

Body modification is a form of self-mutilation assignment

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Body Modification Is a Form of Self- Mutilation Summary-Response Essay One can't look in a magazine nor watch television without seeing the trend. It has become the newest trend in western civilization. Celebrities and the mainstream media glorify it the most. The practice has become as common as women getting their hair done, for some individuals. It is so accessible one or more of these procedures can be acquired by just a trip to the mall. The trend is known as body modification, deliberately altering the body for nonmedical reasons.

The most common forms of body modification are tattooing, piercing and cosmetic surgery. Shelia Jeffreys, an associate professor of political science at the University of Melbourne, gives her perspective on piercing, tattoos and cosmetics surgery in her article " Body Modification Is a Form of Self- Mutilation ". Jeffreys examines piercing, tattooing and cosmetic surgery as all harmful forms of self-mutilation. Jeffreys believes that self- mutilation is due to a male society dominant which doesn't accept homosexuality nor a variety of body shapes, and where pornography is the center of the mainstream media .

More importantly people are mutilating themselves as a response to low social status, sexual and physical abuse and severe emotional distress. According to Jeffreys those who self mutilate also self hate. Women and homosexuals are known to mutilate the most. Over two million young women in the US regularly self-mutilate. Self- mutilation has become a common practice in today's society and its viewed as fashionable rather than deliberate pain and mortification of one's flesh states Jeffrey. Piercing was

originally a symbol of gayness which flowed into the mainstream after models walked the cat walk and were noticeably pierced.

Some take body modification to the extreme by taking part in self-harming networks on the internet where individual can pay to access photos of fresh blood, castration, and more. According to Jeffreys, most self-mutilation is done by a proxy, a surgeon, piercer or sadist, for a financial profit or sexual excitement. The most popular, common, and hazardous form of mutilation is cosmetic surgery. Due to the sex industry's expansion in the US and male buyers demand, the first silicone injection was created which caused more harm than breast implants.

Health risks and issues come with every body modification, some more severe than others. Jeffreys' concluded that any form of body modification is a form of self mutilation which is carried out due to self hate because of male dominated society. Although Jeffreys provides supportive evidence to prove why tattoos, piercing and cosmetic surgery are forms of self-mutilation, she lacks the understanding of long held traditional cultural practices and empathy for those who need plastic surgery because of physical deformities.

The genre being an online article allows Jeffrey to freely express herself, but by doing this Jeffreys fails to put her audiences' personal beliefs and practices into view. Those who have or want body modification are Jeffreys main targets. The purpose of the article is to inform the audience about how piercing, tattooing and cosmetic surgery are all forms of self-mutilation and are carried out by those who self hate. Jeffreys perceives her opinion to be

the standard for everyone, which shows she lacks care for her audiences' beliefs.

Most individuals do not get tattoos and piercing for deliberate pain nor to modify their flesh. A dominant male society has not made most individuals who mutilate emotionally disassociated from their bodies. Jeffrey uses intense impacting vocabulary such as ' self-mutilation' and ' proxy', to make her argument appear to be more influential and leave more of an impression on her readers. Although an impression is left on the reader it does not take away from the fact that Jeffreys points are insensitive and narrow minded.

Jeffreys broadly classifies and judges the topic body modification by her standards only. By doing this Jeffreys proves herself to be very ethnocentric, a belief in the superiority of one's own ethnic group. Grouping broad topics such as piercing and tattoos all under forms of self- mutilation shows a lack of sympathy and knowledge of long standing traditional cultural practices. In tribal regions of Africa, South America, India and Asia piercings and tattoos are a part of one's cultural identity.

Tattoos and piercings define one's beauty, bravery, rite of passage, wealth, ritual beliefs and distinguishes tribes from each other. For many of individuals tattoos and piercings are far from self- mutilation. Tattoos and piercings carrying meaning and represent once identity, the distinguishing character or personality of an individual . (PARAGRAPH ON TRIBAL TRADITIONS) Jeffrey states " cutting one's own flesh, body piercing, tattooing and cosmetic surgery are all forms of self-mutilation which should be opposed"(pg. 1).

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How can Jeffreys imply that one's cultural traditions which have been practiced for over centuries be opposed? How can Jeffreys oppose one's identity. Many of these cultural traditions have become western traditions. For many teenagers today a piercing or tattoo is seen as a rite of passage and carries a lot of meaning like it does for traditional practices. In addition to Jeffreys opposing individuals identify she also disagrees cosmetic surgery which is an individual personal choice. Jeffreys views cosmetic surgery as one of the worst forms of body modification and self-mutilation.

Jeffreys describes cosmetic surgery as self-mutilation done by a proxy(surgeon) for a profit. She groups all cosmetic procedures as forms of self-mutilation. By doing this she unfairly classifies even necessary procedures as self-mutilations. This shows her lack of empathy for individuals who have deformities caused from birth, developmental and injuries. In many medical emergency cases cosmetic surgery is used to fix the appearance of the patients wounds. It can also be used for amputation. (Paragraph about Reconstruction surgery and when it is ok)

Cosmetic surgery is also very common in homosexuals who want to undergo sex reassignment surgery. Jeffreys views gender change surgeries as mutilation done for a large profit. By opposing sex changes, Jeffreys lacks empathy for those who struggle with feeling they were born the wrong sex. She once again views everything by her standards of what is right and wrong. A sex change would not only boost the self esteem of an individual who wants one, but it would also help individuals to feel at peace with themselves.

This should be a decision no one but the individual should decide. Everyone individual has the right to control what happen to his or her body. Often cosmetic surgery is healthy for ones mental health if they strongly feel they cannot live with a certain physical feature on themselves. If going through cosmetic surgery will make the individual achieve true happiness and mental stability, I believe there is nothing wrong with having it done with it. Jeffreys needs to take into account that not everyone can cope with various personal flaws.

Certain procedures such as liposuction can be used to help a individual lose weight and keep them from being at risk for disorders and diseases caused by obesity, a condition characterized by the excessive accumulation and storage of fat in the body. Jeffreys has clearly failed to examine at the greater picture when it comes to cosmetic surgery. The outcome from it not all adverse. In conclusion, Jeffreys believes piercing, tattoos and cosmetic surgery are all procedures done by a proxy to mutilate an individual for a profit. Jeffreys classifies all these procedures under one broad topic of self-mutilation.

She fails to look at the greater picture by taking into consideration traditional cultural practices and the individuals need for modification due to physical deformities from birth and accidents. By assuming everyone should follow her standards, she proves her lack of compassion, empathy and care for her audience . Body modification is a broader/more complex topic than expressed in Jeffrey's article. One can not condense all these issues into one

narrow definition. Work Cited Shelia Jeffreys, " Body Modification as Self-Mutilation by a Proxy," On line Opinion Article April 10, 2006.