his first wife, Freud's father, then forty years old, married again, a girl of hardly twenty. Freud was an uncle from his birth, since his step-brother had then in the family children of Freud's own age. In such a family human relations were often strained. To Freud his father represented an authority, refusal and compulsion. Freud himself admits that he had a strong aversion and jealousy to his father, but a deep attachment to his youthful mother, revealing at once sure symptoms of neurosis. There perhaps could not be a better place for the birth and the development of the Oedipus complex, his brain child, that he ingeniously invented and utilised in the formulation of his theory of the origin of religion.

It is against this backdrop, we have to study his theory on the origin of religion. Totem and Taboo¹ is the embodiment of his reflections here. His theory on the origin of religion is inspired by ethnology, in general, and by Darwin's theory of evolution, in particular. Of the many ethnological theories here, of special interest to me, is the theory of totemism. For, claiming his theory to be historical, Freud applies the totemic practices among some ethnic groups to the phenomenon of religion. We may recall here that the theories in regard to the origin of religion came to be first entertained by the European philologists who embarked upon the study of a comparative mythology. Ethnologists quickly followed suit, equipped with the concepts of evolution. Their chief concern for a while seem to have been a reconstruction of a primitive religion: they recognized that in our society, it appears that some religions are 'more developed' and some are 'less developed'. From here they argued, that, if we fall back upon some least developed religions and their practices, then we can reconstruct the so called primitive religion. Such a primitive religion was identified with animatism or animism or totemism. Freud himself depends on totemism. But all these are theories formulated under the impact of evolution.

1. S. Freud. Totem and Taboo, Edited by James Strachey. (London: Hogarth Press, 1973).

Evolutionary theories of religion came as a protest against such of those dogmatic theories, that have one thing in common: Religion has its origin in a primordial revelation and a primitive monotheism. The implication here is that religion in its inception is pure, but it came to be corrupted in the course of time due to historical vicissitudes. Freud may be right here in calling into question these dogmatic theories, insofar as, under the impact of both scientism and historicism, he is averse to all revelatory dogmatism. But, where he may not be right is in subscribing to scientific dogmatism, that still aims at reconstructing primitive religion. However, Freud is quite selective in his ethnological data. He relies more on the totemic practices than on animatism ^{or} animism or magic.

Freud explicates the origin of religion, making use of the ethnological material on totemism, but he is more than an ethnologist here. For he ingeniously modifies them with his psychological theories of the Oedipus complex and the other related subsidiary psychological theories.

Totem is, as a rule, an animal, and more rarely, a plant or a natural phenomena, which stands in a peculiar relation to the whole clan. The totem animal also believed to be the first ancestor of the clan; at the same time it is their guardian spirit and helper, which sends them oracles

and spares its own children. The clansmen are under a sacred obligation of not killing and eating its flesh. Hence, a totem is also a taboo, it is respected, feared and venerated. Yet, since the totem represents the power of life and growth of the clan, once a year it is ritually slaughtered and partaken of with the hope that the life of the clan may be invigorated, and the collective life of the clan may grow into a solidarity of close kinship. Freud now recasts this material for his own purpose. He identifies two prohibitions operative in totemism; they are the most ancient: prohibitions against killing the totem animal; and the prohibitions against the hetero-sexual intercourse with the members of the totem clan. Unlike the anthropologists, he gives a psychological interpretation of taboo restrictions before he can link them with his theory on the origin of religion. Freud compares the behaviour of the primitives towards their taboo with the obsessional behaviour of the neurotics. Freud is of the view that, if we compare taboo and obsessional neurosis, it should be possible for us to have a better understanding of the relation between different forms of neurosis and cultural institutions. To Freud, religion is an obsessional neurosis of our culture. Man of religion behaves towards his god exactly the way the primitive man behaves towards his totem animal. Like the totem animal,

god of religion too is loved, feared and respected; he considers him as the giver of life and the protector. In short he is his father-creator.

It is important that we pay special attention to the manner in which Freud incorporates the totemic data to his theory on the origin of religion. It is here that he employs the Oedipus complex in his theory. He believes that human beings, like the animals originally lived in hordes under the despotic rule of a pater-primogenitor. The women in the clan, in particular, were his exclusive property. The sons tottering under the despotism league together and kill the father. But they fail to reach an accord on the modalities of sharing their 'gain' and ^{to} continue to live in peaceful co-existence. Moreover, repentance and remorse over the heinous crime set in. Hence, they form a fraternity to bend themselves to a way of life that would not let the recurrence of murder and incest in the community. They ritually celebrate the murdered father to strengthen the bond of unity and brotherhood and hope to be strengthened by the life of the pater-primogenitor. The murdered father becomes their god; the ritual act gives rise to the ethical norms of the clan. Thus, are born the religion, the god, the religious rituals and the basic ethical ^{norms} ~~name~~ of the clan.

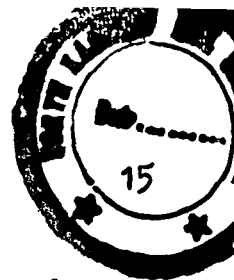
We must not miss here Freud's implications that the totemic system resulted from the conditions underlying the Oedipus complex. Such conditions were in fact the primitive social organisation, that was equivalent to living in hordes, under the despotic rule of the father, the primogenitor. Freud intends to say that the dynamics within the phenomenon of religion is also the Oedipus complex. The starting point of religion is thus the libidinal attachment to the mother and death wish to the father. The totem animal represents the father feared, envied yet also loved; the father killed and eaten, yet ritually celebrated and divinized. The totem then gradually develops into a god. God is consequently nothing but the sublimated father of the human race, hence in the totemic sacrifice it is God himself that is killed and sacrificed.

In critically appraising Freud's theory on the origin of religion we have to take note of two important elements: In the first place, Freud's theory on the origin of religion is inspired by the ethnological findings of the nineteenth century; here again it is the Darwinian theory of evolution that has served as an undercurrent for his reflections on the origin of religion. Secondly, within the evolutionary scheme, Freud seemed to have transformed his theory of the Oedipus complex, subsidiary to the libidinal theory, into

a theory of the origin of religion. Hence, my critique proceeds along both lines. First of all, it is directed against the general ethnological theories, therefore against Freud as well, in so far as Freud ingeniously and creatively utilises this material, not very cautiously though. Secondly, it is directed at pointing out the inner inconsistencies in Freud's theory, especially when he traces the origin of religion to the Oedipus complex.

Accordingly, I hope to argue that Freud's theory of the origin of religion is inspired by untenable assumptions of the ethnological theory of totemism. Thus, for example, Freud claims his theory to be historical, whereas it lacks any historical evidences. There may surely be in some religions elements that we come across in such primitive phases of religion as animism, animatism, magic and totemism. But this does not justify Freud's contention that all religions everywhere have uniformly evolved through these phases. In some religions, the warship of the totem animal may have paved the way for the worship of god(s). But to uphold a thesis, that all religions have passed from animatism to worship of gods, to that of a high god, through the neat evolutionary phases, smacks of a dogmatic scientism. It is a postulate that demands for more historical evidence than the ethnologists can muster. In the reconstruction of a

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primitive religion, the European ethnologists and Freud seem to assume that religion is less true than science, an assumption that cannot be philosophically substantiated. Explication of religion in terms of non-religious factors, even in principle, has its serious problems. Again, Freud explains religion in terms of totemism. But it is possible to argue that totemism cannot be called religion at all, if anything, it only forms a border-line of religion; it is rather a matter of social or tribal organisation in some society.

I also hope to show the many inner inconsistencies in Freud's thesis. Thus, for example, a patriarchal system in a community does not entail that its life pattern should be that of the animal-primates. The fundamental mistake on Freud's part seems to consist in his thinking that the pater-familias is the same as the pater-primogenitor. The mistaken identification indulges in category mistake, for the former is primarily sociological, while the latter is biological; it stems from making the primate animal life a pattern for human life. Again, even if it be granted for arguments sake, it defeats Freud's purpose. Nothing hinders us in imagining that the original despotism of a single male continues in the community even after the liquidation of the pater-primogenitor by way of eliminating the rival claimants by the single strong male. Is not this after all

the way of life among the animal primates? I hope to show many an inconsistency in Freud's arguments here.

Whereas Freud's theory on the origin of religion is inspired by ethnology, it appears to me, his theory on the nature of religion is conditioned by his ideology. It claims to be more philosophical in so far as Freud here concentrates on the power of religious ideas and ideals, and traces them to the needs of human nature, especially the power of the unconscious and its expression in wishfulfilments or phantasy. Hence, he relies here heavily on the data collected from his clinical studies of the mental patients, when he was working as a neurophysiologist. His basic insight on the issue is that religion is an infantile dependency and illusion; it is an admirable psychic myth for the purposes of wish fulfilments. On his realization that he is destined to remain a child of nature for ever vis-a-vis the stupendous powers of nature, ^aman feels for ever the need for a protector-father; it is a spontaneously felt need that he cannot face the powers of nature without a superhuman father. Thus, longing for a heavenly father is many layered.

Nevertheless, the gods that he creates for himself after his own image are his handiwork; although he dreads them and seeks to propitiate them, yet he entrusts them with the task of his own protection. Such a perception is born

fundamentally of human helplessness and weakness. When Freud attributes the inner strength of religious ideas to wish-fulfilment, the latter's range is considerably wide. Its range extends from the merely physical to the epistemological; from the merely psychological to the moral sphere. Therefore, what he seeks to overcome are not merely the natural principalities and powers but also the psychic, moral and the 'spiritual' powers. In the process, the gods that had represented the physical powers may disappear with the advance of scientific knowledge, but the gods that represent the moral and spiritual powers, continue to hold sway on him. His gods may now be thoroughly interiorized.

From here, Freud concluded that religion is a mechanism invented by man for the wish-fulfilment, therefore it is an infantile play, an illusion. But the illusion of religion that Freud speaks of is not an epistemic error or deliberate lie. By illusion Freud means to suggest a contradiction with reality. Freud tends to call a belief an illusion, when a wish-fulfilment forms a prominent factor in its motivation; and in doing so, it disregards its relation to reality. Such illusions, in the opinion of Freud, did not approach religion as an abstract phenomena, or in isolation from other cultural elements. On the contrary, he always saw it ⁱⁿ the context of culture as a whole.

Freud also points out that the many prohibitions which we impose in the society in the name of god are nothing but our own wish-fulfilments. In our society we have certain restrictions against murder, incest etc. For, if people, due to hatred or any other reasons, were to murder one another, the final outcome in the society is a chaos; social life than is not possible. Prohibitions against killing, if they have to command the greatest and the strictest adherence, will have to be presented as being sanctioned, not merely by a civil and social authority, but also by religious authority, that has the power to bind not only the earthly life but a life beyond it. Hence what Freud recommends is not the rejection of morality but its purification. He wants its source to be scientific rather than religious. Freud is of the view that religion by creating for man illusions, alienated man from reality. Hence, his appeal for education to reality principle.

Thus, religion is born of an ignorance of the laws of nature; and the ignorant belief seeks its substitution in the fabricated world of religion.

In critically appraising Freud's theory on the nature of religion, the thrust of my arguments will centre around three points: Firstly, I hope to show that Freud's theory is formulated with an inadequate understanding of human

psyche; this inadequacy bears upon his negative and retrogressive evaluation of human psyche. Freud is unduly harsh on human wishing. Wishing is perfectly human. It needs not be symptomatic of any form of neurosis. Indeed, it is the power behind any act of hoping, loving, aspiring. In itself it creates neither illusions or delusions. Indeed, human life is lived with the power of our ideals projected into the future. Secondly, I hope to show that Freud's theory is inspired by his belief in scientism that religion is less true than science, and that religion would ultimately give place to science. These assumptions are highly debatable, the more so, today, when the scientific euphoria has largely cooled down in scientifically advanced countries. What is more, there are serious philosophical problems associated with the progress of science. A directionless scientific progress, with no concern for a technology with a human face, has created more problems than it has solved. One problem often is overcome by giving rise at the same time to more problems yet to be overcome by the mankind. Science has proved to be, not the god that failed, but the god that overrides the integral human welfare. Science cannot then be a panacea for all human ills.

Again, not every progress in science is go-ipso a cancellation of religion. My criticism is not directed against science but scientism. I do accept science as a

valid and a universal tool for investigation and knowledge. What I denounce is the belief that science is the panacea for all human ills, physical or moral, as Freud naively believed. The latter is a world-view which science by its very nature cannot be. I also do not believe that a criticism against science is a defence of religion.

Thirdly, I hope to show that there may be in the formulation of Freud's theory a repressed religiosity on the part of Freud. On this point, I shall be very brief, since it may warrant more attention to Freud's biographical notes than I have devoted. With extreme caution, I would like to suggest a few directions to such a psychoanalysis of the psychoanalyst.

Finally, despite our critical appraisal of Freud's reflections on religion, we must not miss the positive significance of Freud's study. It has an inestimable value to anyone who is concerned with the study of philosophy of religion. His critique is a perennial philosophical warning to all forms of belief in god and religion. It can serve as a therapeutic and kathartic device for the purification of the belief of the believers. Not infrequently do believers tend to take all sorts of absurdities for truth. God-language can be rid of a great many absurdities that have

too easily passed for religious mysteries. It is here that Freud's critique has served as an admirable aid to the purification of western culture, in general, and of Christian religion, in particular.

Secondly, Freud's has been an insight into the human psyche, the unfathomable unconscious, that bears upon the concerns of religion. For all the limitations of his critique of religion, his understanding of the power of human mind in idolizing, or imaging god, is a positive help to a philosopher of religion. So, too, his relentless efforts towards the total liberation of men, so that he can enjoy a greater autonomy, cannot but be acknowledged. Likewise, there may be now ways of reading meaning out of his many philosophical constructs, especially the Oedipus complex. I hope to make an attempt in this direction, too.

Thirdly, it is also possible to graze towards the reverse contribution of religion to Freud's psychoanalysis. This attempt of mine has been very sketchy. Still, if I have ventured into it, it is only to convince myself that there is an area of the study, that I undertook in this dissertation, that will engage my attention for the many more years to come.

The plan of this dissertation may be briefly stated as follows. This introduction has outlined the scope, extent and the nature of this study. Chapter two traces the moorings of Freud's reflections on religion. Chapter three presents Freud's theory on the origin of religion as an item of socio-genesis. Chapter four is a critical appraisal of the above thesis. Chapter five presents Freud's theory on the nature of religion, as a gigantic psychomythology. Chapter six critically appraises it. Chapter seven, by way of conclusion, ventures to bring out the positive merits of Freudian critique, and also points out some directions for future work in the area.

CHAPTER II

THE MOORINGS

THE MOORINGS

Sigmund Freud's contribution to the philosophy of religion is often eclipsed by his epoch-making work in the area of psychoanalysis. Yet, he may also be considered as a philosopher of religion of no mean rank. Freud himself set a higher value on his contributions to the philosophy of religion. His searching analysis of the origin and nature of religion, of the similarity between obsessive actions and religious practices and ritual, deserves an attention closer than what it has generally received at the hands of the philosophers. Yet, his reflections on religion do not originate from nowhere; they have their deep moorings. I will roughly categorize them as historicism, scientism, popular religiosity and the complicated family relations. Of these, by far the most important is scientism of the day, because Freud steadily moves from a natural scientific materialism to a mechanistic medical materialism, and from here, to a psychoanalytical materialistic atheism, and all this is implied in the philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach.

Early nineteenth century in Europe hailed an era of most astounding scientific discoveries; it may rightly be called the age of scientific reason. The philosophy that was

consistent with the spirit of the age was that of Feuerbach. His was a philosophical anthropology that had far reaching influence on every branch of learning, the most important being the Marxian political economy and the Freudian psychoanalysis. Most interestingly Feuerbach began as a theologian, rambled for a while in the Hegelian philosophy, the acceptable and the cultured philosophy of the Continent for a long time, before he turned out to be the father of modern materialism. He can be accredited to have laid the philosophical foundation for a kind of atheism that tended to view religion as a projection of the human psyche and that the god of religion as an illusion. Feuerbach held such an outrageously irreligious view of the time because he acknowledged the primacy and the power of human imagination. He argued that man, endowed with the power of human imagination, projects his own subjective nature, objectifies, personalizes and sacralizes it, and finally calls it his god.¹ Thus, his god is the objectified subjective nature, embellished with all the perfections, whose lack is the chief characteristic of himself as the frail creature of nature. The motivations of these ingenious creativity on the part of the man are rooted in the needs and the dynamics of imagination,ⁱⁿ the context of man's efforts to negotiate with nature.

1. Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), pp. 10-24.

None rejoiced more in the achievements of science than Feuerbach. He prophesied the revolution of science that would dissolve the religious, in particular, Christian world-view, hitherto held immutably. The fulfilments of his prophecy seemed to have been hastened by the corrosive chemistry, when the chemists successfully produced the organic substance, uric acid, synthetically. It appeared as if the fundamental distinction between the organic and the inorganic world was no more valid. If so, life is not an order of reality that needed a divine intervention, as was firmly believed so long. The distinction between matter and life is not one of quality, but only of some degree.

To Feuerbach, Copernicus was the man of the century. He knows not enough words of praise to him in his writings; Copernicus is the true revolutionary of his days. Likewise he is full-throated in recommending to us the chemical study of Moleschett, Carl Vogt and Ludwig Büchner, the latter two being the noted natural scientists. Inspired by the scientific discoveries of the times, Feuerbach laid the foundation of which may be called the natural scientific materialism of the nineteenth century. Its serious target was the speculations of the idealists philosophers, Hegel and Schelling. Feuerbach attacked directly their philosophy of nature by the exact and inductive research in the laboratories. He rediscovered for

us the contributions of the ancient Greek materialists like Democritus and Lucretius; modern materialists like La Mettrie and Hallbach became respectable overnight among the natural scientists. The industrial and technical growth of major cities in Europe, along with the progress of pure science, lent admirable support to materialism. For Feuerbach the upshot of all these scientific materialism was the acknowledged dependence of mental life on bodily functions. Experiments on animals seemed to have clinched the issue for this dependence.

What is the impact of this natural scientific materialism on philosophy? It was the shifting belief that philosophy must be linked with science and not with theology. The impact is more than evident in the famous materialistic controversy of 1854 at Göttingen, although, in itself, it would appear to me that the controversy did not have either the scientific or the philosophical sophistication that we would expect in a debate of such important issue. Surprisingly, this was not^a controversy between the idealistic and materialistic philosophers, nor between the scientists and philosophers, nor between philosophers and theologians. It was the debate between the medico Rudolf Wagner and physiologist Carl Vogt. Wagner wanted to prove, making use of the philosophical and theological arguments, monogenesis as well as the special,

invisible, weightless soul substance. Vogt withstood these arguments, branded it^{as} 'blind faith' against science; he spoke, going along with the theory of evolution, for polygenesis. He argued that the relation between mind and thought is similar to that between liver and bile. Surely, the famous materialistic controversy is full of obscurities, exaggeration, error. It does not redound^u to the glory either of science or of philosophy. At any rate, when the debate was over, it was construed as a victory to the materialists, not without reasons. Its most important contributions, as far as philosophy was concerned, is that philosophy should henceforth be tagged with science, and not with theology. Religion must not have its say in matters that pertain to science and medicine. The general scepticism directed against religion and theology was also extended to philosophy. The interconnections among the mechanical natural laws should be investigated only scientifically without any philosophical, much less theological, reservations. There is no conscious activity without the cerebral activity; there is no 'soul', if there be anything by that name, independent of the body. Religion, in particular has nothing to do with scientific matters; it is largely a private affair in the life of man. Life as a whole, mind included, can be adequately explained by the interplay of matter and force. Therefore, god is superfluous. Meleschott's The Cycle of Life and

Ludwig Büchner's Force and Matter had become the magna carta of the natural scientific materialism. Feuerbach in his Materialism and Spiritualism was the philosopher spokesman for the newly emerging world-view.

The natural scientific materialism had its immediate impact on the study of the most fashionable scientific discipline of the day, namely medicine. Study of medicine then was largely the study of anatomy and physiology; the latter also included within itself pathology. Natural scientific materialism turned here into what may be called natural medical materialism, within a decade after the famous materialistic controversy. Feuerbach enthusiastically hailed the development. He was of the view that a medical man was of necessity a materialist.

What is more, the medical materialism became the materialism espoused by the rich, unlike 'the proletarian Materialism' of Marx and Engels. But, we should not lose sight of the development that it was the theoretical atheism of Feuerbach that takes the distinct bifurcation into the dialectical materialism of Marx as well as the psychoanalytical materialism of Freud. Thus, Engels, for example, objected to Buchner's mechanistic, undialectical materialism, but had nothing against the materialism of Feuerbach. One of the greatest contributions of Feuerbach, that facilitated the

branching of his atheism into psychoanalytical atheism, is his upholding of the fundamental significance of human sexuality, to say nothing of his denunciation of the idealistic-spiritualistic psychology. For the assertion of the paramount importance of human sexuality, and the negation of the idealistic spiritualistic psychology, came heavily upon the victorian prudery, seen as a Christian virtue. To the medical man, it sounded the breakdown of inhibitions against the scientific, in particular, medical investigations of sexuality. Freud too was soon to come under the influence of scientism through the medical materialism.

Yet another, influence on Freud's reflections on religion is the historic^{cism} of the 19th century. Histori^{cism} indeed goes hand in hand with scientism. One of the positive impact of the European colonial enterprise was the expansion of a historic consciousness of the western man. It would not be altogether wrong, if it is stated that for the first time *the* west took seriously the importance of time and history —, in short, culture. It is not that the element of history was altogether absent in the history of western ideas. But the Greek philosophy, the undercurrent of much of western culture, had played down, with its emphasis on the eternal, simple, indivisible forms, the importance of time.

A direct result of the consciousness of time gave fillip, on the one hand, to the scientific study of matter, its variable forms, energy etc. in science. Darwin's theory of evolution in particular is a significant landmark here. On the other hand, it also gave rise to social sciences. The ethnological studies are significant in this direction. The colonial man had come in contact with unknown people, their customs, habits, languages, religions, societies, socio-political-economic organisations, - all substantially different from his own. He could not escape the one irrefutable fact of the pluralism of cultures. Indeed, a pluralism of culture is at the core of the consciousness of history. This necessarily led to the liberal spirit of modern times, in virtue of relativism that it introduced within the area of social sciences.

The liberal spirit of the colonial man was gradually imbibed by the colonized man through the former's system of liberal education. It is significant that the educated in these countries not only began to avidly incorporate the liberal spirit of histor^{ci}sm and scientism of the west, but also rediscovered their own ancient heritage, if they had one, — but this time with a deep sense of culture. This sense of culture affected in a profound sense their reflections on both science and social sciences. Needless to say, the Continent itself was euphoric with its discovery of the positivistic spirit.

It was this world, inspired by scientism and historism into which Freud made his entry in 1856 in Monastir, a predominantly Catholic town. By the time he migrated to Vienna, Vienna was a centre of learning, where the medical materialism was fed on the scientism and historism of the day in the learned academies.

In Vienna, if Freud took to the study of medicine, the most fashionable subject of the times, it is not so much with a desire to help the suffering humanity as with a desire to understand something of the riddles of the universe and, if possible, to solve some of them at least. Thus, his concern seems to have been theoretical right from the beginning, thus justifying our enquiry into his philosophy. His philosophical temperament always longed for knowledge. He began his studies in physiology in Brücke's Institute. Brücke's Institute gave him an opportunity to rub shoulders with such scientists as Müller, Du-Bois Reymond, Carl Ludwig, and his fellow student, Helmholtz. And, the greatest of these was Brücke himself, in him Freud discovered his intellectual father, the way Feuerbach had found his mentor in Hegel.

The influence of Helmholtz's mechanistic physiology in medicine on Freud is substantial. Robert Mayer had discovered in 1842 the famous law of thermodynamics. Continuing

this work, Helmholtz won universal recognition for his precise definition of the law.² Helmholtz's contribution was not restricted to mere mechanistic physiology, but was extended to ophthalmology and acoustics. What however fascinated Freud in his studies with his fellow student was Helmholtz's success in measuring the velocity of transmissions of stimulus in the nerve fibres. Along with Helmholtz, Freud was soon to dominate the researches in physiology for almost 20 years even outside Germany.

