

Mises on Freud: The relation of mind and action

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Abstract

As thinkers, psychologist Sigmund Freud and economist Ludwig von Mises shared intellectual presuppositions which go far beyond the obvious similarities which might be expected from the overlap in their early 20th century Viennese cultural background. Four of these are worthy of particular mention: anti-materialism, skepticism concerning historical progress, mental purpose (conscious or otherwise) as a primary characteristic of human beings, and methodological rationalism. Both Mises and Freud rejected materialist reductionism while stressing the importance of biological needs in understanding human motives. Both of them saw that modern “progressive” movements were based on illusory optimism about human nature and the social organizations founded on this nature. In Mises’ works on theory and epistemology, especially, he demonstrates his appreciation of the work which had been done by Freud to show that the unconscious mind is a purpose-driven system which lies behind the phenomena of explicitly reasoned and manifested choice, phenomena the study of which Mises termed “praxiology”. This reveals both a similarity between and complementary among praxiology and psychology in its non-scientistic forms (ie. verbally descriptive psychologies such as psychoanalysis, studies which Mises termed “thymology”). Mises, no less than Freud, recognized that much human activity is contradictory and self-defeating, while stubbornly adhering to reason as a principle for investigating human nature. The potential of humans to reflect on their natures rationally while, in practice, succumbing to illusion was a premise shared by the two thinkers but unpalatable to many of their contemporaries. Mises spent his life combating social and economic panaceas of the left, while Freud spent his mature years countering the sexual utopianism of those who had taken his libido theory out of context. However it would be wrong to call Freud and Mises pessimists or even conservatives. Rather they both strove to improve the human condition on the basis of more realistic assumptions than those shared by many of their contemporaries. Both Freud and Mises offered hope through disenchantment with illusions.

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Introduction

Examining the views of economist Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973) on Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is a worthwhile endeavor since both may be considered social philosophers and moralists in a broader perspective. As a social philosopher the mature views of Freud concurred with the general outlook expressed by the younger Mises, and these were given appreciative mention in the latter's work *Theory and History* (1957) as well as elsewhere. Another connection between the two men is that both Freud and Mises have been characterized alternately (and by both supporters and detractors) as both radicals and conservatives. This paper attempts to substantiate a connection between their world-views by examining Mises' approving attitude towards Freud, in contrast to the rejection of the founder of psychoanalysis by the latter's more radical followers. It will be concluded that both men are better viewed as skeptics than as conservatives. What gave their skepticism a conservative cast was the seeming pessimism with which they viewed ongoing social movements of the early 20th century which aimed at the emancipation of human nature by riding it of monetary and political limitations on the one hand and moral and cultural restraints on the other.

It may seem strange to look at the works of a psychologist through the eyes of an economist. However, although the relationship of psychology and economics is a contested point, the social sciences cannot be viewed in isolation. None the less, most economists pursue their specialties without reflecting on the first principles of human mind and nature. A marked exception to this was Mises, a leading representative of the "Austrian" or subjective utility school, most commonly associated with the advocacy of *laissez-faire* economics, who attempted to ground his field (and social science in general) in a fundamental logic of human action which he designated "praxiology." One of the fundamental premises of this way of thinking was anti-psychologism: the notion that the fundamental principles of human economic and social behavior could not be *directly* reduced to psychological drives, motives, or needs. However this did not signify any contempt of psychology in Mises' mind. In fact, the new distinction between praxiology and psychology, served only to highlight the importance of the latter. This is because, for Mises, both praxiology and those forms of psychology which deal with subjective mental events fell on the same side of a much larger ontological divide in science: the autonomous study of purposeful minds by purposeful minds (the human studies) vs. the study by such minds of the world around them (the natural sciences). Unfortunately, then as now, the various disciplines grouped together as "psychology" straddled this divide, some studying humans as objects in the world rather than as subjects. However, even by the time of Mises' early work, the various subjectivist psychologies, that is to say those based on discourse of analysts and clients, had been well established, notably the psychoanalytic, or Viennese school of Sigmund Freud. None the less there is no indication that the two men ever met or collaborated, or had anything other than a lay interest in the other's specialty. Mises, as noted, was intent on keeping psychology at arms length from even subjectivist economics, while Freud had only the vaguest ideas about economics, sociology, and (although he didn't hesitate to state his opinions

on the subject) history.(1)

