

Suicide As Disintegration: From The Death of God to Metaphysical Suffering

STANISLOVAS JUKNEVIČIUS

Lithuanian Culture Research Institute
juknevičius.s@gmail.com

The article regards suicides as an outcome of constantly expanding disintegration of Western societies. Four kinds of disintegration are outlined and scrutinized. Namely – ontological, biological, social and psychological. Ontological disintegration is a human estrangement from God, biological – from nature, social – from other people. Psychological disintegration is an ego estrangement from collective complexes. These disintegration forms are closely interrelated. Ontological and biological disintegration results in social disintegration, social disintegration results in psychological one. The article grounds a hypothesis that the main reason of relatively high suicide rates in the West roots in ontological and biological disintegration, Differences between the countries of the Western region are conditioned by the degree of social disintegration. The growth of social disintegration is the main reason of such a huge increase of suicides in Lithuania as well as other post-communist countries. Particular motifs of suicides are formulated by types and degrees of psychological disintegration.

Keywords: death of God, suicides, disintegration, psychological pain.

Introduction

Looking at the world map of suicides¹ the first thing one notices is the fact that much more people finish their lives with a suicide in the Western or Western-influenced societies, compared to the rest of the world. The post-Communist countries are leading among those all in the West. That is how one comes up with the main questions in the area of suicide research: why more people commit suicides in the Western countries than the rest of the world? Why

does the suicide rate differ considerably even among different regions in the West? What determines, or at least influences, the suicide of an individual?

The scholarly literature marks out and analyzes social, psychological, economical, physiological reasons for a suicide². It is quite noticeable that physiological reasons stand in the background in this group of reasons. Firstly, many scientists tend to question the significance or the relative importance of this factor. For example, how much the fact that the suicide rate in Russia had decreased

1 see www.who.int/mental_diseases/prevention – checked on 16/06/2019; all data on suicides rates used in this article are from this website of the World Health Organization.

2 J. Bering. Suicidal: Why we Kill Ourselves; J.P. Dos Santos et al. More than just numbers: Suicide rates and economic cycle in Portugal (1910-2013); V. Menon & Sh. Kattimani. Suicide and Serotonin: Making Sense of Evidence.

from 31 to 26 during the years 1985–1990 and then had increased up to 41 during the next five years was influenced by the physiological alternations in the brain? Moreover, following this school of thought, the sequence of cause and effect is not very clear: is it physiological changes in the brain that provokes depression and the often following suicides, or is it depression that causes physiological alternations? Social, psychological or economic reasons of a suicide are almost not questioned, the researchers might argue only about their significance and comparative share among different nations and in different historical periods.

According to our opinion, the main concept able to embrace and explain most of the suicides could be that of disintegration, just used in a broader sense that E. Durkheim did³. We chose four types of disintegration to analyze broader in this article: ontological, biological, social and psychological. Ontological disintegration is human's estrangement from God, biological – estrangement from nature, social – estrangement from other people. Psychological disintegration is Ego's estrangement from the collective complexes that affirm and support life. Suicide is the ultimate form of disintegration. That is, so to say, a voluntary retirement of the body.

Next to disintegration, there is a phenomenon that also plays an important part in suicides – that is pseudo-integration. As Heraclitus believed, everything is related in nature and sooner or later moves towards its opposite, so the higher the disintegration is, the bigger is the need for integration.

While not being able to integrate in real life a person that has the potential to commit suicide integrates into the unreal, imaginative world. For example, an unloved teenager might be contemplating a suicide imagining how after his death everyone would love and pity him and regret their improper behavior towards him. Some teenagers put these ideas into practice. In this case, as a rule, a suicide becomes pseudo-integration, trying to solve real problems by illusionary means.

There is a type of disintegration that might be conditionally named as physical disintegration. Physical disintegration – a person's isolation from the normal life conditions as a result of a physical handicap or extreme conditions. Some people commit suicide because of the isolation from society caused by a disease or unbearable conditions in a concentration camp. We will not analyze thoroughly this type of disintegration – firstly, because it is not in the hands of scientists to change these conditions. Secondly, physical disintegration leads to suicide only if it is supplemented by the other, most often – psychological disintegration. A person of a positive life asserting psychological orientation survives even in difficult and unbearable conditions upon the first glance⁴.

