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First published Mon Dec 9, 2013; Thu Nov 17, 2016 Ludwig was the third son of the distinguished jurist, Paul Johann Anselm Ritter von Feuerbach. His nephew, the neoclassical painter, Anselm Feuerbach, was the son of Ludwig's older brother, also named Anselm, himself a classical archaeologist and beautician in the spirit of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Johann Joachim Winckelmann. [2] Ludwig's father, who studied philosophy and law in Jena in the 1790s with Kantians, Karl Reinhold and Gottlieb Hufeland, respectively, belonged to a group of distinguished North German scholars who were invited to Bavaria during the period of administrative reform under Maximilian Mongella, and tasked with the task of modernising the legal and educational institutions of what took place in 1806 in the modern kingdom of Bavaria. Other members of this Nordlichter or Northern Lights group included F.I. Niethammer, F.H. Jacobi (the godfather of Ludwig's younger brother, Friedrich), and Friedrich Thiersch (the teacher of Ludwig's two older brothers, who has sometimes been called the Humboldt of Bavaria). P.J.A. Feuerbach was knighted in recognition of his achievement in modernizing the Bavarian penal code, though his political influence was dramatically limited as a result of Napoleon's outspoken national liberal criticism expressed in the pamphlets he published in 1813 and 1814. Raised Protestant and religiously pious in his youth, Ludwig testified at the theological school of the University of Heidelberg in 1823, where his father hoped to be placed under the influence of the late rational theologian, H.E.G. Paulus. Ludwig was won instead by the theoretical theologian, Karl Daub, who had played a key role in the Hegel exercise in Heidelberg for two years in 1816, and was by this time one of the most important theologians of the Hegelian school. By 1824 Ludwig had secured his father's reluctant permission to move to Berlin on the pretext that he wanted to study with theologians Friedrich Schleiermacher and August Neander, but in fact because of his growing love for Hegel's philosophy. Feuerbach's registration in Berlin was delayed due to suspicions of his participation in the politically subversive student fraternity movement (Burschenschaft), in which two of his older brothers were active, resulting in one of them (Karl, a talented mathematician) being imprisoned and then attempting to kill himself. In 1825, to his father's disappointment, Ludwig moved to the philosophical school, then listened over a period of two years to all of Hegel's lectures except those on aesthetics, repeating lectures on logic twice. [3] Shortly after defending his Latin thesis, *De ratione, una, universali, infinita*, in Erlangen 1828 Feuerbach began giving lectures on the history of modern philosophy at the conservative university there, many of which the faculty was closely associated with the neo-Pietist Awakening, and, in by Julius Friedrich Stahl, who would go on to become a leading theorist of conservatism, also with the so-called positive philosophy of the late Schelling. The scathingly satirical and even vulgar couplets (*Xenien*) directed against the Pietists that Feuerbach attached to his first book, *Thoughts on Death and Immortality* (1830, henceforth *Thoughts*; see Section 2 below), which he published anonymously in 1830, effectively destroyed his prospects for an academic career. During the 1830s Feuerbach published three books on the history of modern philosophy, in addition to many essays and reviews. These include the *History of Modern Philosophy from Bacon to Spinoza* (1833), the *History of Modern Philosophy: Presentation, Development and Criticism of Leibnizian Philosophy* (1837), and *Pierre Bayle: A Contribution to the History of Philosophy and Humanity* (1838), none of which has been translated into English. The first of them won the praise of Edward Gans and an invitation from Leopold von Henning to contribute comments to the *Annals for Scientific Review*, the main journal of the Hegelian Academic Institute in Berlin. In these reviews Feuerbach defended Hegelian philosophy strongly against critics like Karl Bachmann. However, even after the publication of the works on Leibniz and Bayle, he was denied an academic appointment. He was able for several decades to maintain his existence as an independent scholar in the remote Franconian village of Bruckberg under his wife, Bertha Löw, being a partial heir to a porcelain factory located there, from a modest pension due to his father's service in Bavaria, and from publishing royalties. The event that caused the gradual dissolution of the Hegelian synthesis of faith and knowledge that Marx and Engels later referred to as the putrefaction of the absolute spirit was the publication in two volumes in 1835-36 of D.F. Strauss's *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. Here Strauss used the tools of the Higher Criticism he had acquired from his teacher Tübingen, F.C. Baur, to reveal the historical unreliability of the narratives of Jesus' life preserved in the normal gospels, and interpreted the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ as a mythological expression of the philosophical truth of the identity of the divine spirit and the human species (designed as the community of finite spirits that exist throughout history, and not as a historical person, Jesus of Nazareth). The emergence of Strauss's book confirmed the suspicions of theological conservatives such as E.G. Hengstenberg and Heinrich Leo that Hegel's philosophy, despite the use of Christian terminology, is incompatible with historical faith, and the authors of the Berlin *Annals* felt compelled to publicly discredit the Strauss's. It was in the aftermath of these events that Arnold Ruge established the *Halle Annals for German science and art*, which served for several years as a literary institution of the Young Hegelians, and to which Feuerbach began contributing essays and reviews in 1838, including in 1839 an essay entitled *Towards a Critique of Hegelian Philosophy*, in which he began to publicly distance himself from the Hegelian cause, calling for a return to nature and to a naturalistic explanation of the mysteries of Christianity, and religion in general. [4] Feuerbach achieved the height of his brief literary reputation by publishing in 1841 the essence of Christianity, which was translated into English by the novelist, Mary Anne Evans (aka George Eliot), who also translated the Strauss life of Jesus. Engels recalled the emergence of Feuerbach's book as a profound liberating effect on him and Marx breaking the spell of the Hegelian system and establishing the truths that human consciousness is the only consciousness or spirit that exists, and that it depends on the physical existence of humans as part of nature (Engels 1888: 12–13). In 1844 Marx wrote to Feuerbach, referring to the *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (1843, then *Principles*) and *The Essence of Faith According to Luther* (1844), that he had, intentionally or not, given socialism a philosophical foundation (GW v. 18, p. 376). In fact, Feuerbach was only then acquainted with socialist ideas through the reading of his writers such as Lorenz von Stein and Wilhelm Weitling. In the end, he denied Marx's request for a contribution to the *German-French Chronicles*, as well as Rugg's urging to become more politically engaged. He came out of rural isolation to observe quite passively the final disappointing events in Frankfurt in 1848, and to deliver a series of public lectures in Heidelberg beginning the same year. Unfortunately he failed to develop with great specificity or argument the philosophy of the future for which he called in the early 1840s, continuing instead to focus mainly on religion in works such as *The Essence of Religion* (1845), *Lectures on the Substance of Religion* (1851), and *Theogogon According to the sources of Classical, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (1857). The five years of literary work that Feuerbach invested in the last work, which he considered his crowning achievement, went largely unnoticed by both his contemporaries and his descendants. During the 1840s, Feuerbach corresponded and occasionally visited and maintained close personal relationships with several leading German radicals, including, in addition to Ruge and Marx, publishers Otto Lüning, Otto Wigand and Julius Fröbel, the revolutionary poet, Georg Herwegh, and his wife, Emma; Hermann Kriege, an independent activist and early German socialist who immigrated to America, and scientific materialists such as Jacob and Carl Vogt. The impression he made on many top lights of the younger generation reflected reflected Bildungsroman Keller, Henry Green, originally published in 1855, and in the dedication (to Feuerbach) of Richard Wagner's early book, *The Art-Work of the Future* (1850). Partly as a result of a global economic crisis, the porcelain factory that had supported Feuerbach's literary existence went bankrupt in 1859. The following year, he and his wife and daughter were forced to relocate to the village of Rechenberg, then on the outskirts of Nuremberg, where Feuerbach lived the rest of his life under severely strained economic conditions and in increasingly poor

health. Although his productivity as a writer declined sharply during this period, he was able to bring out in 1866 the tenth and final volume of his collected works (which had begun to appear in 1846), bearing the title *God, freedom and immortality* in terms of anthropology, and including a fairly substantial, though fragmentary, essay in *Spiritualism and Materialism*, especially in relation to freedom of will'. In this essay, and in an essay on morality that Feuerbach left incomplete in his death, we find him beginning to outline a moral psychology and a bliss-based moral theory in which the concept of drive-to-happiness (Glückseligkeitstrieb) plays a central role. 2. Early idealistic pantheism In an essay published in 1835 Heinrich Heine observed that pantheism had become until this period the secret religion of Germany. [5] That Feuerbach is generally remembered as an atheist and a materialist tends to disguise the fact that he began his philosophical career as an enthusiastic follower of this philosophical religion, an early expression of which can be found in the Greek words *hen kai pan* (One and All) written in 1791 by Hölderlin on the student album Hegel by Tübingen (cf. Pinkard 2000: 32). [6] [7] This inscription is an allusion to the words uttered by Lessing after reading Goethe's poem-fragment, Prometheus, and respond enthusiastically with the proclamation of spinozist, according to the account contained in Jacobi's famous letters about the Spinoza doctrine (1785; cf. Jacobi [MPW]: 187). It was the publication of these letters that sparked the original pantheism controversy, and had the unintended effect of leading more than a generation of young German poets and thinkers to regard Spinoza no longer as a dead dog and an atheist atheist, but rather as the divine sage of a pantheistic doctrine in which those who, like Lessing, could no longer stomach orthodox notions of divinity that make a strict distinction between creator and creation, they could seek to satisfy their spiritual ambitions. Feuerbach included