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Lawrence Rosenkoetter

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_rosenkoetterl@csl.edu

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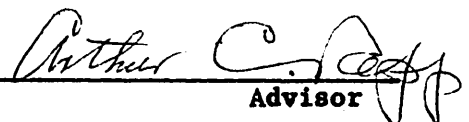
**THE FREUDIAN SUPER-EGO:
A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF CONSCIENCE**

**A Research Paper Presented to the Faculty
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Lawrence by
L. I. Rosenkoetter

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Advisor

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**THE FREUDIAN SUPER-EGO:
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During the last two decades there has been a significant resurgence of interest in the study of moral development. After a period of seeming aversion to this topic, the study of moral development has once again become an acceptable sphere of study within the behavioral sciences. Particularly within psychology an impressive array of men is presently engaged in serious study in this field. A listing of influential figures would have to include Jean Piaget, Robert Sears, and E. H. Erikson.¹

One thing which these otherwise varied theorists share is the heritage of Freud. The influence of such Freudian concepts as the "super-ego," "identification," and the "Oedipus complex" has been enormous. These concepts have not been limited to contemporary psychoanalytic theory and therapy, but they have also helped shape the empirical study of conscience within academic psychology. There is virtually no theory of moral development in which some formative influence of Freud cannot be seen. The work of many theorists, such as Erikson, has been an extension of Freud's work, while the work of other theorists, such as Piaget, has been a reaction to Freudian theory.

The primary purpose of this study is to examine Freud's concept of the super-ego and its related concepts. This examination will be conducted on the basis of Freud's collected works. Three monographs

of Freud are of particular importance in a consideration of the super-ego and its related concepts; these works are Mourning and Melancholia,² The Ego and the Id,³ and The Dissolution of the Super-ego.⁴

This investigation of Freudian thought is intended for the reader who possesses a working knowledge of psychoanalytic theory. No attempt will be made to present Freud's thought in a complete and ready-made theoretical structure for the convenience of the novice. Rather, Freud's relevant theoretical advances will be presented according to the uneven lines of their development.

The investigation of the Freudian super-ego and its related concepts will be followed by a critique of Freud's theoretical position. This will be done primarily on the basis of the theory itself; that is, its organic unity, or lack thereof, and the theory's ability to account for the available data.

A second major purpose of this study is to present the Pauline concept of συνείδησις. Due to the limited nature of this investigation, it will not be possible to investigate this term throughout the New Testament. However, such a limitation would not appear significantly to handicap this study. This is evidenced by the fact that Paul's usage would appear to be normative for the entire New Testament.⁵

In conclusion this study will compare Freud's super-ego with Paul's usage of conscience. Such an identification has often been made, but there are few studies which have attempted an investigation

of what their precise relationship is. Thus this study purposes to further the investigation of this relationship by examining those areas of Freud's super-ego and Paul's conscience which are similar and dissimilar.

The Super-ego in Freudian Thought

Freud began writing about the moral functions of the mind before 1900 in letters to his close friend Fliess. However, the first published indication of Freud's growing interest in the problem of moral prohibition is found in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900)⁶ in which Freud refers to the phenomenon of the censorship of dreams. Freud concluded that in every human being there are two psychic forces or systems. One of these forces forms the wish expressed by the dream, while the other force exercises a censorship over this dream-wish. This censoring force of the individual causes a distortion in the dream. In this way the wish feelings inherent in dreams are repressed.⁷

With the publication of Totem and Taboo (1913),⁸ Freud's growing concern with morality became explicit. Here he introduces the idea of conscience and sees it as being an outgrowth of the taboo of primitive cultures. "Conscience is the inner perception of objections to definite wish impulses that exist in us . . ."⁹ The oldest form of conscience is to be found in the taboo. Taboo is likewise a command of conscience which when violated produces a terrible sense of guilt.

Freud further theorized that conscience probably originated in an ambivalent feeling toward an interpersonal relationship. Such an

Freud's growing concern in T & T

origin of conscience was suggested to him by his clinical work with those suffering from compulsion neurosis. Compulsion neurosis is characterized by a painful conscientiousness which reminded Freud of an exaggeration of the normal conscience. Since he attributed compulsive neurosis to the tension of two contrasting feelings, one conscious and the other unconscious, Freud theorized that here was an analogy which demonstrated the origin of conscience. The conscience must result from the tension of two ambivalent feelings.¹⁰

Among the most important of Freud's writings is On Narcissism: An Introduction (1914).¹¹ Its importance stems from the pivotal role it played in the evolution of Freudian thought. Perhaps the most significant of its contributions is that it introduced the concept of the "ego ideal" and the self-observing agency related to it, which were the basis of what was eventually to be described as the "super-ego."

