

The background is a gradient from red at the top to blue at the bottom. It features several faint, overlapping concentric circles and dashed lines. Some of these lines have numbers along them, such as 150, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, and 260. There are also small arrows pointing in different directions.

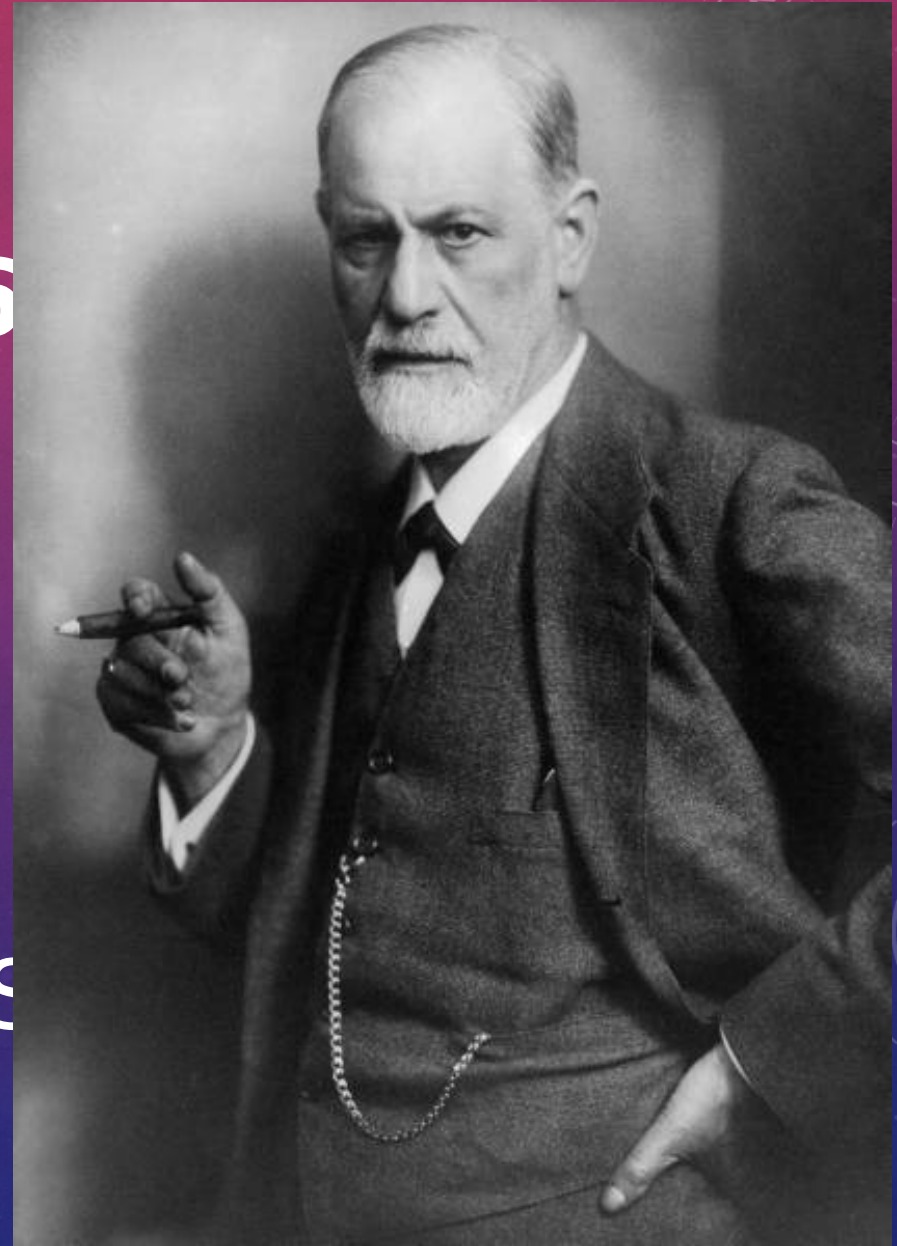
# PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE," FROMM'S *THE SANE SOCIETY*, AND RELIGION

**SIGMUND FREUD (1856**

**PSYCHIATRIST**

**PHILOSOPHER**

**FOUNDER OF PSYCHOANALYSIS**





## 3 FUNCTIONS OF RELIGION:

1) Religion satisfies our thirst for knowledge (and is therefore a rival with science).

### 3 FUNCTIONS OF RELIGION:

2) Religion “soothes the fear that men feel of the dangers and vicissitudes of life, when it assures them of a happy ending and offers them comfort in unhappiness.”



## 3 FUNCTIONS OF RELIGION:

3) Religion “issues precepts and lays down prohibitions and restrictions,” providing ethics.

# 3 FUNCTIONS OF RELIGION

Therefore, religion gives us instruction about the universe, consolation in our worries, and requirements about how we must behave.