several verses of Prometheus-fragment as an epigram in his first book, in which he used Tools of Hegelian logic to develop a view of divinity as One and All along lines defined by Spinoza, Giordano Bruno and Jacob Boehme. These three hailed as pious wise men inspired by God (GTU 241/48) who prepared the reconciliation (GTU 463/214) between nature and spirit that it is the duty of the modern age to celebrate. But this reconciliation, he argued, cannot happen as long as God continues to be seen as a person who exists regardless of the world. That Feuerbach, unlike Strauss, never accepted Hegel's characterization of Christianity since the integrated religion is clear from the contents of a letter he sent to Hegel along with his thesis in 1828. [7] In this letter he identified the historical task remaining in the wake of Hegel's philosophical achievement to be the establishment of the exclusive sovereignty of reason in a kingdom of idea that will usher in a new spiritual discharge. Heralding arguments put forward in his first book, Feuerbach went on this letter to emphasize the need for I, himself in general, which especially since the beginning of the Christian era, has ruled the world and has thought of itself as the only spirit that exists at all [to] cast down his royal throne. (GW v. 17, Briefwechsel I (1817-1839), 103–08) This, he suggested, would require the dominant ways of thinking about time, death, this world and beyond, individuality, personality and God to be radically transformed within and beyond the walls of academia. Feuerbach made his first attempt to challenge the dominant ways of thinking about individuality in his inaugural thesis, where he presented himself as a defender of speculative philosophy against those critics who argue that human logic is limited to certain limits beyond which all research is futile, and who accuse for-profit philosophers of violating them. This criticism, he argued, presupposes an conception of logic is a cognitive school of individual subject thinking that is used as a means of capturing truths. It was intended to show that this view of the nature of reason is wrong, that reason is one and the same in all matters of thought, that it is universal and infinite, and that thought (Denken) is not an activity performed by the individual, but rather by the kind that acts through the individual. In thought, Feuerbach wrote, I'm tied together with, or rather, I'm a me-indeed, I myself am-all human beings (GW I:18). In the introduction to Feuerbach's thoughts he assumes the role of diagnosis of a mental illness with which he claims that modern moral issues are affected. This disease, in which he does not give a name, but which he could have called either individualism or selfishness, gets to be the defining characteristic of the modern era to the extent that this era perceives the single human person for himself in his individuality [...] as divine and infinite (GTU 189/10). The main symptom of this disease is the perception [Anschauung] of the real whole, unity and life in a unity (GTU 264/66). This loss feuerbach finds reflected in three general trends of the modern era: 1) the trend consider human history exclusively as the history of the views and actions of individual human subjects, and not as the history of humanity conceived as a single collective agent. 2) the tendency to regard nature as a simple set of countless single stars, stones, plants, animals, elements and things (GTU 195/14) whose relations with each other are completely external and mechanical, and not as an organic whole, the internal dynamics of which are driven by a single overall vital principle, and 3) the tendency to perceive God as a personal factor whose unimaginable will, through which the world came to be made from nothing and constantly directed, is unyielding by rational necessity. Feuerbach's main objection to God's theistic conception and his relationship to creation is that, in it, both are considered equally inanimate. Instead of consisting of an inanimate issue in which traffic is transmitted for the first time by the deliberate action of an external agent, Feuerbach argues that nature contains within it the principle of its own development. It exerts unlimited creative power by dividing and distinguishing its individual parts from each other. But the priceless multiplicity of systems within systems resulting from this activity constitutes a single organic whole. Nature is ground and principle of itself, or -- what is the same thing, exists out of necessity, from the soul, the essence of God, in which it is one with nature. (GTU 291/86) God, in this respect, is not a skilled engineer acting on the world, but a prolific artist who lives in and through it. In Thoughts Feuerbach further argues that the death of finite individuals is not only an empirical fact, but also a priori truth resulting from a proper understanding of the relationships between infinity and finite, and between substance and existence. Nature is the set of finite atoms that exist in distinction between time and space. Since to be a finite person is not to be no number of other people of which one is distinct, non-existence is not only the state of individuals before they begin to exist and after they have ceased to do so, but also a condition in which they participate by being the designated entities that they are. Thus, existence and non-existence, or life and death, are equally components of the existence of finite entities throughout their generation and destruction. Everything that exists has a substance that is distinguished from its existence. Although individuals exist in time and space, their spirits do not. The substance is generally timeless and lime. Feuerbach regards it however as a kind of cognitive space in which individual spirits are conceptually contained. Real or three-dimensional space, in which the things and people exist in the distinction from one another and in the temporal succession, thinks as substance in the determination of the (GTU 250/55). In his existence-one, Feuerbach argues, God is everything-as-one, and is, therefore, the universal substance in which all finite spirits are grounded, contained and captured [begriffen] (GTU 241/48). It is through the Empfindung experience or feeling that sensitive beings are able to distinguish individuals from each other, including, in some cases, individuals who share the same substance. The form of experience is the length of time, i.e. that everything that is directly experienced happens now, or at this time in the time to which we refer as the present. The experience, in other words, is essentially fleeting and transient, and its content is non-communicable. What we experience are the perceived characteristics of individual objects. Through the act of thought we are able to identify these characteristics through the possession of which different individuals belong to the same species, with the other members of which share these basic characteristics together. Unlike the feeling experience, thinking is essentially contagious. Thinking is not an activity performed by the individual person. It is the activity of the spirit, to which Hegel famously referred to Phenomenology as 'I' which is 'We' and 'We' which is 'I' (Hegel [1807] 1977: 110). Pure spirit is nothing, but this thought activity, in which the individual thinker participates without himself (or herself) is the main thinking factor. That thoughts are presented in the consciousness of individual thought subjects in temporal succession is due, not to the nature of thought itself, but to the nature of individuality, and to the fact that individual thought subjects, while able to participate in the life of the spirit, do not cease to exist as physically distinct entities that remain part of nature, and therefore are not pure spirit. A biological species is identical and separate from the individual organisms that make it up. The species has no existence other than the form of these individual organisms, and yet the perpetuation of the species involves the perpetual production and destruction of the specific individuals of which it consists. Similarly, the Spirit has no existence other than the existence of individuals with self-awareness in whom the Spirit becomes aware of himself (that is, he constitutes himself as a Spirit). Just as the life of a biological species occurs only in the production and destruction of individual organisms, so the life of the Spirit involves the production and destruction of these individual individuals. In this light, the death of the individual is necessary from the life of the infinite Spirit. Death is simply the withdrawal and withdrawal of your objectivity from your subjectivity, which is eternally living activity and therefore eternal and immortal. (GTU 323/111) Feuerbach urged his readers to recognize and accept the irrevocability of their individual mortality so that in doing so they could come to an awareness the immortality of their kind-substance, and therefore in the knowledge of their true self, which is not the person with whom they were accustomed to identify. They will then be able to recognise that, while the shell of death is hard, its core is sweet (GTU 205/20), and that true faith in immortality is a belief in the infinity of the Spirit and in the eternal youth of mankind, in the inexhaustible love and creative power of the Spirit, in its eternal blindness to new people from the matrix of completeness and the granting of new beings for the glorified, enjoyment, and reasoning of itself. (GTU 357/137) In the light of the emphasis placed in his later works on the practical existential needs of the embedded individual, it should be noted that during his early idealistic phase, Feuerbach was strongly committed to a theoretical ideal of philosophy according to which meditation and immersion in God is the highest moral act of which human beings are capable. Whereas in feuerbach's later works she will seek to force philosophy to descend from her divine and self-sufficient bliss into thought and open her eyes to human misery, (GPZ 264/3) here she spoke instead of the painful whining of patients and the last groans of death as victory songs of the genre [in which] she celebrates her reality and victorious excellency over the single phenomenon. (GTU 302/ 95) 3. Feuerbach as a historian of philosophy Understanding logic as one and universal integrated into the works discussed in the previous section also informs the approach followed by Feuerbach in the history of philosophy in the three previously mentioned books and a series of lectures he produced during the 1830s. [8] In his lectures on the history of modern philosophy Feuerbach stresses that philosophical reflection is an activity in which people are led. The history of the philosophical systems that this activity has created, he argues, has been designed only subjectively and therefore insufficiently, since it is seen as the history of the views of individual thinkers. Because thought is a kind-activity the philosophical systems that have emerged during the history of philosophy should be considered as necessary views of logic itself. The idea is not something that is produced for the first time by philosophical reflection. On the contrary, the individual thinker, in the act of thought, transcends his individuality and acts as an instrument or instrument