Yet as thinkers Freud and Mises shared intellectual presuppositions which went far beyond the obvious similarities in their historical and cultural background. This convergence of Freudian and Misesian thinking can be roughly divided into four streams. First is a common aversion to vulgar materialism, a position which is softened in the psychoanalytic literature of Freud, but which is pointed out clearly in Mises' comments on this literature. The second is an orientation towards purpose in human studies, something which is essential to both praxiology and the psychodynamics of motivation according to Freud. Third is the notion of science being incompatible with any sort of "progressist" orientation, the latter being exposed as nothing more than the secular adoption of eschatological notions ultimately deriving from religious valuations of history. Finally, and in a sense undergirding the other three, is a methodological rationalism which is undaunted by the seemingly irrational elements in human thought and conduct.

Both Mises and Freud rejected materialist reductionism while stressing the importance of biological needs in understanding human motives. They both implicitly upheld the principle of ontological indecidability, namely, that neither consciousness nor matter could be reduced to each other or determined as primary cause, but rather that they mutually reciprocate. Both of them saw that modern "progressive" movements were based on illusory optimism about human nature and the social organizations founded on this nature. In Mises' works on theory and epistemology, especially *Theory and History* he demonstrates his appreciation of the work which had been done by Freud to show that the unconscious mind is a purpose-driven system which lies behind the phenomena of explicitly reasoned and manifested choice, phenomena the study of which Mises termed "praxiology". This reveals both a similarity between and complementary among praxiology and psychology in its non-scientific forms (i.e. verbally descriptive psychologies such as psychoanalysis, the studies which Mises termed "thymology"). Mises, no less than Freud recognized that much human activity is contradictory and self-defeating, while stubbornly adhering to a) the intelligible and purpose driven nature of the human mind and b) the utility of reason as the one tool available for understanding human nature. That humans have the potential to reflect on their natures rationally while, in practice, succumbing to illusion was a premise shared by the two thinkers but unpalatable to many of their contemporaries. Mises spent his life combating social and economic panaceas of the left, while Freud spent his mature years countering the sexual utopianism of those who had taken his libido theory out of context. However it would be wrong to call Freud and Mises pessimists or even conservatives. Rather they both strove to improve the human condition on the basis of more realistic assumptions than those shared by many of their contemporaries. In short, both Freud and Mises offered hope through disenchantment with illusions.

Mises' favorable attitude towards Freud and Psychoanalysis

Ludwig von Mises, generally sparing in his complements, praised Freud as one who accomplished the “great exploit of making [psychology] a systematic discipline.” (2) Few today are as laudatory of Freud as a definitive codifier of psychological truth, and indeed many of his insights have been criticized as one-sided, unscientific, and specific to the turn of the century Central European milieu in which he did his research. Among his detractors none was more scathing than Karl Popper (1902-1994), who argued for the non-scientific status of Freudianism in *Conjectures and Refutations* (1963) on the grounds of the non-falsifiable nature of psychoanalytic premises. However it is unlikely that any of this would have caused a change in Mises' estimation of Freud, even if Popper's premise of falsifiability as the criteria of scientific hypotheses was less questionable than it is, since it was precisely the non-positivistic nature of psychoanalysis which evoked the great economist's admiration. Nor is it probable that Mises would have revised this favorable view in light of Freud's diminishing impact on clinical psychology, a decline which contrasts to his enduring influence on fields as diverse as literary criticism and cultural anthropology. Indeed, Mises was even willing to abandon the term “psychology” because of its association with psychometrics and behaviorism, and rename that study of the mind which fell on the consciousness side of the subject/object divide “thymology.” One might say that it was the “unscientific” nature of psychoanalysis, in the sense of not being reduced to physiology or externally observed behavior, that makes it a kindred discipline to praxiology. Praxiology is the study of human action and its consequences, while thymology is the study of those mental states which may or may not lead to actions. Clearly they are each subjective in a special sense, however these two kinds of subjectivities are both solidly on the human studies side of the methodological dualism which was advocated by Mises. In spite of the fact that they applied themselves to very different issues, there are significant convergences in their respective thinking, that of the great economist and the great psychologist from Vienna, a similarity which goes far beyond what can be attributed to commonalities of place, epoch, and origin.

