



Suicide: A Psychoanalytical Approach

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Review article

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Abstract

Review article. A review of Freud and Lacan's work was performed, so as to contribute to the comprehension of the suicide phenomenon. An examination of the classic texts of these psychoanalysis experts was carried out, in order to put these into dialogue with 50 articles which concern the suicide phenomenon, published in Scopus journals. The search was organized around six topics: subjective division, the *jouissance* drive, the dynamics of desire, clinical structures, real, symbolic, and imaginary registries, and the fall of ideals in adolescents. The article concludes that there is no suicide subjectivity, in the sense of a unique profile of subjects whose characteristics would permit the prediction of greater likeliness to end one's life. Suicide, similarly, is non-exclusive to a specific psychopathology. It cannot even be said that only those who suffer from some types of psychological illness will present some suicide risk. In other words, psychoanalysis affirms that one must be prepared to encounter suicide, and all self-destructive processes, in all clinical pictures, and further, in the psychopathology of daily life.

Keywords: Suicide; Self-destructive behavior; Psychoanalysis; Death drive; *Jouissance*

Introduction

Disquiet, surrounding the topic of suicide, has steered the history of psychoanalysis since its very beginnings. In *Studies on Hysteria* [1], suicide attempts, linked to symptoms of hysteria, are referenced, in the case of Ana O. Freud's early work often references unconscious desires, that form the basis for failed actions which spur serious accidents, some with deadly consequences. As such, the author states that, "much of the apparent casual damage suffered by these patients are truly wounds that they themselves have inflicted" [2]. It must be said that aggression, hostility, the need for punishment, and self-destructive behavior are all present in Freud's work, even in his initial texts, but the formulation of a death drive as a basic drive, and a destruction drive, as an expression of its exteriorization, creates a theoretical context more apt for the comprehension of self-destructive behavior,

in general, and suicide, in particular, as rotations against the destructive drive of the individual themselves [3].

Lacan is also shown to be concerned with suicide in his clinical practice, specifically with the suicide of one of his patients, as retold by Elizabeth Roudinesco in the author's biography [4]. It must be said that several of the concepts proposed by Lacan in psychoanalysis, such as *jouissance*, the real, and the object "a," as "the object which causes desire" [5], are powerful tools for the comprehension of self-destructive and suicidal behavior associated with neurosis and psychopathology in daily life. One passage representative of Lacan's reflection on suicide is a reading which considers the suicide attempt known as "The young homosexual woman." As Freud recounts, a young woman was walking next to her sweetheart when they ran into her father, who looked at her with a disgust that foreshadowed the worst [6]. With this, the

girl ran off, and in an evident suicide attempt, threw herself off of a bridge onto the train tracks. Lacan states that this was a passage to the action, in which, given a lack of imaginary and symbolic resources, the registry of the real manifests in this patient's gesture, which also becomes a pure object in itself ("a"), and she throws herself away as if she were garbage:

Let us reveal that two essential conditions for that called speaking with property, passage to the action, are met in this case. The first is the absolute identification of the subject with the *a* to which they are reduced. This is certainly what occurs with the young woman when she encounters her father. The second is the confrontation between desire and the law. Here, this is concerned with the confrontation between the father's desire, based upon which her conduct is constructed, with the law, present in her father's gaze. This is what causes her to feel definitively identified with "a", and at the same time, rejected, driven away, off-stage. This alone may cause her to fall, to allow herself to fall [5].

The purpose of the present article is to perform an examination of certain psychoanalysis topics regarding understandings that may contribute to the comprehension of the suicide phenomenon, together with fundamental references like Freud and Lacan, and articulating the lessons of these two great educators, via the review of 50 psychoanalytical articles on the topic of suicide, published in Scopus journals.