In this work repression is discussed as a function of the ego. Man has the tendency to set up in himself an ideal by which he then measures his actual self. For the ego the formation of such an ideal serves as the conditioning factor of repression.¹²

As the child grows older the narcissistic love that he once had for himself is displaced on to this new ideal ego. Freud continues;

It would not surprise us if we were to find a special psychical agency which performs the task of seeing that narcissistic satisfaction from the ego ideal is ensured and which, with this end in view, constantly watches the actual ego and measures it by that ideal. If such an agency does exist, we cannot possibly come upon it as a

discovery--we can only recognize it; for we may reflect that what we call our "conscience" has the required characteristics.¹³

In Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis (1915-1917)¹⁴

Freud again returned to the topic which he had discussed in On Narcissism: An Introduction. Whereas in this earlier work Freud had stated that he would not be surprised to find a "special psychical agency" within the ego, Freud was now willing to state without qualification that there was "in the ego an agency which unceasingly observes, criticizes and compares, and in that way sets itself over against the other part of the ego."¹⁵

Freud in a letter dated May 31, 1897, to his friend Fliess had dealt briefly with the topic of melancholia and identification. In 1915 Freud again dealt with this topic in a monograph entitled Mourning and Melancholia.¹⁶ In this monograph Freud asserts that somehow melancholia and mourning are connected. Mourning is regularly a reaction to the loss of a loved one or some valued abstraction, such as one's country or liberty. In other individuals these same influences produce melancholia instead of mourning.

However, certain mental features do allow one to distinguish between mourning and melancholia. Melancholia is characterized by

a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment.¹⁷

The same is true of mourning except that the disturbance of self-regard is absent. Freud theorized that this difference would suggest that

melancholia results when an object-loss is withdrawn from consciousness, whereas mourning results from an object-loss which remains conscious. Thus in mourning it would seem perfectly natural that there would be a loss of interest and general inhibition since the ego is fully absorbed by the work of mourning,¹⁸ while in melancholia this same loss of interest and general inhibition seems puzzling since there would seem to be no realistic grounds for mourning.

An individual who suffers from melancholia represents himself to others as worthless, incapable of any achievement, and morally wretched. Freud saw in this behavior the fact that one part of the ego had set itself apart over against the remainder of the ego. Thus one part of the ego assumes a judicial function and takes the rest of the ego as its object.¹⁹

One of Freud's observations in this regard is of critical importance. While listening to melancholics' various self-accusations, he could not avoid the impression that often the most violent of the accusations were hardly applicable to the patient himself. However, with a minimum of modifications these accusations did fit someone whom the patient has loved, loves, or should love. Freud theorized that what had taken place was that the self-reproaches perceived in the patient were actually reproaches against a love-object which the patient had shifted from the love-object to his own ego. Freud in summarizing this process writes:

An object-choice, an attachment of the libido to a particular person, had at one time existed; then, owing to a real slight or disappointment coming from this loved person, the object-relationship was shattered. The result was not the

normal one of a withdrawal of the libido from this object and a displacement of it on to a new one, but something different, for whose coming-about various conditions seem to be necessary. The object cathexis proved to have little power of resistance and was brought to an end. But the free libido was not displaced on to another object; it was withdrawn into the ego. There, however, it was not employed in any unspecified way, but served to establish an identification of the ego with the abandoned object. Thus the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, and the latter could henceforth be judged by a special agency, as though it were an object, the forsaken object. In this way an object-loss was transformed into an ego-loss and the conflict between the ego and the loved person into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification.²⁰

This form of identification Freud termed narcissistic identification. In one respect such identification is a regression since the normal course of development begins with a narcissistic self-love and then gradually the libido is detached from the self and becomes attached to an object-choice. In narcissistic identification this course of events has been reversed,

The importance of this monograph stems from the fact that Freud here theorized that a portion of the ego under certain circumstances may be set apart from the remainder of the ego. This separation within the ego then results in a judicial function of a portion of the ego; this portion of the ego Freud referred to as conscience.

In 1923 Freud introduced the term super-ego to represent this critical-judging portion of the ego. This was done in a monograph entitled The Ego and the Id (1923).²¹ In this work Freud reassesses the significance of his theorizations in Mourning and Melancholia. Freud writes:

We succeeded in explaining the painful disorder of melancholia by supposing that (in those suffering from it) an object which was lost has been set up again inside the ego--that is, that an object-cathexis has been replaced by an identification. At that time, however, we did not appreciate the full significance of this process and did not know how common and typical it is. Since then we have come to understand that this kind of substitution has a great share in determining the form taken by the ego and that it makes an essential contribution towards building up what is called its "character."²²

Character formation is then the result of the process of identification. Identification occurs when an individual is forced to give up a sexual object. At such a time there occurs an alteration of the ego which Freud felt could best be described as "a setting up of the object inside the ego"²³ Freud readily admits that the exact nature of this substitution is at this time unknown, but suggests that identification may be the sole condition under which the id can give up its objects. At any rate, Freud continues, "the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and . . . it contains the history of those object choices."²⁴ While such a process of identification is most common, individuals do have varying capacities for resistance. Such capacities for resistance decide the extent to which the individual's character will resist or accept the influences of his erotic object-choices.