Most of the suicides based on religious or moral motives may be interpreted as a consequence of physical disintegration or pseudo-integration. Some of the first century Christians would commit suicide to avoid humiliation and suffering. Indian women, on the contrary, would burn

3 E. Durkheim. *Suicide*.

4 See, J. B Stockdale. *The World of Epiktetus*.

themselves in order to join their beloved departed one sooner. *Sepuku* – a ritual suicide of the Japanese could also be attributed to pseudo-integration. In this case the Samurai used to integrate with spiritual values, such as glory, honor, fidelity, which were more durable than the material body.

The main hypothesis predicated in this article would be as follows. The main cause of a considerably high number of suicides in the West is ontological and biological disintegration. The level of social disintegration determines the differences among various countries of the Western region. An increased social disintegration is the main cause for the considerably risen number of suicides both in Lithuania and in other post-Communist states. Degrees and types of psychological disintegration cause the specific motives of a suicide.

Ontological disintegration and its consequences for the Western culture

The relationship between suicides and religiosity is revealed in the works of many scientists⁵. This relationship is not so obvious in Western countries only because religiosity is more of declaration and not of realization there. The number of suicides is minimal in Latin America or Islamic countries where religion is of a very high importance in people's life.

It is sometimes claimed that religious people commit suicides less often because

almost all world religions prohibit a suicide. In fact the submission to God's commandments or a fear of the after world's punishment might play a certain role in the lives of religious people, but this role would just be a secondary one. Not because of a fear of hell that a religious person would abstain from committing suicide, but because the idea of suicide does not even occur to him, and if it does, it is dismissed right away and without considerable efforts. Religion gives strength to bear emotional pain, induces love, compassion and respect for others. There are no lonely, abandoned people in religious societies. Even while living completely alone a religious person is not lonely – simply because the horizons of his world extend much further than his tangible material environment. Any suffering or loss has its purpose for a religious person – everything for him is part of a great godly plan, maybe not always comprehensible, but definitely benevolent for a human.

If the belief vanishes, the religious world image starts to pale and falls down. Gaps appear in a harmonious world picture, everyday troubles and tasks gradually lose their sense and meaning. Secularization is the opening of a growing field of senselessness. It not only rips a person away from the life asserting world-view and emotional attitude, but also builds up favorable attitudes of suicide. The main attitude is the perception of one's worthlessness. When love weakens, the wish to distinguish oneself, to surpass other people starts playing a more considerable role in human relationship. A loving person seeks to serve, a non-loving – to have the priority. This precedence is sought after

5 E.M. Kleiman & R. T. Liu. An examination of the prospective association between religious service attendance and suicide: Explanatory factors and period effects; Andrew Wu et al. Religion and Completed Suicide: a Meta-Analysis.

in all spheres of life: science, art, politics and economics. A society that is based on a competition inevitably creates losers. If a person limits his aspirations in some sphere in advance – for example, decides not to aim at the president's position, but to content himself with a post of a party secretary in some small provincial town – others would consider him to be a limited person who has not achieved much in his life. Among those who would strive for political eminence only a few would reach it – simply because the higher the positions, the fewer they are. The rest are predestined to be losers. And this applies to all spheres of theoretical and practical activity.

People react differently to failures. Some of them would make peace with it, some would commit suicide. Failure is one of the most common reasons for suicide in the West.

Biological disintegration and its consequences for the Western culture

Both scholarly and fiction literature provides us with quite a few examples of people committing suicide because of a certain inclination for death that they are not able to resist. What could be the origin of this inclination? According to S. Freud, inclination for death, next to Eros, is inborn for all live organisms⁶.

In our opinion, this point of view has considerable drawbacks. It is quite risky to attribute the inclination for death to all live organisms, including humans. In all traditional cultures – Indian, Japanese,

Greek – suicides were perceived rationally and would hardly let themselves to be interpreted as an expression of the inclination for death. Romanticist poets were probably the first to talk about the death cry; later it became one of the art leitmotifs in the West and gradually moved from art to psychiatry. That gives us reasons to believe that inclination for death is not inborn, but appeared in the West during the development process and is the result of civilization and not human evolution.

The main feature of a contemporary Western person's standpoint towards nature is pragmatism. Intoxicated by the achievements of civilization, man cut himself off from the nature context and felt to rule if not the whole world, then at least nature. The idea that everything should serve him, satisfy his needs, interests and wishes, has become a natural one and goes without saying⁷. However, it is a wrong attitude. If he wishes it or not, if he likes it or not, man is not a sovereign, but is only a part of nature, and is ruled by nature by the same laws as any other biological species.