Method

In the creation of the present review article, an initial detailed examination of each of the references made by Freud in his work, *The Suicide Phenomenon*, was used as a starting point. Next, texts which contained references to other concepts, linked to the phenomenon, were reviewed. These included: the death drive, turning against the very individual with destruction drive, drive unmixing, masochism, the need for punishment, guilt, and melancholy. These contributions of Freud's were put into dialogue with particular Lacanian concepts, and from this mixture, six possible topics emerged, for the illumination of the suicide phenomenon, from the discussion between the two authors' work: subjective division, desire, *jouissance* drive, three registries (real, symbolic, and imaginary), clinical structures, and the adolescent suicide risk. Once the dialogue between these two great masters had been constructed, based on each of the aforementioned topics, a detailed search was performed, both in Scopus and other internationally-recognized databases, for psychoanalytical publications that examined these same problems. Following a careful reading and discussion thereof, 50 articles were included in the present study, such that the review could offer readers a discussion between the two greats, as well as other authors who have

addressed the suicide phenomenon, from the perspective of psychoanalysis, in recent years.

Results

The results of said dialogue was organized in terms of the six aforementioned topics of analysis: subjective division, desire, *jouissance* drive, three registries (real, symbolic, and imaginary), clinical structures, and the adolescent suicide risk.

Subjective Division

Subjective division between the conscience and unconscious is, doubtless, one of the first of Freud's first proposals to subvert the West's conception of humans as masters of their homes [7]. In fact, the name psychoanalysis comes from the chemical metaphor for the division of a compound into its basic elements. Later, Freud proposed the division between the id, ego, and superego, and at different points in his work, focused on the divisions produced within the ego, such as the effect, in the defensive process, of opposite tendencies. On the topic, he states that: "The two opposite reactions to conflict subsist as the nucleus of the excision of the ego" [8].

While the father of psychoanalysis was concerned, throughout his work, with the division of subjectivity, it was Lacan who coined the expression "subjective division," such that "the subject, as such, is uncertain, owing to that which is divided by the effect of language. This I, Lacan, teach you, who follow the path of Freudian excavation" [9]. Subjective division is a concept, currently of generalized use, which boasts certain psychoanalytical concepts, and reflects Lacan's in-depth re-reading of Freud's work.

A first great psychoanalytic contribution to the comprehension of the suicide phenomenon refers precisely to those cases in which the death of an individual does not occur as a constructed, and consciously performed, suicide, but rather as a product of an unconscious formation, particularly as an effect of a symptom or failed action [10]. The unconscious need for punishment [11] may be a good starting point for this initial review of the cases, in which a suicide may be understood in the light of subjective division.

This concerns several cases in which the consciousness of an individual does not produce remorse associated with desire or the memory of an action, precisely because these have become repressed. A desire to damage oneself is also absent, for which reason it is called an unconscious need for punishment. It is a phenomenon that must be inferred based on its effects, which tend to manifest themselves as a subject's compulsion to insistently place themselves in situations with

destructive effects, or which are high-risk. Certain gestures, which indirectly corroborate the presence of an unconscious need for punishment, include the suspicious resignation of the individual, in terms of the effects of said events, the inability to assume a self-critical position about these, and the blind tendency to place oneself in similar positions, time and time again.

Another symptomatic manifestation, also associated with repression and guilt, may be the presence of torturous remorse related to an event, of which the individual does have memory, and which causes them to think that they deserve severe punishment. Prior to this, an accident or other situation, which may have provoked irreparable damage may have occurred, including even the loss of life. As such, this is a measure generated to appease the apprehension generated by an expectation of punishment [12].

In other cases, the failed action placed at the service of the unconscious desire for suicide is not moved by guilt, but rather by the psychological pain produced by certain experiences, which the individual may consider unbearable, and generally have to do with situations in which an individual is experiencing situations that they consider impossible to overcome. Under these conditions, a failed action may occur, which incites them to place themselves in situations with high risk of death, or which rob them of their life [13]. One such case is specified by Freud in *The Psychopathology of Daily Life*, in the case of Ms. X. The patient was an army official who:

She had fallen into a deep unease, owing to the death of her dear mother, and would burst into tears in the company of her friends. To her close friends, she indicated that she had wearied of life. She wanted to leave the service to participate in a war in Africa, which, however, she did not. She felt unhorsed, and now avoided riding whenever possible. Lastly, prior to an equestrian race, from which she could not be excused, she expressed a negative feeling. It will not be a surprise that this feeling came to fruition. You will object: It is obvious that an individual with such nervous depression would not attempt to dominate the animal in the same way as they would were they healthy. I completely agree, however, I would seek in the self-destructive purpose that is highlighted here, the mechanism for the motor inhibition for "nervousness" [2].

