**A Psychoanalytic Reading of *The Chosen***

**What is psychoanalytic theory?**

Psychoanalytic theory is a method of understanding and explaining the production of literary works and their effects on readers, based on the psychological insights and doctrines of Sigmund Freud, a Viennese Jewish physician and psychoanalyst. Freud identified the unconscious as a major and influential source of psychic energy to the extent that the unconscious strongly influences conscious behavior. Then he created a model that explained the psychological sources of human behavior and a vocabulary that interpreted the model.

The psyche has three parts:

1. The *id*: unconscious, primitive, driving to fulfill basic needs. The mind as demanding infant.
2. The *ego*: conscious, orderly, rational. Projects itself onto the world through the *superego*.
3. The *superego*: self-regulating conscience. Product of the influence of upbringing and societal environment on the *ego*.

**In simple terms, think of the *id* as the devil on one shoulder, the *superego* as the angel on the other, and the *ego* as the person in the middle trying to balance both influences.**

Although original Freudian theory is less popular and more frequently criticized today than in the past, there is still much to learn about fiction from post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory.

**The Reading**

With your group, consider the character of Danny Saunders. In the space below, explain what each part of Danny’s psyche is urging him to do.

Id (impulse)

Superego (conscience)

Ego (balance)