Beyond positivism and materialism: The superorganic aspects of mind and action

As Mises notes, Freud was willing to grant the vulgar materialism of the 19th century the benefit of the doubt in the cause of amity with the scientific establishment. However the essence of what the founder of psychoanalysis was incorporating in both his theory and practice remained firmly on the “mind” side of the mind/matter divide regardless of such caveats. As Mises writes,

Freud was a modest man. He did not make extravagant pretensions regarding the importance of his contributions. He was very cautious in touching upon problems of philosophy and branches of knowledge to the development of which he himself had not contributed. He did not venture to attack any of the metaphysical presuppositions of materialism. He even went so far as to admit that one day science may succeed in providing a purely physiological explanation of the phenomena that psychoanalysis deals with.

Only so long as this does not happen, psychoanalysis appeared to him scientifically sound and practically indispensable. He was no less cautious in criticizing Marxian materialism. He freely confessed his incompetence in this field. *But all this does not alter the fact that the psychoanalytical approach is essentially and substantially incompatible with the epistemology of materialism.* [italics mine-M.S.] (3)

According to Mises, both praxiology and the “thymological” psychologies are superorganic. In this sense psychology is an underpinning and a prerequisite for praxiology.

Mises maps out the boundaries between thymology (the psychology of subjective consciousness) and praxiology in *Theory and History*.

The very act of valuing is a thymological phenomenon. But praxiology and economics do not deal with the thymological aspects of valuation. Their theme is acting in accordance with the choices made by the actor. The concrete choice is an offshoot of valuing. But praxiology is not concerned with the events which within a man’s soul or mind or brain produce a definite decision between an A and a B. It takes for granted that the nature of the universe enjoins upon man choosing between incompatible ends. Its subject is not the content of these acts of choosing but what results from them: action. It does not care about what a man chooses but about the fact that he chooses and acts in compliance with a choice made. It is neutral with regard to the factors which determine the choice and does not arrogate to itself the competence to examine, to revise, or to correct judgments of value. It is *wertfrei*. (4)

That is to say that thought and valuation are the private experiences of individual minds and as such cannot be externally observed. Action can be observed. Valuation is the province of thymology. Action is the province of praxiology, which Mises asserts to be an a priori and value free science. Is thymology a value-free science? No, because it is not a science at all, rather it is history, either the introspective mental history of the self or observations and inferences concerning the mental states and motives of others.

This can be clarified by observing the following diagram:

Praxiology=knowledge concerning the logic of choice and action, a priori, suprapyschological, supraorganic, value-free, equivalent to “sociology”

Human Studies

Thymology=subjective knowledge by minds of their own nature, the valuation process antecedent to choice, a posteriori, natural history rather than natural science, supraorganic, equivalent to “psychology” in the literary or introspective sense.

(Teleology/Will/Final cause)

(Efficient cause, instinct, motion)

Natural Sciences=inclusing behavioral psychology and the study of human corporality, together with the rest of the world

Psychology is superorganic while praxiology is both superorganic and superpsychological. A yet more fundamental analytical divide is the methodological dualism between the natural and the human sciences represented by the dotted line. The realm above the line (including both praxiology and thymology) is that in which the human will (consciously or otherwise) determines its own actions.

