

Meta-Psychology of suicide

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Let me first, introduce, the concept of “ The forth Organizer “.

(slide 2) (slide 3)

In many of our conversations and interviews with adolescents, we found that the topic of death is a significant mental preoccupation. Much thought is given to the idea of the end of life, even when self inflicted, in adolescents having no psychopathology or suicide wish. It thus appears to us that the intuitive, seemingly inseparable connection between the suicidal act and the death wish obscures a far more complex scenario.

We suggest that the suicidal act is an expression of suicidal thoughts, which are far more common than the act itself, which is far more common than completed suicide. This is in contrast to a death wish that exists but that does not necessarily finds suicidal expression, although its manifestations may be numerous and varied.

It is important to note that the wish to die and the wish to commit suicide can appear separately or jointly; in the latter case, they reach their full destructive expression.

The Death concept during adolescence

Sexual maturation and fertility which develop at the beginning of adolescence , necessitate control over oneself through a renewed examination of values hind desires, and receives its domineering status. Subsequently, the ideal of the self expresses itself by anticipation, the realization of which is becoming possible. This integration can be grasped as a meta-psychological expression of the fourth organizer, the conflict around the maturation of the fertile body, and the conscious decision to live, and to bring life, which is related to it. The difficulty of coping with life is especially great during adolescence due to the fact that this is the age at which identity moratorium occurs. The adolescent finds himself /herself in a time bubble in which he/she is not committed to anything except the formulation of the identity that will accompany him/her through life. (slide 4) .When the bubble bursts, the adolescent will have to the possessor of a clear identity and make major life choices regarding a profession and a mate. In other words, commitment. The fear of commitment is tremendous, and at times there is an attempt to defer it by what Colarusso calls "freezing" time, which, during adolescence, take on specific significance.

The wish to Suicide (slide 5)

These acts express the desire to be "temporarily" absent; in other words, to freeze external time, while carrying on with interned time. This process allows adolescents simultaneously to avoid external pain and to stop the maturation process. As this act of attempting suicide has, dynamically speaking, its pleasure principle (i.e., enjoying victory over death by staying alive), approximately 40% of these adolescents will make additional attempts and become "suicide addicts."

(Slide 6) The failure of the fourth organizer process is expressed by the ultimate acting out, which is the decision about suicide that results in death. The suicidal act is carried out, whether its purpose is to soothe the pain or to stop the natural processes (since it will indeed stop growth), or whether its source is an inability to internalize the sexual body.

The wish to die (slide 7)

The act is the expression, in a language adolescents create for themselves, of the place in which death and suicide are connected. (slide 8). Even if the death wish itself is not the main motive, it nevertheless exists beneath the surface. The adolescent thus chooses a pathological and destructive solution out of a sense of incapacity and a lack of power to choose life. In these cases, suicide connects with depression, so that suicide becomes the means to express depression.

(Slide 9)

Now I will introduce

The Metapsychology of suicide (slide 10)

I will introduce now an attempt to understand the suicidal act, that, as stated previously, has its own wide foundation, that does not depend necessarily on the wish to die. We will try to show some points that from our point of view are the basis to understand this phenomenon which on one hand is known and is everywhere and on the other hand is mysterious and frightening. The experience of the person that faces suicide is still vague and troublesome, without any change in this experience despite the development of the **perception**, the **knowledge** and the **understanding** of the spiritual world.

Let's begin saying that the loss starts at the moment the adolescent "**knows**" that one day HE is going to die and at the same time has to accept and internalize his sexual body on which control over the hormonal drive unsettles.

1. Oedipus (slide 11)

The story of the mythological Oedipus in Greek Mythology, is delivered in two versions, Sophocles and Euripides.

According to Sophocles, the father Laius, hears a prophecy according to which his son will kill him and will have sexual relations with his mother while she is pregnant. He is shocked and orders the child to be exposed in order to kill him as was the custom during that time. The shepherd who received the child for exposure deceives him and takes the child to his wife because his hearth bleeds for the pretty boy. The child is adopted by a different king who is aware that the child is not his. The CHILD is the only one that does not know.