*“Funny, sounds like what a parent does to a child...” -Freud*



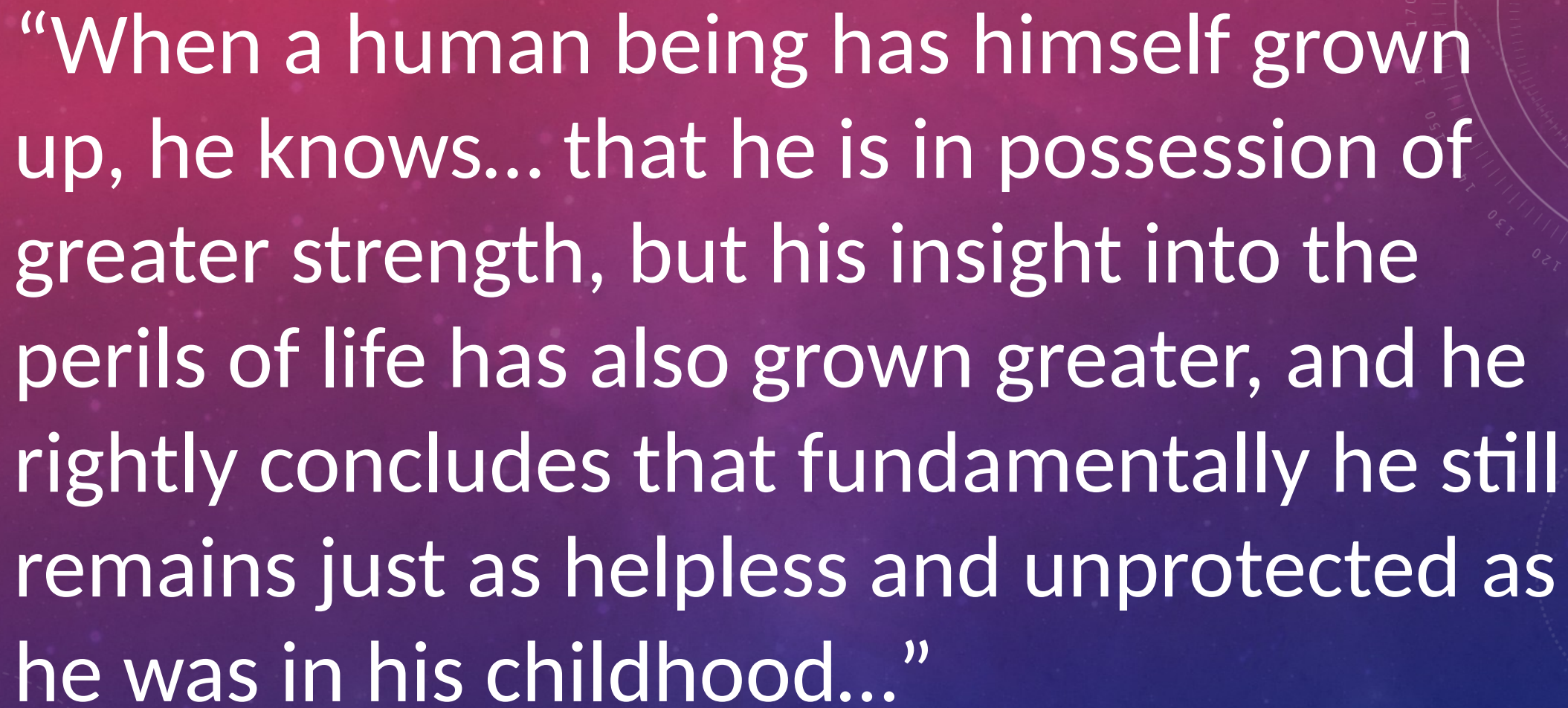
Religion generally teaches that “the universe was created by a being resembling a man, but magnified in every respect, in power, wisdom, and the strength of his passions – an idealized super-man.”

## G-D AS “FATHER”

“A religious man pictures the creation of the universe just as he pictures his own origin.”

When we were children, we looked to a father (or authority figure) to create our world for us – our metaphysics, our therapy, and our ethics. As adults, we still have those needs.





“When a human being has himself grown up, he knows... that he is in possession of greater strength, but his insight into the perils of life has also grown greater, and he rightly concludes that fundamentally he still remains just as helpless and unprotected as he was in his childhood...”

We “exalt the image [of our father] into a deity.”

The strength of this protective, fatherly image – who knows all and will make everything okay –

is very strong and sustains our belief in G-d.





“Two things inspire me to awe: the starry heavens above and the moral universe within.” –Kant

That is odd – comparing the universe with how to treat people. But this makes sense given Freudian psychology. Fathers teach us about the world *and* teach us right from wrong.

# WE SHOULD STUDY RELIGION SCIENTIFICALLY

“Religion is a human affair” and should  
“submit... to a critical examination.”

“It seems not to be the case that there is a  
Power in the universe which watches over the  
well-being of individuals with parental care.”

