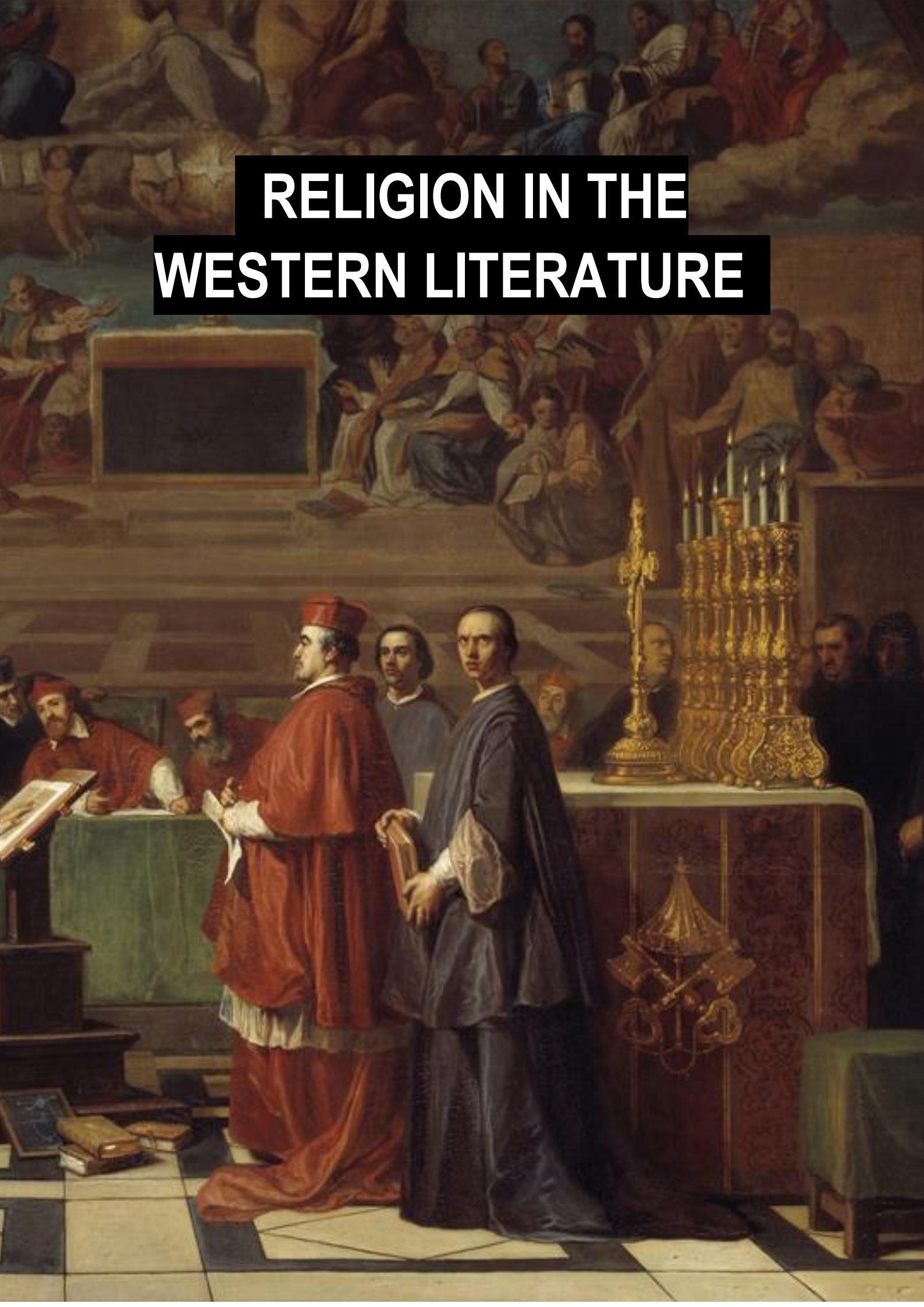


RELIGION IN THE WESTERN LITERATURE



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Emrah BOZKURT

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1. RELIGION IN THE WESTERN LITERATURE