Identifications made in early childhood are particularly general and lasting in their effect. Of extreme importance in character formation is the first identification, the identification of the individual with his father or mother. This first identification Freud referred to as being both intricate and problematic. This results from two factors: the Oedipus situation and the bisexuality of each individual.²⁵

At an early age the male child develops an object-cathexis for his mother. At first the child deals with his father by identifying himself with him. However, as the child's sexual wishes toward his mother become more intense, the child begins to perceive his father as an obstacle. The child's relationship with his father now takes on hostile coloring and changes into a wish to get rid of his father so that he might take the father's place with the mother. This hostility of the child toward his father varies in intensity and may best be described as an ambivalent attitude. Simultaneously, his attitude toward his mother is solely affectionate. Freud referred to this triangular situation as the Oedipus complex.²⁶

On this occasion Freud does not deal with the dynamics involved in the demolition of the Oedipus complex. Rather, Freud simply assumes that such a dissolution will be the case. When the boy's object-cathexis of his mother must be given up, one of two things may happen. There may take place either an identification with his mother or an intensification of his identification with his father. The relative strength of the child's sexual dispositions will determine whether the outcome of the Oedipus situation will be an intensification of the identification with the father or an identification with the mother. In the case of the male child it would be more normal for the former to occur. Thus the dissolution of the Oedipus complex would result in a consolidation in the masculinity of the boy's character.²⁷

The identification which follows the dissolution of the Oedipus complex results in the super-ego's adoption of the attitudes and behavior

of its object-choice. Thus the child strives to become like his parents. But at the same time the content of the super-ego is not simply a residue of the child's object-choice, for the super-ego also contains powerful reaction-formations against its object-choices. Thus the super-ego not only says, "You must be like your father," but also "You may not be like your father;" that is, you may not do everything your father does. This double aspect of the super-ego, Freud says, results from the fact that the super-ego also has the task of repressing the Oedipus complex.²⁸

In direct proportion to the intensity with which the individual experienced the Oedipus complex is the influence that the super-ego will have over the ego. This can be seen both in terms of the conscience's strength and the amount of unconscious guilt.²⁹

As the individual grows older, the role of his father is carried on by teachers and other individuals in authority. Their injunctions and prohibitions, in turn, are assimilated into the super-ego, and there, in the form of conscience, continue to exercise moral censorship. Any tension between the individual's conscience and the actual performance of his ego is experienced as a sense of guilt.³⁰

As we have seen, the process of identification is dependent upon the ending of the Oedipus complex. In 1924 Freud published a monograph on this topic entitled The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex.³¹ On this occasion Freud indicated that there were at least three possible interpretations regarding the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. His first suggestion is that it could be the result of a painful

experience on the part of the child. The young boy could awaken one day to find that his mother's love has been transferred to a new arrival to the family. Thus he can no longer consider his mother to be his own property.³²

A second view is that the Oedipus complex must collapse, just as the milk-teeth fall out when the permanent ones begin to grow. Thus the Oedipus complex would be considered a phenomenon determined and governed by heredity, and it would consequently pass away at the appropriate developmental stage.²³

However, it is a third view which Freud clearly favors and develops in detail. As the male child develops sexually, his genitals become a source of great interest. The child's interest is betrayed by the fact that he manipulates them frequently. Adults do not approve of such behavior. Finally the child is threatened. He is told that this part of him which he values so greatly will be taken away from him. At first the boy does not believe the threat, but this unbelief is sooner or later broken down by the sight of the female genitals. The sight of a little girl who is so much like himself except that she has no penis makes the threat of castration suddenly become imaginable. The child is faced with a conflict. At present the child stands in the Oedipus attitude toward his parents. His masturbation is only a genital discharge of sexual excitement belonging to the Oedipus complex. However, for him to continue in such a way would cost him his penis. The cost is too great, and the child's ego turns away from the Oedipus complex.³⁴

With the repression of the Oedipus complex, the child gives up his object-cathexes, and they are then replaced by identifications.

The authority, attitudes, and values of the father or parents are introjected into the ego, and there it forms the super-ego. To this process we have previously made reference.