The law of entropy,³ coupled with that of thermodynamics, constitutes the most fundamental laws of nature. To Freud, they made possible the unity of all natural forces. Freud did not hesitate to extend his understanding to human body as well. What was rather hazily spoken of by Descartes and LaMettrie, was sought to be presented by Freud with some degree of exactitude. A purely mechanistic theory of human body was now possible —, and all this, as others would say, at the cost of human mind. Human organism can be understood exactly as the inorganic nature can be, viz. in terms of the interplay of physico-chemical forces which are basically forms of energy.

2. Sum total of energy remains constant in any isolated system, despite the changes taking place in individual energy components, such as mechanical, chemical, electrical and radiant energy.

3. The law that heat cannot be entirely changed back to energy.

The above work of Freud was admirably supported by the researches of Du Bois-Reymond, who was working at that time in the Institute on animal electricity in muscles and nerves. His own conclusion was that in human organism there are no forces other than physical and chemical. Both the physical and chemical forces are ultimately inherent in matter and also are reducible to the forces of attraction and repulsion. One might contend here that it was a thoroughly physicalistic physiology but it succeeded in inflicting a mortal blow on all forms of idealistic philosophies of nature. It also overcame the vitalisms of Aristot^{le}ian and the scholastic brand. For all these philosophies had presumed in diverse ways that the human organism was endowed (by the creator largely) with such immaterial factor as soul, substantial forms, ends, goals, purposes (entelechy) etc. and that therefore it possessed higher telos and ultimate objectives. But, with the mechanistic physiology of Freud and his colleagues in Brückes Institute came a purely causal, deterministic explanation of the human organism in terms of physical and chemical factors.

But, in the hands of Freud, the law of thermodynamics came to acquire a double, in the law of psycho-dynamics. For, he claimed that not only the corporeal processes but also the mental processes can be explained 'from the interplay of forces'. Mental processes are such that they assist or inhibit

one another, combine with one another, nay more, enter into compromises with one another.⁴ To explicate this Freud assumed a psychic energy, the grist to his law of psycho-dynamics, that was soon to become the bedrock of his psychoanalysis. He contended that such psychic energy admits variants like cathexis, counter-cathexis, influx, discharge (of energy), excitation, tension, displacement and so on. Under the impact of this psychic law, he conceived of human psyche as a machine, a mental appliance. Whatever proceeds from this psyche had become for him the subject matter for his clinical observations. (Freud had by now started working as a neurophysiologist). He tried to understand them purely after the models of the physicalist physiological science. It is true that he does use such terms, especially in the context of dream interpretations, as end, objective and purpose but he did not abandon the deterministic model both for the physical and the psychological processes. All mental phenomena, deliberate, fortuitous and obscure alike, are then wholly determined in his physicalist physiology.

But, if we are to understand the full significance of his reflections on religion, we have to turn to his transition from medical materialism to his radical atheism of psychoanalysis. For, while it is easy enough to see why the medical

4. Sigmund Freud, Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis, Edited James Strachey, (London: Hogarth Press, 1973), pp. 50-51.

materialists think that science, and not religion, is the panacea for human suffering, it is not at all clear to us why Freud espoused a radical atheism abjured by his colleagues in the Institute. This, I am inclined to believe, is to be traced back, in part, to his principles of psychoanalysis. For, here, he not only has the perception of the dynamics of human psyche, he also seems to construe it, drawing deeply from his own personal resources. Hence, it would be worthwhile that we briefly digress to see some of the influences of his early upbringing, before we look into the specifically psychological influences.

We may begin here with the kind of religiosity that Freud was exposed to in his childhood. It is not at all true, as his biographer, E. Jones thinks, that Freud "grew up devoid of any belief in God or immortality and does not appear to have felt the need of it."⁵ While he does not prefer any proof for his contention, the evidence seems to suggest the contrary. In his childhood at least he observed the Jewish customs and feasts. This is not merely because of his authoritarian father, who was an orthodox Jew, but also because of his piety to whom Freud was fondly attached.

5. Ernest Jones, Sigmund Freud : Life and Work, (London: Hogarth Press, 1954), p. 37.

His father, although aloof to Jewish tradition, quietly followed his religion. The present that he gave to Freud on his thirtyfifth birthday was a copy of the Bible with an inscription in his own hand, and an encouragement for Freud's intellectual pursuits. Further, Jones himself admits that Freud's mother preserved in him 'some belief in deity'. She had instructed him in Jewish faith; she had called upon the blessings of the Almighty, when Freud began his practice after his course of studies. Later in his Interpretation of Dreams,⁶ he was to ridicule some of the elements of his mother's instruction. But he often read the Bible, and was strongly influenced by it. He admits that the Bible had 'an enduring effect on the direction of (my) interest'. He ungrudgingly acknowledges his great devotion and respect to Hammerschlag, his teacher of Hebrew and Biblical history.

But Freud had also strong anti-religious feelings, although he gradually acquired them ^{due} ~~one~~ to his bitter experiences. The religiosity that Freud confronted during his childhood is far from edifying. Hence, it may be said that religion itself is another source of his atheism. Moravia, the town in which he was born, and early brought up, was predominantly Catholic. The provincial town, that it was, was known neither for broadmindedness nor for tolerance of other faiths. When a boy, he was singled out as a Jew in the school.

6. Sigmund Freud. The Interpretation of Dreams. This famous work went unnoticed when it was first published in 1900. Nor his lectures on the issue widely attended in the university.

Freud was proud of being a Jew but humiliation at the time of European anti-Semitism was a daily experience. He longed to be educated in a more liberal atmosphere of England, where his nephew was already pursuing his studies. Later when he joined the university in Vienna, he was made to feel inferior and alien, because he was a Jew; but Freud, aware of his intellectual capacities, refused to comply with. Even as an adult, he was faced with social alienation. He could not forget an insult which his father had to swallow at the hand of a Christian teenager, at the height of anti-Semitism in Europe. He hated the youth and the religion he professed. What is more, he also hated the Jewish virtues of meekness and humility that his father displayed, as religion in practice. His feelings of hatred and revenge against Christianity are perfectly intelligible. What however is not intelligible to us, is his ambivalent attitude towards his own religion. At times he is deeply attached to Judaic morality. In his early years Freud was taken to church by his Catholic nursemaid. Here he was initially fascinated by the Catholic rituals, especially the celebration of the Eucharistic mystery. One of his plays in childhood was the 'celebration' of mass and the preaching of the word. They made a strong appeal to him, against the religious ideas of heaven and hell, redemption and resurrection — all received through the maid. His later aversion to all rituals is to be traced back to this infantile

fascination with the Catholic rituals. Freud was to equate soon all religious rituals with obsessive activities, and religion itself with obsessive neurosis. In one of his essays⁷ he forcefully argued that the formation of religion is a pathological counterpart of obsessional neurosis.

The anti-Semitism that he witnessed and experienced had also its impact on his profession, too, when, after many difficult years as a student and a teacher of conventional medicine, Freud gradually emerged as a hypnotist and psychoanalyst, most of his patients were only Jews. Religion therefore meant to him only the authoritarian, corrupt, anti-Semitic, Catholicism of Vienna. His investigations into the private sexual life of the patients offended the prudery of the Catholic religion, and made him suspect among the professional colleagues. The result was disastrous to Freud. He lost his clientele, earnings, and in some cases, even the breaking of friendships.

Lastly, the complicated family relations to which Freud was exposed to, may have also shaped his views on religion. After the death of his first wife, Freud's father, then forty years old, married again, a girl of hardly twenty.

7. V.P. Gay. "Psychopathology and Ritual: Freud's Essay 'Obsessive, Actions and Religious Practices'", Psychoanalytic Review, Vol. 62, 1975, p. 117.

Freud was the first of the eight children from his second marriage. Freud was an uncle from his birth. For, when he was born, his step-brother had children of his age. In such a family, human relations were often strained. Freud held his father responsible to all the complications in the family. By the time Freud himself grew up to be forty, he revealed a neurosis of his own. He had developed a deep aversion and jealousy towards his father. His father represented to him authority, refusal and compulsion. At an age, when his father remarried, Freud himself completely abstrained from sex, as he admits in his autobiography. This only goes to indicate how strong was his aversion and jealousy to his father, revealing at once sure symptoms of a neurosis. It is not impossible for us to read a 'sexual congestion' in his often negative evaluation of human sexuality. But his self-confidence and inner security however comes to him from his mother. He himself admits that he had not only fond devotion but also certain attraction for his strong willed and energetic mother. There could not be a better place for the birth and the development of the Oedipus complex, his brainchild, that he ingeniously invented and utilised in the formulation of his theory of the origin of religion.

Let me now briefly relate the influences of scientism and historism^{ci} on the social conditions, before I come to the

critical psychological influences that shaped Freud's religious reflections.

The spirit of the early nineteenth century Europe was largely then shaped by scientism and historicism. In such a scheme, a god of religion, was soon to be useless. For science, it was thought, can be without the hypothesis of god and can explain everything by means of the natural laws. For the scientist's world does not consist of any supernatural mysteries, but of only the laws governing movement, the forces of attraction and repulsion and the conversion of one force into another. God-concept then was simply a way of filling in ^{the} gaps of science. Even by the end of eighteenth century, science had reached a point of sufficient sophistication for its principle so as to become increasingly applicable to the solution of the problems of economic significance: Machine harnessed power for the production of goods. The moneyed class naturally became the masters, since they had the capital necessary to finance it, in the form of the raw material and the ownership of the means of production. Industrial revolution made its impact. Its gains were probably felt much before its negative and dangerous fall outs. With increase in wealth and the progressive application of elementary sanitary precautions, made available through science, the population of Europe trebled between 1800-1900.

Increasing percentages of this larger population moved into the cities; the process of urbanization was thus a sequel to industrialization. The result was an emergence of a new force, the working class, that at once lost touch with the soil that they were so long cultivating, and along with it, suffered a certain kind of alienation from the rurally oriented tradition, upon the western civilization. The effect of this and the growing technological money-economy changed the former face of the medieval communities. It required a complete revamping of man's conception of social relationships. Instead of organic communities living together like their ancestors with a common ground, the new society came to be composed of individuals, whose relationships with their fellow beings were in the nature of quasi-legal contracts. This applied progressively to all the relationships of human existence: employer-employee, state-citizen, the believer-church; and lately even to marriage, which no longer, spontaneously, was considered as an indissoluble sacramental union. With the rise of new classes, new modes of existence, new modes of thought, the basic ideas of the society radically changed.

The astonishing advance of the natural science might well be regarded as the most notable feature of the nineteenth century. This advance has continued without interpretation

in our own century. As a consequence of the success of science, the claim was bound to be made that the natural sciences should have a greater part, or even a definitive part, in shaping the philosophical ideas. It was but natural that philosophers now looked towards science for their inspiration. Positivistic philosophies were the natural 'rulers' of the spirit of the times. Freud was an ardent devotee of the scientism of the day.

But his concerns were here prominently theoretical. Even after his graduation in medicine he continued to work in Brücke's physiological Institute. As it did not provide him with sufficient means for his family's maintenance, on Brücke's advice, he started to work as a neuropathologist with the psychiatrist Meynert. Gradually his interest shifted from the animal nerve cells and fibres to human nervous system. His contribution here to the understanding of brain paralysis is substantial. He had also now begun to lecture in neuropathology in the University of Vienna. This followed his venture as a private practitioner, a specialist in nervous disorders, which brought about a series of difficulties against this practice of unorthodox medicine. This was compounded by the wave of anti-Semitism in Vienna. Once again, advised by Brücke, he came to Paris to work with Jean Martin Charcot, on hysteria and hypnosis. This led him

to the first serious investigations of the soul. This was also a turning point in his life in so far as it was a definite turning from pure mechanistic neurology to neuropathology, that puts him on the path of psychoanalysis. We are now in a position to study the specific influences of psychology.

The very first item that attracted his attention in the cause of psychopathology is that in human beings spontaneity and a mechanistic determination can co-exist. He was stimulated by a sort of inquisitiveness directed to human relations and objects of nature. He was here much attracted to Darwin's theory of evolution for more than one reason. First of all, it offered the prospect of an extraordinary advance of human knowledge. Secondly, it was then of topical interest. Thirdly, and most importantly, he saw in it the prospects of an explanation of religion in terms of evolution, that admits within itself both spontaneity and mechanical ^{determination} ~~discrimination~~. He hoped through it to discard the Bergsonian vitalism that advocated the evolution of organs by way of organic need or desire.

To turn to his more specifically psychological influences. The investigations into the human soul that he had begun with the treatment of hysteria by way of hypnosis

led him deeper into the subject. He began to see and treat hysteria and its symptoms as products of emotional traumas. Hypnotism revealed to him that the traumas were repressed by the hysterical patient. In the process of curing the patient, these traumas had first to be abreacted; the unconscious stimulus had to be laid bare. The exercise required a transference. Freud called his method of laying bare the unconscious, abreacting the traumas and transference catharsis psychoanalysis.

From here Freud was to move to a point of no return. From 1895, he increasingly moved away from physiology. (This is what I call his shifting concerns from psychopathology to psychoanalysis). But he still retained physiological language in his writings, even in his interpretation of dreams, we do come across such terms as 'neurosis', 'quantifiable states of nerve cells' and so on. This is because Freud acknowledged both parallelism and interaction between the physiological and psychological processes, hitherto unexplored. This transition was partly made possible to him by following the ideas of G.T. Fechner, the founder of experimental psychology.⁸ The more he used the Cathartic methods,

8. Fechner had gone against the materialism of Moleschott, Vogt and Büchner. His influence on Freud's teachers Brücke and Meynert was substantial. Hence, that Freud should be influenced by Fechner does not surprise us in any way.

the more he began to reject the dogmas of medicine. He came to the conclusion that what operates behind the neurosis is not anykind of emotional stirrings, but the present or the past sexual disturbances. The nature of neurosis is then primarily sexual. Sexual here must be interpreted in a broad sense: it does not so much refer to actual seductions as to sexual fantasies. Needless to say, this gradually brought him to the investigations of the sexual life of his neurotic patients, however, not without serious difficulties for his professional survival. The investigations however gave him a rare insight into the dynamics of human psyche: a storehouse of concealed and repressed wishes.

Under the impact of the physical laws of thermodynamics and entropy, Freud had already formulated his own law of psychic energy. He called it libido, interpreted largely in terms of the powers of sexuality, and also spoken of in terms of its conversion from one form into another. Hence, it was not at all difficult for him to link libido with the emotional stirrings of the neurotic patients. Now, along with the principle of libido goes his another equally important principle, the unconscious. The unconscious is an interplay of forces, scarcely noticed, more often consciously denied. It is apparently unaccountable and hidden in the dark

in comparison with the conscious mental life. For Freud, it is important to note, all psychical activity is essentially unconscious; the conscious psychic activity is both secondary, and negligible, in one's mental life. So, exploration into the human soul meant to Freud the exploration of the complex unconscious; the unconscious becomes the object of methodical investigation.⁹

Ego is the conscious system (agency) of the psyche. It rejects the unconscious, repulsive instinctual impulses. The rejection however is not without an intense conflict. Sometimes it may so happen that these conflicts are not brought to the conscious, nonetheless rejected impulses, by way of primary defence mechanisms, are repressed in the unconscious, with their full energy cathexis^s remaining constant. The result of this whole process of assertion of impulses, their repressions, conflict etc. is the substitute satisfaction in dreams and bodily neurotic systems.

Freud visualized a task for the therapy. The traumatic affects had to be abreacted. They had then to be exposed

9. The word itself is not new, though. Romanticism had always suspected it. Literature vaguely spoke of it; but neither deeply explored it. See L.L. White, The Unconscious Before Freud, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1959). Freud not only investigated into it, but also distinguished between the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious. Moreover, he distinguished between the systems of psyche as ego, id and superego.

as repressions. Freud believed that by collaboration between the patient and therapist, it was possible to achieve both abreaction and 'revelation' of truth of the affects. This achieved, there is a need to replace them by judgements, either by way of accepting them; or by rejecting them, but now, on rational grounds. Freud noted that hypnotism could not achieve much in the task. Hence, he advocated the method of 'free association'.

The patient is to honestly admit and own up his feelings as well as ideas that come to his mind. For it is imperative that the patient know himself to the depths of his unconscious existence. To be sure, there would always be initial resistance on the part of the patient. But the therapist must be equipped with the skill both to overcome it and assist the patient to know himself in his depths. This investigation and cure of the neurosis came to be known as psychoanalysis.

The skill on the part of the therapist is complex. The analyst has to master the particular kind of interpretation for the analysis. For he should be able to understand, and help the patient, when the latter resists to lay bare the unconscious. Freud introduced the concepts of transference and counter-transference of the relationships from the patient to the analyst, and from the analyst to the patient

respectively. For the patient may transfer either the positive or the negative relationship to the analyst, without the latter wishing for it. The analyst therefore needs here extreme deftness in handling the situation. Neither the influence of the analyst nor the resistance of the patient is ruled out in the therapeutic process. Both finally settle down for a 'therapeutic alliance', in the sense that the patient learns to make room for the analysts influence, and the analysts learns to handle the negative and the positive feelings of the patient towards him. The repressed emotional experience towards important persons in the past (in regard to important persons in his life) is to be relived by the patient. He invariably uses the analysts as the duplicate for the purpose of reliving the repressed experience. This is the way to abreact the repressed feelings. The doctor is now able to catch sight of the unconscious structures and the dynamic forces at work. He is now in a position to interpret them and formulate the unconscious motivations. They are brought to the conscious level of the patient; he is made to understand his positive and negative feelings to the analyst. This way the analyst counter-transfers the relationships to the patient, so that the patient is able to have the right understanding of his feelings. This way the analyst is capable of making in the patient a lasting transformation of the mental resources; only then, morbid symptoms disappear. The

patient is now able to love and live and work again, as a normal, healthy human being. This, for Freud, is the object of therapy.

The question that is of great value, to Freud, is: What is the key to the patients unconscious? The key to the unconscious then ought to be the royal road of psychoanalysis. Such a key to Freud was the interpretation of dreams. Dreams are not pointless. Beyond their patent dream content are to be found the dream thoughts, that are processed in the dreams. In them are traces of our waking life, or, as Freud would say, 'day's residues'. Along with these residues is, invariably, a repulsive wish, an impulse, that is repressed. The repressed impulse weaves out a dream and seeks substitute gratification, when the ego's controls are minimal in sleep. The repressed impulse summons up the libidinal energy for dream, although the resistance of the ego is not entirely wanting even in dreams. Hence, the material of the day's residue called upon to consciousness is vastly changed, diminished, condensed, displaced, distorted and finally dramatized. Dream then is undoubtedly a substitute and compromise formation.

From here Freud concluded that 'dreams are wish-fulfilments'. They are like the neurotic symptoms. Dreams are disguised fulfilments of wish that is repressed. Like

neurotic symptoms, they too need intelligent and resourceful interpretation. Repressed traumas can be analysed and understood with the help of dreams. Small slips and symptomatic actions of everyday can bring to light the unconscious processes of mental life.¹⁰

Freud's views on the nature of religion were to be substantially shaped from this quarter of psychoanalysis, long before they came to be put in black and white towards the end of his life. Benefitting from his insight on the dynamics of human psyche, laid bare resourcefully in The Interpretation of Dreams, Freud was to ask in Catholic Vienna about the source of inner strength of religion. The question sets off his searching and scathing analysis of religion. His answer was that religion is not the precipitates of our rational thinking but the 'illusions, fulfillments of the oldest, strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind. The secret of their (religious ideas) lies in the strength of those wishes'. He would arrive at this conclusion because of his conviction that the libidinal energy can acquire new forms, and that the dynamics of human psyche is basically unconscious, and that any conflict brought about by the repressed impulses can seek substitute satisfaction

10. Sigmund Freud. Psychopathology of Everyday Life, Edited James Strachey. (London: Hogarth Press, 1973), pp. 191-216.

through wishfulfilling systems. Religion is both an individual and a collective system of wish-fulfilment.

Although his theories were completely ignored by the intelligentsia, his efforts did not go in vain. His was a path-breaking exercise in the area of psychoanalysis, it was bound to make its impact felt soon in the world of ideas. Soon psychoanalysis, that evoked initially nothing but suspicion to itself, was no longer viewed as an auxiliary science to psychopathology. It established itself as an independent tool of scientific investigation. It provided some impetus to the study of the mental life of normal, healthy human beings. Dream interpretation, in particular, made it possible to penetrate into the forgotten past, especially of the childhood.

Through psychoanalysis, Freud sought to establish that the sexual conflict situations are not absent even in early childhood. His theory of the infantile sexuality is not entirely devoid of meaning, if only we are to understand rightly his much maligned concept of libido. Libido is the energy of sensuality in its widest conception; it represents a comprehensive pleasure-seeking bodily function. Neither children nor adults, neither normal nor abnormal people, neither debauchees nor the celibates, are exempt from it. To

Freud, it may acquire many forms from tender and friendly feelings to sadistic seductions. One may argue here that Freud indulges in unduly broadening of the concept of sexuality. But, to Freud it had become a necessity because his theory of sexuality had become so comprehensive that it excluded neither the expressions of the arts, cultures, sciences; nor the sacred and the secular; and that it included within itself wish-fantasies like Oedipus complex, its early childhood phases like autoeroticism etc., its fixations at particular stages of human life, its regressions in the event of repressions and its sublimations even in the many cultural achievements.

We have to give credit to Freud for his most important scientific achievements, namely the theories of the unconscious and of the libido. The theory of the unconscious in a sense is based on his theory of libido, his law of psychodynamics. Its distinctive feature is its manner of working through primary processes and the interpretation of dreams. The theory of the libido, though patterned after the laws of thermodynamics and entropy, admits within itself a number of subsidiary theories such as the Oedipus complex and the infantile sexuality. Freud makes use of both theories for his reflections on religion. I hope to show that in the formulation

of these theories, Freud's own self-analysis played a decisive role. He tends to universalize and theorize his own passion for the mother and a hostility to the father. The invention of the myth of the Oedipus for the explication of his theories on religion must not be seen to lie in the periphery^a of his either life or philosophy.

Freud considered himself qualified to speak on religion. For his psychoanalysis had long crossed the frontiers of medicine and become an instrument of knowledge, thanks to the recognition it achieved for itself as a school of metapsychology. This recognition was to come not only from Adler and Jung, the depth psychologists, but also from Putnam and William James, the Harvard neurologist and philosopher respectively. Freud enthusiastically applied his psychoanalysis to the study of religion, while others increasingly made use of it in literature, folklore, mythology, aesthetics, education, pre-history and history of religions. It was a long journey to Freud from physiology to cerebral anatomy and cerebral physiology, from there to psychopathology, and finally, from psychopathology to psychoanalysis which may be considered as a metapsychology. Meanwhile his other works on religion, Childhood Memories of Vinci, Michaelangelo's Moses and Dostoevsky and Parricide saw the light of the day, indisputably putting his claim to be heard among the philosophers of religion.

In conclusion, we may say that the moorings of his religious reflections^{are} to be traced back to the spirit of nineteenth century scientism and historicism^{ci}, the type of religiosity that he encountered in his childhood, the conflict ridden family situations, and above all, his own dazzling discoveries in the area of psychoanalysis.

CHAPTER III

RELIGION: A SOCIO-GENESIS

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In this chapter I give an exposition of Freud's theory on the origin of religion. His theory on the origin of religion is influenced by ethnology, in general, and the theory of evolution, in particular. Hence, in the first part, I will examine the many theories, ethnologically inspired. Of special interest to me here is the theory of totemism. In the second part, I shall examine Freud's application of the theory of totemism to the phenomenon of religion, whereby he aims at concluding his thesis that religion is an obsessional neurosis of humanity.

While it may be true that religion is co-eval with man, theories of religion are of recent origin. Under the impact of the scientific theory of evolution, social scientists come to accept that every religion is a product of human evaluation and has been conditioned by social environment. Since man has developed from a state even lower than that of savagery, it is thought to be reasonable to attribute to him in that state only a minimal of religious consciousness. What then are the factors, or the means whereby religion came to be originated?

But, the simplest and the usual answer to this question, given especially by the religionists, is that man is not

a mere animal but that he differs from the beast in having an immortal soul and a religious instinct. Their argument is roughly stated as follows: There are no races however primitive, which can be shown to be utterly devoid of religion. This religious element of human thought, because it is universal, must be considered as essential. The religious element of human thought consists essentially in a belief in a soul and a spiritual life. Such a belief is said to be a part of human nature. Thus, based on this natural conviction, religion becomes a product of man's religious instinct.

But there are people who may assume neither the universality of religion, nor the existence of soul. For, in their opinion, the 'religious instinct' does not require the assumption of either an immortal soul or a universality of religion.

