

Conclusion

Through the research and application of the historical background, the societal condition, and Freud's psychological theories, the environmental effect obviously has a powerful function on Pinkie and Alex, and the consequences are their abnormal psychology and behaviors. Then the struggle and conflicts between reality and desire are showed and related to the personal inadequacy of Pinkie and Alex, as what Cullingford argued, "The sense of personal inadequacy in the face of temptation is matched by the contrast between desire and reality" (188). It is the society that gives Pinkie and Alex desire and hope, but it is the home that teaches them reality and despair. In the connections with the society, they sense the poorer background of themselves, and the inferiority complex brings about their ambition and anti-social thoughts of leading a gang and committing crimes for money and power. On the other hand, Pinkie and Alex are not satisfied with their familial conditions. The disequilibrium and the dislocation resulting from family breakdowns then lead to their abnormal psychology and acts.

In Freud's theories, there is also a very similar conflict between the pleasure principle and the reality principle, which separately stand for the id and the ego. In the process that Pinkie and Alex become young offenders and even murderers, it is obvious that the ego does not play its role well to balance the needs from both the id and the super-ego. As what is noted before, one will fall ill of a neurosis when the ego loses its capacity to deal in some way or other with the libido, because ego has the function to allocate the libido. Therefore, there must be a problem of Pinkie's and Alex's egos, for the failure on allocating the libido results in their neurotic symptoms which influence their criminal acts.

As a fact that delinquency actually lies in the home, the formation of the ego

and the development and transformation of the libido all lie in the home. First of all, the Oedipus complex plays the role of a mechanism that forms the super-ego in the home. The process that one's libido finds the mother as its object is called object-cathexis, and the process that it gives up its original object and identifies with the father is called identification. And in the identification with the father one's super-ego is gradually formed. However, if the object-cathexis is not transferred to other girls or the identification is not completed, there may be some neurotic symptoms showing up. The reason is that the development of the libido and sexual impulses are interrupted, so that they will be transformed into symptoms to be a substitute for those frustrated impulses. Thus the ego has a great function in this process due to its allocation of the libido and its balance between the pleasure principle and the reality principle.

Furthermore, the two dangerous functions in the development of the libido also lie in the home—fixation and regression. According to the theories of aetiology, the external frustration caused by family breakdowns at home undoubtedly leads to the internal frustration of the libido, and the incomplete development of it causes the fixation of the libido. Then the fixation of libido works together with frustration in the causation of illness. Thus frustration is regarded as the external factor of neuroses, and libido-fixation is the internal one. In the development of the libido, when meeting frustration some sexual impulses will choose to get back to early phases of organization and types of object-choice. That is, they regress to the fixation points and show up as symptoms, and the process is called regression. Consequently, the development and transformation of the libido are influenced by family breakdowns, and since the ego is responsible for the allocation of the libido, the formation of the ego lies in the home too.

Through the function of the Oedipus complex and the development of the libido we can find the conflict between ego and sexuality—the ego and the id. However, the conflict is made more complicated with the function of the super-ego. Of course, we have known the fact that the super-ego mainly comes from the identification with the father to repress the Oedipus complex, but authoritative consciousness on society like religion also participates in it. Significantly, there is the other function that helps construct the super-ego in the development of the libido—sublimation. During one's sexual latency period, the psychic forces develop and act as inhibitions on the sexual life, such as "loathing, shame, and moral and esthetic ideal demands" (Theory of Sex, 551). The means that accomplish these important constructions for later personal culture and normality are from the infantile sexuality, whose energy is deflected less or more from sexual utilization and conducted to other aims. The historians of civilization believe that "such deflection of sexual motive powers from sexual aims to new aims, a process which merits the name of sublimation, has furnished powerful components for all cultural accomplishments" (Theory of Sex, 552). The ego then faces the conflict from this process.

In the aspect of aetiology, we can find the connection between sublimation and the development of the libido. About people's illness caused by the frustration of the libido, Freud had another statement:

The frustration is very rarely a comprehensive and absolute one; in order to have a pathogenic effect it would probably have to strike at the only form of satisfaction which that person desires, the only form of which he is capable. (Psychoanalysis, 302)

So in general, there are many possible ways to endure lack of libidinal satisfaction without falling ill. The process serving as protection against illness arising from

want is particularly significant in the development of culture, and it consists in abandoning part of the sexual impulse and turning to a new social aim. We call the process sublimation, by which “we subscribe to the general standard which estimates social aims above sexual aims” (Psychoanalysis, 302). Accordingly, by sublimation the frustrated libido must not be the cause of a neurosis and it is provided a reduction in the possibility of falling ill.