through which the idea implements one of its moments, which is later reproduced in the consciousness of the historical philosophy. The activity of the idea is subjectively experienced as inspiration (Begeisterung). In the production itself, the idea does not go from non-existence, but rather from a state of existence (in itself) to (which is for herself). The idea produces itself by its definition, and human consciousness is the means of Logic is nothing but the self-activity of the eternal, infinite idea, whether in art or religion or philosophy, but this activity is always the activity of the idea in a particular determination and so at a particular moment, because it is precisely according to the particular decisions of the idea that successively enter the human consciousness that we differentiate the periods and seasons of history. (VGP 11) The emergence of new philosophical systems arises in this respect from a need that is both internal and external. Some philosophical ideas are capable of achieving historical expression only under certain historical circumstances. Just as it was possible for Christianity to appear at that point in history, when the ties of the family and the nation in Greco-Roman antiquity were dissolved, so it was possible for modern philosophy to appear only under certain historical circumstances. The beginning of the history of modern philosophy must be at the point where the modern spirit begins for the first time to distinguish itself from the medieval spirit. The dominant principle of the medieval period was the Judeo-Christian, monotheistic principle, according to which God is conceived as an almighty man through an act whose will of the material world was created by nothing (ex nihilo). It is because nature, as designed in this respect, is excluded from divine substance, according to Feuerbach, that medieval thought showed no interest in nature research. It is only where the essential nature begins to be discovered that the spirit of modernity is distinguished by the medieval spirit. This happens more clearly when matter comes to be seen as a characteristic of the divine substance, so that God is no longer seen as a being distinct from nature, but rather as the immutable and eternally forthcoming cause from which the fullness of finite shapes in nature pours forth. This is the case first among philosophers of the nature of the Italian Renaissance, and then in Jakob Böhme's speculative reflections and spinoza system. Indeed, it is a feature of Feuerbach's view of the history of modern philosophy that he sees it as a principle, not with nature philosophers of the Italian Renaissance. Feuerbach insists on the speculative importance of Bacon's nature philosophy. It is precisely in the submission of nature to experimentation, and therefore to rational understanding, that spirit grows above nature. But while Feuerbach emphasizes the philosophical importance of experience in the modern rediscovery of nature, he nevertheless insists that empiricism lacks a principle of its own. Later he will talk about the need for an alliance between German metaphysics and the anti-scholastic, optimistic principle of French sensuality and materialism (VT 254-255/165). The belief Feuerbach that the Christian faith is imological in logic and philosophy was was from his own studies on the history of modern philosophy, especially the studies of leibniz and Bayle. His monographs on these elements were written during the period of controversy following the emergence of the life of Strauss of Jesus. Towards the end of the 1830s the Young Angels were increasingly opposed to two fronts, by right-wing Hegelians such as Friedrich Göschel, who insisted on the compatibility of Hegelianism and Protestant orthodoxy, and by representatives of the so-called positive philosophy, who, taking their inspiration from the late Schelling, stressed the personality of God as revealed in the Christian revelation as a supreme metaphysical principle (cf. Breckman 1999 and Gooch 2011). In the light of these developments, starting with Leibniz's monograph, Feuerbach has increasingly sought to distinguish between each other and prove the incompatibility of what is referred to there as a philosophical and theological point of view, respectively. Feuerbach sees the theological view as practical because he imagines God as a being separate from the world, in which he acts according to purposes similar to those that guide people's actions, rather than capturing the world as a necessary, and therefore logically understood, consequence of divine nature. To be sure, for leibniz, there is nothing arbitrary about divine will. God's will is determined by his infinite wisdom and kindness, which force him to choose to create the best possible world. But this attempt to reconcile logical necessity and divine sovereignty remains, in Feuerbach's view, an unacceptable compromise. Like Tycho Brahe, who sought to combine ptolemy and copernis astronomy, Leibniz sought to reconcile the incompatible. In general, Feuerbach regarded Leibniz's theory of monads as an initial philosophical position that offers a truly new conception of the substance, and an alternative to the mechanistic-mathematical Cartesian narrative of movement, and therefore constitutes an organic connection to the developmental sequence of historical philosophical systems. Feuerbach criticized Leibniz, however, for not having emerged the unity or harmony of the monads by the nature of the monads themselves, and for appealing instead to a theological representation of God as an alien, an external force that achieves this harmonization miraculously, and therefore inexplicably. Although, considered superficially, Feuerbach's study of Bayle is a continuation of the line of research sought in his previous historical monographs, closer inspection confirms Rawidowicz's observation that this book marks an important turning point in his spiritual development (Rawidowicz 1964: 62-62). The book is full of aberrations that happen for many pages without making any reference to Bayle, which can create the impression that it lacks a clearly defined focus. In fact Feuerbach is here moving in, and building a case for, the claim that that more explicitly in the years to come, i.e. that the practical denial of Christianity is a fact to the extent that the scientific, economic, aesthetic, moral and political values and institutions that are components of modern European culture are incompatible with the requirements of the authentic Christian faith, as expressed in the Bible and in the writings of classical patriarchal and medieval writers, who are either indifferent or indifferent to the scientific exploration of nature, the acquisition of wealth, the pursuit of artistic creativity as an end in itself and efforts to establish moral and political norms on the basis of universally valid rational principles and not the power of revelation or the Church. Although the Protestant Reformation, in rejecting ecclesiastical celibacy, affirming the inclination of the lay, and the separation of temporal and spiritual power, solved the contradiction between spirit and flesh that was typical of medieval Catholicism, Feuerbach argues, it failed to resolve the contradiction between faith and reason, or theology and philosophy. Bayle's historical significance for Feuerbach consists in his uncompromising exposure to this contradiction, which, because it was so deeply rooted in Bayle's own character, he could only resolve by accepting the finish. Feuerbach tried to further expose this shying in his 1839 essay, In Philosophy and Christianity, in which he for the first time publicly rejected Hegelian claim that philosophy confirms in the form of conceptual thought the same truths confirmed by religion in the form of logical representations. 4. Criticism of Christianity In a part of the prelogism of the second edition of the *Essence of Christianity* (1843) that Eliot omitted from its translation, Feuerbach reveals that he had sought in this book to achieve two things: First, to attack Aggelina's claim to the identity of religious and philosophical truth, showing that Hegel manages to reconcile religion with philosophy only by depriving religion of its most distinctive content. Secondly, to place the so-called positive philosophy in a more fatal light, showing that the original of the pagan image of God [Götzenbild] is man, that flesh and blood belong to personality essentially. (WC 10–11) The assessment of each of these objectives requires further clarification of the historical context in which Feuerbach's book appeared, i.e. one year after the ascension of the former throne of the romantic conservative, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, whose inner circle of advisers consisted of pious aristocrats closely associated with the neo-Pietist Awakening, who felt called upon to establish a German-Christian state as a bulwark against the influence of subversives on the continent. 1840 also saw the death of the Prussian Minister of Culture, Karl vom Stein zum Altenstein, who was a supporter of hegelian discourse, and a bearer of hopes the New Angels for both academic progress and a Prussian state informed by a liberal Protestant ethos receptive to progress in the arts and sciences. The wedge driven by the outcry surrounding the appearance of strauss's book between the right and left wings of the Hegelian camp made this central position increasingly intolerable. The policies of Altenstein's successor were instead aimed at killing the dragonseed of Hegelian pantheism in universities under Prussian jurisdiction. By the time Feuerbach published his most famous book, *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), in which he tried to develop a philosophy of positive religion or revelation (WC 3), he had begun to distance himself from his previous idealistic pantheism. That, however, tried in this book to criticize both Hegelian speculative theology and positive philosophy from the same point of view taken by Spinoza in his Theologian-Political Treatise (VWR 16/9; cf. WC 10-11) has often been overlooked. At one point in spinoza treatise observes that biblical writers imagine God as governor, legislator, king, merciful, fair, etc., despite the fact that all the latter are mere features of human nature and far from divine nature. (Spinoza [1677] 2007: 63) In Christianity Feuerbach makes a similar distinction between metaphysical and personal divine accusations. God is regarded as the theoretical object of rational reflection, or God as God, is a timeless and unread entity that is not affected by human suffering and ultimately inseparable from reason itself. The consciousness of human invalidity associated with the consciousness of this being is by no means a religious consciousness. is much more characteristic of skeptics, materialists, naturalists and pantheists. (WC 89/44) Considering that metaphysical indictments, which serve only as external points of support for religion (WC 62/25), can be considered as those applicable to the first person of the Trinity (i.e., God in his abstract universality), the second person of the Trinity, because he has been subjected to the salvation of mankind in a humble birth and a degrading death, he is the only, true, first person in religion (WC 106/51). The doctrine of the Incarnation, Feuerbach argues against Hegel, is