In our opinion, one of the main reasons of suicide is nature's response to the unrestrained expansion of civilized man and the danger to the other biological species caused by this expansion. In this case we base our view on a simple and comprehensible presumption, that the law of biological self adjustment which serves as a basis for the natural evolution since the origin of life on earth is valid for humankind too. A Western man has distorted the balance

6 S. Freud. Beyond the Pleasure Principle.

7 F. Trentmann. Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First.

in nature – some of the wild animal species have died out already, some of them are on the edge of extinction, for the most part the rest are controlled by man, the conditions for wild nature are constantly deteriorating, etc. It would be absolutely natural if nature, trying to reconstitute the balance, devoted a bigger and bigger share of its creative energy to restrict a man's claims. On the contrary, it would be strange if the nature behaved otherwise.

Traditionally nature applies two methods to restrict the excessive expansion of specie: a natural enemy and diseases. Man does not have natural enemies due to the achievements of civilization. Two goals are pursued by diseases: fertility reduction and devastation of already born individuals. Nature successfully copes with both these tasks: demographic balance is negative in almost all Western countries, so even without any additional means the white race that has been the basis of Western civilization for centuries will extinguish by itself. However, the progress of science and technology is going too fast and the resulting threat for nature is too high, so nature takes additional measures – destroying the individuals already in existence. One of those measures – formation of suicidal thoughts, intentions and attitudes which is most often named as an inclination for death.

In this way, if the move away from God precipitates suicide, the alienation from nature makes it necessary. Following this logic, the most secularized and the most nature hostile nations should lead in the suicide rates. However, nature has got its own logic. It attacks the weakest, not the

strongest representatives of a species. A lion would never advance upon the leader of a buffalo pack, but would focus on the weakest of the herd. Thus, if one assumes that a biological factor plays a certain role for suicide, and nature applies the same regulative laws for humankind as for other species, the suicide rate should be the highest among the weakest nations.

Social and political factors of suicides

There are four main groups of dangers that might put in peril the existence of any nation. The first danger is the deprivation of political, and, at the same time, cultural independence resulting from military intervention of more powerful states. The second danger is the assimilation with other nations as a sequence of a peaceful – economic or/and cultural – invasion. The third danger is the loss of consensus regarding the main prospects of the development of a nation, political disunity of a nation leading to a civil war. And finally, the fourth danger is the erosion of social relationships as a result of a peaceful disintegration of relationships among the members of a community.

The first reason was mainly responsible for the dynamics of suicides in the West in the twentieth century – that is the threat for the existence of some nations resulting from adverse historical circumstances. Austrians, Estonians, Hungarians and Czechoslovakians were leading the suicide rates before the Second World War. All these nations had serious problems with self-dependence of the State system. When Austro-Hungarian monarchy, one of the

most powerful monarchies in Europe, fell – Austria became a small state, having to deal, apart from everything else, with all the economic, social and moral consequences of losing the war. However, this state soon found its own place in new Europe and was no longer on the list of the leaders in suicides. Hungarians got their independence in 1919, after a struggle of more than three centuries for their unified sovereign state, just to lose it again in 1945. Estonia's fight for an independent state was also full of dramatics. Czechoslovakia – a political neologism born in 1919, was not able to perceive either its identity, or its historical prospects in time. Unsteadiness of this creation was proved by the split in 1993.

Lithuania, Russia, Byelorussia and Latvia were leading in suicides at the end of the twentieth century. Unexpected to some, Lithuania's leadership in this context is more than comprehensible: during the last two centuries (according to some authors, ever since the times of Vytautas the Great) Lithuania has enjoyed its independence for approximately 30 years only. Latvia's way to independence was no easier. Byelorussia did not even dream of creating their independent state. Russians experienced and are still experiencing all the consequences of the falling empire.