The Future of an Illusion (1927)³⁵ contains only a brief reference to the super-ego, but in this brief discussion Freud outlines an intriguing characteristic of the super-ego. The super-ego, through a process of transformation during the course of many generations, is capable of a cultural strengthening. Freud declares:

It is not true that the human mind has undergone no development since the earliest times and that, in contrast to the advances of science and technology, it is the same today as it was at the beginning of history. We can point out one of these mental advances at once. It is in keeping with the course of human development that external coercion gradually becomes internalized; for a special mental agency, man's super-ego, takes it over and includes it among its commandments. Every child presents this process of transformation to us; only by that means does it become a moral and social being. Such a strengthening of the super-ego is a most precious cultural asset in the psychological field.³⁶

Freud once again examines the relationship of the super-ego to culture or society in Civilization and Its Discontents (1930).³⁷ Without the super-ego of the individual, society would not be able to exist amidst the aggressiveness of its citizens. By means of the super-ego, the individual's aggressiveness is introjected or internalized. In this manner the harsh aggressiveness is turned back on the ego. If it were not for the super-ego, these same aggressions would be unleashed by the ego upon others.³⁸

As would be expected, there develops then a tension between the ego and the super-ego. This results in a sense of guilt, which expresses

itself as a need for punishment. In this way civilization further gains control over the individual.³⁹

In Freud's last work, An Outline of Psychoanalysis (1940),⁴⁰ Freud again returned to a theme which he mentioned in passing in his earlier monograph, The Ego and the Id. There Freud had referred to an identification which preceded that identification which resulted from the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. This identification he refers to as "primary identification." In 1940 Freud elaborated on what he had understood by primary identification.

The long period of childhood, during which the growing human being lives in dependence upon his parents, leaves behind it a precipitate, which forms within his ego a special agency in which this parental influence is prolonged. The parents' influence actually includes not merely the personalities of the parents themselves but also the racial, national, and family traditions handed on through them as well as the demands of the immediate social milieu which they represent. In the same way, an individual's super-ego in the course of his development takes over contributions from later successors and substitutes of his parents, such as teachers, admired figures in public life, or high social ideals.⁴¹

A Psychological Analysis of the Freudian Concept of the Super-ego

During the history of mankind few theories have been subjected to so much searching, and often bitter, criticism as has Freudian theory. In modern times only Darwin's theory of evolution has been attacked, reviled, ridiculed, and slandered with comparable vehemence. It is not the intention of this study to present a history of such criticism. Rather, this critique will consist in an analysis of the Freudian theory

of moral development. But prior to the critique itself, the assumptions on which this evaluation will be made must themselves be made explicit.

Since the object of this evaluation is a theory, it would be beneficial first to consider what a theory is. The working definition employed in this study is that a theory is "a cluster of relevant assumptions, systematically related to each other, and a set of empirical definitions."⁴²

According to this definition the assumptions upon which a theory is based must be related directly to the empirical events or behavior of which the theory is an explanation. The good theory is one which contains useful and predictive assumptions concerning empirical events which are contained within the behavioral category under investigation.⁴³

Not only must the assumptions be stated clearly, but all of the various elements contained in the theory must be explicitly related to each other. Thus there must be rules which define the manner in which the assumptions and concepts of the theory are interrelated. In this way there will be a systematic interaction within the theory in order that all of the internal relations are clear.⁴⁴

Finally a good theory must be capable of empirical definitions. Such definitions are essential if there is to be interaction between the concepts of the theory and reality. Without empirical definitions it would be impossible to gather data, since the concepts of the theory would lack antecedents in the empirical world.⁴⁵

If a theory is good, then it will lead to the observation and collection of relevant empirical relations. In this way a good theory will lead to a systematic expansion of knowledge. The function of a theory can be compared to a "proposition mill" which grinds out related empirical statements which are then, on the basis of further research, capable of confirmation or rejection. Secondly, a good theory will permit the incorporation of known empirical findings into a consistent and reasonably simple framework. Thus a theory is also a means of organizing and integrating all that is known concerning the subject under consideration.⁴⁶

The gravest criticism of Freud's theory of moral development is that his theory does not allow for empirical consequences. As was noted above, a good theory must allow for the translation of its concepts into empirical propositions. The concept of the super-ego is not capable of such empirical definition. Although the concept of the super-ego does help to "explain" certain phenomena, its explanation is of an after-the-fact variety and means very little. The super-ego is considered to be a bad theory ~~inasmuch~~ as it does not allow for predictions in advance of actual behavior.