not for the Christian believer not a symbolic representation of the eternal procession and the return of the infinite spirit to, and behind, its finite manifestations, but rather a tear of divine compassion [Mitleid] (WC 102/50), and, therefore, the act of a sacred heart that is able to with human suffering. That God was forced by his love for humanity to renounce his divinity and become a man Feuerbach takes as proof that man was already in God, he was already God himself, before became a man (ibid.), that is, that faith in divine compassion includes the attribution or projection to God of a moral emotion that can only be experienced by a being capable of suffering, which God as God is not. The *Essence of Christianity* is divided into two parts. In the first part Feuerbach considers religion in agreement with the human substance (WC 75), arguing that when supposed theological claims are understood in their proper sense, they are recognized as expressing anthropological, rather than theological, truths. That is, the accusations that religious believers apply to God are accusations that apply correctly to the human kind-substance of which God is a fictional representation. In the second part Feuerbach considers religion to be contrary to human substance (WC 316), arguing that when theological claims are understood in the sense in which they are usually taken (i.e., as referred to in a non-human divine person), they are self-contradictory. [9] At the beginning of 1842 Feuerbach still preferred to present to the public his views under the label anthropotheism rather than atheism (GW v. 18, 164), stressing that his primary purpose in denying the false or theological substance of religion was to confirm its true or anthropological substance, i.e. to ensure that the religion was not the same. Feuerbach begins the *essence of Christianity* by suggesting that, since human beings have religion and animals do not, the key to understanding religion must be directly related to what is that most essentially distinguish human beings from animals. This, he argues, is the distinctive kind of consciousness involved in the knowledge of Catholics. [10] A being endowed with such kind-consciousness is able to take his own essential nature as an object of thought. The ability to think here is designed as the ability to engage in internal dialogue, and thus to know itself as containing both an I and a You (a general other), so that, in the act of thinking, the human person stands in relation to the kind in which non-human animals, and human beings qua biological organisms, are unable to stand. When a man is aware of himself as a man, he is aware of himself not only as a thinking being, but also as a willing and a feeling of being. The power of thought is the light of knowledge [des Erkenntnis], the power of will is the energy of character, the power of the heart is love. (WC 31/3) These are not powers that the individual has at his disposal. It is rather forces manifested psychologically in the form of non-selfish kinds-drives (Gattungsriebe) with which individuals find themselves periodically overwhelmed, especially those poets and thinkers in works whose genre-substance is most clearly instadiated. [11] Such events include experiences of erotic and platonic love, the to knowledge; the experience of being moved by emotion music; the voice of conscience, which obliges us to mitigate our desires to avoid violating the freedom of others; Compassion? admiration; and the urge to overcome our own moral and spiritual limitations. The latest push, Feuerbach argues, presupposes a realization that our individual limitations are not restrictions of kind-substance, which thus acts as the norm or ideal to which one's efforts are directed to self-transcendence. The individual of man is limited both physically and morally. Our physical existence is limited in time and space. We are also limited -- and often painfully aware of our existence like this -- to our mental and moral abilities. But I only experience as a painful limitation my inability to be and do things that others of my kind are able to be and do, so that recognizing my own limitations I recognize at the same time that they are not limitations of the genre. If they were, I either wouldn't be aware of them at all, or I wouldn't experience my awareness of them as painful. For example, I represent myself only for cowardice, because I know the bravery of others, which I myself miss. I only stir myself for my sting because of my awareness of the generosity of others, which I myself miss. The experience of consciousness—taken in the broad sense as an awareness of one's moral and mental deficiencies and inadequacies—presupposes the consciousness of species in the form of awareness of the qualities one finds oneself missing, but can imagine oneself under other conditions of occupation. Feuerbach's central claim to the *Essence of Christianity* is that religion is an alienated form of human self-awareness inso far as it concerns people's relationship to their own substance as if they are distinct from themselves. Although, in developing this claim, Feuerbach was clearly influenced by Hegel's narrative of unhappy consciousness in Phenomenology, Ameriks's claim that Feuerbach's philosophical teachings [...] can be understood as little more than a complement to a complement to the details of Hegel's repulsive narrative of Orthodox Christianity as a form of unhappy consciousness (Ameriks 2000: 259) is problematic for a variety of reasons. First, he overlooks the possibility that Hegel has understood his analysis of disgruntled Consciousness to apply to the otherworldly associated with medieval Catholicism, or perhaps to otherworldly religion in general, but in any case to the kind of Protestantism he regarded as the religion of the modern era (Hegel [1807] 1977: 14), and in which he found the sacred and the secular reconciled. Secondly, it overlooks the fact that Feuerbach's ownership of the subjects found in the Hegel account of unhappy occurs in the context of an explicit, if incomplete, repudiation of the philosophy of the Hegel Spirit. Unlike Hegel, who perceives Unhappy Consciousness as a moment in the development of human self-awareness that also a moment in the advent-to-be-for-absolute itself, Feuerbach has until this moment concluded that one cannot distinguish the absolute spirit from the subjective spirit or essence of man without, in the end, continuing to hold the old view of theology (VT 246-247). Third, it overlooks the importance of Feuerbach's emphasis on meaning for understanding the essence of religion precisely those subjective aspects of religious consciousness (imagination and emotion) that Hegel himself regarded as unconscious or of secondary importance. Finally, in relation to this third point, it overlooks the importance of the Feuerbach agreement with Spinoza v Hegel that faith [...] requires not so much truth as piety (Spinoza [1677] 2007: 184). In a short essay published in 1842, in which he tried to clarify the difference between his own approach to the philosophy of religion and Hegel, Feuerbach suggested that this difference is most evident in the relationships in which each of them stands in Schleiermacher, who famously defined religion as a feeling of absolute dependence. While Hegel had reprimanded Schleiermacher for relinquishing the truth-claims of the Christian faith by taking articles of faith as expressions of this sentiment, Feuerbach says he only does it because Schleiermacher was prevented by his theological bias from drawing the inevitable conclusion that, if emotion is subjectively what religion is mainly about, then God is objectively nothing but the essence of emotion (B 230). These comments fail to recognize that, in *Essence of Christianity* Feuerbach had conceived of God as an alienated projection of the human kind-substance, which was said to include not only emotion, but reason and will as well. However they reflect Feuerbach's generally overlooked development against Hegel's resources derived from the philosophies of Schleiermacher and Jacobi's sentiment,[12] and show the direction in which his thinking about religion continued to move after the publication of *The Essence of Christianity*, that is, far from the emphasis on species-consciousness captured along the Hegelian lines, and toward what Van Harvey has aptly referred to as naturalist-existentialist themes that dominate his later writings on religion (see Harvey 1995), which are discussed in Section 6 below. 5. The New Philosophy In lectures on the history of modern philosophy delivered in 1835/36, Feuerbach wrote that idealism is a true philosophy, and that what is not spirit is nothing (VGP 139). Around the same time he vigorously defended the absolute method that Hegel used in his Logic against his critics (GW 8:73). Feuerbach himself referred to his early philosophical 'the view of pantheistic identity' (GW 10:291). His efforts to get rid of this view have been ongoing over the course of two decades, although the extent to which success is debatable. While the young Marx saw Feuerbach as the true conqueror of old philosophy, the neo-Cantian historian of materialism, F.A. Lange, could find in his new philosophy only another repetition of the philosophy of the spirit, which we find here in the form of a philosophy of conscientiousness that lacks materialistic good faith (Marx 1844: 80; Langer [1866] 1974: v. 2, 522). In 1839, the same year that Feuerbach made his first public break with Hegelianism in the essay, *To a critique of Hegelian Philosophy*, he was still able to write that he lost in speculative philosophy the element of empirical, and in empiricism the element of speculation, and to describe his own method as an attempt to unite both kinds of philosophical activity in a form of skepticism or simply criticism as much as speculative the simple empirical (GW 9:12). It was only in 1842, between the time of publication of the first (1841) and the second (1843) editions of the *Essence of Christianity* (which also happens to have been an era of draconian censorship and police surveillance) that Feuerbach was convinced of the need to make a radical break with the speculative philosophical tradition. [13] This prompted him to mention in the foreword to the second edition of his famous book that the idea retained for him only a practical meaning as faith in the historical future, and in the triumph of truth and virtue. In the realm of theoretical philosophy suitable he now considered himself, in stark contrast to hegelian philosophy, a realist and a materialist (WC 15). In two short philosophical manifestos published in 1842 and 1843, respectively, Feuerbach sought to conclude, through an internal critique of the old philosophy (culminating in the Hegelian system), the principles (Grundsätze) that would lay the foundations for a new, naturalistic philosophy of the future. After the publication of these two manifestos, however, he turned his attention back to religion, arguing in the foreword of the first volume of his collected works (1846) that only in his book on the Substance of Faith According to Luther (1844) did he come to appreciate the truth and substance of sensuality [Sinnlichkeit] (GW 10:187), and thus to overcome the contradiction between speculation and empiricism in which its place in the essence of Christianity had