Concepts such as religion, belief, ritual and magic will be used intertwined while conveying his views in the Western literature. This is because religion is analyzed with its effects and consequences rather than its structure. Before written culture, religion and magic were often mentioned together. People who wanted to control events tried to minimize risk in a world full of uncertainties through magic. Even though we have stated that magic existed before written culture, it is possible to say that magic continues to exist today, and some people still prefer magic to minimize risk. Religion has existed as a universal institution since the first human communities. The history of religion and magic is equal to the history of humanity. Some anthropologists say that every human being who has ever lived has belonged to a religion. One of the religions of the first human communities was animism. Animism is known as spirit worship and has similarities with the Islamic mysticism of *wahdat al-body*. Animists claim that all beings in nature have souls and consciousness. Animists believe that animals, plants, stones and so on all have a soul like humans and that these souls are closer to them than gods and goddesses. Animists have a weak belief in gods; they believe that although gods created human beings, it is the spirits who help them. In animism, man is not the master of nature, but only a part of it. They think that there is not much difference between the development of any plant and their own development.¹ According to E.B. Taylor, Animism is the oldest of human religions. He argued that it developed from the first people's experiences of sleep, dreaming, waking, death and similar states and their reflections. This gave rise to the belief in a soul that could be separated from the body, and later on, he argued that ancestor worship developed. He claimed that these developments led first to polytheism and then to monotheism. Philosophers are divided on the issue of God and deity: Some philosophers, including Taylor, claim that it has been reduced from polytheism to monotheism, while others, on the contrary, say that it has increased from monotheism to polytheism. According to L. Feuerbach, there is a connection between religion and dreams: "Emotion is a dream that we see with open eyes, religion is the dream of the awakened consciousness, the dream is the key to the mystery of religions."² He influenced K.Marx and F.Engels who said 'Religion is the heart of a heartless world.'³ with his views on this subject. Shmidt, who differs from Taylor, says that people's turning to the dead gave rise to animism. The Qur'an, on the other hand, has completely prevented animism; one of the reasons is that it explains death as a beginning, not an end, and presents it in connection with the afterlife. The Qur'an states that with death, one's dispositions and connections to this world are severed and considers it primitive for people to turn to the dead. From the Qur'an's assessment of this issue, it does indeed seem, as Shmidt suggests, that people's orientation towards the dead led to animism. By viewing death as a definitive separation from this world

¹ Bozkurt, *Değişen Dünyada Sosyoloji*, s.242-243.

² Şerif Mardin, *Din ve İdeoloji*, İstanbul 2016, s.41.

³ Bozkurt, *a.g.e.*, s.245.

and the beginning of a new life in a completely different dimension, the Qur'an has prevented animism and similar deviations from the soul-body distinction.⁴

Totemism, which is characteristic of tribal societies, is considered one of the religions of the first communities. In Totemism, it is believed that there are mysterious, kinship-type relationships between humans and nature. As in Animism, Totemism believes that natural objects and living things have spirits and supernatural powers. Totems serve as a representation of a community or person and are believed to be descended from all members of the community, uniting the group and providing them with a protective spirit. E. Durkheim, who argued in his studies that people view objects and phenomena in the universe as sacred and profane, considered totemism as the oldest religion of humanity.⁵ J. Frazer, on the other hand, claimed that religion arose from the efforts of early humans to explain and make sense of their experiences of their environment and their lives. W. James, like K. Marx, claims that religion is the only thing in human life that can function as a consolation and strengthening, as "the individual experience of feelings, actions and solitude in relation to the sacred". C.G. Jung said that religion is a special state of mind that can be formulated: "What is understood as forces, spirits, demons, gods, laws, ideals, or whatever one may call them, is a careful observation and reckoning with certain dynamic factors, things in man's world which he finds powerful, dangerous, helpful, or meaningful and beautiful enough to take seriously, to love and adore sacrificially."⁶ When Jung says that "religion is a relationship, positive or negative, with the highest and most powerful value", he means that the human personality plays a role, consciously or unconsciously, in the relationship with the highest value, that is, the human-god relationship can be conscious or unconscious. He goes further and says that the unconscious is the greatest power of man and that it is God. With this idea, Jung says that God already exists within the human being and accuses those who say that God is outside the human being of 'systematic blindness'. According to him, the symbols in dreams carry the immanent meaning of God; the discovery of the sense of religion in man is possible by going into his subconscious, and dreams are helpful for this task.⁷ Fromm criticized Jung for reducing religion to a psychological phenomenon and at the same time elevating it to the status of an unconscious phenomenon.⁸ W. Wundt called it "an unmediated consciousness of the life of every finite in the infinite sphere".⁹ C. Geertz defines religion as a set of symbols that act by formulating concepts about the general order of existence, creating strong, enduring and long-term emotions and motivations in human beings. In response to the phenomena of tension and suffering, B. Malinowski argued that religion, magic and tradition offer psychosocial mechanisms for coping with tension by providing traditional and spiritual escapes. Religious ceremonies-rituals and legends-myths exist to confirm and explain the

⁴ Çalışkan, a.g.e., s.216.

