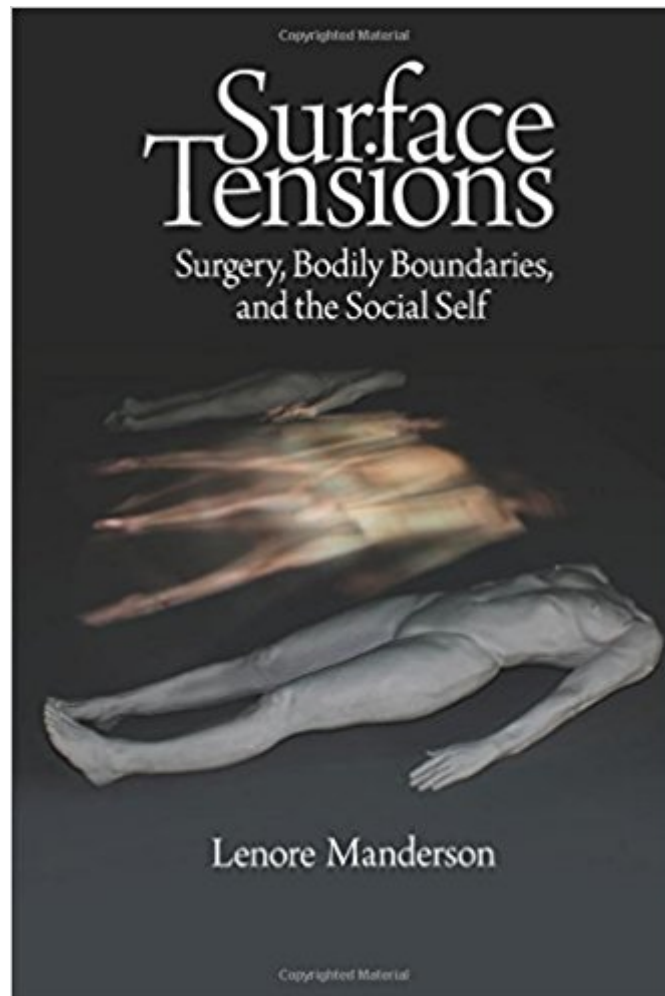




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Surface Tensions: Surgery, Bodily Boundaries, And The Social Self



Synopsis

Surface Tensions is an expansive, yet intimate study of how people remake themselves after catastrophic bodily change—the loss of limbs, the loss of function, the loss or replacement of organs. Against a sweeping cultural backdrop of art, popular culture, and the history of science and medicine, Manderson uses narrative epistemology based on in-depth interviews with over 300 individuals to show how they re-establish the coherence of their bodies, identities, and biographies. In addition to offering important new insights into the care, rehabilitation, and rehabilitation of post-trauma patients, Manderson's work challenges conventional ideas about the nature of embodiment and is an important contribution to medical anthropology, disability studies, and cultural studies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Lenore Manderson's informants have so much to tell her. The author is not out to soften the often painful directness of their stories, but foregrounds what it is that hurts. In the process, Surface Tensions does not simply describe the world, but also changes it. It interferes in our collective body image. It alters our shared insights in what human bodies are, do and need." — Annemarie Mol, Professor of Anthropology of the Body, University of Amsterdam — Surface Tensions offers a glimpse into the world of post-operative bodies, exploring both the harrowing challenges of bodies disfigured by life-saving surgeries and technologies, and the heartening sense of perseverance among those who must learn to live in new ways with their missing parts and/or prostheses. By

focusing on the tensions that lie on the modified body's surface--at once cultural, relational and intuitive--Manderson has masterfully rejuvenated an anthropology of the body and enlivened the field of disability studies. This is a stunning ethnography and cultural study of subjectivity in the lives of those who deal with amputation, stoma, mastectomy, and transplant, and a refreshing treatise on how medicine changes what it means to be human." - Prof. Vincanne Adams, Anthropology, History, and Social Medicine, UCSF School of Medicine

"This book richly imagines the cultural meaning, possibilities, creativity, and losses involved in the increasingly cyborgian experiences now altering the surface of many lives in rich nations. Lenore Manderson helps us to imagine what comes next by first making palpable what actually existing altered bodies and their avant-garde artistic and filmic representations portend. We will all benefit from her insights." - Rayna Rapp, New York University

"Anthropologist Manderson has produced a rich book examining how people manage transformed identities after surgery. Based on in-depth interviews, the book also considers representations in popular culture and film and artistic works from sculpture to performance art that challenge bodily boundaries and identity. There are chapters on managing stoma and ostomy appliances, living with transplants and long-term dialysis, postmastectomy identity and sexuality, and life after amputations. The empirically rich book explores in depth ideas about cyborgs and subjectivity, the issue of surfaces and prostheses, and the boundaries of the self. Somewhat disconnected from key issues in disability studies, this is nonetheless an important text for medical anthropology, gender studies, and related studies of embodiment in contemporary society.

Summing Up: Recommended. Graduate students, faculty." - J. L. Croissant, University of Arizona, CHOICE

Lenore Manderson is an inaugural Australian Research Council Federation Fellow and Professor of Medical Anthropology in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, and the Faculty of Arts, at Monash University, in Melbourne, Australia. As a medical anthropologist, public health scholar and social historian of medicine, she has been active in education and research on inequality, social exclusion and marginality, infectious and chronic disease, gender and sexuality, in Australia, Southeast and East Asia, and Africa. She has published over 500 works, including the co-edited volumes *Global Health Policy, Local Realities* (2000), *Social Capital and Social Justice* (2009), and *Chronic Conditions, Fluid States* (2010). She collaborated in and is the subject of the film, *Nerve* (USA, 2007). She is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and the World Academy of Art and Science, and is Editor of the international journal *Medical Anthropology*.

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