There is a feature common to the dynamics of suicides among the nations that have fought for their independence which may be named as an overdue effect: most of people commit suicides not during their struggle for independence, but after the declaration of independence. This fact is common almost among all nations that have gained their independence in the

twentieth century: Hungary, Finland, Baltic States and Iceland. This phenomenon might be explained by at least two groups of reasons. On one hand, the fight for independence is an important factor unifying the nation, however dramatic and full of losses it might be. When the struggle is over this factor disappears and the nation experiences a certain existential vacuum. Old goals are reached and the new ones are not formed yet. Respectively, the risk of suicides increases and its number grows. On the other hand, an important role in the life of newly born independent states is played by a sudden change of the social economic conditions, fluctuation of the habitual life norms and values and the resulting feeling of loss, uncertainty about the future. However, one should not overestimate this factor. All post-Communist countries have gone or are still going through the hardship of transformation from the Socialist to the Capitalist system, but the suicide rate in some of them (Poland, Bulgaria) increased only slightly during 1990 – 2000, and even decreased in some of them (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Transcaucasia).

The second important factor influencing suicides is the loss of cultural peculiarity as a result of globalization. This factor plays an important part in countries with a strong traditional culture, for example Japan. The suicide rate in this country is not the highest in the world, but the rate of growth is one of the fastest. The suicide rate has increased from 17 to 24 during a short period of 1995 – 2000.

The third factor weakening a nation is the political split of the nation, the ultimate form of which is a civil war. This factor was

probably the most visibly expressed in Sri Lanka, where the suicide rate jumped from 10 in 1960 to 36 in 1985 as a result of intensified ethnic conflicts and the civil war.

And finally, the fourth threat for sovereignty is a social disintegration of citizens, expressing itself in weakened and/or vanished relationships among members of a society – relationships within a family, a collective or various social groups. Social disintegration is the main reason for a comparably high suicide numbers in the post-Communist space.

A comparably high suicide rate in Lithuania is determined by the impact of two out of four factors mentioned above. Firstly, Lithuania, different from most other Western nations, has had a long and hard struggle for its independence. Secondly, the social disintegration in Lithuania is one of the highest among the Western societies. True, Lithuanians are the least concerned about family, friends, acquaintances, they are the least eager to improve life conditions of their neighbors, the sick or the handicapped⁸. Lithuania falls also behind in terms of forming a civil society⁹.

Most of the parameters of social disintegration are directly related to suicides. Namely, there is a statistically significant variable between divorce rates and suicides¹⁰. The connection between suicides and various parameters of social disintegration is revealed in the work of B. Wollman¹¹.

8 See R. Inglehart et al: tables A001, A002, E164_1, E167_1.

9 R. Žiliukaitė. Neatrasta galia: Lietuvos pilietinės visuomenės žemėlapis.

10 D. Gailienė et al. Suicide in Lithuania.

11 B. Wollman. Between Survival and Suicide.

Psychological pain and its causes

E. Schneidman claims that the main cause of suicides is psychological pain, and the main reason for psychological pain is unsatisfied needs¹². In fact, unsatisfied needs are true causes, but only one of the causes of psychological pain. Suffering is characteristic both for the old and young, both for the rational and irrational, both for the unprivileged and the ones on top of the hierarchy, so to attempt to explain a variety of all this suffering by unsatisfied needs is a possible, though really risky, task.

In our opinion, both physical pain and psychological suffering has the same cause and performs the same function. That is a sign of danger. Physical pain means that the human body is in danger, psychological suffering – that one's Ego is in peril. The magnitude of pain is directly proportional to the danger occurred. If the cause of a physical pain is not eliminated the human body may perish, if the reason of a psychological suffering is not removed, the Ego may be lost.

The human Ego is a fragile psychic structure, so it feels safe only if it is embedded in the more powerful psychic combinations, such as collective complexes. For example, if a person constantly thinks, feels and behaves as a real Communist, one might claim that his Ego is a part of a considerably greater and more powerful Communist complex. As Carl Gustav Jung puts it, "once upon a time men were possessed by devils, now they are not less obsessed by ideas, and so on"¹³.

12 E. S. Shneidman. The Suicidal Mind.

13 C. G. Jung. On "The Tibetan book of the great Liberation", p. 486.

Two main groups of forces exert influence upon the life of any person: his conscious self and his subconscious complexes. If these two groups of forces act in the same direction, then the psychic evolution of that person proceeds smoothly. However, if a person consciously aims at something which is contrary to his sub-consciousness, the emotional conflicts come onto the stage. Once these conflicts get serious it might lead to a disease or reviewing one's conscious attitudes and making some concessions to the pressures of the sub-consciousness. In the latter case the whole person's psychic life moves over and its centre becomes not the Ego, but some hypothetical point between the Ego and the sub-consciousness. Analytic psychology calls this new centre and source of psychic life a *Self*. To find one's Self means to discover oneself. People who have discovered themselves lead a quite peaceful and quiet life. Inner anxiety, discontent is the evidence that a person did not yet find themselves, i.e. his Ego and Self do not match each other.