The concept of identification can be more readily translated into empirical categories than can the super-ego, and yet this Freudian concept likewise has severe limitations. Through this one concept Freud attempted to explain mourning, conscience, and sexual identify. Such an overarching theory seems to have been doomed from the outset because of the diversity of behavior involved in mourning,

conscience, and sexual identity. Possibly Freud would have been better advised to theorize that there are three different determinants.⁴⁷

The inability of the same concept of identification to account for such diversified phenomena as mourning and sexual identity can be readily seen by comparing the identification said to result from mourning with the identification resulting from the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. In the state of mourning, Freud maintained, the mourner introjects the ego of the lost love-object. However, the identification with which the Oedipus complex ends does not result in a similar introjection of the lost love-object's ego; for if the male child were to follow the dictates of the theory, he would introject the ego of his mother. Such an introjection would transfer the sexual identity of the mother to the boy. This clearly contradicts the known empirical data; Most boys do not become girls. Rather, the male child somehow introjects the ego of his father, and in this way his sexual identity as a male is established. Identification under these two circumstances appears to be two different processes.⁴⁸

In studying Freud's theory of moral development, it readily becomes evident that Freud labors under a limited view of what moralization involves. For Freud the moralization of the child meant little more than the control of sexual and aggressive behavior. Consequently, his treatment of the topic of moral development is quite limited. The topics of moral knowledge and moral thought are left untouched. It has not been until the present century that this imbalance has been corrected and attention has been given to the intellectual aspects of moral development.⁴⁹

Another criticism of Freud concerns his methodology. The research of Freud which resulted in his theories did not take place in the controlled conditions of the laboratory. Rather, Freud's data came from observations he made during the treatment of patients. Accordingly, the conclusions he arrived at were made by a line of reasoning which was rarely explicit. Freud's writings are confined to his conclusions. The reader is asked to accept on faith the validity of his inductive and deductive operations, for nowhere does he present the original data, the method of analysis utilized, or any systematic presentation of his empirical findings. Thus it is practically impossible to repeat any of Freud's investigations.

And yet some of these liabilities of Freud's theory have also been assets. Lionel Trilling and W. H. Auden recognized in Freud a deep current of romanticism. This can be seen in his "sense of the role of impulse, of the drama of life, the power of symbolism, of the ways of knowing that were more poetic than rational in spirit"50 The skillful way in which Freud employed mythological allusions to put across abstruse concepts and his picturesque language are indicative of this poetic spirit. The excitement of this spirit has gained for Freud an enormous following. It is in this role that Freud has made his greatest contribution to the study of moral development. Freud asked questions which he was unable to answer completely. However, in addition to the questions, Freud also provided the motivation for continuing study.

The Concept of Conscience in Pauline Usage

The word "conscience" (συνείδησις) is derived from the stem of the verb σύνωσα, which means "I know in common with." The stem implies knowledge about another person which can be used in witness
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for or against him.

In the New Testament the word suneidesis appears thirty times. There are three occurrences in Romans,⁵² eleven in Corinthians,⁵³ six in the Pastorals,⁵⁴ five in Hebrews,⁵⁵ three in I Peter,⁵⁶ and two in Acts.⁵⁷

Any attempt to determine the meaning of suneidesis in the New Testament must differ from most similar quests in the New Testament, for the word suneidesis makes virtually no appearance in the Septuagint. Consequently, no recourse can be made to any Hebrew idea in the Old Testament which might serve to elucidate the meaning of suneidesis for the New Testament writers.⁵⁸

The Hebrew failure to develop an examined theory of conscience comes as no surprise when one considers their theological emphases. Hebrew thinking is strongly theocentric and not introspective. God as King and man as obedient servant is emphasized. The obedience which God demands has been revealed to man from a source outside of man. Thus the Law and the Prophets, not knowledge of self (including the conscience), teach the fear of the Lord and are the beginning of wisdom. Hence, there was present no strong urge to examine the inner motives of man's behavior and man's subjective psychological phenomena.⁵⁹

This leads to the conclusion that the question of the origin of the New Testament's usage of suneidesis can be answered in one of two

manners. Either the New Testament authors invented this word to describe an experience which was peculiar to Christianity, or they must have adopted the word and the ideas connoted by it from some non-Hebrew source. Accordingly, the search for a possible source of New Testament usage must now turn to the Gentile world.

A study of the surviving literary remains of the Hellenistic world reveals that the Greek usage of suneidesis can be divided into two categories. On the one hand, suneidesis was used by the philosophers in technical or semi-technical writings. Here it was used in a non-moral context and can best be paraphrased "I am conscious within my self that" From this technical sense suneidesis evolved into an "everyday" word. In the latter usage the meaning of suneidesis became the content of the individual's consciousness of his own acts or behavior in terms of their moral quality.⁶⁰

Since the New Testament authors did not write for professional philosophers, it is the latter colloquial usage of suneidesis which concerns this study. Within the context of this "popular folk-wisdom," suneidesis was viewed as a faculty implanted in man, which was his by right of his very nature. Thus suneidesis functioned by necessity, as an expression of man's constitution. Therefore, every man was thought to have a suneidesis.⁶¹