Purpose in Praxiology and “Thymology”

Praxiology: socially exteriorized purpose

“Thymology”: interior purpose, conscious and otherwise

For both Mises and Freud “action” is not just movement in accordance with a series of efficient causes, but rather willed action. Praxiology deals with outcomes rather than ultimate motives, while psychology (thymology) deals with the latter. The notion of subconscious willing is a strange one, however it is found in Freudian psychology. Praxiology does not need to delve into the notion of whether the will is conscious or subconscious, since it (praxiology) deals with the manifest outcomes of the act rather than its interior origins. In that sense praxiology is sociological rather than psychological. Naturally, the forms of willing which are most evident in human experience are those which are preponderantly conscious in nature.

On the other hand there is a philosophical position that willing cannot be anything other than conscious, a point of view which seems to have been embraced by the popular philosopher Ayn Rand (1905-1983). Certain passages in Mises’ magnum opus *Human Action* (1949), if considered in isolation, would seem to support the contention that for Mises as well, action is always the result of conscious willing. However the discussions on psychology/thymology in *Theory and History* and elsewhere, indicate that Mises concurred with Freud on the possibility of subconscious willing.

Skepticism regarding automatic “progress”

The contingent nature of social improvement

Both Freud and Mises considered themselves to be “liberals” in the older sense of the term, however their thoughts are doomed to disappoint those with presuppositions concerning “liberalism” as a historical project. Freud was forced to clarify the fact that, although he had initiated libido theory, he was not a “sexual revolutionary” in the sense that the word was used after the time of Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957). Likewise, Mises, although claimed for libertarian social optimism, did not embrace the sort of “heroic” view of human destiny which sometimes dominates libertarian discourse. It would be too simplistic to view the thought of either Freud or Mises as heroically optimistic or tragically pessimistic. Neither Freud nor Mises ever admitted to being pessimists, or for that matter, conservatives. Both were far more nuanced thinkers who tried to explore the possibilities for drawing out the salutary and rational potential of human nature without denying

the prevalence of self-defeating and irrationalist motifs in 20th century society. One might term this understanding of human nature, as rational in principle but deluded in actuality, "meta-pessimism". For Mises it meant the substitution of real subjectivity in market preference for the delusional subjectivity of "fiat money" (paper money issued without assets to back them) and central banking; for Freud it meant the substitution of rational analysis for neurotic rationalization. In both cases it involved bucking currents which promised utopia in exchange for passive acquiescence to the present state of affairs. This eyes-wide-open policy could easily be misconstrued as misanthropy or defeatism. However the tireless labors and heroic perseverance of both men showed them up for what they both were: meliorists who felt that optimism was an achievement rather than something guaranteed as if by right. Mises states the following in *Theory and History*.

A realistic philosophical interpretation of history must abstain from the chimerical notion of a perfect state of human affairs. The only basis from which a realistic interpretation can start is the fact that man, like all other living things, is driven by the impulse to preserve his existence and to remove, as far as possible, any uneasiness he feels. It is from this point of view that the immense majority of people appraise the conditions under which they have to live. It would be erroneous to scorn their attitude as materialism in the ethical connotation of the term. The pursuit of all those nobler aims which the moralists contrast with what they disparage as merely materialistic satisfactions presupposes a certain degree of material well being. (5)

