

## SENSE OF GUILT IN FREUDIAN WORK: UNIVERSAL AND UNCONSCIOUS<sup>1</sup>

André Gellis  
Maria Isabel Lima Hamud

**Abstract:** In the project entitled “Genesis and Development of the Concept of Sense of Guilt in Freud’s Work”, the research aims to “investigate the theoretical trajectory of the sense of guilt in Freud’s work”. That research had many results. We choose to talk about the duality “universal guilt/ individual guilt” and the unconscious guilt. First, the universality of the sense of guilt is discussed, which appears constantly in religion; but we discuss also specific demands Superego does to Ego. Besides, the unconscious guilt appears several times, culminating in the discussion about how feelings can be unconscious.

**Keywords:** Psychoanalysis. Guilt. Unconscious. Superego.

From a chronological reading, subsidized by or related biographical texts, it is clear that Freud’s interest in the sense of guilt did not emerge neatly, on the contrary, it is clear that Freud noted the importance of it at different times and situations, but didn’t pay attention to devote a thorough and specific study about it. It is understood that this is due to the fact that Freud did not investigated it directly, because his study focused on the neuroses and unconscious when faced

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This paper is dedicated to Osman Mustafá Hamud – *in memoriam*.

with expressions of guilt. In this way, it permeates the psychoanalytic theory since Freud's early works, when he only conjectured about the psychological mechanisms (in their drafts, for example) without any intention of publishing them, as many ideas were still being developed and it was hard to prove them. During this period, it is possible to identify the guilty from related terms, such as self-reproach and remorse, which are not defined or characterized.

A crucial notion to psychoanalysis, the guilt appears often related to morality and ethics, as well as the emergence of the superego and to the development and survival of civilization. Guilt is seen as a universal feeling that sustains life gregarious, but it also related to the subject, to the causation of neuroses. Given this universality, in contrast to individual guilt, unconscious, there is the glimpse of the theoretical evolution of guilt, as well as the analysis of the relation and manifestation of it in various aspects, group, culture, civilization and finally in the subject. These are relevant points to the study and comprehension of guilt to the psychoanalytic theory.

## 1 Universal Guilt and Individual Guilt

In many texts, specifically in "Totem and Taboo" (1913), "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego" (1921), and "The Future of an Illusion" (1927), Freud presents the irremediable antagonism between the demands of society and of the drive motion, considering such an inconsistency as a constant threat to the survival of civilization, since the hostile and aggressive impulses are always looking for a way to express themselves. That's exactly why the civilization takes benefit of the internal agent who oversees the subject and condemns him to the arisen of guilt. After many reflexions and works, in 1929, in "The malaise in the culture" Freud concludes that the civilization can, in one way or another, dominate the dangerous desire of aggression, weakening it, disarming it and setting a agent inside the subject to contain the desire. That's because this agent – the superego – watches the ego and is ready to condemn it, intensifying the feeling of guiltiness that sustains the civilizations. To reach this conclusion Freud had to travel a painstaking path of research and investigation that sometimes stands the universality of guilty in an attempt to explain the heart of the civilization and sometimes is attentive to neurosis and guilt that plagues the subject.

In "Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices" (1907), Freud elaborates a certain comparison that can be helpful in understanding the guilty on their individual and collective variables. By treating ceremonies as a

set of conditions that must be met, Freud points out that the obsessive ritual appears to be a ceremonial, with the difference that in the religious ceremonies each and every detail is significant and has some symbolic meaning, while the obsessive ritual is devoid of any clear direction and it seems absurd, even to the own obsessive who, despite being able to escape from the ritual, recognizes the lack of logic in his acts.

The psychoanalytic investigation dilutes the absurd aspect of obsessive acts by revealing that they have a sense (unconscious) and that is by the mechanism of psychological displacement that happens the replacement of the real and important subject by a trivial one. Thus, the obsessive ritual emerges as an act of defense or security, it is a kind of a protective measure; and what is hidden to the subject is the connection between the time that anxiety arises and the danger that it points out. Comparatively, it is verified that the devoted practices in the ceremonies of the religious individuals are also characterized as enterprises whose main object is the implementation of protective measures that aim to ensure security.