The suneidesis comes into activity in connection with a person's own deeds. The subject of an individual's suneidesis is the quality of his own acts and character and is not concerned with the acts and character of others.⁶²

Suneidesis concerns itself almost exclusively with acts or deeds. Its reference to character only takes place in so far as character is both determined and expressed by specific acts.⁶³ Likewise, it is with past acts that the suneidesis concerns itself. It is specific acts of past wrong-doing as opposed to a continued and habitual condition of character which calls forth the suneidesis.⁶⁴

Finally, the Hellenistic "popular philosophy" viewed the suneidesis as emerging in pain. Man is so formed by his nature that if he oversteps the moral limits of nature, he normally feel pain.⁶⁵ This pain might best be described as a combination of fear and shame which results in guilt. This guilt, in turn, paralyzes and destroys the individual.⁶⁶

Due to the limitations of this study, the consideration of the New Testament use of suneidesis must be confined to the Pauline corpus. There is good evidence that such a limitation will not seriously distort the general New Testament usage. This is evidenced to by the fact that Paul is the first of the New Testament authors to use suneidesis. Secondly, Paul uses suneidesis more than any other Biblical writer. Thirdly, Paul builds more upon this term than does any of the other New Testament authors. Consequently, it has been most common to accept Paul's usage of suneidesis as normative for the early Christian community and likewise normative for the sacred Scriptures produced by this community.⁶⁷

For the purposes of this investigation, the Pauline usage of suneidesis will be considered on the basis of the Corinthian and

Roman epistles. It is not within the scope of this study to engage in questions of authorship. The Corinthian and Roman epistles are generally accepted as by Paul himself, but a strong body of competent opinion denies the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals. Hebrews, in turn, is an anonymous piece of writing, and nowhere does it claim the authorship of Paul. Thus this study will directly concern itself with the use of suneidesis only in the Corinthian and Roman epistles.

Paul assumes that all men possess the faculty of suneidesis. Paul's argument in the second chapter of Romans makes it apparent that Paul viewed man's suneidesis as something man possessed by reason of his very nature as a man.⁶⁸

For Paul suneidesis concerns itself primarily with individual deeds. Paul's extended discourses in Corinthians regarding the giving of offense to the weak concerns itself with specific deeds, the eating of meat offered to idols while in the presence of less enlightened Christians.⁶⁹ Paul's usage is once again in agreement with the usage common to the Hellenistic world; he too viewed suneidesis as primarily concerning itself with individual acts and only secondarily with character.

Likewise, Pauline usage of suneidesis indicates that its object is always acts of wrong-doing. Suneidesis tells man that he is doing something which is wrong. The function of suneidesis is seen as passing a negative judgment.⁷⁰ Suneidesis can only show man what is right in the sense that he fails to feel remorse after the questionable act has been committed.⁷¹ Not until the third century and onward does conscience

come to be thought of as a "positive, selective power enabling us to know what is right before we do it" This function of the suneidesis is foreign to both the fourteen Pauline occurrences and common Greek usage.⁷²

The object of suneidesis according to Pauline usage is always past acts. There are no occurrences in Paul which parallel modern English usage, which makes conscience a guide to future action. Suneidesis only functions in terms of past acts or deeds. Thus the absence of any conscience pangs cannot be taken as conclusive proof as to the moral quality of any intended acts.⁷³

In accordance with common Hellenistic usage, Paul held that suneidesis emerges in the life of the individual as pain. In counselling the Roman Christians to accept the authority of their government, Paul cautions that disobedience not only means the wrath of God but also trouble from one's suneidesis.⁷⁴ From the context it is clear that the trouble cautioned against is the pain of a guilty suneidesis.

As can readily be seen, Paul has in general taken over the popular Greek usage of suneidesis.⁷⁵ But at the same time, Paul did make significant alterations as to its basic connotations, although the alterations are primarily in regard to details. Paul placed it within the setting of the Judaeo-Christian doctrine of God as both righteous Creator and sustainer of all things. This God judges all men by the absolute moral standards inherent in the divine nature, as revealed in the person of Christ Jesus.⁷⁶

Perhaps the most significant alteration introduced by Paul was his emphatic distinction between the strong and weak suneidesis. In his letters to the church at Corinth Paul recognizes the existence of variability among the suneidesis of different individuals. This may be due to a lack of knowledge, a force of habit, or a lack of ability to withstand the example of others.⁷⁷ The significance of such a distinction is to be found in its ethical implications. Because the Christian stands within the context of God's glory, it is necessary that he always be conscious of the fact that his brother's suneidesis may react differently than his.⁷⁸