⁵ Bozkurt, a.g.e., s.243.

⁶ M.Doğan Karacoşkun, "Dinî İnanç-Dinî Davranış İlişisine Sosyo-Psikolojik Yaklaşımlar", *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, IV(2004), Sayı:2, s.24.

⁷ Carl Gustav Jung, *Din ve Psikoloji*, çev. Cengiz Şişman, İstanbul 1993, s.62,85,119.

⁸ Erich Fromm, *Psikanaliz ve Din*, çev. Şükrü Alpagut, İstanbul 1990, s.29.

⁹ Karacoşkun, a.g.m., s.24.

order of religion and function as safety valves for the expression of tensions and unresolved contradictions. Cicero, defining conceptual religion with 'attachment', one of the original meanings of the word religion, states that "religion is that which gives veneration and worship to a supreme being (called divine)".¹⁰ F. Schleiermacher, who considers God as an object of religious feeling and emphasizes his immortality, but says, "He is not everything in religion, but only a feature", emphasizes the existence of religious feeling and intuition in human nature and says that the essence of religion is intuition and feeling. In this way, religion becomes a third dimension, separated from metaphysics and morality. Schleiermacher makes the following definition of religion based on the human search for infinity in the universe: "Religion is the intuition and savoring of infinity." In other words, it is devotion to the infinite; however, as we mentioned, he considers God only as a feature in religion.¹¹ Hegel is quoted as saying of Schleiermacher's definition, "If this definition is correct, then a dog should be more Christian than a human being. For dogs feel a more absolute commitment than we do."¹² In this way, this definition is reduced to emotion and attachment, so it is not a comprehensive definition of religion. P. Tillich, in his definition of Christianity with a focus on human psychology, defines religion as "man's interest in the ultimate (god(s))", where the ultimate is the sacred itself. This definition has been criticized for not being a comprehensive definition of religion that includes all religions and 'quasi-religions' such as communism and fascism. Since human beings pursue a goal, all organizations called religions or quasi-religions have an ultimate goal and reaching it is the ultimate goal.¹³ Tillich here limits the definition by specifying the object as God; although he includes monotheistic and celestial religions in this definition, he excludes polytheistic religions or religions that do not accept God. R. Otto, who deeply emphasizes divine authority in the concept of religion, takes his evidence from the holy books. According to him, "the distinguishing mark of true religion is not the notion of a personal god, but the sense of the essence of a holy being, incomprehensible to the intellect, different from all others, whose majesty man fears and at the same time admires for its beauty."¹⁴

In the West, the distinction between the sacred and the profane leads to religious dualism, which becomes a difficult problem to overcome. The historian of religions Challeve, who is one of those who frequently expresses that definitions based on a single god will not be sufficient to overcome this problem, states that adopting a polytheistic definition may be a way out, but emphasizes the inadequacy of this definition and accepts that it is more reasonable to define according to the sacred.¹⁵ In philosophical, sociological and anthropological perspectives, other factors are reflected in the definition of religion. These are the social, economic, historical and cultural contexts in which religion exists. In this

¹⁰ Çalışkan, *a.g.e.*, s.24.

¹¹ See place.

¹² See place, s.25.

¹³ See place.

¹⁴ See place, s.26.

¹⁵ See place, s.27.

context, the history and mental changes experienced by human beings have been re-evaluated and the role of religion in the life of societies has been pointed out. In this context, I. Kant says, "Religion is the perception of all our duties as divine commands."¹⁶ In this definition, Kant sees morality as a very broad phenomenon and seems to reduce religion to morality. However, no matter how important morality is in religion, it is not possible to accept all behavior as God's commandment. By explaining the possibility of perceiving the religion of revelation as natural religion, Kant tried to give a new flavor to the understanding of natural religion published in his time. Because according to him, the true religion is the one that has come by revelation, and in order for it to be widely accepted, it needs to be based on more rational foundations. It can be said that Kant realized an attack against natural religion here. The most extreme point in the understanding of religion based on reason in the West is A. Comte; he claims that the Religion of Humanity, dominated by reason, offers the universality sought by East and West by saying "Humanity has replaced God".¹⁷ This understanding of religion in the West consists of efforts to bring God down to earth in the definitions of religion. Such ideas can be seen as the first attempts to lay the foundations for the removal of religion from the public sphere.