Freud realizes that both religious ceremonies as obsessive rituals come with two features: to seek protection against hostiles internal impulses (temptation/sin) and to avoid the expected evil (a punishment, a penance or to be castigated). He perceives that there are in both laws and prohibitions, whose function is atoning. Then, Freud works on the formation of the religion, that is based on the suppression or renunciation of certain instinctive impulses – from

which come, for example, the commandments – and verifies that the feeling of guiltiness resulting from a continues temptation and the anguish in the form of fear of the divine punishment have been known for a longer time in the religion's field than in the neuroses fields. Later on, the renounce of the impulses will be discussed in Freud's work as a crucial element (along with the intensification of guilt) of the basis of the civilization development.

Given the parallels and similarities between religion and obsessional neurosis, Freud (1907/1969) concludes: "it can be considered an obsessional neurosis a pathological correlate of the formation of a religion, describing the neurosis as an individual religiosity and the religion as a universal obsessional neurosis" (p. 116).

The relations between religion, which mitigates the universal guilt, and the obsessional neurosis, which accepts individual guilt, also appear in "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood" (1910), in which Freud talks about the courage and intellectual independence of Leonardo. Among many aspects of his genius, Freud is interested exactly by what appears to be just a "detail" in the history of that brilliant man: his cold repudiation of sexuality. Freud says that the affections of the Italian genius were controlled and subjected to research, which does

not mean that he was devoid of passion, he just “converted his passion into a thirst for knowledge ... delivering to the investigation with the persistence, constancy and penetration which is derived from passion” (Freud, 1910/1969, p. 69). It is remarkable that Leonardo developed the ability to sublimate his sexual impulses, both in their artistic expressions as in his curiosity and intellectual interest. According to Freud, this target was only possible because the *libido* escaped from the repression, being able to sublimate and invest in his researches.

Freud notes yet an important fact and characteristic in Leonardo's history: the absence of his father during his early childhood and the thoroughness with which he made notes in a diary, which called him attention, because it pointed out a possible obsessional neurosis. The absence of his father explains the weakness of the mechanism of repression, indicating the existence of infantile sexual researches uninhibited and, therefore, the apparent absence of guilt. Moreover, living with his poor and abandoned biological mother, as well as his disappointment with the developments of the vulture fantasy, are possibly in the origin of repulsion' feeling that he developed by women.

The author carefully attempts to the child's curiosity in different moments and shows that the children's speculation about sexual activity produces concrete fundamentals to the psyche and it is related to guilt. The prevailing thought at that time was that the sexuality emerged only at puberty, but Freud described infantile sexuality and opposed to the idea that sexuality concerns only to adulthood. Thus, the child can give herself/himself a huge guilt for his/her child curiosity, or yet the guilt derived from the fear of losing parental love or fear of punishment, which can cause numerous future developments. Such an understanding, if it does not justify, at least explains the remarkable independence that Leonardo had in relation to his own feelings and also in relations to other human beings, not needing nor being dependent of any authority figure.

Freud recalls the idea of human need to rely on some authority, since human being is born in a state of complete dependence, and says: “However, Leonardo could dispense with this support; he was not able to have it done during his first years of life if he had not learned to live without the father.” (Freud, 1910/1969, p. 112).

Relating that dependence to the initial need for authority, Freud concludes that the parental complex is also rooted in the necessity of religion, because the “religious feeling” is originated in and with the observation of the huge dependence and human frailty, extended beyond the everyday life. Having this in mind, Freud is able to establish the reason why the religion turns out to be a collective neurosis and liberates the subject of an individual neurosis:

The protection against neurotic disorder that religion gives to the believers is easily explained: it puts away the parental complex, which depends on the feeling of guilt, either on the individual, or on the totality of human race, solving it for him, while the one who does not believe has to solve by himself one's problem. (Freud, 1910/1969, p. 113)

Shortly after writing about infantile sexual theories and reflecting about the role that parents, education and society have on children, in 1908, Freud writes the article "Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness", under the influence of the book "Sexual Ethics" (Von Ehrenfels, 1907). According to the English's translator, this article is one of the first long exposures that Freud makes on the antagonism between civilization and instinctual demand. Earlier writings, however, had already revealed that the belief that Freud had in this regard, for example, in the letters to Fliess and his "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality", published in 1905, where he says that the relation between civilization and the free development of sexuality is inverse.