Conditionally three problems might be distinguished in the process of the formation and functioning of an Ego: an inchoate Ego; erroneously formed Ego; deformed Ego. In an analogical way one might speak about the pain of non-discovery, the pain of pseudo-discovery and the pain of loss. Each of these types of pain is overwhelming for a person who experiences it and might lead to a suicide.

The pain of non-discovery manifests itself when a person does not see a reason to carry on with life. All traditional cultures have created systems of meanings that sometimes would supplement and

sometimes would contradict each other. The refusal to look for some particular meaning or any meaning at all constitutes the specifics of the contemporary Western culture. A senseless life becomes a norm, not a misfortune. Some philosophical trends provide a theoretical grounding for this attitude, namely – existentialism.

One of the main fundamental paradoxes of existentialism is that its theoreticians declared the rejection of meaning, the Absurd, but would not commit suicides; conscious or unconscious followers of this school of thought do not declare it, but would commit suicides. A. Camus concludes his essay on suicides – “one must imagine Sisyphus happy”¹⁴. Maybe one must, but it is extremely difficult. One ought to distinguish himself with an extraordinary, even perverse imagination in order to picture Sisyphus hopelessly stuck in eternity as happy. Probably A. Camus enjoyed such an imagination, but most common people do not, and as soon as they make sure their life becomes a meaningless task of pushing a rock up a mountain, they finish it with a suicide. Here is just one fact that has been massively explored in the Russian press: two girls jumped down from the roof of a nine-storey building in Gorky in 2002. The only explanation that has been provided in their suicide note was a short phrase: “we got bored with everything...”

It happens quite often in contemporary Western society that suicides are committed by people you would least expect it from. Such a case is described in a novel by E. M. Godmundsson “The Angels of

14 A. Camus. *Sizifo mitas*, p. 100.

the Universe”¹⁵. The novel surprises with a suicide not of the main character – a man having mental problems – but of his friend, *a wealthy dentist driving a jeep*. It is usually said about similar people: *What would he lack? A good wife, gifted kids, a great, well-paid job...* In fact, this kind of suicide testifies to a seeming integration into society by people whose Egos would eventually not discover their Selves.

There are considerably few people in a contemporary Western society who would openly declare a senseless life. The so called philosophy of equal opportunities or free choice performs the leading role in the West. It is like society barrages a pile of meanings, values and ideals for an individual, and he picks up the most relevant ones for himself. It is claimed that individual values are equivalent to each other unless they challenge considerably the interests of other individuals. However, this is not quite true. Some values facilitate integration, others – disintegration; some of them affirm life, others – death. A perverse culture has been created in the West as a result of ontological, biological and social disintegration, and its main features are placing the material goods ahead of the spiritual ones, the detachment from, if not despising, nature, the cult of individuality and originality. Thus, if the contemporary Western culture is a perverse culture, so any integration into it is pseudo-integration, and the discovery of those socially authorized meanings becomes a pseudo-discovery. Therefore, the number of strange, by the first glance unexplainable suicides, will only increase.

¹⁵ E. M. Gudmundsson. *Visatos angelai*.

The pain of loss is probably the most often encountered type of psychological suffering. This is a situation when the Ego is filled with some content and then suddenly loses it. The life of Young Werther is a classical example of such a phenomenon. It is quite a common occurrence that suicides are committed by people who lose their social ideals, goals and meanings.

The disproportionate relationship between education and upbringing creates a significant drawback of the so called society of equal opportunities. The major focus in the traditional cultures was dedicated to the upbringing, the formation of a personality's moral and emotional foundation. Formal education and knowledge played only a secondary role. And Western society is even called the *knowledge society*. However, the formal knowledge one receives at school makes only a small particle of one's Ego. If an Ego is not molded purposefully it gets filled with the simplest, easily accessible, and at the same time the most easily losable contents: pleasurable sensations induced by psychic stimulators, worshipping a popular music band, questionable affection or casual love relationship. Losing anyone of these contents puts a jeopardy losing one's Ego as well. More than 4.000 teenagers commit suicides every year in U.S.A. only. And this trend will only grow if the attitude in regard to the relation between education and upbringing is not reconsidered.

