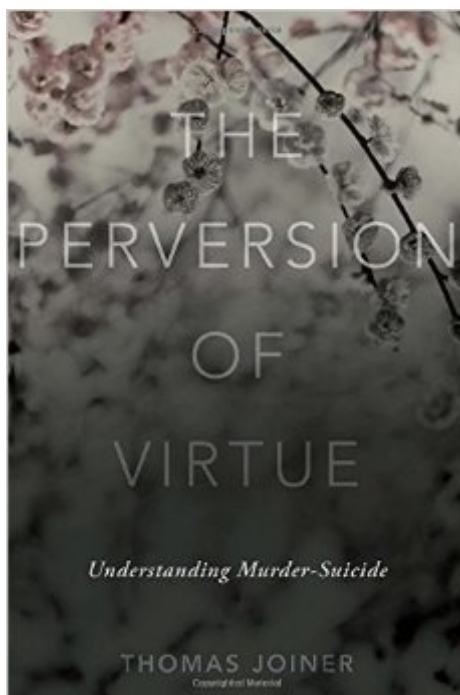


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The Perversion Of Virtue: Understanding Murder-Suicide



Synopsis

Of the approximately 38,500 deaths by suicide in the U.S. annually, about two percent--between 750 and 800--are murder-suicides. The horror of murder-suicides looms large in the public consciousness--they are reported in the media with more frequency and far more sensationalism than most suicides, and yet we have little understanding of this grave form of violence. In *The Perversion of Virtue*, leading suicide researcher Thomas Joiner explores the nature of murder-suicide and offers a unique new theory to explain this nearly unexplainable act: that murder-suicides always involve the wrongheaded invocation of one of four interpersonal virtues: mercy, justice, duty, and glory. The parent who murders his child and then himself seeks to save his child from a fatherless life of hardship; the wife who murders her husband and then herself seeks to right the wrongs he committed against her, and so on. Murder-suicides involve the gross misperception of when and how these four virtues should be applied. Drawing from extensive research as well as real examples from the media, Joiner meticulously examines, deconstructs, and finally rebuilds our understanding of murder-suicide in such a way that brings tragic reason to what may seem an unfathomable act of violence. Along the way, he dispels some of the most enduring myths of suicide--for instance, that suicide is usually an impulsive act (it is almost always pre-meditated), or that alcohol or drugs are involved in most suicides (usually they are not). Sure to be controversial, this book seeks to make sense of one of the most difficult-to-comprehend types of violence in modern society, shedding new light that will ultimately lead to better understanding and even prevention.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I love the book! I read it in one sitting and just couldn't put it down. I believe it by far Joiner's best book so far. Even the concept of suicide itself is more clearly conveyed here compared to his previous books devoted just to this one topic. This book is a must for clinicians and police investigators alike. It is scientifically based yet easily accessible by lay readers as well. Congratulations on a masterpiece Professor Joiner! Please do keep up with the writing- I am eager to read your next book .

Dr. Joiner is considered an expert in suicide studies and treatment. One of my co-workers highly recommended this book to our consultation group. When my peer was explaining the traits attributed to suicide risk my first thought was that was taken from Durkheim decades earlier. It is a narrow book that has a lot of information. If the intended audience was clinicians, the editorial staff was deficient. Much of the first portion could have been summarized. It was a chore to wade through in case you would miss something. Pages 196 onward are where I started taking notes and thinking of my specific client base. That alone was worth the investment of time. So I give Dr Joiner a high rating because of the material and his efforts involved. I wish we had his materials in going graduate school. He is a credit to the field. His editors would get a 3 star because they did not reign him in or let his stature intimidate them.

It is an interesting read and gives the reader some insight into what goes on in the minds of people who commit murder-suicide. It is a difficult topic but the book helped me understand it a little more.

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