All these considerations converge to an inevitable way: to seek the origin of guilt and to explain the rise of civilization, of moral, included of religion. In 1913, Freud publishes "Totem and Taboo – some points of agreement between the mental life of the savages and neurotics", where he talks about the primal horde and its two founding crimes: incest and parricide.

"Totem and Taboo" was one of the most brilliant theoretical contributions in explaining the relevance of subject's guilt. From anthropological studies of primitive communities still existents, rites and prohibitions strongly entrenched are observed, for example, in the horror of incest and exogamy. In his text, Freud suggests that there are many similarities and points of agreement between the psychology of primitive peoples – portrayed by social anthropology – and the psychology of neurotics, the focus of psychoanalysis. In this sense, the study of the first would have much to contribute to the development of psychoanalysis. It is also important to highlight the importance of childhood, as for Freud, the wild man and the neurotic are very similar to children. A neurotic person invariably shows some degree of psychic infantilism, or failed to get rid of psychosexual conditions that prevailed in its infancy (inhibition) or returned to them (regression).

Freud chooses for his study in "Totem and Taboo" the Aboriginal people from Australia, because they are described by anthropologists as "one of the most miserable and backward savages." One of the elements that most draws his attention to those tribes is the horror of incest of that people and a preoccupation with prevention, which it is punished even when occurs among animals. If that primitive naked cannibal people did not develop any kind of civilized morality, it was

expected that there would have no restrictions on their sexual life and that their sexuality would not be subject to standards. However, what occurred was that “they set themselves, with the most severe and the most scrupulous accuracy, the purpose of avoiding incestuous sexual relations” (Freud, 1913/1969, p. 7). It is a kind of “law” against marriage and sexual relationship between persons of the same clan<sup>2</sup>, although they were from different biological families. This finding, despite being against the expected, it was not surprising to Freud, since long before he imagined a possible relation between the prohibition of incest and civilization: in 1897, Freud wrote to Fliess (“Draft N” (Freud, 1897b / 1969) that incest is antisocial and civilization is a progressive renunciation of it.

Among the aborigines of Australia, the incest taboo is so strong that its violation is energetically avenged by the entire clan, unlike what happens when other prohibitions (killing the totem, for example) are violated and the punishment is automatic, as if a disaster or misfortune hit, inevitably, the violator. Freud realizes on that particular case the community tends to punish the offenders brutally. He suspects, then, there should be also a collective guilt, if the offender rested immune; all the people could be punished or castigated; Freud goes on to approach the guilt from the necessity of punishment.

To comprehend and explain the collective guilt, Freud had to resort to the scientific myth of Darwinian primal horde in which the children would have united themselves to kill the primal father. But with the death of their father, instead of satisfaction and freedom the children were faced with remorse and fear of punishment, so they adopted a totem (often an animal) as a substitute for the holy father, who was revered and inviolable, causing a kind of reconciliation that might ease the guilt and help forget the committed crime. For this reason, totemism can be considered a first attempt to religion. The totemic religion would have arisen out of the filial guilt in an effort to allay that feeling and to appease the (wrath of ) father with the most careful obedience to him. For Freud, all later religions are seen as attempts to solve the same problem.

In 1939, three essays collected in “Moses and Monotheism” Freud has some theories about the monotheistic religion. Among them, the thesis elaborated on the murder of Moses brings an important development for understanding the origin of collective guilt, as it adds the burden (more murder) to its source. Freud points out that this group’s fault had exceeded the limits, “it had seized all the peoples of the Mediterranean as a vague unease, like a cataclysmic premonition” (Freud, 1939/1969, p. 131).