1.1. ACCORDING TO LUDWIG FEUERBACH

Feuerbach's thesis about religion was based on a finding about perception. According to him, in order to say that something exists, it was not enough for it to be conceivable. Because this claim is to say that things that are considered to exist can be perceived or heard. Feuerbach's conclusion from this is: God's existence cannot be proved unless it takes a form that can be perceived. Accordingly, Feuerbach says that the proofs of religious science are in fact ineffective and invalid assumptions. Religion is the transfer of man's own thought to a superhuman plan. The belief in God in the human heart is a reflection of the tendency to compare one's own limitations with an ideal being. Beliefs in the immortality of the soul and the manifestation of divine justice are merely the transposition of people's own thirst for justice into an abstract plan. The extraterrestrial is a human aspiration in disguise. According to Feuerbach, this situation reveals an important similarity between religion and dreams: "Emotion is a dream that we see with open eyes, religion is the dream of the awakened consciousness, the dream is the key to the mystery of religions."¹⁸ Feuerbach says that when a person realizes that his religious ideas are a reflection of his inner world, he will no longer look for a yardstick outside his own nature, but will try to realize his own personality. By making this inference through the Christian religion, he states that people no longer just dismiss Christianity from their minds, but that it is a fixed idea that is at odds with their way of life. S. Freud has similar ideas on this subject. Both of these thinkers regarded religion as an illusion; we think that the understanding on which their ideas are based is closely related to the understanding of God in the Christian father-son dichotomy. When asked where God came

¹⁶ See place, s.28.

¹⁷ See place, s.29.

¹⁸ Mardin, *a.g.e.*, s. 40-42.

from, what is his nature, Feuerbach replied, "The object of all emotions is outside man, the object of religion is within man... You know man by his god and man by his god, both of these are identical with each other. Whatever a man's god is, it is his heart and soul; hence God is embedded in nature." Rather than drawing a conclusion from this definition that if a person is cruel, his god is cruel, and if he is good, his god is good, Feuerbach explains that this is an illusion, that there is no abstract reality after the concrete reality of God. Since religion, i.e. God-consciousness, is designed as man's consciousness about himself, there is a sameness between man and God, but man is not conscious of this sameness. This unconsciousness is the nature of religion. Religion, then, is the earliest and at the same time indirect form of human self-consciousness. The necessary conclusion of this information is: "religion is the childhood of humanity."¹⁹ According to him, the end result of man's ever-changing understanding and beliefs is atheism. Thus, religion is explained as man's relationship with himself, with his own nature.

1.2. ACCORDING TO SIGMUND FREUD

Freud characterizes religion as a neurosis²⁰ and an illusion. Claiming that man's beliefs are created by man himself, he says that they stem from man's neuroses. He developed a theory of religion in relation to his own theory of human psychodynamics. In this theory he argues that religious beliefs are reflections of psychic tensions, conflicts and complexes. According to this theory, gods or spirits are defined as ancestral figures developed by people with ambivalent feelings and are the common shared fantasies of society. As a result, religion is characterized as a common neurosis. According to Freud, religion, as Marx thought, has a function of distracting society. However, unlike Marx's social evaluation of this situation, Freud evaluates it as a problem of personality. He claims that religion is a game that people resort to in order to solve their personality problems. In this regard, Freud goes back to the childhood of the individual and mentions that the first stage in the evolution of personality is the child's feeling of complete powerlessness in a realm that he does not understand in any way. He states that in the face of this powerlessness, the parents, who are a kind of omnipotent absolute who fulfill the wishes of the child, appear. Later on, when his beliefs take a more formalized form, when he encounters other situations that remind him of his childhood, he easily adapts himself to his childhood situation. He becomes ready and willing to rediscover the omnipotent absolute that he has longed for since time immemorial under a different form. Religion, he says, is precisely a structure that fulfills this longing. Let us further elaborate on Freud's theory by quoting Erikson: "Parental faith, which supports the trust that emerges in the newborn child, has throughout history found its institutional guarantee (and sometimes its greatest enemy) in organized religion. Trust, the result of protection, is the touchstone of the reality of any religion. Common to all religions are: a sometimes childlike surrender to the Creator or Creators who bestow spiritual health, as well as worldly blessings;

¹⁹ Çalışkan, *a.g.e.*, s.34-35.