Indeed, the religious instinct itself is of a dubious character, since children may be said to have neither religious ideas nor impressions that are not socially indoctrinated. Freud's conclusion too bears upon this truth. But we must pay attention to the way that Freud arrives at it.

Needless to say, in formulating his theory, Freud owes a good deal to the evolutionists. For the evolutionists in general, religion began due to the underdeveloped state of

human nature, as the primitives did not understand the mysteries of nature. But, as time went by, due to the gradual process of evolution, religion became more and more purified from its crude stage, until mankind may be said to have arrived at a more and more refined forms of religion. Under such evolutionary assumptions, the chief concern of the ethnologists for a while seem to have been a reconstruction of the so called primitive religion: they recognized that in our society, it appears that some religions are 'more developed' and some are 'less developed'. From here they argued that, if we fall back upon some least developed religions and their practices then, we can reconstruct the so called primitive religion.

Evolutionary theories of religion came as a kind of protest against such of those dogmatic theories that religion, to begin with, is pure but that it got corrupted in the course of time due to the historical vicissitudes.

Thus, for example, orthodoxy maintained, in ancient India, that there was once one inspired religion and that all other religions are decadent forms of it. In the sixth century B.C, the heterodox 'Hindus' likewise believed that the pure religion of reason got corrupted into religions by the priests and their priestcrafts for their own benefit. Similar theories

sprang up independently centuries later in Europe in the theological contexts. The pure monotheism is the religion of revelation that got initiated due to the introduction of original sin. These dogmatic theories either of reason or of revelation were, to be sure, honest guesses based on inadequate information. Hence, the evolutionists sought to overturn these theories. They contended that religion did not begin with human nature as something pure and given but evolved gradually due to a host of historical conditions.

An important evolutionary theory, subscribed to by many sociologists, is associated with the names of E. Tylor¹ and Herbert Spencer.² The theory goes by the name of animism. The 'savage' believes that what is active is alive and that, being alive, an object, an animal or material has within it the same sort of spirit which man recognises within himself. Hence, he peoples the world with spirit-inhabited objects. He thinks also that, when he dreams, his spirit is abroad, performing the acts, which he imagines himself as doing in his dreams. Hence, he acquires the notion of a spirit capable of existing independent of the body. He attributes to other men, animals and objects a spirit and spiritual powers

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1. E. Tylor (1891). Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Culture, (New York: Gordon Press, 1912).
 2. Herbert Spencer, Principles of Sociology, 3 Vols. (Westport: Greenwood, 1975), Ch- VI.

similar to his own. Again, as he sees in dreams a dead ancestor, apparently still active, he infers that the spirit of the dead is still live. He extended this argument to the spirits of animals and weapons. He acknowledged that the spirit may be malicious or, at least, not always beneficial. So the savage placates these potential foes, hence offerings to ghosts. Ghostly spirits are gradually endowed with more superhuman powers and revered as gods. Thus, the animistic theories are also closely linked up with the worship of the dead ancestors.

Another early theory of religion is naturalism, with which is generally associated with the name of Max Müller, the German Indologist, not less influenced by the notions of evolution of his days. Hence, the theory may also be called a German theory, as contrasted with the English animism. The thrust of naturalism is the tendency of the savages to fear and revere objects of nature that seemed to them powerful, such as waterfall or thunderstorm or majestic tree — to all of which they attribute life and 'anthropathic' nature. In like manner they also revere venerable human phenomena, kings and wizards, as gods of natural phenomena, with underlings, as on earth. It is not uncommon in many cultures that man instinctively regards the sun as a great personage, and moon and stars as mother and children, or as shepherd and

sheep. Man learned at an early age to recognize and worship both the benevolent powers of nature, after personalizing and divinizing them.

A theory of magic as a form of religion is given to us by J.G. Frazer,³ although the status of magic vis-a-vis religion is rather ambivalent. For magic at times is considered as a form of religion, but at times only a threshold of religion. It is not uncommon among the philosophers or religion to argue that, where magic fails, religion begins. Be that as it may, to Frazer, religion is the child of magic. The essential feature of magic is the suggestion that man first tries to control powers of nature by magical means. Thus in magic, it is not the power but man who is superior, he seeks to use the power of nature for his own goals and objectives. When however man finds this impossible, Frazer continues, he resorts to entreaty, which is the hallmark of religion, as distinguished from magic. But this is no explanation of the principles of religion, since magic itself is religious.

Durkheim's⁴ own theory, which, in general, is the French theory, has no formal designation but may be called

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3. J.G. Frazer, The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion, Vol. I. (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1985).
 4. E. Durkheim. The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1965).

'collectivism'. 'Illusionism' would perhaps be a better name for it. I would gladly not consider this theory here, but for its employment of totemistic elements in his collectivism, that Freud himself moulds in a different direction. It too assumes totemism as the earliest form of religion. Durkheim also holds totem to represent some convenient animal living nearby. He builds up all religious data on the distinction between the totem that is tabooed, or sacra, and the 'common'. The collective representation of tabooed 'things' constitutes to him religious belief. But Durkheim is not so much interested in presenting us with a theory of the origin of religion as in identifying the source of moral authority in the society. Hence, he considers this belief in the sacred power, or totemic force, as the source of moral power. The totem is the symbol of the group, as well as the totemic force, a power which becomes the god of the community. Since it is at once the symbol of the society (group) and the god, Durkheim completes the equation, god and society must be one and the same: God is in fact the clan personified. As all religions, having a totemic origin, in his opinion, pass through the same phases, it follows that God and society in given cultures are identical. All religious rites are social in origin, and they exhibit rules of conduct as the sacred things, and lead man to presume the supposed existence of a world of sacred things and extra-

ordinary powers. Since collective representation is produced in the main by social excitement, it follows that religion is born of mental effervescence. It is, accordingly, merely an idea, or illusion, but as its effects are real, it may be said to have reality. Thus Durkheim, too, in making use of totemistic theory to explicate the source of moral authority by way of the illusoriness of religion, is deeply indebted to the philosophical atheism of Feuerbach.

The most important contribution of ethnologists in regard to my present concern appears to be the explanation of religion as a totemistic practice. Freud also comes into the picture precisely at this stage. He explains the origin of religion specially in terms of totemism. Freud expounds his theory mainly in his book Totem and Taboo.

In the earlier part of this work, Freud gives us an impression of being a master anthropologist. His collection of data is fairly exhaustive before he ventures upon an analysis, and thereupon a synthetic reflection on them. He lays the groundwork of his theory by description of the Australian aborigines. He first identifies a few features in their form of life, and goes on to add that the earliest man must have lived in a specified manner: The Australian aborigines are regarded as a distinct race who show neither

the physical nor the linguistic relationship with their nearest neighbours, the Melanesian and the Polynesian people who provided so much of a grist to the mill of the British and French anthropology. They are primitive in many senses because they neither cultivate soil, nor build houses; nor do they keep any domestic animals, rather they live by hunting animals, and also upon the roots they dig. Freud is also doubtful if they can be said to have any religion, at least in the forms possessed by other ethnic groups nearby. But Freud is quick to note that these aborigines have very strict rules in regard to the avoidance of incestuous sexual relations. The lack of social and religious institutions is made good of by the system of totemism among them. All the Australian aboriginal tribes are divided into small clans, and each of the clans is named after its own totem.

What is a totem? Freud answers: Totem

"is as a rule an animal (whether edible and harmless or dangerous and feared) and, more rarely, a plant or a natural phenomena (such as rain or water), which stands in a peculiar relation to the whole clan. In the first place, the totem is the first ancestor of the clan; at the same time it is their guardian spirit and helper, which sends them oracles, if dangerous to others, recognizes and spares its own children. Conversely, the clansmen are under a sacred obligation (subject to automatic sanctions) not to kill their totem and to avoid eating flesh (or deriving benefit from it in other ways). The totemic

character is inherent, not in some individual animal or entity, but in all the individuals of a given class. From time to time festivals are celebrated at which clansmen represent or imitate the nations and attributes of their totem in ceremonial dances."⁵

The inheritance of the totem, it may be pointed out, may be either through the female or through the male line. This is important to note because critics of Freud have often failed to observe the latitude given by Freud here. Although originally the male descent prevailed everywhere, it was subsequently replaced in some clans by the female descent too. However irrespective of the sex-determined descent of the totem, the aborigine's relation to his totem is the ground of his social obligations. Indeed, it can override even the blood relationships. Besides, the above freedom from the sexually determined descent, as far as the clan is concerned, the totem is also not locally determined. For the clansmen may live in different localities, they live peacefully with members of different totem clans.

Freud now raises a few important questions: How did these prehistoric men come to adopt totems? Did they think that this is due to the fact of their being descended from one animal? What is the basis of such of their social obligations as pertain to their sexual restrictions?

5. Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo, pp. 2-3.

Freud believes that he should begin with the last of the questions in his attempt to answer the questions, since it has a direct relevance to the observed data in the totemic clan. He says,

"In almost every place where we found totems, we also found a law against persons of the same totem having sexual relations with one another and consequently against their marrying. So we find the institution of 'exogamy' is related to totemism."⁶

The violation of a prohibited law against incest was not met with an automatic punishment in a spirit of retributive justice. It was rather avenged in the most energetic fashion by the whole clan, as though it were a question of averting some 'national' danger that threatens the whole community, or some guilt, that was pressing upon it. To put it in our modern philosophical jargon, there is, as it were, some shadow of Kant's religious thought and of the categorical imperative. For to adopt a religious attitude, as Kant sees it, is to look on duties as if they were divine commands. Thus, Freud draws our attention to the great care exhibited by the Australian aborigines and other savage peoples, for the prevention of incest. The savages are more sensitive, Freud thinks, on the subject of incest than the modern man is. This

6. Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo, p. 4.

is probably because they were liable to greater temptations to it, and that, for that very reason, they stand in need of fuller protection.

The social obligations, that pertain to the 'primitive rationalizations', that members of the same clan originate from a common descent, or ancestry, are presented by the totem. Hence the totem is sacred, and, in so far as it is sacred, it is also a taboo. To explicate this concept, Freud once again has recourse to ethnologists. 'Taboo' is a Polynesian word, meaning, on the one hand, 'sacred', 'consecrated' and, on the other, 'uncanny' or 'dangerous' or 'forbidden'. The word then has within itself in either of the senses, an object that is peculiarly marked out with a character of being unapproachable, or being difficult to negotiate with. It is principally this that is expressed in prohibitions and restrictions.

Freud thinks that taboo restrictions are distinct from moral or religious prohibitions. They differ from moral ordinances, in so far as they are said to be imposed on their own accounts, prior to an established order of morality in a given culture. Hence, it has been described as the oldest human unwritten law of the heart. So too, taboo is said to be other than any divine ordinance because Freud supposes

that taboo is older than gods, and that it dates back to a period before any kind of 'religion' existed in a given culture. Wundt classifies taboo prohibitions of the Australian tribes into three groups. The classification is based on the type of objects that are made into totems: animals, human beings and other objects. The taboos on animals consist essentially of prohibitions against killing and eating the totem animals. They constitute by and large the nucleus of totemism, according to him. Other taboo restrictions directed to human beings and other objects (e.g. certain species of plants) are not so severe, although not very rare. Wundt also adds that, the true sources of taboo lie deeper than in the interests of the privileged classes, to discount any conflict-ridden class interpretation of the form of life pertinent to the aboriginal societies. On the contrary, they have their origin in the source of the most primitive and, at the same time, most lasting of, human instincts — in fear of 'demonic powers'. One may raise the question of the existence of the demons. But, irrespective of their existence or otherwise, Wundt touches upon a very vital point that gods and demons both have arisen from the same human consciousness, determined by the instinct of fear, a point that is so convincingly argued out by a perceptive psychologist of religion,

Rudolf Otto.⁷ An important element that we ought to identify in all the above ethnological theories, be it animism or naturalism or collectivism or totemism, is fear, consequent upon man's ignorance of the working of the laws of nature. This is in a special way related to totemism on which Freud directly depends for his theory. Needless to say, fear and prohibition are closely interlinked, although the element of fear is not always made explicit, nay more, it may have been sublimated. Little wonder then that the totem becomes readily the taboo with a host of prohibitions to which these primitive races are subjected. Many sorts of things are forbidden, but they are a matter of course; and they feel convinced that any violation of them will be automatically met by direct punishment.⁸

It is interesting that Freud likes to see these prohibitions as mainly directed against the liberty of enjoyment

7. Rudolf Otto. The Idea of the Holy, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 14-16.

8. Freud has given instances to show how any unwitting violation of one of these prohibitions is automatically punished. Though the punishment for the violation of a taboo was, no doubt, originally left to an internal, automatic agency, the violated taboo itself supposedly took vengeance. When, at a later stage, ideas of gods and spirits arose, with whom taboo become associated, the penalty was expected to follow automatically from the divine power. In other cases, probably as a result of a further evaluation of the concept, society itself took over the punishment of offenders, whose conduct had brought their fellows into danger. Thus, for Freud the earliest penal systems may be traced back to taboo.

and against the freedom of movement and communication. In some cases they have intelligible meaning and are clearly aimed at abstinences and renunciations, which are otherwise injurious to life and living. But in other cases their subject-matter is quite incomprehensible, often concerned with trivial details and, at times, even seem to be of a purely ceremonial nature.⁹

Freud identifies two prohibitions within totemism. They are to him the most important because they are the most ancient. They are: prohibitions against killing the totem animal; and the prohibitions against the hetero-sexual intercourse with the members of the totem clan. But, unlike the anthropologists, he gives a psychological interpretation of taboo restrictions before he can link^{them} with his theory on the origin of religion. Freud compares the nature of taboo with the obsessional prohibitions of neurotics. According to him,

"Taboo is a primaeval prohibition forcibly imposed (by some authority) from outside, and directed against the most powerful longings to which human beings are subject. The desire to violate it persists in their unconscious; those who obey the taboo have an ambivalent attitude to what the taboo prohibits. The

9. Freud also discusses about the various taboos which are imposed from time to time: the taboos on enemies, the taboo upon rulers, the taboo upon the dead, etc. The taboo upon the dead arises from the ambivalent attitude that man plays in regard to conscious pain on the one hand, and the unconscious satisfaction over the death that has occurred.

magical power that is attributed to taboo is based on the capacity for arousing temptation; and it acts like a contagion because examples are contagious and because the prohibited desire in the unconscious shifts from one thing to another. The fact that the violation of a taboo can be atoned for by a renunciation shows that renunciation lies at the basis of obedience to taboo."¹⁰

Freud is of the view that, if we compare taboo and obsessional neurosis, it should be possible for us to have a better understanding of the relation between the different forms of neurosis and cultural institutions. Further, Freud believes that a study of the psychology of neurosis is important for the understanding of the growth of civilization itself. For neurosis shows elements of agreement with those of the great social institutions of art, religion and philosophy. For Freud a case history is a caricature of art, and an obsessional neurosis is a caricature of religion. Let me pay attention here only to the latter. Freud, in presenting us his theory of the origin of religion, makes use of the elements of animism, magic and above all, totemism.

Animism, according to him is not merely a system of thought, that gives an explanation of a particular phenomenon, but also is a world view that allows us to grasp the whole universe from a single point of view. He is of the view that

10. Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo, pp. 34-35.

the human race has in the course of ages developed three such world views: animistic or mythological, religious and scientific. Of these, animism, the first to be created, is perhaps the most consistent and exhaustive picture of the universe in terms of the spirit, in virtue of its perspective, it is a psychological theory; hence Freud's interest to incorporate it in his explanation of religion. Freud certainly has a point to score, when he presents animism as a world view, for

"it still persists in modern life either in the debased form of superstition or as being basis of our speech, our beliefs and our philosophes."¹¹

But Freud is quick in pointing out that animism itself is not yet a religion; it merely constitutes the foundations on which religions are later built. Freud however fails to explicate the vital relation between myths and animism.

The second of the world view, viz. magic, is directly developed from the animistic theory. For we must not assume that mankind came to create its first world-system through a purely speculative thirst for knowledge. Rather the practical need for mastering the world contributed to this effort. The thesis that knowledge is power has acquired many a form

11. Ibid., pp. 77-78.

in the history of mankind. Hence, side by side with the animistic system, go the elaboration of directions for making oneself master of other men, animals, things and also the spirits. Thus, sorcery and magic came to be regarded as the strategy of animism. Sorcery is the art of influencing spirits, first, treating them as if they were like human beings, and then by appeasing them. Man seeks a reconciliation with them in many sacrificial ways. He seeks to make them more favourably disposed to him, even by intimidating them, by taking away their power and making them a tool of his own will. However, magic does not concern itself per se with spirits, although the latter are not ruled out from its practices. But it seeks to subject the processes of nature to the will of man, so as to protect the individual against enemies and dangers. Magic is directed in a special way to one's enemies. Freud gives an instance of this magical practices among the aborigines, most of which are taken by him from Frazer. They have reference not only to the private enmity but also the piety of aiding the gods in their fight against the demons.

Freud identifies two important features in the magical performances, irrespective of its being performed either for

scoring victory over his personal enemy,¹² or for aiding the gods or nature to bring about whatever is beneficial to man. First of all, in them is implicit a similarity between the performed action and the expected happening. Secondly, in them is implicit an element of spatial contiguity; the benefits of magic are supposedly for a community living within a limited territory.

The reason why Freud focusses his attention on this twofold features of magic is his recognition that the motives which impel man to practice magic are rooted in the strength of human wishes. We can assume that primitive man had great confidence in the power of his wishes.

If animism supplied man with a dogma/belief in transcendental entities of spirits, magic provided him with a set of rituals. Both these elements are essential to the origin of religion. These two world-views now generally make way for the most important elements of social organization and morality that govern the social relations. Little wonder then that religion always is used as a tool to stabilize the socio-cultural systems. Thus, it was a gradual transition for Freud

12. One of the most widespread magic procedures for injuring an enemy consists of making an effigy of him out of any kind of material. The likeness counts for little, and in fact any object may be 'named' as his image. Whatever is subsequently done to this image is believed to happen to the hated prototype: Thus if the effigy has been injured in any limbs, it is believed that the prototype too will be impaired in the respective limb.

from animism to magic, and from magic to totemism. Needless to say, all of them have their sources in the ignorance of man of the laws of nature and their workings. If religion is a belief born of ignorance, a set of rituals, indulged in due to ignorance, is coupled with the need for a set of moral laws to ensure a stability to man's individual as well as social life. Totemic culture became the first stage of an evolution of religion of the primitive man.

But, how does Freud incorporate the totemic practices in explicating his understanding of the origin of religion?

A totem is generally an animal, at times a plant. It is considered as the primegenitor of the clan. Hence, besides being endowed with sacrality, it is feared, it is a taboo. It is not killed. Yet once a year it is ritually slaughtered and celebrated with the hope of being nourished by the power of the totem. At such celebrations the members of the tribe may wear the skins of these animals or the masks to disguise themselves as the totemic animals and participate in ritual dance. They may either individually or collectively bear the names of their totems. Many tribes use pictures of animals as coat of arms and decorate their weapons with them; men paint animal pictures on their bodies, or have them tattooed. They believe that, if the totem happens to be a dangerous animal, it spares the members of the tribe named after it;

that the totem animal protects, and even warns the member of the tribe of an imminent danger. The fact that the clan believes to have descended from the totem, it is supposedly connected with the totem animal by the bond of common origin, the clan shares a blood-bond with the totem.

Freud acknowledges at least three kinds of totem: the tribal totem is the totem of the whole tribe; it is hereditarily shared from generation to generation. The sex totem belongs to all the masculine or feminine members of a tribe to the exclusion of the opposite sex. And, finally, the individual totem belongs to the individual; it does not descend to his successors. Of these the latter two are comparatively of little importance to Freud, compared to the tribal totem. For the tribal totem is the object of veneration to the tribe. It is this totem that, being primegenitor and consanguinous with the tribe, forms the nucleus of the tribal religion. It is not only their god the father, but also what binds them to one another, as brothers and sisters of a single group.

Hence, Freud regards totemism as both a religious and a social system. On its religious side, the totem is the object of religious veneration. On its social side, it is the source of the obligations for the members of the clan towards one another and also towards other tribes. As the totemic religion grows and develops, these two aspects of totemism acquire a certain independence,

from each other, although their interdependence can hardly be entirely severed. It may so happen that the social system often survives the religious, and conversely, remnants of totemic religion may still continue to govern the social system long after the totemic religion has given way to a religion of high gods.

Inspired by the evolutionary hypothesis of Charles Darwin, Freud sought to have a close look at its elements for his explanation of religion. From the habits of the higher apes, Darwin had concluded that man, too, lived in small hordes, in which the jealousy of the oldest and ^{the} strongest male prevented sexual promiscuity. Freud builds upon this assumption. He believes that a promiscuous intercourse in a state of nature is extremely improbable. For the jealousy of the male quadrupeds, and their being aroused sufficiently to battle with their rivals, bespeak against any such promiscuity. Hence, it is not improbable that man originally lived in small communities, each with a single wife, or, if powerful, with several, whom he jealously defended against all other rivals. He may not have been much different from the primitive gorilla that lives with several females. When the young males grow up, a contest takes place for mastery. The strongest, generally, by driving out the contending males, establishes

himself as the master of his 'family'. This then is also the pattern of living among the human beings in the earliest days of human habitation on our planet, thinks Freud.¹³

Freud was much fascinated by the behaviour of children. He observed that the attitude, that a child bears towards animals, has much in common with the attitude of the primitive man towards the totem. The child, to begin with, does only love the animal, and does not hate it; much less does it draw up any sharp distinction between his own nature and that of other animals. But, gradually, due to some negative experiences in it, the child begins to fear a certain animal; it does not make bold to see it; nor to touch it. Thus, there arises the clinical picture of 'animal phobia' in the child. However, this animal phobia is not inborn but only acquired. It now both loves and hates, respects and fears the animal. Freud however ingeniously gives a different meaning to the child's attitude towards animals. He reads in it what goes in psychology by the name of 'substitution'. The animal, loved and hated, respected and feared, is a substitute of its father. For the child originally loved and admired the father, but gradually learned to respect and fear his authority. Thus, the child assumes a double, indeed an ambivalent, attitude

13. Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo, p. 125.

towards the father. It now begins to relieve the conflict within itself by displacing its hostile and anxious feelings upon a substitute for the father. With these considerations in mind, Freud tries to show that there are traits in child's behaviour here which show a remarkable correspondence with the totemistic practices of the primitive man. For the primitive man, and also for the totemic system, in so far as it still is in effect today, the totem becomes the ancestor and the primal father: naturally, it is a taboo to kill the totem.

The first result of substitution is very remarkable: since the totem animal is the father symbol, the two main commandment of totemism, namely the prohibitions against killing the totem animal and the prohibition against the sexual intercourse with the women of one's own clan, find themselves violated in the crimes of Oedipus. Oedipus is said to have killed his own father and taken his mother to wife. Freud is of the view that the totemic system resulted from the conditions underlying Oedipus complex. Such conditions were in fact the primitive social 'organisation', that was equivalent to living in hordes under the despotic rule of the father, the primegenitor. The passage now to Freud from totemic religion to the religion of god the father is

direct one. Thus we are compelled to say that the dynamics within the phenomenon of religion is also that of the Oedipus complex. The starting point of religion is thus the libidinal attachment to mother and a death-wish to the father.

In the totemic religion, sacrifice had a great role to play. The original sacrifice of the totemic religion was the ritual slaying of the totem animal and the collective partaking of it with the hope of being reinvigorated by the life and energy of the totem symbol, which is also the symbol of the primegenitor of the clan. Such other meanings, as offering something to deity to be reconciled with it, or as the self-denial on the part of the worshipper, are the later extensions of its original meaning within the religious practices. The first sacrifice of the totemic religion was thus nothing else but an 'act of social fellowship' between totem god and the clan. Thus, it was unmistakably observed by Freud that the sacrifice was a public ceremony; as a matter of fact, all religion was a public affair; and what is more, religious duty was only a part of a social, or a clan, obligation. He also observed that sacrifice and festival go together among all races; and each sacrifice entailed a holiday, and no holiday could be celebrated without a sacrifice. The sacrifice

was a sacrament, and the sacrificial animal itself was the old totem animal, the primitive god; through the ritual slaying and eating of it, the members of the clan revived and assured the similarity with their totemic god.

