

The illusion Freud meant in *THE FUTURE OF AN ILLUSION* was religion, life's yeastiest force then and now and always (with close competition from lust, greed, and anger): Freud's "illusion" was an illusion of 19th-c. mechanistic materialism. The illusion this thinksheet deals with is the notion that, parallel to "the separation of church and state," religion and morals are separable (so the former can be socially assigned to home and church, the public schools having responsibility only for morals, a responsibility shared by home and church).

1. This illusion is now so common that pseudoscholarly supports for it seem, to the general public, plausible and even persuasive. In particular, the religiomoral connection is being described as particularistically biblical (see letter printed on p.2 of #1837): the Bible and the two religions springing directly out of it are being bracketed away from public school thinking/planning--which amounts to an Oedipal slaying of the father-faith of America, often with a tinge of antisemitism (as "The Ten Commandments" means a gloomy codex civilis/criminalis that tries to keep me from having fun and growing up). I'm concerned that clergy themselves seem, by and large, to buy this dangerous nonsense--esp. liberal clergy.

2. On a scale of 2 to 9, all ways of life that are and that ever have been are placeable as to the relative strength of morals and religion in the religiomoral mix. Why not 1 to 10? Because (this being the nub of this thinksheet), a moralless religion and a religionless morality (say, respectively, 1 and 10) are impossibilities. Let's put Judaism as 8, Christianity as 5, the ancient and Hellenistic Greeks as 2 (along with the Hellenistic Romans), and the ancient Romans as 9. (My placements are arbitrary but substantial enough for profitable conversation.) Where, then, can my enemies (on the public-school-and-religion issue) go for any support from the long past? To the ancient Romans--e.g., recently I ran across this perfectly balanced sentence in Ennius (d.169BC):

Moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque.

The accent (the mountain top in my diagram) is medial, not initial (as in some languages) or periodic (as in many languages, normally in English): "The state stands." Both the grammatical and the substantial subject of the sentence is the issue of what it takes for a government to endure. Since the government's surviving and thriving is an aim of every government in the training of its citizens, this aim must be incorporated in public school curricula. And since no state can long endure without engendering its religion in its young, religion should be incorporate in public school curricula--an obligation that cannot be evaded by saying America has no religion that is isolable and teachable (which is giving the answer before asking the question) and by pleading "pluralism" (as though the presence of aliens and deviants should determine against the teaching of the state's root and sky!--no pejorative edge intended on "alien" or "deviant")....Because Latin is inflected, word order can be dramatic (as it cannot in an uninflected language like English): "Customs ancient state stands Roman manhood and" = "The Roman state stands because it engenders our ancient customs-morals and our style of virility." Note the profound underground religious tones.

3. "Why be pious? Why be good?" (and the connections between the two) are at the heart of my 1954 doctoral dissertation. No wonder I have strong feelings about current efforts to separate the two! The attempt to practice this separation is disastrous for morals and religion.