



# T ATTOO ABOO

A Reader

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Alexandra Skedzuhn-Safir / Nicole Franceschini

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A Reader

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# Introduction

Alexandra Skedzuhn-Safir  
Nicole Franceschini

Throughout the world, tattoos have historically been expressions of the socio-cultural identity of individuals or communities: tattoos can be elements of initiation, marriage rites and other rituals or traditions. Yet in other parts of the world, tattooing practices have been ostracised due to their associations with crime and immorality. The historic late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries practice of tattooing is most commonly associated in Western Europe with harbor cities, such as Hamburg or Marseille. However, metropolises such as London featured a lively tattooing scene.

To research the practice of and places associated with tattooing, a study project was designed to address tattooing in terms of its cultural heritage, both intangible and tangible. In the winter semester 2018/2019, this study project was offered by the Chairs of Architectural Conservation and of Cultural Management. Twelve international students from the study programmes World Heritage Studies and Architecture participated in this study project, which was held at Brandenburg University of Technology (Cottbus, Germany) and in London.

During a one-week excursion in January 2019, students visited two sites at Westminster that were particularly prominent for tattooing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Where the former exuberant Turkish Hammam on Jermyn Street in the West End once stood, today there is only a large, open space surrounded by other historic buildings. Also in Westminster at the site where once an imposing Royal Aquarium had occupied a large area close to Westminster Abbey. After it was demolished, the Methodist Central Hall was erected in its place. Its archivist Paul Moyihan kindly provided students with information and images of the former Royal Aquarium.

Other destinations visited during the excursion were the Maritime Museum in Greenwich, where curator Kristian Martin described the exhibition *Skin Deep* held in 2002 on the subject of tattoos, and the significance the participation of a community of people who are themselves tattooed or work as tattooists/tattoo artists. Curator Sophie Richards gave us an insight into her exhibition *Pacific Encounters*. It shows traditional tattooing instruments, along with the historical practice of tattooing in the Pacific, its influence on the Western world, and the transfer of knowledge.

During our visit at Oxford, curator Nicholas Crowe at the Pitt Rivers Museum showed us the archived, historic tattoo templates of Japanese imagery, which inspired tattooists in the West, and discussed the challenges of preserving the collection. Gemma Angel—lecturer at the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography in Oxford—gave us an overview of the current academic interest of historic tattoo practices and the symbolism of 19<sup>th</sup> century tattoo patterns employed in Western Europe. Later Matt Lodder, art historian and senior lecturer in Art History and Theory from the University of Essex, also met with the students to discuss Western tattoo practice and image content from an art history perspective.

Some museum exhibits and collections on tattooing feature historic tattoos on preserved human skin. Due to the ongoing debate on how museums should handle the repatriation of human remains, and what conditions must be fulfilled in order to do so, the (historical) remains of human skin are a particularly problematic issue. Tattooing as a taboo, therefore, not only concerns the practice and the people associated with it, but also regards the collection and display of tattooed skin as a debatable practice that, regardless, requires framing in a sensitive, respectful manner in line with individual human rights.

As a hands-on project, students examined the possibilities of assessing the meaning of past and present sites of tattoo parlours by researching primary sources in archives, but also through conducting interviews with different stakeholders on contemporary tattooing practices.

This reader presents a collection of their essays on this topic with a particular focus the tangible and intangible aspects of tattooing, and the spatial history of tattooing based on two distinct areas in London as a case study. In recent years, academics have initiated reframing tattoos as part of the intangible cultural heritage discourse within research, conferences, exhibitions and publications dedicated to this field, covering tattoo practices in historic and contemporary contexts. The 2003 UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* defines intangible cultural heritage in Article 2 as:



*'...practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity [...].'*<sup>1</sup>

The interface between the intangible and tangible components of tattooing as cultural heritage may be detected at the sites where tattooing is or has been carried out. Also, places where people meet—including those who identify themselves as individuals or a cultural group through their tattoos—form part of this particular storyscape, as well as places where tattooing tools and materials are developed and produced. Examining the connections between tangible and intangible cultural heritage, with the different places, practices and stakeholders is a significant gap in heritage research. This study project, therefore, aims at providing a preliminary examination of this gap.

To determine the culture heritage values of tattoo parlours, there are various models to illustrate the significance of space, and methods to analyse and assess the cultural significance of sites and buildings associated with tattooing. It is possible to examine these places through archived documents, historic photographs, or basically by investigating the buildings themselves, making the building a primary source. To understand the 'workings' of historic urban sites, an approach called Spatial History has gained a revival. By mapping different types of buildings or places, determined by their social, political or economic function, the historic urban landscape can be visualised. Therefore, relationships and dependencies of sites and the activities that took place there can be (better) understood, and perhaps even discovered.

In particular, students examined the historic urban landscape for the period between the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century of the area surrounding Jermyn Street in the West End, as well as the quarter around the former Aquarium in

Westminster. Their research was primarily based on the archival research conducted at the National Archives in London. Here, they analysed the entries of London directories for these two quarters, so that the students could produce two distinct maps to visualise the historic context of the tattooing practices and five specific business categories: retail, leisure, manufacture, eateries and services.

Students produced maps for this project based on information from the historic maps by the Ordnance Survey Maps. To assess whether development occurred within one determined period and if the observed phenomenon of one particular year remained somewhat stable, the students mapped the two areas for the years 1890 and 1903. For this period, a sufficient amount of data has survived to compile meaningful maps. These two distinct years are grounded in two facts. For the year 1890, the location of the different businesses could be well established due to a second set of maps that were consulted: The Goad 'Insurance Plan of West London', whose last version had been published in 1889. The end of tattooing at the Aquarium was in 1903, when it was demolished.

The students' papers are divided into distinctive themes connected to the practice of tattooing. Section one deals with tattoos as a form of heritage. Specifically, section one examines tattooing as an intangible practice and its implications in safeguarding (Maas), the role of tattoos in terms of shaping and forming identity (Bell), and research challenges presented by tattooing traditions from the perspective of an archaeologist (Anderson). The second section is dedicated to tattooing as an art form. This encompasses the production of tattoos through the development of respective tools (Winter), specific designs as an expression of Punk culture (Wu), the work of a tattooist and his influence in globalising traditional Japanese tattoo patterns (Metzner), and the problems of exhibiting tattoos as a practice and art form (Alcaina Gallardo). The third section investigates the possibilities of mapping as a methodological approach to visualising, assessing and presenting relationships between tangible and intangible heritage (Eppler), to the tattooing practice and its connection to the social fabric in London at the turn of the penultimate century (Meister). The third section concludes with students' thematic

mapping on tattooing practices and the historic urban landscape, especially for two quarters surrounding the Royal Aquarium and the Turkish Hammam in Jermyn Street between 1890 and 1903 (Alcaina Gallardo et. al.). This reader, overall, gives us a small insight into the links between two seemingly unconnected but nevertheless interdependent parts of cultural heritage: the material and immaterial.

Using the two examples of historical places in Westminster where tattoos were made, which—contrary to what we might think—were rather offered for the upper social classes, the method of Spatial History can be used to show in which economic and social environments this practice took place.

Future research could further provide detailed and differentiated statements about tattooing practices in London at other locations and time layers—including other tattooists and tattooed people—in order to determine the locations where the actual practices are located.

We wish to thank all who have helped bring this reader together: Katie Williams and Nicole Vasconi for their copyediting, Lénika Muñoz for the typesetting, layout and design, and Emily for permitting us to use a photograph of her tattoos for the cover of the reader.

1 UNESCO (n.d.) Intangible Cultural Heritage, Convention text, available online at <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention> (accessed 22 May 2020).





Heritage



# Safeguarding and Intangibility of British Tattooing Practices

Kelsey Maas

## BRIEF HISTORY OF TATTOOING IN THE UK AND DEFINING INTANGIBLE

Tattooing practices have long been a part of the United Kingdom. Their histories within the British Isles have spanned through the Celts and Romans to the era of colonising the Americas and Oceania. This practice was adapted into the maritime culture that interwove with the English colonies in what was perceived to be exotic and far away lands. From these exposures, Europeans returned with stories of the Indigenous communities they encountered and their own 'captive' stories and bore tattoos to lend them legitimacy. From here they were incorporated into exhibitions and shows of tattooed men and women. Outside of the sideshows, tattooing became an established business practice in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a British person could get a tattoo at a brick and mortar tattoo parlour instead of having to know the right people or communities in order to gain access. In 1894, Sutherland Macdonald became the first listed 'tattooist' in London's Post Office Directory, making him the city's first official professional in the field, and he was rumoured to have tattooed British royalty in addition to his aristocratic clientele.<sup>1</sup> While it became a more established practice, it also became subject to critique and prohibition. From the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, tattooing began to be associated with the criminal and taboo. It was often associated with those living on the margins of society. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was often used as a form of resistance and as a clear marker of being part of a counter culture movement or alternative community. It has only been in the last decade that tattooing has become normalised and those with tattoos are not necessarily considered to be actively resisting a norm. Today, it has lost much of its previous taboo nature, but is still underappreciated or misunderstood from those outside of the tattooed community.

The rich history of tattooing in Britain has changed and adapted with the social and cultural influences that have made contact with the country. It has seen times of high popularity, but also has been perceived as extremely taboo. Luckily, it has adapted through the restrictive times and still exists today, but it still struggles to be accepted within the mainstream and therefore risks not being protected as a cultural practice. While the custom

will likely always continue within the different tattooing communities within Britain, it risks being misunderstood, misrepresented and unprotected in formal institutions such as cultural organisations and bodies — i.e. museums, institutes and formal heritage societies. The aim of this paper is to look at how the intangible practice of tattooing can be safeguarded within institutionalised mechanisms within the United Kingdom. However, before understanding how tattooing can be safeguarded within the United Kingdom, the concept of intangible heritage must first be understood.

In 2003, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (ICH Convention).<sup>2</sup> This document will be a guiding framework for the content of this analysis as it is the most robust and internationally recognised mechanism for safeguarding and discussing intangible heritage. Through the ICH Convention,<sup>3</sup> intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is defined as:

*'the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.'*<sup>4</sup>

The ICH Convention is framed around four main goals: safeguarding, ensuring respect, raising awareness and providing international cooperation and assistance.<sup>5</sup> These goals ideally would align with what the UK should strive for in the safeguarding of tattooing practices. The UK is a State Party to the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, which in theory could work in conjunction with the ICH Convention, but they are not a State Party to the ICH Convention.

Safeguarding is a type of protection, but it stresses the importance of being dynamic and evolving along with the intangible cultural practice. The traditional notions of protection conjure images of a stationary place or items to be guarded. This perception is grounded in an idea of permanence. Safeguarding can never be fixed. Through the ICH Convention, safeguarding is defined as:

*'Measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage.'*<sup>6</sup>

While certain traditional elements of conservation exist within this definition, it also moves beyond them to ensure the ICH is appreciated and transmitted to future generations.

The approach to look at safeguarding through authorised and institutionalised measures is not an attempt to remove the methods of protection tattooed communities have long been employing, but to add additional safeguards in a fast moving and globalised world. While tattooing has lost much of its negative connotations at present, cultural viewpoints may shift and recognising the practice through official mechanisms would help ensure the protection of the practice in the future. Also, by being seen through authorised institutions, tattooing can be given a platform it previously did not have access to, which enables it to not only be safeguarded, but also celebrated as a cultural practice and important piece of British heritage.

A critically important aspect of the ICH Convention is the involvement of the communities who participate in this heritage. To be nominated, the convention calls for 'their free, prior and informed consent' as a key element for the nomination to be considered.<sup>7</sup> This creates a cross-collaborative approach to safeguarding. It attempts to avoid a purely authorised take on the protection and management of the ICH by instead forming a collaboration with those who are truly the experts who can contribute meaningful ways to continue and protect

this heritage for the future while getting the support of recognised bodies who typically protect and manage heritage.

The ICH Convention on paper sounds promising, and while it is a step forward for the safeguarding of intangible heritage, it requires buy-in from the State Parties to be fully actualised. There are organisations within the United Kingdom (ICOMOS UK, Museum Galleries Scotland and Edinburgh Napier University's Centre for Cultural and Creative Industries) who push for the country to become a State Party, but there is push back from the state. The convention requires State Parties commit to the necessary processes to show they are ensuring safeguarding measures both from legislative standpoints as well as collaborating with communities, groups and relevant NGOs.<sup>8</sup> The ICH Convention actively promotes the equality of all heritage, which conflicts with the English dominance of monumental and physical heritage.

Ten years after its ratification, the ICH Convention has influenced over a dozen State Parties to create new or add to existing legislation to safeguard their ICH.<sup>9</sup> This is promising and shows it is possible to adjust current legislation to incorporate intangible heritage or even create new legislation. Blake noted that much of the legislation and institutional development surrounding ICH for State Parties of the ICH Convention happened at the regional level.<sup>10</sup> This can enable different communities to highlight the distinctness of their region's tattooing culture, which may differ due to the type of trade or migration to and from the area.

The ICH Convention attempts to place importance on human rights and how they relate to ICH, which is an important step forward in recognising communities and groups that may see their rights infringed upon.<sup>11</sup> For tattooed communities, the ICH convention can offer recognition of their culture, ensure safeguarding of the practice and protect their cultural rights in the future.

## UNDERSTANDING THE UNITED KINGDOM

Within the United Kingdom, the four countries of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have

their own heritage organisations, as well as certain areas of autonomy for legislative powers outside of the UK parliament that can influence heritage policies and organisations for their different regions. In England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland there are *English Heritage*, *Historic Environment Scotland*, *Cadw* and the *Northern Ireland Environmental Agency* respectively. These agencies differ on how they manage and approach heritage based on cultural and governmental influences of their nation. Scotland, for example, already has resources in place for safeguarding intangible heritage and are trying to foster greater recognition of the concept of intangibility within heritage, whereas, England's viewpoint on heritage is based in monumentality and tangibility which may prove difficult to overcome when attempting to implement intangible heritage policies or convincing English communities that they have intangible culture and it should be appreciated and protected at the same level as their physical heritage.

From the Western discourse of heritage, heritage has conventionally been viewed as tangible, built and monumental.<sup>12</sup> Smith has critiqued this through what she terms as the *Authorised Heritage Discourse* (AHD), which serves heritage experts who act as the gatekeepers in determining what is considered heritage and validates Western knowledge systems that influence heritage practices.<sup>13</sup> Institutions like UNESCO and its World Heritage List are founded within the influences of AHD and have resulted in the dominance of Western thinking in how global heritage is recognised and protected. For example, the current structure of the World Heritage List makes it quite difficult to nominate intangible elements of a site because it is difficult to prove authenticity, which in turn makes it harder to safeguard intangible values.<sup>14</sup> It is only in the recent past that UNESCO has tried to counter this by providing mechanisms to honour and safeguard heritage that challenges AHD values, such as the ICH Convention,<sup>15</sup> the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.

Smith and Waterson argue that the dominant heritage discourse in England is based on tangibility and in order to be genuine English heritage, it must hold elements of physical permanence that symbolise English cultural values and can be conserved for future generations.<sup>16</sup>

This has created an English discomfort with the concept of intangibility, as they fail to recognise it as a legitimate form of cultural heritage, which impacts how heritage is discussed, used and viewed within the UK.<sup>17</sup> This is seen in UK legislation, which predominantly favours built heritage, such as the *Town and Country Planning Act* (1947), the *National Heritage Act* (1983) and the *Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act* (1979).<sup>18</sup>

Conservation within the UK is strongly influenced by John Ruskin and tied to the idea of authenticity through the originality of the structure and aesthetic value.<sup>19</sup> This attitude conflicts with the nature of intangible heritage, which is ever changing to adapt to the needs and culture of the time. For many English people, they cannot understand how a cultural practice can be considered heritage and thereby authentic if it has changed from its original form. Or how a practice can be considered heritage if it does not measure to the levels of monumentality so often promoted in English heritage, such as castles, cathedrals and megaliths.

From interviews performed with heritage professionals throughout the field, Smith and Waterton overwhelmingly found that the interviewees either denied the existence of intangible heritage within England or stressed how those within England simply cannot comprehend English heritage within the notion of intangible heritage.<sup>20</sup> This attitude has clearly influenced current practices within England. If one searches on *English Heritage's* website for the term 'intangible', or, for the context of this paper, 'tattoo', it comes back with zero results. The same results return on the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO's website. To contrast, in Scotland they have the ICH Scotland Wiki, which was developed by Edinburgh Napier University in 2008 and is now managed by Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) with the sole purpose of giving general education on Scottish ICH and providing a dynamic platform to inventory and reference this heritage.<sup>21</sup>

It is uncertain if the UK will ratify the ICH Convention in the near future. Hill et al. argues the UK may be avoiding ratifying the convention in order to avoid having to actively reevaluate how they interact with minority groups in the country.<sup>22</sup> From the lens of AHD, the ICH Convention provides official mechanisms to challenge



Western norms, which continue to misunderstand and resist the concept of intangibility. However, official groups within the UK, such as UK ICOMOS and Arts Council England, recognise the importance of the ICH Convention's work and may help in nudging the nation forward in becoming a State Party.

To be listed as a World Heritage site, the site must demonstrate that it meets at least one of ten criteria set by the World Heritage Centre, which focus on cultural and natural values, in addition to having Outstanding Universal Value. Currently, six of the 31 UK World Heritage sites are inscribed with criterion (vi), with three being in England. This criterion focuses on a direct link between the site and associated events or traditions,<sup>23</sup> or in short, the site has intangible elements. This is promising as it shows that within the framework of a tangible site, intangible elements can be appreciated. What is needed moving forward is creativity to inspire new ways of thinking when it comes to educating and protecting ICH within the UK.