The *Jouissance* Drive

The concept of drive is doubtless among the fundamental contributions of Freud to the comprehension of subjectivity, firstly, because it permits the study of the specifically human dynamic of sexual and aggressive impulses, and differentiate them from the instinctive programming which governs the behavior of higher mammals and other animal species. The

study of partial drives is an invaluable Freudian contribution to the comprehension of multiply psychological disorders and human phenomena that would otherwise be inexplicable.

The emergence of the concept of *jouissance* in Lacan's work, is part of an in-depth review of Freud's work, a rigorous exercise reflected in the French author's statement that "there is a *jouissance* beyond the principle of pleasure" [14]. One of the fields in which this is articulated most clearly is with the concept of drive. It is certainly the field of *jouissance* drive in which dialogue between these two great teachers of psychoanalysis exhibits one of their best-achieved meeting points.

This Freudian-Lacanian articulation of *jouissance* drive is a potent tool for the comprehension of certain self-destructive and suicidal behaviors, which cannot be otherwise explained. One dynamic belonging to the anal-sadistic drive may lead a subject to offer themselves as an object to another, such that they may experience *jouissance* on their expulsion and discarding [15], even at the price of their moral and physical destruction. In extreme cases, suicide itself, a dynamic of oral drive, may be manifested as an offering to another for them to suck their blood like a vampire or consume them and consummate their death [16]. The victim confirms the mortal effects of the link with the other, to devour them, but cannot extract themselves therefrom, in a perspective of ectopic drive, a subject may offer to the other's gaze, the visual spectacle of their own destruction [17] and finally, in the logic of the invoking drive, self-destruction may come together with the elemental phenomenon of the auditory hallucination of a voice that comes from the real, and which orders their suicide [18].

The four scenarios mentioned in the above paragraph are from the perspective of highly self-destructive dynamics, in which the role of the *jouissance* drive of partial drives may play a part in self-destructive and suicidal behavior. The importance of this reflection lies in the understanding that may be provided by psychoanalysis for the comprehension of the role of the *jouissance* of partial drives in the dynamics that may lead subjects to their own deaths.

Desire

Desire is, quintessentially, and above all else, the desire to live. It is that which leads one to the shower each morning, to go out into the world and seek out objects lost in linguistic networks and interactions with others. As such, suicide is an imminent danger to those who, for many reasons, have lost the ability to desire. In melancholy, observe one of these clinical pictures. On the loss of a loved one, it may happen that an individual loses all desire to live, all interest in the world, and dedicates themselves, with all of their being, to

self-destruction. The dynamic explanation of this mysterious phenomenon is that, in an attempt to conserve the lost object, the ego embraces this, within itself, via an identification process. Once within, it unleashes all of its vengeful fury on the object. Behind the apparently-inconsolable sadness of melancholy, there is a ferocious master unleashed against the object of one's destructive fury. The lesson that melancholy leaves us is that desire, inasmuch as it places sexual and aggressive drives in the social field, serves a function at the service of life affirmation. When individuals are robbed of the social dynamic of desire and abandon their own narcissistic dynamics, they are at the mercy of the destructive power of the death drive.

Desire humanizes the drive. *Jouissance* drive, in its most genuine version, is a *jouissance* organ that has no concern for self-conservation, and does not necessarily belong to the social field. The definition of desire, as such, is "in function of the desire of the Other" [5]. It announces that accessing desire implies passing said drive through the other's field, and thus inscribing it into the social field.

Thus, desire, as it unleashes the search for human realizations in the significant order, and in links with others, is on the side of life affirmation. Recognition is not an impediment to the analysis of three linking dynamics, bound to desire, that are frequently found associated with suicide narratives, or stories in which individuals find themselves struggling for the desire to walk toward their own destruction. This concerns risks inherent to the condition of desiring, which ensues in situations in which a significant loss or specific contingencies may deviate the desire for its convergence with the affirmation of life, and place it at the service of death.