2 The clan is determined by the totemic ties independently of the ties of kinship.

Also in "Totem and Taboo," Freud makes some analogies between obsessional neurosis and religion by identifying that the obsessional prohibitions involve quite extensive restrictions, as well as the prohibitions of the taboo and religion, and realizes that some restrictions may be lifted if certain actions are performed, so these actions soon become compulsive acts that will be repeated indefinitely: they have the same nature as atonement, penance, purification or even defensive measures. The moral sense comes from the same source from which the religion had been originated, but the moral sense is the result of the requirement of both society and the penance that establishes guilt.

After "Totem and Taboo," the question of collective or individual guilt will be discussed in a 1914 text "On Narcissism – an Introduction," when Freud talks about the ideal ego and about the resulting instance, the superego. With the narcissism concept Freud made a good progress in understanding the feeling of guilt, because the construction of an ideal notion of the ego, and, later, of the superego, exemplifies the requirement from which is derived the guilt on the subject. Laplanche and Pontalis point out the ideal of the ego as a relatively autonomous intrapsychic formation that serves as a reference to the ego enjoy their affective relationships and affirm that "its origin is mainly narcissistic" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 2004, p. 222). Freud says that the ideal of the ego reveals an important *scenario* for the comprehension of the group psychology, as well as its individual side, this ideal presents a social aspect, which is the common ideal of a family, a class or a nation. According to Freud, the ideal binds not only the narcissistic libido one has, but also a considerable amount of one's homosexual libido<sup>3</sup>, which return to the ego.

It is through this understanding that Freud captures the feeling of guilt in his social sphere: "The lack of satisfaction that comes from the non-realization of an ideal liberates homosexual libido, which is transformed in guilt (social anxiety)" (Freud, 1914/1969, p. 108). It is known that originally, in psychic life, the guilt was a product of the fear of the parental punishment, which means, the product of the fear of losing the love of the parents; later the parents will be replaced by an indefinite number of people in the community, which leads to "social anxiety"; that, despite presenting itself as individual guilt, is born due to the collective experience.

In 1915, Freud describes the feeling of guilt and relates it to the attitude adopted in face of death; in "Reflexions upon war and death," he says that the early history of mankind is full of murders and points out that obscure sense of guilt to which mankind has been subject to

3 It refers to the narcissistic identification to the ideal in which it refers to the sexual investment made on the own ego.

since prehistoric times and that in some religions, it was condensed in the doctrine of the primal guilt, of the primal sin, is probably the result of the guilt of murder that would have incurred the prehistoric man. In the same text, Freud discusses the ambivalences of feeling that were presented in the war time, because at the same time that man could kill his enemies without the least scruple, he performed rites of purification and isolation to get rid of the guilt over his act and of the fear of vengeance of the dead spirit.

According to Freud, along with a dead body, it has begun to exist not only the doctrine of the soul, but the belief in immortality and a powerful source of man's guilt, but also the first ethical commandments. The first and most important prohibition made by the awakening consciousness was: Thou shall not to kill. (Freud, 195b/1969, p. 305). Concomitant with the ethical requirement there is the fear of death itself, which is also reflex of guilt.

The formulation of the Oedipus complex, the sense (universal) of guilt is made present and revived individually, in which Freud identifies as intense death wishes (desire to kill the father), these can be transformed into conscious fear of one's own death (as revenge) thanks to the action that the oppressive internal instance originates with the resolution of the Oedipus complex – the superego. For Freud, at the time of primeval crime, the authority was external to the subject; now with the emergence of the superego and the internalization of norms, the oppressive instance is internal. This set up a problem: only a waiver would not be enough, since the desire persists and does not escape to the superego. Guilt is understood, therefore, as being the way the ego perceives the criticism of the superego. It is therefore a sense of unworthiness. There is an ideal of the ego that "criticizes" the ego and make it feels unworthy of the ideal.