Metaphysical suffering

There is a type of pain, a suffering to be more precise, that is impossible to explain

either by the troubled Ego formation, unsatisfied needs, or any other facts of one's biography. That is because in some cases the reasons of suffering extend behind the limits of a personal experience.

One of the better known examples of this type of suffering was the suffering of the Germans caused by the bombings of the Ally aviation during the Second World War. There is no doubt many peaceful civilians, who probably even disagreed with the Nazi ideas themselves, have died, suffered and become handicapped during those bombings. However, one can not be innocent if the whole nation is guilty as a whole. Thus one can only discuss different concepts and various degrees of guilt, as it is done by K. T. Jaspers in his work "The Question of German Guilt"¹⁶.

Humankind is the broadest subject of a moral guilt. Let us assume a certain person has breathed in some radioactive dust and has developed cancer. In this case the guilt does not have to fall on him, his family or nation – maybe the dust was blown in by the wind from a far away country that person would not even know to exist. However, he belongs to the humanity that has polarized the atom, thus gave a chance for the radioactive dust, therefore, as a part of humanity, a person is responsible for the actions of other humans, no matter if he approves or not, condemns or justifies them. This type of guilt was named *a metaphysical guilt* by K. Jaspers. Its core is the solidarity among people which makes everyone responsible for the whole world's injustices and atrocities, especially for the

crimes a person has been made aware of.

The foundation for the theory of metaphysical suffering is the principle of moral determinism. All things are related in nature, society or psychics, everything has got its cause and consequence, and this causal relationship is ruled by moral laws. The objective of the moral causality is the rehabilitation of justice. This reconstruction proceeds both in physical and metaphysical space, and both individuals and their groups are the subjects for the moral responsibility. That means a person may suffer not only for his own sins, but also for those of others – his family, nation, the entire humankind. If a metaphysical guilt exists, so does a metaphysical suffering.

The source of metaphysical suffering is the collective sub consciousness. All black deeds, crimes and sins ever conducted by people accumulate into the collective sub consciousness. Justice demands every one of those deeds is accounted for. However, it is the most sensitive people, not the biggest evil doers that suffer the most as a rule – it is them whose borderline between the consciousness and sub consciousness is the most fragile, who are capable to feel not only for themselves, but for the others too. As K. Jaspers believes, it is through them the whole world's injustices and atrocities get objectified. Since the number of sinners always outdoes the number of the redeemers, it is almost impossible to avoid a metaphysical suffering.

A metaphysical guilt constitutes the primary abyssal cause of a psychological pain. A distorted balance between guilt and responsibility, or in a broader sense, between the consciousness and sub con-

16 K. Jaspersas. Kaltės klausimas.

sciousness leads to anxiety, neuroses, troubled Ego formation, unsatisfied needs and the abundance of pseudo needs. So far the main remedy used for the psychological suffering is suppression. However, it can not last indefinitely. Since the collective sub consciousness gives the primary source for suffering, suppressing one person's suffering makes it burst out through another. Respectively, the number of mental disorders increases. According to the data of the World Health Organization, there are 120 million people in the world that suffer depression (mostly in Western countries), and the number of the cases is constantly growing.

Conclusions

“The death of God”, declared by F. Nietzsche and widely advertised by epigones, has opened a new page in the Western history¹⁷. Detached from God humans have started receding both from society and from nature. A suicide is a natural and consistent consequence of this disintegration.

A religious person who recognizes his unity with his family, nation, humankind, nature and God is the least inclined to commit a suicide. Having turned away from God, nature becomes the main object for integration. However, if a human is a creation not only of nature, but also of God, even the one who is best integrated into nature, but non-religious personality might experience a certain existential vacuum and contemplate at least theoretical possibility of suicide. Having estranged both from

God and nature, the social bonds constitute the core thread binding people together. They tie geographically close people into certain political, social, ethnic groups that constantly fight for the spheres of influence. Fighting means there will be ones who lose. Some nations have died out through history, some are on the edge of vanishing. Members of endangered nations are much more inclined to suicides as they face one more form of disintegration – a threat to be secluded from humankind. Together with the fast modernization of the Western society other aspects of social disintegration intensify. The more energy a human devotes to the struggle for his existence, the less of it is left for his friends, acquaintances or family. Social disintegration encourages suicides in two ways: some people break down in the rival struggle, some of them do not even succeed to place themselves in it. In the latter case the importance of the psychological disintegration manifests itself. A human Ego feels safe only if it is embedded in some larger accumulations of psychic energy, namely collective complexes. Since the contemporary society favors individualism, some of those life-asserting collective complexes have vanished, and others have shrunk to the level that they have no considerable impact on a person's life anymore. Respectively, the number of mental disorders increases.