The first of these is related to the radical castration experience that many subjects experience with a breakup or loss of love or desire, and who, following the loss of the beloved object, find that the only path is suicide. These are individuals for whom the lost object occupies the place of a quintessential phallic signifier, and as such, with the emergence of the question, "who am I?", the following response appears overwhelmingly: "I am the one with the phallus." The vulnerable side of this strategy is that, when there is an abrupt separation or loss of this object, an impossible, radical castration experience occurs in the subject, which may push them to die by their own hand [19].

Psychoanalysis teaches that one learns to desire, supported by our identificatory references. Further, the everyday phenomenon established by all, which consists of an object becoming more desirable for a subject when it is desired by another with whom the subject has an imaginary rivalry, must be mentioned. This is a secret that forms part of

the game of seduction in the social world.

Identification with parental figures, teachers, and important social references is fundamental for the construction and strengthening of desire, but just there is a risk for suicide: the suicide of certain famous individuals, who serve as identificatory references. For many, these may become a precipitating factor of the suicide of some of their fans. It is true that this does not occur in virtue of simplistic causality, and that, in many cases, there are other factors that contribute to the explanation of these suicides. However, it is fact that suicides of the famous elevate suicide rates among their fans [20-22].

The definition of desire as the "desire of the other," as indicated by Kleeve in *Dialéctica del amo y el esclavo* shows the perspective of the desire for recognition. In this sense, the definition of desire as the "desire of the other" must be understood as the desire for desire. In the most rigorous sense, desire must be desired. This acceptance is, of course, the most fascinating of the three, and for this reason, is that which is most closely linked with distress, as capturing the gaze and desire of others, and of the other implies confrontation with the question of how others see an individual or what they want from them. The response to that question is not always flattering or reassuring. The other and the Other may wish the worst. It might even be said that the weak point of this strategy in the field of desire is just that becoming what another desires may cost one dearly, even one's own life, as the subject operates by "demanding of myself what you want" [23]. In this sense, it is said that, in virtue of certain contingencies, the game of desire may cease to serve as a life affirmation, and place itself at the service of death [24].

Suicide in the Freudian clinic

It is inevitable that this section begins with a reference to melancholy, that mysterious situation in which an individual, following a loss, becomes engulfed in sadness, loses interest in the world, radically reduces their work capacity, and in some cases, develops a true passion for self-denigration and punishment, to the point of suicide [25]. What does the author say about the relationship between suicide and melancholy?

For some time, it has been known that no neurotic individual intends to kill themselves without returning by way of the impulse to kill another. However, we fail to understand the interaction between forces, for which reason such a goal may be proposed. Now, the analysis of melancholy teaches that the I can only die if, in virtue of the retreat of the investiture of the object, it may treat itself as an object, if they are permitted to direct the hostility that falls upon an

object and subrogates the original reaction of the ego toward objects in the outer world [26].

The famous Freudian expression in this same text, in accordance with which “the shade of the object fell upon the ego” [26] means that, behind their sadness and disinterest in the world, the egos of melancholic individuals has been divided into two parts. In one of these, the lost object has been internalized, by way of identification, and in the other, it stands before them as a fierce master that has unleashed their destructive fury, like a monarch out for blood. The profound disinterest in the world of the melancholic individual, absorbed in their mortiferous frivolousness with the object, which is finally themselves, is that which causes this scene to be so refractory to intervention, and have such a reserved prognosis [27,28].

Let us continue this brief reference to the clinical with several Freudian cases, in which suicide is linked to psychopathological disorders. One of the first cases the author notes in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* refers to a case of hysteria, in which a patient's need for punishment manifests in the failed attempt to provoke an “accident” that would cost her life. See a fragment of this story about the case:

“I was not satisfied with this as the determination of her accident, and asked her whether she had not something else to tell me. ‘But why were you not more careful?’ I asked. ‘Oh!’ she answered, ‘perhaps it was only a punishment. for that episode which I confided to you!’ ‘Has this episode still bothered you?’ ‘Yes, later I regretted it very much; I considered myself wicked, criminal, and immoral, but at the time I was almost crazy with nervousness’ (...) ‘I had often reproached myself with the words, you really had your child killed, and I feared that such a crime could not remain unpunished. Now that you have assured me that there is nothing seriously wrong with my eyes, I am quite assured I have already been sufficiently punished’” [2].