However, the super-ego indeed participates in the conflict of the ego and the id, and has an influence on one’s consciousness and behavior. That is because what we call the character of a person is built up mostly from the material of sexual excitations, and “it is composed of impulses fixed since infancy and won through sublimation, and of such structures as are destined to suppress effectually those perverse feelings which are recognized as useless” (Theory of Sex, 594). Therefore, the super-ego has its significance in the development of one’s character; what’s more, it also makes significant function on the common consciousness of human beings. As we mentioned in chapter II, the super-ego contains the ego ideal and conscience. So the ego ideal coming from the identification with the father influences one’s character by having the tension with the ego and condemning the ego by its critical agency, and the conscience coming from authorities on society affects him by giving the sense of guilt. Authorities on society like religion, schools, or the government thus have certain functions on people’s common consciousness.

As a result, in my opinion, how the super-ego functions and the development of civilization may provide a solution for the dysfunction of the ego of Pinkie and Alex. The reason is that civilization originates from the sublimation of part of the libido and forms a public consciousness on society which deeply influences people. In the course of human development external coercion gradually becomes internalized, and

“for a special mental agency, man’s super-ego, takes it over and includes it among its commandments” (Freud, Future of Illusion¹, 14). Everyone must process this transformation, because only by that means does he become a moral and social being. Then those who have processed it turn “from being opponents of civilization into being its vehicles” (Future of Illusion, 14).

In Freud’s view, all men are anti-social and anti-cultural with the tendency of destruction, so “civilization has to be defended against the individual, and its regulations, institutions and commands are directed to that task” (Future of Illusion, 7). Therefore, coercion cannot be dispensed in the work of civilization, though owing to it men have become embittered, revengeful, and inaccessible. The best example is the phenomenon that underprivileged classes will envy what privileged classes have and do their best to “free themselves from their own surplus of privation” (Future of Illusion, 15), just like Pinkie and Alex’s situation of being repressed by the society or the government. Thus only by the pressure of external coercion can people obey the cultural prohibitions. Besides, civilization deprives the liberty of the individual: “the development of civilization imposes restrictions on it, and justice demands that no one shall escape those restrictions” (Freud, Civilization², 42). Whereas, civilization protects the interest in human’s communal existence and the manner in which the social relationships of men to one another are regulated. It seems that the emphasis turns from the material to the mental aspect. The decisive questions are how and to what degree to “lessen the burden of the instinctual sacrifices imposed on men” (Future of Illusion, 8), how to reconcile them to what must necessarily be remained, and how to compensate them.

The consequence of civilization may not be all happiness, but on the other hand

¹ In this thesis it represents The Future of an Illusion.

² In this thesis it represents Civilization and Its Discontents.

it brings people suffering. There is one thing making people suffered that they have faced the inadequacy of “the regulations which adjust the mutual relationships of human beings in the family, the state, and the society” (Civilization, 33). In this unsuccessful prevention of the social source of suffering, people then tend not to admit it, because we cannot know why the regulations made by ourselves fail to protect and benefit for us. However, happiness is in fact about the economics of the individual’s libido, so Freud viewed one’s psychical constitution as an important factor of suffering:

It is a question of how much real satisfaction he can expect to get from the external world, how far he is led to make himself independent of it, and, finally, how much strength he feels he has for altering the world to suit his wishes. (Civilization, 30)

Then what plays a decisive part is not the external circumstance but his psychical constitution, which faces the repression of the libido and the deprivation of liberty resulting from civilization. That is quite similar to the cause of people’s neuroses—the internal frustration resulting from the external frustration. What we call civilization, accordingly, is responsible for our misery, and maybe we will be happier if we give it up and back to the former situation.

Of course, to give up the present civilization is impossible, for it is its characteristics of order and cleanliness that we deeply need. Yet what’s the most important is the impossibility to ignore that “civilization is built up upon a renunciation of instinct”, and by suppression, repression, or some other means “it presupposes precisely the non-satisfaction of powerful instinct” (Civilization, 44). This “cultural frustration” has a dominative function on large relationships of human beings, and if the loss is not comparatively compensated, serious disorders will appear

for certain. The cultural frustration then takes a part in the society and the home and constructs part of people's external frustration, which seriously influences young criminals like Pinkie and Alex by the function of the super-ego. Also, by the super-ego civilization makes people's aggressiveness which opposes it harmless. It is because one's aggressiveness has been internalized and sent back to where it came from, the ego itself, part of which takes over it and forms the super-ego against the rest of the ego by the sense of guilt. Therefore, civilization controls the individual's aggressiveness "by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within them to watch over it" (Civilization, 71).