²⁰ Nevroz, toplumsal tavır ve davranışları tutuklayan ve kişide ruhen hasta olduğu bilinciyle birlikte bulunan tinsel bir hastalıktır.

a diminutive or humble attitude that reveals human insignificance; a confession of bad behavior, evil thoughts and intentions through prayer and song, and a heartfelt plea for inner peace through divine guidance; finally, the need for individual trust to be a common faith and individual insecurity to be a common conceptualized evil. On the other hand, it is also common for the individual to find the source of his recovery in the rituals in which the majority participates and which become a sign of trust in the community.”²¹ In sum, Freud basically says that Freud's childhood psychology and the search for shelter and protection similar to parents in the face of natural phenomena later led him to God or gods, and that this was the origin of religion. According to him, this universal obsession of man will disappear with the growth of the child, that is, with the scientific progress of humanity.

1.3. ACORDING TO KARL MARX and FRIEDRICH ENGELS

Marxists regard religion as ideological. They define it as a product of the ideology of the ruling class, which, by promising an illusory freedom in the afterlife instead of a real freedom in this world, serves to counterbalance the revolutionary potential of people under various social oppressions and to normalize and justify their own domination. No one can deny that religion serves this function, but it is hardly possible to say that this is the reason for its existence. As a matter of fact, Marx, while agreeing with the above well-known Marxist definition, points out that this is not the way religion is formed, that it is a result. In fact, he did not systematically engage with the subject of religion. According to him, consciousness is a product of society and the religious world is nothing but a reflection of the real world. In other words, man constructs religion, not religion constructs man; like Freud, he says that all religions are a fantastic reflection in the human brain of the forces that control people's daily lives. *“Religion is the heart of a heartless world.” He argues that people seek refuge in religion to find peace in this cruel world. He concludes that religion is the opium of the people, legitimizing the domination of a certain class and teaching people to be docile and obedient to their masters, as Marxists have argued. He says that religion prevents people from challenging the injustices of this world by creating an imaginary other world.*²² But this is all about the end result of religion, we can say that Marx differed from the Marxists on the formation of religion when he said: *“Religion is the sigh of oppressed creatures, the heart of a heartless world, the soul of soulless events. (Religion) is the opium of the people.”*²³ The opium mentioned in the sentence is not a tool used by an unscrupulous upper class to lull the people to sleep, as Marxists understand it, but a self-deception that people use to keep themselves from sinking beneath the surface of events. In other words, Marx saw religion as a tool used by the mass of people to console or numb themselves against the cruelties of life, against the fact that the upper class was oppressing the proletariat. He emphasized that this was the case in all history with historical materialism. According to Marx, the moment man understands the deception in religion, he also understands the necessity of eliminating the conditions under which he

²¹ Mardin, *a.g.e.*, s.43-44.

²² Bozkurt, *a.g.e.*, s.245.

²³ Mardin, *a.g.e.*, s.42.

enslaves himself. He stated that the only way to understand this deception is through revolution, with the words "social existence determines consciousness".²⁴ Marx and Feuerbach have similar ideas about human self-deception and the possibility of getting rid of it once one realizes it.

In the final analysis, Marxists see religion as a drug that numbs the emotions and makes them impervious to pain. They say that God does not create human beings in his own image, but that human beings create gods in their own image and likeness, and they use Feuerbach's words as evidence: "if birds had a religion, their gods would have wings". They also claim that religion has created classes since the beginning of history and explain it as follows: Citing the Babylonian god Marduk, they argue that the gods created humans to serve them, i.e. to perform temple rituals or menial tasks, to provide food for the gods, and so on. They point out that this divides humanity into two classes, with the untouchable gods constituting the ruling class and those who serve constituting the laboring class. In this way, the clergy were freed from the necessity to work and had full services and privileges as the physical representatives of the gods on earth. They emphasize that the purpose of religion is to provide ideological justification for the enslavement of the majority to the minority, even though this is the reality of ancient and modern society. Marxists say that all the religions that existed in the world were communist in the beginning, and that the prophets and the first ones who followed them were communists. In drawing this conclusion, they evaluate the early periods and look at what was done, and they are completely right. All of the newly emerging religions, divine or secular, supported the oppressed, the poor, the hungry and grew and expanded with their followers. What these pioneers did and said almost exactly coincides with communist principles and rhetoric. We can reinforce the reality of this by quoting some examples from Christianity:

"The use of all the things in this world should be common to all people. The greatest evil is when one person says to others - this is mine, that is yours - and this is the root of the quarrels between people." Aziz Clement (death: 101 A.D.)