Finally, in "The malaise in the culture" (1930 [1929]), Freud recognizes two sources for the guilt, the anguish in the face of authority, and, later, the anguish before the superego. Guilt emerges, then, not as a diffuse feeling, but a ubiquitous and universal feeling: a continuous inner unhappiness. In the text, it is clear that the survival of civilization is just possible with the requirement of the renounce and resignation of the impulses of the subject, which intensifies the feeling of guilt. Thus, for the survival of civilization and evolution of culture there are high standards of moral conduct to which every person must conform, controlling their impulses and renouncing their satisfactions. Therefore, as Freud said in the malaise, "we can represent the feeling of guilt as the most important issue in the development of civilization" (Freud, 1930[1929]/1969, p. 96).

Freud noted, then, that the course's requirements to which the subject, during the whole history, was submitted to: first he is obliged



to inhibit their impulses for the sovereignty of the primal father, then, they are submitted to the paternal law in the Oedipus complex, until being restricted by the internalization of morality in the superego instance, damming their impulses by religious norms, and, finally, fitting themselves the social standards, always due to the intrinsic guilt, which they are not able to escape from.

One can therefore say that the individual guilt is intimately and directly related to collective guilt and that it results not only from its history but it is the product of the primary condition of dependence of human beings and their group experience.

## 2 Unconscious guilt

The question of the unconscious not only permeates the entire Freudian theory as it is also one of the most essential concepts of psychoanalysis. From the "Project for a Scientific Psychology" (1895) Freud gets interested in studying psychic mechanisms. To formulate his two topical psychic apparatus Freud goes through a path full of pitfalls and develops a notion based on quantitative elements (neurological impulses) to the qualitative dynamics of the psyche. In "The Interpretation of Dreams" (which began to be written in 1895 and was published in 1899) Freud gives a qualitative leap in psychoanalytic theory to abandon the overvaluation of consciousness and to emphasize that the unconscious is the true psychic reality, in order to ensure that the interpretation is the royal road that leads to knowledge of the unconscious activities.

In 1901, in the chapter "Determinism, belief in chance and superstition" on "The Psychopathology of Everyday Life", Freud uses the example of clinical paranoia to demonstrate the existence of unconscious knowledge, since it is considered that nothing can be arbitrary or indeterminate on the psyche. The fault appears in it on an example of the occurrence of a number a reader reported to Freud: when he (the reader) read that any number evoked to consciousness in a apparently arbitrary way has a defined meaning, he decided to test this hypothesis, thinking about a number and analyzing what could have determined his choice, until he came to the Universal Library numbers and realized that the numbers that he chose initially, when decomposed, come to the number of the plays *Menschenhass und Reue* (Misanthropy e remorse) and *Die Schuld* (The guilt), concluding by himself: "My current mental state is of misanthropy and remorse...I am constantly plagued by the idea that it is my guilt that I did not get to be what my abilities would have allowed." (Freud, 1901/1961, p. 292).

In the same chapter, Freud talks about superstition being an expectation of misfortune: a person who wishes evil to another one, having been raised with moral precepts and therefore repressed her hostility in the unconscious “will be especially prone to expect the punishment for her unconscious evil as a misfortune that threat her from the outside” (Freud, 1901/1969, p.311). This “punishment” concerns to the need for punishment, linked to [unconscious] guilt, may appear in several ways. Freud does not used to speak of unconscious guilt, but investigating the psychic determinism, which appears in slips and it is revealed in the mechanism of formation of dreams, he found unconscious expressions of guilt.

In 1906 Freud was invited to participate in a law conference for students about psychoanalysis, the experience of free association as a method of research and the theory of Zurich complexes. This conference is presented in the text “Psychoanalysis and the establishment of facts in legal proceedings” in the same year. Freud talks about the unreliability of witnesses’ testimony which leads the public to be interested in the “research method that aims to induce the defendant to establish his own guilt or innocence.” (Freud, 1906/1969, p. 95).