In this case, the “accident” served the patient as a punishment, but it also served another function, closely related to punishment, but which, psychologically, has a different purpose: escaping once and for all the distress that the expectation of punishment produced, by ensuring it herself. In this case, the performance character in the scene painted by the patient's narrative is notorious [29].

Suicide cannot be associated with a single psychopathological illness. Just as with desire and the act of attempted suicide or consummation of suicide with melancholy and hysteria, suicidal behavior associated with psychosis also occurs, as Freud recounts for the Schreber case:

Pathological inspirations call to the ill, to the point which, inaccessible to any other impression, it remained seated for hours, completely absorbed and immobile (hallucinatory stupor), and martyred him such that he wished for death: In the bathroom, he attempted to hang himself a number of times, and requested the “cyanide destined for him.” Little by little, delirious ideas claimed mythic, religious characters, direct agreements with God, was the game of demons, he saw “miracles,” heard “sacred music,” and believed that he lived in another world” [30].

It is common to hear, in psychiatric clinics, stories of patients who have attempted suicide, and when questioned about the motivation for said action, they respond that they heard a voice or voices that ordered them to do so. In some cases, the voice is God's, or that of an important person with which the patient has an imaginary relationship, or a figure known to form part of the delirium. It may also happen that the voice or voices that appear in the elemental phenomenon of delirium are completely anonymous. This, however, does not make them any less vital [31,32].

In obsessive neuroses, suicide may also appear linked to patients' psychopathological profiles. Suicidal ideations, linked to homicidal ideations, or not, may appear in an individual's conscience, without any idea of its origin, and despite this, having the compulsive character of obsessive ideas. Also, character traits typically associated with this clinical picture, such as stubbornness, defiant attitudes, and irrational perfectionism may favor an individual's becoming immerse in vital crises that are later linked to suicidal processes. Let us read the story of a Freudian clinical case, in which the suicide topic appears to be linked with obsessive neurosis. This is a case in which the desire for the death of another reactively unhinges suicidal ideation.

In the patient, one must suppose something similar, but much more intense: an unconscious attack of rage that, simultaneously, and together with longing, could be disguised in the following exclamation: “Oh, I would like to travel there and kill the old lady who stole my beloved!” And the command continues: “Kill yourself as a punishment for such lust for rage and death,” and the entire process proceeds under the most violent affection, in inverted sequence--the command for punishment first, and at the end, the mention of punishable lust--in the conscience of the obsessive patient [33].

Before concluding this section, let us refer to the story of a suicide, masked as an accident. This involves a case that was told to Freud by Sandor Ferenczi, a colleague. It involves the suicide of a young woman, in a failed action, who had been mourning the sudden loss of her partner:

Just two days prior, after returning from a trip, without any exterior motive, she began to speak of her death and testamentary dispositions (...) I don't see any causality or effect of a blurred consciousness, but rather deliberate self-annihilation, performed with an unconscious desire, and masked as a casual accident. Certain displays on the part of Ms. Z and her relatives corroborate this conception. Both before and after meeting me, and those which took me to the last few days, all of which may be understood as an effect of the loss of her last boyfriend, who, in her eyes, nothing could substitute" [2].

The cases mentioned in this section prove that which was stated in the beginning, that suicidal behavior cannot be exclusively linked with any single pathology or determined clinical structure. One must rather be open to encounter the suicide phenomenon in any clinical picture, and even associated with the vital crises of individuals with no clinical diagnosis, and who have no reason for one [34].

Suicide and Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real Registries

This section will reference the way in which suicide and self-destructive actions come together with the three registries proposed by Lacan: imaginary, symbolic, and real. It may be pertinent to state beforehand that death by one's own hand is not related predominantly or exclusively to any of the three registries, and that the contributions provided by psychoanalytical reflection on research about this phenomenon are derived from the confirmation of the way in which the dynamics characteristic of each one of the registries come together, in self-destructive and suicidal processes.