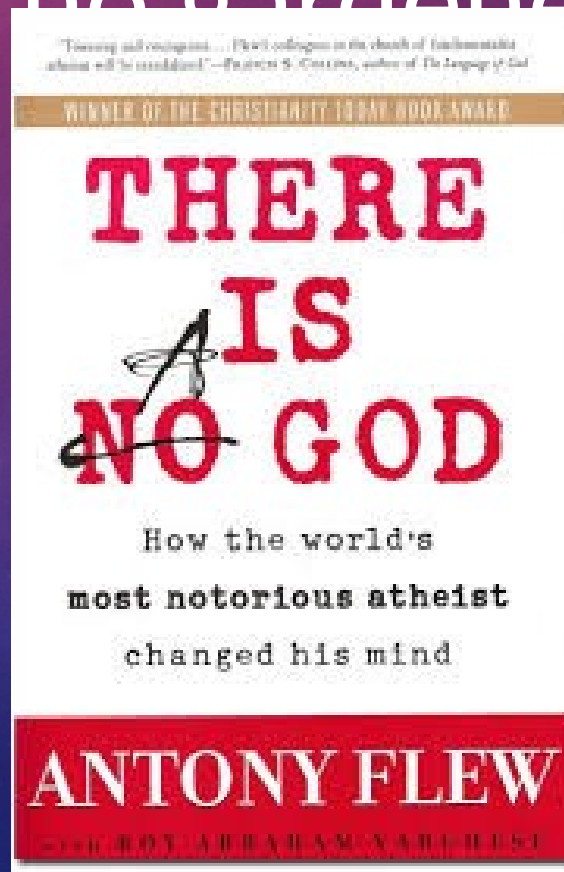
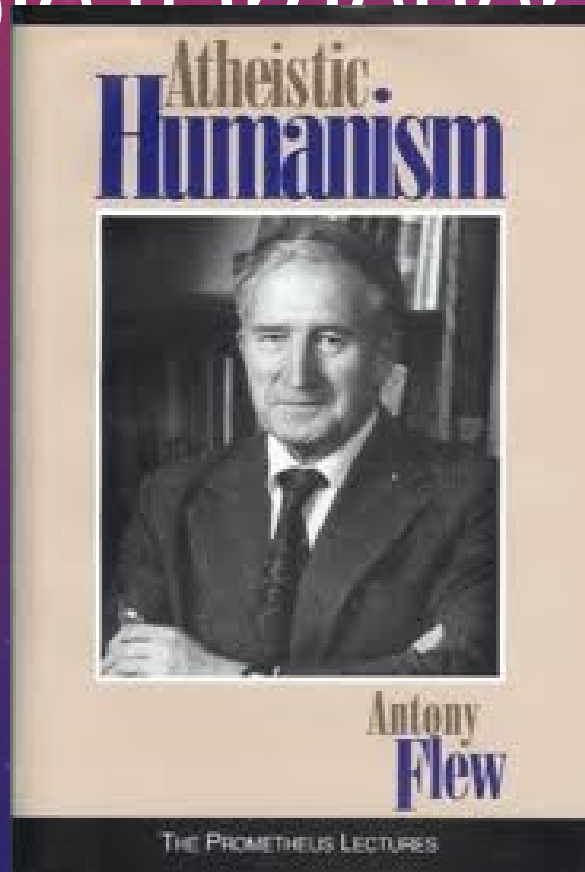


## THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

“Earthquakes, tidal waves, conflagrations, make no distinction between the virtuous and pious and the scoundrel and unbeliever... Obscure, unfeeling and unloving powers determine men’s fate....”

# SIMILAR TO FLEW'S "INVISIBLE GARDENER" EXAMPLE

What is the difference between an invisible gardener and no gardener at all?





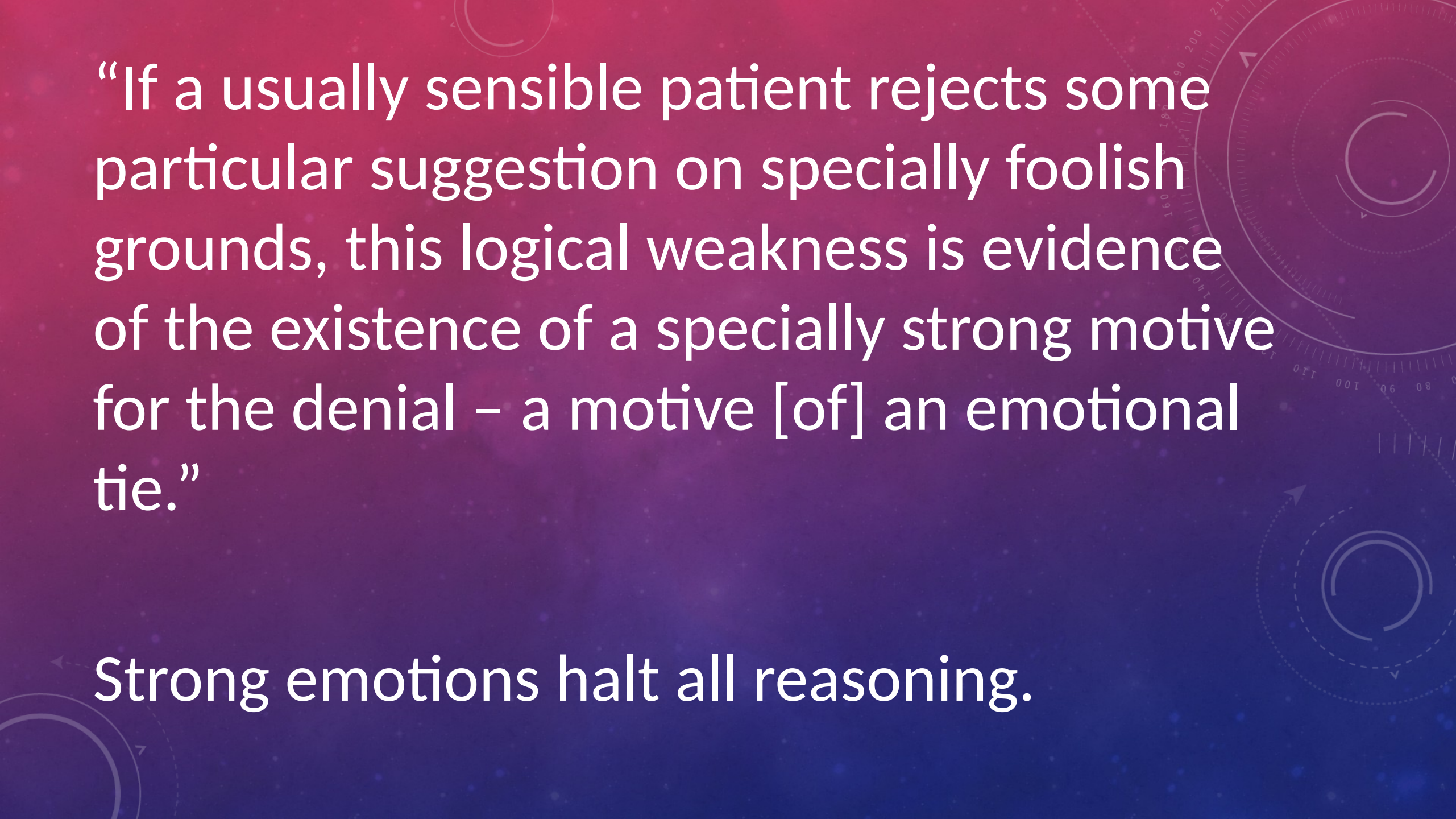
Religion “originated from the helplessness of children.” “Religion is an attempt to master the sensory world in which we are situated by means of the wishful world...”