The ambiguity of libido and its suppression by society

Towards the end of his career Freud took up the notion that the life instinct (*libido*) was balanced by an instinct for destruction (*thanatos* drive). This latter worked its way out in the life of the psyche in a manner that was even less frequently presented to consciousness than the erotic impulses. Like the erotic instinct its overt manifestation was succeeded by guilt and pain and thus it tended to disguise itself through rationalization and forgetting, or cloud its essential nature by combining with the erotic drive in the form of sadism. Now it is clear that one of the most effective ways to disguise the destructive impulse (*thanatos* drive) is to attribute it to some agent exterior to the self. Thus, according to psychoanalytic theory, the superego can engage in aggression with relative impunity because of its semi-detachment from the ego. Not only is one more likely to gain cooperation and strength by aggressing in the name of some high-minded principle...one feels much better about oneself in the process. It is important to note that there is nothing necessarily pathological about this displacement of aggression into the superego per se, and it was an essential component of the system, or "economy", of the psyche according to Freud although it certainly played a necessary role in the etiology of neurosis. Two further things need to be said about this notion of the superego according to Freud, first it served as a link between the psychology of the individual and that of the group due to its moral character, and second it has been subjected to a series of protean interpretations...depending on the school of cultural criticism which has undertook to provide this abstract notion with a persona: God or Devil, duty or denial.

It would be very strange if it had been left to late 20th century Austro-libertarians to finally arrive at the identification of the superego and the state. Rather, this particular insight had been seized on practically immediately, and almost as immediately it was mishandled and misconstrued. This miscarrying of the libertarian implications of Freudianism is a primary reason for the great psychologist being seen as a depressing, if not authoritarian, figure rather than a potential liberator. Indeed the very miscarriage of anti-statist psychology was a motivating factor behind the cautionary message contained in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930). Its publication can be seen as the divergence between prudent investigation of human motives and the romantic idea of liberating the instincts. The figure confronting Freud at this divergence is Willhelm Reich, and therefore we will have to give a brief and synoptic sketch of this complex and conflicted man who in many ways embodies all that was promising and all that was questionable in the political application of psychoanalysis.

Reich could see that the state was the institution charged with the social equivalent of the individual's superego. Moreover, Reich's anti-statism merged into a general democratic-egalitarian criticism of psychological repression in any form. Here we can see a parallelism between the instinctualist's conflation of psychological categories and the statist's conflation of state and society so minutely criticized by Mises. Not that Reich was anything but a very sincere and committed anti-statist all his life, but his oversimplifications make him the perfect foil for the sort of economic criticism associated with Mises as well as the psychological criticism of Freud. Of course he committed the error of psychologism, the very notion which Mises had attempted to rid from economics by shifting the basis of social science from "wants" and "desires" to "action". However by the time that Reich had begun to formulate his left-libertarian theories Freud had already moved beyond his early conjectures that all instinctual drives could be reduced to the libido, and posited a countervailing destructive instinct. Reich rejected this and clung tenaciously to a monistic pleasure principle. He restated the philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau in psychoanalytic terms: all human ills are the result of excessive social controls. In post-Freudian terms this meant control of sexuality in particular. Freud's response to this one-sided appropriation of his theories was *Civilization and its Discontents*.

Many sentences in *Civilization and its Discontents* were taken from Freud's reply to Reich's position...In that book Freud took the view that 'civilization is built up on renunciation of instinctual gratifications... this "cultural" privation dominates the whole field of social relations between human beings.' Freud went on to justify this privation in these words: 'the existence of the tendency to aggression, which we can detect in ourselves and rightly presume to be present in others, is the factor which disturbs our relations with our neighbors, and makes it necessary for culture to institute its high demands...' (6)

Freud told Reich that if he (Freud) was wrong about the innate propensity towards aggression, the latter (Reich) would have to lead his psycho/social/sexual revolution on his own.

In the sense that Reich became heir to the original social critique of psycho-analysis which Freud abandoned at this time, Reich did in fact inherit the burden of attacks for 'threatening culture' which early psycho-analysis had been afflicted with. (7)

But Freud was not just retreating from a radical position out of fear. He had seen so much evidence of an aggressive instinct that he felt he had to augment his theory to take it into account. Obviously, if there was an aggressive instinct acting in competition with the libido, the prospect of creating a world of harmony by liberating the (implicit sexual) instincts, was rendered utterly utopian. Needless to say, this was a bitter pill for many people who had been led down the primrose path of sexualizing human psychology, and many of his former admirers rounded on Freud... sparking an anti-Freudian movement which continues to thrive in modern culture. Likewise Reich, a man of tremendous integrity, did not deserve the sort of red-baiting and persecution which he subsequently reaped. Rather, the fault of Reich was less in his research than in his inability (in marked contrast to Freud) to break from the predominant current of egalitarianism and nature-worship which increasingly characterized modern Europe. Indeed, it is by no means clear that Freud won "round one" of the debate which precipitated *Civilization and its Discontents*. The cultural momentum was still on Reich's side, and indeed, in an attenuated sense, has continued to be so down to the present.