"What things do you call "mine"? What things can you call "mine"? From whom did you take them? You talk and behave like someone who, on one occasion or another, goes early to the theater and, without hindrance, seizes the seats reserved for the rest of the people, claims that they didn't arrive on time, and prevents them from sitting down, claiming that in reality the common property is only for his own use. And this is exactly how the rich behave." Aziz Basil (death: 379 A.D.)

"The earth is the common property of all those born on it and therefore all the products of the earth belong to everyone without distinction." Aziz Gregory (death: 604 A.D.)

"Nature has made its riches available for the common use of all people. God created everything generously so that all living beings could enjoy it in common

²⁴ Fulya Saatçioğlu ve Murat Ukray, *Das Kapital & Karl Marx*, Ankara 2014, s.203.

and the world would be their common property. While it is only unjust usurpation that creates the right to private property, it is nature itself that gives birth to the right to community." Aziz Ambrose (death: 397 A.D.)

These words were spoken in the early days of Christianity, and they emphasize, as the communists do, that the basis of the class struggle is the right to private property. Therefore, this is the reason for all the fights. However, the early believers of Christianity, whom Marxists consider to be communists, changed under the hegemony of the ruling class in later years and sided with the power and fought against the oppressed. The first believing communists of Christianity were replaced by those who took money from believers in exchange for the forgiveness of their sins, sold places to believers in the afterlife and so on. The church and religion are no longer on the side of the oppressed, but have infiltrated the state power, which is the oppressor. This situation is not unique to Christianity; a careful examination of the historical course of all other religions can easily show that this is also the case.

F. Engels said that "as far as the state is concerned, religion is a purely personal question". Commenting on this statement, Lenin said: "the state should not be concerned with religion; religious institutions should not depend on the state. Everyone should be free to profess whatever religion he likes or to declare himself an atheist, that is to say, an atheist like every socialist in general". Lenin, however, says: "The party of the proletariat wants the state to declare that religion is a personal problem, but it does not consider the struggle against the opium of the people, against religious superstitions, etc., a personal problem. The opportunists distort the question as if the Social Democratic Party regarded religion as a personal question."²⁵ While Lenin says that everyone should be free to believe in religion and that the state should ensure this, he also states that the state should fight against this opium. On the one hand, he emphasizes that one should be libertarian and leave this issue to the freedom of individuals, and on the other hand, he says that the state must fight it. The same idea is present in all Marxist-Leninists, they emphasize the freedom of people with regard to religion, but on the other hand they fight against the individual to make him give up his religion and they feel obliged to fight against it.

Marxists say that moral teachings such as love thy neighbor, help others, etc., which are inculcated by both celestial religions and moral religions, are not possible in class societies; the market economy, which is accompanied by an ethic of cut-throat competition, which drives my neighbor into poverty, etc., and the capitalistized human consciousness and morality turn such moral inculcations into a difficult or even impossible proposition. In order to change people's psychology and behavior, it is necessary to change their way of life. This situation is one of alienation; what is called alienation consists of this: dead things (capital) are seen as alive, while living things (human beings, labor) are considered dead, insignificant, meaningless. Marx's self-deception in religion is also an alienation; the proletariat is the class where this alienation takes place, not only in the religious plan, but also in the social, economic

²⁵See *place*, s.194-195.

and political plans. Therefore, the proletariat, where alienation is superimposed in various ways, is the group that will realize the revolution. According to Marx, there is a strong link between ideology and religion, and the characteristic of religion, according to him, is that it is not an instrument of domination, but a means of rescue that people cling to. Marx's thoughts and explanation of religion is that religion is one of the learned intellectual patterns that ensure the continuation of the mechanisms of a given society. The ideological character of religion shows itself at this point. In fact, the opiate function of religion is no different from the opiate function of any other system. Given that all culture, no matter under which system, has a self-perpetuating quality, all of its elements are ideological in nature. Ideology is not a private deception, as Marx inferred, but becomes the rules of the game that society plays on all its members in different fields in order to perpetuate itself.