Religion “appears [as] the neurosis which individual civilized men have to go through in their passage from childhood to maturity.”

Amazing to think that you were once a helpless little baby, but now you are a giant helpless man.



your eCards  
someecards.com



“If a usually sensible patient rejects some particular suggestion on specially foolish grounds, this logical weakness is evidence of the existence of a specially strong motive for the denial – a motive [of] an emotional tie.”

Strong emotions halt all reasoning.



Religion requires you to abandon rational and scientific thinking.

Would you enter a car where the driver said “I have no need of following traffic rules” but instead drives in accordance with his soaring imagination?

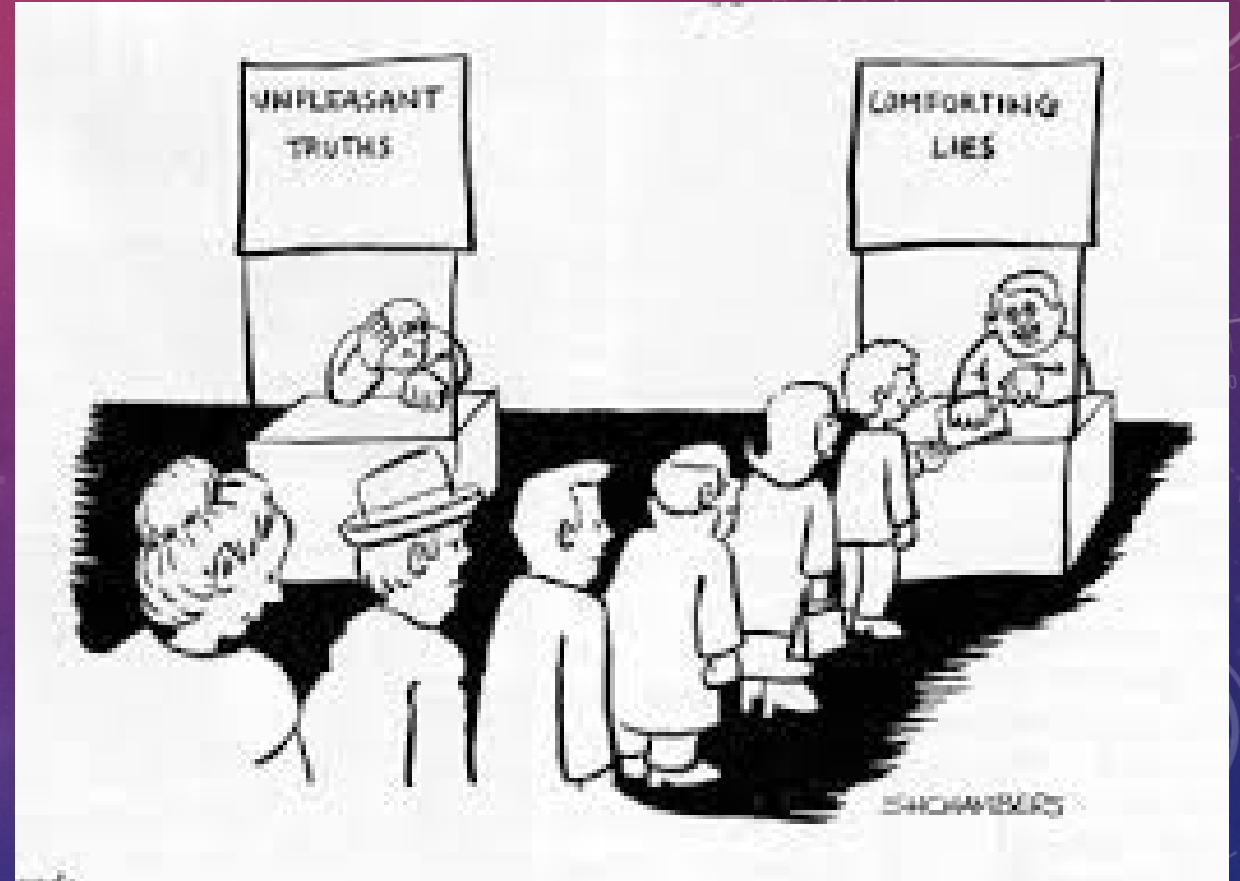
“The prohibition against thought issued by religion to assist in its self-preservation is also far from being free from the danger either for the individual or for human society.”