## SAFEGUARDING TATTOOING PRACTICES

The safeguarding of tattooing practices already exists outside of mainstream heritage mechanisms and has been fostered by the communities who practice tattooing and/or have tattoos. While some of the recent measures fall within institutionalised cultural spaces, there is no systematic safeguarding of tattooing that covers the whole of the United Kingdom. Going back to the ICH Convention's definition of safeguarding, the following examples showcase partial elements of safeguarding, but lack overly comprehensive and dynamic ways of safeguarding the practice. The majority are directly linked to tattooing, however, recent developments within ICOMOS UK are worth noting even though they currently have not addressed the topics of tattooing.

### HISTORIC SAFEGUARDING MECHANISMS

#### Drawings and Writings

One of the earliest forms of safeguarding comes in the form of documentation through engravings and

drawings. As the British Empire expanded throughout the globe, explorers returned with writings and drawings from these faraway lands. It was one of the few ways to capture the imagery of unknown lands and peoples for an unacquainted audience. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the artist John White created watercolour paintings of Indigenous Americans and his images were adapted for the book *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia (1590)*.<sup>24</sup> These images displayed people who often had markings on their arms, legs, face and chest and were some of the first depictions of tattooed people from North America. Captain James Cook's journey on the *Endeavour* provided England with the first glimpse of tattooing in the Pacific. One of the illustrators on board, Sydney Parkinson, captured the facial tattoos of the Maori in his drawings<sup>25</sup> and described them in great detail in his personal journal.<sup>26</sup>

Historic drawings and writings provide a window into the time of their creation; however, they are also painted with bias and often were altered when reproduced. It certainly gives insights into who was observing, but should be viewed sceptically when analysing who was being perceived. While they can be problematic, at times they offer some of the little evidence available of the historic nature of tattooing.

#### Receptions and Performances

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, travelling shows of tattooed men and women were once a popular pastime. In Victorian London, one could find tattooed women, often the wife or partner of the tattooist, heavily covered with designs, and they were quite the popular spectacle to see.<sup>27</sup> Not only did this showcase the tattooist's designs and artistic abilities, but it created a space of awe and amazement for tattooed people. It was a place to be entertained and enjoy the art of tattoo. Other events could venture on the intimate side, where the performer wore a costume that concealed areas of the body that were historically deemed sensitive while displaying the tattooed spaces in a tasteful manner for the time. In 1882, *The New York Times* published a review of Irene Woodward's reception in New York City's Sinclair House describing her outfit, background and tattoos.<sup>28</sup>

These receptions and performances acted as a way to promote the artistry of tattooing and the communities who either had or made them. It was a way for those outside of this community to see tattoos displayed fully, but as with drawings and writings, it is not a straightforward promotion of the practice. Shows were commercial, so while they helped provide income to tattooists and the tattooed community, it also meant they had to make the shows as appealing as possible. Often the tattooed person had fantastical background stories of being captured by Indigenous tribes, who they were forced to live amongst and who allegedly tattooed them against their will. In all reality, many had not even been to the areas where they were supposedly held captive. Although the authenticity of the performer's background should be examined critically, these events promoted a community who typically lived within the margins into a space of appreciation.

#### Tattooing Guides

In 1896, D.W. Purdy authored *Tattooing: How to Tattoo, What to Use and How to Use Them*. Purdy was one of the first professional tattooists in London in the 19<sup>th</sup> century who had a wide offering of designs, including the Tower Bridge, battleships or even the House of Parliament.<sup>29</sup> His book was divided into three chapters, which covered the topics of what to use; sketching; and pricking in, sponging.<sup>30</sup> In his preface he declares:

*'This book is printed chiefly to enlighten the public more about the Arts of Tattooing. And it is absurd for a person to try and Tattoo his or herself, as it is impossible and it would be disfiguring the Flesh ... if you turn to the instructions, you will be reading them carefully, and studying them mentally, all that is necessary to become an expert.'*<sup>31</sup>

Other historic guides of a similar nature include George Burchett's *The Art of Tattooing: How to Tattoo by Hand or Electricity* (n.d.) and Louis Morgan's *The Modern Tattooist* (1912). A contemporary guide used by beginner tattooists is entitled *Tattooing A to Z: A Guide to Successful Tattooing* by Huck Spaulding.<sup>32</sup>

This type of document may capture the interest of novices or those interested in tattooing, but tattooists themselves have a history of learning by doing and shadowing those already in the craft. Guides offer the tattooists perspective into their work, but do they actually transmit the knowledge to other tattooists? Guides result in another form of documentation, which provide historical insights into how the practice was approached since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The historic guides were sold in a time where tattoos were perceived as exotic and were not known within the mainstream. It allowed for technical observations of the craft to be shared with both those inside and outside of the tattooed community.

## RECENT SAFEGUARDING INITIATIVES

### Conventions and Clubs

Since the 1950s, conventions and clubs provided spaces for promotion and transmission of tattooing practices. In 1953, the Bristol Tattoo Club was established as an organisation that promoted the tattoo culture beyond the common misconception of the tattooed community being comprised of only criminals or military members.<sup>33</sup> This was an early attempt at promoting tattooing in both an active and positive manner. The founder of the Bristol Tattoo Club, Les Skuse, created a tattoo convention, which connected the best tattooists of the time.<sup>34</sup> These conventions continued to grow in attendance and even influenced American tattoo culture. Today, tattoo conventions can be found throughout the United Kingdom. World Tattoo Events listed 26 UK conventions happening over a period of 12 months.<sup>35</sup> Depending on the convention, an attendee can get tattooed, but also find tattoo parlour suppliers, tattoo art competitions, entertainment, art exhibitions and general shopping vendors. These conventions lean towards the entertainment side of the spectrum and mirror the concept of a music festival, but for the tattoo community instead. They offer a space to celebrate everything associated with tattoo culture. Conventions facilitate the employment of tattoo artists and provide the opportunity to get tattooed, which supports the practice continuing. These are large events and often are publicised in large metropolitan areas, meaning even people outside of the tattoo community are aware of its presence.

Tattoo clubs offer support for their communities. Their nature allows them to cater to the needs specific to their region, which may differ from national or global trends in the tattoo world. If one searches online for tattoo clubs within the UK, the search returns local groups and clubs that have chapters. The diversity of options showcases how people have banded together to foster meaningful tattoo communities across the UK.

Conventions are a space that gather like-minded people and provide desired services for tattoo communities. However, the convention space is highly commercialised and has grown in scale. This runs the risk of becoming overly commercialised, where the focus is on buying products, and less importance is placed on the values surrounding tattooing.

## ICOMOS UK

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee (ICHC) was formed within ICOMOS UK in November 2012 and meets four times in the year with the goal of creating a three-year strategic plan and annual work program.<sup>36</sup> This committee states their mission is:

*'to create an awareness and understanding of the 2003 UNESCO Convention and ICH Guidelines among ICOMOS-UK and its membership, heritage partners engaged directly or indirectly in the understanding and safeguarding and promotion of heritage across the UK.'*<sup>37</sup>

The ICHC has implemented two large projects surrounding ICH outlined in greater detail here:

### 1) Exploring Intangible Cultural Heritage in Museum Contexts Pilot Project:

The project had five aims: explore the museum's idea of ICH, discover ICH within the museum and find ways to engage this with audiences, create spaces of collaboration for ICH communities and museum staff, research ways of using ICH to engage with the greater community, and foster sustainable relationships

between ICH communities and the museums.<sup>38</sup> A large component of the project was to raise awareness about ICH in museum collections with both the museum staff and the surrounding communities.

The project revolved around a workshop for each participating museum. The museum would hire a local artist who would enable communities to curate their ICH and facilitate participation in the workshop. The participating museums explored ICH through singing, poetry, visual arts and oral history. The communities determined where the workshop would be hosted and the means of evaluation for the event with the end goal of disseminating what was learned to other museums, other ICH communities, and the broader culture field. A written report was created outlining the methodology and findings, which was presented at the 2019 ICH conference referenced in the next section.

### 2) Intangible Cultural Heritage Conferences:

ICOMOS UK has hosted two conferences on the topic of ICH since the formation of the ICHC. The first was held in 2014 and entitled *Intangible Cultural Heritage in the UK: promoting and safeguarding our diverse living cultures*, followed by *Passing on Our Cultural Traditions to Future Generations* in 2019.<sup>39</sup> Both events targeted ICH specific to the UK with a range of presenters from throughout the country focusing on a diverse range of ICH topics. The first conference stated:

*'The primary aim of the conference is to raise awareness about the different types of ICH, both rural and urban, as practised by the UK's culturally diverse groups of people.'*<sup>40</sup>

The conference has been a one-day event hosted in London thus far and has prompted attendees to consider the values of ICH, the challenges of safeguarding it, issues of transmission and inclusivity, and overall recognition of ICH.

ICOMOS UK is currently leading the way for a nationwide discussion of ICH within the UK. They are recognised as a prominent heritage organisation and have used their authority to foster conversations and projects that

recognise the importance of UK ICH. They understand that the concept of ICH is currently misunderstood or not even known and this must be addressed in order for progress to be made. Currently their initiatives have been limited to heritage professionals and with museums. While this is a place to start, education must continue to spread awareness to ICH communities and the general public. Recognition outside of the professional heritage field is key to ensure more resources and legislative protections for ICH, as well as for the adoption of the ICH Convention.

## Scottish Initiatives

Scotland has made efforts to recognise the importance of ICH and has been the most active within the UK in how it attempts to safeguard it. In 2008, Museum Galleries Scotland and Edinburgh Napier University's Centre for Cultural and Creative Industries authored a study entitled *Scoping and Mapping Intangible Cultural Heritage in Scotland Final Report*. This report extensively outlined the context of ICH through the ICH Convention and common terminology surrounding it. It specifically analysed ICH within Scotland and included relevant case studies. One of their recommendations from the data they collected was to create a wiki specifically of Scottish ICH.<sup>41</sup>

The concept of wikis allow for open editing rights in an attempt to pool knowledge from a range of authors. With the ICH Scotland Wiki (<http://ichscotland.org/>), only registered users with the site can edit entries and areas outside of the registry are accessible only by site administrators for editing. The wiki is designed in a manner that makes the site simple and intuitive. There is a section that explains the concept of ICH in both English and Scottish Gaelic. One can search for Scottish ICH via category (crafts, festivals, know how, storytelling, etc.), region on an interactive map of all the Scottish local authorities or through a general search.

By being in a wiki format, the site is accessible to wider audiences for both submitting and viewing. It allows for the communities of ICH to add meaningful ICH to the registry without going through an intensive or restrictive process. However, a current flaw with the system is

the lack of moderation. Presently, there are clear spam entries in the registry that have yet to be removed and distract from the legitimate ICH entries. The site is currently managed by Museum Galleries Scotland (MGS).<sup>42</sup> MGS has been an accredited expert NGO advisor to UNESCO and the ICH Convention since 2012 and has facilitated ICH programming for museums and galleries throughout Scotland.<sup>43</sup> In its present form the ICH Scotland Wiki could be improved through better maintenance, but it does provide an accessible tool that England and the rest of the United Kingdom could utilise for identifying, documenting and promoting UK ICH.

## A CASE STUDY: SKIN DEEP AT THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

In several of the recent safeguarding measures listed above (ICOMOS UK and in Scotland), museums played an important role. In 2002, the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich hosted the *Skin Deep* exhibition, which pioneered the history of tattooing within the UK.<sup>44</sup> This was the first time tattooing was given the primary focus for an exhibition.

The exhibition was open for six months and focused on Captain Cook's exposure to Indigenous tattooing practices in the Pacific, how the practice was adapted through maritime culture, and ended with tattooing in contemporary contexts.<sup>45</sup> The exhibition was framed in a narrative that took the visitor from early Pacific encounters with specific case studies from the different cultures and the impacts Christianity had on tattooing practices. It then examined mariners' tattoos through sailors, tattoo technology and the spaces tattooing could be found (tattoo parlours, fairs, navy, etc.). The final section examined tattooing in the present culture through revival movements, how it is seen and used in the Pacific today and the general conceptions of tattooing of the present time.

The exhibition faced challenges, some of which are still factors today. The exhibition was hosted in a small space, which restricted access to the exhibition as well as how much they could fit within the space. Museum staff noted they had little in their collection regarding tattoo culture, the material culture for this topic in general



was sparse, the topic proved to be ethically challenging for the time, and they had to be mindful of being culturally sensitive.<sup>46</sup> Access to tattoo related materials can be especially challenging, as the majority are within private collections and it can be hard for museums to gain access.<sup>47</sup> Even with the challenges, the exhibition proved to be highly successful. It revised the perceptions of the National Maritime Museum, brought in a more diverse and younger audience, received positive guest feedback, provided the museum with large amounts of positive press and enabled the museum to foster new collaborations with the Maori Cultural Group of London and the Pacific Islands Society.<sup>48</sup> In further discussion with Kris Martin, one of the curators, he summarised the show as being surprisingly successful for a topic that was still slightly taboo, and he said the tattoo community was overly positive and commented that it was about time that the practice was given serious attention in a legitimised cultural space.<sup>49</sup>

Overall, the National Maritime Museum chartered new territory for tattoo representation in the museum. They opened the door for it to be not only an acceptable topic to discuss, but showcased how the topic was a fresh subject for museums and could engage new and diverse audiences compared to the traditional museum visitor. Since *Skin Deep's* initial opening, the National Maritime Museum Cornwall opened the *British Tattoo Art Revealed* exhibition, which is currently travelling to multiple locations in the UK.<sup>50</sup> The exhibition placed the art of tattooing and the communities who get them in a culturally recognised space, which affords them the opportunity to correct misconceptions about the practice and highlight the diversity of this ICH practice.

## UTILISING THE MUSEUM — CONCLUSIONS

What does this mean for the future? At present, the UK is not a State Party to the ICH Convention and while some safeguarding mechanisms surrounding ICH have emerged in the recent past, they still have not escalated to a nationally recognised platform. In order for tattooing to be recognised as national cultural heritage within the UK, ICH first must be understood and accepted as

legitimate heritage. The movement towards accepting ICH in the UK has started, but it is a process that requires cultural institutions, heritage organisations and professionals, and the UK people to work together to solidify its legitimacy.

In the meantime, the museum offers a realistic and approachable place to start with the promotion of tattooing as a piece of the UK's ICH and a mechanism for its safeguarding. The museum is a recognised institution that can lend legitimacy to the practice of tattooing as ICH. However, it must overcome the Western notions of monumentality and tangibility that dominate within England and the greater UK. This has started already through tattoo themed exhibitions and tattoo related items in museums' permanent collections. They have established positive results from the visitors that have engaged with them and have prompted the museum to explore new concepts within their institutions. The museum has created a space for tattooing to be legitimised, celebrated, and for aspects of the practice to be safeguarded.

By its nature, ICH is constantly adapting and being recreated by its community to fit their needs as it is transmitted from one generation to the next. Because of this, ICH is challenging to safeguard. It cannot be frozen in time, for this restricts the organic evolution of its nature. Museums can help recognise and institutionalise the practice of tattooing, but care must be taken that the museum does not stifle the practice by immobilising the ICH's flexibility and adaptability. Tattooing is more than fixed pigment on the skin and the efforts to safeguard it within the museum must be creative and innovative. If this is achieved, the tattoo community will be enabled to applaud their tattooing practices and in turn be celebrated by the broader UK community, future generations will be able to learn of its importance to the UK, and overall it will help safeguard the practice for its practicing communities, the UK and the wider world.

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# Identity for Indigenous Tattoo Practices

Jack Bell

## TATTOO AS A FORM OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

Tattoos have significant meaning for a culture's identity. Countless societies from across the world have practiced tattooing over many centuries and these heritage traditions have developed into a powerful form of identity expression. In the past three decades, many traditional indigenous tattoo practices have been revived and now this heritage is playing a critical role in the way these communities express their identity. This comes in the wake of colonisation, during which many indigenous cultures had their tattooing heritages suppressed and destroyed. In the footsteps of colonisation came globalisation and the global identity crisis, whereby cultures began to harness heritage forms such as tattooing in order to reaffirm their identity in the face of heightened intercultural communication. Although this text will discuss many separate traditional tattooing practices, they are not homogenous or uniform. They all come from different cultures, have different designs and are at different stages of revival, but for all these communities, tattooing builds identity not only on a personal scale but on a broader cultural scale as well. This work will select an array of indigenous tattoo traditions to show contrasting situations, explain why revivals occur (or do not) and explore how they evolve to demonstrate the different revival scopes within this phenomenon. By studying these distinct revivals this research aims to question how potent tattooing is as an identity construct, explore its place in identity politics and attempt to place traditional tattooing within the context of the identity crisis.

