



Bodies under Siege: Self-mutilation, Nonsuicidal Self-injury, and Body Modification in Culture and Psychiatry

By Armando R. Favazza MD MPH

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A quarter century after it was first published, *Bodies under Siege* remains the classic, authoritative book on self-mutilation. Now in its third edition, this invaluable work is updated throughout with findings from hundreds of new studies, discussions of new models of self-injury, an assessment of the S.A.F.E. (Self Abuse Finally Ends) program, and the Bill of Rights for People Who Self-harm.

Armando Favazza's pioneering work identified a wide range of forces, many of them cultural and societal, that compel or impel people to mutilate themselves. This new edition examines the explosive growth in the incidence of self-injurious behaviors and body modification practices. Favazza critically assesses new and significant biological, ethnological, social, and psychological findings regarding self-injury; presents current understandings of self-injurious acts from cultural and clinical perspectives; and places self-mutilation in historical and contemporary context.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The book is very well written and extremely informative, and Favazza has produced a refreshingly honest and objective account of self-harming behaviour... There is much to be learned from this book and, for clinicians or academics working with people who self-harm, it is an invaluable resource."

(British Journal of Psychiatry)

" *Bodies Under Siege* is an excellent book dealing with self-mutilation in depth and breadth. It is a clinical volume that should be of use to all in the mental health field. The book is also an anthropological contribution to the understanding of what it means to be human."

(Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease)

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(Arthur Freeman, MD Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease)

Review

"Explores the various ways in which people mutilate their bodies. Favazza explores the historical background and offers insights into how and why people do truly appalling things to their limbs, heads, and genitals. He pleads for understanding for a group of patients who are often seen as bizarre and repellent."

(New Scientist)

"The seminal book on [nonsuicidal self-injury]; presents a comprehensive historical, anthropological, and clinical review of the topic."

(Current Directions in Psychological Science)

"A compendium of cultural and clinical reports of self-mutilation and a summary of what is and what is not known about therapy, the book is a major contribution to both the anthropological and psychiatric literature. I know that having read it I will see my next self-mutilating patient through more insightful and compassionate eyes."

(Journal of Nervous and Mental Disorders)

"A comprehensive historical, anthropological, ethnological, and clinical account of self-mutilation."

(Journal of the American Medical Association)

About the Author

Armando Favazza, M.D., is a professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Missouri, Columbia. He is a fellow of both the American Psychiatric Association and the American College of Psychiatrists and is a co-founder of the Society for the Study of Psychiatry and Culture.

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