“Our best hope for the future is that... the scientific spirit, reason... may in process of time establish a dictatorship in the mental life of man.”



# CONCLUSION:

Religion is pure  
Illusion and keeps  
us immature.  
It succeeds because  
it fits into our  
instinctual wishful impulses.



# THEIST RESPONSE #1

We have a desire for “G-d the Father” because G-d is, in fact, our spiritual parent. Freudian psychology is not the only explanation.

Freud: Yes, but my explanation is the simplest and the most scientific.



# THEIST RESPONSE #2

You have made a gross generalization of all theists. Your argument is essentially ad hominem.

Freud: Perhaps, but show me where I am wrong.  
*(If you disagree, lay down on my couch.)*



## THEIST RESPONSE #3

Freudianism can be just as much of a religion, and is susceptible to most of your critiques of religion. Non-dogmatic and thinking theists exist.

Freud: Psychoanalysis is a science, not a religion. Religion by its nature is dogmatic.



## THEIST RESPONSE #4

All you have shown is that theists depend upon theism psychologically, which many theists accept. Why couldn't we need G-d and yet G-d still exist?

Freud: Belief in imaginary things in order to cope with life is mental illness.

## THEIST RESPONSE #5

Your argument does not refute other arguments for G-d's existence. G-d may still exist.

Freud: I have explained why we debate whether G-d exists instead of whether the tooth fairy exists.



## THEIST RESPONSE #6

Deism is untouched by your arguments.

Freud: You still refuse to face the world as science says it is – totally without anything supernatural. Deism has many of the same psychological pay-offs, so my analysis applies to you, too.

# *THEIST RESPONSE #7*

I have a theory, too, Dr. Freud. I believe extreme anti-theists like you are angry and mentally unbalanced, since no one in their right mind, who is at peace with themselves, spends so much time promoting such implausible, unreasonable, and fairly vicious viewpoints, such as “Religious people have a mental illness.” Let me treat you the way you treat theists: Any response you give other than “You are correct” is further proof that you are in great denial about my truth. And the angrier you get at my ideas is further proof that you are not rational and scientific, but very emotionally tied to your beliefs.

Freud: You clearly have a Father Complex and are defensive about it, since it serves your child-like needs. I’m not angry at all – this is pure projection. It’s not vicious to call out mental illness; I’m a shrink!



# FROMM'S RESPONSE TO FREUD

Neo-Freudian  
Neo-Marxist  
Existentialist  
Humanist



Love is the only sane and satisfactory  
answer to the problem of human  
existence.

(Erich Fromm)

Civilization per se does not cause neurosis.

Freud is ahistorical.

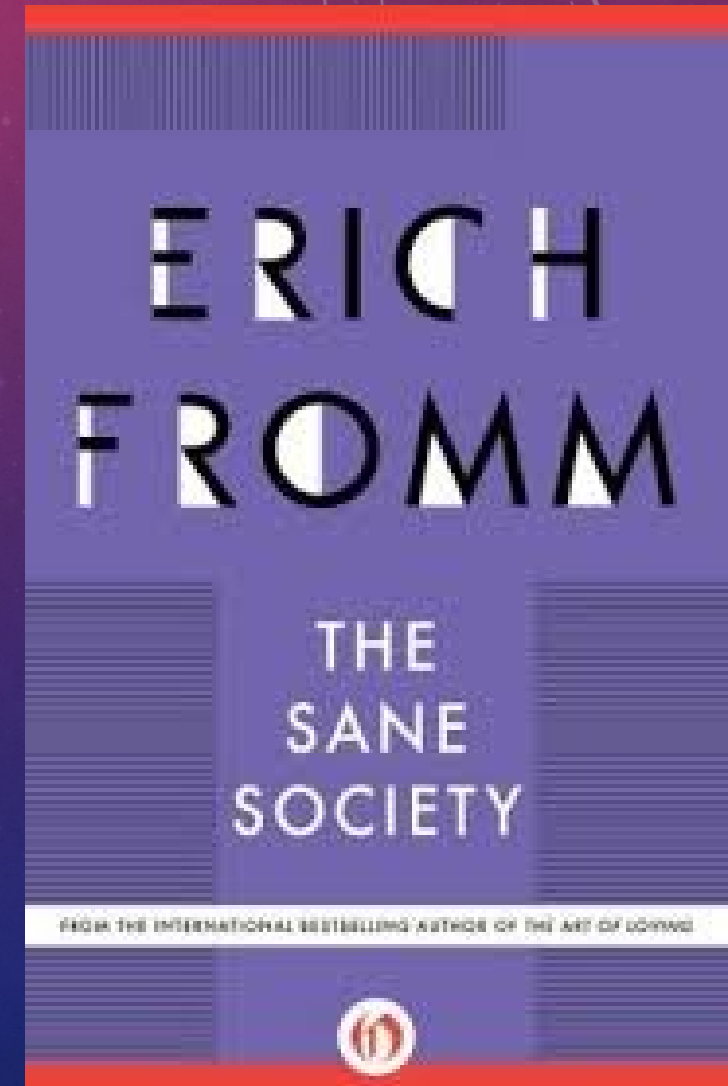
Suicide and alcoholism rates higher in most capitalist societies.