Sophocles completely turns around **knowledge**. Knows or does not know. Does Laius know about what happened with the child? Does Jocasta know whom she is marrying? Does Oedipus know whom and who he is?

The second axle in the ellipse is the **Hubris**, the pretense to win against the gods. Sophocles stresses the Hubris of Oedipus as knows all. Oedipus is represented as

the father of the people when he does not know who his father or mother are. **Laius** believes that he **knows** more than Apollo. Jocasta believes that it is possible not to know, Oedipus believes specially after the (fictional) victory over the Sphinx, that **he knows all**. All the tragedy spins around knowledge and the use of knowledge, the desire for knowledge, also when it is forbidden, and the ignorance of it, also when you are warned against the results. Between the obligation of knowledge and the Hybris fluctuates tragedy since fate is not given to change. Therefore also the punishment is blindness and exile, when the punishment is imposed willingly there is purification and becoming sober through suffering.

According to Eurypides, the sin is more ancient - it is forbidden for Laius and Jocasta to have children, since they were told in advance that it will bring tragedy. Laius gets drunk and cannot **control** his drive. It means, the ancient sin according to Eurypides is the sin of **control**. Also later on, the heroes of the story according to Eurypides do not control their drives or they act according to strict laws without internal judgment.

(slide 12) The triangle according to which Bion talks about, is love - eros, hate - tanatos and knowledge as the third side. Knowledge is the possibility to receive the knowledge and its limits (that became the original tragedy of Oedipus because he refused to enfold the limits of knowledge). According to Bion, knowledge is of the difference between the sexes and the generations. It is non-sexual knowledge. When the child becomes an adolescent, he goes through a de-sexualization process. In pathological situations, the knowledge goes through re-sexualization . The suicide is the way to create a connection with yourself, to know yourself in a different way, when you recoil from the weight of the knowledge.

(slide 13) In analytical language, the Sophocles tragedy fluctuates between fatherly omnipotence to motherly impotence, around the first oedipal demand - to know who are your father and your mother. It is the question of the transgenerational chain, and the part of the adolescent is going to fill in it. To come into terms is acceptance of castration, understanding the imperfection that is the principle of reality, and leaving eternal opening to doubt. It is also accepting the way of things, meaning being an individual and yet a part of a chain. According to this way of thinking, the problem of the suicidal adolescent is on the difficulty of accepting castration and therefore turning to suicide or to death as a solution to prevent castration, that is to say, holding to the perfection at the price of death. One axle of the tragedy of Eurypides fluctuates around the distress of the human being. The human being is an object on the hands of the forces that he cannot confront. The passion, the drunkenness, the anxiety in the face of the Sphinx, the will to control. The second axle of the tragedy according to Eurypides is also human and it is the blind obedience of the law. It is the sin of Creon that he "just follows orders". It means that the tragic ellipse according to Eurypides is all human and it fluctuates between submission to the drive and blind obedience (sadist and primitive id and super ego). When there is no interval between loss of control and blind obedience a difficulty is created in the internalizing of the sexual body and the solution is extreme, meaning suicide.

(slide 14) The Eurypidean tragedy, according to the analytical language fluctuates between the id (drives) and the primitive super-ego. The wish is the fulfillment of the drives, without any thought or doubt, and the other pole, the negative, is the surrendering to the super-ego, demanding and punishing, again without any thought or doubt. The healthy adolescent finds his way to the integration, to higher defense mechanisms, but the unhealthy one either submits to one of the

poles or getting away through "freezing the time", avoiding demands and drives by suicide.

(slide 15) The riddle of the Sphinx kills and is directed in general and not specifically to Oedipus. The question refers to the laws of growth and aging, and to the will of the human being to receive upon himself those rules, since, in the act of recognition that this is the essence of the human being, men recognize the fact of his changing and his aging. According to the legend, he whom is not capable of answering correctly, that is, refuses to bring upon himself those laws, the Sphinx kills him. It is the riddle of every adolescent. The manifest riddle is the wrong one, since it asks who the man is throughout life, but it neglects the birth and the death, as well as the meaning and the responsibility of being human.