remained immersed. It is certainly the case that a number of concepts that are central to the philosophical anthropology with which Feuerbach tried to replace the old philosophy, including the attempt to naturalized freedom held in his final writings, were first introduced and developed in writings on religion published in the 1840s and 1850s. Because of this it is difficult to neatly separate a discussion of Feuerbach's new philosophy his later theorization of religion. Either way, the first of these issues will be explored in this and the second in the next section. Feuerbach's preliminary efforts in his final active years to develop a movement psychology and naturalized ethics will be briefly examined in the final section. One thing that distinguishes Feuerbach's new philosophy from other versions of modern empiricism and materialism is his claim that he has reaped the principles of this philosophy through a dialectic reversal of the Hegelian system. In the Feuerbach Demonstrations he argues that, by placing the human substance outside man in the ethereal realm of the absolute spirit, hegelian philosophy is the theological alienation of people from their own substance, which he now explicitly equates with a subjective spirit. The re-ownership of this abstract substance by finite, physically human subjects cannot be positively achieved [auf positive Weg], but only through a total denial of hegelian philosophy that will reveal once and for all the telus incarnation of the history of philosophy and humanity (VT 247). In this way, Feuerbach thinks, the hidden truth of Christianity (VT 263) will eventually take place in the form of an atheistic humanism that renounces the imaginary consolations of religion in order to embrace the historical duties of human self-awareness and the creation of political and cultural institutions that are conducive to it. In 1846 Feuerbach published a series of fragments from his unpublished documents in order to document the course of his philosophical evolution. One of these fragments, titled *Doubt*, and dated 1827-28 (which is the time when Feuerbach was writing his Doctoral Thesis) already seems to predict Feuerbach's later criticism of Hegel. In this piece we find him questioning the transition from the first to the second part of Hegel's tripartite philosophical system, i.e. the transition from logic to the philosophy of nature. The conceptual process detected by Hegel in logic, according to which categories of thought are sequentially inferred from one another, is driven by the negativity of the logical definitions of each of these categories, until the process culminates in the absolute idea. But what negativity remains within the absolute idea to spur the transition from thought to existence, unless it is that the supposedly absolute Idea remains somehow incomplete until it becomes an embodiment in the realm of sensual, that is, nature. In this case, however, nature itself (like the realm of sensuality) is the hidden truth of the idea. The claim to the identity of thought and existence was the cornerstone of hegelian philosophy in which Feuerbach finds the old philosophy perfected, and one of the main theses of the new philosophy is the rejection of this claim. Feuerbach argues that, because the concept of pure existence which Hegel begins logic is an abstraction, at the end Hegel succeeds only in thinking reconciliation with the thought of existence, and not with being existence. The new philosophy confirms that existence is distinct from, and before, thought, and that it is as different as the panoply of individually existing beings, from which it cannot be understood. Thought comes from being, but being doesn't come from thinking. [...] The essence of being [that is, as opposed to the mere thought of existence] is the essence of nature. (VT 258/168) To say that something actually exists is to say that it exists not only as a figment of one's imagination, or as a mere determination of one's conscience, but that it exists for itself regardless of consciousness. Being is something in which not only me but others, above all also the object itself, participate (GPZ 304/40). Confirming the distinction between thought and existence, disavowing Hegel's criticism of the safety of reason, and confirming the claim that nature exists through itself, regardless of thought, the new philosophy also confirms the reality of time and space, insisting that true existence is finite, defined, physical existence. While in his lectures on logic and metaphysics, and in his writings from the mid-1830s, Feuerbach had defended the Hegelian method of Entwicklung logic or the development of various moments of absolute idea, he now argues that the concept of development implies a duration, so that a non-temporal developmental process is a contradiction in terms. If speculative philosophy is the philosophy of infinity, the new philosophy aims to reveal the truth of portability by reversing the path that speculation takes from infinity to finite, and from indeterminate to defined (VT 249). Although, in the *Inter-Democrats*, Feuerbach refers to speculative philosophy as inaugurated by Spinoza, restored by Schelling, and perfected by Hegel (VT 243), to principles that traces the origin of this tradition to Cartesian philosophy, namely to the abstraction from the sensual [Sinnlichkeit], from matter (GPZ 275 / 13) through which the conception of cogito first a. Much of the content of the Principles consists of a cut-off investigation of the history of modern philosophy, which is supposed to identify through a series of dialectic inversion a necessary evolution from the rational deity of Descartes and Leibniz through Spinoza's pantheism to kant and fichte idealism, culminating in the philosophy of Hegel's identity. What this research is primarily intended to show is that the fundamental tendency of this evolution was towards the realization and humanization of God or, alternatively, towards the divination of the real, materially existing—materialism, empiricism, realism, humanism—[and] denial of theology. (GPZ 285/ 22) This research is followed by a brief 'demonstration' of the historical of the new philosophy, which takes the form of criticism of Hegel, and from the enumeration of many doctrines that distinguish the new new from the old one. While previous rationalists had conceived that God was completely distinct from nature and possessed perfect knowledge untainted by materiality, and in addition they had placed the effort and work of abstraction and self-liberation from sensuals only on their own, Feuerbach notes that Hegel was the first to transform this subjective activity into the self-activity of the divine being, so that, like the heroes of pagan antiquity, God (or the Idea) must fight through virtue for his divinity, and it only comes to be for himself (or herself) at the end of a long and arduous process (GPZ 296/32). This process, as described by Hegel at the end of the science of logic, involves the logical idea that freely releases [ing] itself ... [in] the externality of space and time that exists absolutely on its own without the moment of subjectivity. (Hegel [1812-1816] 1969: 843) What Feuerbach refers to as the liberation of the absolute from matter is achieved as a spirit gradually distinguished from nature before reaching self-awareness as absolute. Here, Feuerbach notes, the issue is indeed in God, ie, it is comfortable as God, and to put the subject as God is to affirm atheism and materialism, but to the extent that the self-externalization of the idea in nature is replaced during the coming-to-be-for-it-itself idea in the forms of subjective, objective and absolute spirit, this denial of theology (i.e., of God conceived as unconscious by nature) is negated in turn. Hegel's philosophy thus represents, for Feuerbach, the last wonderful effort to restore Christianity, which was lost and wrecked, through philosophy ... identifying it with the denial of Christianity. (GPZ 297/34) The old philosophy designed by the cog as an abstract and merely a thought that is in essence of which the body does not belong (GPZ 319-320/ 54). The new philosophy, on the other hand, confirms that, as a matter of thought, I am a real, sensual being and, indeed, the body as a whole is me, my very essence (ibid.). Although it remains unclear exactly what Feuerbach could mean by claiming that the body as a whole is my ego, elsewhere he says that to confirm that the ego is corporeal has no other meaning than that the ego is not only active, but also passive ... [and that] the passivity of the ego is the activity of the object in such a way that the object belongs to the inner being of the ego (AP 150/142). The object and ego is, to use a heideggerian term, gleichursprunglich or equiprimordial. It is through the body that the

ego is not only an ego, but also an object. To be embodied is to be in the world. means having so many senses, that is, so many and bare surfaces. The body is nothing but the porous ego. (AP 151/143) If philosophical thinking is to avoid a prisoner of ego, Feuerbach insists, it must begin with its contrast, with its alter ego (AP 146/138). Teh TEd of thought is feeling. While in thought it is the object determined by the thinking activity of the subject, in the sense of experience, argues, without much argument and with obviously little concern for the epistemological problems that concerned the British empiricists and Kant, the consciousness of the subject is determined by the activity of the subject, which thus acts as a subject in itself. What makes it possible for the ego to put the object is only that, in positioning the object as something different from itself, the ego is simultaneously in terms of the object. If, however, the object is not only something that is raised, but also (to continue in this abstract language) something that it sets itself, then it is clear that the pre-met ego, which excludes the object from itself and negates it, is only a case of the subjective ego against which the object must protest. (AP 147/ 139) It's not about I, but about the not-me within I, that real, sensual objects are given. Memory is what first enables us to transform objects of the sense experience into objects of thought, so that what is no longer present in the senses can nevertheless be present in consciousness. In this way it allows us to overcome the limitations of time and space in thought, and to construct from a multitude of distinct senses a perception of the universe as a whole, and of our relationships with the various other beings that exist in it. Feuerbach continues to confirm that, unlike animals, man is a Catholic, cosmopolitan being, but now argues that he does not have to attribute to man every unique hypersensitive school in order to confirm this truth, since where a sense is elevated above the limits of its specificity and slavery to needs, it is elevated to an independent and theoretical meaning and dignity; universal sense is intelligence [Verstappen]; universal sensitivity, mentality [Geistigkeit]. (GPZ 336/69) What distinguishes humans from animals is not their possession by non-natural forces of either reason or will, but the fact that human beings are absolute sensuuls whose forces of observation and remembrance extend throughout nature. 