The psychoanalytic investigation helped a lot in the revelation of unconscious contents in neurotic people and, accordingly, had approached the neurotic to the criminal, since the crimes of incest and parricide are faced in the Oedipus complex. Another similarity is the fact that both have a hidden secret, however, the criminal hides something intentionally, while the neurotic, the secret is hidden from his own consciousness, what means, it is not only forgotten, but strongly repressed. It is as if the neurotic ignored his own secret and the criminal simulated such ignorance. In addition, the secrets are reluctant to be revealed, however, the resistance in the analytic treatment lies on the border between the conscious and unconscious and can be countered by the patient through conscious efforts, aiming the healing, which does not occur with the criminal, as he won’t cooperate, since his goal is to keep the crime secret, and not to reveal it, and his resistance arises entirely from consciousness.

Thus, Freud retakes the concept of psychic determinism in an attempt to articulate a possible psychoanalysis contribution to those cases, but he points out to another difficulty, since the repressed psychic material in the neurotic torments the patient the same way it does to a guilt conscience. He sees also another complication: “You, sirs, in your investigation, may be misled by a neurotic that, however innocent, reacts as guilty due to a hidden sense of guilt already existent and that comes over the prosecution.” (Freud, 1906/1969, p. 103). At this conference the question Freud had about the unconscious quality of guilt appears as a possibility, but it is not yet directly attributable to guilt.

Freud takes the childhood to develop the hypothesis of not conscious guilt and cites an easily verifiable example, when a child accused of a transgression denies any guilt, but cries as a condemned person. Freud says that even seeming that the child lied to plead not guilty, often she did not commit the offense of which she is accused, but her crying may denounce any other fault that she has committed. According to Freud, "[the child] speaks the truth when deny being guilty of the first offense, while revealing her feelings of guilt from another fault"<sup>4</sup> (Freud, 1906/1969, p. 103). In "Dostoievsky and Parricide", discussing the male Oedipus complex, he says that it is due to the fear of castration that the boy abandons his desire to possess the mother and to get rid of the father, and adds: "to the extent that this desire remains unconscious, it constitutes the basis of guilt." (Freud, 1928/1969, p. 189).

In "Obsessive acts and religious practices" (1907), according to the translator, it will explicitly appear for the first time the term "unconscious guilt", which will play such an important role in Freud's later writings, as in "The Ego and the Id" (1923). In that text, Freud states that in the obsessive actions, however it does not seem to, everything has a meaning and can be interpreted, saying yet that "the obsessive act serves to express unconscious motives and ideas" (Freud, 1907/1969, p. 113), since the person who obeys the compulsion does not understand its meaning. Freud also talks about some sneaky feeling of anguish, as an expectation of misfortune linked to the idea of punishment, the inner sense of repressed hostile feelings. The same expectation appeared in relation to the superstition quoted above, which reaffirms the link between the unconscious sense of guilt and the necessary punishment.

By studying the obsessive acts, Freud concludes: "You can say that the one who suffers from compulsions and prohibitions behaves as if dominated by a sense of guilt, which, however, knows nothing, so we can call it unconscious sense of guilt." (Freud, 1907/1969, p. 113). Nasio (2007) explains that the obsession is a result of displacement of castration anxiety that passes from the unconscious to the conscious, crystallizing in the form of guilt, and "the unconscious anguish of being beaten by the father becomes an anguish of being punished by the superego" (p. 116). This anxiety that involves the expectation of punishment is itself a sense of guilt.

In "Totem and Taboo" (1913) Freud attempts to grasp the relation of guilt with the unconscious. Freud believes that the expressions of hate were not allowed in the primal horde – which meant that that affection remained repressed in the unconscious – and that the violation of any rule generated a certain feeling of guilt, which was intensified with the parricide. By calling attention to the fact that a sense of guilt has in it a

4 The lack which Freud refers to in this case it is, probably, derived from the crimes on Oedipus complex.

lot of the anguish nature, Freud describes this sensation as a “great fear of conscience.” It is this relation between guilt and anguish that enables the visualization of the unconscious sources:

“The psychology of the neuroses has made us see that if impulses are full of repressed desires, its libido will turn into anguish<sup>5</sup>. And this reminds us that there is something unknown and unconscious in connection with the feeling of guilt, namely, the reasons for the repudiation act. The character of anxiety that is inherent to the sense of guilt corresponds to the unknown factor.” (Freud, 1913/1969, p. 43)

It was only in 1915, in the article “The Unconscious”, that the question of unconscious guilt was clarified. Freud differentiates ideas of affections: the first traces of memory that are psychological representations, while the affects and emotions correspond to processes of discharge, whose final manifestations are perceived as feelings. With this distinction, Freud questions the possibility of having unconscious impulses, emotions or feelings, since they are perceived and felt by the conscience, and concludes, “it is certainly the essence of an emotion that we are aware of it ... Thus, the possibility of the attribute of unconsciousness would be completely excluded with regard to emotions, feelings and affections.” (Freud, 1915a/1969, p. 182).