To begin with, the social sciences at the time (1920s) had seen a resurgence of the kind of Rousseau-like thinking which idealized allegedly natural and primitive society. This was even true of the anthropologists, who should have known better, who were in the grips of a rather atavistic interpretation of "culture" one which hinted that groups could mould their belief systems without regard to any objective constraints or universal constants. Thus the Reichian side of the argument was fortified by the persistence of the theory of primitive promiscuity. Freud himself accepted this periodization (i.e. primitive vs. civilized) of human instinctual control, as indicated by the very title of his work, which implicitly contrasts "civilization" with a prior state of nature. This was the consensus paradigm of 19th century evolutionists, and by no means confined to leftist writers such as Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). Moreover, Reich was encouraged by the work of early 20th century ethnologists who delved into the sexuality of so-called primitive cultures in order to elaborate this paradigmatic assumption. Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) was his primary informant in this regard, although the general thesis was popularized more widely in America by Margaret Mead (1901-1978). Subsequent revisions of anthropological theory have cast grave doubts on the notion of a historical "state of nature"...or at least the existence of societies without regulation of sexuality. Thus concerning Mead's supposed discovery of the absence of social constraints on sexuality in the South Pacific, Derek Freeman writes,

From close examination of a wide range of evidence, it has emerged that her exciting revelations about sexual behavior were in some cases merely the extrapolations of whispered intimacies, whereas those of the greatest consequence were the results of a prankish hoax. (8)

By being constrained to reason within this naive evolutionary schematism, Freud was forced to argue against the monism of the pleasure principle with one hand tied behind his back. Reich was on much better grounds, for he could argue for nature against civilization by construing the former as both an original state of affairs and a normative ideal. However, as with all forms of monism, Reich was forced into the problem of theodicy: In a monistic world based on good, where does evil

arise? In his latter work the necessary antagonist emerged in his theory of “emotional plague”...in other words the dualism resurfaced in etiological rather than instinctual terms. Whatever the merits of Reich’s subsequent physicalistic research, Reich as a political thinker was much more of a dualist than Freud, since he eventually stigmatized all forms of social control as fascistic, sick, and evil. With the exploding of the 19th century notion of a pre-civilizational “state of nature” it becomes clear that any such program as advanced by Reich involves not a return to human origins but a utopian (or dystopian) metamorphosis of human nature into something radically other.

The seeming pessimism of Freud preserved him from the angry sociological dualism which afflicted Reich. Now we can see that there is no clear disjuncture between nature and human social organization...and that in defending “civilization” Freud was only pointing out the necessity for behavior-restricting rules at any level of technical or social development. Yet this is not to assert that Freud was a conservative who felt that tightly restrictive rules made for the best of all possible worlds. He saw himself as a revolutionary who tread the “middle way” between repression and utopian disregard for the darker side of human nature.

The kind of conflation of politics and psychology which Reich, and subsequently much “continental” psychology fell into was void from the beginning according to anyone who accepts the praxiology/psychology distinction. The point we have been making in this section is that Freud carried a Misesian sort of criticism into the realm of psychology itself. Freud’s analysis of instinct into libido and aggression undercut the possibility of certain kinds of human liberation, namely those premised on the elimination of all behavioral restraints. However, the fact that Freud refused to join Reich and the left in their brand of social criticism does not mean that he was a political quietist. Rather, as I have been broadly hinting, we may see Freud as a right-libertarian who’s professional concerns condemned him to be largely unread in the area of political economy.