Within the super-ego, the most important agency set by civilization is religion, and the religious power watches over people by strengthening the conscience and the sense of guilt. The motives for the formation of religion are the same as children's contribution to the manifest motives in relation to their helplessness and ambivalent attitude to the father. Under the function of the Oedipus complex people's fear for the father is the same as their admiration and longing for him. Freud interpreted about the origin of religion roughly:

When the growing individual finds . . . that he can never do without protection against strange superior powers, he lends those powers the features belonging to the figure of his father; he creates for himself the gods whom he dreads, whom he seeks to propitiate, and whom he nevertheless entrusts with his own protection. (Future of Illusion, 30)

So the religious needs from the helplessness and the longing for the father is undoubted, especially the feeling is not only prolonged from childhood but sustained by the fear of the power of fate. As a result, as soon as people find that even gods cannot completely get rid of the control of nature and fate, the tasks of gods become

the compensation of the shortcomings of civilization, the attention of the sufferings that people face in life, and the supervision of the practice of the regulations within civilization. In addition, if people are taught that there is “no almighty and all-just God, no divine world order and no future life” (Future of Illusion, 44), they will feel free to disobey the regulations of civilization. Thus gods exist in human society with these significant meanings.

In Freud’s opinion, a belief can be called an illusion if a wish-fulfillment is a main factor in it without regarding its relation to reality. One having his belief has to defend the religious illusion with all his might. Then if it becomes discredited his world collapses: “There is nothing left for you but to despair of everything, of civilization and the future of mankind” (Future of Illusion, 69). It is then asserted that every one shows a kind of paranoia, correcting what he feels unbearable in the world by constructing a wish and putting this delusion into reality. Many people procure “a certainty of happiness and a protection against suffering” (Civilization, 28) through a delusional recreation of reality. Accordingly Freud regarded religion as a kind of mass delusion, and he went further to point out the consequence of this phenomenon: “religion restricts this play of choice and adaptation, since it imposes equally on everyone its own path to the acquisition of happiness and protection from suffering” (Civilization, 31). However, in my opinion, religion is not absolutely a mass delusion to people but has a significant meaning in their compensation for the suffering they have experienced. Besides, though religion restricts the play of choice and adaptation to some extent, its imposition on people’s free will is dubious. What we should put emphases on is whether the religious sense should be cultivated and how great the sense of guilt religion brings us.

Undoubtedly, the sense of religion and the sense of guilt are the inevitable

consequences in the civilization of human beings. There have been two main points in the education of children: “retardation of sexual development and premature religious influence” (Future of Illusion, 60). The retardation of sexual development, as the analysis in Chapter III, forms the frustration of the libido and causes neurotic symptoms. Then the premature religious influence, one of the consequences of civilization, may form a child’s strict super-ego against his id and make him suffered. What is worse, premature religious education may lead to children’s atrophy of the mind, and the best example is the obvious contrast between the radiant intelligence of children and the feeble intelligence of adults. A child will not be troubled with God and the next life after a long time, so by imposing the religious sense on him, the deprivation of his free will of thinking must result in the interruption and the obstacle of the development of his intelligence. However, we have no other means to control the instinctual nature in spite of our intelligence and we cannot expect people under the prohibitions of thought to reach “the psychological ideal, the primacy of the intelligence” (Future of Illusion, 61). Thus the premature religious sense does not actually help children. For example, with a deep belief of Christianity, Pinkie suffered a lot by its doctrines and prohibitions which had indirect influences of his neurotic symptoms. The deeper he believed it the closer he was to hell.

The other consequence of civilization is the sense of guilt. We cannot be sure of the existence of the capacity to distinguish the good from the bad, because what is bad in common consciousness may not be dangerous but be enjoyable and desirable to someone. Therefore, there must be an “extraneous influence” at work in the beginning, the loss of love, and one must avoid it due to the fear of the loss. Whether one has already done a bad thing or just intends to do it then makes little difference; he is only afraid of being found out. Furthermore, when the authority of

the larger human community is internalized through the formation of the super-ego, the conscience reaches a higher level. According to Freud, the field of ethics presents us that “ill-luck—that is, external frustration—so greatly enhances the power of the conscience in the super-ego” (Civilization, 73), so fate is viewed as a substitute for the parental agency. If one is unfortunate it means that he is not loved by this power anymore, and fearing of the loss of love, he must submit to “the parental representative in his super-ego” (Civilization, 74). Thus the establishment of the sense of guilt is clear. Firstly, the renunciation of instinct comes because of the fear of losing love under the work of the external authority. After that an internal authority, conscience, is set up, and the renunciation of instinct comes owing to the fear of it. Under this situation bad intentions are equal to bad actions, and then the sense of guilt and the need for punishment come along. In addition, the two consequences of civilization are actually related. Religion tends to heighten the conscience part to strengthen people’s sense of guilt for keeping the order in human society, and being one of the authorities on society it also provides an origin to the sense of guilt.