1.4. ACORDING TO MAX WEBER

According to Weber, the first purpose of religion is to give meaning to human existence. He thinks that religion not only holds society together but also functions to change society. He attributes the design of a society to whether the members of that society think about what the ultimate truth is. In this context, he says that the influence of the worldview brought by religion affects society and designs it. With this idea, Weber links the development of capitalism to Protestantism. According to him, there is a connection between religious events and economic events. One does not affect the other unilaterally, but both can affect each other. In this regard, Weber states that “no system of economic morality has been determined solely by religion”. In his studies, Weber tried to understand the influence of religion on economic events; he saw the economic morality of religion not as theological dogmas, but as the whole of the practical behaviors that religion demands from its members and forces them to accept.²⁶ Weber stated that the worldview of Protestantism transformed capitalism into advanced capitalism, and the belief that in the Calvinist form of Protestantism, man was born not for his own purposes, but to realize the natural order given by God, led people within this system to develop the rational aspects of society and thus to accept the rationality elements of the market mechanism as an image of God and to use them.²⁷ The principle in Calvinism that the riches acquired are not to be used for personal gain has led to accumulation, that is, capital. In addition, in this sect, where being successful is seen as a blessing from God and being a beloved servant, being hardworking is encouraged and seen as worship. According to Weber, this is how capitalism developed. Weber's view on religion revealed the difference between rationality of purpose and rationality of value. Rationality according to the end is the freedom to choose one's goal, but also the freedom to choose the shortest path to that goal. The Calvinist's preferred way of becoming God's beloved servant is rationality of purpose. Because it is more important to have been than to be. Rationality according to value is the ability of a person to choose only the means due to the influence of his values, while the end is fixed. Weber had the following to say about the religions he dealt

²⁶ Bozkurt, *a.g.e.*, s.248.

²⁷ Şerif Mardin, *a.g.e.*, s.35.

with in his own studies on religion changing society: Confucianism was expressed as the status morality of educated people who acted with worldly rationality, and those who did not belong to this stratum were not considered men. This status ethic had a serious impact on the Chinese way of life. Hinduism, on the other hand, was created and passed down from father to son by a caste of cultured intellectuals who functioned as a kind of spiritual and ceremonial counselors for individuals and communities without official positions. Buddhism, he argues, was propagated by monks who rejected the world and were constantly migrating because they had no home, living on alms and engrossed in contemplation. He considers Islam to be the religion of world conquering warriors, but he has not completed his studies on this subject. He considered Judaism as the religion of pariah peoples since the great exile, and that Christianity began its journey as a religion of itinerant artisans.²⁸ Finally on the impact of religion on the economy, traditionally people worked only for their basic needs, but the Protestant ethic changed this understanding. Now people worked to make a profit, and instead of giving, which was a religious obligation, they saved and invested more and more. Because the ethics he believed in instilled in him that this was the way to be God's beloved servant. Weber called this approach the spirit of capitalism.

1.5. ACORDING TO EMILE DURKHEIM

As we have already mentioned, Durkheim accepts totemism as the oldest religion of humanity and according to him, totemism explains the essence of religion. He argues that religion as a social phenomenon can be comprehended by analyzing totemism. According to Durkheim, the most important element of religion is not the belief in a supreme god, but the division of the world into the sacred and the profane.²⁹ The reason for such a conclusion is that there are godless religions. Durkheim also says that religion cannot be defined in terms of mystery and the supernatural. Religion consists of sacred objects, beliefs and rituals. He says that religion first determines the sacred, then the organization of beliefs related to this sacred takes place, and finally the rites and practices that emerge more or less logically from beliefs take shape. In this systematic, Durkheim thinks that religion is a means of social integration. Although he says that people get most of their knowledge and the organization of this knowledge from religion, he also states that religion is the extreme point of collective thought. Durkheim states that religion is the first and most tightly unifying force and that it encourages a sense of loyalty to co-religionists, the country and the rulers, and gives them moral obligations. Durkheim does not accept God, he says that religion comes from a single source and that this source is society. According to him, collective consciousness constitutes religion, and the source of collective consciousness is society. Therefore, the source of the concept of God and the sacred is the society that forms the collective consciousness. Durkheim states that the whole being, order and structures of society are expressed in religion; religion is the institution that gives a miniaturized model of society. He considers religious rituals as an affirmation of social values that enables people living in that society to remember its social

²⁸ Bozkurt, *a.g.e.*, s.249-250.