6. The later theory of religion although Feuerbach is most often associated with the slogan hidden behind the essence of Christianity, according to which theology is anthropology (to the extent that the accusations attributed by Christians to God are in fact indictments of the human kind-substance), in a series of works on religion published in 1840 and 1850 Feuerbach advanced explanations of the origin of religious concepts and beliefs that are strikingly different from, and apparently contrary to, the most familiar presented in this book. The main works in which Feuerbach promoted these new theoretical proposals are luther's previously mentioned book (1844), a short book entitled The Essence of Religion (1846), the essay, Faith in from the point of view of Anthropology (1847), the Lectures on the Substance of Religion were originally published in 1848-9, but were first published in 1851 (hereinafter Lectures), and Theogonia (1857). The question of the relationship between the account of religion contained in the Essence of Christianity and the views put forward in these later writings is complex, the most penetrating analysis of which is in Harvey (1995). Here Harvey identifies five distinct explanatory principles used by Feuerbach in the essence of Christianity, among which distinguishes those captured along hegelian lines from those that tend instead in the direction of existentialist-naturalist themes that dominate Feuerbach's later writings on religion (Harvey 1995: 68-69). Harvey's thesis is that, in those heavier writings, Feuerbach actually develops a new, bipolar model of religion that is both incompatible with, and more compelling than, the former, which relied too heavily on abstract Hegelian perceptions that are no longer viable. While, in the Essence of Christianity, the emphasis was placed on God as an alienated projection of the human kind-substance, and on the infinity and perfection of the species, the new bipolar model sees religion as a cover for the deep psychological needs arising from the extraordinary and uncertainty of finite, integrated existence of individual human subjects seeking to preserve themselves and expand their physical powers. In a previously cited essay published in 1842, which was intended to clarify the differences between Hegel's philosophy of religion and his own, Feuerbach cited readers seeking to evaluate his argument on the essence of Christianity with his Critique of so-called Positive Philosophy, published in Halle Annals in December 1838 (B 235). There, Feuerbach argued for the first time that all 'decisions' (Bestimmungen) attributed by positive philosophy to God are definitions of either the 'substance of nature' or the 'substance of man' (KPP 204). This claim is consistent with Feuerbach's subsequent statements, including his observation to the Authorities that God, in the theological sense, is God only as long as it is designed as a being distinguished from the being of man and nature (GPZ 280/19). Here the consequence seems to be that, if it can be shown that the characteristics attributed by theologians to God are characteristics derived either from human consciousness or from nature, then it will have been proven that God has no existence other than the existence of human consciousness and nature. So even if it's true, as Harvey is probably right to argue, that the bipolar model of religion found in writing not only complements, but replaces, the position taken by Feuerbach on the essence of Christianity, these two separate explanatory undertakings can, however, be understood as alternative strategies for the realization of the original Feuerbach Feuerbach Whereas the categories of deity may be reduced to categories derived either from the essence of nature or from the human substance; Also, while Harvey is right to point out that the human kind-substance rarely mentioned in Feuerbach's later writings, by 1851 Feuerbach had not yet abandoned the claim that God conceived as a personal being distinct from nature is nothing other than the deified and objectified spiritual essence of man (VWR 28/21). As Rawidowicz (1964: 113) and Ascheri (1964: 62) have both observed, the rupture with the speculative tradition that Feuerbach marked in the Preliminary Theses and in the Principles corresponds to a noticeable change in his attitude to religion, if not in his appreciation of the true-value of traditional dogmatic claims. In his war essays in the late 1830s, and in the Essence of Christianity, Feuerbach had contrasted unfavourably with the selfish practical view of religion, which he linked to the unlimited subjectivity of emotion (Gemüt) and imagination (Phantasie), to the unbiased, theoretical view of philosophy, which he linked to logic and objectivity. At the end of the Principles, however, he informs his readers that the new philosophy, without ceases to be theoretical, nevertheless has a fundamentally practical tendency, and that in this respect he assumes the position of religion and is in the religion itself (GPZ 341/73). This line of thought develops somewhat further in an unpublished manuscript where Feuerbach observes that, in order to replace religion, philosophy itself must become a religion in the sense that it must, in a manner appropriate to its nature, incorporate the essence of religion or the advantage that religion possesses over philosophy (NV 123/148). Here Feuerbach does not tell his readers what this advantage is, but in lectures he argues that the difference between philosophy and religion can be reduced to the simple statement that religion is sensual and aesthetic, while philosophy is nonsensuous and abstract (VWR 20/13). The advantage of religion over old philosophy, then, is probably the tacit recognition of the truth and essentiality of sensuality and human portability, which it is the duty of the new philosophy to articulate explicitly. When Luther feuerbach's book was first published in 1844, his subtitle suggested that it was designed as an addition to the essence of Christianity. Because, in the first edition of this book, Feuerbach had relied heavily on excerpts from patriarchal and medieval works to substantiate his claims, some theological critics had retorted that, while Feuerbach's account of Christianity could be applied to Catholicism, it did not apply to Protestantism. He was responding to critics that Feuerbach turned his attention to Luther, and, in doing so, introduced a number of concepts and themes that had not occupied a prominent place in the essence of Christianity, but which he continued to in his later writings, including both those devoted to religion, as well as those devoted to other subjects. Primarily among these concepts and themes are Seligkeit or smallpox and the Glückseligkeitstrieb or drive-to-happiness; human selfishness or human self-love? a sense of dependence on nature; and the powerful, theogenic (i.e., divine) wish to be free from the limitations of nature with which human movement towards happiness is limited. Feuerbach begins Luther's book by accepting that no doctrine seems more clearly to contradict the central claim promoted in the essence of Christianity, that is, that Christians worship the human kind-substance, than the doctrine of Luther, which is the epitome of human self-obsolescence to the extent that it emphasizes the corruption and contempt of human nature as opposed to the perfection of divine nature. This appearance, however, is misleading. For, while it is true that what Luther takes from Man gives to God, since what belongs to God belongs to Christ, and all that belongs to Christ belongs to the Christian, only on the surface is luther's doctrine. that, in the essence of Christianity, he had contrasted the selfishness and intolerance of faith (which he linked to the false, theological essence of religion) with altruism and love of universality (which he linked to the true, human essence of religion), in Luther Feuerbach's book stresses that the Christian faith is faith in a God who is love, but the main object of whose love is humanity, so that this faith turns out to be an indirect form of human self-love or self-affirmation. The Christian believer confirms his existence, as well as his trust, in the goodness of God, who has promised him smallpox or freedom from the painful limitations of mortality. It is only because the Christian believer completes and satisfies himself in God (WGL 363/46) that God has all that human beings lack. Luther, with his emphasis on God being pro nobis or for us, was the first to leave out the secret of the Christian faith (WGL 366/50), which is, at the bottom, the assurance that God is by nature dealing with man, [...] that God is not for himself or against us, but rather for us, a good being, good for us men. (WGL 366–67/51) From this recognition Feuerbach goes on to develop an analysis of divine characteristics, which he interprets in this context as within the end of goodness (WGL 368/52). Here, and in Feuerbach's later writings, the concepts of smallpox and driving to blessing seem to play a role analogous to that played by the concept of kind-substance in the Essence of Christianity. While, in the last project, properties such as omnisciently and perfection were said to be characteristics of the human kind-substance, in the section on Seligkeit towards the end of Theogeny, where Feuerbach develops a line of thought introduced in Luther's book, many of these same characteristics are said to characterize the state of smallpox itself. God is only the prologue, smallpox the text of Christianity. Or: The mystery of the deity is revealed for the first time and revealed in the gospel of smallpox (T 308). The thesis here is that the characteristics of the Christian God are determined by the most fundamental desires of the Christian believer. For example, god creator qua is first of all almighty, but omnipotence is attributed to God just because God must be almighty in order to be able to exercise his kindness to the faithful by providing them with what they lack, including eternal life. There is no shortage that cannot be satisfied, and no final harm that can occur, the person who is the object of the kindness of an almighty being. In this context, divine qualities are determined by human needs, and these are in turn defined by the psychophysical constitution of humans as beings who find themselves constrained by physical limitations from which they have an urgent desire to be liberated. Faith in divine omnipotence is not motivated by any particular desire, however, but rather by the undefined general desire that there is generally no physical necessity. no restrictions, no opposition to man and human desires (WGL 372/59). Feuerbach, whose understanding of Seligkeit or blessing seems to have been greatly influenced by Augustine's narrative of felicitas in the city of God, defines blessed at one point as freedom from sin, sensual movements, the oppression of matter, death, and the limitations of nature in general (WGL 403/103). While the God of Christianity was previously identified by Feuerbach as an alienated projection of the human kind-substance, here God is defined instead as the realized move toward the happiness of the Christian believer. To say that faith in God is motivated or caused by human movement towards happiness is not necessarily to deny that the characteristics attributed to God are characteristics derived from human nature, but is in any case to confirm that God's