

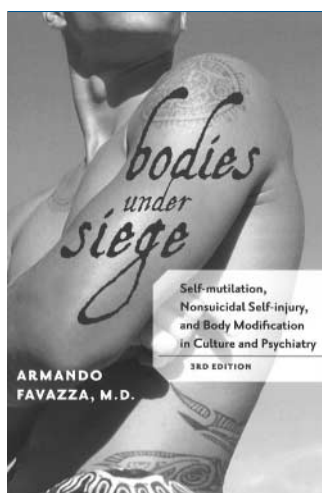
The editors, both senior lecturers in clinical psychology at the University of Limerick in Ireland, aim to present the reader with discussions of mental health issues in old age within the context of normal as well as problematic development across the lifespan. They are upfront about their intention to provide a collection of chapters that pay attention to understanding the positive and salutogenic aspects of ageing. These aims are achieved in part as we read about the potential of theories, such as Erikson's lifespan developmental theory, attachment theory and the dual process model of assimilative and accommodative coping, to shed light on thinking about matters such as adjusting to bereavement or to life in care. In this respect, the book succeeds in drawing these ways of thinking to the fore.

In other respects, when I was not finding the book fascinating, I found it frustrating. There are many spelling errors, a paucity of tables or figures (four in the entire volume) and considerable repetition between chapters, with population demographics and the basics of Erikson's theories being the main victims. It promises to appeal to students, educators, practitioners and policy-makers, yet its coverage of fundamental research evidence is often sketchy and sometimes superficial – the chapter on treatment of mental health issues, for example, tries to cover treatment of major conditions within sections of just 1–3 paragraphs each; that on carers fails to acknowledge the role of spouses; whereas that on assessment mistakenly cites the Mini-Mental State Examination as an assessment of mood. Students should not rely on this book for basic education in this field, nor should professionals rely on it for an update on the latest research or practice.

This book lacks polish but it is a bit of a rough diamond. I feel it needs to be read as a collection of interesting essays rather than as a conventional text.

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**Bodies under Siege:  
Self-mutilation,  
Nonsuicidal Self-injury,  
and Body Modification  
in Culture and Society  
(3rd edn)**

By Armando Favazza.  
Johns Hopkins University Press.  
2011. \$35 (pb). 352 pp.  
ISBN: 9780801899669

Self-harming behaviour is a global public health problem. It is one of the main risk factors for suicide and it results in extensive mortality and morbidity. Every year in the UK, self-harm results in more than 200 000 attendances to casualty departments, placing considerable strain on the National Health Service.

Favazza's original *Bodies Under Siege*, published in 1987, rapidly became the seminal textbook on self-harm. It contained an unparalleled cultural exploration of an array of self-harming behaviours. By dedicating separate chapters to specific variants

of self-harm (the head, limbs and genitals each warrant their own chapter), and examining different beliefs, practices and customs across the world, Favazza brought into a very public discourse a previously unmentionable topic.

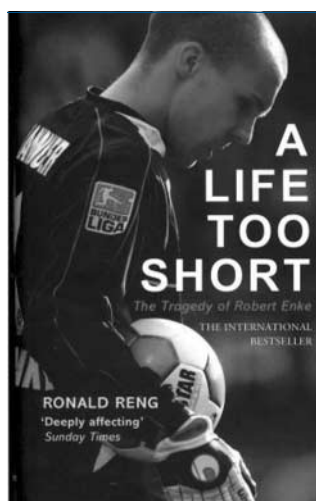
The third edition, although 40 pages shorter, retains most of the aforementioned trove of information, while also summarising the subsequent decades of academic and clinical endeavour into the prevention and treatment of self-harm. Notable additions include an in-depth discussion of the social forces behind the exponential increase in tattoos and body modification observed in modern popular culture, as well as the pivotal role the internet now plays in providing information about self-harm, including treatment for people who self-harm and their families. Thousands of websites, chat rooms and forums dedicated to self-harm have been created since the second edition was published in 1996.