In the registry of the imaginary, the image and gaze are central, especially where the gaze is one's own image, reflected in the mirror of the other (lower case), or in other words, the specular pair that arouses passionate love, which seduces and idealizes even fanaticism, and with which aggressions from inoffensive hostility to irrational, devastating hate are rivalized and exchanged. The form in which self-destructive and suicidal actions come together with the dynamics of the imaginary itself may be inferred. It could be said that, in general terms, when a link is subjected to the hegemony of the logic of the imaginary, without an important outsourcing of the registry of the symbolic, it may very easily liberate the deadly effects of the destruction drive.

Certain self-destructive and suicidal processes, in which the logic of the imaginary is notorious, are, for example, the altruistic suicides of martyrs, kamikazes, or the radical abandonment of that which life offers, in the name of love of others, or the Other, from a community or important

cause [35]. The deadly effects of loving bonds and gradual destructions, or in the outburst of a crime of passion, a privileged scene may be necessary as well, in order to verify the presence of the devastating effects of the imaginary. It is also important to mention, in this series of rivalry logic which often forms part of partner ties, that this may escalate to aggressive competition and flow out in fierce confrontation which, in some cases, spurs the suicide of one of the partners [36]. The seventh art presents a hyperbole of this phenomenon in a scene in which both partners die, in a Hollywood classic, called *The War of the Roses*.

Further, ties for hostile competition between equals may lead to self-destructive processes or directly to suicide, in those cases in which the dispute is radicalized and uses the "you or me" logic, in which there is no place for two equals in the same space, just because the lack of symbolic third party that would dialectize the link leaves the rivals with the threat of elimination or dissolution in the other. Some suicides, of bankers and businesspeople, in times of economic crises, which, despite their losses, conserve part of their fortunes, owes to their inability to endure the narcissistic wound to their self-image, and particularly, to the unbearable imaginary affront to their phallic rivalry with their peers in the financial world. A privileged context of a deployment of the passions, derived from imaginary rivalry between males, is the "pink zone" of cities in which young men parade around and employ the seduction ritual, and compete among equals. These rituals tend to set off aggression in levels that sometimes end in tragic outcomes, and oftentimes induce young men to involve themselves in dangerous bids and games, which, from the beginning, may clearly involve risk to one's life [37].

The relationship between the registry of symbolic and self-destructive action and suicide is an opportunity to examine the deep determination of language in the regulation of the human experience. It is also an occasion to examine this small intersection, between registries, of the real and symbolic, which may be appreciated in the metaphor of Euler circles, with which Lacan represents the conjunction of the three registries. The first thing that may be said is that, thanks to language, the experience of death, for humans, is not reduced to the final passing. There are many expressions of this in the symbolic field. For humans, being excluded from a symbolic order, which is fundamental to the construction of their place in the world, in terms of "in the symbolic order, all elements are valid as they are opposite another" [38] may be experienced as death. In some cases, this may spur radical health deterioration, self-destructive action, or suicide itself. Banishments, then, from for violating clan law in aboriginal communities, as well as excommunications or expulsions of religious community groups of those who have transgressed against something fundamental about the order, are

emblematic. In other contexts, the same may be generated by curses uttered by members of the group, invested with certain symbolic attributes, like the mother in a family, or the priest in a religious community, and condemnations to ostracism by the leader of an artificial group, and in general terms, the exclusion dynamics of those whom are objects in the social scenario: sexual, ethnic, political, and aesthetic minorities, etc [39].

It could be said that frequent cases of the appearance of suicidal ideations, attempts, or consummated suicide, in individuals who have been the object of violent sexual action, such as incest, rape, abuse, or seduction by individuals who abuse the power relationship, may also be illuminated by the role played by the symbolic registry in the order of human life. In the definition of the symbolic universes in which we live, speaking beings, sexuality is a fundamental factor. Particularly, the law of castration has the effect of cutting the field, in which, in each cultural context, the expression of sexual *jouissance* is legal. The different forms of sexual violence have the effect of placing victims in a damaging areas in their symbolic universe, in which they are at the mercy of the other, to be used and discarded as objects of *jouissance*, without hope of aspiring to being desired or idealized.