The needs of humanity are thwarted in modern capitalist society.

We are *Homo Consumens*.

Our society is sick and insane.

“The Pathology of Normalcy”

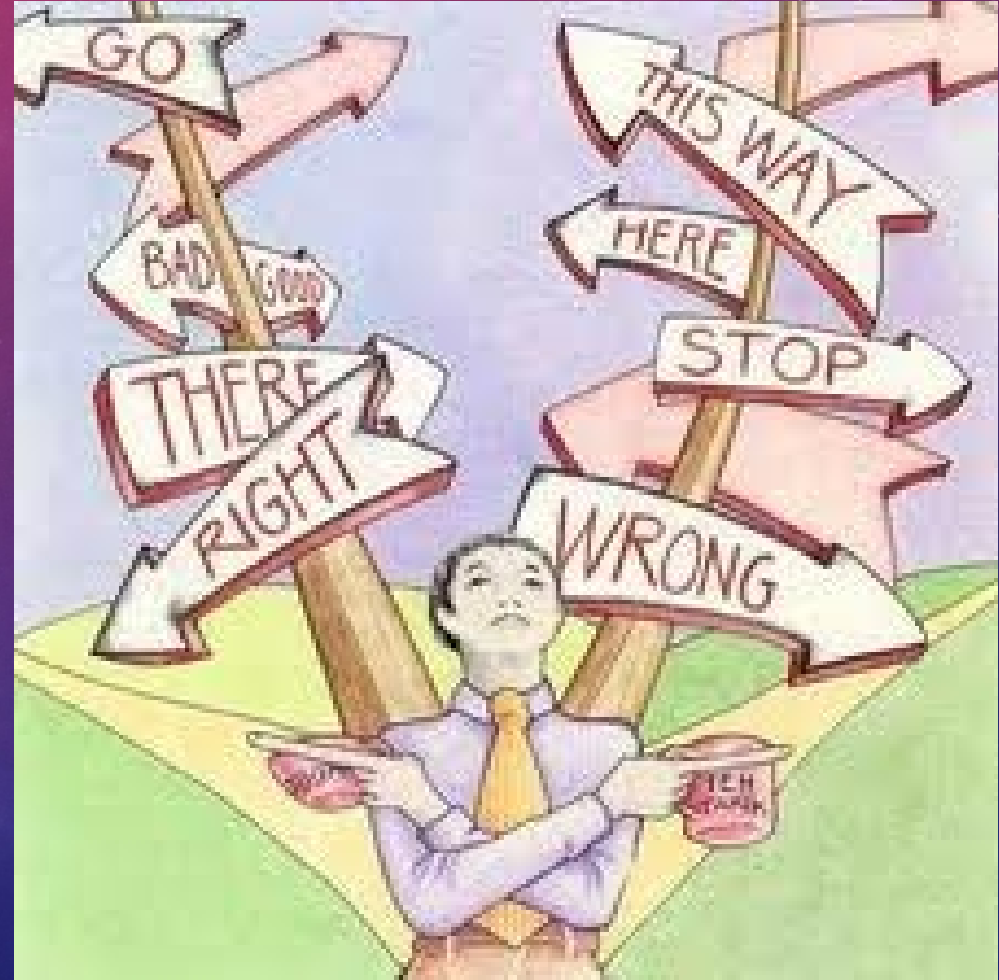




Religion is a remedy offered by the system to solve the socially patterned defects of alienation and exploitation (Marx).



Religion is trying to solve the problem of being born human (Existentialism).





# EXISTENTIAL REALITY

We have two options – return to the womb (instinct, animality), or become a creator instead of a creature.

Unlike Freud, Fromm argues we have free will, and this freedom makes “existence a problem we must solve.”