Such a celebration of a sacrifice in the totemistic religion is only a vestige of what may have happened within the human community in its inception. Living as they were under the despotic and jealous hegemony of the father prime genitor, the sons league together to kill their father. They succeed collectively in what they could not individually. But soon a sense of guilt and remorse sets in their hearts. As the guilt and remorse continued, there arose a need for collective atonement, which finds its expression in the sacrificial meal. Thus, the murdered father is ritually celebrated and eaten with the hope that the entire clan will be nourished with the strength of the father. This also has other functions such as the establishment of the unity of the clan and the binding upon one another to prevent such heinous crimes, as parricide and endogamy. Thus, is born the religion of the clan with its prohibition centred morality against murder and sexual promiscuity.

Freud recognises the same features characterizing every religion. The totem religion originated from the sense

of guilt of the sons at having killed the father, and from their attempt to palliate this feeling, and thus to conciliate with the killed father through subsequent obedience. In Freud's analysis, all later religions exhibit the attempts to solve the same problem; they vary only in accordance with the stage of culture, in which they are attempted, and with the pathos which they feel. Nonetheless, they are all reactions aiming at the same great event, with which culture began; and these events have not let mankind come to rest. Thus, Freud ingeniously employs the notion of Oedipus complex to explain the essentials of human civilization, in general and, of religion, in particular. The sexual desire for the mother, and the hatred against the father in the child, find *their* its parallel in women of the horde and the hatred directed to the jealous leader of the horde on the part of its other younger males. But, the slaying of the father, postulated in Freud's theory, marks the turning point in son's attitude. The psychological category of 'ambivalence' is brought about to bear upon the subsequent story of the origin of religion. The tender feelings, said to have always persisted, gain now the upper hand, as soon as their hate had been satisfied; they change now to feelings of remorse and guilt. In psychic situation of 'subsequent obedience', well known to psychoanalysts, the sons now prohibit what the father's presence

had formerly prevented them from doing: They bind themselves to the prohibition against free sexual access to the women of the group. In this way the dead father has become more powerful than when he was alive; the power of the dead is thus interiorized by the living. The sons hope to redeem themselves from the guilt of parricide. To the clan, the father-substitute, the totem animal, becomes at once sacred. Its killing is henceforth a taboo. What is more, they also renounce voluntarily the fruits of their heinous crime, they deny themselves the liberated women. The two above restrictions are the religio-moral laws of the primitive community. They are also the fundamental taboos of totemistic form of religion: not to kill and eat the totem; and not to marry within the totemic clan. Freud sees in these prohibitions the two suppressed desires of the Oedipus complex: to kill the father and marry the mother.

Freud thus laid special emphasis on the ambivalence of the emotions that goes a long way to explain the horror of incest which is particularly strong in primitive peoples. This ambivalence is based on the feeling of guilt and remorse for the killing of the tribal leader; but it also manifests later in an atonement, which gives rise to the totemic religion; once begun at the dawn of the prehistoric times, it

consolidates itself gradually, acquiring steadily newer elements within it. The feeling of remorse and guilt in the sons, to begin with, is the cause for the deification of the slain father. But the totemic religion gradually grows beyond it. The actual killing and eating of the father by the sons (Freud readily believes that the earliest man was a habitual cannibal) is enacted annually in a solemn ritual. The father substitute, the totem, was, on this solemn occasion, killed and eaten by the whole clan or community. In doing so, the participants assimilated the clan god within themselves; more importantly, it contributed to the strengthening of their clan solidarity. Religious rites, to Freud, were thus primarily social in nature promoting group integration by emphasising the vital connections between totem and each individual member of the clan, and, of the clan members among themselves. Now the totemic religion has catered for both the vertical and ^{the} horizontal dimensions of the higher religions in a splendid manner.

We must then end the chapter with which we began viz. the impact of the evolutionary hypothesis on the Freudian reformulation of religion. The totem animal represents the father-feared, envied, yet, also loved; the father killed and eaten, yet, ritually celebrated and divinized. The totem then gradually develops into a god. God is consequently nothing

but the sublimated father of the human race, hence in the totemic sacrifice it is god himself that is killed and sacrificed. Little wonder, the man of religion behaves towards his god in exactly the same way as the primitive man behaves towards the totem animal. Both are like children with ambivalent attitude towards animals. Oedipus complex is the child's obsessional complex, even as religion is the neurosis of the primitive man and, for that matter, of mankind.

CHAPTER IV

ORIGIN OF RELIGION: A CRITIQUE

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Having already presented an exposition of Freud's theory on the origin of religion. I would now like to critically evaluate it. In doing this, we have to take note of two important elements. In the first place, Freud's theory on the origin of religion is inspired by the ethnological findings of the nineteenth century; here again, it is the Darwinian theory of evolution that has served as an undercurrent for his reflections on the origin of religion. Secondly, within the evolutionary scheme, Freud seemed to have transformed his theory of the Oedipus complex, subsidiary to the libidinal theory, into a theory of the origin of religion. Hence, my critique is two-pronged. First, it is directed against the general ethnological theories, therefore, against Freud as well, insofar as Freud ingeniously and creatively utilises this material, not very cautiously though. Second, it is directed at pointing out the internal inconsistencies in Freud's theory, especially when he traces the origin of religion to the Oedipus complex.

Freud's theory is not entirely fashioned by psychoanalysis, rather it is indebted to the ideas of Atkinson, Robertson Smith and Wæendt, to name but a few ethnologists. But, the ethnological theories on the origin of religion

are inspired by untenable assumptions, the more so, because Freud selectively uses this material.

It need not surprise anyone, if I contend that Freud's theory on the origin of religion is weaker than that on the nature of religion. For one thing, his views on ethnology are highly suspect; the ethnologists of his time themselves did not take him seriously. It was their quiet conviction that Freud had not only selectively gleaned their material but also quite misunderstood them. Therefore they did not think it fit to refute his theory, supposedly based on the ethnological material. For another, serious scholars on religion today refuse to treat the problem of the origin of religion as a historical one. Hence, in its pure historical form, the theory is not sought today to be defended. But Freud's views become important to the students of philosophy, insofar as Freud uses this material to substantiate his subsidiary theory of the Oedipus complex and, then, transforms the latter into the theory of the origin of religion. Is he justified in doing what he did?

When it is stated here that the ethnological data do not throw any light on the problem of the origin of religion, let it be said at the very outset, that it is not meant to cast aspersions on the work of such eminent ethnologists of

his time as Taylor, Marett, Frazer, Robertson Smith and others. I do not question the ethnological data, meticulously and copiously collected, collated, edited and published. What I do question is their interpretation. Thus, for example, a philosopher of religion does not question the fact that there is the belief in mana in 'primitive' religions. What he does question is: How is mana an impersonal fluid power, that an individual is said to be incapable of controlling? How does animatism attribute life to all things, not only animate but also apparently inanimate? Why should totemism be inseparably related to exogamy? How can one incorporate so very heterogeneous material into a preconceived evolutionary scheme?

A theory of the scientific evolution of life and species has today become a shibboleth. The impact of evolution, in its extended sense, on religion, too, is tacitly admitted by the philosophers and religionists. To be sure, religions have gone through many phases; they too have been affected by evolutionary development. This much can readily be granted to evolutionists and Freud. They are here on firmer grounds than the theologian, especially, if the latter is wedded to the notions of static and immobile realities. And yet, what has appeared to be a shibboleth of evolution has not gone without challenge. Scholars on religion do question the imposition

of what may be said to be a dogmatic evolutionism, especially in its narrow interpretations in the history of religion. Philosophers too may have difficulties with an evolution that has become a doctrine and a system. For they realize that religions have developed, not in unilinear fashion, but in an unsystematic manner. The pluriformity of religions that strikes us so much is a product of unsystematic development. Hence, the neat systematic development of the religions, advocated by some ethnologists, cannot be accepted.

There may, surely, be in some 'primitive' religions such phases as animatism, animism, magic and totemism. We may grant that some religions may have passed through the belief that everything in the world is endowed with a secret life. Some religions may have passed through the belief that things are ensouled with a power. Some religions may have passed through a phase of the worship of the dead ancestors. In some religions, man may have tried to gain control over the power(s) by way of magic. Finally, in some religions, the worship of the totem animal may have paved the way for the worship of the god(s). But, to uphold a dogmatic thesis that all religions have passed from animatism to worship of gods, or a high god, through the neat phases of animism, magic and totemism, is not philosophically warranted. It is a

postulate that demands for more historical evidence than the ethnologists can muster. It is nothing short of dogmatism, because ethnologists seem to be naively believing in the narrow conception of an evolution.

Hence, it may be argued that a theory of evolution, as applied to religion, is valid in a broad sense, and here too, only upto a point. It must not be extended unduly too far. The presuppositions of such a narrow, but systematic, evolution are not historically warranted. Let us, for example, consider the following presuppositions: religions have developed uniformly; the phases of development are here animatism, animism, magic and totemism; magic is the phase immediately preceding religion so much so that it could be said that religion begins where magic ends; the notion of holiness developed from the belief in spirit; finally, belief in one god developed from belief in many gods. But some of these presuppositions can never be historically proved, they lack empirical evidences.

Ethnologists, engaged in the task of reconstructing primitive religion, invariably proceed with the assumption that a belief in spirits is fundamental to these religions. But the religionists have pointed out that such a belief is not necessarily found with many 'nature-peoples'.

Perhpas, it is also not found even among the oldest cultures. Going by the evidences provided by historians of religion, development psychologists and even by some of the ethnologists, we can argue that animistic ideas are not the original ideas of religion; if so, they too are derived phenomena. We cannot say with certainty that any given religion has followed in its development the different phases outlined above. There may be certain phases, but there are also individual traits that cannot fit into the straight jacket; they interpenetrate one another. Historians of religions have found it more useful to speak of strata or structures rather than phases and epochs of religion. Where the latter do exist, they have found it more meaningful to speak of them in terms of the strata.

Even where strata of religions are identified, we should not think of them as systematically worked out structures. For such neatly worked out structures have their problematic assumptions. For an illustration, think of the Azande religion that Evans Pritchard discusses.¹ The Azande's daily life is governed by his religion; religion to him is a form of life. If you speak of an epistemology

1. Evans Pritchard, "Zande Theology" in Social Anthropology and Other Essays, (London: Free Press, 1962).

in his system, all his knowledge is vital and existential. There is no way of proving that his system of knowledge is in anyway inferior to that of the modern European, equipped with all the scientific knowledge, made possible by the spirit of enlightenment, and the consequent technology. His religion is perfectly rational to him insofar as he follows his form of life. In the world-view that he follows; all his actions, however trivial to others, are perfectly rational. There is no way of proving that the Azande religion has no reality behind all that he believes and does; not at least anymore than in the beliefs and actions of the modern man. Much less can we argue that his world-view has arisen out of a grave mistake that is in need of correction.

In the reconstruction of a primitive religion, the European ethnologists and Freud seem to assume that religion is less than science, — an assumption that cannot be substantiated. Explication of religion in terms of non-religious factors, even in principle, has its serious problems. Any attempt to explain religion in terms of magic also has led to unsolvable difficulties. What is more, often the distinction between the 'primitive' and the 'developed' religions is drawn from the distinction between a non-scientific and the scientifically and technologically advanced civilizations, little realizing that there is no correspondence between 'higher' and 'lower' civilizations, on the one

hand, and the 'primitive' and the 'non-primitive' religions, on the other. For each religion is a complete system, even as a culture is a complete system. If so, the distinction between the primitive and the higher religions cannot be reasonably substantiated.

Surprisingly enough, Freud's Totem and Taboo was published in the same year that Emile Durkheim published his monumental sociological work on religion.² Durkheim's interest, though theoretical, was centred around the primitive people of Australia. In this work, he challenges the hitherto prevailing view of primitive religion. The prevalent view on primitive religion was that it was devoid of any content, and was steeped in superstition and empty rituals. Hence, Durkheim's significant contribution lies in this that he argued that primitive religion is not devoid of content but that it too has a conception of a core reality. However, he ended up identifying this core reality, not with any transcendent reality or divine power, but, with the reality of the clan or society; totem is the symbol of the clan or society.

Did Freud pay any attention to this work, the more so, because he too was interested in giving us a theory of

2. Emile Durkheim. Elementary Forms of Religious Life, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1965).

the origin of religion? It does not seem so. Freud may have shared the theoretical interest of Durkheim, but he was not interested in substantiating his theories with case studies of communities. His selective gleanings from the works of ethnologists seem to be used in the service of a preconceived psychological theory of religion. It was sufficient for him to use the evolutionary model of the ethnologists in his understanding of religion. The model culminated in the theory of totemism. And, the totem symbol was all that he was looking for to take his psychological leap towards his own theory of the origin of religion.

The evolutionary scheme, so important to the ethnologists, in general, and to Freud, in particular, did not go unchallenged. The objective of this attack on evolutionism however appears to me, not merely academic. While Andrew Lang³ worked against the scheme single-handedly, Wilhelm Schmidt worked with a team of students to produce his twelve volume studies on the origin of religion. A thorough going work in the German tradition, indeed! In the same tradition, we have, in recent times, the work of the ethnologist A.E. Jensen.⁴ The anti-evolutionists, in particular, Schmidt

3. Andrew Lang. Making of Religion, (New York: AMS Press, 1898); See also his Magic and Religion, (New York: Gordon Press, 1901).

4. A.E. Jensen, Myth and Cult Among Primitive Peoples, (Chicago & London: University of California Press, 1963).

introduces a new element in the study of the origin of religion. He believed that the original religion is neither animatism nor animism; neither magic nor totemism; but a 'primitive monotheism'. With a considerable skill, he argued that the primitive tribes believed, not in any spirits, but in a high god, a primordial principle, a universal father of the tribes, symbolized by sky, or sun etc. He also suggested that this primordial principle did not necessarily receive any homage and worship. It was a simple explanatory hypothesis, an 'originator', that filled in queries about the source of all things. The high god thus is primary, he is by no means derivative.

It may be worthwhile to probe a little deeper into this theory of the high god, since it had a considerable influence on the anti-evolutionary scheme. Would it be somehow a refutation of the Freudian theory on the origin of religion?

To begin with, scholars are not unanimous on the antiquity and nature of the high gods. Secondly, we have no means of knowing if the primitive tribes, referred to by the scholars of the Schmidt school, are really primitive in the real sense. I am afraid, there is no way of determining what is 'primitive' in the real, and historical sense. The

scholars of Schmidt school are more conceptual than historical in their orientation. This is not without reasons. They occupy a mid position between the ethnologists-anthropologists and philosophers-religionists. Even here, they are more in the service of theology than of history. Thirdly, there are a host of related problems in regard to these high gods: Do we speak of high god or gods? If the latter is the case, did the high gods include other gods to bring about primitive monotheism? These questions cannot be answered with any certainty, even in the case of the religions of the Middle East, which have supposedly entertained notions of primitive monotheism. Or, does the high god simultaneously include other gods, an idea that so fascinated Max Muller in his treatment of the Vedic religion, and compelled him to coin such words as 'henotheism' and 'kathanotheism'? Finally, how are we to understand the nature of the high gods? Are they active or passive? Yahweh of the Semites may be actively engaged in the affairs of his tribal people, but this could not be said equally of the many otiose Greek and the Egyptian gods.

In spite of the above difficulties, theories of the primitive monotheism shook the foundations of the evolutionary scheme of religion. But, the anti-evolutionists have not been successful in answering the central question: What

is the primordial religion? In their answer that it is the religion of the high god rather than animatism/animism, their theological, indeed narrowly Christian, bias is geared to establish a primitive revelation from primitive monotheism. Thus, the theory of the high god is directly in league with, indeed in the service of, the Biblical theology. This bias proved to be a stumbling block for the serious studies of the German Schmidt school, that otherwise did a fairly exhaustive study on the origin of religion. I am afraid, even Max Müller could not extricate himself from this bias, when he began his studies on the Vedic religion.

Evolutionary and anti-evolutionary schemes then have their own moorings and objectives. Evolutionary theory professes to be scientific (more precisely ethnological) and argues out the origin of religion from animatism, and its clearly worked out developmental phases, to the higher monotheism. Anti-evolutionary theory, on the contrary, professes to be theological and argues out the origin of religion from primordial revelation and monotheism to its degeneration into a variety of religious practices. The former begins in nature in all its inchoate and imperfect forms, and gradually evolves into refined forms of religion. The latter begins in the 'praeter-nature' in the garden of Eden in its pure form, and gradually degenerates into superstition and priest-craft. But, neither theory can be historically

substantiated. Both are equally dogmatic, the one representing scientific dogmatism, and the other representing theological dogmatism. The first one is supposedly history that claims to be rationalistic and natural science; the second is supposedly theologically inspired natural science. Neither tells us what the primordial religion is. Honestly, we cannot know scientifically what the origin of religion is.

The search for a primordial religion, an original religion, is futile. It does not fructify either in the garden of nature or in the praeternature. The sources that are necessary for the historical explanation of religion are simply not available to us. The attempt to reconstruct it by studying the nature-people of our times leads us nowhere, for the nature people of our times are not the same as the primitive people. Even as a civilized people have a long history, the nature-people too have an equally long history of their own, often unwritten, but sung, danced about and ritually celebrated. In regard to their religion, we cannot go beyond the historical and psychological 'hypothesis', 'visions', 'presumptions' and 'essays'. The author of Totem and Taboo seems to have been aware of it, but also seemed to have ignored these signs deliberately, to come up with a theory of the origin of religion in terms of his own brain-child, the Oedipus complex.

If we know nothing about the origin of religion scientifically, we also know nothing of it theologically. The genesis account of the primordial, praeternatural state of grace, in which man, lived in Eden, is not meant to serve as any 'recollections of primeval times'. The garden of Eden is not in any point of time on a calendar. The event of Fall is not intended to convey a historical and scientific truth but only a set of religious truths within the Semitic Weltanschauung: that God is the creator and sovereign of all that is created, that ^god's creation is essentially good; that man exercises his freedom, rebels against God and is responsible for his choice. Fittingly, these truths are presented in the form of religious poetry and myths.

In the light of what is stated of the myth of 'creation and fall', theologian today need not fight shy of the evolution either of the world or ^{man} himself, from the lower forms of life. Scientific evolution does not do any violence to his religious truths. On the other hand, he need not jealously guard the notions of primitive revelation and primitive monotheism either. Precisely on account of the absence of historical evidences to either evolutionary theory or anti-evolutionary theory, neither a confrontation nor a synthesis between the two is warranted.

Happily, today, the dogmas of ethnology cum science of religion and of theology cum church are more resilient than they formerly were.

This resilience in the dogmatic positions is directly reflected in the science of religion. Recent books, in the area of either history or philosophy of religion, do not any more devote introductory chapters to the origin of religion. Nor do ethnological manuals have a chapter on the so called primitive religions. If at all they do, they speak of the primitive religions, and here too, there may be several chapters on each of the religions, thanks to their awareness of the historicity of a religious tradition. They are now inclined to discuss the religions in their concrete givenness, be it Polynesian, Amerindian, or African religions. To be sure, 'patterns of culture' will have to be understood in themselves,⁵ so too, each religion, in the light of its own assumptions. Rightly, the study of religion has come to be the study of the history of religions.

Accordingly, religions are today examined in their own specific forms, often with intensive field studies. Resources of philology, sociology, psychology, ethnology,

5. Ruth Benedict. Patterns of Culture, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).

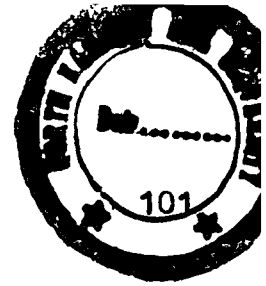
archaeology, history of art and folklore are brought to bear upon the study of religions. Malinowski's 'functional' approach is, to a limited extent though, is a guide to such field studies.⁶ He studies the many institutions of a given religion. The functions of these institutions within a religion give us a viable total picture of that religion. Individually, the functions may have appeared odd, pointless and even ridiculous, but, when taken together, they reveal a coherence within the totality of that religion. The task that the science of religion sets before itself is, not an a priori construction, nor the classification of religion as 'higher' and 'lower'; it refrains from value judgements. The task is rather to perceive the diversities among the apparent similarities, to perceive among the apparent diversities, ^{the deeper similarities,} and thereafter to analyze the functions, perceptible against its own background, and finally to put them together for the sake of seeking the religion in question as a totality.

I will now turn to the specific critique of Freud's theory on the origin of religion.

Firstly, consistent with the ethnological and the anthropological spirit, the problem of the origin of religion

6. Bronislaw Malinowski. Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948).

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is viewed as an historical problem. Freud too claims his theory to be historical. But, his theory is anything but historical, despite the copious ethnological material in his Totem and Taboo. His most important conclusions lack historical evidence. Anything, to be considered as historical, should have some specific time, and space and its ordering therein. The 'facts' which Freud tended to establish, on the contrary, came from myths, dubious totemic practices and psychoanalysis. None of them is a documentary source of the kind, which the historians generally use to reconstruct the past. As a work of history which Freud claims it to be, his reconstructions of the primal horde, and of the events which led to the slaying of the father and the establishing of the clan solidarity thereafter, are nothing but the work of fanciful imagination. Historians of religion are quick to point out that all the reconstructions of pre-history are usually tentative, and so, all that we can do is to judge its plausibility in the case of the origin of religion, which however is low.

Freud is aware of the weakness of the explication of religion in terms of animatism, animism and magic. He therefore makes use of the totemic practices. This is not because the totemic practices represent the earliest form of religion, but because it comes handy to be identified with his

fanciful theory of the Oedipus complex, and then to explain away religion in terms of the latter. I have already pointed out that it is not possible to substantiate that every religion has passed through the totemic practices, despite their antiquity in some religions. It is also possible to maintain that totemism cannot be called religion at all; if anything, it only forms a border line of religion; it is rather a matter of social or tribal organization in some society. The identification of a social organization with the religious practices is based on an assumption that, to the early societies, there was no distinction between the social and the religious concerns. Unfortunately such an assumption is entertained not only by anthropologists but also philosophers. The tendency to treat everything primitive in an amorphous manner is widespread, although rarely scholars care to substantiate the claim with either arguments or evidences. Indeed amorphousness here is cover for ignorance.

In trying to answer the question of the origin of religion, one cannot but implicitly address himself to the question of the nature of religion: Why is man religious? What is there in his nature that necessitates the origin of religion? What is there in the nature and constitution of man that induced him in the beginning to seek satisfaction

in religion, and continue to ^{do so} be religious through the ages? It surely is not the case that Freud did not raise these questions at all. Indeed his Future of an Illusion⁷ is an answer to this set of questions. But while these questions are not even implicitly entertained in the content of the origin of religion, his answer here is sociogenetic. The origin of religion is explained away as a consequence of the primitive man's attempt towards a cohesive social unity. The nature of religion there is explained away in terms of the power of the human psyche. In both the cases, Freud's is a brilliant 'mythology' without a unity between the social and psychological. That his answer to the question, why men is religious, is nothing short of a naive simplification of a complex phenomenon, and that his explanation is not any better than begging the question, I hope to show in the next chapter. Here, it is sufficient to suggest that there is no unifying thread between his social and psychological 'myths'.

While Freud shares the view of ethnologists that totem is also a taboo, in his enthusiasm to assert the antiquity of totem and its resultant taboo over against the concept of god, he assumes that all moral prescriptions of

7. Sigmund Freud, Future of an Illusion, Trans. W.D. Robson Scott, (London: Hogarth Press, 1973).

the society are prior to religious commandments. This assumption is not only arbitrary but smacks of dogmatism. For one thing, all societies did not pass through the totemic practices. For another, even when a primitive revelation and a primitive monotheism are readily rejected, philosophers, religionists and the literary critics have been successful in pointing out that in some societies, at least, the concept of gods seems to have been co-eval with man. Earliest known cultures and civilizations may have readily entertained the conceptions of some form of deity, not merely impersonal, to be coalesced into the concepts of totem and taboo, but, more often, a personal deity to retain its distinctiveness from an impersonal capricious powers. If this is the case, Freud cannot suppose that taboo dates back to a period even before any kind of religion and religious prescriptions existed within a given culture.