knowledge of the perfections of the human kind-substance serves an underlying psychological need determined by people's dependence on nature, and awareness of this dependence in the form of strong hopes and fears that they create to lead to services of faith. Two years after the publication of the book Luther Feuerbach published another short book entitled The Essence of Religion, the basic ideas in which they are further developed in lectures, where Feuerbach explains that because Christians themselves do not worship such things as the sun and the moon, but instead will, intelligence, consciousness as divine beings and powers (VWR 27/20), he had ignored nature in the account of Christianity (VWR, 26/19). This had caused some unspecified but 'absurd' misunderstandings, which increasing the slogan that encapsulates his doctrine from theology is anthropology to theology is anthropology and physiology (VWR 28/21). This modification reflects a new emphasis on Feuerbach's later writings on the ontological dependence of human consciousness on the natural human organism, which exists only in relation to the natural order of which it is part -- a relationship that mediates, or, to be more precise, is revealed by the senses. The Essence of Religion begins with impressive claims 1) that the feeling of dependence is the territory of religion, and 2) that the original object of this feeling, that is, in the history of religion, is nature. Feuerbach defines the feeling of dependence as the feeling or consciousness of man that does not exist and cannot exist except for a being who is different from himself, that he does not have himself to thank for his own existence. (WR 4) This feeling can manifest itself negatively as fear, which Feuerbach refers to at one point as a feeling of dependence on an object without which I am nothing, which has the power to destroy me (VWR 39/31), but can also manifest itself in the form of festive joy and exaltation. Feuerbach finds both of these strong feelings expressed in the act of offering sacrifice, which he takes to be the most characteristic act of nature's religions (as opposed, presumably, to prayer as the characteristic act of spiritual, that is, monotheistic, religion). In addition to filling a gap in the argument put forward in the Essence of Christianity, stressing the dependence of the human substance on the substance of nature, Feuerbach also sought in the Essence of Religion to define the common characteristics of what he calls religions of nature, on the one hand, and spiritual religions such as Christianity, on the other, and to clarify the relationship between these two types of religion. Feuerbach uses the term religion of nature to refer to both the pagan religions of classical antiquity, and the religions of various tribal peoples whose beliefs and practices were described for Feuerbach and his contemporaries by European travelers in magazines such as Das Ausland, from which Feuerbach comes from a number of examples to which he refers in this book (see Annex II). Tomasoni 1990: 10-11, 127-135). While a sense of dependence is the territory of religion, what the act of sacrifice aims for or seeks to achieve is freedom from the constraints of nature, or, alternatively, human independence. If blessing is the condition not limited by the restrictions imposed by nature on all finite, physically subject to generation and corruption, then human smallpox can be seen as the ultimate goal religion (WR 34). The gods are the objects of worship and the recipients of sacrifice, because they are the benefactors of people in the specific sense that they are imagined to have their power to satisfy fundamental human desires, including I don't want to die. Only a being who loves man and desires the happiness of [Seligkeit] is an object of human worship, religion (VWR 71/60). The act of sacrifice is motivated by the experience of need (Bedürfnis), which includes the simultaneous awareness of both its non-existence other than nature and its existence as a conscious being distinguished by nature (WR 32). In the Feuerbach lectures he argues that a sense of dependence on nature is the only truly universal name for the psychological or subjective territory of religion (VWR 39/31). This is still the case even after nature has ceased to be the place of the deity, and the origin of the visible world is pursued by the will of a transcendent creator who brought the world into existence from nothing, and who is solely responsible for the incidents attributed by polytheists to a multitude of divine organisms. The objective correlation of the sense of dependence, in the case of both polytheism and monotheism, is the real existing things and people who are objects of various human needs, physical and psychological needs that Feuerbach implicitly acknowledges, especially in Theogonia, to be defined culturally. Feuerbach's description of the feeling of dependence as implying awareness that I am nothing without a non-I that is distinct from me still closely related to me, something else, which is at the same time mine is (VWR 350/311) reflects his understanding of nature as the whole beings [Wesen], things, [and] objects that man distinguishes from himself and his products (WR 4). Nature, in other words, is the non-human world, without consciousness, will and emotion. It includes things like light, electricity, air, water, earth, and the plants and animals on which the existence of man depends, but it also includes the human body itself to the extent that the results produced by it are produced unconsciously and unintentionally. Nature is the 'cause and soil of man'; in human species nature becomes a personal, conscious, intelligent (verständliches) being (VWR 29/21). To say that human beings depend on nature is to say, among other things, that nature, which lacks consciousness and intent, is what has caused the existence of humans, and that the same physical processes that have produced the human brain have also produced human consciousness. While all organisms depend on nature for their existence, human beings are distinguished by other organisms by the extent of their conscious awareness of this dependence, which Feuerbach finds expressed in the early forms of cultural activity, including the first forms of nature's religion focused, for example, on the changes of the seasons, and on the offering sacrifice to divine beings associated with various aspects of the natural world. Although nature is the original object of religion, this goes unrecognizable initially because human beings do not do it in the beginning by nature or vice versa. The forces of nature are instead personified, and natural events are attributed to the human-like motives of spirits and gods. Religion, according to Feuerbach, presents the following contradiction: When it perceives itself divinely, it mistakenly thinks of God as a thoroughly non-human being (i.e., one whose existence and characteristics in no way depends on the existence and characteristics of human beings), and when he perceives himself as a religion of nature, he wrongly attributes consciousness and will to what is in fact completely non-human. Further analysis of the sense of dependence leads Feuerbach to conclude that this feeling itself presupposes selfishness as the absolute hidden territory of religion (VWR 91-92/79). Here the same reasons that, if human beings are not subject to strong psychological movements that compel them to expand and develop their physical forces, including especially the movement towards self-preservation, they will not experience the limitations imposed on them by nature as painful and restrictive. Life is selfishness (EEWR 82) to the extent that the fundamental movement of all living beings, including the human body, is the movement for self-preservation (Selbsterhaltungstrieb). Nevertheless, what Feuerbach calls human selfishness does not seem to be the same thing, either with psychological selfishness (the claim that everyone always acts out of self-interest) or moral selfishness (the claim that good is what serves my own interests). Feuerbach writes that, by human selfishness he means man's love for himself, that is, the love of the human substance, the love that pushes him to satisfy and develop all impulses and tendencies without which satisfaction and development is neither can be a true, complete human being. (VWR 60–61/50) Feuerbach's book, Theogonia according to the Sources of Classical, Jewish and Christian Antiquity (1857), is the product of six years of close engagement with Hebrew, Greek and Latin texts since antiquity, and exempts the vastness of Feuerbach's humanitarian knowledge. Feuerbach considered it a simpler, more complete, mature work (GW 20: 292). It may not be a mere coincidence that the period of Feuerbach's commitment to these literary feats was the same period when one of the His correspondents were Emil Ernst Gottfried von Herder, the son of Johann Gottfried von Herder, whose introduction to the study of Feuerbach theology had been read as a young man while he was learning Hebrew grammar in preparation for his education in the theological faculty at the University of Like the elder Herder, who conceived the poetry of the Hebrew Bible as a product of the genius of mankind in his childhood, Feuerbach turned to the Iliad and odyssey, which he regarded as urstätten or original sites of anthropology, and in Hebrew scriptures, for clues about the origin of faith in the gods and in God. Large parts of the book consist of either 1) careful literary analyses of individual excerpts selected, for example, from the Iliad or odyssey, or from the creation accounts in Genesis, or else from a verse from Pindar or Ovid, or an excerpt from the New Testament. or 2) excerpts from a wide range of Greco-Roman, patrician, rabbin and medieval sources that Feuerbach cites as evidence to support the book's central explanatory claim. This claim is that the psychological origin of faith in the gods and in God is the strong human desire for happiness or smallpox that is conceived as a state of freedom by the restrictions (Grenze) that nature imposes on human existence, which are experienced by the human subject in the form of strong feelings of hope and fear. Seeking to substantiate the claim that desire is the fundamental religious phenomenon, Feuerbach analyzes several epiphanies from the Iliad in order to show that the gods make their appearances in the saga in response to references addressed to them by man. To the extent that the purposes to which the actions of the gods are directed in the Homeric epics are determined by the wishes of mortals who invoke their blessings and curses, the gods act as representatives or alternates of the (Vertreter) of human self-love (T 12). Desire is a slave of necessity, but a slave with the will for freedom (T 47), and the gods are the fictional embodiment of human freedom by the limitations of portability. Feuerbach comes to this conclusion through his analysis of the acts of reference prayer in the Iliad and their role in fulfilling the desire, and mentions in this context the observation of the Byzantine Homeric commentator, Eustatus of Thessaloniki, that Homer does not only allow the gods' request to remain unfulfilled. In the divine-human relationship, it is the mortals who desire, fight and will, and it is the gods who complete or carry out