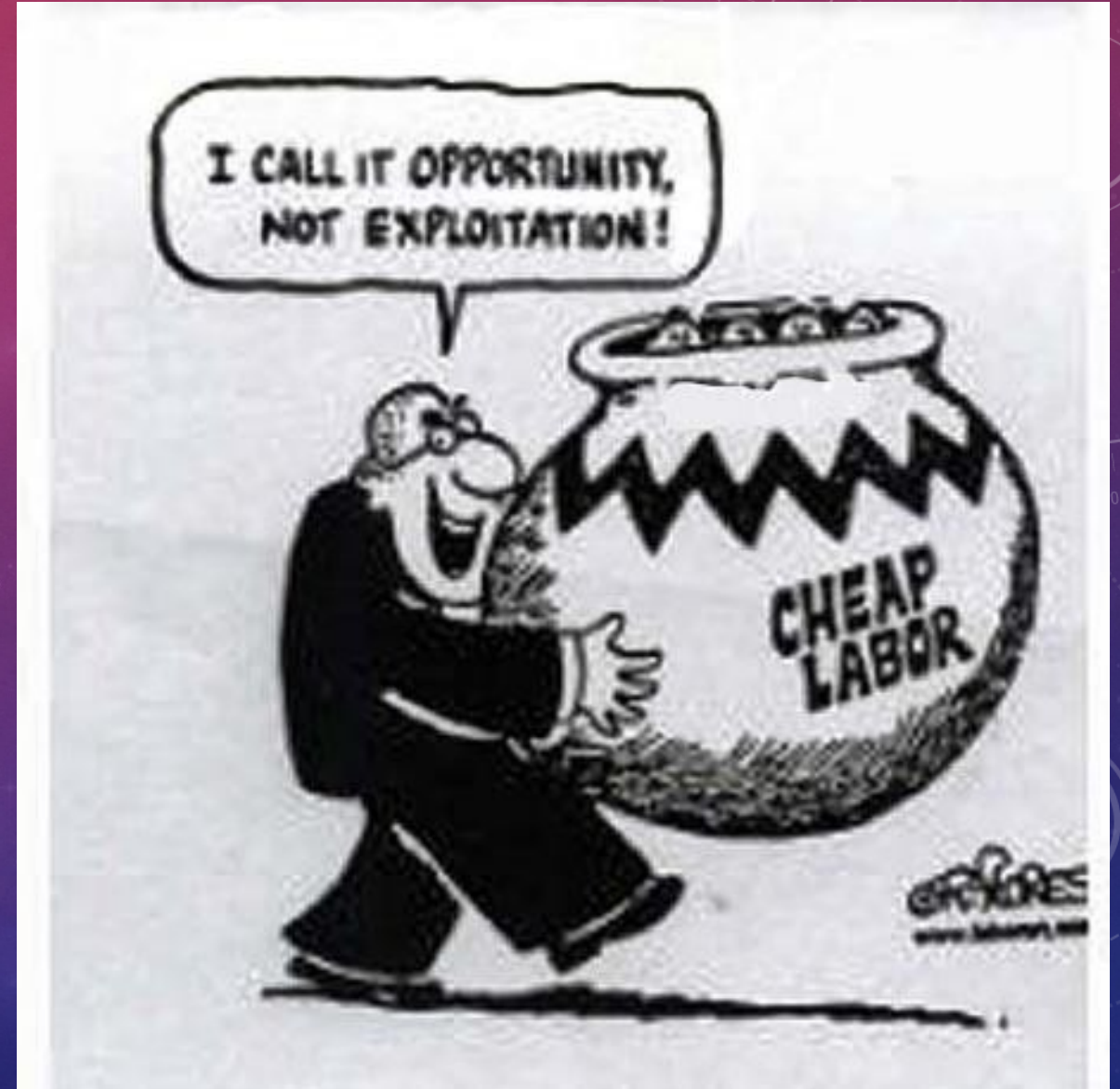
All humans need  
a “frame of  
orientation”  
to remain sane.  
Religion provides  
this.





Monotheism is incompatible with alienation, thus with private capitalism and state-capitalism (USSR).

Religion should be a moral force for criticizing capitalism, “socialist” authoritarianism, and any system that treats humans as *things*.