An important element that can be noted in all the ethnological theories, as having given rise to religion, is the emotion of fear, consequent upon the ignorance of man about the workings of the laws of nature. This is in a special way related to totemism, on which Freud directly depends for his theory. This elemental theory of fear is an undercurrent of all the ethnological theories, to say nothing of totemism. Freud does incorporate it in his

theory, although he was careful to add that the fear of gods is coupled with the hope of securing their goodwill. There is no doubt that a vague terror, more aptly an awe, or religious dread, may have existed in the life of the religious man, but this peculiar feeling cannot be explained in terms of the ordinary psychological feeling of fear. The simple emotion of fear is inadequate to explain the associated feelings of wonder, admiration, gratitude and reverence, that play often a greater role in the life of the religious man. A perceptive religious psychologist, Rudolf Otto, seems to me to have grasped the truth of this experience as not merely as the experience of the tremendum but also that of the fascinans.⁸ If so, religion ought to have its root in a 'kinship' with a transcendent power, but this kinship cannot be so artificial as ^{is} thought of by Freud.

Speaking of animism itself, Freud maintained that animism is not a religion, but rather it constitutes the foundation, on which religions are later built. This is a point that, even if readily conceded to Freud, on the ground that animism can be world-view that still persists in modern life, either in the debased form of superstitions or as being the basis of our speech, beliefs and our philosophies,

8. Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy. (London: Oxford University Press 1958)

Freud does not take pains to substantiate his contention. A substantiation here would call for a detailed working out of the vital relation between myths and animism, an attempt we see in the works of Campbell.⁹ So too, a probe into the role of folklore would be of immense help to study this vital relation.¹⁰

From all that is discussed so far, it follows that Freud's reliance on ethnology, as we find it more and more diluted in his Totem and Taboo, is of little help to establish his theory of the origin of religion. We then have to examine his psychoanalytical elements superimposed on the ethnological data. These elements are centred around his assumption that Oedipus complex is both innate to man, and universal to human community. Before I enter into the critique of various elements, I would like to briefly refer to the attempts of the Neo-Freudians to make Freud's theory plausible. They generally reject the hereditary implications of the events in the primal horde. They feel that the Oedipus complex arises anew each time out of the familial configuration. They modify Freud's position, to a considerable degree, to make it more plausible by rejecting the implications of a racial mind and the inheritance of acquired

9. Joseph Campbell. Myths We Live By, (New York: Bantem Book, 1978).

10. Ernst Cassirer. Symbol, Myth and Culture, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

memory. Instead, they think that sacrifice should be viewed as the symbolic expression of an unconscious desire for parricide that each individual has acquired for himself.¹¹

A critique of the Neo-Freudianism could be an interesting academic exercise; however, it falls outside the purview of my work.

Firstly, restricting myself to Freud's own theory, I notice, that Freud's conclusion, that religion is an obsessional neurosis of mankind on the basis of the psychological concept of 'substitution', does not hold good. Freud observed that the attitude that a child bears towards animals has much in common with the attitude of the primitive man towards the totem. The child, to begin with, does only love the animal and does not hate it, but gradually, due to some negative experiences the child begins to fear a certain animal. Thus, the fear of the animal, on the part of the child, is not natural but acquired. The child now both loves and hates, respects and fears the animal. Freud however ingeniously gives a different meaning to the child's ambivalent attitude towards the animals. He reads in it what goes in psychology by the name of 'substitution'.

11. Money Kyrle. 'The Meaning of Sacrifice' as quoted in William A. Lessard & Evan Z. Vogt, Reader in Comparative Religion, (London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972).

The animal loved and hated is a symbol of the father. For the child, that initially only loves and respects the father, gradually acquires the hatred and the fear of the father. The father is loved, but his authority is also feared, resented and hated. Hence, the father, that is feared and respected, loved and hated, is substituted for the animal that is in the same way loved and hated. The animal concerned has become the totem that is at once the taboo. This argument is now transported from the individual level to the collective level. Primitive mankind, like the child that substitutes the animal for the father, substitutes the totem animal to the pater-families of the community.

The above argument, however, persuasive, has serious difficulties. First of all the concept of substitution here is riddled with problems. Love and hate, respect and fear are the natural emotions of human beings. There are many things in this world which we love and hate, respect and fear. Hate and fear may also have been occasioned by negative experiences in life. It is not the case that we express this ambivalent emotions towards animals and father only, but also towards many other objects, events, animals and persons in life. If so, how can we be sure as to what

is substituted for what? In concrete, why should an animal, and nothing else, should be substituted for father and nothing else? Conversely, why should father, and nothing else, substitute an animal, and nothing else? In the Freudian theory, then, there is no justification to substitute my love and fear of the animal to the love and fear of the father. The concept of substitution then leads us nowhere near the solution of the origin of religion. The transposition from the life of the individual to that of the community is fraught with philosophical difficulties both at the individual and the collective level.

Secondly, granting merely for arguments sake that a child sometimes 'displaces' its hatred of the father upon the animal, it could still be questioned, if it is the case with every child, (at least the one that has come to accept religion), and at all times, so much so that it can be now asserted with a certainty that the origin of religion of mankind is traced back to the primaeval displacement. What is more, in spite of his acceptance of the electra complex, as distinct from Oedipus complex, the displacement in this context is selectively reserved for the sons by Freud. For the present, I shall not dwell upon the oddity of this selective reservation on Freud's part.

I shall rather dwell upon another aspect. Taking this displacement to be valid, would the sons retain enough of the original hate-impulse to slay the father? If they did, would the slaying not resolve the value of displacement in society once and for all? Freud may affirm both the questions. But others will require more scrutiny before they accept the affirmations. For the first affirmation would go against an adequate psychology of human feelings. The second affirmation would imply that religion began everywhere with the 'displacement' and the slaying of the father, in every society, including the one that did not know totemic practices.

Thirdly, the assumption of Freud that originally human beings lived in hordes like animals is also not supported by historical evidences. We should not lose sight of the fact that a theory of evolution, despite its having become a shibboleth, is still a hypothesis. The assertion, that the human species and some of the animal primates may have a common ancestor on the scale of evolution, has opened more questions to be answered than it has actually answered; many are the links that are missing here. Further, a patriarchal system in a community does not entail that its life pattern is that of the animal-primates, among whom, too, there is the domination by the male. The funda-

mental mistake here seems to consist in our thinking that the 'pater-familias' is same as the 'pater-primogenitor'. The mistaken identification indulges in category mistakes, for the former is primarily sociological, while the latter, biological; it stems from making the primate animal-life a pattern for human life. Freudian theory, in its narrow limits, cannot even account for the prevalence of a matriarchal system. It also does not follow that the matriarchal systems necessarily have a religion centred around a female deity, to reverse the Freudian theory of the slaying of the father and replace it with the slaying of the mother, if it is ever sought to be done by the neo-Freudians.

Fourthly, even if we agree with Freud's supposition, that the human community is modelled on the life pattern of the animal primates, with the biological instinct of sex as the nucleus, there are difficulties that Freud can hardly answer. It remains inexplicable to us why, after the completion of the act of parricide, it becomes impossible to the sons to reach an accord to share the women of the clan. It would be highly arbitrary to think that a league is not possible, when it comes to the sharing of the women. Needless to say, my emphasis is here on the possibility of the league itself. For Freud once again, speaking for the sons'

coming together to ritually celebrate the murdered father, and also to bind themselves to a code of conduct for preventing the recurrence of the parricide and incest in the community, in remorse and recompense. What I question is Freud's creation and recreation of a community at his sweet will, when it suits him, and rejection of the same, when it does not suit his scheme of arguments. We also cannot establish that, with the completion of the parricide, there is no more the unity of the community. For what prevents the strongest of the male to assert his hegemony over the community, eliminate his rival, take possession of the women and thus establish the original community under his domination? Is not the pattern of life of the animal primates the model for Freud's patriarchal community? Freud's inconsistencies here seem to be embarrassing even to the well-meaning supporters!

Further, Freud thinks that the very first moral principles of the community originate with the emergence of the new community, after the parricide and the celebration of the murdered father. These principles are prohibitions against incest and murder. It is at the celebration that the brothers bind themselves to these principles as the first social and moral taboos. The community would henceforth be guilty of their violations. This argument of

Freud is hardly convincing. Remorse and recompense are consequent upon the sense of guilt. It is precisely this that the sons suffer from, when they have murdered the father; it is precisely this that has necessitated their coming together to bind themselves to the prevention of the heinous crimes. Does Freud put the cart before the horse?

There is yet another problem that refers to the clan's solidarity itself. Few anthropologists suggest that the ~~exogamy~~^{exogamy} and the matrilineal system are resultant upon the sanctioning of the first laws of taboo in the community. Freud thinks that the ~~band~~^{band} of brothers allowed strangers, to have access to the women whom they had renounced. This is the beginning of both exogamy and the matrilineal system within the community. This supposition of Freud is not warranted. In the first place, who are the strangers whom the ~~band~~^{band} of brothers give access to the women they have renounced? If we buy the Freudian presuppositions, we could suggest that the strangers are none other than the members of the same clan expelled by the jealous pater primogenitor. This situation hardly gives rise to exogamy, to say nothing of the matrilineal system of the society. Secondly, if the ~~band~~^{band} of brothers renounce their claim to the women of their

clan, we should be prepared to argue that they would be now emotionally attached to other clans, since their own clan does not sustain them emotionally. In the latter case, all that is left for the brothers is the disintegration of their own clan solidarity, to preserve which they not only celebrate the murdered father but also aim at the smooth functioning of their own clan. They would be left with a clan in which they have practically no role to play. The clan solidarity, that they wanted to preserve at all cost, including the renunciation of the physiological instincts, has come to naught.

A corollary of the above situation would be equally inexplicable to Freud. Granted for the argument sake that Freud's totemistic taboo becomes an adequate explanation of exogamic practices, it fails to throw light on the endogamic practices. However, limited in its prevalence, endogamy is, after all, practised in some communities. Freud's selective gleanings from the ethnological data is rather baffling to us.

Freud tells us that the totem meal is the beginning of social organization, of moral restrictions and of religion. To Freud, the latter of these is fundamental; the former is necessarily linked with the latter. But it is quite

possible, not to read here any trace of religion at all. The totem meal need not be seen as a sacramental meal of a religion. Freud seems to be reading too much of a Christian Eucharistic sacrament in the totemic meal; and in doing this, he is anything but cautious in transferring an element of his own culture into the primitive cultures. His attempt is characterized by an enthusiasm rather than a careful analysis. He thinks and rejoices that he has been successful to explain away Christianity, a 'father religion', and its sacramental life. One need not read any kind of remorse and repentance in the totemic meal. Indeed, it is quite possible to adopt a standpoint that is diametrically opposed to that of Freud. Totemic meal may also be read as a victory celebration of the band of brothers at having succeeded to overthrow the authority of the jealous and the despotic father.

To conclude, the theory of Freud on the origin of religion moves in vicious circle. It claims to be historical because it draws upon the ethnological data. But it is nothing short of a fantasy, corresponding to the analysands. The introduction of the psychoanalytical Oedipus complex puts the final seal of fantasy on it: The totem is the father, the father is killed and eaten; the brothers never

get over their remorse for the deed; to reconcile themselves with their father and themselves, they invent morality and religion. The above reasoning cannot be historical, even in principle, no matter how much the ethnological data is forced in the ~~procrustean~~ ^{Procrustean bed} of Oedipus complex. Unfortunately, the truth is that the primal parricide is merely an 'event', constructed out of ethnological scraps, on the pattern of fantasy, although it is given a semblance of scholarship, by way of psychoanalysis.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION: A PSYCHO-MYTHOLOGY

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In this chapter, I would like to present Freud's views on the nature of religion as a gigantic psycho-mythology. Whereas the Totem and Taboo is an embodiment of his views on the origin of religion, the Future of an Illusion¹ is the fruit of his reflections on the nature of religion. Whereas the former is dependent on the Darwinian evolutionary theory, therefore, in essence, is reportedly historical, the latter is dependent on the Feuerbachian philosophical atheism. Freud has the distinctive merit of providing to the philosophical theory a psychological thrust. He brings in his understanding of the human psyche to fully bear upon his reflection on the nature of religion.

His basic insight on the issue is that religion is an infantile dependency, therefore an illusion, that it is an admirable psychic myth for the purposes of wish-fulfillments. On his realization, that he is destined to remain a child of nature forever vis-a-vis the stupendous powers of nature, man feels for ever the need for a father; it is a spontaneously felt need that he cannot face the powers of

1. Sigmund Freud. The Future of an Illusion.

nature without the protection of a father. Needless to say, his earthly father cannot match up to the task. Hence, he lends these powers themselves the features, belonging to the figure of his father. Thus, the gods that he creates for himself after his own image are his own handiwork, although he dreads them, seeks to propitiate them, nevertheless, entrusts them with his own protection. We must recognize in his attitude that his longing for a father is identical with his need for protection. Such a perception is born fundamentally of human helplessness and weakness. Against this backdrop, Freud addresses himself to an important question: In what does the peculiar value of religious ideas lie? The answer is cited from the supposed dynamics of the human psyche, as he perceived it:

"They are the illusions, fulfilments of the oldest, strongest and the most urgent wishes of mankind. The secret of their strength lies in the strength of these wishes."²

Thus, for Freud, the value of religious ideas lies in their capacity for wish-fulfilment, human wishes get their fulfilment through religion. For him, religion occupies a predominant position in our civilization, which itself is a defence mechanism against the vicissitudes of life. He believes that

2. Ibid., p. 26.

so long as man lives by a civilization that is constantly fed by a religious world-view, and not by science, man will remain infantile, depending on religious ideas for the apparent fulfilments of his wishes. Hence, I shall first discuss Freud's views on civilization, very briefly though, and then link it to his theory on the nature of religion.

Civilization includes within itself two important elements: one, all the capacity man has acquired to control the forces of nature for his own satisfaction. —————

————— Two, all the prohibitions necessary to control the relations among human beings, especially in regard to the distribution of the available resources. But, Freud admits, there are serious difficulties here: The two trends of civilization however are not dependent upon each other. In the first place, the mutual relations among human beings are governed by the amount of instinctual satisfaction made possible by the existing resources. Secondly, it is possible that an individual himself can become the resource to another, to the extent that the latter makes use of the former's capacity for work, or even chooses the latter as a sexual object. Thirdly, and this is of vital importance to Freud, paradoxical though it may seem, every individual is virtually an enemy of civilization. It is true that

civilization is supposedly for the universal human benefit: indeed, man can ill-afford to exist in isolation. But, human beings do find it a heavy burden, when civilization calls upon them to make instinctual sacrifices, without which there hardly is a life of the human community. Freud, does not miss the point that civilization has to be defended against the individual; that its regulations, institutions and commands are invariably geared to this unpleasant task.

In defence of these tasks, civilization may interfere with human instincts, by way of attempts at a certain distribution of resources as well as of maintaining that distribution. Indeed, it aims at protecting everything that contributes to the conquest of nature, and the production of wealth, even against man's hostile and indolent impulses. Civilization has to contend with the truth that human creations are easily destroyed; that science and technology, which may have built them up, can also be employed for their destruction.³ Freud believes that civilization is something that is imposed on a majority by a minority group. The latter knew how to coerce others and their powers. The defeats encountered in the civilizations are not inherent

3. Ibid., p. 2.

in itself but rather in the imperfections of the cultural forms, which have been developed over the years. Freud deplores that although mankind has made a lot of advance in controlling nature, by way of science and its associate technology, unfortunately, it has not made much advance in the management of human affairs. He visualizes that, if only we could get over the destructive elements within human nature, which are inherent therein, there could be a golden age in a civilization; ^{we} would be free from all discards and dissatisfactions. For Freud, this is neither a wishful thinking nor a pious sentiment. He is convinced that, through the influence of exceptional individuals, who can set examples of great renunciation and sacrifice, mankind can build a humane civilization. Likewise, the majority of the masses have to recognize such individuals as their leaders, who can ultimately save a civilization. But in the hands of these leaders, coercion is an effective instrument in the cause of maintaining and saving civilization. Thus, Freud puts it briefly that the two widespread human characteristics, viz. the controlling of the forces of nature and the regulation of human relations, are responsible for both the creation and the maintenance of civilization. For the satisfaction of human needs and the regulating of the human relations among themselves for the well-being of the society, ^{man} must be

subjected to some degree of coercion. For 'men are not spontaneously fond of work, and arguments are of no avail against their passions'.⁴

Freud is well aware of the criticism that may be levelled against his views concerning the characteristics of human masses depicted here. For they imply that coercion cannot be dispensed with within the work of civilization. They also demand a reorganization of our cultural institutions, that may involve the sacrifices of our instinctual gratifications. Precisely on account of these, man may become embittered and revengeful. Freud is of the opinion that it is only the new generations, that will have been brought up in kindness, and that will have high opinion of reason, and that will have enjoyed the benefits of civilization at an early age, will regard civilisation as their own possession. Such a generation also will not hesitate to make the necessary sacrifices to bequeath a humane civilization to its posterity.

Privation, in virtue of sacrifices of instinctual life in the cause of civilization, cannot be dispensed with in the society. Freud distinguishes between privations

4. Ibid., p. 6.

which affect one as an individual and those that affect one as a member of a group. For Freud both are important, as they can bring about either the individual or the collective neurosis respectively; civilization can contribute to both. Privations at the individual level are the earliest, which began to detach men from his primordial animal condition, though not without an intense struggle in his psyche. Freud recognises that these privations are still operative in civilization. The instinctual wishes, like those of incest, cannibalism and lust for killing, which now suffer in civilization, are born afresh with every child. For example, the neurotics, who already react to these frustrations, exhibit the suppressed instincts with a social behaviour. The instinctual wishes may have been prohibited but they are still practised in many places, under certain conditions.

Privations at the collective level are also imposed by civilization. Paradoxically, they present themselves with a greater force of necessity with the advancement of civilization. To be sure, with the advancement of science and technology, there is also an advancement in civilization. But it also accompanies a host of restrictions by one group

over another, in the context of social organizations. Thus, if we refer to the restrictions that apply only to certain class of people, by contrast, it is quite possible that a higher class may have imposed these restrictions on them. The lower class then naturally envy the privileged class and will do anything to free itself from their own surplus of privations. If however this is not the case, then a permanent measure of discontent will continue in the society; this may lead to dangerous revolts. A civilization which leads its members to revolt does not have the prospect of having a lasting existence. What is more, even though one group of people might get exploited by another group, the exploited group may still indulge in the exploitation of a third group, and so on. This logic holds good not merely at the small group and community level, but also at the national level. Every nation has ^{recourse to} the task of ruling other nations and dictating their laws over others. It is the law of civilization that the exploited is also the exploiter, even as the exploiter is also the exploited. But the identification of the suppressed classes with the suppressing class is only part of a larger whole. For, on the other hand, it is equally possible that there can be an identification here in a very different sense: "the suppressed classes can be emotionally attached to their

masters; in spite of their hostility to them they may see in them their ideals."⁵ This is because under the impact of a kind of world-view, such relations can be in a sense satisfying. Otherwise it would be impossible for us 'to understand how a number of civilizations have survived so long, in spite of the justifiable hostility of large human masses.'⁶

Hostility is natural to man. Likewise restrictions that are imposed on them. The great merit of Freud consists in laying bare the psychological, to some extent, sociological, dynamics of the phenomenon of hostility and restriction in man's life. If however, some of the prohibitions were to be lifted, there would be anarchy in the society: as one may, without hesitation or restriction, kill another to satisfy one's own string of wishes; but, as everyone will have the similar, if not the same, wishes, the anarchy of society will express itself with one man set upon another. In such a society, only one person, who is the strongest and ruthless, would be the happiest, once all the restrictions of civilization are laid aside; such a person, in virtue of being a tyrant and a dictator, can guarantee only an unstable social order, because the possibility of overthrowing his rule by someone, who is more, or equally,

5. Ibid., p. 9.

6. Ibid., p. 9.

powerful and ruthless, is always there. Thus, if there are no restrictions imposed by the civilization, then it will become a state of anarchy; it is a relapse into the state of nature.

Is it possible to construe that a state of nature is better than a state of civilization, wherein man is called upon to sacrifice some of his instinctual satisfaction for the sake of an ordered civilized life? On the face of it, it may seem so. But, the reality, the unpredictability of nature, is worse than any self-imposed restrictions. For nature has its effective methods of restricting us, as she destroys us coldly and cruelly. Indeed, it is precisely to menacle the unpredictable icy cruel hands of nature that men come together and create a civilization. There are forces in nature before which, for all his collective efforts, man is absolutely helpless and miserable. Hence, no one can hope that nature will be subjected entirely to man, as there are many things which are beyond the human control: Man is absolutely impotent before the 'earth, which quakes and is torn apart and buries all human life and its works'. He is helpless before the surging 'water which deluges and drowns everything in a turmoil.' He is often entirely disarmed before the diseases, which he has only recently recognized as attacks by organisms that belong

to a different kingdom. And finally, there is the 'painful riddle of death, against which no medicine has yet been found, nor probably will be'; with these elemental forces, 'nature rises up against us, majestic, cruel and inexorable'. The net result of all these is a profound sense, on the part of man, of inadequacy, weakness and helplessness. He may have thought of escaping that sense through the work of civilization but, is now painfully conscious that he has lost the battle with the nature even before he began it. Little wonder then that, in the face of an elemental catastrophe, mankind forgets the discontents, difficulties animosities and rational barriers of its civilization, not merely to mourn but also to recall 'the great common task of preserving itself against superior ^{Powers} of nature.'⁷

It is precisely at this juncture that Freud embarks upon the discussion on the nature of religion. If the origin of religion is rooted in the beginnings of human civilization, its nature is to be traced back to the power of the religious ideas that would mitigate the superior powers of nature, and initiate a process of regulating human relations in the society. For the function of religion, or religious ideas, for that matter, is the wishfulfillments.

7. Ibid., p. 12.

The wishes that clamour for fulfilments are most primitive, hence powerful, — all born out of, negatively, human helplessness, and positively, the need to be protected by a father. Thus, Freud's god is assigned at once with the function of protecting mankind from the helplessness against the majority powers of nature.

The wishes, whose fulfilments that man longs for, are many. Firstly, the longing for the protection by a father from the many uncertainties of life is only too natural. Such a longing may have been originally for a mother, but soon it gets replaced by the longing for the father, as the child begins to recognize the power and the strength, invested in the authority, of the father. Of all the living creatures, the human babe seems to be the most helpless at its birth. In the scale of evolution, it seems to have been born many years prematurely, if we are inclined to compare it with a new born calf. Secondly, there is the wish to avoid injuries to one's limits, and prolong the earthly existence, in the face of the constant threat to maiming, and the near certainty of death at any moment. The human babe is fit to die the moment it is born, unless properly cared for. This longing may even grow in the form of a wish to prolong one's existence even beyond this earthly life, when ultimately man has to succumb to the

inevitability of death. Thirdly, there is the wish for justice in an unjust world. Nay more, when they longed for justice does not forthcome, it may even receive extra-terrestrial wings, to transport the individual to the next world, wherein he is said to be adequately, nay more a tenfold, rewarded. Finally, there is the wish for the tasting of the fruit of knowledge with its many ramifications: He wants to solve the riddles of the origin and nature of the universe in which he lives. He wants to know the type of relation that may be said to exist between himself and his universe. He wants to probe into his own nature, destiny and the purpose, if any, of his existence. He wants to know the relation between the union of the physical and mental that he encounters within himself. All these are mysterious. The need for their fulfilment can be primitive, pressing, urgent and even vehement.

Freud also reminds us that it is not only the superior powers of nature, that offer themselves as formidable. Civilization, which is on all counts his own creation, too, imposes certain restrictions on man. For the other man brings him a measure of suffering, which only makes him painfully conscious of the imperfections of his civilization. To some extent, he seeks to overcome these sufferings by

adopting the techniques of appeasement, bribery, flattery and even a semblance of obedience. But these techniques cannot be absolutely mastered, as the social situations vastly vary. Moreover, in social situations, there are certain relations that cannot either be mitigated or supplanted. This is all the truer in the situation of a child, being helpless in relation to its parents, specially in relation to one's father. It fears him, in spite of knowing that it would get protection from him from the dangers he knew.