The body is one of the foremost vehicles for proclaiming a person's identity. People's facial features, the clothes they wear, their jewellery, their health, weight or their attractiveness, when viewing a person's bodily adornments, people judge the book by its cover and make assumptions about that person. Tattoos fit well into this framework and are a potent symbol of one's self. This is because they are quite often highly visible, imbued with individual significance or symbolism and are extremely personalised. A person's identity needs to be continually recreated and reasserted to remain relevant to the time and place.<sup>1</sup> People maintain their identity by

wearing certain clothes, participating in certain cultural practices and maintaining their body in accordance with the identity they wish to project. Considering this, tattoos are beneficial in identity construction because they are permanent and do not require continual reassertion to contribute to identity. The permanency of a tattoo also indicates that it represents a strong belief, idea or identity that the wearer has a firm commitment to. Moreover, the permanent nature of tattoos creates an air of constant cultural identity that can be traced back to one's ancestors and used to connect with their cultural identity. This pairs well with the perception of the past as having been constant, as opposed to the rapidly changing modern world.<sup>2</sup> Tattoos are now becoming more socially acceptable, but for a long time they had been on the fringes of Western society and resigned to sub-cultures. For example, in Western society, there is a long and well-documented perception of tattoos as being associated with criminal activity.<sup>3</sup> The perception of tattoos as being taboo makes them a more powerful expression of identity. For indigenous populations, tattoo practices can be a powerful medium of identity expression during a time of crisis, particularly when their identity and culture are being challenged by the processes of colonisation and globalisation.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, countless indigenous tattooing practices went into decline as colonisation took place. Common traits can be identified among these instances of cultural decline. In many places, such as Marquesas and Papua New Guinea, missionaries actively tried to stop tattooing practices and convert the indigenous peoples to a Western lifestyle.<sup>4</sup> In Tahiti, missionaries went as far as flaying the skin from an indigenous person to remove a new tattoo.<sup>5</sup> Though this is an isolated and extreme case, it demonstrates the vigour with which some missionaries sought to eradicate tattoos. Governments, too, played a role by outlawing tattooing, but also by ending tribal warfare and headhunting. Warfare and headhunting was an important part of tattooing practices for many cultures. The Kalinga of the Philippines earned their tattoos by headhunting but when tribal warfare ended they could no longer receive the tattoos which had proclaimed their prowess as warriors.<sup>6</sup> The Kalinga peoples and the neighbouring Burik people also adopted Western dress styles. The effect was that traditional tattoos were covered by

clothing and began to lose their importance as social markers.<sup>7</sup> It was not just a targeted removal of tattoo practices that contributed to the decline of indigenous tattoos around the globe. Settlers brought diseases that ravaged societies such as the Kayabi people of the Amazon forest, killing their elders and the tattoo masters who guarded the traditional knowledge of tattoo.<sup>8</sup> Factors such as the end of warfare, use of Western clothing or widespread disease had far reaching impacts beyond the decline of tattoo practices. In some cases, such as with the Inuit cultures of the Canadian Arctic, there was a systematic suppression of all traditional practices in a campaign to end their culture.<sup>9</sup> During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, traditional tattoo practices across the world went into decline in the face of colonisation and the resulting globalisation. Many instances cite similar experiences with missionaries, disease, the end of tribal warfare and government bans. Today, the net result is that many of these tattooing practices are only carried out by a handful of dying elders or are already lost.

Although the process of globalisation has been felt acutely by indigenous cultures, it has challenged all cultures to some degree. It is often argued that globalisation and intercultural communication has created a global identity crisis. Having been exposed to so many cultures from across the globe, people are now questioning their own, and increasingly people are identifying with multiple cultures. More and more identity is being disconnected from community and place. For example, in Kuwait there is a small but strong contingent of middle class youth who identify strongly with aspects of Japanese culture and immerse themselves in Japanophilia.<sup>10</sup> Within this framework of a global identity crisis, people's cultural heritage is being used to reaffirm their identity and as a vestige of certainty. The discourse has divided views on whether this has spawned information-based identities, discredited heritage or caused a strengthening of local identity.<sup>11</sup> The revival of traditional indigenous tattoo practices represents a strengthening of local identity. Heritage is intimately connected to a person's identity. Heritage is the constant cultural process by which people negotiate meaning and value from the past to engage with the present.<sup>12</sup> This is a big part of how people distinguish themselves from others and construct their identity. In the face of increased globalisation, intercultural communication and the global identity crisis,

the importance of heritage in identity construction has grown.<sup>13</sup> People are encountering a vast array of different cultures and using their own heritage to reaffirm their identity. Within this framework of a global identity crisis, it can be seen that indigenous tattoos are doubly powerful due to the tattoo's potency in identity construction as a form of body adornment and due to their place in cultural heritage practices. Traditional indigenous tattoo practices are a highly significant example of tattoo and heritage interconnected with identity construction. In indigenous cultures across the world, traditional tattoo practices are being revived as a vehicle for stabilising and reaffirming identity.

### TATTOO AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION ON A GLOBAL SCALE

Mark of the Four Waves Tribe is an excellent example of how traditional tattoo practices are being used within the context of the identity crisis. The community group was founded in 1996 in California but has since grown into a global community. They are diasporic Filipino people from the global community who are looking to connect with their Filipino culture.<sup>14</sup> One of the foremost ways in which they connect with their Filipino culture and strengthen their Filipino identity is through tattoo practices. They strongly believe that their tattoos are unique to each person and need to be earned. To this end, members are educated in Filipino culture and a certain level of cultural knowledge is expected before being tattooed.<sup>15</sup> Members will have in depth discussions with the tattoo artist on topics such as genealogy, astrology or career goals, from which a tattoo is designed to represent the individual. Styles, designs and motifs are chosen that are specific to the person from amongst the various tattoo practices of the Philippines. The group also possesses the skills to tattoo with the traditional tools in a hand tapping or poking style. Tribe members express that their tattoos are not fashion statements but act as a bridge to their family history.

This is an explicit case of Filipinos who are removed from their country using tattoos to connect with their culture from across the globe. Having been removed from their country and living within another culture, they are also removed from their traditions and find it harder

to identify as Filipino. The Mark of the Four Waves Tribe forms a neat example of how traditional indigenous tattoo practices and heritage can be used to reaffirm identity within the global identity crisis. There are many other aspects of Filipino culture that the Mark of the Four Waves Tribe could focus on (and they do to a lesser degree), but tattooing is what the group was founded on and has chosen to express their identity with. This is because tattooing is such a loud medium of identity when trying to express their heritage in a foreign country. It is very important to highlight that this does not function only within the physical tattoo but through the overall process and experience of making the tattoo. The study in Filipino culture, the personal searching involved in developing the tattoo and the traditional tattooing method are all forms of intangible cultural heritage, which cannot be separated from the resulting tattoo. This demonstrates how traditional tattooing practices can be used to reaffirm identity in the global community. But other groups are taking this one step further by harnessing their indigenous identity to reclaim their culture and fight for political rights.

The Inuit traditions of the Canadian Arctic have a rich history of tattooing. In this icy corner of the earth, tattooing traditions extend back around 3000 years.<sup>16</sup> What further distinguishes these traditions is the tattooing techniques they used. Although there is evidence of hand poking being practiced, the majority of tattoo practices involved skin stitching. This technique involves using reindeer sinew as string, dipping it in ink and stitching it through the skin to draw the pigment through, creating the tattoo.<sup>17</sup> The process requires incredible dexterity and patience. Traditionally, the tattooist was a female elder. The practice went into decline in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was primarily due to missionaries systematically deconstructing their culture, suppressing their practices and removing children to state run boarding schools for assimilation into Western culture.<sup>18</sup> The culture and people suffered greatly. Another century later and there were only a handful of elderly women left who bore tattoos. Tattooing had not regularly been practiced for around eighty years.<sup>19</sup> This is changing today, with artists such as Marjorie Tahbone and Dion Kaszas reviving the tradition.

Marjorie Tahbone and Dion Kaszas are extremely articulate about why they tattoo. Both of them see it as a way to reclaim their identity, take pride in their heritage and promote their culture. On his website, Dion Laszas declares,

*'I believe there has been a systematic effort to erase us out of existence.... I paint to counteract this reality'.<sup>20</sup>*

He goes further to write,

*'My work today is an effort to populate the artistic landscape with indigenous faces, bodies, and beings. My goal is to make us as indigenous peoples visible, to counteract the stereotypes, and to paint our realities into artistic existence. As a cultural tattoo practitioner the marks I tattoo on indigenous bodies reveal the wearers indigeneity, they reveal their indigenous identity'.<sup>21</sup>*

This represents indigenous tattoo practice being used in identity politics to gain recognition. There is a strong motivation in this tattoo revival to assert identity and connect to a culture that has been, to a degree, lost. Marjorie Tahbone says,

*'Tattoo makes a powerful statement that we are still here and will continue to live and thrive in this world'.<sup>22</sup>*

By tattooing, these artists remind the world of their ancient traditions and that the people who practice these are still strong within Canada. She says,

*'My goal has always been to strengthen our cultural identity. Because of our recent history of assimilation into Western society, we as Inuit have lost a significant part of ourselves. Now, when someone receives a traditional tattoo, it heals, it reminds them who they are, where they come from and the strength our people have'.<sup>23</sup>*

Like many of the other revivals discussed here, the Alaskan one has a strong element of saving the tradition



before the cultural knowledge is lost. But given the history of their culture's suppression and their current political context within Canada, this tattoo revival is also being used to achieve a larger scope of cultural recognition than that of an individual's identity.

Indigenous tattoo practices have functioned in a similar way for the Maori people of New Zealand. They, too, have suffered during the process of colonisation and are struggling with inequality in New Zealand. The Maori have a unique *moko* tradition, which distinguishes itself from other practices through the chiselling technique of tattooing that results in the skin of the tattoo being raised.<sup>24</sup> It is a combination of tattoo and scarification. Both males and females are tattooed on the face, but the male facial *moko* is particularly spectacular, covering the whole face in intricate design. Today, the *moko* is being revived and, similar to the Inuit revival in Canada, the Maori activists are using the *moko* as a celebration of their Maori identity and of political resistance. One group states that,

*'The resurgence of ta moko among Maori is a direct means of asserting our tino rangatiratanga (absolute sovereignty). It is in defiance of past and present political agendas, laws and regulations that continually deny access to our lands, language, customs and beliefs.'*<sup>25</sup>

It is interesting to note that tattooing as a form of political resistance is not new among indigenous groups. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when missionaries were trying to impose a Western ideology, tattoos were being used in very similar ways as a form of political objection. For example, in Tahiti, there were several tattoo rebellions, where Tahitians tattooed in open defiance of the missionaries, one of which saw forty-six Tahitians prosecuted for getting tattoos.<sup>26</sup> In Marquesas, circa 1900, a man called Moa-etahi had '*Kahau hee atua loava! li kehu, ahi veu; vave te etua!*' tattooed on his arm. In English, this means, 'You are invited to follow the god Jehovah! [His] anger is ash, the flames are wet! Hurry to the Gods!', and was an explicit protest of colonisation and Christian religion.<sup>27</sup> This occurred forty years after tattoos were banned in Marquesas. There are many parallels that can be drawn between these and today's

revivals, which underlines the practice's longstanding significance within these cultures and the importance of tattoos as a medium of political protest and identity.

## TATTOO AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AT A LOCAL SCALE

Indigenous cultures worldwide are finding a new pride in their tattoo practices and are wanting to capture the information carried by their elders, often the last tattooed people in their community, before it is lost. This has resulted in many hurried attempts to gather all possible information in the hopes that the practice will not be forgotten and can be revived. One such case is the Motu tradition in Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea is an incredibly diverse country, filled with many distinct tribes, languages and tattooing traditions. One of these is the Motu tradition, which revolves primarily around long sea voyages, superstitions and the sailor's eldest daughters. The practice went into decline in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and by 2015 there were only a handful of elderly women still tattooed.<sup>28</sup> The decline of this tradition and its impending demise prompted the creation of the documentary *Tep Tok: Reading Between Our Lines* in 2015. This documentary was created to harvest the information held by the remaining tattooed elders on the practice before they passed away.<sup>29</sup> This example is distinguishable from those previously discussed because it is not a revival but rather a scrambled attempt to capture information from which a revival may eventuate. In an attempt to continue the tradition, filmmaker Julia Mage'au Gray started tattooing in the traditional Motu way during the production, but this is far from the fully-fledged revivals happening in cultures such as the Maori.

Another indigenous tattooing practice that is undergoing similar knowledge-gathering methods is that of the Kayabi in South America, who reside in the isolated Xingu Reserve. In South America, it is estimated that less than ten tribes are still tattooing. The Kayabi is one of these, but during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, their practice went into steep decline.<sup>30</sup> One of the major reasons for this was the cessation of tribal warfare. An important aspect of the Kayabi tradition was tattooing the names of warriors that the wearer had killed. The other significant aspect is tattooing one's own name, which has spiritual

connotations. When the practice was dying, one man in particular, Yxyt, took a keen interest in reviving the practice, gathered lots of information and continued the tradition. Yxyt had kept the majority of the knowledge in his head rather than transcribing or recording it, and when he died unexpectedly, much of the information was suddenly lost.<sup>31</sup> His nephew Kurapi has since stepped in to pick up the pieces and has started tattooing. One major component that was lost was the traditional glyphs that were used in the tattoos and their meanings, though Kurapi is endeavouring to rediscover these. Kurapi states that tattooing is 'one of the most important aspects of our culture and identity'.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, he worries that the souls of those youths now not being tattooed with their name could be lost. This, like the Motu tradition, is an example of an indigenous tattooing practice that is currently directed at information gathering. It is important to note how important this phase is and the defining influence that this will have on any future revival. For many cultures, the traditional tattooing knowledge is now at risk of being lost.

For these tribes, the tattooing practices and identity construction are functioning on a smaller scale. Neither the Motu tradition nor the Kayabi tradition is being used to reaffirm identity in a global context or as political resistance. In this respect, they are quite different from the practices of the Mark of the Four Waves tribe, Maori or Inuit, for whom the global identity crisis framework can be applied. Another stark example that illustrates this is the Managalase society in Papua New Guinea. This culture is extremely remote and tattooing has not been practiced here since the 1950s, but the feelings expressed about its loss are much more local in scale. The tattooing practice was tied into marriage and the end of tattooing has led to an increase in children being born out of wedlock and the neglect of parental duties. One particular local believed that a revival could help the community and strengthen bonds with neighbouring villages (the practice involved festivals with other villages).<sup>33</sup> The Motu, Kayabi and Managalase traditions can be excluded from the identity crisis framework because they are isolated and not as exposed to intercultural communication from around the world. They are using their tattooing heritage to reaffirm identity but it is not because they are questioning their own identity in the face of globalisation. They have experienced a

direct loss of culture necessitating the reaffirmation of their identity.

Another interesting facet of this area is cultures who are resistant to their tattooing practices revived. For example, a revival of the Naga tattooing tradition in India is being spearheaded by artist Mo Naga, but he has found that his people are generally reluctant to be tattooed in the traditional style. The tattooing style is perceived as backwards and many people prefer more modern or Western tattooing styles. Mo Naga estimates that only 15% of his clients are from the Naga tribes, while around 75-80% are foreign tourists.<sup>34</sup> In Algeria, there is an ancient practice of tattooing women that has been displaced by the religious practices of Islam, which prohibits tattooing.<sup>35</sup> Although the tattooing practice is no longer continued, it has been incorporated into other art forms such as painting and survives through traditional songs. This raises questions as to whether incorporating tattooing motifs and styles into other areas of the culture is a valid way of continuing the practice. It is certainly practical. The Motu of Papua New Guinea have substituted body paint for tattooing during their sea voyage festivals.<sup>36</sup> Salvador-Amores argues that the survival of traditional Filipino Ibaloy tattoos is now assured after its appropriation into clothing, print and modern tattooing, which has given birth to a renaissance of the art form.<sup>37</sup> Ultimately, part of a tattooing tradition's significance is sacrificed if it is not embedded into a person's body. But for many cultures, such adaptations of tattooing practices could help to involve a wider audience who are not prepared to commit to tattooing while reinforcing the practice in other areas of the culture to ensure its survival.

## DISPLACED TATTOOING TRADITIONS

Thus far, all tattooing revivals discussed have been done within the cultures that originally practiced them. This is not always the case though. Some ancient tattooing practices are being revived by people who have no direct historical or ancestral connection with the culture. This raises interesting questions about identity for traditional tattooing practices and the purpose of saving a tradition. For example, the Pazyrycks were an ancient Scythian nomadic tribe who lived before the

Common Era. The archaeological sites of this ancient culture have produced well-preserved tattooed bodies. This led Danish archaeologist Søren Nancke-Krogh to receive a set of tattoos copied from a Pazyryck chieftain's remains in the 1960s.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, in the 1990s, Canadian Steve Gilbert tattooed Dave Mazierski with another design copied from Pazyryck remains.<sup>39</sup> Neither of these people have a heritage connection with the Pazyrycks. Indeed, you would be hard pressed to find someone who does, since they lived well over a millennium ago. Dave Mazierski admits that prior to being offered the tattoos he had no knowledge of the Pazyryk people.<sup>40</sup> So why are these people reviving the Pazyryck tradition and what are they trying to proclaim about their identity? In many such cases there is a strong element of aesthetic beauty that draws a clientele. There is also an appeal in something so ancient and perhaps the idea that by tattooing these again, you can honour these past people or in some way continue these archaic cultures. This idea of displaced tattooing can also be linked to the tattoo tourists that visit Mo Naga, often collecting different cultural tattoos from across the globe. In the context of the global identity crisis, these Pazyryck tattoos are a powerful statement proclaiming that your identity can reach not only across the globe, such as the Japanophilia in Kuwait, but back across time. But there is a limit to how much we can know about such an ancient practice, and to a degree any Pazyryck revival must have an element of invented tradition. So does this impact the practice's authenticity?

There is no record of Indigenous Australians ever tattooing, yet today a neo-Aboriginal tattoo style has emerged, an invented tradition. The designs and motifs of this tattoo style are taken directly from other Aboriginal art forms.<sup>41</sup> Many key areas of the tattooing practice found in other indigenous tattoos are not present though. There are no clearly defined beliefs or rituals associated with it and the tattooing technique and tools used include just a standard tattoo gun, as opposed to the bones, plants, ash and other materials used in other traditional practices. There is no tradition practiced over generations or history of neo-Aboriginal tattooing since it is a relatively new art form. When there are other Aboriginal art forms such as rock art or body painting that deal with the same motifs and symbolism, why are people choosing tattoos over more historically accurate practices? On one level this yet again speaks

volumes about the power of tattooing as a vehicle of identity, but it also reflects the desire to stamp our own heritage within the global identity crisis and expand the repertoire of cultural expression. Another example of this is the Neo-Nordic style, which is attributed extremely broad definitions such as black and grey tattooing drawing inspiration from northern European countries such as Sweden or Iceland.<sup>42</sup> The designs are often unrelated to historical Nordic designs. In the absence of a specific culture being associated with the practice, Neo-Nordic stands apart from those discussed thus far. It is almost completely an invented tradition and should not be categorised within indigenous tattoo practices but reflects many of the themes interrogated here.