Following this scheme, the main attention in suicide prevention should be focused on the cultivation of spiritual values, formation of life-asserting world-view and emotional attitude; amplification of social integration should follow, then – psychological education should take place, and finally –

¹⁷ S. Bruce. *God is Dead: Secularization in the West.*

medical means of psychic adjustment should be employed. The contrary way is employed in practice. The most attention is devoted to the sick people – the ones whose psychological disintegration has reached the level of pain. Prevention of mental diseases takes a certain place in the general prophylaxis of health, however it is obvious that psycho-

logical integration can not succeed without social integration. Without a harmony in the society there can not be harmony in the soul. There is no point to discuss the ontological or biological integration in Western societies. It is no wonder that the waves of suicides in the West take over wider and wider areas and demand more and more victims.

Literature

- Bering, J. *Suicidal: Why we Kill Ourselves*. University of Chicago Press, 2018.
- Bruce, S. *God is Dead: Secularization in the West*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2002.
- Camus, A. *Sizifo mitas. Iš prancūzų kalbos vertė Violeta Tauragiienė*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2006.
- Dos Santos, J.P., Tavers, M., & Barros, P.P. More than just numbers: Suicide rates and economic cycle in Portugal (1910-2013). *SSM Popul Health*, 2016, 2, pp. 14–23.
- Durkheim, E. *Suicide*. Routledge, 2000 (1897). Sigmund Freud. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Martino Fine Books, 2009 (1920).
- Gailienė, D., Domanskienė, V., Keturakis, V. Suicide in Lithuania. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 1994, 1, 3, pp. 149–158.
- Gudmundsson, E. M. *Visatos angelai. Iš islandų kalbos vertė R. Ruseckienė*. Vilnius: Tyto alba, 1996.
- Inglehart, R., Basáñez, M., Díez-Medrano, J., Halman, L. and Luijckx, R. (eds.). *Human Beliefs and Values: A Cross-Cultural Sourcebook Based on the 1999-2002 Values Surveys*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 2004.
- Jaspersas K. Kaltės klausimas. Kn.: *Gėrio kontūrai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1989.
- Jung, C.G. On “The Tibetan book of the great Liberation”. In W. McGuire, (Exec. Ed.), Sir H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler (Eds.), R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). *Collected works of C.G. Jung*. Vol. 11. *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, pp. 473–508. Princeton University Press, 1969 (1939).
- Kleiman E.M., Liu R.T. An examination of the prospective association between religious service attendance and suicide: Explanatory factors and period effects. *J Affect Disord*, 2018, 1(225), pp. 616–623.
- Menon, V., & Kattimani, Sh. Suicide and Serotonin: Making Sense of Evidence. *Indian J Psychol Med*, 2015, 37(3), 377–378.
- Shneidman, E. S. *The Suicidal Mind*. Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Stockdale, J. B. The World of Epiktetus. In Sommers, Ch. & Sommers, F. (eds.). *Vice and Virtue in Everyday Life*, pp. 658–672. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1993.
- Trentmann, F. *Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First*. Allen Lane, 2015.
- Wu, A. Jing-Yu and Cun-Xian Jia. Religion and Completed Suicide: a Meta-Analysis. *PLoS One*, 2015, 10(6).
- Wollman, B. *Between Survival and Suicide*. New York: Gardner, 1976.
- World Health Organization Database. https://www.who.int/gho/mental_health/suicide_rates/en/
- Žiliukaitė, R. Neatrastagalija: Lietuvos pilietinės visuomenės žemėlapis. Kn. Žiliukaitė, R. (mokslinė redaktorė). *Dabartinės Lietuvos kultūros taidos tendencijos: vertybiniai virsmai*. Vilnius: Kultūros, filosofijos ir meno institutas, 2007.