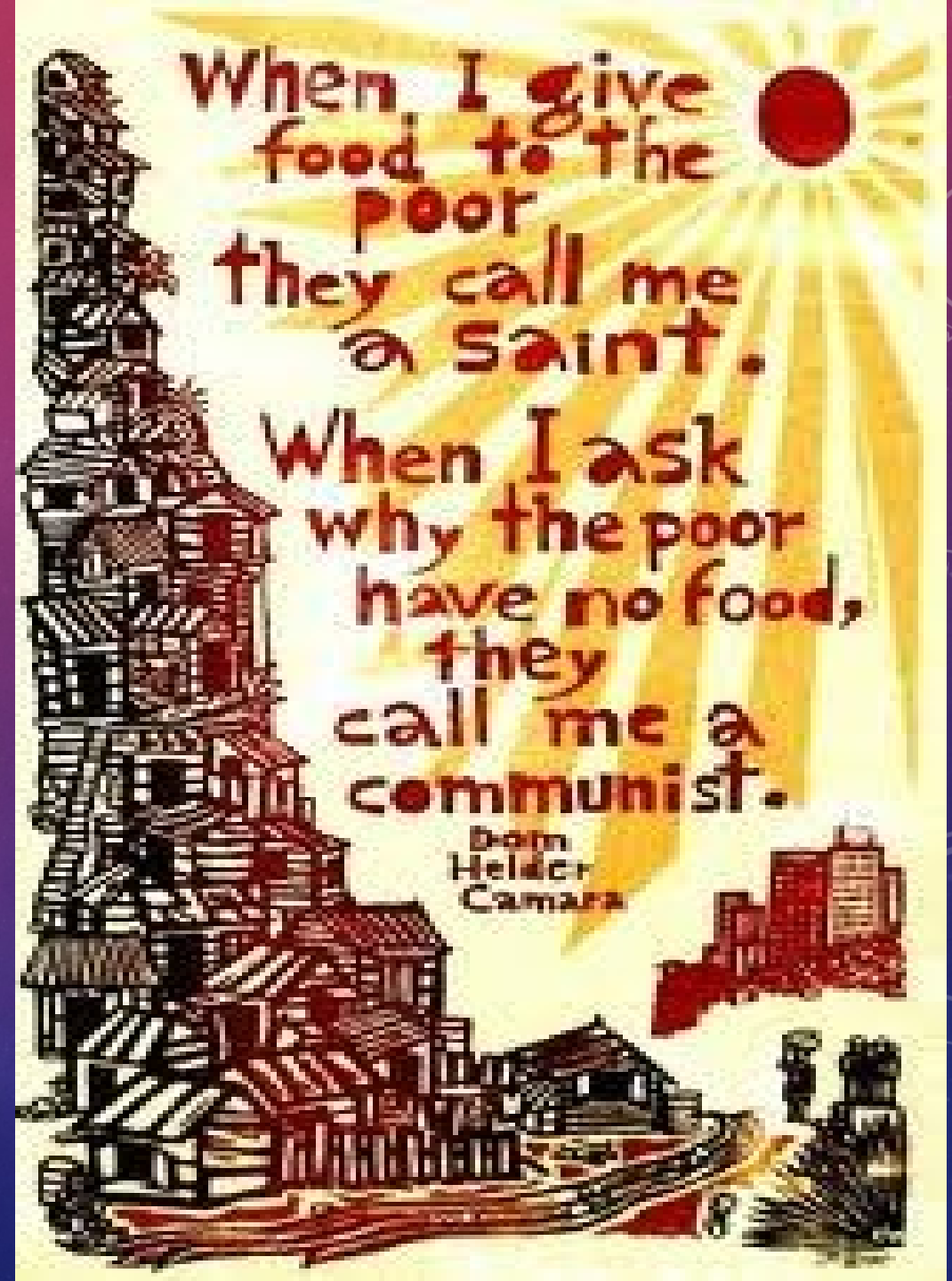
## Fromm's Solutions

Love, universal brother/  
sisterhood,  
and relatedness are what  
humans need, which our  
present system cannot provide.





Marxists are wrong to categorically condemn religion – instead, stress its progressive, humanistic values.  
(Liberation theology)

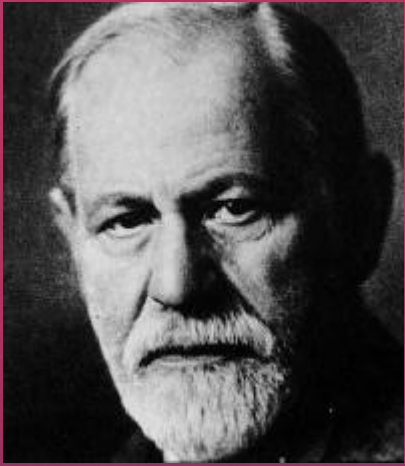




Here are some ways that Freud  
might disagree with Fromm –  
along with Fromm's responses...

Sources: *The Sane Society*, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, "A Philosophy of Life"

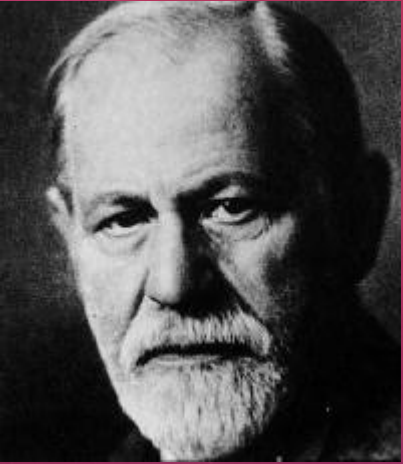




“In abolishing private property, we deprive the human love of aggression of one of its instruments.... Aggressiveness was not created by property.”



“The nature of man cannot be deduced from the specific manifestation of human nature as it is engendered by the capitalist system.”

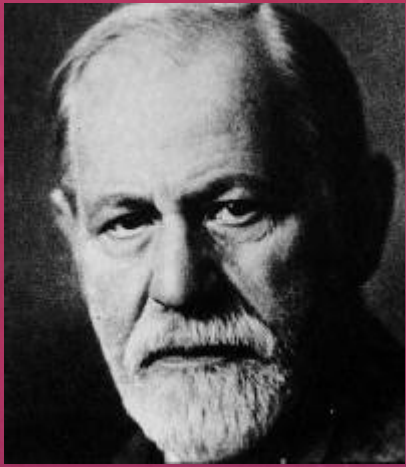


“[W]ould not the diagnosis be justified that... possibly the whole of humanity... [has] become ‘neurotic’ under the pressure of the civilizing trends?”



“[M]an himself became a part of the machine, rather than its master. He experienced himself as a commodity, as an investment; his aim became to be a success, that is, to sell himself as profitably as possible on the market. His value as a person lies in his salability, not in his human qualities of love, reason, or in his artistic capacities. Happiness becomes identical with consumption of newer and better commodities.... He is incapable of love and to use his reason, to make decisions, in fact incapable to appreciate life and thus ready and even willing to destroy everything.”





“Religion is an illusion.”



“[I]t was an error of the nonbelievers to focus on attacking the idea of [G-d]; their real aim ought to be to challenge religionists to take their religion, and especially the concept of [G-d] seriously; that would mean to practice the spirit of brotherly love, truth and justice, hence to become the most radical critics of present-day society.”

***WHAT DO  
YOU THINK?***