



The Metapsychology of Suicide

Sam TYANO

Professor Emeritus in Psychiatry
Tel Aviv university
School of Medicine

Bilbao 2018

Development Organizers

There are three childhood organizers:

Social Smile

Stranger anxiety

The “No”

(R. Spitz)

During adolescence there is a fourth one:

The choice of life

(S. Tyano)

The Fourth Organizer

It is a subconscious process in which the adolescent accepts the fact that life will end and one day HE will die.

The adolescent takes responsibility on his own life

The wish to Commit Suicide

“To be or not to be, that is the question.”

(Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act 3, Scene 1)

The wish to suicide

Desire to be “Temporarily” absent

Freeze external time while carrying on with keeping the
internal time

Pathological Development

The development is perplexed

There is a conscious pre-occupation in
Death

It might bring to suicidal acts

The wish to Die

***“And when they asked
her:***

***“What do you want,
Sybilla?”***

she answered “I wish

to die.” (Eliot, The Wasteland, 1922)

The Wish to die

There is no age limit. Usually begins early in life

It is passive many times and without any suicidal act

The clinical impression is that of “empty” depression. No words. No acts. These patients might seem very boring in psychotherapy

It is a “NO”

The wish to die the wish to commit suicide

wish to die *VS.* wish to suicide

There is no age limit. Can begin early in life

It is passive many times and without any suicidal act

The clinical impression is that of “empty” depression. No words. No acts. These patients might seem very boring in psychotherapy

It is a “NO”

It begins and is specifically confined to adolescence

Colarusso: Paternal Vs. Maternal time

The fear of commitment is tremendous, as if the adolescent attempts to defer it by “freezing “ Paternal time

Contents

- Adolescent suicide and Oedipus
- The third path
- Impulsivity





Oedipus

- Two versions: Sophocles and Eurypides
- Sophocles: The tragedy revolves around Knowledge and the refusal to know
- Eurypides: The tragedy revolves around drives and control

Bion

- The triangle according to Bion: love - eros, hate - tanatos and knowledge as the third side.
- According to Bion, knowledge is of the difference between the sexes and the generations.
- It is non-sexual knowledge.
- 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.

Sophoclean Oedipus

- Knowledge and blindness
- The Hubris to know all when you know nothing
- Knowledge: who your parents are
- The ellipse (the Hubris): Knowing all and refusal to know

Eurypidean Oedipus

- Drives and control
- Total release of drives (blind id) begins the tragedy and the blind obeisance completes it
- The tragic ellipse is between the poles of id and primitive super-ego



**The riddle of the Sphinx is The
riddle of every adolescent:**

What is man?

Sophocles

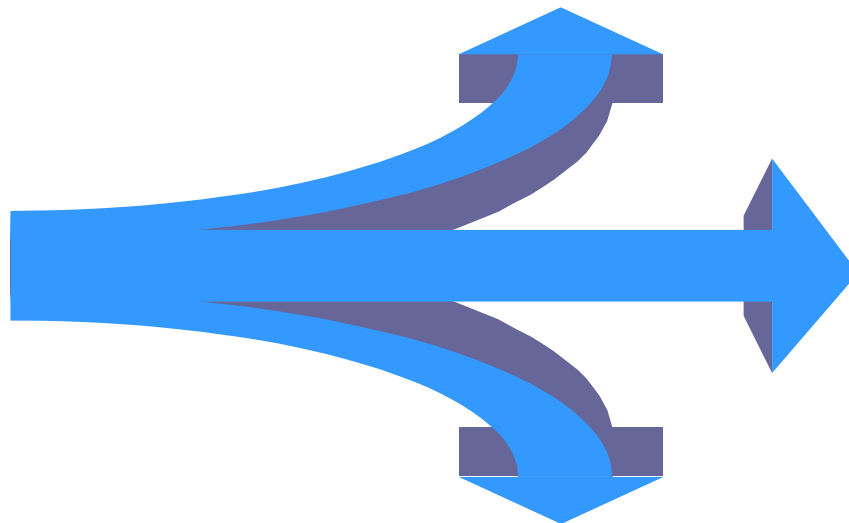
- Who am I?
- Where did I come from and what is my place in the transgenerational chain?
- What does it mean to be human as part of this chain ?

Eurypides

- The power of the drives
- What is control
- The space between total release and blind obeisance
- The golden route between id and super-ego

The Third Path

- When an animal is in conflict between two instincts it chooses a third path
- This third path is an escape from the situation



Third path and suicide

- Human internal conflicts are also 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.
- Attempted Suicide might be an expression of that third path, when the conflict is between the drive for change and the recoiling from the change.