

EUROPEAN MAN ON DR. FREUD'S COUCH
(a CVSP appraisal of Freudian Man)

- *The Age of Einstein, Marx, & Freud...*
- *Facts – Theories – Method of Therapy – Philosophy of Man (our focus)*

I. FREUD: PHILOSOPHER OF HUMAN UNHAPPINESS

- A. **Three-headed monster:** Body – External world – Relations with Others (society).
- B. **Fleeing the monster:** nine ways to seek '*happiness*': **unrestricted satisfaction**; isolation, Science, intoxication, Yoga, work, illusions (Imagination, Art, Religion), being-in-love, Aesthetic attitude.
- C. **Freudian Man:** self-preservation; love of aggression; need for love; impulse to attain pleasure & avoid pain (Epicurean).
 - 1. **Id:** unconscious, libidinal, sexual, aggressive
 - 2. **Ego and Super-Ego:** derivative, survival, disciplinary
 - 3. **Happiness:** direct, unrestricted satisfaction of basic instincts; not part of "plan of Creation"; three-headed monster, **society as main enemy**
 - 4. **Blind Evolution:**
 - **structural incompatibility** of man and society
 - **nasty and sadistic: sublimation and sense-of-guilt**
 - **Civilization:** built on **human sacrifice** and **feeling guilty**
 - 5. **Guilt:** external and internal origins: **Oedipus complex** and primordial murder of the father
 - 6. **Oedipus-Prometheus:** tragic vs. rationalistic atheism; **moral indignation / victory**
 - **Freudian Man:** moral sense **not original / no victory.**

II. FREUD: DEFLATOR OF EUROPEAN "CIVILIZED" MAN

- A. **Triple blow to Self-Image :** Copernicus – Darwin – Freud.
- B. **On-the-couch :** rationalist – romantic – spiritual Man.
- C. **Analysis:**
 - 1. **Civilization a thin veneer :** progeny of frustrated parents, letting-off-steam, compensation prize, compromise, mediocrity; slave-labor, **nature-renunciation**
 - 2. **Three-fold Delusion of Grandeur:**
 - **rationalist man :** truth, beauty, goodness, in classical splendor and harmony
 - **romantic man :** rebel-creator, master morality, creativity, adventure, depth of feeling, self-fulfillment
 - **spiritual man :** joy, freedom, communion, spontaneous generosity and mercy, mutual service, delight in fulfilment of others, love of enemies.
- D. **The not-so-flattering truth: Freudian 'wisdom'**
 - 1. **avoid** being seduced by **grandiose** images of Man
 - 2. **forget** about **inherent goodness and purity**
 - 3. **you are not** the **master** of your destiny
 - 4. **your greatest achievements** are mere **palliatives**
 - 5. **[Siduri as Sage** (a pretty clever chick for someone so ancient!)]
 - 6. **"the adjustment is all"** (apologies to the **ripeness** man - Bill **Shakespeare**) .

III. APPRAISAL - DIALOGUE- FOOD FOR CVSP THOUGHT

- A. **Positive contribution: “Critique of Un-Reason”**- a powerful *corrective* to *shallow* intellectualism and *naïve* optimism; *deeper* awareness of *instinctive life*...
- B. **Debate** revolves around his “*Image of Man*”: unduly *pessimistic ethos*; no *eye* for *authentic positive aspects* of human life: *reductionist*; *partial* theories... ***
- ❖ **Example of an alternative “vision of humanity”**: *existential therapy focus on freedom, responsibility, dignity, empathy, as “true humanity”* ; *ID as merely “unachieved humanity” (reductionism of an oak tree to an acorn)*...
- *neglect of this perspective gives rise to aberrations and does not help the patient to realize full identity / freedom :*
 - *victim-mentality (society is the enemy) : academic excuse for mediocrity ; over-permissiveness: self-control is neither repression nor a necessary evil*
 - *cynicism: assumption of hidden motives /self-deception (leading to facile negativity and tortuous obfuscation, debilitating complexity); the real challenge - provide solid basis for human trust and transparency based on authentic dignity/responsibility*
 - *neglect of Reason, Will, Conscience, the Imagination as autonomous, creative powers of the Human: reductionist even in depiction of instinctual makeup (e.g. alternative theory: seven basic instinct-clusters)*
 - *over-generalization of results of his own specialization : partial theories : biased sample of the human race*
 - *inadequate analysis of the phenomenon of guilt : can be seen as the objective counterpart of human freedom, solidarity, empathy, responsibility, dignity...*
 - *a travesty of the infinitely rich human reality and experience of love*
 - *reductionist analysis of Art, Science, and Religion as mere palliatives*
 - *cavalier treatment of opponent views : the only unforgivable sin in CVSP!*
 - *self-defeating philosophy of man ; status of Freud’s views reduced to sublimation, compensation, self-deception, etc....: obvious loss of power to compel*
 - *Karl Popper and falsification*
 - *woman ...*

*** “*With few exceptions, my dear fellow humans are good-for-nothing*”