Methodological Rationalism and “meta-pessimism”

At the root of both Mises and Freud’s endeavors in science lay a profound commitment to reason which was tempered by a realization that reason is only a potentiality, not a guaranteed actuality, of human existence. However reason can be discredited by its expansion into an eschatological concept, as when the progress of particular historical movements are seen as the implementation of a rational plan of social organization. In many places Mises points out that these movements towards reason are only the actualization of the ideals of the movement’s leaders. Mises notes in his work *Socialism* (1920), that many social institutions, even those of which he approved, were given false justification by theologians and rationalists (in the deductive 17th century sense of the word) who attempted grandiose “theories of reality” in preference to examining the real grounds which led to the adoption of those institutions. Freud makes much the same point in *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

At the other end of the spectrum Freud points out how reason can be twisted into the service of alibis and equivocations, a process which he calls “rationalization.” Mises seconds Freud’s

observations on how the reasoning faculty can be twisted to serve, consciously or otherwise, as an instrument of self-justification rather than truth-discovery.

Rationalization is the name psychoanalysis gives to the construction of a pretext to justify conduct in the actor's own mind. Either the actor is loath to admit the real motive to himself or he is not aware of the repressed urge directing him. He disguises the subconscious impulse by attaching to his actions reasons acceptable to his superego. He is not consciously cheating and lying. He is himself the victim of his illusions and wishful thinking...A few steps further in the same direction may lead to insanity.(9)

However there is a countervailing insight which is equally important for both Freud and Mises, the ubiquity of rationalization in human affairs in no way impugns the validity of reason itself when successfully applied to problems in the real world, even problems which involve the clash of human opinions. It can be taken for granted that people will advance ideas which they favor for some psychological or material reason, however there still are methods of sifting the truth from the falsity of theories which are independent of the motives for which they were advanced. Freudian psychology, in the opinion of Mises, in no way validates the relativist position which assumes that there is no distinction between truth and opinion...the old sophist doctrine which now is expressed in the phrase "having an ideology", thus he states,

All that counts is whether a doctrine is sound or unsound. This is to be established by discursive reasoning. It does not in the least detract from the soundness and correctness of a doctrine if the psychological forces that prompted the author are disclosed. The motives that guided the thinker are immaterial to appreciating his achievement...The most sophisticated psychoanalytical examination of Pascal's life tells us nothing about the scientific soundness or unsoundness of his mathematical and philosophical doctrines. (9)

Freud of course would have been in complete agreement. He would have never undertaken to develop a novel branch of therapy if he had believed that all people's mental operations were equally deluded and there was no such thing as truth in the abstract. Curiously, for a school which made its business the investigation of the irrational, the identifying symbol of the Freud's disciples was a signet ring bearing the Owl of Athena.

Conclusion

Focusing on the thought of Mises towards the founder of psychoanalysis has considerable merit. For one thing, it helps us clarify Mises' own philosophical position and gives us a more nuanced view of his thinking. This is urgent since, as Misesian theory becomes more widely known and influential, it is bound to be the subject of misinterpretation and oversimplification. Mises, though a seasoned and chastised rationalist, was an ambitious thinker, and his hopes for praxiology went well beyond what is usually understood as "economics" to embrace all the social sciences, including sociology and anthropology. There is an emerging tendency in the modern Austrian school to see Mises as the founder of a geometricizing or deductive sub-school, in contrast to Fredrick Hayek

(1899-1991) who is presented as a softer, and perhaps more interpretive thinker.

However it was by never Mises intention to reformulate the social sciences on the model of Spinoza's *Ethics*, as the *more geometrico* solution to all problems of human society. The fact that the praxiological island floats in a thymological sea, and that the latter, though purposeful and structured, is not "rational" in our usual sense of the term, puts limits on our ability to understand the mind according to a priori categories. This is as much a Misesian as a Hayekian insight. It might be hard to see this by looking at, for example, Mises' monetary theory which is so elegant and satisfying on its own level, but if we observe the same thinker when he is engaged on the topic of psychology we peer into a different level of depth.