In the same article, Freud says it is possible to talk about unconscious drive motion, but he points out that, by naming as an unconscious feeling or instinct, it is necessarily referred to something which ideational representation is unconscious. Freud believes that it is possible that an emotion or affection be felt and understood in a wrong way, which due to the repression of the appropriate representative of that affection, forced it to link to another idea. Thus, the consciousness mistakenly believes that the affection felt is the expression of the replaced idea. It is important to highlight that it is exactly this process that happens in obsessional neurosis.

Considering the repression suffered by the original idea, Freud explains the permit of the name “unconscious guilt”:

If we restore the true connection, we will call the original affective impulse of unconscious, however, its affect was never unconscious, the fact is that its idea had undergone repression. In general, the use of the terms “unconscious affect” and “unconscious emotion” refers to the vicissitudes suffered as a result of repression, by the quantitative factor in the instinctual impulse. (Freud, 1915a/1969, p. 182)

5    Latter, in 1926, at “Inhibitions, symptoms and anxiety”, Freud will abandon the idea of anguish as repressed libido and will start to consider it as a reaction to a traumatic or dangerous situation, thus, the anguish will be responsible for the repression and won't be a result of it.

Freud says that the unconscious ideas, even after the repression, continue to exist and try to manifest in conscious and that the inhibited affection in its development may appear as anguish.

In 1923 Freud publishes "The Ego and the Id", which deals with the second topic of the psychic *apparatus*, in which he presents the structures of the ego, of the Id, and of the superego. From a dynamic perspective, Freud analyzes the function of the ego, which must reconcile the pressures of the Id with the ideals of the superego and the external reality. The important thing here is that the unconscious body ceases to be treated only as a place to be understood in its dynamic size and economic, becoming the quality that permeates all structures – this, ego and the superego. Thus, Freud states that since the beginning, it is attributed to the moral tendencies of the ego the function of encouraging the repression. He explains that if the repressed content has access to conscience, the self-censorship attached to it will emerge unchanged; but the content emerges in a disguised way (for example: dreams, slips and jests), does not attract attention [conscious] for itself, what appears is simply a diffuse feeling of guilt without any content and, therefore, named unconscious.

When considering the dynamics of the unconscious, Freud points out that the unconscious guilt it is also expressed in the analytic treatment and explains some resistance derived from the ego during the analysis: the negative therapeutic reaction, presented in the fifth chapter, entitled "State of dependency of the ego", when elucidates important aspects of the dynamics and functioning of the superego. According to Freud, "the guilt that is finding its satisfaction in the disorder refuses to leave the punishment of suffering." (Freud, 1923/1969, p. 62). The feeling of guilt in these cases presents itself as a resistance to healing and very difficult to overcome.

The superego, which is also largely unconscious, is then presented in its relations with the ideal of the ego, as an instance of self-criticism able to judge and oppress the ego. Freud points out the moral censure and states that "the tension between the demands of conscience and the actual performance of the ego is experienced as unconscious sense of guilt" (Freud, 1923/1969, p. 49). In 1924, on the text "The economic problem of masochism" Freud returns to this issue and states that the use of the term "unconscious guilt" is psychologically incorrect, since feelings can not be described as "unconscious." However, from the necessity for punishment, he explains that the tension between the ego and superego refers to the reaction of the ego by the perception that it did not correspond to the demands of its ideal, i.e., the tension felt as guilt refers to the anguish felt by the ego, being the anguish unconscious.

