



Suicide and Agency: Anthropological Perspectives on Self-Destruction, Personhood, and Power (Studies in Death, Materiality and the Origin of Time)

Ludek Broz, Daniel Münster

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Suicide and Agency offers an original and timely challenge to existing ways of understanding suicide. Through the use of rich and detailed case studies, the authors assembled in this volume explore how interplay of self-harm, suicide, personhood and agency varies markedly across site (Greenland, Siberia, India, Palestine and Mexico) and setting (self-run leprosy colony, suicide bomb attack, cash-crop farming, middle-class mothering). Rather than starting from a set definition of suicide, they empirically engage suicide fields—the wider domains of practices and of sense making, out of which realized, imaginary, or disputed suicides emerge. By drawing on ethnographic methods and approaches, a new comparative angle to understanding suicide beyond mainstream Western bio-medical and classical sociological conceptions of the act as an individual or social pathology is opened up. The book explores a number of ontological assumptions about the role of free will, power, good and evil, personhood, and intentionality in both popular and expert explanations of suicide. Suicide and Agency offers a substantial and ground-breaking contribution to the emerging field of the anthropology of suicide. It will appeal to a range of scholars and students, including those in anthropology, sociology, social psychology, cultural studies, suicidology, and social studies of death and dying.

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