Thus, Freud assimilates the two situations, namely the dangers originating from the forces of nature and also from the not so well perfected social situation of civilization, to a play of wish-fulfilments: Wishing here plays a very important role, as it does in the dream life of a neurotic. Like the latter, he indulges in a pastime, a play. To be sure, he makes the forces of nature into persons, with whom he can associate, as he would with his equals. But this would hardly do justice to their overpowering forces. Therefore, he proceeds to bestow on them the character of a father. Thus, his gods are born, indeed, he 'begets' his own gods and bestows on them his own image,

minus all the imperfections his own nature is heir to. To Freud, religion thus becomes an infantile play, an illusion.⁸

But the illusion of religion that Freud speaks of is not an epistemic error, or a deliberate lie. By illusion, Freud means to suggest a 'contradiction with reality'. Freud tends to call a belief an illusion, when a wish-fulfilment forms a prominent factor in its motivation; and in doing so, it disregards its relation to reality. Such illusions, in the opinion of Freud, can neither be verified nor be refuted. The riddles of the universe reveal themselves to us so fragmentarily that there will always be many things, to which science cannot give any synthetic answer. And, yet, it is only science that can give us whatever knowledge we have about reality. Our civilization, be it with its knowledge of the world, in which we live, or with the laws, that govern human relations, is, Freud believes, built upon the dogmas of religion, rather than the knowledge obtained by science. Freud deplors that our society is based on man's belief in the truth of those dogmas. If men were taught that there is no superpower above us, then they would not feel obliged to the illusory religious precepts of civilization.

8. Ibid., p. 13.

But, religion is the illusion that has sway over reality; religion in fact extends its sway even over science. For the helplessness of man continues, even with scientific knowledge, and along with it, the longing for a father, and therefore for the gods. This is partly because nature develops automatically, according to the internal necessities; this bestows on religion a peculiar legitimacy. Without doubt, the gods were the lords of nature. Are they not said to intervene occasionally in its course to show that they have relinquished nothing of their original power? It appears, as though it were essential for gods at times to create some natural calamities like flood, earthquake etc. in order to show that after all they existed before, and that they are far more superior to man.

Religion, Freud is quick to acknowledge, is a complex phenomenon. His estimate of it is characterized by a deep scepticism, but tinged with an equally deep sense of appreciation. It seems that he was, towards the end of his academic career, more interested in religion than in any other manifestations of culture. He did not approach religion as an abstract phenomenon, or in isolation from other cultural elements; on the contrary, he always saw

in it the content of culture as a whole. Therefore, when it comes to the apportioning of destinies, he could not but entertain an unpleasant suspicion regarding human existence, indeed, he had no ready made panacea for the helplessness of the human race. Freud believes that religion is to mitigate, or at least make tolerable, the helplessness that man encounters. In the service of overcoming his helplessness, he creates his ideas of religion. As soon as man possesses these ideas, they protect him from two directions — against the dangers of nature and fate, and against the dangers that threaten human society itself. This obviously needs our closer attention.

What are those ideas that apparently have so great a protective power? Life is supposedly created for serving some higher purpose, though it is not immediately known. Such a purpose is embedded in the spirit of man, the soul; the latter is viewed detachedly from the physical existence of man; it gets infinitely evaluated and exalted. Everything that happens in the world becomes an expression of an intelligent being, ^a for more superior than we, who by his dictates is said to make everything for the betterment of human beings. The moral laws embody the will of the infinitely intelligent and benevolent beings, they govern the whole

universe. Man and his society are maintained by a supreme court of the divine justice. Consequently, in the end, all good is rewarded, and evil punished. Freud sees in all these the historical beginnings of the ideas of god. Building upon this, he continues, since god is a single person, since an infinite being cannot but be one and unique, man's relation to him could recover the intimacy and the intensity of child's relation to its father; it also deserves certain reward, as befits his only beloved child. These then are the moorings of the worship of a deity in religions.

It would be naive to think that these ideas of Freud have evolved in a straightforward and simple way. He is not merely a psychologist or philosopher of religion. He is also immensely equipped with a host of anthropological data, all of which he ingeniously employs in his theory. His ideas on the issue have passed through many stages. Nonetheless, they all converge remarkably to a single phase. And that phase corresponds to the final form taken by the Christian religion, or more appropriately, Christian civilization.

One is likely to see in Freud an apparent contradiction in regard to the religious ideas. Initially, he tries

to show that religious ideas have arisen in order to defend oneself against the superior forces of nature; but he gradually moves on to argue that these ideas are meant to modify the shortcomings of civilization, and that a person need not discover them anew. But I am inclined to believe that the contradiction is more apparent than real. With reference to their origin, Freud locates them in the particular functions they are called upon to fulfil. But with reference to their efficacy, he locates them within the given civilizations. In the latter case, he is more concerned about the power of these ideas. Hence, Freud does not find it odd to bestow the supposedly revelatory character on the religious ideas, operative in a civilization. Through them people often attempt to carry on the process of humanization in nature in order to end the helplessness of man from the elemental forces. Primitive man projected himself in the outside world of nature, in the hope of influencing the nature by way of establishing a certain relation with it. Such a relation he hoped to establish, if the things outside were regarded to be just like him. In the Totem and Taboo, in the context of the origin of religion, for Freud, the relation concerned became the son-father relationship: god was the exalted father, and the longing for the father was the root of the need for

religion. But, in The Future of an Illusion, in the context of the nature of religion, it is the human helplessness and weakness that gains the upper hand, and it assumes the beginnings of the need for religion. For Freud, however, it must be noted that, in this transformation from son-father relationship to that of human weakness and helplessness, there runs a vital thread: It consists in the relation of a child's helplessness to that of the adult, which continues. The libido out of its narcissistic needs attaches itself to the objects which satisfy its needs. In one case, it is the mother, the first love object, that becomes thereafter the first protector. Likewise, in other case, it is the father, the first protector, that becomes thereafter the first love object, that therefore becomes thereafter the first protector, in ways that far surpass the mere sensuous interpretations.

Thus, it should not surprise us, if Freud switches over gradually from the protection by the mother to the protection assured by the father. But the child's attitude towards the father is marked by a certain ambivalence. The father signals danger for the child, and so the child learns to fear him. But, the father nevertheless assures protection to the child, and so the child also admires him. In the Totem and Taboo, Freud showed that this ambivalent attitude towards the father is imprinted in every religion,

the more so, in such father-religions like Christianity. Man's longing for the protection of a father is thus identical with his need for the protection of a father; it is identical with his need for protection against the consequences of human weakness. 'The defence against childish helplessness is what lends its characteristic features to the adult's own reaction to the helplessness.'⁹ This reaction gives rise to the formation of religion.

What in general are the religious ideas? In the first place, they are teachings about reality which one has not discovered for oneself. Such reality may pertain to man's inner or outer life. The information concerned is valued to be the most important, therefore highly prized in life. People have come to associate with it hidden riches of the spirit, should someone possess it. Secondly, the religious ideas enjoy a peculiar authority. They are believed because they were already believed in by the ancestors. Within this authority of the hoary past, there may be proofs that have been handed down from earlier times. Thirdly, in virtue of the authority of the tradition, it also becomes, in a sense, impervious to reason. Hence, it is forbidden to raise questions against its authority. In the earlier times one was punished severely, if one raised

9. Ibid., p. 20.

questions, or doubts, about it; it is not uncommon even today that society looks askance at any attempt to question the authority and authenticity of its teachings.

Fourthly, in virtue of their supernatural referents, and unquestionable authority, hallowed by the times and the imperviousness to reason, they have exercised the strongest possible influence on mankind.

Freud however, believes that it does not need much reflection to see through the power of religious ideas, that make for the wish-fulfillments. Since religion is born of ignorance, only science can ultimately do away with our need for religion. Our morality should rest on science rather than on religion. With this conclusion in mind, he asks, if mankind was happier at a time when religious doctrines had unrestricted sway over it. He quickly answers the question in the negative. For civilization has little to fear from educated people. If people realise the nature of religious ideas, and also the vacuity of the concept of god, they would ascribe scientific rather than religious rationale for the moral prohibitions, that were hitherto given a religious garb. Thus, following Durkheim, Freud wants to suggest that it is the society, or civilization, that is the source of morality. Freud argues out the need for a scientific basis for morality at some length. He

points out that the many prohibitions which we impose in the name of god are nothing but our own wish-fulfilments. In our society we have certain restrictions against murder. For, if people, due to hatred or any other reason, were to murder one another, the final outcome in the society would be a total self-destruction. Insecurity of life, which is an equal threat for everyone, unites men into society and imposes on them reasonable prohibitions against killing; however it may reserve to itself the right to killing those, who threaten to violate prohibitions of the society. Hence, the source of morality ought to be scientific rather than religious.

But man's nature is such that he does not always give this rational explanation, but rather asserts that these prohibitions have been issued by god. What people do not want done, they give it the vestiture of religious prohibition. In this way, we can say that religion is nothing but a wish-fulfilment of human beings. The command, 'thou shall not kill', Freud believes, was applied to father-substitute under totemism, but was later extended to all people, though even today it is not universally accepted.

But, it is worth noting that, for Freud, religion does not lack entirely the elements of historical truth,

in spite of the fact that it only caters for wish-fulfillments. This is so, in virtue of the link that he establishes between the Totem and Taboo and the Future of an Illusion. In the former, he acquaints us with the notion of the primal father. The original image of god in the latter is that of the moral father. On this model, the later generations have shaped their figure of god. Therefore, the religious explanation of the prohibitions, in the society, is in a sense right, because it is the murder of the primal father, who becomes the moral god, that occasions the beginning of moral laws in the society against murder, incest and so on. Moreover, in this process is also to be found a displacement of man's own will into that of the gods. At the historical origins of our civilization, men understood that they had dispensed off their primal father by violence; and out of the feeling of guilt they determined to obey his will. Thus, religion may be said to have at least some elements of historical truth. Precisely because of these elements, for Freud, religion includes not only wish-fulfillments but also some historical recollections. Needless to say, these historical recollections are not so much of any single man as that of mankind itself. As an amalgamation of past and present, religion thus has incomparable wealth of power on the life of man.

But, for all its historical recollections, religion retains its character of being the neurosis of the adult man. He draws an analogy between a child's relation to civilization and the adults relation to religion. Just as a human child cannot successfully complete its development to the civilized stage, in other words, the process of its socialization, without passing through some stage of neurosis, the adult too cannot grapple with life's vicissitudes without apparently succumbing to the neurosis of religion. Man falls into the states of neurosis of religion, primarily due to his intellectual weaknesses. Religion thus may be regarded as the obsessional neurosis of children, that arises out of the Oedipus complex^{and} originates out of its relation to the father-protector, whose need is rooted in the weakness of his mind and matter alike. But, even as a child, with its growing up, can overcome its neurosis of the childhood, the adult too can turn away from the neurosis of religion, if he cares to wax into the maturity of his intellect.

Freud terms the waxing into maturity, by way of the growth of our intellect, 'education in reality'. It consists, negatively, in giving up the illusory props that religion

provides man and, positively, in acquiring and nurturing a scientific temperament. The truths contained in the religious doctrines are the distortions of reality. Most people readily and avidly hold on to the solutions offered by religion, because they cannot easily recognise the distortions of reality performed. by religion. A religious believer is bound to the teachings of religion due to his private fancy in, or affection for, the particular elements within it. Such an attitude is against reality. But there are also countless other people, who believe in and give obedience to religious doctrines, purely out of fear of them. This attitude is an even greater violence to the education in reality. Freud's education for reality calls upon seeing through both the subjective fancies as well as the 'objective' elemental fears. Such a clear seeing is made possible with a proper understanding of the reality of our own subjectivity, and the objectivity of the world in which we live. To the extent that one is trained in reality principle, one can break away from the false assurances offered by religion, and thereby with religion itself.

Freud's 'education to reality' is highly complex. It is against this complexity that we have to look into

Freud's appreciation of religion, if any, in the process of enrichments of civilization. He is here very different from the radical approach of Marx. In spite of much immorality of religion, it cannot be gainsaid that religion is also a source of morality to most people. He is quite vocal in asserting the meaninglessness of human attempts to do away with religion by force or violence. Indeed, he fears such attempts will be only counter productive. Without providing man an alternative rational source of morality, doing away with religion will only leave the society chaotic. Though religion is an illusion, it still affords man a great source against the vicissitudes of life, and also an ever greater source of morality to him. Without such sources, people would not be able to bear the burdens of life and cruelties of reality. But, Freud is convinced that, in the end, it is not religion, but science, that should be the foundation of life and its morality. For, when the help that was expected of religion does not forthcome, the religious man caves in under the weight of his own psychomythology. He feels so insignificant in the universe that he recognises that he is no longer the centre of creation. Freud draws our attention to the analogy of the child that may be said to be warm and comfortable in his parent's house, but is miserably, helpless when removed from there. Hence, his

insistence on the education to reality. He believes that "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'."¹⁰ It is this education to reality that Freud is at pains with to present before us, after discussing the nature of religion, he wants us to replace the religious world-view with a scientific one. While the religious world-view feeds us on illusions, the myths of the psyche, the scientific world-view, on the other hand, hopes to arm us with the reality consciousness; it has nothing to do with the universal panacea called god. Education for reality, moreover, aims at giving us the rational interpretation to prohibitions against murder, incest etc., as rooted in social and rational needs rather than in an absolute divine will. Rather than make us cower before the brazen images of the elemental powers, it makes us fight, in order to save ourselves from the powers of nature. The hope that god will save us is a false, illusory hope. Hence, it is ultimately science, and not religion, that is to save mankind from the miseries of life.

Freud has an implicit understanding that people, who do not have any knowledge of religion in their childhood,

10. Ibid., p. 45.

will have a stranger control over reason. But, he also knows that the human nature is such that, irrespective of religious ideas or otherwise, it is hardly going to change, in so far as it has to contend against the hardships of life. Religion, no doubt, is one world-view that aims at mitigating them. But, its solution is inadequate, in so far as it merely creates illusions of care rather than bring out genuine changes, hence we must outgrow religion, and we can. Hence, we ought to have recourse to reality by way of reason, and such an enterprise is eminently scientific. Freud reminds us that the scientific enterprise too must not overlook the fact that human needs are important piece of reality, and that is a concern which needs special attention.

This has led Freud to acknowledge that religion can help man for the refinement and sublimation of ideas as well as feelings. Science can no longer contradict such refined and sublimated ideas and feelings, nor can it disprove them. Science can only make us aware of their real nature. Since religion is based on a belief in a higher spiritual being, it will be incapable for it to prove either the existence or the nature of that higher spiritual being through the tools of science; but science has to acknowledge the function of the religious ideas. But, since these ideas are

illusory, however functionally valid, they cannot prevail upon the challenges of science, and they will soon lose their hold on human beings. The vacuum created by the dispossession of the religious ideas must be filled by science, for we can hope to gain whatever knowledge there is about reality of the world, and whatever power we can wield over nature and our surrounding, and thus hope to arrange our life with some harmony, — only through science and a scientific outlook on life. Freud is quick to add that the belief in science is not an illusion. While religion is a technique by means of which the person, who is afraid of life, tries to find a heaven of false security, science exposes the falsity and the illusoriness of the former; and replaces it with itself, in virtue of its supremacy of reason and its power. Therefore, it is science which will not only abolish religion, but also usher in human happiness.

CHAPTER VI

NATURE OF RELIGION: A CRITIQUE

NATURE OF RELIGION: A CRITIQUE

Having already presented an exposition of Freud's theory on the nature of religion, I will now critically evaluate it in this chapter. The thrust of my critique will centre around three points. Firstly, Freud's theory is formulated with an inadequate understanding of human psyche; this inadequacy bears upon his understanding of human psyche purely negatively, nay more, retrogressively. Secondly, it is also inspired by his belief in scientism, that religion is less true than science, and that religion would ultimately give place to science. Thirdly, there may be here, in the formulation of his theory, a repressed religiosity, on the part of Freud. On this point, I shall be very brief, since it may warrant much closer attention to Freud's biographical notes than I have actually devoted.

Freud had entertained the suspicion, if the publication of his material on the nature of religion would not do some damage to the cause of psychoanalysis. He wrote in his Future of an Illusion,

"In point of fact psycho-analysis is a method of research, an impartial instrument. If the application of psycho-analytic method makes possible to find a new argument against

the truths of religion..., defenders of religion will by the same right make use of psychoanalysis in order to give full value to the affective significance of religious doctrines."¹

Indeed, his suspicions were confirmed, in so far as they came true even during his life time. Both Adler and Jung, one time his close associates in the cause of psychoanalysis, found it increasingly difficult to subscribe to his fanciful theories, especially those pertaining to religion. Here, again, their difference stemmed from their refusal to go along with Freud's understanding of the dynamics of human psyche, exclusively in terms of sexuality, however wide its application was, to Freud, and in terms of negativity and retrogression. Closely associated with this difference of opinion on the dynamics of human psyche is their differing approaches to the nature itself of religion. Thus, opposition to the Freudian theories came even within psychoanalysis, and even during Freud's own time. But the critique by Adler and Jung has been from the psychological perspective, but I would like to restrict my critique to that of philosophy of religion.²

Psychologists, in general, take it for granted that Freud's theory on the nature of religion is derived from

1. Sigmund Freud. Future of an Illusion, pp 26-37

2. In itself, extremely interesting, this debate within the school of psychoanalysis is outside the purview of my dissertation.

from psychoanalysis. But this view can be called into question. For one thing his atheism appears to me to be an attitude that precedes his psycho-analysis. I hope to substantiate this claim a little later. For another, even if psycho-analysis is taken to be the source of his reflections on the nature of religion, there are here serious drawbacks. To begin with, his theory failed to use his most powerful tool, namely the clinical method of psycho-analysis. For we must not forget that his conceptions of religion were derived not from actual clinical work with believers themselves. Rather his subject matter of analysis was the shattered psyche of man, not necessarily religious. His subjects were no less atheists than theists. At the end of his analysis, he ended up invariably with a speculative transference of psychoanalytic ideas to groups of people, who may not be said to be exclusively religious. This transference of psycho-analytic ideas from the abnormal people to a group of people, who may be said to be religious, is philosophically baffling, unless it is already proved that being religious is an abnormal human behaviour. I am afraid, this is the probandum which Freud seemed to have taken for granted.

Secondly, even in the transference of the psychoanalytic ideas from persons to a group, Freud is not particularly

sensitive to the distinction between the individual persons and a group of people, subject to an institutionalized behaviour. In other words, he does not make a sharp distinction between the concept of the individual and that of the institution. This has led him to presuppose uncritically, and without qualification, the existence of a mass mind; naturally, he relies on an exaggerated concept of psychic unity. What is more, once the psychic unity has become an abstraction, he tends to give insufficient attention to the conscious aspects of religious behaviour and experience within the group.

Both the arguments stated above lay bare the illogicality of Freud's contentions. For, underlying his theory, is the fallacy of what may be termed as a 'psychomechanistic parallelism'. This is the fallacy of assuming that, because two behaviour patterns are observed to exhibit the same constituents, or are reducible to the same component elements, they are to be attributed to the same psychological mechanism. Freud observes a parallel between the infantile neurotic, and the religious, behaviours: the behaviour of the child, its babbling and its efforts to placate its father are paralleled by the compulsive

behaviour of the neurotic, trying to lessen his guilt. Both behaviours are, in Freud's opinion, identical with the religious behaviour of plac^aing the deity and lessening one's guilt. Hence, Freud thinks that religion is a regression to infantile or/and neurotic behaviour. The parallelism involved is too mechanistic, despite its psychological flavour; it has also not ceased to be psychologistic and deterministic, to say nothing of its illogicality.

It would be of interest to see how the religionists react to psychomechanistic parallelism. Their reactions exhibit a greater sense of history of philosophy and logical sagacity than that displayed by most psychologists. They are quick to distinguish between the idea and the image of god, a distinction that we rarely come across in Freud. This is partly because Freud is much more sympathetic here to the empiricistic than to his own German tradition. Empiricists from Locke onwards tend to use the word 'idea' as though it were both secondary to, and derivative from, the 'image'. To be sure, epistemological considerations were of paramount importance to the empiricists. These considerations have their considerable impact on their metaphysics. The empiricists had laid the axe to the very root of all forms of innatism. Freud too may be said to share a great deal of this empiricistic bias and, not without reason, does the

scholastic rationalistic psychology of 'soul' in his hands grows into empirical psychology. Religionists are aware of these undercurrents in Freud. They therefore point out that an image is sensory in character: A dog can form an image of a bone, an infant can form an image of its mother's breast; even so, a child, or an adult, can form an image of God. The art galleries are replete with the images freely imagined, and executed in artistic beauty and grandeur. God may have been 'imaged' as a flying monster of extraordinary might or the suave grandfather with a flowing beard floating in the clouds. But an image is not an idea. An idea is a concept, and, as concept, it is the product of the intellect, a spiritual faculty, distinct from the faculty of imagination. Hence, the concept of god is what we express to ourselves as an ultimate concern. Thus, to the religionists, the fatherhood of god is a concept of ultimate concern. An image of god as a suave old man with a flowing beard is in no sense the same as the idea of god. Graven images in the Semitic tradition were prohibited for fear that they would not either present, or adequately represent, the concept of god. In their religious worship, this misrepresentation was feared as an ever present danger of lapsing into idolatry; it was thought that human mind

could easily regress to images, before the concept was firmly fixed. If Freud has not made the distinction between the image and the idea of god, he is indulging in a form of metaphysical empiricism, but with no epistemological sophistication of the empiricists. He thinks that, if one accounts for the image of god, one has also then accounted for the idea of god.

Freud's theory on the nature of religion seems to me to be more a personal attitude than an outcome of his psycho-analysis. That attitude however is rooted in his inadequate understanding of the human psyche. Whereas serious thinkers of religion adopt a holistic approach to their understanding of man and his religion, Freud bases it on only the mental, and that too partial, make-up of human beings. It is a partial mental make-up because human psyche is conceived by him rather negatively and retrogressively.

Contrary to popular belief, Freud's atheism is not derived entirely from psychoanalysis. As pointed out earlier, a philosophical atheism, advocated by Feuerbach, is the basis for the atheism advocated by Freud. Feuerbach viewed religion as a projection of the human psyche, and the god of religion as an illusion. He held such an outrageously irreligious view of the times, because he

acknowledged the primacy and the power of human imagination. He argued that man, endowed with the power of imagination, projects his own subjective nature; he objectifies, personalizes and sacralizes it, and finally calls it his god. Freud is indebted to this projective atheism of Feuerbach, but he succeeds in providing us with a psychological interpretation to it. Going along with the Feuerbachian atheism, Freud believes that religious ideas are the illusions, fulfilments of the oldest, the strongest and the most urgent wishes of mankind. This is also his answer to his query in regard to the source of the power inherent in religious ideas. It constitutes the core of his Future of an Illusion: Religion and its goddare illusions; they provide for the fulfilment of the primitive wishes of man. The world, the religious man weaves out, is the pseudo-world of wishes that are generally repressed, therefore that seek their own satisfcation. Hence, as a repression of the unpleasant experiences in life, religion opiates the senses to an extent that the pain of existence is made at least bearable. Again, as a regression it works illusorily creating false beliefs. Thus, religion both hides the reality and projects the unreality. In this way it serves as an expression of both individual and the collective neurosis.

Repression, again, for Freud, has its foundation on repression, and the basis of religious neurosis is the unconscious, the storehouse of the repressed impulses.

Freud can be confronted here with two questions: Is it legitimate to understand human psyche purely negatively as a storehouse, an unconscious, of the repressed wishes of the past events? Why should we not rather view it prospectively as having a meaning and a purpose, which lie in the future? Freud may be said to have his own answers. He would affirmatively respond to the first question, since all psychic processes are to him primarily unconscious. His response to the second question would be that, though we can view the psyche prospectively, its meaning and purpose are illusory. But, philosophically speaking, we cannot maintain either position.

Freud's response to the second question may first be taken for our examination, for it is indeed the basis for the first. Even if we accept for arguments sake that psychologically a projection is an illusion, from this it does not follow that god, as the object of illusion, does not exist. Hence the assumption, that the religious world is a projected world, does not entail the position that god as its object does not exist. Hence the assumption, that the

religious world is a projected world, does not entail the position that god as its object does not exist. In every act of hoping, believing and loving, there is an element of projection. In an act of loving, the lover may project an image of his beloved, disproportionate to reality. Yet, from this it does not follow that a psychological projection by the lover entails the non-existence of the beloved; much less does it cancel the existence of the beloved. Nay more, an understanding of something hoped for, believed in, or of someone deeply loved, can very well proceed along a psychological projection.

Let us now come to our second question and Freud's more important response to it. It refers to the negative way of conceiving human psyche. This is more important because Freud believes that he has proved here the power of religious ideas as capable of weaving a world of wish-fulfillments. But this negative, or retrospective, understanding of human psyche lacks a holistic perspective on human nature. The whole man, Freud thinks, is a morbidly brooding creature, living only in the past. While the elements of the past cannot be ruled out, life is lived on the strength of the goals that we from time to time determine for the future.