Paul never viewed suneidesis as his crowning "moral doctrine." In fact, there is every reason to believe that Paul introduced suneidesis into Christianity under the compulsion of his encounter with the Corinthian church. Perhaps the Corinthians defended their practice of eating meat offered to idols by pointing to their suneidesis. Paul's immediate reaction had been to perceive both the liability of suneidesis to error through defective knowledge and its major defect as an ethical norm, its negativity.⁷⁹ The probability that this term was one forced upon him by his opponents at Corinth is heightened by the fact that while dealing with an identical topic in Romans 14:15 as in I Cor. 8:10, Paul avoids the term entirely. Paul's usage of suneidesis can be partially accounted for by the policy of his ministry that he would be all things to all men.⁸⁰

A Comparison of Freud's Super-ego and Paul's Conscience

In conclusion, a comparison will be made between Paul's⁸¹ and Freud's concepts of conscience. In the past these concepts have been almost glibly equated without a thorough understanding of their relationship.⁸¹ These concluding remarks will sketch their relationship and make explicit their points of agreement and disagreement.

A first point for comparison is their respective theories regarding the origin of conscience. Freud theorized that conscience was the result of identification, and identification was primarily the result of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. In effect, Freud was saying that morality is not instilled by God but is acquired from society or more directly from parents.⁸² Paul stands in disagreement with Freud on the question of origin. Paul views conscience as a faculty which man possesses by right of his humanity. To this extent the influence of Hellenistic thought can be seen in Paul. In addition, Paul modified the Greek concept of the conscience's origin by implicitly tracing its origin to God.⁸³

Conscience serves as a judicial function for both Freud and Paul. Freud views the super-ego or conscience as a psychical agency within the individual which constantly observes, criticizes and compares the actual behavior of the individual; with an ideal self.⁸⁴ Paul's usage does not significantly differ from this aspect of Freudian usage.

Both Freud and Paul agree as to the pervasiveness of the phenomenon of conscience. Each viewed every man as possessing this faculty.

Likewise, each agreed that not all consciences were equally operative. Freud theorized that the level to which an individual's conscience develops is a function of the intensity of the Oedipus complex experienced by the individual. Freud pointed to women as validating this point. Since they are not able to experience the Oedipus complex to the same degree as do men, women tend to be less moral than men.⁸⁵ Paul also divided consciences into categories which reflect different levels of efficiency. Paul recognizes the existence of such a variability when he speaks of strong consciences and weak consciences.⁸⁶

During the previous study of Pauline usage, it was concluded that for him the conscience always had as its object past events. For Paul the realm of the conscience was not future behavior. This observation is not true of Freudian usage. Freud thought of conscience as having a broader role. The significance of the conscience could be seen in planning and future decisions. The content of the conscience contained innumerable attitudes and values which had been introjected from lost love-objects. For example, a woman might have a compulsion for chocolate candy because her lover, who later jilted her, was particularly fond of chocolate candy.

Another area of agreement between Freud and Paul is that the object of one's conscience is always his own behavior. Guilt results only when we violate the dictates of our conscience. Guilt never results when someone else violates the dictates of our conscience.

In Freudian theory the conscience tells the individual what he should do and also what he should not do. Thus in this respect the super-ego once again occupies a broader sphere of direction than does the Pauline conscience. The Pauline conscience only functions in response to wrong-doing. Conscience is always evoked as a negative response.

Freud and Paul are once again in agreement that when one ignores the dictates of his super-ego or conscience, pain as a consequence normally follows. Paul was satisfied to accept this aspect of conscience as defined by the Hellenistic world. Freud has elaborated on the pain more than has Paul. Freud sees this pain as arising because of the tension between the ego and the super-ego. This tension or pain is experienced most directly in the form of guilt.

One of the major differences in their respective treatments accorded the concept of conscience hinges on the relative importance of this concept for their work as a whole. In the case of Freud, the super-ego is of key importance. Through this concept Freud accounts for the ability of society to contain the aggressive and hostile impulses of man. Without the super-ego, life within a social context would be impossible. But such importance is not accorded the conscience in the overarching theology of Paul. Paul merely accepted this concept and assimilated it into his theology because of his pastoral concerns with the church at Corinth. Thus the concept of conscience for Paul never approaches the importance accorded it by Freud.