The following work on this topic merits mention: Understanding suicidal behaviour in young people referred to specialist CAMHS: a qualitative psychoanalytic clinical research project [40], Traumatismes complexes et thérapeutique par la méthode des enveloppements humides (« packing »). Étude psychopathologique à partir de trois cas [41], Technical Considerations in the Psychotherapy of Traumatized Individuals: A Psychoanalytic Perspective [42], Psychoanalytic/psychodynamic psychotherapy for children and adolescents who have been sexually abused [43], and Childhood Sexual and Physical Abuse and Adult Self-Harm and Suicidal Behaviour: A Literature Review [44].

In that which refers to the relationship between self-destructive actions and suicide, with the registry of the real, an initial inevitable reference mentioned above is Lacan's indication, related to those situations in which the repertoire of responses that the imaginary and symbolic offer to a subject, to resolve an extreme situation and the passage to action, emerges in the strictest sense, as the expression of the death drive that may derive in a radical self-destructive action or suicide

The reader may find more on this proposal in the following articles: Comprensión del suicidio desde la perspectiva del psicoanálisis de orientación lacaniana [45] Melancolia e (im)permanência: fundamentos para uma teoria freudiana do suicidio [46] De la perversité dans le passage à l'acte suicidaire [47], and Acting out y pasaje al

acto. Hacia una ética del acto suicida [48].

Therein, the impossibility of imagining or symbolizing consequently causes one to do their worst. It is there that "the real only exists if it finds brakes in the symbolic and imaginary" [49]. However, additionally, the real portion of the death drive is in those places where it intersects with the registries of the imaginary and symbolic, in certain cases, mentioned above, in which the imaginary passions are exacerbated to the mortal limit, or in those in which a symbolic death sets off a self-destructive process that may end in the consummation of suicide.

Suicide and the Fall of Ideals

The unique Freudian text, whose title refers expressly to suicide, is an especially brief article, entitled, "Contributions to a discussion on suicide" [50]. Therein, two interventions that the author made in a debate on the topic, which took place at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1910, are transcribed. Although the details on what motivated said debate are unclear, with the orientation of Freud's contributions, it may be inferred that the occasion may have been an individual or multiple case of suicide in an educational institution in Vienna. Freud is particularly critical of what could be called suicidogenic dynamics in the educational scenario, or those circumstances in which the interactions of an educational institution cease to be at the service of the affirmation of life, and proceed to cause self-destructive processes in some students.

"...Secondary school is, for its pupils, the substitute for the traumas that adolescents find in other living conditions. Secondary school must achieve something more than pushing its students to suicide. It must instill in them enjoyment for life and provide them support, at an age in which, owing to the conditions of their development, they are prone to loosen their ties to their parents' homes and families. It seems undeniable that it fails to do so, and in many ways, fails in its mission to provide a substitute for family or generate interest in life outside, life in the world. This is not the place to undertake a critique of educational institutions in their present state. However, I am authorized to highlight a single factor. School cannot ever forget that it works with yet immature individuals, and has no right to impede their presence in certain states of development, unpleasant though they may be. It cannot assume the relentless character of life, nor wish to be anything other than a game or staging of life" [30].

In these initial words, the author's affirmation of the traumatic character of school is surprising. Later, he very clearly situates himself in the field of what should be, and resoundingly affirms that educational institutions must

keep to the side of life affirmation. Supported in this, he fiercely critiques schools, in his context, which may serve as a reference for some of contemporary schools [51]. Finally, the author reflects on adolescent psychology, which cannot be separated from the suicide topic that captured Freud's attention at the time. He implicitly warns of the suicidogenic effects of teachings which apologize for the severity present in educational processes, and culminates with valuable guidance, considering education from a recreational, dramaturgical perspective.