Freud's attempt to understand human psyche purely retrogressively is facilitated by his study of the mentally

disordered people in his clinic. But this passage from the abnormal to the normal, from the religious to the neurotic, is a non-sequitur; this I have already shown. His attempt is, again, facilitated by his acceptance of the Feuerbachian thesis of projective power of human psyche. I have shown that this too is fraught with contradiction, since there is nothing against a real god corresponding with the wish for a god, irrespective of the physical or the moral 'ailments', for which that god is sought after. Freud's attempt is also facilitated by seeing in religious ideas the power of wish-fulfilments. This too can be countered. It is rather intriguing why Freud should be so harsh upon human wishing; wishing is perfectly human. In itself it creates neither illusions nor delusions. It need not be a symptom of either neurosis or psychosis. Indeed, it is the normal power behind any human act of hoping, loving and aspiring, without which there hardly is a meaningful and purposeful human life.

From all these, it now follows that Freud has based his understanding of religion, not on the integral human nature, but exclusively on the mental make-up. Here, too, the mental make-up is seen as a repository of the past unpleasant experiences, which are mostly of the nature of sexual frustrations. Such a mental make-up is not only too

narrow and negative, because human beings have needs, more basic and deeper than Freud failed to take note of, but also because it fails to do justice to the integral human nature. It is, I am afraid, not only bad psychology but also bad philosophical anthropology. Hence, it is quite possible to turn tables on Freud, and ask questions that he feared most, from the perspective of psychoanalysis itself: Is it not symptomatic of neurosis to cry wolf at human nature, merely because it is said to admit sexual ~~practi-~~^{prohibitions?} ~~ti-~~ties. It is also possible to ask Freud questions from the perspective of integral human nature: How does Freud evaluate one thought to be superior to another, or one feeling to be inferior to another? One may entertain the idea that life is an interminable chain of sorrows; another may entertain the idea that all suffering will meaningfully terminate. Philosophically speaking either attitude is practised. One may entertain the feeling that all dying is unto nothingness. Another may entertain the feeling that all dying is unto a fulness. Philosophically speaking, either feeling is exhibited. It is not possible to prove either the superiority or the inferiority of one or the other. Freud has failed to take note of the most important truth of life, that life is a matter of attitudes, in giving us his rather inadequate understanding of human psyche.

My defence of human wish, even the one for God and eternal life, must not be misunderstood here for a proof for God's existence or an eschatology. It is not intended to be a trajectory in the armoury of the believer. All that I want to suggest is that the Freudian psychology of human wish does not prove the non-existence of god either; nor does it ever prove that religion is an infantile neurosis. Further, a suggestion is made that there can be a correspondence between human desire and an objective reality. The object of wish may correspond ontologically, in spite of convictions of the majority to the contrary. This is the rock against which all projective theories, Feuerbachian *and* Freudian alike, may flounder. Hence Freud's belief, that the child's bliss or frustration ^{at its mother's breast} determines its unconscious, may be psychoanalytically extended to state that it also determines its consciousness. Likewise, it can be argued that a transcendental reality, lying in the future, can determine one's unconscious as well as the conscious; that it serves as the springboard for one's hoping, aspiring, believing and, above all, loving —, in short, for one's life; and that this reality corresponds with the oldest, the strongest, the noblest and the most urgent wishes of mankind. Therefore, the human wishes need not be the wishes

of the neurotics. They can be the wishes of mature, normal, adult human being as well. To be sure, there can be psychological explanation of the religious belief, but we ought not^{to} forget that it can only be an explanation, without being exhaustive in terms of the totality of life.

Now, let me turn to the second point. Freud sincerely believed that science, and not religion, is the liberator of mankind; that religion is less real than science; that human happiness lies most, not in the practice of religion, but of science and technology; that religion ultimately, and inevitably too, gives place to science. Such an attitude of Freud is made explicable to us by his unbounded faith in the nineteenth century scientism. But, the kind of faith in scientism practised by Freud has itself now become outdated and suspect. Freud's rosy optimism has shattered from every side, in spite of mind-boggling scientific discoveries and technological inventions, scarcely imagined by Freud. We must take note here that Freud's answers tended to be narrowly scientific, but his questions were genuinely metaphysical.

The scientific euphoria of the nineteenth century is, to some extent, understandable, since many of the theoretical

scientific discoveries opened up the possibilities for spectacular scientific progress. Indeed some of this progress was witnessed by Freud at a pace scarcely anticipated by him. But this scientific euphoria has, in our times, largely cooled down in scientifically advanced countries, although it still holds its sway in developing countries like India. What has struck the post-modern man is the inability of science to introduce wisdom into our world. Freud's belief, that religion is less real than science, has failed to carry conviction with us. Neither the Feuerbachian anthropology nor the Marxian political economy nor the Freudian psychoanalysis has succeeded in dislodging the god of religion or abolishing religion. Freudian optimism and scientism has not been successful in installing science as the new deity of modern man and establish the dogma of scientism. Indeed, to many men, today, known for their intellectual integrity, belief in God and religion has acquired new dimensions. They are reluctant to accept that every progress in science is by its very fact a cancellation of religion. Nor do they accept that science and religion are contradictory, as was naively believed by Freud. They are today acutely aware of the fact that the spectacular progress of science has itself landed science into a curious crisis. Even theoretical objections to a blind progress of science are not wanting.

When man has forgotten that science is an instrument of knowledge, he comes to believe in science as a world-view. Science has now given place to scientism. But this faith in scientism has acquired a dubious distinction of presenting itself as an answer to man's metaphysical complexity of being. It is not without reason that the age of Enlightenment was immediately followed in Europe by German Romanticism; the latter exhibited a profound disillusionment with the spirit of Enlightenment. Science was initially hailed as the harbinger of human happiness, but the message proclaimed did not conduce unconditionally to the humane existence. It only proved to be a mixed blessing. While it did contribute, to a limited extent, toward human happiness, it also brought, in its wake, unemployment, maldistribution of the wealth, hazardous wastes, environmental pollution, destruction of the natural resources, unbridgeable social relations, unmanageable social situations, stress and strain of modern complexity of living, and what not.

What is more, the harnessing of the power of the atom has made man also a helpless creature of his own inventions. He stands before his Frankenstein monster as his own victim. This is not an empty threat that hangs like a Democles sword on humanity, reminding man of the individual

mortality but that of his race; today, it is no more a remote possibility. For it became an actuality even before we mastered the techniques of disposing off the nuclear waste permanently. Now, at the turn of this century, we are painfully aware of the destructive power of science that can turn the human habitat into a mound of ash, that cannot support any form of life, let alone human form, for millions of years to come. Who would ever say that mankind has learned wisdom with so much of scientific knowledge and power? An unmitigated confidence, that an uninhibited rudderless progress in science will lead us to a humane existence, has shattered. Paradoxically the idol of scientism itself had to suffer its own iconoclasm. Hence, science as a world-view has failed miserably, belying the hopes and aspirations of Freud.

In the face of colossal death and destruction, staring into our eyes, made possible by science, serious thinkers are asking questions in a counter-direction. Can religion be a help in effecting a synthesis between a guided scientific progress and a meaningful humane existence? Would religion be a help towards providing us with a synthesis of just social order, sympathetic and humanistic working conditions, respect for life, dignity of human person, a harmony with nature and, above all, a concern for

human values? Freud's belief that religion will give way to science cannot be subscribed to. Indeed, if it were to be true, it should be a grave concern for man. Nor can his belief, that a religious world-view will only make man infantile, ~~can~~ be subscribed to. Indeed, if it were to bring about conditions for an abundance in human existence, not subscribing to a religious world-view may even be a grave loss to humanity. Even if one were not to accept the dichotomy of the sacred and secular, and assign these domains to religion and science respectively, religion would still contribute something that is essential to human existence. For while science would give us the knowledge of aspects of our life, religion would still be needed to knit cohesively the meaning structures that are fragmentarily obtained from the different factors of our life.

If I ever gave the impression of denigrating science, I plead for disavowing that impression. My criticism is not directed against science but scientism. I do accept science as a valid and universal tool for investigation and knowledge. What I denounce is the belief that science is the panacea for all human ills, physical or moral, as Freud naively believed. The latter is a world-view, which science by its very nature cannot be. Nor do I believe that a

criticism against science is a defence for religion. I am quite aware that many people today refuse to carve out a brazen image of the new God of science, even as they equally refuse to burn incense before the god of religion. Theirs is a tacit agnosticism, if not a militant atheism. They are committed neither to science nor to religion. Their attitude is generally one of ~~the~~ tolerance, and they treat the practice of religion as a private affair. An analysis of this privatization of religion, however, is outside the purview of my dissertation.

Finally, with extreme caution and a certain sense of diffidence, it may be asked, if in the Freudian reflections on religion there is not an element of repressed religiosity. The enterprise seems, to some extent, warranted, since to me it appears that his atheism is largely autobiographic; at any rate it is not entirely derived from psychoanalysis. I do not ask my question with a view to administer Freud a dose of his own medicine. For me, as a student of philosophy, the enterprise appears necessitated, since Freud's own rich, but hidden, life has a bearing on his reflections, that scholars often tend to forget. Even psychologists have paid little attention to this aspect of his thought. Moreover, the enterprise would also be an acknowledgement

of the invaluable tool that Freud has provided us with. Nonetheless, my attempt is only a suggestion towards such a study rather than a detailed enquiry ~~th~~^ereat.

It may be conceded to Freud that one's sexuality can be repressed. But, is only sexuality repressed? How about one's fears and anxieties, hopes and aspirations, concerns with the future and the unknown —, in short, one's concern with the search for meaning in life? There are religionists who would identify man's search for meaning in life with 'religiosity'? Is it this kind of religiosity that Freud was repressing under the facade of a hectic and busy academic activity? Such elements are perceptible in his diaries, even if one can discount their interpretations by his biographers. It is not unlikely that Freud has endeavoured to repress his religiosity, and allowed the free play of his fixations and prejudices. It is not without reason that Freud felt compelled to devote all his energies for the study of religion towards the end of his career.

It is not the case that Freud was not exposed to religious education in his childhood, as I have already shown. Even as a child he was very much perplexed with the riddle of human existence, and he often reflected upon the solutions which religion claimed to have offered. Religion,

Freud is quick to acknowledge, is a complex phenomena. As an adult, he hoped secretly that psychology would provide him with an answer to all his religio-philosophical problems which were constantly surging in his mind. He even admits that due to some strange reason he was 'ruthlessly checking them' and that he 'became a therapist against his will'. Thus, the problems of religion remained suppressed deep within him. Over the years they did not die down, but only gained an unusually powerful momentum. They suddenly erupted towards the end of his life. Thereafter he devoted all his time for the study of religion. All the works of his mature ~~old~~ ^{old} age were his reflections on religion. His therapeutical works of earlier years appeared to him a sort of detour. It is in the fitness of things that he begun his literary career with an anonymous essay on the Moses sculpture by Michaelangelo, and he now ended it up with a bold reconstruction of the myth of Moses. During the intervening period, his fascination for Moses, the greatest prophet of his religion, had, secretly, but steadily, grown, at times verging onto a fixation.

A word about his personal morality must be said here, since morality is so very closely associated with one's religious beliefs and practices. It is true that Freud was not a practising Jew, in the sense of observing all the

religious practices of his religion. But, neither he nor his father ever entertained the thought of crossing over to the Christian faith. Freud, if anything, was hostile to Christianity, at least secretly, although it cannot be said that he was unusually sympathetic to his own religion. But, when it came to personal morality, it was the Mosaic decalogue that was at its root. The influence of Moses on his life was more than what he would consciously admit. However, in the practice of Mosaic morality, he wished away Judaic religion therein. He was a strict moralist, and by no means a libertine, as some have thought. He even sought to provide morality with a rational basis from the perspective of social psychology. He did not advocate any 'ethics of instinct', contrary to the common belief of some psychologists. The philosopher of libido was not a libertine, but was a happily married husband and a loving father, although he abstained from sex after his fortieth year, — at once an expression of an unconscious hatred towards his father who, at that age, married a second time. Further, he also believed that the growth of civilization depended, to some extent, on the renunciation of one's instinctual life and also on the subjugation of the 'infantile pleasure principle' to 'the reality principle'. From this too, it can be

suggested that Freud's reflections on the nature of religion are not consistent with the type of morality that he practised. All these only suggest that Freud did suppress his religiosity.

Finally, I would like to end this critique by drawing one's attention to a paradox in his life. To be sure, Freud was a successful academician and a scholar; though, initially, he was not accepted as a doctor, fame came his way, once he had established himself as a pioneer in psychoanalysis and a celebrity in depth psychology. So successful, especially in the eyes of his biographers, Freud was much preoccupied with death. It would appear that a philosopher, who spoke so much of libido, love and life, would have little concern with death. But, there was in his personal life neither a link nor a smooth passage from life to death. He had developed a horror for death. He had admitted that dying is 'a very difficult task'. Here, too, he was trying not to entertain the thought of death; much less would he see the significance of death in the integral life. Yet, he was constantly living death. It was tragic that cancer had eaten into his palate and, in the sixteen years of his sickness, he had undergone not less than thirty operations. Such a sickness could turn a man either a believer or a

non-believer uncompromisingly. Freud was in a sense both, and yet, neither. He constantly struggled against construing meaning to the inevitable fact of death. Death seemed to be a profound futility to human existence, yet he refused to accept it consciously. Therefore, he could speak of human existence only in terms of eros, suppressing at the same time thanatos. But we cannot forget that it was Freud who gave us these two principles as the constituent instincts of human life.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

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In concluding my study on Freud's views on religion, I would like to highlight the inestimable value of Freud's reflections on the origin and nature of religion. In doing this, if it should ever appear that I occasionally probe also into the critique that I myself presented in the previous chapters, it is simply because I am impelled by the spirit of philosophy that calls for a restless mind in the area of ideas.

The main thrust of my critique has been to establish that Freud's criticism of religion is not only not established, but that it leaves much that calls for modification. It however does not mean that Freud has contributed nothing to philosophy of religion. On the contrary, his reflections have a perennial significance in the philosophy of religion in the form of a warning to all forms of belief in God, especially in its Judeo-Christian form. Secondly, his probing into the depths of the unconscious in its dynamic reality must not be ignored by anyone who is serious about religion, god and belief in god. It is in this context that his psychoanalytical theory of religion becomes a theory of paramount importance. Whatever modifications that

he was forced to make within his psychoanalysis under the impact of empirical and conceptual methods, one thing he comes to establish rather authoritatively: all human activity, individual or corporate, therefore, all religious activity pre-eminently, stems from that unconscious region of the psyche that lie beyond our conscious control and direct observation. Hence, a philosophy of religion cannot ignore his theory of the unconscious.

What I now discuss in this chapter are the implications of the above statements.

Scholars have generally taken note of the fact that Freud's reflections on religion distanced in the past, and continue to distance even now, a great many people from religion. But what they have missed in their observation is their therapeutic and cathartic value to the faith of the many more believers. We cannot but recognize in them, in spite of Freud's own professed atheism, a call for honesty in dealing with religion. Philosophers, in particular, have tended to stretch their language about god and religion to such an extent that it loses its original meaning. They are not free from a certain intellectual misdemeanour. They create their own abstractions and baptize them as gods. The believers themselves, on the other hand, tend to revere a

sense of inadequacy and impotency before the universe as being specifically religious. It is against these theoreticians and practitioners alike of religion that Freud takes a cudgel.

Freud is then in his own right a philosopher of religion, demanding a critical rationality in our concerns with religion. I have already pointed out that belief in science, in the sense of absolutized reason, is highly suspect. Such belief can be questioned, and Freud too can rightly be questioned, after Paschal. But, Freud's merit consists in equally questioning scepticism in science, in the sense of absolutized faith, after Descartes. Such belief can be questioned, and, Paschal, Kierkegaard, Jensenists and Barth, to name but a few, too can be questioned, after Freud. History of philosophy has been a witness to the story that, time and again, in order to revalue faith, science has been devalued. Christian philosophers have been at times guilty of disvaluing certain conclusions of reason to revalue faith, whereas Christian faith does not demand this form of hostility to reason. In short, to be a believer in God, one need not cease to be either a philosopher or a scientist. The attitude of overwhelming reason to recover faith is not religious, much less Christian. Freudian critique can be used as a corrective against some of the above

attitudes of the philosophers and believers, especially in their attitudes of certain forms of Biblicalism and traditionalism, that tend to make of Christian revelation a source of irrefutable truth and certainty.

We can think of several attitudes towards the relation between religion and science. There can be a polemical and hostile opposition; there can be an agreement to differ and, yet, permit mutual co-existence. Both these attitudes are negative. There can also be positive attitude: thus, there can be a critical and dialogical dialectical cooperation. Faith and reason, religion and science, theology and philosophy need not be seen as warring forces in hostile camps, but as making for a healthy dialectics in our struggle to understand human life and reality. If we are to benefit from Descartes, and the tradition that he represents, for a theory of knowledge, we can entertain, in regard to religion, a critical rationality without any ideological rationalism. If so, Freudian critique of religion may be acknowledged, to an extent though, as a legitimate method in doing philosophy of religion.

During Freud's time in the Continent, an unquestioned religious dogma, primarily Christian, that one believes because of absurdity, seemed to have prevailed. We should

know that the implication of such a dogma is that religious doctrines are beyond reason; that the claims of reason are inapplicable to religious truths. Freud may be said to ask his contemporary Christian, if all absurdities are to be believed; if not all of them, why should he believe the absurdity that has a religious garb. If one were to argue that the truths of religion are not ^{rationally} understood, but perceived from within, the truths of religion may be said to depend on the private, personal experience of a few. But, how can what has been perceived interiorly by a few become normative for all? On the contrary, should we not depend on critical rationality, to which virtually everyone can be called upon, in virtue of his rational endowment? Freud reminds us that 'faith on account of absurdity' must be considered as an authoritative norm that ought not to have any binding force.¹ The philosopher in Freud is then attacking the possible groundlessness of the religious doctrines. He says that we subscribe to these truths, for a whole lot of practical reasons, as if they are true, even when we know that they cannot be so. One such reason is the maintenance of human society. He is only concerned about the man, who does not believe in such a philosophical attitude of 'as if' truths, therefore, who can easily dispose off religion.

1. Sigmund Freud. Future of an Illusion, p. 28.

Philosophers and social scientists today accept the relative merit of both Feuerbach and Marx to religion. In the same vein, we have to acknowledge the contribution of Freud too. What Feuerbach achieves from the philosophical standpoint, and Marx from sociopolitical standpoint, Freud achieves from the psychological standpoint. They all plead, and here Freud's appeal is direct, for a greater humanity for man; they all plead for a comprehensive liberation of man. To what extent they have succeeded is debatable, but this concern however is a typically, I may be excused here, 'religious'. Freud, in particular, is opposed to a blind submission, and slavery of man to any authority and oppression by religion, Church and even 'God', whatever we mean by these terms. Some of the meanings prevalent in Freud's Christian Europe hardly redounded to the glories of religion. Hence his critique may be viewed as an attack on the defective forms of religion, especially Christianity of his times. A modern Christian cannot but accept this criticism without a sense of self-appraisal and honest admission.

In the spirit of honesty and self appraisal, a believer may have to take seriously a few of the Freudian correctives.

Firstly, Freud's insistence on 'training to reality principle' must not be forgotten. When religion is explicated purely and exclusively with reference to das ganz Andere, it often loses contact with reality. Who would then grudge conceding to Freud that religion often becomes an infantile commitment to a superego, that is as good as a tyrant? That god can then be a displacement substitute? Secondly, an infantile commitment to superego makes of religion an institution for wish-fulfilments; it has become an institution for the satisfaction of human needs. The concern of its intrinsic truth is pushed under the carpet. Who can then grudge conceding to Freud that religion now is a return to infantile structures, a regression to childish wishing? Thirdly, once religion has become a rigid fidelity to a written word and to a legalistic, more often a casuistic, conscience, it becomes an omnibus of obsessive, pedantic, empty and petty repetitions of prayers, incantations and rituals. Religious ideas now acquire the power of delusions; their observances assume the place of substitute satisfactions. Being pointless, meaningless and motiveless, they became defensive and protective measures brought about by fear, guilt, frustrations and temptations. They now may be said to spring from

the depth of the unconscious. Who would then grudge conceding to Freud that religion has now a parallelism with obsessional neurosis? One needs only remember the ablutomania of lady Macbeth, in a different context though:

Freud's critique of religion is also directed against the hostile attitude of the church against progress and science. Some of his own childhood negative experiences of the Christian religion and the church may have made him to direct his attack against the arrogance and the misuse of power by the church. The church ruled over the souls, over the human spirit, in the name of God. Freud thought that the Church exploited the poor with the fear of sin and submission to the taboos untested. It also exhibited certain disvaluations of sexuality and women. Küng, in one of his works², draws our attention to a host of ecclesiogenic neuroses brought about by an ecclesiastical system. History is replete with the facts of intolerance against the deviationists, inquisitions, crusades, hammering of the heretics, burning of the witches, recantation of the scientists, anathemas against scientific, philosophical and even theological researches. Freud perhaps wants to remind his contemporaries, especially the intellectual world, that the

2. Hans Küng. On Being a Christian, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976).

church acted for centuries as a tyrannical superego, arrogating to itself the powers of God.

Freud's critique is directed not only against this traditional image of the church but also against the traditional image of god himself. He calls ~~over~~^{our} attention to the many ways of the idolizing capacities of human mind; often the believers and the unbelievers alike are ignorant of these capacities. Freud believes that within the patriarchally dominated Christian culture of Europe, the image of god is formed, not so much by an original insight and free decisions, as by the image of a father, either kind or vindictive, at an early stage of our development. Although it may be argued against Freud that he conceives of the father image as necessarily vindictive and jealous (there may be here a personal contour, as I have shown earlier), his insight, that our image of god is formed in many ways, cannot be easily dismissed. A philosopher of religion cannot but take it seriously.

Irrespective of god being imaged as father or mother, our childhood experiences with adults do make for the transference of positive or negative qualities to our god. I would extend Freud's argument from his Christian culture to

any other culture to contend that the images of god-mother, Mother of God, Mother-Church, god-the-child, god- the spouse etc. are as valid and authentic as god the Father. The experiences as such, referred to, may be forgotten or even repressed, but they do contribute to the process of imaging God. In the process of education and discipline, parents may have unwittingly given to the child the image of a disciplined and vindictive father god. This can have in later life a substantial impact on the religious belief of the child. It is precisely here that I am inclined to believe that, although the Oedipus complex cannot explicate the origin of religion, his belief that religion is associated with sexuality, may have some truth. This is so because often religious conflicts are fixations on the experiences of the family set-up in one's childhood.

I now turn to the second point that I raised in the beginning of this chapter viz. the contribution of Freud to the study of religion by way of his in-depth probing of the dynamics of the human psyche, or the unconscious.

It is interesting to note that religionists today, both the theoreticians and the practitioners, accept the legitimacy and the validity of psychoanalysis as an effective, nay more, a potent, instrument of religious

knowledge. This should make some difference to Freud's critique of religion. For it is at once an acknowledgement of the inestimable value of the tools that Freud has provided us with for any scientific and philosophical investigation. The religionists unhesitatingly accept psychoanalysis as a critical authority, to which philosophical statements have to give an account of themselves. This at once suggests that the philosophers of religion do use psychoanalysis to clarify the content of faith, the meaning of such religious categories as sin, guilt, justification, forgiveness, god, corporality and sexuality. There are then meeting points between Freud's Critique of religion and religion itself.

Freud wanted man to be master of himself, when he spoke of man's integral liberation. He wanted man to be aware of himself, to learn to control his instincts, to understand the burden of his history, to negotiate with his sense of sin and guilt. Implicit in his appeal for the education for reality principle is an ethical appeal. In so far as religion has always concerned itself with such an integral liberation of man, Freud's ethical appeal corresponds with the appeal of the religions. Even Christianity that is the target of his attack is no exception here. Unwittingly Freud appeals to the humane intentions

of Christian faith, when he asks that man must be considered as a psychological reality, a free, mature, realistic and assured person; that he has to learn to accept himself, to come to terms with his past, to look for the causes of his failures and the sense of guilt, and to master them. Therefore, psychoanalysis and religion, instead of being in the warring camps, can really cooperate and work for a common, human cause.