²⁹ Bozkurt, *a.g.e.*, s.247.

constitution from time to time.³⁰ According to Durkheim, religion is not a personal but a social process. With this inference, Durkheim is similar to the emphasis in the Qur'an that religion is a process; in fact, the situation here is the distinction between subjective and objective. However, Durkheim deals with this situation in terms of totems. According to him, totems were worshipped because they represented the unity of their group. Once the sanctity of the totem was accepted, the foundations of the sanctity of the society worshipping that totem were laid. Therefore, the respect shown to the totem was also shown to that society. He also says that respect for religious things is in fact nothing but respect for authority. From Durkheim's theory we can conclude that everything human or social is religion or religious in nature. In this way, for religion to be religion, it means that society must be overemphasized. Therefore, it is clear that Durkheim neglected the personal aspect of religious feeling too much. It is possible to infer from his definition of religion that 'societies deify' or that 'gods are nothing but society in disguise'. Moreover, no religion that does not have a community has disappeared from the face of the earth, just as it is not clear to what extent it would be valid for all religions to put a religious stamp on everything that societies do.

1.6. ACORDING TO ERICH FROMM

*"... the essential characteristic of this kind of religious life is that people surrender to a power outside themselves which is invisible, unseeable, and inaudible. The great virtue of this kind of religion is obedience and the chief sin is disobedience. In contrast to God's description of himself as all-powerful and all-knowing, man is powerless and meaningless. It is when and only when he is fully devoted to God that man gains power. Devotion to a powerful authority is one of the solutions that saves man from loneliness, limitation and abandonment..."*³¹

Fromm makes this definition for authoritarian religions. He divides the characteristics of religion into humanitarian and authoritarian phenomena. Fromm thinks like Durkheim about believing in God; he states that the important thing in religion is not to believe in God or not to believe in God, but the distinction between a humane way of life and an authoritarian and idol-worshipping life. He states that when religion cooperates with the power in society, it moves away from its humanistic essence. Fromm states that humanistic religions are concerned with man and his powers as follows: "Man must first of all develop his intellect in order to understand himself and his relations with other human beings, to grasp his place in the universe. And man has to recognize reality, to realize the limits of his possibilities and power. He must develop his powers of love, his self-respect, and the experience of being in communion with all living beings. This kind of religious life gives man the intuition that he is one with the universe. A person who builds his relationship with the world on thought and love feels at one with the whole universe. In a humanistic religion, human endeavor is focused on learning to use one's powers. Virtue is not in obedience but in self-realization. Belief is the confidence that comes from believing in something and is the result of personal experimentation in cooperation with thought and feeling. It is not an outright acceptance of

³⁰ Şerif Mardin, *a.g.e.*, s.45.

³¹ Erich Fromm, *a.g.e.*, s.55.

a certain behavior because of its author. Instead of guilt and suffering in authoritarian religions, the dominant emotion here is joy.”³² What Fromm says about faith is important. He emphasizes that belief emerges as a result of reason and personal experience and points out that behavioral patterns should be accepted in this way, that is, anything that religion commands should not be accepted without questioning its causality, without knowing it. Otherwise, just saying that religion commands this and therefore I accept it as such would be to accept and practice it without knowing. And in such a situation, it is not possible to talk about thought and emotion. Fromm says that any system of thought and action that is shared by the individuals of society and that gives those individuals a certain direction and a certain purpose of attachment can be called a religion. According to him, it does not matter whether such a system is godly or godless.³³ He says that there is no culture that has not had the phenomenon of religion and that there will not be any in the future. Therefore, gods and non-gods, even contemporary secular systems, are seen as religions according to this definition.³⁴ In this regard, L. Nortbourne argues against defining belief systems that are not centered on and originated from God as religions, saying that some human systems can replace religion, but defining them as religions would not be correct because it would cause confusion. According to him, the word religion is primarily used for something that is not a construct of the human mind, but rather something that originates from God.³⁵ However, we have already pointed out that this is not the case with the views of Fromm and Durkheim, and we will elaborate below that the Qur'an also recognizes such human systems as religions.

³² Erich Fromm, a.g.e., s.57.

³³ Karacoşkun, a.g.m., s.25.

³⁴ İsmail Çalışkan, a.g.e., s.36.

³⁵ Lord Nortbourne, *Modern Dünyada Din*, İstanbul 1995, s.11.