(slide 16) According to Sophocles, the story of Oedipus is within birth and death, since there is no point to the riddle without knowledge about birth and death, and since men have to be born to die. The question of the Sphinx is symbolic to the fourth organizer, since those who do not answer correctly, die. It brings up from the repressed the unpreventable connection between life and death, while for Oedipus, who surpasses correctly the first step of the riddle, that is, acknowledges being a human being, she has a further question. She asks Oedipus what he knows about himself, that is, who are his mother and father, or alternatively, how was he created. Concealing she asks what does he denies on regards to himself. That is to say, there are two steps to the question or two steps of development. Oedipus does not answer correctly to the second part, concealed in the first part, and this way he swivels the tragedy since the price of the incorrect solution is fraudulently receiving upon himself the royal seat as well as the marriage to his mother Jocasta. In order to be able to answer to this question of self knowledge, the human being has to be Oedipus, but has to acknowledge the first scene, that is **knowing** who is the mother and the father and how he was created.

(slide 17) The riddle of the Sphinx according to Eurypides is the riddle of **control**, and how a human being should live his life. The question is about having a space between total drive release and total obeisance. The child (on four) cannot repress his drives and cannot use the higher defense mechanisms, such as sublimation and humor. The adult should get there but without tramping into total submission, evading from the rigidity to elasticity and changeability. It means getting through all phases of development to their successful end. Only then the solution of the riddle, about the one who completes the cycle is meaningful. It is the cycle of day, the cycle of years and age, the cycle of development. This is also the place where every adolescent finds himself between blind adoration and total neglect, following an absolute leader and total individuality.

Hence, there are two conditions here, one inside Oedipus (the meaning) and the other defining its limits (the transgenerational chain). Those who are not ready willing to deal with the first scene are the melancholies. Those who are not ready to carry the weight of adolescence and aging are those failing in front of the Sphinx, they are the suicidal ones.

II) The third way (slide 18)

Timbergen and Curtland describe an animal behavior according to which when there are two problematic ways, for example, expression of aggression as opposed to fear behavior, animals choose the third way out. Curtland describes such a behavior in birds - cormorants. When two birds find themselves facing one another

and a display of aggressive behavior begins, they accelerate in their behavior until they start to fear. Then, they get into a conflict of expression of aggression and expression of fear. At this stage, according to Curtland, they find a third way out, by way of disconnected behavior, nesting. A similar story is described by Lorenz among dogs. Lorenz described two dogs that run along a fence and bark at one another until they do not see each other anymore. This behavior is a permanent behavior until one day one of the neighbors removes part of the fence. They run along the fence and suddenly they bump into each other. They freeze in conflict between aggression and anxiety, and then they walk along together, run side by side without looking one another and when they get to the fence shelter again, they start barking again as before.

In projection to the human being it can be suggested that also the human internal conflicts are resolved more than once by means of the third path out. This path bypasses the conflict or is not attached to it and in that matter it allows the human being to deny or cut himself at least from his own existence. We suggest, that the suicide is an expression of that third way, when the conflict is between the drive for change and the recoiling from the change. In adolescence a larger drive for change is created when in some of the adolescents, those with a pathological development, there is a larger recoiling from the change of pathological expression of what we called the fourth organizer . As a result of this, those adolescents may choose suicide as a “way out “.

(slide 19) One of the important things regarding the third path, also in animals, is the delay on time. There is no obligation that the acting “out” will be made immediately, it may be delayed for a long time, after the relatively long freezing period between two contradictory drives. It means, also, that suicide may be delayed, with a delay in the accumulation of energy. Therefore, it can be chronological attached to a certain trigger.

In another words, the suicidal act can be impulsive towards the outside also if in the undercurrent it is the result of a continuous process.