these human intentions to the extent that the conditions for their satisfaction are beyond human control (T 19). While desire itself is a purely subjective psychological phenomenon, the completion of the action to which a desire can provoke, or the achievement of the end to which the desire is directed, depends on external conditions that may or may not be conducive to the fulfillment of the desire. It's under such where failure is a clear possibility, and a matter of urgency hangs in the balance, that the gods are called and their blessings are sought in order to bring some human effort to a successful completion. Gods are beings who are able to do or know what people will be able to do or know, but can not (T 39). Religion comes not, like philosophy, from a theoretical or speculative impulse to understand the world, but from a practical concern to influence the course of events that appear within it. Faith in the gods thus presupposes the desire that there should be beings capable of guaranteeing the success of human efforts, and faith precedes hope in the logical order of things religiously. If human beings did not have a strong desire, say, to be freed from slavery or to avoid death, faith in the Promised Land or immortality would never have arisen. In biblical terms, faith in God is trust in what God promises, but what God promises is what is sought or desired by human beings. The religious significance of God's promises depends on their correspondence with deep human desires. While, in essence of Religion, Feuerbach refers to the feeling of dependence as the territory of religion, he now attributes the psychological origins of the gods to desire. Desire, which is seen as an act of effort for what remains beyond the limits of human power to achieve, is theogenic in the sense that epiphanies (i.e., manifestations of gods or God) described in Homeric epics and in the Bible, are seen as narrative events, occur as responses to strong human desires or needs, or else as expressions of gratitude and celebration in response to cases where these needs are believed to have been met through cooperation or assistance of a divine service (T 32). The gods owe their existence to sensuality and materialism to the extent that it is the product of the material needs of finite, embedded human subjects. Interesting parts of Theogonia are dedicated to the analysis of the role of the gods in the dedication of the vows, and to the origin of consciousness in the affected will-to-happiness of the other. Feuerbach attributes faith in divine justice to the desire that the person from whom someone has been harmed should be harmed themselves (T 103). It is addressed to the mythological representations of Eerins and Medusa as proof of the sensual origin of the voice of consciousness (T 136), which presupposes a strong, unintentional sense of sympathy with the pain of the person who has suffered, or is about to suffer from, one's actions. It is only in his ego that man has a criterion for distinguishing between right and writing (T 140). At one point in Theogeny Feuerbach defines morality (Sittlichkeit) as the drive-to-happiness endowed with wisdom, the wise, rational, healthy, normal, justified (gerechte) self-love (T 82). When human beings during their history acquire new and different desires, they also tend to worship new and Deities. While the ancient Greco-Roman pagans, even the ancient Jews, were mainly concerned about securing smallpox in the form of long life and time prosperity, the first Christians sought their blessing, their own, in eternity or eternal life. Feuerbach closely associates this shift from a concern with temporal smallpox to a concern with eternal smallpox with the Christian emphasis on the creation of ex nihilo, which also contradicts the Jewish narrative of creation as it involves shaping and ordering pre-existing elements, and limiting the Greco-Roman gods to be able to prolong the lives of mortals , and securing their smallpox in this life without being able to give them immortality. Freedom from the natural need attributed by the first Christian thinkers to God is interpreted by Feuerbach as an expression of the desire of these Christians to be freed from the limitations of material existence. 7. The naturalization of morality in Feuerbach's last writings As noted in the previous section, Feuerbach's embracing of sensuality coincides with a move toward nominalism reflected in a shift of emphasis from human race to individual human being in his later works on religion. One way this shift occurs is in a striking change in Feuerbach's assessment of selfishness. Among the many topics that remain unclear in Feuerbach's later writings is what the expression human substance can mean for him once he has given up the genre-ontology of his previous writings and has declared himself nominal. This central question aside, it is at least clear that in the Principles, and in his later writings on ethics, Feuerbach continues to emphasize the importance of inter-subjectivity and the I-Thou relationship, but that these are no longer conceived in idealistic terms, as they had in his previous writings, including his doctoral thesis, where he talked about thought as a kind-activity in which the individual subject of thought participates. In his later writings on feuerbach ethics he continues to confirm that human beings are essentially community and interactive beings, both in relation to our cognitive and linguistic abilities, and in relation to the range of moral emotions we experience towards each other, but the banality in which the human substance manifests itself is now said to be one that presupposes a real , logical distinction between I and You. Undoubtedly the central concept in Feuerbach's latest works, which include the essay, About Spiritualism and Materialism, especially in relation to freedom of will, and an incomplete essay on morality, is the concept of Glückseligkeitstieb or drive-to-happiness. Towards the end of the Preliminary Thesis, having confirmed that all science must be based on nature, and that doctrines not so grounded remain purely hypothetical, Feuerbach had gone on to note that this applies particularly to the doctrine of freedom, and had in the new philosophy the work of naturalization of freedom (VT 262/172). This is one of the tasks to which he applies himself in About Spiritualism and Materialism, where he aims at supernatural supernatural among them counts Kant, Fichte and Hegel, who attribute to man a noumenal or universal will that is independent of all natural laws and natural causes and therefore of all sensual motives [Triebfedern] (SM 54). Arguing that it is possible for the will to be determined by the simple form of moral law, regardless of any reasonable inclination, Kant had defined the will with purely practical reason. In doing so, Feuerbach argues, he turned the will into a simple abstraction. For Feuerbach it makes no sense to talk about a timeless will lack influence directed towards a particular object. The concepts of movement (Trieb), happiness, feeling and will are closely intertwined in the account of the organism that Feuerbach tried to develop in these last writings. Feuerbach sees the feeling as a first condition of willingness (M 366), since without feeling there is no pain or need or sense of lack against which for the will to try to assert himself. At one point it defines happiness as the healthy, normal state of satisfaction or well-being experienced by an organism that is able to satisfy the needs and movements that are components of individual, characteristic nature and life (M 366). The move towards happiness is a move towards overcoming a multitude of painful limitations with which the finite, physical issue has been affected, which can include political barbarism and despotism (VWR 61/50). Each particular drive is a manifestation of the movement towards happiness, and the different individual drives are named after the different objects in which people seek their happiness (SM 70). Among the specific discs to which Feuerbach refers in his later writings are drive-to-self-preservation, sexual drive, drive-to-enjoyment, drive-to-activity and drive-to-knowledge. Although it does not explicitly link movements with the unconscious, Feuerbach predicts Nietzsche and Freud on the body as territory of both will and consciousness (SM 153), and stresses that the action arises from the power with which a dominant movement succeeds in enslaving other conflicting movements that can be reassert under changed circumstances (SM 91). Feuerbach also occasionally makes a distinction between healthy and unhealthy discs, although he has little to say about the standard or criterion for making such a distinction. While happiness involves the experience of a sense of satisfaction on the part of a being that is able to satisfy movements that are characteristic of its nature, the inability to satisfy these movements leads to various forms of dissatisfaction, aggravation, pain and frustration. The German word, Widerwill, means disgust or revulsion, but literally includes non-want or, willing against, and this, Feuerbach argues, is the most rudimentary form of willingness. Every disease (Übel), every unsatisfied movement, every unsatisfied longing, every sense of absence [i.e., a desired desired is an irritant or stimulating injury and refusal of movement towards happiness innate in every life and feeling is, and the compensatory confirmation of the movement towards happiness, accompanied by representations and consciousness, is what we call will. (M 367) Freedom of will, as Feuerbach understands here, is freedom from evil (Übern) which restricts movement towards my happiness, and depends on the availability to me of the specific means necessary to overcome these limitations. Another way that Feuerbach seeks to naturalized freedom is by developing a naturalistic account of consciousness, according to which the voice of consciousness, which imposes restrictions on my own movement-to-happiness, works in this way as an advocate for the movement towards happiness of the i except me, the sensual Thou (SM 80), who has or stands to be harmed by the actions from which I may have a moral obligation to refrain from execution. Where there is no damage or benefit, Feuerbach argues, there is no criterion for distinguishing the right from error (SM 75–76). Feuerbach agrees with Schopenhauer on compassion (Mitlid) as a key source of moral motivation, but rejects Schopenhauer's association of compassion with the abdication of the will to live. The purpose of morality and law is to harmonise the movement towards the happiness of the various individual members of a moral community. My right is the legal recognition of my own movement towards happiness, my duty is to move towards the happiness of the other who requires recognition from me. (SM 74) Moral will, as Feuerbach understands here, is not a selfless will. It is rather this will that seeks not to harm because it wishes to suffer no harm (SM 80), and has come to define its interests with those of others. Because sympathy for the pain of others presupposes antipathy to my pain, anyone who removes my interest (that is, refuses to recognize moral value in acts motivated by self-interest) simultaneously removes with compassion (Mitleid). (Mitleid).

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