The latest edition includes Favazza's personal reflections on his career-long exploration of self-harm and body modification, in which he reaffirms that there is hope for those whose lives have been overtaken by such potentially destructive behaviours. The book ends with a fascinating epilogue by Fakir Musafar, a pioneer of the 'modern primitive' body modification movement, who discusses the attractions, dangers and possibilities represented by such behaviours.

My only criticism of the book is that Favazza confusingly uses a number of interchangeable terms for self-harm, the preferred UK term. Indeed, the proliferation of terms describing the same phenomenon has arguably held back research in this field. Overall, however, the book is very well written and extremely informative, and Favazza has produced a refreshingly honest and objective account of self-harming behaviour. It is, as stated by Favazza, more than a catalogue of horrors; 25 years on, it is still an important publication in this challenging area of psychiatry and a particular strength of the third edition is its comprehensive (26-page) reference list, which spans more than 130 years of literature about self-harm. 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. Highly recommended.

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**A Life Too Short: The  
Tragedy of Robert Enke**

By Ronald Reng.  
Yellow Jersey. 2011.  
£16.99 (hb). 400 pp.  
ISBN: 9780224091657

In late 2009, Robert Enke was at the peak of his footballing powers, acknowledged as one of the German *Bundesliga*'s best goalkeepers and expected to represent his country in the 2010

World Cup. He had seemingly overcome personal tragedy, depressive episodes and a series of ill-fated foreign transfers, regaining the form that had previously linked him with some of the biggest clubs in the world. On 10 November 2009, Robert Enke ended his life, aged only 32. Over 40 000 people attended his memorial service.

*A Life Too Short* was originally intended to be a collaboration between Enke and his friend, author Ronald Reng; not an autobiography, but a chronicling of how Enke had managed and overcome his depression. The book is an intimate portrait of a man who appears to be the antithesis of our description of the modern international football player; a reserved, thoughtful and dignified individual, who married his childhood sweetheart and for whom manners and respect were more important than money or trophies. Indeed at times, the reader could be forgiven for wondering whether Enke's untimely death and the writer's close relationship to his subject has led to a somewhat rose-tinted portrayal of him.

Reng's previous bestselling book, *The Keeper of Dreams*, explored the unique physical and psychological characteristics of a professional goalkeeper compared with his outfield counterparts, and *A Life Too Short* often reads like a case in point. The trained reader can identify a number of cognitive biases that dogged Enke, such as the selective abstraction that he often applied to individual performances.

The player's private struggle with such thoughts runs parallel with the matches, tournaments and transfers that many readers will be familiar with, lending an insight into aspects of football, particularly the art of goalkeeping, that some would not have previously considered. The subtle development of Enke's skills, observed beautifully by the author, and his growth in stature among his peers are in stark contrast to the player's confidence

in his own abilities, illustrated by excerpts from his diary and from interviews with Reng.

As one would expect, the book is less accessible to those who are not fans of the sport, not least because Enke's attention to detail and enthusiasm for the minutiae of goalkeeping is reflected in Reng's writing. Although many of the characters described outside of the sport are colourfully depicted by the author, it is the portrayal of many of Enke's contemporaries and their impact on his game that is most interesting to the football supporter. Some personalities in the game are reflected very badly in their lack of understanding of both Enke's mental illness and the difficulties some young players have in adjusting to new teams, countries and languages.

Critics will draw attention to the frequent use of the word 'depressives' to describe those with depression, but by and large the book addresses mental health issues in general with both sensitivity and rationalism. Although Enke's recovery from depressive episodes is inspiring, the spectre of his suicide looms large over much of the book, and the less-informed reader could be forgiven for coming to the conclusion that his eventual suicide was inevitable.

At the very least, *A Life Too Short* shines a spotlight on what must be a more prevalent issue than is currently recognised – that of mental illness in professional footballers. It begs the question why few cases are reported in British football leagues and whether or not it will take a tragedy like the death of Robert Enke for the sport in this country to recognise its presence.

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