### AUTHENTICITY, ACADEMIA AND WHAT THIS MEANS FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURES

Can Neo-Nordic or Neo-Aboriginal tattoo practices be considered authentic? Although for the Neo-Nordic style there is a strong argument against this, the Neo-Aboriginal practice is much more contentious. Thinking of authenticity as historical accuracy to past practice is oversimplifying the concept. Many of the cultural values and much of the significance associated with other indigenous tattooing practices are still present, having been borrowed from other cultural art forms. Authenticity for all tattooing practices can become problematic because there is an expectation of genealogy and of cultural knowledge, both of which can work to authenticate a tattoo. To guard traditional culture and perhaps unwittingly to authenticate the tattooing practices, the Mark of the Four Waves Tribe have invested heavily in historic Filipino tattoo literature and newcomers require cultural lessons before they are able to be tattooed.<sup>43</sup> Among the Maori, a person's right to a *moko* is judged on their cultural prowess and the tattoo often leads others to have unrealistic expectations of the wearer's cultural knowledge.<sup>44</sup> In addition to cultural knowledge, traditional techniques can be important to authenticity. This is because they require very specific cultural knowledge and skills that are usually only possessed by a tattoo master of the culture, someone who is heavily invested in the tattooing practice as opposed to general tattoo artists. In addition, traditional techniques are often

more painful, which is often seen as a sign of bravery. What really threatens a practice's authenticity is its disassociation from tradition, or when the practice no longer shares the motifs, beliefs or knowledge of the culture. The most obvious example of such a threat is people receiving tattoos who have no appreciation for their cultural significance and history. Within indigenous tattooing the question of who can receive tattoos is extremely contentious. Some artists will openly share tattoos as long as the recipient has an appreciation for the practice and culture. Other artists zealously guard their skills, only tattooing those from within their community. It has often been argued that the authenticity of heritage is being threatened by the commodification of heritage and tourism.<sup>45</sup> AlSayyad argues that worldwide, the belief that tradition is a vestige of authenticity is dying.<sup>46</sup> Within traditional indigenous tattoo practices, this is manifested in tattoo tourists. Tattoo tourists could be described as cultural enthusiasts from outside the indigenous cultures who 'collect' indigenous tattoos. Unless the tourist has the cultural knowledge and actively participates in the culture on a continual basis, the authenticity of their tattoo is less than that of a local who is active in the community. This distinction is not a simple matter of ancestry but of participation and acceptance within the culture. Even when a tourist has an appreciation of the culture and tattooing practice, it will detract from the authenticity of the tradition when they do not strongly identify with the culture. Ultimately, this is the choice of individual indigenous communities and it is essential that they alone dictate the direction of their practice in the future. By exploring this subject of indigenous tattoos, academics can help raise awareness of tattooing practices, ensure their survival and support tattooing artists and communities.

The tattooing practices discussed in the paper can be seen to function in three ways: saving the tradition, the global identity crisis and identity politics. These are not mutually exclusive and each tradition moves amongst these three elements. For all traditions there is a desire to save the heritage demonstrated in the ardent information gathering and the continuation of these tattooing practices today despite so many hardships. Examples such as the Mark of the Four Waves Tribe illustrate how tattooing heritages can be used to reinforce identity within the global identity crisis,

and how they can connect people from across a culture and be an intimate expression of one's self. Finally, tattooing traditions can be seen as tools that indigenous communities can harness to push forward identity issues and political issues, as exemplified by the Inuit and Maori artists. By describing and comparing the tattooing practices contained in this paper, their motivations and connection to identity have been unveiled. The ways in which tourism can threaten a practice's authenticity has been emphasised and the danger of disassociating practice from tradition stressed. These examples have underlined the role of tattoos as a powerful expression of identity because of their visibility, permanency and perception as a constant heritage tradition. But for these effects to occur with any force, the traditional knowledge must be preserved before it is lost. It is overwhelmingly clear that this current time is a crucial one, as countless tattooing traditions are in danger of disappearing. But the tattooing revivals discussed here highlight the powerful influence they can wield for the indigenous communities who carry them out and thus the importance of saving them.

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# Troublesome Tattoos: The Difficulties of Tracing Tattooing Traditions Within the British Isles

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## INTRODUCTION

Tracing the history of tattooing through the United Kingdom is fraught with difficulties. This paper will seek to discuss why it is so hard to trace tattooing practices and will focus primarily on the Scottish and English histories and briefly draw comparisons from other cultures. It will argue that there was a tattooing practice occurring within the British Isles prior to the expedition to the Pacific by Captain Cook and Joseph Banks, which has been heralded as the reason tattooing was brought back into the British Isles.<sup>1</sup> This is despite various accounts over the centuries that tattooing was already known and practised within the United Kingdom prior to this expedition.<sup>2</sup>

Many different cultures all over the world independently undertook tattooing practices for artistic, social or medicinal purposes.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is more likely than not that, provided a culture had the means to create tattoos, they would practice it in some form during their history.<sup>4</sup> However, tracing this is difficult due to the archaeological evidence being fragile. Recent studies, combined with technological advancements, have allowed researchers new insights into the surviving archaeological assemblages that may demonstrate tattooing practices. However, this problem is exacerbated by the fact that most studies concentrate on smaller elements or regions,<sup>5</sup> with areas such as the British Isles being largely overlooked.

To begin, we must assess the various elements that make it so hard to trace this history. This paper will focus on the main sources of archaeological material currently available. Using these aspects, it will be argued that this evidence cannot stand alone, yet when combined, they show a probability that there was some form of tattooing or body art occurring prior to the arrival of the Romans. The main sources of archaeological evidence are human remains, plant remains, tools and use-wear studies. Unfortunately, many of these aspects are fragile and do not survive well within the burial record unless found in very specific conditions. This is partly why it is difficult to trace and why classical authors will be used to compare the physical evidence with the written. However, therein lies the next difficulty, as these sources

also cannot be taken at face value. The classical authors and their descriptions of the ancient inhabitants of the British Isles have created national identities between the Scottish and the English. While this stems from Caesar's account of the ancient Britons,<sup>6</sup> it can be argued that it was further developed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century during one of the key tense social and political situations between the two nations. It was this development that has carried these identities into modern times.

The emergence of new techniques, such as those found during experimental archaeological studies to look at the residue<sup>7</sup> and striations<sup>8</sup> on tattooing tools, still has a long way to go. Yet, the progress made so far allows researchers to develop better insights into tattooing practices worldwide. While these studies cannot always be applied to other regions, they allow researchers to build a greater dataset for future comparisons with archaeological materials. Furthermore, researchers are trying to correct public perceptions of what kinds of tattooing were occurring during this history of the British Isles, although this mainly concentrates on tattoos from pilgrimages.<sup>9</sup> While pilgrim tattoos will not be discussed within this paper, it is still important to note that there is a clear body of evidence that shows there was a tattooing culture already present in the British Isles prior to the post-contact period in the Pacific.

## BOG BODIES

Mummies have been one of the best sources of evidence of tattooing from around the world, with a variety of mummies both deliberately or naturally mummified sporting tattoos from various cultures.<sup>10</sup> Despite some claims that there may have been an attempt to deliberately mummify human remains<sup>11</sup> within the British Isles, currently the best preservation of ancient human remains is from bog bodies.

The environmental conditions of the bogs allow for some organic material, which would normally degrade quickly through the decomposition process, to be preserved due to the waterlogged conditions of the bogs. The main consensus amongst researchers is that many of the bog bodies must have been submerged quickly and deliberately post-mortem.<sup>12</sup> While this is an agreed-upon



stage in the process of creating a bog body, there are still debates about the structure of peat bogs, as they change dramatically over time and there has been little research into the effects of the landscape on bog bodies.<sup>13</sup> It has also been suggested that to produce a better level of preservation, the remains need to be submerged during colder months due to the relationship between temperature and rate of decomposition.<sup>14</sup> This is based on the lack of decomposition<sup>15</sup> of most of the remains that have been found so far. The lack of decay is caused by the anaerobic conditions that allow a range of organic materials to survive in the burial record. However, this can be affected by the type of bog, the specific burial conditions and the organic material. Nevertheless, these bodies and any associated artefacts provide a range of data from which researchers from a variety of fields can gain insights into the past inhabitants of the British Isles.

One of the most famous bog bodies is that of the Lindow Man III. There has been much speculation about whether this Iron Age man had tattoos or not.<sup>16</sup> Based on current archaeological evidence, this is the closest researchers have been to determining whether tattooing was occurring in the British Isles during the Iron Age, but it is still not conclusive. This is due to the traces of copper pigments on the body and speculation about its source. Therefore, this means that it cannot be conclusively stated that the Lindow Man III had tattoos; as although peat bogs preserving soft tissue relatively well,<sup>17</sup> the epidermal layer degrades in the bog's conditions.<sup>18</sup> While tattooing inserts the ink or foreign compounds into the dermal layer,<sup>19</sup> allowing for mummified remains to retain their tattoos, the acidity and nature of bogs still destroy some cellular structures. Thus, there is a clear need to distinguish that while bogs can preserve remains relatively well, there is still a chemical reaction occurring with the bodies once they are submerged.

This was also found with other Lindow Moss bog bodies, such as Lindow Man II, which also underwent analysis<sup>20</sup> with no traces of tattooing or other dyes found.<sup>21</sup> Pyatt et al.<sup>22</sup> argue that this is due to the previous studies only looking for plant-based compounds rather than mineral ones. However, due to the cellular structure having been compromised in the bog's conditions, neither was able to find further evidence of tattooing outside of the traces of elevated copper. These studies have included

Gas Chromatography assessments on the effects of the *Sphagnum Moss*, which is a key component of peat bogs,<sup>23</sup> but they only looked at Lindow Man I and Lindow Man II. The results of this study found that leaching from the *Sphagnum Moss* was present in all samples, in addition to other organic materials being noted in one of the samples of Lindow Man II.<sup>24</sup> While this does not give any hints of tattooing practices, it highlights the fragile nature of bog bodies, in that they may pick up other organic compounds through leaching processes.

Overall, this shows the difficulties researchers have with needing to rely on bog bodies to try and determine tattooing practices, as the state of preservation can vary based on several factors. Furthermore, false perceptions about bog bodies showing evidence of tattooing are exacerbated by previous fictitious studies by Alfred Dieck, who claimed to have found bog bodies within northwest Europe with tattoos.<sup>25</sup> Thus, despite bog bodies being a helpful tool for archaeologists to study past cultures, until new remains are found with clearer evidence, they cannot be solely relied upon to state the likelihood of prehistoric communities practicing tattooing.

## WOAD

The discovery of elevated traces of copper on Lindow Man III raise the question of if there had been tattooing practices within the British Isles, then what was being used? Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>26</sup> it had been claimed that it was an indigo dye derived from woad (*Isatis tinctorial*), which had been used by the ancient communities. This claim had been based off a translation of Caesar's statement that 'all the Britons stain themselves with woad'.<sup>27</sup> While this will be further discussed under the classical authors, it should be noted that it was this translation that began the idea that woad was being used as ink by the Celts<sup>28</sup> and Picts.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, studying woad in relation to the pre-Roman society does lend merit to the idea that tattooing was occurring.

In more recent decades, researchers have largely dismissed the idea that the Celts and Picts had been using woad as a pigment source for tattooing. This was because woad is not a native plant to the British Isles,<sup>30</sup> and until recent decades, scholars argued that it had

been introduced after the arrival of the Romans. This made the discovery of traces of woad in a pre-Roman Iron Age deposit even more remarkable.<sup>31</sup> The Dragonby site allowed researchers to argue that the introduction of woad occurred before the arrival of the Romans. This is significant, as it provides Caesar's account more credence than previously thought. Yet, the evidence that was recovered at Dragonby does not have any direct association with the possibility that woad was used for tattooing,<sup>32</sup> as the remains of the plant found in this pit are not parts that would have been used for dyeing.<sup>33</sup> Van der Veen et al.<sup>34</sup> state that this is due to seeds being found, as when the plant is used for dyeing, the seeds have not yet formed. In other words, the remains found are from a more mature plant, whereas the dye had been created using younger plants.

Another difficulty is that it is unclear how widespread woad was within the British Isles prior to the arrival of Romans, as evidence at one site does not mean that it was widespread. It may have been overlooked at other archaeological sites from the Iron Age if archaeologists were not expecting to find it and thus missed it. This is a distinct possibility, as while archaeobotany is a growing specialisation within the archaeological field, it was previously overlooked as a method for studying the past due to the idea that organic material will not survive in the burial record.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, microfossils of plant remains require laboratory equipment to see. This means macrofossils need to be identified in situ in order for an archaeologist to take more samples to assess for microfossils. This issue has been raised by other researchers in the hunt for woad in the pre-Roman record.<sup>36</sup>

As previously mentioned, organic materials do not typically survive the burial record. The remains from the Dragonby site were able to survive in the waterlogged conditions of the trench.<sup>37</sup> This created a similar condition to bogs, which allowed the remains to be preserved when they would otherwise have degraded. However, as aforementioned, there is no guarantee regarding which organic materials survive, due to their fragile nature and the number of variables that will impact the decomposition process. Furthermore, while Dragonby shows that there were traces of woad, it can still be difficult to distinguish depending on what parts of the

plant have survived. For example, if the pollen survived the burial record, it is unable to be independently identified and distinguished from other members of the same family (*Cruciferae*).<sup>38</sup> This can make it difficult to differentiate between the different plants if only the pollen has survived in the record. While there is clear evidence at the Dragonby site, as it was seeds that were found, it needs to be noted that the survival of organic materials such as pollen can be deceptive.

Despite the problems surrounding archaeobotany and finding traces of woad within the burial record, researchers must revise their understanding of the customs of the ancient Britons when faced with the evidence that some had sources of woad. Due to this, the only conclusion that can be made from the Dragonby site is that woad was present prior to the arrival of the Romans. This in itself is significant considering that woad is native to Eurasia<sup>39</sup> and therefore either communities in the British Isles were trading with the continent or a migration of people had occurred and these people took woad with them. Considering that there are a number of well-known and documented mummies from Eurasia with tattoos,<sup>40</sup> the theory could be raised that tattoo practices had spread from one side of Europe to the other, along with woad. Bearing in mind that woad has properties for anti-bacterial, anti-fever, anti-swelling and can be used to stop bleeding,<sup>41</sup> this would have made it beneficial to take when migrating to new areas to ensure that the community had access to known medicinal plants. Furthermore, as binding agents such as urine are also anti-bacterial, they could be used in conjunction with woad on wounds. Unfortunately, in researching for this paper, no scholarly sources were found on any experimental archaeology that has looked at the possibilities of tattooing with woad. This is an area that should be explored in order to further develop our understanding of the possible use of woad as a tattoo pigment.

## THE PICTS AND SCYTHIANS

There has been much debate about the Picts and where they came from amongst scholars throughout history, with many arguing that they were not Celtic.<sup>42</sup> Instead, many argue that they were a Scythian race.<sup>43</sup> While it

is unclear whether they were descended from Celts, Scythians or another group entirely, this argument is being raised due to the fact that the Scythians have been found to have tattoos and travelled to areas where woad was a native plant.<sup>44</sup> While most of the research into Scythian tattooing practices do not go into detail about what pigments were used, it may be theorised that it contained at least some parts of woad due to the 'bluish black' appearance.<sup>45</sup> This may have been mixed with charcoal or ash, which was also a common pigment for tattooing across the globe.<sup>46</sup> This is further supported as a possibility by the results of testing the skin of one of the mummies from site Pazyrky Ak-Alakha- 3. This study used X-ray-spectral microprobe analysis and found that the pigment composition of the tattoo 'contained mineralised vegetable matter or soot'.<sup>47</sup> However, this is only one form of multidisciplinary study that could be used. Other techniques for analysis, such as those using Gas Chromatography to research ancient tattoos, were unable to be found in the literature. Studies that did include this technique often look at the associated grave goods or other sections of the remains.<sup>48</sup> This technique is commonly used on mummified remains, as it is currently the main tool to study small quantities of lipids that can be preserved in a wide variety of environments.<sup>49</sup> Thus, it would be another area for future research to assess.

Furthermore, as the Scythians practiced deliberate mummification,<sup>50</sup> it may be argued that if the Picts were indeed descendants of the Scythians, then there may have been an attempt to continue to practice deliberate mummification in Scotland.<sup>51</sup> However, unlike in other parts of Western Europe where the Scythians moved to, there is no evidence of tattooing<sup>52</sup> associated with the possible attempted mummification in Scotland. While this may have occurred while the remains were being moved from one burial to another,<sup>53</sup> it is unlikely that associated grave goods would have been ignored if the person was important enough to move. Unfortunately, during the research for this paper no literature was able to be located on any biomolecular study of these individuals to allow for further discussion on this aspect. It is acknowledged that this may be due to the fragile nature of the elements required to perform these tests. Perhaps with further technological developments this will be a possibility in the future.

Overall this link between the Picts and the Scythians

is very weak. However, it needed to be discussed, as this connection has been proposed in previous studies that do not consider the aspects of tattooing. While the migration of people allows for the exchange of goods and ideas, until more tangible evidence can be found to associate these two, it is simply another theory that has a number of coincidences.

## TOOLS AND USE-WEAR

Unfortunately, there has been no record of ancient tattooing tools found in the British Isles. However, this does not mean that they were not there. It has only been in recent decades that archaeologists and researchers have begun to focus on trying to find tools that may have been used for tattooing in existing collections and at new sites.<sup>54</sup> Although this can be difficult because tools may have a variety of uses and the typologies can vary between each culture.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, this research is based on individual cultures<sup>56</sup> that were tattooing prior to European contact, with little work focusing on the British Isles. This means that identifying tattooing tools would be almost impossible if they were being assessed solely with the naked eye. However, through experimental archaeology, growing resources are being developed to allow archaeologists to properly theorise if a tool was used for tattooing.