In his second speech in the aforementioned discussion, he contributes a valuable key for the study of the suicide phenomenon in adolescence, which relates to a process which, although inevitable, and in a certain sense desirable, is a contributing factor to profoundly painful states in youth during much of puberty and adolescence. This could generically be called the fall of ideals. The removal of parents and certain significant adults from their place as ideals is certainly necessary for adolescents to invest wholeheartedly in other references, such as their teachers, friends, and youthful infatuations. However, this makes it no less painful, and sometimes distressing, this process in which one's affection and significant processes change, in which the topic of disillusionment may mobilize important components in the destruction drive. The author states:

Above all, we wished to know how it was possible to overcome the drive to live, which is of such extraordinary intensity. It alone may occur with the help of the disillusioned libido, or there may be a renouncement of the ego to their affirmation, for strictly egotistical reasons (...) Here, it is only possible to begin from the state of melancholy, with which the clinic has familiarized us, and its comparison to affection in mourning. Those affective processes that survive in melancholy were completely ignored, as were the destinations of libido in that state. We have also failed to psychoanalytically understand the lasting affection punishment in mourning [30].

Indeed, years later, thanks to increased comprehension of melancholy, and especially of the destination of aggression in this clinical picture, the author was able to illuminate mourning and its ties to self-destructive processes in adolescence. The extreme mourning picture in which he vengeful fury of the destructive drive against the lost object is unleashed, which has been conserved therein, thanks to an identification, provides a clue to comprehension of the inevitable suffering that the mourning of their developmental process entails.

Adolescent suicide is addressed in the following articles: El pasaje al acto suicida en la adolescencia. Rechazo de un juicio. [52], Tentative de suicide à l'adolescence: quel sens ?

[53,54], Adolescence and depression [55], and in Ideaciones y comportamientos suicidas en adolescents [56].

Conclusions

Psychoanalysis opens a number of doors to analytical perspectives that contribute to the comprehension of the suicide phenomenon. Some of its basic postulates have become key explanations which permit the comprehension of why other animal species do not commit suicide, and in all human societies, suicide appears as an institution.

The possibility that language introduces into the human experience, considering oneself an object, thanks to which drives may be reflexive, like a destination to which the subject is simultaneously the object of the drive (love-onself and kill-onself) is a fundamental starting point for the comprehension of the suicide phenomenon. The remaining versions of subjective division are fundamental references for the comprehension of the suicidogenic role of psychological conflict between psychological instances and the deadly eruption of that repressed, thanks to an education in the unconscious.

The proliferation of self-destructive behavior and elevation of suicide rates seen today become more comprehensible when it is admitted that the *jouissance* of partial drives and their linkage to the death drive are present in all phases of human development, and under favorable conditions, deploy all of their destructive effects.

Desire is a psychoanalytical concept in which many aspects return to dimensions of the "desirable" experience, in the most colloquial and broad sense of the word. This, however, does not always occur. The most deep-seated developments on desire in psychoanalysis cause the exploration of constellations in which desire, in its most rigorous exception, as an unconscious desire, is not necessarily on the side of pleasure and well-being, and is linked to phenomena in which fascination and horror come together, within which self-destructive actions and suicide itself are the order of the day.

The Freudian clinic clearly teaches that self-destructive behavior and suicide itself are not exclusive to any clinical picture, and that it cannot even be said that they are exclusive to the psychopathological field [57]. Perhaps one of the most valuable contributions of psychoanalysis to the comprehension of the human condition is a slogan to keep at the forefront of one's mind: that self-destruction is an inherent dynamic of the human condition. As such, the pertinent question would not be whether, in human beings, there are self-destructive processes, but rather where they are located, and how they manifest [58-62].

In that which refers to Lacan's three registries, it could be said that they contribute to the powerful illumination of self-destructive and suicidal processes. The imaginary, as a dimension of the experience, is especially conducive to the liberation of disproportion, with all of its deadly side effects. The registry of the symbolic permits a comprehension of the way in which different exclusion dynamics of symbolic universes may unleash self-destructive processes in subjects. The registry of the real is fundamental for the comprehension of suicide's relationship with the occurrence of actions, when presented with limiting situations [63-69].

Finally, the dialogue between psychoanalysis and pedagogy provides important orientations on the subject of education and the psychology of adolescence, which may be useful for the construction of pedagogies which are more in line with the affirmation of life, as they help in the comprehension of the role played by the fall of ideals in suicidal processes of pubescent and adolescent youth [70-72].

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