Finally, seeing Mises' thought as being, in some way, circumscribed by Freudian, or any other, depth psychology, counterbalances the irrepressible desire of libertarian thinking, left and right, to strike a Promethian pose with a healthy dose of pessimism regarding the tendencies of human nature. It is not, as I have pointed out, that either Freud or Mises were truly pessimists. However they were well aware that the ideal potentials human nature by the way of rationality, compassion, responsibility and justice were only that, potentials. Rendering them actual involves the prudent application of hard won knowledge to the ever changing circumstances of human events.

Footnotes

- (1) Freud was famous, or notorious, for his anthropological and historical speculations in *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism*. He was not entirely unread in economics either. Apparently he had worked on the German translation of John Stuart Mill's *Political Economy*. (Personal communication from Prof. Richard Ebeling, New York University)
- (2) Mises, *Theory and History* p.152
- (3) *ibid.*, pp. 152-3, italics mine-- M.R.S.)
- (4) *ibid.*, p.271
- (5) *ibid.*, pp.367-8
- (6) Boadella, *William Reich* p. 75
- (7) *ibid.*, p.76
- (8) Freeman, *The Fateful Hoaxing of Margaret Mead*, p.1
- (9) Mises, *Theory and History* pp. 27-28
- (10) *ibid.*, pp. 281-282

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ミーゼスによるフロイト論 —精神と行動の関係—

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要 旨

思想家としてのジークムント・フロイトとルートビッヒ・フォン・ミーゼスは、知的な前提を共有していて、彼らの歴史的、文化的な背景に明らかな類似性があるなどということをはるかに越えている。この類似性の4つは、とくに論述する価値がある。反唯物論、歴史的進歩に対する懐疑論、人類の第一義的特徴としての精神的目的（あるいは別表現では意識）、および方法論的な合理主義。ミーゼス、フロイトの両者とも、人間の動機を理解する際、生物としての必要性の重要性を強調する唯物論者の還元主義を拒絶する。彼らは両方とも、現代の「進歩的」運動は、人間の本性についての幻想的な楽観主義に基づいており、社会的組織はこの本性として見出される、と見ていた。理論や認識論に関するミーゼスの著作において、とくに彼は、フロイトによって書かれた著作への評価を示し、こう言っている。すなわち、フロイトの著作における無意識の精神は、明示的に理由づけられ宣言された選択という現象、つまりその現象の研究でミーゼスが「プラキシオロジー」と名づけたものの背後にある、目的誘導システムである、と。このことは、プラキシオロジーと非科学者の形態における心理学との同一性も、それらの相互補完性も、両方とも明らかにした（つまり、心理分析や、ミーゼスが「チイモロギ」と名づけた研究のように言葉で記述される心理学）。ミーゼスは、フロイトと同じ程度に、詳しく研究するための原理として人間本性を考えることを頑固に支持する一方、人間行動は相矛盾的で自己破壊的である、と認識する。人間は、合理的にその本性を反映させる潜在力を持っているのに、事実上、幻想に屈服するものであるということは、この2人の思想家に共有された前提であったが、それは、彼らの同時代人の多くには不評であった。ミーゼスは、左翼に対する社会的および経済的な万能薬と闘うことに全生涯を費やしたが、一方、フロイトは、彼のリビド理論の文脈をはずし、それを性的ユートピア主義と論じた人々に対して反論することに成熟期を費やした。しかしながら、フロイトとミーゼスを悲観論者であるとか、保守主義者であるとか呼ぶのは誤りであろう。むしろ彼らは、両方とも、同時代の多くの人が共有していた、より現実的な仮定に基づいた人間条件を改善しようと懸命に努力したのであった。フロイトとミーゼスは、幻想とともに幻滅からの脱出を通して希望を指し示したのである。

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