By undertaking use-wear studies, archaeologists are able to gain an understanding of how a tool needs to be used in order to create micro striations.<sup>57</sup> These striations may also trap different pigments and residues.<sup>58</sup> Regrettably, many scholars argue that there needs to be a large collection of use-wear studies<sup>59</sup> in order for researchers to gain a better understanding of any type of tool. Even once a number of these studies have been undertaken within different parameters, there is still the significant difficulty of trying to find tools that may have been used for tattooing within previously excavated materials or there may be little context recorded about that artefact. For new finds, budgets may not extend to assessing every artefact in the hopes of finding one artefact that may be considered a tattooing tool.

Abovementioned, the idea was raised that if an artefact had no context then it would also hinder the analysis

from trying to discover whether it was a tattoo tool. This is due to the possibility that a tool may have a number of different uses. Therefore, there needs to be evidence such as pigments to show a greater probability that it may have been used for tattooing.<sup>60</sup>

It is not just the tool that creates an incision that needs to be considered as evidence of tattooing. Ways to process the various pigments must also be taken into account, as all associated artefacts can also assist with the identifying of tattooing traditions or, at a minimum, maybe be considered evidence for painting the body. Carr<sup>61</sup> raises the idea that cosmetic grinders, which date to pre-Roman times and have been found in the archaeological record, may indicate a form of woad processing. Having undertaken a number of experiments with different binding agents and quantities, Carr<sup>62</sup> was able to demonstrate that the small cosmetic grinders would be able to produce large amounts of woad. While this reflects back to the contention about what pigments ancient communities in the British Isles were using if they were indeed practicing forms of tattooing, this possible associated paraphernalia needs to be considered in experiments. This should be done with ample evidence and when the evidence is scarce in order to see all aspects of the process.

## CLASSICAL AUTHORS

In the absence of archaeological evidence, classical authors are all that remain to indicate that the Celts and Picts were practicing tattooing. However, this evidence is marred by several different problems, most notably those concerning translations. While this was briefly mentioned earlier, Caesar's account of the ancient Britons, 'all the Britons stain themselves with woad',<sup>63</sup> is one of the most contested sources of evidence. This is due to the translation of *vitrum*, which began to be translated as woad in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>64</sup> While there is no direct translation for *vitrum*, it can also mean 'glass' or 'crystal', which Carr argues that it is therefore closer to a crystalline substance.<sup>65</sup> Ovid also uses another term, *viridesque* or *viridis*,<sup>66</sup> which has also been translated as woad, yet is believed to be another mineralised pigment. While Ovid was not recording a history, the change of words from Caesar is theorised to mean that he heard

about tattooing practices by a different source<sup>67</sup> which is now lost. However, these accounts suggesting a mineral compound was used are still important when combined with the results of high minerals found on Lindow Man III.<sup>68</sup> When analysed together, the Lindow Man III may lend credence to the classical claims that it was a mineral-based compound that was being used for tattooing practices, if they were occurring at all.<sup>69</sup>

If we are looking at the translation of *vitrum* as 'glass', we can also include Pliny's account that a plant called *glastum* was used.<sup>70</sup> This is the first example amongst the classical authors in which it was stated that a plant was used. Despite it being inconclusive if it was woad or another plant used for dying, these traces are highly unlikely to survive the burial record even in conditions such as bogs.<sup>71</sup>

The aforementioned are the only surviving classical accounts that propose what was being used to create the markings on the skin. Propertius,<sup>72</sup> Pomponius Mela,<sup>73</sup> Martial,<sup>74</sup> Tacitus,<sup>75</sup> Solinus,<sup>76</sup> Herodian<sup>77</sup> and Claudian<sup>78</sup> simply state that a practice was occurring, and their accounts vary considerably. This makes it difficult to distinguish and it is further hindered by Caesar's claim that 'All the Britons'<sup>79</sup> participate in this practice. This claim in itself is highly unlikely considering that Caesar's account was from Kent. Therefore, it is difficult to believe a generalisation that was being made about a larger landmass that he had not travelled to. Even though there is possible evidence through the Lindow Moss bog bodies and the Dragonby site that regions further north were undertaking tattooing practices, based on the evidence available so far, Caesar's claim is simply a generalisation about what Rome viewed as a barbaric people.





Figure 1: Habit of a woman Pict/Femme Picte by Gijsbert Van Veen, 1590. Courtesy of The New York Public Library, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Art & Architecture Collection. Public Domain.



Figure 2: A Young Daughter of the Picts by Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, ca. 1580. Courtesy of the Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. Public Domain.

## IMAGE DEPICTIONS

Since the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the images that have been created to represent the ancient inhabitants of the British Isles have deliberately selected what aspects of the classical authors they wish to represent. As time progressed, these depictions became starker in contrast when comparing a Pict to an ancient Briton. These images served as their own form of propaganda, which will be discussed under the idea of tattooing traditions and national identity later in this paper.

The above images show two similar yet different depictions of what a Pict would look like. *Figure 1*<sup>80</sup> is similar to the depictions of indigenous cultures of the Americas by Europeans. This is a move away from earlier depictions, which tried to retain some of the characteristics classical authors had mentioned, such as De Heere's 1573–1575 image of an ancient Briton and Pict.<sup>81</sup> In contrast, *Figure 2*'s<sup>82</sup> artistic representation of having tattooed flowers has been argued to be a joke played by Le Moyne in that many of the plants depicted on her body had only been recently introduced to the British Isles.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, this migration began to just depict the Picts and not the ancient Britons. None of the images found while researching this paper displayed any possible form of tattooing outside of Picts and occasional representation of Druids.

As images, such as *Figure 1*, are based on Europeans' views of the tattooing practices in the Americas, they can be used to argue that difference between these images and those recorded by Joseph Banks and Sydney Parkinson from the Pacific. While all accounts show the Europeanised view of other cultures at the time, depictions such as Van Veen's may have been used to show that the civilisations in the Americas were no different than the ancient Britons and Picts.<sup>84</sup> Unfortunately, this view expresses the idea of the time<sup>85</sup> that the Europeans were the modern-day Romans, and that with their influence, these 'barbaric' people could become civilised, just as the Romans civilised their ancestors. While this is an archaic and long-outdated view, in the context of these images it must be highlighted, as it is a representation of how the Europeans viewed other parts of the world.

## NATIONAL IDENTITY

Through the combined comparison of a range of different aspects of this study, it may be argued that one of the reasons it is difficult to trace tattooing is due to the national identities associated with it. Considering the image depictions and the translation problems, both occurring since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the social climate needs to be assessed when looking at the British Isles.

The above images were created during a time of tense social, political and religious standoffs throughout the British Isles. For Britain, there was a need to create an 'otherness' to devalue Mary Queen of Scots claim to the British throne. Despite being imprisoned during this period, the fact that Mary was a Catholic still garnered her support within the British Isles and on the continent in Catholic countries. Therefore, the growing absence of depictions of ancient Britons with tattoos can be seen as a form of propaganda to show that the British were more civilised than those in Scotland. Speed's<sup>86</sup> written account shows the view that there was a clear view in the need to move away from being associated with the ancient Britons, who were considered uncivilised in part due to their tattoos.

A similar argument could be made by the Protestants. Due to the Catholic Church allowing religious tattoos acquired on pilgrimages,<sup>87</sup> by comparing tattooing with being uncivilised, it gave the Protestants further means to devalue Catholics and the Roman Catholic Church. As tattooing had been allowed by the Catholic Church since the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century through the Papal Legates,<sup>88</sup> this would have allowed Protestants to argue that the church had been supporting archaic practices with this decree.

Furthermore, Boudica<sup>89</sup> was not depicted with any tattoos until recent years.<sup>90</sup> While there is no written record of her having tattoos, when taking Caesar's claim that 'All the Britons'<sup>91</sup> were tattooed, it is significant that older publications and artistic depictions take no liberty in depicting her with tattoos like they do with the Picts. The lack of tattoos here can be used to argue that perhaps the accounts from this period until recently were symbolic of Elizabeth I being similar to Boudica. Therefore, if

Boudica had have been depicted with tattoos, this may have associated her with Mary rather than Elizabeth. By removing the traces of tattoos, Elizabeth I could be seen as another Boudica. This has credence, especially when considering the disdain for women rulers at that time, the women who were fighting to maintain their power and protect their people.

## CONCLUSION

Overall there are a number of reasons as to why it is difficult to trace the history of tattooing within the United Kingdom. Yet, considering that there is ample evidence from around the world<sup>92</sup> that civilisations independent of each other began tattooing, it is highly likely that, like rock art, this was a global phenomenon. However, more accurate data and evidence is certainly required to prove this idea. Unfortunately, as it has been discussed, the environmental conditions needed to preserve this evidence are difficult to find in places such as the British Isles. Even in places such as Egypt, which has better conditions, the likelihood of finding evidence of tattooing is relatively low.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, a number of factors need to be considered when looking for evidence of tattooing in places with poor environmental conditions. These factors, if considered alone, do not provide much evidence to support pre-Roman tattooing practices. However, when considered in conjunction with one another, there is a high probability that some form of tattooing was occurring.

This study has aimed to show why it is important to look at multiple factors when assessing the history of tattoos. Unless a bog body is found with clear, preserved evidence of tattooing, the subject of tattooing in the British Isles will always be considered conjecture due to the nature of the artefacts involved. While studies on use-wear and tools may assist in strengthening the theory that there was tattooing, they cannot be solely relied upon due to the variety of tools and methods which may have been used.

While archaeologists can never truly understand why cultures tattooed themselves, the use of tattooing in society has certainly changed over time. With many theories as to why tattooing occurs in each society, they have most certainly played a role in distinguishing groups and identifying people in various ways. As new research is undertaken and artefacts found, more light may be shed on the practices from the British Isles.

## ENDNOTES

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Art



# The Invention of the Tattoo Machine: The Stepping Stones for the Invention of the Electric Tattoo Machine

Maike Winter

## INTRODUCTION

This paper is included in a study project concerning the tattoo culture in Europe and how it evolved, with a focus on its history in London. During the research phase of the project, a closer look was taken at the areas most connected with the earliest commercial tattoo artists in London. As we looked closer at the businesses and social structures in said areas, it became clear how different that time period was, and that it was loaded with a transformative energy due to the urbanisation and industrialisation processes. My attempt for the following paper is to take a closer look at these transformative processes and their causes. Furthermore, I want to consider the invention of the tattoo machine and the historic background that led to this and many other inventions. To understand the heyday of tattooing, I will take an extensive look at the substantial stepping stones that led to this period. The Industrial Revolution and the connected urbanisation process will be the first topic discussed in order to highlight the social changes that were taking place. I will further write about the British voyages in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, including why they were essential to the Industrial Revolution and their importance for tattoo history. Connected to the British voyages and tattoo history is the debate about the context of both elements. The discussion of whether tattooing was common in Europe since the beginning of time or if it was transferred to Europe after the expeditions of the British Navy remains controversial and has not led to clear, undisputed answers. I will outline the different theories and standpoints to illuminate the discussion and a variety of possible courses tattooing might have taken. In the fifth section, I return to the situation in Britain and the effects of the Industrial Revolution, which sparked an inventive time period. The different inventions that lead to the final patented tattoo machine will be mentioned, as well as why the machine has not undergone major changes since it was invented. I will finally take a look at the effects of the invention of the tattoo machine on the British tattoo culture.

## EARLY INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The history of the Industrial Revolution is written in Britain and starts in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. Coal was used as source of energy since about the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but due to the bad air quality and burning smell it caused, it was not very common.<sup>1</sup> When the population of Britain grew rapidly in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the demand for wood, the most common source of energy, increased. The forests around the cities shrunk and the distances that the wood and timber had to be transported quickly grew longer. The deforestation around the cities became unbearable and was connected with high costs of transportation.<sup>2</sup> Since no end was in sight for the growing of the population, an alternative had to be introduced. In comparison to wood, coal seemed to be an inexhaustible resource at that time, and the cost of transportation was lower since it could be mined closer to the urbanised areas. Furthermore, coal is far more lucrative as a source of energy than wood, as it produces the same amount of energy with a lower level of raw material.<sup>3</sup> '[The English] also went on to spark a coal-fired industrial revolution that would transform the planet'.<sup>4</sup> As coal became a standard fuel source, the shallow mines could not meet the demand any more, and deeper mines brought the challenge of pumping out the ground water.<sup>5</sup> In 1712, the first steam engine developed by James Watt solved this problem and made the first and most important step for the Industrial Revolution.<sup>6</sup> The exchange between scientific and technological ideas was encouraged and censorship was not practised by the government or the church like it was in France at the time.<sup>7</sup>

The society changed from being mainly agriculturally oriented to living in cities by the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup> More citizens were employed and the wages in Britain were exceptionally high due to the success in the global economy. The high wages had positive effects on the society that will be considered in the following paragraph. They also actuated the invention of new technologies to improve the economic situation. In a situation where the source of energy was cheap and the cost of workers was high, the money was more effectively invested in new technologies and fuel than in manpower.<sup>9</sup>

Another factor that boosted the Industrial Revolution was the work of Isaac Newton, which was part of the Scientific Revolution in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> The growing understanding of the natural world led Newton to take major steps for the scientific community, and his discoveries created knowledge and an essential backbone for the inventions created during the Industrial Revolution.<sup>11</sup> The Industrial Revolution was therefore a product of a growing population, a changing society, low costs of energy, high wages and a developing understanding of the world we live in.

## BRITISH VOYAGES

Looking at the early causes of the Industrial Revolution, next to the utilisation of coal and the intellectual climate in Britain, the financial situation played a major role as well. British wealth was built mainly through the exploration and utilisation of parts of the world previously unknown to Western society. 'The commercial and imperial expansion of Britain created a unique structure of wages and prices, and that price structure, in turn, prompted the technological breakthroughs of the eighteenth century'.<sup>12</sup> The slave trade was the biggest factor for the profit of voyages. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the time of Captain James Cook's voyages, the profits per voyage were about 10% higher than the prior investment.<sup>13</sup> 'By the 1760s annual exports from the West Indies alone to Britain were worth over £3 million (equivalent to around £250 million today)'.<sup>14</sup> Not only did the slave trade itself generate profits, but the work on the plantations also brought great profits to British traders, according to Professor David Richardson of the University of East Anglia.<sup>15</sup> The most important goods were sugar from South America and, later, cotton from North America. 'Britain was the most important international consumer of American cotton. By 1860 over 88% of the cotton imported into Britain came from the labour of enslaved Africans in America'.<sup>16</sup> Prosperity was not only achieved through the trade of imported products; jobs in Britain were also created to supply goods to slave traders. Clothing for slaves and the export of manufactured British goods were also sources of growing sales.<sup>17</sup>

Further outcomes of the voyages of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century were the insights gained into new cultures that

were different from those in Europe. While it was not necessarily the motivation of voyagers to learn about different cultures, when confronted with them, there was growing interest in the unknown.<sup>18</sup> 'The attitudes of Europeans when first confronted, in the flesh or by report, with new-found peoples of the Pacific, were dominated by two kinds of question[s]. First: Whence, when, how and why had they come to settle an ocean of such enormous extent? Second: What does their existence imply for us?'<sup>19</sup> It was common that scientists and also artists joined voyages to investigate the local fauna and flora and produce detailed drawings of the observed.<sup>20</sup>

## ONE POSSIBLE ORIGIN

Without a doubt, the procedure of documenting and classifying humans alongside plants and animals is viewed critically today and testifies to condescending behaviour. The debate about Eurocentric historical views is important when reviewing the historiography. One also has to keep in mind when considering the British documentation of Pacific inhabitants and culture that it was made through the lens of the respective author's interpretation and does not depict a complete picture. 'Images coloured by the imagination of one group, class or country, were incongruent with those of another whose experience and interests were different. The peoples of Europe had their own literary ephemera and oral traditions by which information and interpretation was disseminated'.<sup>21</sup> Keeping this in mind, the following paragraph outlines the possible origin of the European tattoo culture and the corresponding debate.

In his paper 'Things of the sea', Lodder argues that tattooing might have been borne out of boredom and the resulting creativity of seafarers.<sup>22</sup> Tangible evidence can be found in engraved metal or wood objects. The paper verifies that for this art, as well as for tattoos, certain tools and materials available for men at sea, such as charcoal, soot, gunpowder or a piece of black cinder, were used as pigments and a needle.<sup>23</sup> Motifs found on tobacco tins or wooden knife handles resemble the description of early documented seamen tattoos, which to Lodder is a relevant observation that supports his position.<sup>24</sup> 'In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of tattooing became

popular among British sailors around the time of Captain James Cook's voyages to Tahiti, and for a time, tattoos were present in the western world mostly on the bodies of seamen returning from the South Pacific'.<sup>25</sup> The tattoos of seamen were the first to appear in the modern age in Europe, and they consisted of seafaring motifs like anchors, ships or mermaids, and names, presumably of loved ones left in the homeland, were also found in several cases.<sup>26</sup> He sees his thesis strengthened by the fact that the motifs seen and documented on inhabitants of the Pacific islands do not have similarities to the motifs used by European seamen.