No comparison between Freud and Paul could be complete without first considering their respective views of men. Freud lived and worked within

a world that saw man as the summit of an evolutionary process. In man God or nature had shown a persistent wisdom in its effort to produce a final product. This was the image of man which Freud's theory so significantly altered. Freud presented man as the unfinished product of nature. He saw man struggling against unreason, driven by drives and urges which must be contained if man were to live in society. Man was host both to seeds of madness and majesty. "What Freud was proposing was that man at his best and man at his worst is subject to a common set of explanations: That good and evil grow from a common process."⁸⁷

Paul's anthropology to a certain extent coincides with that of Freud. He too saw the countless evil forces with which man was daily forced to contend. And yet Paul could have never agreed with the pessimism inherent in a view that "good and evil both grow from a common process." For Paul all good had its foundation in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. It was because of this focal position of the Christ that conscience need not play a more vital role in the thought of Paul. Freud's theory demanded a conscience of super-ego so that a social form of life could be a possibility. But Paul saw social life as possible because men had been created in the image of God. Despite the distortion of this image in sin, God still sustained life. The conclusive testimony to the sustaining providence of God was the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

¹Henry W. Maier, Three Theories of Child Development: Erikson, Piaget, Sears (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), passim.

²Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, edited by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), XIV, 243-258. Hereafter Strachey's edition will be referred to as SEF.

³"The Ego and the Id," SEF, XIX, 13-66.

⁴"The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex," SEF, XIX, 173-179.

⁵C. A. Pierce, Conscience in the New Testament (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1955), p. 16.

⁶"The Interpretation of Dreams," SEF, IV, 1-625.

⁷Ibid., IV, 140-142.

⁸"Totem and Taboo," SEF, XIII, 1-161.

⁹Ibid., XIII, 68.

¹⁰Ibid., XIII, 68-71.

¹¹"On Narcissism: An Introduction," SEF, XIV, 73-102.

¹²Ibid., XIV, 93-94.

¹³Ibid., XIV, 95.

¹⁴"Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis," SEF, XVI, 1-463.

¹⁵Ibid., XVI, 428.

¹⁶"Mourning and Melancholia," SEF, XIV, 243-258.

¹⁷Ibid., XIV, 244.

¹⁸Ibid., XIV, 245.

¹⁹Ibid., XIV, 247.

²⁰Ibid., XIV, 249.

²¹"The Ego and the Id," SEE, XIX, 13-66.

²²Ibid., XIX, 28.

²³Ibid., XIX, 29.

- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Ibid., XIX, 31.
- ²⁶Ibid., XIX, 32.
- ²⁷Ibid., XIX, 33.
- ²⁸Ibid., XIX, 34.
- ²⁹Ibid.
- ³⁰Ibid., XIX, 37.
- ³¹"The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex," SEF, XIX, 173-179.
- ³²Ibid., XIX, 173.
- ³³Ibid., XIX, 174.
- ³⁴Ibid., XIX, 175-176.
- ³⁵"The Future of an Illusion," SEF, XXI, 3-56.
- ³⁶Ibid., XXI, 11.
- ³⁷"Civilization and Its Discontents," SEF, XXI, 64-145.
- ³⁸Ibid., XXI, 123.
- ³⁹Ibid.
- ⁴⁰"An Outline of Psychoanalysis," SEF, XXIII, 144-207.
- ⁴¹Ibid., XXIII, 184-186.
- ⁴²Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, Theories of Personality (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1937), p. 11.
- ⁴³Ibid.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 12.
- ⁴⁵Ibid.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., p. 13.
- ⁴⁷Roger Brown, Social Psychology (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 380.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 379.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 378.

⁵⁰Jerome S. Brunner, "Freud and the Image of Man," Freud and the Twentieth Century, edited by Benjamin Nelson (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), p. 280.

⁵¹W. D. Davies, "Conscience," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), I, 671-676.

⁵²Rom. 2:15; 9:1; 13:5.

⁵³1 Cor. 4:4; 8:7; 8:10; 8:12; 10:25; 10:27; 10:28; 10:29; 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:12; 5:2; 5:11.

⁵⁴1 Tim. 1:5; 1:19; 3:9; 4:2; 2 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:15.

⁵⁵Heb. 9:9; 9:14; 10:2; 10:22; 13:18.

⁵⁶1 Peter 2:19; 3:16; 3:21.

⁵⁷Acts 23:1; 24:16.

⁵⁸Pierce, p. 13.

⁵⁹Davies, I, 671.

⁶⁰Pierce, p. 21.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 40-41.

⁶²Ibid., p. 42.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Davies, I, 673.

⁶⁵Pierce, p. 50.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 112.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 16.

⁶⁸Rom. 2:15.

⁶⁹1 Cor. 8:7-13; 10:23-30.

70 1 Cor. 4:4.

71 D. E. H. Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 210.

72 Ibid.

73 Pierce, p. 114.

74 Rom. 13:5.

75 Pierce, p. 108.

76 Ibid.

77 Davies, I, 674.

78 1 Cor. 10:23-30.

79 Pierce, p. 99.

80 Davies, I, 675.

81 Brown, p. 376.

82 Davies, I, 673.

83 Ibid.

84 1 Cor. 8:7-13; 10:23-30.

85 "Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis," SEP, XVI, 428.

86 Brunner, p. 279-280.

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