Now it is possible to understand that the affections described as “unconscious” were inhibited in their development by repression and, in fact, what is unconscious is not the affection, but the original representation of it, and the libidinal charge attached to it. Therefore, to speak of “unconscious guilt” means that the psychic representative of the original guilt was repressed.

### **La culpabilité chez Freud: universal et inconscient**

**Résumé:** Intitulée “Genèse et développement de la notion de sentiment de culpabilité dans l’oeuvre freudienne”, ce projet de recherche avait comme objectif “d’investiguer la trajectoire théorique de la notion de sentiment de culpabilité dans l’oeuvre freudienne”. Parmi les résultats obtenus, nous avons choisi de discuter plus spécifiquement sur la dualité “culpabilité universelle/ culpabilité individuelle” et sur la qualité inconsciente attribuée à la culpabilité. En ce qui concerne la constatation de la dyade de la culpabilité nous abordons l’universalité du sentiment de culpabilité – qui apparaît constamment sous forme de religiosité – et nous dissertons sur l’exigence spécifique du Surmoi à l’égard du Moi. La qualité inconsciente de La culpabilité apparaît à de nombreuses reprises, et est amène à discuter comment est-il possible que le sentiment soit inconscient.

**Mots clés:** Psychanalyse. Culpabilité. Inconscient. Surmoi.

### **Sentimento de culpa na obra freudiana: universal e inconsciente**

**Resumo:** O projeto de pesquisa do qual resulta este artigo teve como objetivo geral “investigar a trajetória teórica da noção de sentimento de culpa na obra freudiana”. Dentre os resultados obtidos, optamos por discorrer especificamente sobre a dualidade “culpa universal/culpa individual” e a qualidade inconsciente atribuída à culpa. Na constatação da díade da culpa tratamos a universalidade do sentimento de culpa – que aparece constantemente em formas de religiosidade – e discorreremos acerca da cobrança específica que o Supereu faz ao Eu. A qualidade inconsciente da culpa aparece inúmeras vezes, culminando na discussão acerca de como é possível ser inconsciente o que é sentimento.

**Palavras-chave:** Psicanálise. Culpa. Inconsciente. Supereu.

## **Sentimiento de culpa en la obra freudiana: universal e inconsciente**

**Resumen:** El proyecto de investigación que da origen a este artículo tuvo como objetivo general “estudiar la trayectoria teórica de la noción de sentimiento de culpa en la obra freudiana”. Entre los resultados obtenidos, optamos por analizar específicamente la dualidad “culpa universal/culpa individual” y la cualidad inconsciente atribuida a la culpa. En la constatación de la dualidad de la culpa tratamos sobre la universalidad del sentimiento en cuestión – que aparece constantemente en formas de religiosidad – y profundizamos acerca de la demanda específica del Superyo al Yo. La cualidad inconsciente de la culpa aparece innumerables veces, culminando en la discusión acerca de cómo el sentimiento puede ser inconsciente.

**Palabras clave:** Psicoanálisis. Culpa. Inconsciente. Superyo.

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**André Gellis**, Advisor Professor of the research Project, Professor at Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho – UNESP/Bauru. Director of the Center of Applied Psychology (Centro de Psicologia Aplicada – CPA, da Unesp/Bauru). Address: Engenheiro Luiz Edmundo Carrijo Coube Avenue, 14-01, Vargem Limpa. Zip Code: 17033-360, Bauru, SP, Brazil. E-mail: [agellis@fc.unesp.br](mailto:agellis@fc.unesp.br)

**Maria Isabel Lima Hamud**, Psychologist, graduated by the UNESP/Bauru. Specialist in Legal Psychology by the Sedes Sapientiae Institut. Psychologist in the Department of Penitentiary Administration of São Paulo. Director of the Center for the Coordination of Technical References and Social Reintegration and Citizenship. Address: Libero Badaró Street, 600. Centro. Zip Code: 01008-000, São Paulo, SP, Brazil. E-mail: [mhamud@sp.gov.br](mailto:mhamud@sp.gov.br)/[isabel.hamud@yahoo.com.br](mailto:isabel.hamud@yahoo.com.br)

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