Anna Friedman also takes a critical view on the origin of tattoos. In her text 'The Cook myth: Common tattoo history debunked', she addresses the thesis that modern Western tattooing was not discovered or revived by Captain Cook's visits to the Pacific in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup> The text states that scientists of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century were familiar with the practice of tattooing, although there was no common name for it. Terms like 'pricked', 'engraved', 'stained' or embroidered' were used.<sup>28</sup> She mainly acknowledges Cook's first voyage for naming the practice, as afterwards words like the English 'tattoo', the French 'tatouage' or the German 'Tätowierung' emerged.<sup>29</sup> She cites a text from 1791 by explorer Charles Pierre Claret de Fleurieu: 'We should be wrong to suppose the *tattooing* is peculiar to nations half-savage; we see it practised by civilised Europeans; from time immemorial, the sailors of the Mediterranean, the Catalans, French, Italians, and Maltese, have known this custom, and the means of drawing on their skin, indelible figures of crucifixes, Madonas [sic]. &c. or of writing on it their own name and that of their mistress'.<sup>30</sup> The statement was published 20 years after Cook and his company returned from their first voyage, and therefore it is questionable if it refers to pre-voyage tattooing, as Friedman interprets it, or rather to the impact of the voyages. According to the text, tattooing had been present in Europe but fluctuated in popularity.<sup>31</sup> Friedman also questions the approach of most historic texts concerning tattooing for not being open to interpretations other than the common point of view. In conclusion, while being critical about the origin of modern tattooing, Friedman credits Cook's voyages for 'marking a pivotal moment in the increasing visibility of tattoos on Europeans'.<sup>32</sup>

Whether Western tattooing was reinvigorated by the voyages of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century or not is a question that cannot be answered with certainty, and it is still widely discussed among tattoo historians.

## THE INVENTIVE TIME

Now that the general background has been discussed, this section will focus on the effects that the early phases of the Industrial Revolution had on the further developments of the industrial age. The Industrial Revolution was a long process that lasted approximately from 1750 to 1850. With the advancement of the Industrial Revolution, a growing trade sector formed and the expanding British Empire allowed for the import and export of new goods, thus creating more wealth for a wider part of the society. The English population and the prosperity of the newly formed British middle class grew, and with it the sales in England increased.<sup>33</sup> Not only did the market for imported products increase, but the interest in goods produced in Britain also grew simultaneously. New products were brought onto the market.<sup>34</sup> For the first time in history, larger segments of the British population spent their money on goods other than those necessary to survive. With the growing market, not only were jobs for labourers created, but the trade sector also grew exponentially. Import and export rates grew, as did the domestic market, providing more and more jobs in trade and in factories.<sup>35</sup>

British businesses had a high incentive to meet the demand of a growing market, and new inventions and technologies helped them to achieve their goals.<sup>36</sup> With the rise of mass production, businesses began to study ways to be more cost efficient. As mentioned before, the biggest factor to address was the high cost of wages. A range of inventions helped in creating a more economic work process. Though machine-aided mass production was first introduced during the Industrial Revolution, it was not a fully automatic process like we can sometimes see today. A large number of labourers were still required to mine the coal, keep the engines running and operate the machines, thus providing a lot of work for British citizens. Since the wages were high and big parts of the population were employed, the workers had the chance to save money and invest it.



Not only were they purchasing products, thus creating the market of the industrial age, they were also investing in the education of their descendants. This resulted in high rates of numeracy and literacy. Naturally, with a more educated population, the effects of innovation and new inventions were reinforced.<sup>37</sup> While inventions of the early Industrial Revolution were often based on trial and error and chance discoveries, the later Industrial Revolution benefited from a growing knowledge and understanding of physical and chemical processes.<sup>38</sup> As mentioned above, the effects of the early industrial age led to a growing middle class that was well educated, and this new generation was driven by the progressive time in which it was born and raised. The upbringing of most of the relevant inventors, such as Watt or Josiah Wedgwood, was similar: they were raised in a non-agricultural economy, they were part of an urban society and most of their parents were not labourers but had backgrounds in trade.<sup>39</sup> 'High wages, town living, a commercial culture, and widespread education constituted a distinctive popular culture that produced inventors'.<sup>40</sup>

After the first phase of industrialisation passed, a culture of inventions evolved, which is the inventive time period I refer to in this paper. The act of inventing was itself institutionalised.<sup>41</sup> In the late Industrial Revolution, businesses in Britain had good experiences with investing in new technology. The transformative process had been ongoing and in many cases successful. This factor provided motivation for creative minds to work out their ideas in detail.<sup>42</sup> The approach to patenting certain ideas or technologies has evolved over a long period of time.<sup>43</sup> In a more globalised and competitive world, the protection of inventions changed and it became more important to distinguish and define what invention was made where. *The Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property* of 1883 is a testament to that change and to the more institutionalised practice of inventing.<sup>44</sup> The prospect of integrating the inventions into production processes in numerous cases reinforced the ambition to invent.<sup>45</sup>

## THE TATTOO MACHINE

According to tattoo historian Carmen Nyssen's research, newspapers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century noted the emergence of tattooing, and reports referred to handheld tools.<sup>46</sup> The work of Edison found a new prospect a few years later in Samuel O'Reilly. Born in 1854 in Connecticut, United States of America, O'Reilly showed interest in delicate craftsmanship as he started a career in a local clock shop.<sup>47</sup> In the early 1880s, he made his first active contact with tattooing and studied the craft.<sup>48</sup> Like Sutherland Macdonald in London, O'Reilly was one of the first tattoo artists that appeared in New York City directories in 1888.<sup>49</sup> In Nyssen's work, it is mentioned that O'Reilly was the tattoo artist of the Chatham Square Museum, but aside from this vague piece of information, it is not easy to comprehend his professional career.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, his name is written on the patent of the first electric tattoo machine, which speaks to the fact that O'Reilly was involved in this stage of progress in tattoo history. The desire was to keep pace with the ongoing and rapid development in technologies. Though the patent was filed in 1891, O'Reilly stated that he had been working on the machine for years prior to patenting it and that he had also tried it on different occasions.<sup>51</sup> The technology of the electric tattoo machine did not vary from its precursors, the electrical pen or the dental pluggers, in its technical function. It still consisted of a rotary-electromagnetic coil driving a needle up and down at high speeds.<sup>52</sup>

An important part of any rotary driven machine is the cam. This is the part that alters the motion, for example, from a rotary motion to a reciprocating motion.<sup>53</sup> In Edison's pen, a three-pointed cam was integrated, which allowed three perforations per revolution.<sup>54</sup> This part was changed in O'Reilly's tattoo machine. He described the outgoing motion of a three-pointed cam to be too gentle and short for piercing and implementing ink into the skin.<sup>55</sup> In the patent of the tattoo machine, the cam is diamond shaped, supposedly enabling better usability. Furthermore, O'Reilly added an ink reservoir to provide an even flow of ink to the needle and a characteristic tube assembly for higher precision.<sup>56</sup>

## EFFECTS OF THE INNOVATION

The previous section explained in detail the invention of the tattoo machine. It also outlined the time and social situation in which the invention emerged. In this last section, the focus is on the time period after the invention of the tattoo machine. Prior to this, tattooing was a delicate handicraft that required a great proficiency of the artist. It also was a slow process, even for experienced artists, as the needle was piercing the skin approximately two or three times per second.<sup>57</sup> It required not only artistic talent, but also skilled craftsmanship and a lot of time to get a tattoo done. These facts give an idea of how much of an innovation the tattoo machine was: it changed and accelerated the process of tattooing. The new method of tattooing was referred to as '*perfectly safe and painless*' by tattoo artist John Williams in early 1890.<sup>58</sup> I would like to go into more detail about the hygienic benefits that the tattoo machine entailed. Of course, there are standards for maintaining a hygienic tattoo machine in the present, but no further research has been carried out in this field, nor could I find further information comparing the safety and health aspects of tattoo machines to the hand poking tattoos of the time.

At first, the change was most evident in the performance of tattooed artists. Some were advertised as the first electrically tattooed artists, bringing attention to the matter. A few artists were even performing before the patent was filed, giving an impression of the upcoming innovation.<sup>59</sup> The tattooed artists had a standing and their tattoos were already seen with greater interest than the average seafarer tattoo before the innovative change, but with the invention of the tattoo machine, they became increasingly trendy and a ubiquitous phenomenon. According to newspaper reports, tattooed performers had become abundant due to electric tattoo machines and the faster and less painful process of tattooing.<sup>60</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This paper concerned the invention of the tattoo machine and the stepping stones that led to the innovation. It gave a comprehensive picture of the background of the innovation in tattooing. The paper explained the importance of the early Industrial Revolution, along with the invention of the steam machine and the use of coal as a newly established source of fuel, and it traced the social structure and the intellectual climate of the time. It then argued that these factors were the important stepping stones for the invention that changed tattooing. The paper further categorised the importance of the British voyages, as they added a supplementary drive to the Industrial Revolution economically and perhaps also culturally, thus making them another stepping stone for the invention of the tattoo machine. The debate accompanying the history of European tattoos and British voyages was discussed, and although this paper cannot provide a definitive solution for this debate, I argued that these voyages were undoubtedly of high importance for European tattoo culture, regardless of the lack of evidence of a direct influence of tattooed inhabitants of the Pacific on tattooed seamen. The paper moreover covered the late Industrial Revolution and the elements of the surrounding environment that enabled the invention of the tattoo machine, which included, first and foremost, the changing social structure due to the Industrial Revolution. In the sixth section, the invention of the tattoo machine was explained in detail, and its predecessors, the electrical pen and the electric dental pluggers, were shown to be the last stepping stone towards the invention. The last part of the paper concerned the effects of the invention of the tattoo machine. It provided an idea of how much of an innovation the machine was for British and European tattoo cultures and made clear that increased access was important in establishing tattoo practices and a rapidly growing and developing tattoo culture in Britain. It is safe to assume that the invention of the tattoo machine was an important step for bringing tattoos from exceptionality to a part of pop-culture.

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# Patterns and Designs: British Punk and Tattoos in 1970–80s

Yiwen Wu

## INTRODUCTION

Many people are not familiar with the term punk. For many people, the term punk can refer both to bands like the Sex Pistols and to fashion designers like Vivienne Westwood. Whether it's punk music or punk fashion, punk culture is more like a spiritual manifestation. Punk is difficult to define, but it has only one core idea: angrily resisting. Scottish singer Shirley Manson once even commented, 'Mozart was a punk, which people seem to forget. He was a naughty, naughty boy'.<sup>1</sup> Mozart's music was so out of place in his time, and this difference made people feel amazed.

Punk originated in the 1970s and emerged between the British and American proletariat. This class movement was also a veritable youth movement. In the mid-1970s, they defined the boundaries between punk culture and mainstream society. This also destined the early punk community to be a minority, a subculture. Their way of life was considered by mainstream society to be young, stubborn, rude and even worthless.<sup>2</sup> They first expressed their self-satisfaction and untamed nature in society and life through music. Later, the youth movement of punk continued to affect clothing, design and even comics.

The word punk was first recorded between 1590 and 1600 as follows: 'The sense development is apparently 'prostitute' > 'catamite' > 'hoodlum'; the adj. 'poor in quality' (1896) is unclearly derived and perhaps a distinct word'.<sup>3</sup> In the Oxford Dictionary, it states, 'late 17th century (in punk (sense 3 of the noun)): perhaps, in some senses, related to archaic punk 'prostitute', also to spunk'.<sup>4</sup> This shows that the word punk is related to the disgraceful and degenerate profession of prostitutes, and is not a positive word. Now the word punk is not only used as the name of this youth movement, but it is also used to represent worthless people or young hooligans.<sup>5</sup> Through the interpretation of this word, we can find that in the public's view, punk is the movement and culture initiated by these vulgar and fallen people.

This era is also the true era of young people. The massive growth of the population had made their employment possibilities a problem. In this period of rapid economic growth, the main problem faced by

young people was not eating, dressing, housing or even employment, but education. A group of young people suddenly appeared in the world, and the world did not have time to instil them with the cognitive skills of adults, and they reached the age of self-awareness of the world. In the eyes of some middle-class children, the affluent life was boring, and they were not as satisfied with this as their parents were. They were not widely recognised by society, but they were eager to show how they were different from their parents. They wanted to express their own ideas in society and resist their fathers.

## PUNK SPIRIT

The more common views of British punks were anti-commercialism, anti-government, anti-authoritarianism and anti-collectivist, and they were in support of personal freedom and DIY ethics.<sup>6</sup> Through these resentful views, it is not difficult to see that these punks found common ground in anxiety, and their anxiety involved various fields of society. They expressed these ideas through related movements. As one of the representatives of British subculture, punk culture is constantly changing or advancing, and the boundaries of this unique culture are difficult to define. We cannot simply define the positivity or negativity of punk. This also gave the punk spirit some universal characteristics in the United Kingdom from the 1970s to 1980s, but there were individual differences or differences between groups. As Hebdige said in his book, 'perhaps there is no single means of explaining the phenomenon that was Punk at its best'.<sup>7</sup> In this chapter, we will focus on why punk culture was needed in the UK at that time.

## BRITAIN HAS NO FUTURE

Although Britain was not the place of origin for punk, it was still the centre of punk music and multicultural collisions. British people expressed anger and thought differently from those in the United States, where punk originated. The prevalence of punk in the UK appeared in the mid-to-late 1970s, a period of desperation in Britain. The inflationary pressures left over from the 1960s had led to a gradual rise in unemployment and industrial conflicts, which together triggered long-term social unrest and

conflict. Inflation soared to 25% in the early 1970s<sup>8</sup> and has remained high since then. The unemployment rate in the UK broke through the one million mark in 1976 and reached 1,635,800 in August 1977,<sup>9</sup> reaching 6.8% of the population.<sup>10</sup> The high unemployment rate peaked in the 1980s, and more and more young people lost their jobs. The large-scale unemployment rate in the UK reached a new peak of 3,407,729 (12%) in 1983.<sup>11</sup> Such a recession indicated that the British economy could not recover for some time.

At the same time, the high unemployment rate of young people in the UK was also one of the reasons for the popularity of punk culture. Between 1982 and 1983, the youth unemployment rate in the UK for those aged 16–17 reached nearly 33%, while the youth unemployment rate for those aged 18–24 reached 20%.<sup>12</sup> This prompted them to go to the streets and to find new ways to make money and spend their time. Sex Pistols guitarist Steve Jones summed up the period, ‘It was cold and miserable, you couldn’t get a job, and everyone was on the dole’.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, the late 1970s and early 1980s was a major period of socio-economic change. During this time, the highly politicised atmosphere was filled with people’s dissatisfaction with the government and this inspired a sense of participation. This atmosphere promoted new ideological movements and a series of related reactions. Andy Beckett<sup>14</sup> believes that the ‘Declinism’<sup>15</sup> in the mid-1970s had become part of the British state of mind. The future of a country that has lost its way is foreseen as a violation of authoritarianism and the collapse of society.<sup>16</sup> As Andrew Marr<sup>17</sup> notes, where ‘political cynicism or unease had been spread in the 50s and 60s by the behaviour of the cliques who ran the country, by the 70s it was driven more by a sense of alienation’.<sup>18</sup> It was from this alienation, particularly amongst working-class youth, that punk emerged.<sup>19</sup>

The popularity of punk from the 1970s to the 1980s in the UK is no accident. The inevitable factor is the result of the inaction of the political parties and the continuous decline of the economy. And these young people who should have become the backbone of the country had become people who were useless to society, which led them to join the youth culture movement. Through the early punk slogan, ‘No Future’,<sup>20</sup> we can intuitively

feel the disappointment of this group in society and the government. They were pessimistic about Britain’s future, but these young people still hoped to take their future into their own hands through the punk movement.<sup>21</sup>

## YOUTH CULTURE IN BRITAIN

Punk is a youth culture, which appears among the youth. For a long time, youth culture has been filled with a sense of deviance because this culture often stands on the opposite side of mainstream culture. This youth culture was broadly defined as the unique mode of life developed by young people and was a way of expressing social and material experiences. Youth culture developed under a constant class struggle. It combined pop music, clothing style and unique language culture to provide young people with a way to resolve their class-status contradictions.

The teddy boy appeared in the UK in the mid-1950s, and the skinhead appeared in the 1960s. By the mid-1970s, punk culture spread from the United States to the United Kingdom and became popular. The similarities and differences between these three youth cultures made them independent but intermingling. The rise of these youth cultures in 1950 and 1980, and their vast influence, made them an indispensable part of British cultural heritage.

### Similarities

The first similarity is their common denominator: these three subcultures were mainly prevalent in the working class. And it was the younger generation of the working class who created these distinctive youth cultures. These youth cultures also provided the working class with the possibility to express themselves through cultural movements, which were ‘a consciousness of class-based politics’.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, each of these three cultures had representative cultural symbols, such as a particular musical style or a specific dressing style. Music and fashion are both mediums that can be widely spread, and they all have specific routines, from specific elements to subtle individual differences. And the communication of

their ideas does not need to be done through language or description. Through songs, we can feel the author’s emotions, and through fashion and the specific symbols, patterns and designs used, we can understand what the designer wants to express.

*‘Youth cultures, such as mods and skinheads, embraced class-based clothing, embellishing or ‘pimping’ them up (jeans, Doc Martens, braces etc.). Hippies embraced the casual work attire of the all-American workforce (Levi jeans) and mixed it with the informal, workaday garments from both east and west. By making the clothing more open, less rigidly hierarchical, more openly democratic and universal, the rhetoric became one of the openness: emancipation through fashion’.*<sup>23</sup>

Specific clothing and hairstyles are also an important way to distinguish between mainstream culture and subculture because their expression is more daily and intuitive. These visualised languages were also part of the social and economic struggle of these young people. And these young people were also smart; they directly took the elements that belonged to the mainstream culture and redefined them so that they had a new meaning.

Compared with teddy boys and skinheads, punks often use leather, rubber and vinyl as materials to make clothes. Moreover, they often tear the clothes and then reconnect them with safety pins or straps. Sometimes they paint on their clothes. Rivets and safety pins are the metal elements of their accessories. This use and combination of different materials always makes people think of violence or sexual violence. This difference was like a conscious version of ‘semiological guerrilla warfare’<sup>24</sup> that used symbols and violence to challenge traditional rules and values. And they made or modified parts of their clothes themselves, which echoed the punk ideology of their DIY ethic. It can also be seen that they opposed the commercialisation of the framework model. They wanted to make something different, from a T-shirt or even a piece of jewellery, in order to reflect their unique sensibilities. Punk clothing was separated from

the class-based, fixed clothing model, and it redefined the working class from the 1970s to the 1980s through new clothing language and new trends.