Before I bring out this cooperation, I have to insert a caveat: It is this that there are limitations to psychoanalysis in the case of religion. Religion will not permit the reduction of the reality of man to a mere psychological unit, which Freud actually did. Ricoeur calls his attempt 'a reductionistic hermeneutic'.³ In his opinion, to a Christian, psychoanalysis can liberate man from his socio-psychological inadequacies but not from sin. Other Christian thinkers would add to this that psychoanalysis can cure man's psycho-somatic illness, but it cannot be an answer to the ultimate questions of meaning and meaninglessness, life and death; that it can bring man to consciousness but not to forgiveness; that it can heal but not save. These reservations are not entirely meaningless,

3. Paul Ricoeur, "Atheism of Freudian Psychoanalysis", Concilium, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 31.

when we pay a closer attention to the life of the father of psychoanalysis (as well as great public figures) than it has so far received in the hands of scholars. The ultimate questions should admit answer not only to the sick but also to the sane. The problems of neurosis are problems of life that loom larger than its psychological framework. Freud's own psychoanalysis was concerned with neurosis, rather narrowly and retrogressively. Today, the psychoanalysis, that concerns itself with neurosis prospectively and hopefully, and thus views man as a forward looking being, a project, a centre of freedom and consciousness, has invariably brought this to our notice, that the questions of meaning of life, suffering and death are encountered in the treatment of neurosis. Psychotherapists will be open to these questions, only if they are prepared to go beyond the limits of their science, and to appeal to ~~some~~ sort of faith, religious or non-religious.

Coming back to the cooperation and the complementarity between psychoanalysis and religion, we have to begin acknowledging Freud's genius, however one-sided his views may be. But, this one-sidedness too must not be ignored. In his critique of religion, and in his espousal of the merit of psychoanalysis, there are exaggerated views

to say nothing of the historically false views. Some of his views are of personal import; some of his views are dogmatic in nature; some he is even unwilling to correct, despite their apparent contradictions. Yet, there are positive claims in his critique, which religion can fruitfully incorporate and use them for a cathartic purport.

In the first place, it is usually objected against Freud that he has given a psychological universality to sexuality: Freud has stretched the concept of libido indiscriminately and mechanically to all expressions of sexuality, varieties of kindly feeling, sympathy, friendship, and to religiosity as well. Sexuality seems to be ubiquitous in his critique. But there are other instinctual and personal factors, besides those of sexuality. To be sure, in a child's sucking, eating, and kicking up its limbs, there are feelings of pleasure, but they are hardly sexual in nature. To be sure, in a dream, one may perceive sexual symbolisms, but this is so, only if they are projected against a sexual background. Otherwise dreams may present such ordinary materials of problems carried over from a work-a-day world. It is wrong to think that all that is forgotten is also what is repressed. In short, not all slips are Freudian. Behind them, we should remind

ourselves, are not ~~e~~xclusive sexual wishes, but a broad spectrum of emotions, affections, moods, sensations, instincts and images, that defy the Freudian systematic analysis and interpretation. In principle, one can distinguish between love and sexuality, even as a distinction between personal charm and sexual charm can be made. There is a limit to the transference of theories from natural science, physiology and brain mechanism to all mental happenings; all mental happenings cannot be explained in terms of ^emore reflex machinery. The transference comes to a dead end, where specifically human needs begin to manifest themselves. They clearly transcend the physiologically programmed instincts.

The above objection has its validity. Nonetheless, the positive claims of psycho-analysis must not be overlooked by religion. Man in his conscious life, his religiosity included, even when it is consciously practised, is determined by the unconscious. Within the unconscious lay buried powerful psychological factors, among which sexuality has a role, that man can scarcely afford to ignore. It goes without saying that the disturbed sexuality is the cause of many a neurosis. What is more, many a neurosis can find a religious expression in the form of

pathological scrupulosity, aggressiveness, fanaticism, sanctimoniousness, and what not. It is in the interest of religion, if sexuality can be properly integrated into personality structures, if it were not to acquire virulence of its own.

Secondly, it is also argued against Freud that he gave undue importance to the experiential and the environmental factors in early childhood. His critics are sceptic of the exclusive significance, that Freud gives to sexually determined childhood traumata. They argue that Freud is wrong in absolutizing childhood traumatizations and aberrations. In contrast to these, there are conflicts of puberty and adulthood, which are often of greater significance. This is more so, because the early childhood interests are not oriented to any immediate sexual goal. Unlike, these, the adult interests are here qualitatively different. Even if we admit the validity of dreams, they do not solely go back to childhood experiences; rather they process the current happenings.

This objection too has some truth in it. Yet, here too, we must not miss the positive claims of Freud: Instinctual wishes and conflicts from early childhood do have a bearing on a person's thinking, feeling, willing and

acting. This is in a special way applicable to his religious attitudes. This however does not preclude any later repressions by way of conscience, environment and authority. It cannot be easily brushed aside, that the decisive problems of life as a whole often go back to the unprocessed events of early childhood, despite the person not being aware of them.

Thirdly, it is argued against Freud that repression of sexuality alone is not the producer of conflicts in man. There can be non-sexual causes which bring about neurotic disorders in a normally functioning sexual life. Nay, more, even psychoanalytic treatment may have negative consequences in the form of insecurity in instinctual behaviour, unresolved transferences, dogmatic rigidity, relativization of values and so on. The force of the argument here is that the Freudian therapy is not the only possible method of mastering mental conflicts. What is more, some religious thinkers even think that the Freudian therapy is not the only possible method of mastering mental conflicts. What is more, some religious thinkers even think that the Freudian therapy is analytical and dissecting, whereas what is required for the patient, in the process of self-discovery and integration of the

personality into society, is a synthetic, integrative and intuitive approach. Hence, they decry about Freud's retrogressive, or the backward-looking approach, and recommend a prospective and forward-looking orientation, which, in their opinion, religion is capable of providing man with.

But, for all the elements of truth in the objections raised above, there are insights in Freud's thesis that we are forced to concede. We cannot but admit that an all round growth of human personality has to take into consideration a proper education in matters of human sexuality. This is especially true about man's moral development. The Socratic 'know thyself' can be an agenda for the reconstruction of one's personality; the integration of human sexuality into human personality cannot be left out from the self-knowledge. Nor can we leave out the conflicts that arise from a compromise between the conscious and the unconscious. The unconscious impulses may be rejected impulses, or disguised impulses, or even half-accepted instinctual wishes. Some of them could very well be sexual in their origin. The patient may adopt anyone of the following resolutions, he may learn to satisfy the repressed wishes; if this is not possible, he may learn to sublimate

them; if this too is not possible, he may learn to forego their satisfaction, but now on a conscious level. But, in everyone of these cases, the unconscious is brought to the conscious, so that one accepts willfully and responsibly whatever one is and does. This is the only way for the disappearance of illness and the fuller development of the vital energies of personality. But, neither psychoanalysis nor religion, that aims at a cure, can afford to ignore the agenda of self knowledge, so insightfully given by Socrates.

Finally, it may be argued against Freud that in his critique of religion, he depended heavily on the Oedipus Complex, whereas neither the ethnologists nor the clinical psychologists have ever really encountered it. The latter, in particular, opine that the incestuous relations with the parents is not a normal occurrence. Neuroses are not produced so much by child's pleasure-seeking as by the adverse conditions of insecurity, helplessness and defencelessness against life's vicissitudes. Besides, psychologist's point out that sexual conflicts are not so much causes as the effects of neurotic constitutions. It is therefore held against Freud that he made Oedipus complex a dogma of his psychoanalysis, and imposed it arbitrarily on all his observations of religious and psychological facts.

The critics of Freud here are surely in a stronger position. It is true that Freud made of the Oedipus Complex a dogma. But, here too, we must not miss the positive import of his thesis that focus on a great deal of material associated with human conflicts. Feelings of affections and animosities towards people, with whom the child enters into relationships, is of fundamental importance in human life. Needless to say, the role of parents with whom the child enters into the earliest relations are of paramount importance in the early stage of child's life. If so, the total abandonment of the Oedipus Complex may be an irreparable loss to us. I am of the opinion that it needs to be intelligently reinterpreted. May be that a demythologization of it will contribute something precious to our understanding of human conflicts. If so, religions have something here to learn from Freud.

Why do I use a term, 'demythologization', from the history of religions, although the term is actually coined by theologians? It is because, in its classical application by Freud, the Oedipus Complex has become a psychological myth; in its literal sense, religious thinkers do not take it any more seriously than the myth of creation in the Bible. Nonetheless, it has a positive claim, for the loss

of which they would be all the poorer. Hence we suggest here the process of divesting it of its mythical character.

Following closely on Freud's Three Essays On The Theory of Sexuality,⁴ the psychologists have studied carefully, what they call, 'the emergence of the first objective relationships' both by way of reconstruction (through analysis) and observation. What are the features of the emergence of the first objective relationships? To the child, the first objective relationship with the mother is of paramount importance. The mother initially constitutes its whole and sole relation, because she is its total environment. The first year of its existence is, to the infant, a life of total union, a 'symbiosis', with the mother; it is a relation of 'closed system', so to say. Gradually, there appears the formation of a second objective relation with the father; this too is of great importance. For the original 'symbiotic' relation with the mother is to expand into a tripolar parent-child relation. The closed system of mother-child has to open up to make room for a third person. The one-to-one symbiotic relation of mother-child has to open up into a relationship of community. Precisely at this stage, competition and conflicts become

⁴. Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on Sexuality, James Stratchey, Ed. (London: Hogarth Press, 1973).

inevitable. Call this tripartite, ~~an~~ community relation, if you so wish, by Oedipus complex, or by any other name at your sweet pleasure, but you cannot ignore the existence of the essential objective contents of the process of multi-relatedness in the life of the child. Psychologists believe that what now takes place in the life of the child, roughly between the second and the sixth year, contributes decisively to the character formation of the child. The foundations of the later modes of feeling, thinking, willing and acting are laid here. Therefore, if this Oedipal phase is not properly mastered, seeds of later neuroses are already sown here. In this way, Oedipus Complex, once demythologized, may be a help to understand our modes of relating ourselves to others, therefore, to our religious attitudes, in a special way.

I have discussed so far how Freudian critique, for all its being rejected by me earlier, may have within itself certain elements of positive claims, and may have a therapeutic value to religions. I now would like to explore, very sketchily though, if religion too has something to contribute to psychoanalysis. It is only a tentative exploration, that perhaps would give me some directions to further research in the coming years. I hope to show now

the contribution of religion to psychoanalysis by placing the Freudian critique, very selectively though, vis-a-vis those of Jung, Fromm, Frankl and Erikson.

Freud, speaking of the function of religion, considers religion to be the cause of neurosis, to begin with, but, at a later stage, is itself the neurosis substitute. But, Jung presents ~~as~~ an exactly opposite picture. For Jung, religion is the cure of neuroses; he would even consider that it is the lack of religion that causes neuroses. He argues that a decline of religious outlook on life has increased man's neuroses. Most of his patients in their middle age were looking for a religious outlook in life; earlier, they all had lost what the traditional religion had to offer to them. Their cure, to a large extent, consisted in helping them to regain the religious outlook, in life; earlier, they all had lost what the traditional religion had to offer to them. Their cure, to a large extent, consisted in helping them to regain the religious outlook, irrespective of the particular creed and the church.

Jung observed, as against Freud, that in the cure of neurosis, there is more than the organization of instincts. There is rather the question of meaning of life,

hidden. Neurosis results in one, who has only sexuality but not love; who has no faith because one is afraid to grope in the dark; who has no hope because one is totally disillusioned in the world. In short, one has no understanding of life because one fails to read meaning in life. Jung recognizes in these, and similar human predicaments, problems that cannot be traced back to mere repressed sexuality. He does not deny the disturbed instincts, but the complex overrides the instinctual sphere; indeed the instinctual sphere may even be only of secondary importance. Hence, Jung did not treat the religious problems of his patients as illusory, but as authentic. Hence Jung thought that it is of paramount importance that man learns to accept himself, with all the darker aspects of the irrational, meaningless and evil elements. But, it is not sufficient that the darker aspects be brought to the conscious through psychoanalysis. It is here that Jung wants to take us beyond psychoanalysis to religion.

He thinks that Freud has failed to take note of the fact, that man cannot, single handed, overcome the powers of darkness. He stands in need of the spiritual help offered by the traditional religions. He is helped in his suffering, not merely by his thoughts of himself, but by

the superhuman and the revealed truth. Hence the contribution of religion to psycho-analysis cannot be played down.

Erich Fromm goes even further than Jung. Going against both Freud and Jung, he refuses to view man merely abstractly in the inner workings of the mind, for man is not merely psychological. Rather man should be viewed, he avers, in his essential relatedness with the world. Fromm is more influenced by Adler; Heidegger was not new to this trend of thought. Man should be seen in his socio-psychological setting, as young Marx also would plead. Man's passions are not derived merely from his biology, or a pre-existing complex of instincts. They are rather formed socio-biologically from the setting of a host of relationships of human needs to his environment. Hence, social and cultural conditioning of man must be taken into account.

Even the psycho-analysts are not an exception to the social and cultural conditioning. Their thinking and feeling are affected by their Weltanschauung and the system of values that they subscribe to. Going along with this process of relating themselves to the world, we can think of some psychoanalysts as 'adjustment advisors'. Their goal of psychoanalysis is an adjustment of the personality with the existing structures of the world. Some

psychoanalysts however, are basically 'doctors of souls'; they aim at the cure of souls. They aim at the fuller development of the person's potentialities, individuality, moral and intellectual integrity. In their approach, there is a positive affirmation of life and love. To Fromm, the contribution of religion is felt in this second approach.

Fromm thinks that, in so far as psychoanalysis is concerned with the human and individual integrity, it is not opposed to the goals of any 'humanitarian religion'. To him, a humanitarian religion need not be any supernatural religion, indeed, it need not go beyond 'this worldliness'. At the same time Fromm is emphatic in pointing out that the humanitarian religion is not what Freud thought it to be, namely, an authoritarian conscience, a superego. He thinks that both psychoanalysis and genuine religion are concerned with the knowledge of truth, freedom and independence of man, man's capacity for love; the knowledge of social conditions, in which his capacity can grow and actualize; and the knowledge of the difference between good and evil, and also of the capacity to listen to one's conscience.

Religious attitude, to Fromm, is an attitude of wonder and rapture, and of becoming one with the dictates of conscience. There is something of this attitude in

psychoanalysis, too, in so far as the latter aims at breaking the barriers of conscious ego and establish contact with the unconscious, which, however, must not be understood either in the Freudian sense of a repressed and negative evil or in the Jungian sense of a source of revelation and a symbol of God. It is rather shaped individually in the system of passions. Being in contact with environment, the unconscious reacts by affirming or denying its environment. It makes for the realization, either productively or negatively, of man's need for his roots, identity, effectiveness and devotion. It contains the best and the worst, the highest and the lowest, the acceptance or the rejection of life, all possible wishes, misgivings, ideas and insights. Fromm points out that all these can be integrated with the values of religions. Hence, he sees no opposition between psychoanalysis and religion, provided the latter is genuine and humanitarian. To be sure, Fromm has nothing to clarify in regard to the concept of god, but he is not disrespectful to the profound wisdom recorded in religions.

Nor is he against the rituals of religion. Criticising Freud, who had drawn a parallel between obsessional neurotic actions and religious rituals, Fromm points out

that Freud missed an important point here. Along with the irrational rites of the repressive and obsessive character, there can also be rational rites of religion, which do not lack any meaning. Without compulsive obsession, they celebrate life and express devotion to dominant values by shared actions. Just as a greeting, a clapping for applause, reverence for the dead are secular rites, there can also be meaningful religious rites of washing, fasting, matrimony, meditation etc. All of these affirm life without being repressive. It is wrong to think that the modern man does not need them anymore. Thus, Fromm has a positive appreciation of religion, both in individual and corporate life.

But, both Jung and Fromm are concerned with the function of religion, with the experience of 'god' rather than the reality of god, existing independent of man and the world. The religious attitude to them is basically a humanitarian attitude, that affirms man and human life. The concern of the classical philosophers of religion, if god, as an objective reality, exists or not, is not theirs. Instead of denying the things and aspects of the world, one should respect attitudes of love and reason. They point out insightfully that it is not only the wood and stone

that are idolized but also, words, leaders, powers, states, political groups, science, opinions of masters etc. To many a believer even god has become an idol. Surely, there is much to the believer to learn from Jung and Frømm, in spite of their limitations. Can we make good of these limitations?

Unlike to Freud, to whom man is determined by the unconscious instinctual elements, to Viktor Frankl, the founder of logotherapy, man is determined by an unconscious spirituality. This, we may note, is a radical departure from, not only Freud but also from his modified version by Jung and Fromm. Frankl thinks that the psychotherapist, in his contacts with patients, encounters ideological and spiritual questions, which must not be ignored. What is more, they are not mere sublimations of the libido, as Freud naively believed; nor are they the impersonal expressions of the collective unconscious, the archetypes, as Jung believed. They are rather the questions of meaning in human life. While Freud neglected them arbitrarily, Jung and Adler hastily psychologized them. For growth and health in human life, a spiritual orientation is a must. Hence, Frankl argues that a cure, if sought, cannot come exclusively from psyche, it has to come from the spirit, or logos (hence his logotherapy). It

now follows that one's religiosity too must not be repressed. Hence, 'will to meaning' is the key-feature in Frankl's logotherapy. We can say that Freud's psychoanalysis has given way to Frankl's 'existential analysis', 'care for the spirit', a 'logotherapy', in his own language.

A barrage of questions can be raised against Frankl: can he prove the transcendental quality of conscience from its mere facticity? Can he prove his unconscious god to be a transhuman agent, to be of personal nature, from the mere voice of conscience? Would Frankl make any sense to the 'irreligious' man, who refuses to rise beyond conscience? Does he not move only within an immanent facticity? Does he not go to the other extreme, that is to say, where Freud sees only the instinctual, Frankl sees only the spiritual? If Freud is accused of a negative psychology, can we not accuse Frankl of doing narrowly positive psychology? Answers to these questions can be varied, but we must not forget Frankl's greatest contribution to psychology: A sense of futility is inherent in the greatest of human achievement. Futility seems then to be an integral part of human existence; it has always been with man, although it may have increased to neurotic proportions in modern culture. Precisely because of this, psychotherapy cannot

escape spiritual questions, particularly those pertaining to the meaning of life; at this stage, it cannot but confront religion.

Psychoanalysts today, even of the strictly Freudian school, have increasingly come to acknowledge the merit of Freud's critique by Jung, Fromm and Frankl. All of them emphasize on the human relatedness. This however does not mean that Freud entirely overlooked the socio-cultural conditioning of man. Freud's Vienna, or the Christian Europe for that matter, before the world war I, may be said to have practised a certain amount of hypocrisy in sexual matters; it was the age of the Victorian prudery. Repressed sexuality, often with religious sanctions, passed for religious piety, high morality and taste in culture. Freud's merit consists in subjecting the Id to an intensive analysis. Freud may rightly be said to be a philosopher of Id.

But the modern culture is the culture centred around Ego. Our contemporary society may be said to be obsessed with the concerns of ego; if so, the ego may be said to draw upon itself renewed attention, before the psychoanalysts and the religionists of today. Little wonder then that the twentieth century has placed the problem of identity at

its core. We need only to scan the strictly philosophical and the semi-philosophical literature of our times to be convinced of what we state here. I have not merely thinkers like Heidegger, Sartre, Marcel, Marcuse and Merton, in my mind, but also Erikson, Rollo May, Binswanger and others.⁵ A constant theme that runs through their writing is the emptiness that the modern man suffers from in the midst of plentifulness, and a consequent groping to lay hold on his identity. They warn us that, if man does not grow towards something, his ego becomes problematic; neurosis is then the result.

Freud's contribution to western culture consisted in psychoanalytically focussing on the repressed sexuality and prudery, by way of a critique of Christianity. What we perhaps need today is a similar attempt to lay bare the

5. H. Marcuse, Essay on Liberation, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972); Ibid., Five Lectures: Psychoanalysis, Politics and Utopia, Trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro and Sherry M. Webber, (London: The Penguin Press, 1970); Ibid., One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966). See also, Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society, 2nd rev. and enl. edn. (New York: W.W. Norton Co., 1963); Ibid., Identity: Youth and Crisis, (London: Faber & Faber, 1968). See also, Rollo May, Love and Will, (New York: The Fountain Library, 1974); Ibid., The Meaning of Anxiety, (New York: Norton, 1977); Ibid., Power and Innocence: A Search for the Source of Violence, (New York: Norton, 1972). L. Binswanger, Being in the World: Selected Papers of Ludwig Binswanger, Trans. Needleman, Jacob, (Portland: Intl. Spec. Bk. 1978).

repressed spirituality. But Freud's message is not irrelevant to modern man even today, in so far as Freud highlights, however inadequately, in his Civilization and Its Discontents, the need for a control of sexuality. It should not surprise us that the talk of controlled sexuality comes from the psychoanalyst, who opposed repression of sexuality. Our contemporary cultures, that have grown increasingly consumeristic, have exhibited a great many behaviour disorders, resultant upon the senseless comfort-seeking, self-indulgent addictions, the upshot here being the menace of drugs, that have harmed the promotion of life. The problem today does not seem to be a repression of our hedonistic faculties, but of regaining a sense, purpose and meaning in life.

Hence, I am inclined to believe that the neuroses of our times are not due so much to repressed sexuality and guilt as to the lack of orientation, norms and, above all, meaning, in life. Psychoanalysts and moral philosophers alike think that cultural values, to which people held so far to steady them in life, have collapsed, and people everywhere suffer a great deal of emotional stress. In practice, the break-down of cultural values have meant to many societies the break-down of religious convictions and

practices, which had in the past fostered man's individuation and self-discovery. Now, the break-down and the abandonment of traditional spirituality is not unfortunately replaced by a new meaningful spirituality.

Finally, is life possible psychologically without religion? It would seem possible; seemingly, Freud's own life is an instantiation. And yet, going along with Erikson's reflections, we may take note that there are people who cannot live without religion. For they derive their faith, perhaps, not from religious dogmas, but from fellowship, productive work, social action, scientific pursuits and artistic creation. This is a religious attitude. This is one way of filling the unconscious spirituality. On the contrary, there may be professed religionists but, in practice, they mistrust both life and man. What are we then to make of religion, in the face of these contravening evidences? Psychotherapists today however ungrudgingly concede that religion over the years has served to restore a sense of trust and faith in man, so essential to human life. Religions have done it, advocating a child-like surrender to a power, supposedly the dispenser of spiritual health; demonstrating man's finitude before that power; admitting evil within and around man; recognizing an inner

division in man and the need for a unification. In short, developing in the individual a sense of trust and faith that is directed to community. If one does not derive this sense from religion, he must look for it from some other source, if he is not to suffer the shipwreck of his life.

In the light of what is stated above, I will ask a final question: Was Freud without a (sense of the) religion, despite his rejection of Christianity, in principle? Way back in 1910, when love meant to him merely sexually determined love, Freud wrote that he had done a great deal for love. For Freud, here, man was nothing more than a mechanical system, driven by ego instinct and libido. This system he had built up painstakingly with Brücke and other physiologists. But, at the end of his career, Freud began increasingly to speak of the need for man to discover the non-sexual forms of love;⁶ now, to him, man became more than a machine. Man is seen as essentially related to others, driven often by the instinct of, not merely, union, but also of communion. At this stage, life and love are seen to go together, and to be more deeply rooted in man than sexuality. This aspect of his writing, I am afraid,

6. E. Fromm, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, (New York: Greenwich Connecticut, Fawcett Publications, 1973), pp. 439 ff.

is largely ignored by the psychologists, in spite of his declaration that his early academic career was a detour, as I have already pointed out. To be sure, this transformation of Freud is dissonant with the author, who wrote earlier that the Christian commandment, 'Love thy neighbour', is 'unreasonable, unpsychological and impossible to fulfil'. Freud witnessed the rise of Hitler to power in a short span of three years, and mused with Alfred Einstein, if the need for humanity was not 'love without sexual aim', as a way of opposing war. He expressly speaks of the help here that religion should give to psychoanalysis.⁷ I am inclined to believe that, what Freud admits here is what he had always practised in life. But why? He had admitted to a Harvard neurologist that he had no answer to the question.⁸ An exploration into this would at least be a pointer to the many unanswered questions.

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7. S. Freud, Why War? in Vol. 22 of the Complete works of Sigmund Freud, Trans. James Stratchey, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), p. 212.
 8. E. Jones, Life and Works of Sigmund Freud, (London: Hogarth Press, 1954), p. 465.
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