There may be some confusion in the formation of the sense of guilt, for it is in fact an interrelationship that conscience—the anxiety which becomes conscience—is the cause of the renunciation of instinct which results in conscience and the sense of guilt. Thus this interrelationship shows clearly: “every renunciation of instinct now becomes a dynamic source of conscience” and “every fresh renunciation increases the latter’s severity and intolerance” (Civilization 75). Accordingly, the most important problem in the development of civilization is the sense of guilt, and through heightening it we pay the price for our advance in civilization—the loss of happiness. We cannot deny the contributions made by civilization and religion; however, it is

human civilization that leads to people's frustration and pain. Besides, as what we stated before, there are undoubtedly connections among sublimation, super-ego, and civilization. The process from the sublimation of the libido to the construction of the super-ego then represents the development of human civilization. Therefore, we can say that what makes people suffered is exactly the super-ego.

As young offenders, Pinkie and Alex live under a strict censorship of the super-ego, no matter from the authority or from the conscience; whereas it must contributes to and invoke their aggressiveness. According to Freud, there must be a considerable amount of aggressiveness developing in the child against "the authority which prevents him from having his first, but none the less his most important, satisfactions" (Civilization 76). The decisive factor of this aggressiveness is the external frustration brought about by the authority, and it causes young offenders' internal frustration, the frustration of the libido and the deprivation of the instinct. Evidently, in the field of psychoanalysis we can always find a processing influence from the external to the internal, and it comes to be the conflict between the super-ego and the ego of people. Thus the aggressiveness of Pinkie and Alex results from the internal frustration which also results in their symptoms of neuroses.

Pinkie's aggressiveness is the consequence of his strict super-ego, and it results from serious family breakdowns and powerful religious sense. The family breakdowns and over-strictness of the father in Pinkie's family bring him the internal frustration and his weak super-ego; but after he leaves home, the environment and the deep-rooted religious power still construct his strict conscience and the sense of guilt. Also, Alex faces some family breakdowns and the dislocation of the home; they are the origin of his internal frustration and aggressiveness and may lead to his sense of guilt to his family. And what strengthen his super-ego are the environment and the

government. Therefore, what is in common is their lacking of the tension between ego and super-ego at home, and since they may have been brought up without love, the whole of their aggressiveness can be directed outwards. Moreover, it is clear that the stricter their sense of guilt is the higher possibility of their delinquency may be. The two-sidedness of super-ego is then revealed: in one way, people need the super-ego to be an outlet of their aggressiveness, and in the other way, the over-strictness of the super-ego will cause their serious aggressiveness to the society.

Accordingly, how to balance the conflict between the super-ego and the ego becomes an important issue. In the psychoanalytic patterns of Pinkie and Alex we can always find the function of the environmental effect, because the society and the home all take a decisive part in their life. The disorder brought about by the environment undoubtedly serves as the external frustration for Pinkie's and Alex's internal frustration, the frustration of the libido. Thus the ego has the duty to bear and balance both the frustrated instinct of the id and the strict censorship of the super-ego; either one will have the danger to cause aggressiveness or neurotic symptoms, no matter inwards or outwards. Then during the conflict between the ego and the super-ego, Pinkie and Alex lose their identities. In our culture, there are always a high evaluation of youth on accomplishment rather than age and "a disproportionate lack of opportunity for youth manifests itself" on society, and consequently, "arrogance and frustration appear in the young, fear and envy, in the old" (Coser, 450). So any forms of the authority cannot really help the ego function like schools or religions, but they only strengthen the strictness of the super-ego and the conflict between the ego and the super-ego. What is more, when the authority tries to keep one's life in order by repression and doctrine, he may completely lose "the ability to identify evil in himself or to deal with it prudently" (McCall, 294).

Therefore, the way to reconstruct the losing order and identity should be through the establishment of a strong ego to deal with both the id and the super-ego.

Also, the traditional religious sense which represses people by strict super-ego should be avoided, and people nowadays must have a new faith in which they can believe themselves more and strengthen the function of the ego. It may occur to us that Pinkie ended in the destruction of his life and all the other things but Alex ended in getting maturity and anticipating socialization. The key point is Alex has a stronger ego; in spite of the irresistible Lodovico's Technique, Alex always got an easy and optimistic attitude to deal with everything happening on him. Therefore, in order to prevent violent acts (aggressiveness) and abnormal psychology (symptoms of neuroses), familial education seems to be the only solution to form the strong ego since neuroses and delinquency all lie in the home. It is important to balance the conflict by the modification of the strict conscience and of the twisted instincts. Parents should also broaden their views to help their children, as what Philip E. Ray said, "Everything human is inevitable . . . both the good and the evil" (486). And since young people possess keen reasoning ability, bright minds and the strong ego can be expected to show on them.