### Differences

Although punk had similarities with the teddy boy and skinhead movements, it also differed from them because they were in different stages of development within British society. The biggest difference was the perception of different races. The two corresponding views of anti-racism and racism belonged to punks and skinheads, respectively. The attitude towards race is based on the features and number of immigrant groups in the UK.

Regarding immigration, ‘in the 1950s large numbers of West Indians arrived in Britain. Also from the 1950s, many Asians came. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain became a multi-cultural society’.<sup>25</sup> Since the 1950s, a large number of Indians, Pakistanis and especially Caribbean immigrants have flooded into the UK, and these immigrants reached their peak in the early 1960s.<sup>26</sup> Caribbean and West Indian migration to Britain was essentially powered by free market labour forces. However, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, the number of emigrants was slightly higher than the number of immigrants.<sup>27</sup>

A large number of foreign labourers entering the UK would inevitably have an impact on local labour. As a capitalist society, in order to reduce costs, capitalists were willing to hire cheaper foreign labour, and the competitiveness of the local labour force was weakened, eventually leading to their unemployment. Secondly, the large-scale rise of the external population would also cause a shortage of local resources, such as housing, education and so on. The integration of foreign culture and local culture also played an important role in social stability. Skinheads, who appeared in 1960, had accepted the culture of Jamaica, and some of its members were Jamaican immigrants.<sup>28</sup> It has been several years since the earliest Jamaican immigrants entered the UK, which suggests that there is a need for a certain period of time to pass for cultural integration to occur. At that time in the 1960s, the influx of South Asian immigrants led some British skinheads to take violent actions against



them,<sup>29</sup> which was part of the political movement of some skinheads.

While skinheads participated in a racist campaign, punk's attitude toward different races was more moderate. The first reason for this is that in the mid-1970s, the number of immigrants decreased relatively, and the number of emigrants increased. With the high unemployment rate mentioned earlier, more Britons had chosen to emigrate and find new places for development. Secondly, the impact of foreign culture had gradually diminished with the development of time. At this time, the UK had developed into a pluralistic society. This diversity led to greater inclusiveness, and this inclusiveness was reflected in the punk culture. In the era of punk's popularity, there was an organisation in the UK called 'Rock Against Racism (RAR)'.<sup>30</sup>RAR aimed to use music to prevent young people from accepting racism. The musicians in this organisation came from a variety of music genres and various countries, and they also had different skin colours. Art is highly inclusive, and certain styles of music cannot be solely attributed to specific classes or skin colours. The musical style of some punk bands also incorporated the reggae style of black people. And this punk music movement enabled British society to develop harmoniously under the influence of multiculturalism.

### TATTOOS IN THESE THREE YOUTH CULTURES

The design of tattoo patterns was also one of the characteristics of these three cultures. Teddy boys, skinheads and punks all had their own language for tattoo patterns. So what were the similarities and differences in tattoos in these three cultures?

Teddy boys appeared in the late 1950s, when British tattoos were influenced by sailor culture. Teddy boys' tattoos were mainly simple black and white lines. The patterns were dominated by simple characters and animal and plant motifs. In the mid-1970s, there was a huge teddy boy/rock 'n' roll revival in the UK.<sup>31</sup> The original teddy boy culture was influenced by rock music, 'although commercially successful music genres such as progressive rock were vilified by anti-establishment, nonconformist punks, the 1970s teddy-boy scene

weathered the arrival of the Sex Pistols and continued to be popular into the early 1980s'.<sup>32</sup> The tattoo patterns chosen by teddy boys came from their unique fashion culture, from their iconic hairstyle to their style of dress, as well as the style of rock dance that teddy boys loved. Skinhead tattoos also incorporated fashion symbols that were unique to their cultures, such as the patterns of jeans and Martin boots. Additionally, in the late 1970s and 1980s, their tattoos were more based on 'Chicano'<sup>33</sup> tattoos. These tattoo patterns were mostly the symbols of criminals or of gangs.<sup>34</sup> They mostly tattooed on the forehead or hands, and tattoos were dominated by crosses, swallows, teardrops or words and sentences. For example, the teardrop pattern and the swallow pattern represented killing in prison.<sup>35</sup>In Chicano culture, the crude crucifix symbolises that the wearer killed more than ten people,<sup>36</sup> and the skinhead tattoo symbolised that this person was a young criminal.<sup>37</sup>

Punks also had their own cultural symbols that they used for tattoos. Among these symbols, punk's signature hair and clothing styles had been artistically processed and had become iconic symbols in punk tattoos. Unlike the tattoos of the first two youth cultures, punk tattoos were more often depicted through characters. Part of the image of these characters came from real life, while the other part was virtual. In addition, punk music was more closely connected to punk's overall cultural aesthetic, and tattoo designers also used music-related symbols. For example, the band logo tattoo and the band member tattoo were common.

After analysing the tattoos of these three cultures, we can see that they all mostly applied the elements of their own cultures to the design of tattoo patterns. Thus tattoos, which reflected their unique cultural styles, represented the life philosophies that these young people pursued. Unlike skinheads or teddy boys, punk youths did not directly quote or adopt tattoo styles or designs from other cultures. Their tattoo designs were unique to their youth culture. This also echoed the DIY theory that existed in punk ideologies. In the eyes of punks, art did not directly develop from other cultures directly, but was an innovation. They created a style different from other cultures and thus created a style of self. The process of punk tattoo design was also an embodiment of anti-commercialisation. Their tattoo designs didn't have a

fixed pattern, nor were they designed for popular tastes. The artistic value of punk tattoos was higher than their commercial value. Tattooists would not sell these designs, but would convey the spirit of punk through them. For the unique virtual characters used in punk tattoos, each different pattern had its own characteristics. Although these images had unique artistic symbols connected to the punk culture, the characteristics or colours of these artistic images were different.

### PUNK TATTOOS

In addition to the tattoos associated with bands, there have been a large number of tattoos representing the punk culture between the 1970s and the 1980s, and these tattoos have a certain selection of designs and patterns. The selection of designs reflects the problems of society at the time. Punk culture and even tattoos have been given political connotations. Through the choice of these special patterns, this group of street youths expressed their dissatisfaction with culture and social economy. Punk culture was considered to be a creative outlet for this generation in times of crisis. The design of tattoos was also part of their creative culture, and they expressed their thoughts and emotions through patterns. However, in the view of the mainstream media, punk culture was not only a cultural destroyer,<sup>38</sup> but it was also a sign of crime and decay.

### ANARCHISM AND CIRCLE-A

Punk subculture and the politics and social beliefs associated with punk music constitute the punk ideology. This ideology was often expressed by punk rock and lyrics, as well as punk fashion and punk visual culture. They show a social and political attitude through their clothing or tattoos. For example, they like to wear second-hand clothing to advocate against consumerism, or to show their opposition to the government's political stance through an anarchist tattoo. Punk's ideology is an opposition to mainstream culture and the status quo of society.

In the late 1970s, the famous punk band the Sex Pistols released their first masterpiece, *Anarchy in the UK*.<sup>39</sup> It

included the following lyrics:

*'I am an anti-Christ, I am an anarchist. Don't know what I want, but I know how to get it. I wanna destroy passerby, cause I wanna be anarchy, no dog's body. Anarchy For the UK, it's coming sometime and maybe...'*<sup>40</sup>

The lyrics support the concept of violent anarchy that reflects the common worries and anger of the British working class in the 1970s. During the recession, these young people were frustrated and powerless. This song also set off a wave of anarchism among young British people. Anarchism is a radical and revolutionary right-wing political philosophy that advocates the abolition of the government and all unequal rule and hierarchy. A group of anarchist punk bands emerged from this anarchist boom. These bands wrote their own songs by putting their own anarchist positions forth through their lyrics. Although some radicals attempted to use the anger of the working class to trigger group riots, the anarchism that most punks admired at that time was self-rule.

The symbol widely used by anarchist punks is the Circle-A. The origin of this pattern is not clear, but since this pattern was widely used by British punk youths in the 1970s and 1980s, it is considered to have first appeared in this period. The design of this Circle-A, according to Peter Marshall,<sup>41</sup> is based on Proudhon's<sup>42</sup> motto 'Anarchy is order'.<sup>43</sup>This pattern consists of a capital letter A surrounded by a capital letter O. The letter O represents the word order, and A stands for anarchism. The use of this symbol by punk bands spread the anarchist idea more widely. The punk youths put the logo on their clothes or tattooed it on their bodies.

In tattoos, this anarchic pattern appears mostly in red and black. These two colours are based on the colour of the representative flags of anarchism. The anarchists chose the red flag in the 19th century. It was one of the earliest signs of anarchism and the symbol of the British Labour Party from its beginnings to the 1986 Labour Party meeting.<sup>44</sup> In politics, the red flag is mainly a symbol of socialism, communism, Marxism, trade unions, left-wing politics and historical anarchism. Anarchism is a form of socialism that stems from general socialism and the workers' movement. In the punk movement, the

vast majority of young people were from the working class. So the punk movement, or the punk anarchist movement, was part of the workers' movement. It represents resistance from the working class. Since the 1880s, black has been one of the symbols of anarchists. The black flag can be in stark contrast to the flags of other countries. At the same time, white flags indicate surrender, while black flags symbolise opposition to surrender. The black flag can be a 'terrible symbol of hunger, pain, and death',<sup>45</sup> and it can also be a symbol of 'worker's pain, expressing their anger and bitterness'.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, in the punk anarchist tattoo pattern, the black colour was also used to indicate the anger of these members of the working class about unemployment, as well as their resistance. They believed that the cause of unemployment was mostly the government's inaction. The essence of anarchist behaviour is that their ideas are based on the real life experiences of the working class.

In addition, another iconic flag of anarchism is the black-red flag. This flag originated in Spain. These two colours could also be applied to this pattern at the same time.<sup>47</sup> We can also see the application of these two colours on the Circle-A pattern through the example of tattoos. These two colours are the representative colours of anarchism. Although they date back to the 1880s, they were once again widely used in the punk anarchist movement of the 1980s. This kind of resistance movement of the working class has not stopped.

The pattern widely used in the punk anarchist movement is the Circle-A pattern, which is more iconic and easier to graffiti. Although the composition of this pattern is a fixed circle and the letter A, the design of the tattoo pattern was not consistent in the punk scene. The circle had no fixed thickness and size, and the letter A had no fixed font and no fixed position in the circle. Each punk applied the design according to his own preferences, so each tattoo was unique.

The tattoo artist combined the Circle-A pattern with other elements to create new cultural symbols. One tattoo designer combined the Circle-A pattern with Mickey Mouse.<sup>48</sup> The circle corresponds to the shape of Mickey's ear, and the white space inside the letter A. One of Mickey's other ears adds one of the most common

accessories in the punk culture, which was a safety pin. Mickey's hairstyle is the representative hairpin of the punk, and there are also piercings in his nose. These subtle elements corresponded to punk fashion culture. The tattoo artist also combined the Circle-A pattern with the skull.<sup>49</sup> The skull also has a punk hairstyle and piercing. Among the surrounding elements, there are symbols of drugs and music. The colours of the Circle-A are also the most typical red and black colours. This kind of creation combined the various elements of punk, not only the philosophy of life and fashion, but also the political beliefs. One could easily identify the content of punk culture through these tattoo designs.

## CONCLUSION

From the 1970s to the 1980s, the British punk movement experienced its peak. Although the punk movement was criticised and seen by many as negative, the legacy of this movement is rich. During this period, punk artists produced a wealth of works, and this also led to a rise in the cultural power of the working class. Besides this, punk culture was not only artistic but also political. From the anarchist punk tattoos, we can see that the frustration caused by large-scale unemployment was also seen as an opportunity within punk art. Through tattoo design, these young people had the opportunity to apply their ideas to artistic creation. This kind of creation was also an expression of opposition to commercialisation and popularisation.

The DIY ethic also ran through the design of punk tattoos, and everyone had different expressions. And this punk movement provided these young people with a space and a platform to express themselves. The core part of the punk spirit was to express yourself and express your own opinions. Through the anti-racism movement, we can also see that the punk spirit was tolerant. It accepted the impact of foreign culture but still maintained its own unique style under this impact. The impact of this punk movement on the UK was enormous. Although the punk spirit of the UK has gradually declined or become commercialised over the years, the punk spirit has not disappeared. This movement has created a more tolerant space for young people, in which they can do what they want to do.

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# Globalisation of Traditional Japanese Tattooing in the Spotlight of Ed Hardy

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## INTRODUCTION

The traditional Japanese tattoo is now well known in the globalised society. Today, this tattoo style is often mixed with styles and motifs from other influences, such as traditional western tattooing. Before the 1970s, Japanese tattooing used to be separated in the hidden tattoo parlours of Japan.<sup>1</sup> The tattooist and the client would develop a special relationship by getting to know each other in a personal way. Also, the traditional Japanese tattoo symbolised a special meaning in many ways, including spiritual, social and cultural. This tradition is strongly enmeshed within the history and the values of Japanese society.

Today, Japanese tattooing is suffering and flourishing at the same time. On the one hand, it is suffering due to global cultural appropriation and the dilution of its own strong tradition. The Cambridge Dictionary defines cultural appropriation as 'the act of taking or using things from a culture that is not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect this culture'.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Japanese tattoo motifs now play a big role in modern tattoo culture. They are incorporated into new designs, and completely new forms of creativity have been established based on the influence of Eastern Asian art.<sup>3</sup> The spreading of Japanese tattoo culture and awareness surrounding it benefited and influenced non-Asian cultures.

One of the more well-known contemporary American tattooists is Donald Edward Talbott 'Ed' Hardy, best known as Ed Hardy. Hardy was the first non-Asian tattooist who lived in Japan and worked with a traditional Japanese tattoo master.<sup>4</sup> Now, Ed Hardy's designs are known all over the world. But what role does Ed Hardy play in this process of the cultural appropriation of traditional Japanese tattooing? How does he increase the unknowing act of adopting these patterns? The Westernisation of traditional Japanese tattoos and the biography of Ed Hardy are already well studied, but there is still a lack of research that explores the link between these two both topics. Ed Hardy's biography had direct effects on the cultural appropriation of this specific tattoo tradition. This text exposes the connection between

the Westernisation of tattooing practice in Japan with Ed Hardy's biography. This process will be explained through the example of Hardy.

A very important period relating to the spreading of East Asian tattoos in the world was the 1970s. Therefore, this work focuses specifically on this decade, when Hardy went to Japan and afterwards introduced Japanese tattooing to the Western world. This leads to the research-question: In what way did Don Ed Hardy, one of the best-known American tattooists, contribute to the Westernisation of traditional Japanese tattooing? This question will be elaborated upon in three chapters.

In the first chapter, there will be an explanation of traditional Japanese tattooing. There will also be a concise historical overview of this practice in order to provide a basic understanding of it. The next chapter examines problems with the traditional tattooing-practice in contemporary Japan. Next, the reader will get an insight into the problems (the appropriation process versus traditionalists) of today. Finally, through the example of Ed Hardy's life, the overall topic will be explained. The resources used for this research included several books about the history of Japanese tattooing as secondary literature, a biography of Don Ed Hardy and online and newspaper articles about different tattoo trends nowadays that are related to the overall topic.

## TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TATTOOING: DEFINITION AND HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Japan has a long history of body colouration practices, but the beginning of wider tattooing practices can be dated to the Edo period, which lasted from the 17<sup>th</sup> century until 1868.<sup>5</sup> It was a time of a flourishing culture, but also a time of suppression by the *Tokugawa Shogunate* (a feudal Japanese military government). The economy was improving after the end of the civil wars in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and merchants wanted to show their fortune by getting tattooed. While commoners were still politically oppressed, they could nevertheless pursue their pleasures. New styles were established in literature, theatre and painting. Well known examples are the *Geisha*-shows—a Geisha is a Japanese woman who entertains through performing—the *Kabuki* theatre



and *Ukiyo-e* pictures. The *Ukiyo-e* art is based on the characters of the *Kabuki* theatre,<sup>6</sup> and this style of art influenced the tattoo styles. Lots of *Ukiyo-e* motifs have been incorporated as an expression of the *Edo*-society.<sup>7</sup>

The traditional Japanese tattoos are designed as full-body suits. The tattoo covers a large part of the body, with all motifs connecting to each other.<sup>8</sup> In consideration of the traditional Japanese way of thinking, tattoos are like 'a flower in the shade'.<sup>9</sup> The tattoos are not supposed to be shown in public, which is why these full-body-tattoos are just placed on parts of the body that are covered by a *Jinbei* (a traditional summer *Kimono*).<sup>10</sup> These specific tattoos are called *Horimono*, which means tattooing in general. Another name is *Irezumi*, which means tattooing in a punitive way, because tattooing was used in the *Edo*-time to distinguish criminals as well. That's why traditional tattooists prefer the term *Horimono* as the superior description for the practice.<sup>11</sup>

To create the *Horimono*, the tattooist uses a special technique called *Tebori*. There are different colours for this process. For example, *Sumi* is black ink created by the use of plant-soot. It is used for the outlines and for the shadings. The tattooing is all done by hand. The tattooist uses tools that have needles, and these needles are fixed with wood or metal-sticks. The colour is inserted into the skin manually.<sup>12</sup> This is a process that takes a lot of time and involves persistent pain. Both before and during this procedure, the tattooist and the client usually build a personal relationship.<sup>13</sup>

For the *Horimono*, there are certain motifs that have a specific meaning and that are tattooed in a traditional way. These motifs are known for their mythological, folkloristic and spiritual meanings. Many motifs are based on the characters of the *Kabuki* theatre. *Kabuki* is a traditional Japanese popular drama with singing and dancing that is performed in a stylised way. The *Kabuki* theatre includes music, dancing, miming and costuming. It has been a major theatrical form in Japan for almost four centuries.<sup>14</sup>

Plants are used as symbols representing luck, courage, power, wealth, reincarnation and enlightenment. This includes, for example, cherry and plum blossoms, chrysanthemum and the lotus flower. Butterflies and

waves are used for the background. *Shui Hu Zhuan*, *Kintaro* and *Momotaro* are motifs from the *Kabuki* theatre and from folktales. Whilst mythical creatures such as dragons and phoenixes are depicted, so too are realistic animals such as tigers, lions, carps and goldfish. Last but not least, Buddhist gods are represented.<sup>15</sup>

Since the *Edo*-period, tattooing has been a big part of the *Yakuza* life. The *Yakuza*, a criminal organisation, was established in that period.<sup>16</sup> Today, they are involved in prostitution, pornography, extortion and drugs, among many other practices. The word *Ya-ku-za* (8-9-3) comes from a card game with the most worthless combination of numbers. The *Yakuza*-members take pride in being 'worthless'. They had all the resources necessary for getting tattooed: the time, the money and the need for group identification. This went along with the word *Irezumi*. As mentioned before, *Irezumi* means tattooing in a punitive way, as a sign of belonging to a criminal group. For *Yakuza*-members, getting tattooed was proof of their commitment.

With the end of the *Edo*-period, tattoos became an underground phenomenon. This is why the majority of the tattooed people in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were *Yakuza*-members. The *Meiji-Restoration* of 1868 marked a turning point in Japanese history because it was the time when Japan opened up to the West and abolished the feudal system. Emperor Meiji took power. This was the time when the society of Japan was immediately exposed to the lifestyle of Western countries. From one day to the next, tattooing became stigmatised as a backwardly barbarian cult practice. This resulted in an official law that prohibited tattooing until the end of the Second World War, which is why tattooing became an underground practice.

The integration of Western culture into Japanese society led to a change in the perception of nudity and eroticism in the population. Before the *Meiji-Restoration*, it was completely normal for the working-class to work naked and show their bodies naked in public. But since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Christian worldview affected this perception, which resulted in changed appearances in public. This increased the development of a more and more secret Japanese tattooing practice.<sup>17</sup> Throughout Japanese history, tattooing has gone back

and forth between being incorporated into society and being forbidden.<sup>18</sup> It is likely that this interdependence led to the secret *Jinbei-Horimono*, on the one hand, and an open approach to nudity on the other before the *Meiji-Restoration*.

With the rise of the modern youth culture, another milestone was set in popularising tattooing in Western societies in the 1960s. This happened primarily through the work of the American tattooist Sailor Jerry (also known as Norman Keith Collins), who was serving in the US Merchant Marines during the Second World War. When he travelled through East Asia, he got tattooed at different ports. At first he tattooed in the traditional American-style, which is a way of tattooing that was influenced and developed by the US Navy sailors since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Typical to this style are bold black outlines and strong colours. Characteristic motifs are religious iconography, pin-up-girls, animals, landscapes and military insignia.<sup>19</sup> But at the same time, he expanded the technical aspects of his work by experimenting with pigments. He was also one of the first Western tattooists who incorporated motifs from the Far East, such as dragons.<sup>20</sup>

Sailor Jerry passed his knowledge on to his apprentices, and these tattooists can be seen as multipliers who improved the technical and artistic levels of modern Western tattoos. They won many supporters among the American tattooists for incorporating Japanese imagery.<sup>21</sup>

## PROBLEMS WITH TRADITIONAL TATTOOING PRACTICE IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

The circumstances in Japanese history discussed earlier led to an ambivalent attitude towards tattooing in modern Japanese society. On the one hand, the majority of the population act like they are against tattoos in public. Many public spaces, such as public spas, prohibit people with tattoos from entering. The main reason for this is the stigmatisation of tattooed people, who are seen as part of the *Yakuza*.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, there are still a few traditionalists who want to preserve the Japanese tattooing tradition from Western influences.<sup>23</sup>

The few tattoo masters who remain in modern times try to secretly secure this craft by giving their contact details just to customers of inner social circles.<sup>24</sup> But overall it has to be said that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, following global tattoo trends, tattoos are once again considered to be fashionable in youth cultures.<sup>25</sup>

Tattoos and other body modifications are, for many young Japanese, a means for self-expression and identity. These Western influences result in contradictions and conflicts regarding the habits of the East-Asian culture. The term *Wan Pointo Tatu* ('one-point-tattoo') means to get just one tattoo on a certain part of the body. This way of tattooing is often used by young Japanese people who are choosing the Western style.<sup>26</sup> A couple of years ago, such a tattoo would have been called *Tengo*, which means something like mischief, because it was seen as a youthful indiscretion. But now it seems that tattooing in Japan is again becoming popular by accepting the Western influences. Because of the Western-style tattoos, the meanings of traditional tattoos are getting more and more obscured. This leads to completely different trends among the Japanese tattooists. On the one side, contemporary modern tattooists offer the Western style of tattooing. On the other side, there are the traditional tattooists who are specialised in classic designs and do not publish their contact information.<sup>27</sup>

One element of the resistance against the globalisation process can be seen in the lack of communication among traditional Japanese tattooist colleagues.<sup>28</sup> The rivalry is shown by the fact that they are keeping their skills and techniques reserved for selected clients. This led to the fact that these tattooists would appear at modern tattoo conventions, but would not report or educate people on their way of tattooing. The problems and contradictions of globalisation can be shown in this special fact. Why is the sensitive and secret way of dealing with the tattoo tradition so important for them?<sup>29</sup>

In traditional Japanese tattooing the unity of the whole design is very significant. All the designs on each body part are interconnected with each other. This long process requires a greater commitment between the client and the tattooist.<sup>30</sup> The tattoo masters think that this culture needs to be preserved and committed to from generation to generation. In this long process, it

is very important to establish trust in the relationship between the tattooist and the client. Therefore, tattoo masters often prefer to have one week of consultation in the beginning in order to get to know each other. Each motif has a special meaning and can be combined in a certain way. For example, a snake can never be placed next to cherry blossoms, because the snake is active in autumn, but the blossoms flourish in the spring. All these considerations cannot be made properly with the dilution of Western influences.<sup>31</sup>

In the traditional Japanese society, the meanings of tattoos have been social and collective identification markers among social groups. Today, the social linkages are not so important anymore. Instead, the reason to get a tattoo has shifted and become more personalised/individualised. The contemporary Japanese tattoos are an indicator of globalisation and rising consumer culture.<sup>32</sup>

This can be noticed by different parameters. First of all, the link between client and tattooist is more impersonal. Furthermore, motifs now vary in a wide range from Eastern and Western traditional styles to abstract artworks, the one point tattoo (a single pattern/ motif) is now very fashionable, and modern tattooists now mainly use modern tattoo machines in Japan.<sup>33</sup>

On the one hand, the designs of traditional Japanese tattoos have been widely spread in other countries all around the world. A famous example is found in the biography of one of the best-known American tattooists, Don Ed Hardy (the next chapter illustrates the impact of Ed Hardy's journey to Japan in the 1970s on global tattoo culture).

On the other hand, Japanese tattoo designs ironically appear as Western one-point-tattoos in Japan today. In this sense, the global appropriation process works both ways. Other countries get to know the traditions and transform them, and then these transformed styles get absorbed into contemporary Japanese culture. This leads to positive and negative effects. A positive effect would be that tattooed people are less negatively perceived in the Japanese public. But a negative consequence is that the traditional values and practices associated with tattooing get lost through modification.

Looking back in history, tattoos have been associated with the working class and with criminals. But this cannot be said anymore in today's culture, as tattooed skin appears in different social classes. The globalisation process creates polarised attitudes towards tattooing in the Japanese society. Probably the behaviour of traditional tattoo masters can be interpreted as a sign of resistance against an assimilation process. This can be observed in the lack of communication among the masters, the rivalry within those social circles and the secrecy of the practice.<sup>34</sup>

### **DON ED HARDY AND THE FUSION OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TATTOO MOTIFS WITH WESTERN TATTOOING**

#### **ED HARDY'S WAY TO TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TATTOOS**

Donald Edward Hardy (also known as Ed Hardy) was born in 1945 in Iowa but grew up in California.<sup>35</sup> From an early age he was fascinated by tattoos. He spent days in the local tattoo parlour of Bert Grimm, but his interest vanished after awhile when he realised that no tattooist would give him an apprenticeship at his young age.<sup>36</sup> But he still turned his interest towards fine arts, getting in touch with more traditional media and working with charcoal. He attended the Art Institute in San Francisco, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in printmaking. During his studies, his passion for tattooing rose again. Soon he met Phil Sparrow, an Oakland-based tattooist who introduced him to the art of Japanese tattooing. Hardy was enthusiastic when he saw those designs. In 1968, he opened his first tattoo shop, and he later became an apprentice at Norman Collins' (also known as Sailor Jerry Collins) tattoo parlour. Collins gave Hardy a better understanding of Japanese tattooing. They both had the same philosophy about tattooing, as they thought of it as a legitimate art form. In their minds, it should be a constant effort on the part of the tattooist to improve their style and the tattooist needs to innovate tattoo culture by transforming and finding new styles and methods. Collins already combined Japanese tattoo motifs with Western styles in his works, and this would have an effect on Hardy in the future. Hardy indicated that 'a tattoo is an affirmation.

You put it on yourself with the knowledge that this body is yours to have and enjoy while you're here'.<sup>37</sup>

In a way, this correlates with some aspects of the Japanese tattoo tradition. By marking the body, you are accepting the fugacity of your own existence. Ed Hardy was fascinated by both the aesthetics and the philosophy of the traditional Japanese culture.<sup>38</sup> This fascination intensified when Sailor Jerry introduced Ed Hardy to Kazuo Oguri (his artist name is Horihide), who was a traditional Japanese tattooist. In 1972, Collins invited Horihide and Ed Hardy to his tattoo parlour in Honolulu. During this stay, Horihide invited Ed Hardy to come over to Japan to work in his tattoo parlour in Gifu.<sup>39</sup>

Ed Hardy spent five months in Horihide's parlour in 1973. He was the first non-Asian to gain deep access to this special world of traditional Japanese tattooing.<sup>40</sup> During this time he attained a profound understanding of the Japanese culture. He was taught the techniques of traditional tattooing called *Tebori*. He learned about the compositions of body-suit-tattooing without the need of a stencil at first. He was mostly doing the colouring work while Horihide was doing the outlines and the shadings.<sup>41</sup> He gained all this profound experience because Horihide regarded him as an accomplished Western tattooist who wanted to learn the Japanese ways of tattooing.<sup>42</sup> The way of designing tattoos by freehand seemed to liberate him in his artistic practice, but at the same time he noticed that the vocabulary of traditional Japanese tattooing was limited in his opinion. This resulted in frustration because he wanted to live out his creativity.<sup>43</sup>

While Hardy lived in Japan he got in touch with the life of the *Yakuzas*. In the 1970s, most clients of traditional tattooists were *Yakuzas*.<sup>44</sup> Because the social behaviour and the mind set of the Japanese people had been so different, Ed Hardy could not understand their way of living. He thought the people would never accept him. At a certain point, Hardy had enough of living in Japan. After five months he went back to the United States.<sup>45</sup> But looking back it has to be said that this stay in Japan was kind of extraordinary because no Western person had been introduced to Japanese tattooing in this deep way before.<sup>46</sup>

These influences had a powerful effect when Ed Hardy came back to America. For example, the studios and the working process of Japanese tattooists inspired him. The typical Japanese studio was a private space with no advertisement at all. This was in contrast to Western tattoo shops at that time. Hardy adopted this model when he came back and opened his tattoo parlour, called Realistic Tattoo Studio, in San Francisco. It was the first Western tattoo parlour that exclusively offered works with private appointments.<sup>47</sup> With this new idea he set a milestone of success. By that time Ed Hardy already had a reputation outside of California.

He said:

*'I'd just been tattooing sailors and stuff, I was trying to upgrade it. I came back from [5 months in] Japan determined to just open a private studio where people could come in and tell me what they want, instead of offering something from the wall.'*<sup>48</sup>

He further said:

*'I had several clients when I began getting a reputation for doing custom tattoos, which almost no one did in those days, and I had a shop in a sailor town area [in California], and I was drawing clients from really all over the place. Several of these wealthy New Yorkers heard about me through the grapevine... they would come out to get these large, Japanese influenced tattoos, and they started saying to me, 'You gotta come to New York, there are a lot of people there that want your work.'*<sup>49</sup>

#### **ED HARDY'S TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TATTOO MOTIFS**

When Hardy was back in the USA, he continued to work with Japanese motifs. But at the same time, he started to experiment with the forms and created even more dynamic compilations of tattoo motifs. Japanese tattoos are composed with much more consideration of the shape of the human body than traditional Western tattoos. For example, the waves of the background



support the curve of the shoulder. The figurative motif is traditionally placed on a broad and flat part of the body, such as the back. But Ed Hardy started to develop more optical dynamics by conflicting different motifs with each other. Often the figures were placed on body parts where the viewer had to experience the tattoo from different angles and perspectives in order to understand the whole concept of the composed motif. In a way, Ed Hardy 'wrapped' the central image around the human body.<sup>50</sup>

While the Japanese imagery became very popular in the 1970s, especially in tattoo shops, tattooists incorporated Japanese motifs in an inflationary way. Ed Hardy went on to experiment with new ideas and styles for the next few decades. Another episode in the tattooist career of Hardy was, for example, the Chicano jailhouse tattooing styles.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, it can be said that Ed Hardy's work as the first Western apprentice at a traditional Japanese tattoo parlour was outstanding. He was already well known in the United States before his journey to East Asia. That is why he had such a strong influence on the distribution of the Japanese tattooing practice in the West after his stay and developed this style even further into a new way of tattooing.<sup>52</sup>

In the second half of the 1970s, a real tattoo culture was developing in the US.<sup>53</sup> In order to more widely communicate experience and techniques, bigger tattoo conventions were established. For example, there was the first United States Tattooist Convention in 1976 in Houston, Texas. This led to an international movement with a broad network of international contacts. Tattoo beauty contests took root. The first specialist literature for tattooing was published in multiple languages in magazines.<sup>54</sup> Ed Hardy also published an art book series called *Tattootime* (a series of five books). This contributed to the spread of East Asian tattoo practices throughout the world as well.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, different artistic activities were organised, such as exhibitions and performances in galleries. Museums were also constructed, such as the Tattoo History Museum in Oxford or the Tattoo Art Museum in San Francisco, in order to distribute the international tattoo culture. The distribution of Japanese tattoo art by famous Western tattooists like Don Ed

Hardy and the general publicity of the tattoo culture also increased appreciation of tattooing within Japan itself.<sup>56</sup>

In 2000, Ed Hardy entered the fashion industry. A French fashion businessman called Christian Audiger came across his silkscreen shirts, which were sold at his tattoo parlour. Ed Hardy signed over the master licence.<sup>57</sup> This licence allowed Audiger to produce items that showed Hardy's artwork. The brand became very famous and successful. In 2009, the sales exceeded 700 million US dollars. Suddenly his artwork could be seen everywhere. Many celebrities also wore those clothes at that time (e.g. Madonna and Catherine Zeta-Jones). Ed Hardy didn't like the fame of this brand. He was in trouble with Christian Audiger, but he didn't have any influence in dictating the brand's trends. This conflict led to Hardy becoming somewhat infamous.<sup>58</sup> In the end, this brand was another way of popularising and Westernising Japanese imagery.

For Ed Hardy, images are very important from a graphical point of view. He incorporates motifs and traditions from other cultures in his own art and transforms them into something new. In an interview, Ed Hardy spoke about a conversation with a client. The client wanted "a big 40's va-va-voom tits-and-ass nurse. And he wanted me to do it next to a lot of Tibetan tantric imagery". The client was reluctant to ask for this tattoo. But Ed Hardy "thought it was great. I put it on him and thought, this is real American tattooing—having all these cultures floating next to each other...".<sup>59</sup>

This reflects the trends of globalisation today as well. Ed Hardy's attitude can be seen as a strong example for dealing with different cultural traditions in a globalised world. On the one hand, he contributed to the liberty of art in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. On the other hand, traditions, meanings and cultural values get lost because of such an attitude; even worse, they become banal.

## CONCLUSION

Traditional tattooing holds an important place in the historical culture of Japan. In the feudal period, it was an established practice in the civic society. Tattooing played a social and collective role in former Japan. The motifs were inspired by the *Ukiyo-e* art of the *Edo*-period. The imagery had spiritual, mythological and folkloristic importance. Traditionally, the members of the *Yakuza*, a criminal organisation, were tattooed in Japan. With the *Meiji-Restoration* in 1868, the feudal time concluded. Japan opened to Western cultures and tattooing was forbidden because it was seen as a barbarian practice at that time. In the modern times of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the tattoo practice became widely stigmatised due to the historical consequences of the *Meiji-Restoration* and because a lot of criminals (like the *Yakuza*) wore these traditional tattoos. The majority of the population didn't want to be associated with this criminal organisation.

Nowadays, tattooing is increasingly a trend for young Japanese people who are influenced by globalisation and Western culture. Western-style tattoos (also known as 'one-point-tattoos') are more and more common in Japan. This leads to problems with traditional tattooists who want to preserve their tattoo culture and practices. They realise that Western influences dilute their traditions. Which leads back to the research question from the introduction: In what way did Don Ed Hardy, one of the best-known American tattooists, contribute to the Westernisation of traditional Japanese tattooing?

Before Ed Hardy went to Japan, he was already well known in the tattoo society of the USA. The journey to Japan symbolised a milestone in Western tattoo history. He was the first tattooist who went to Japan in order to get trained by a real traditional East Asian tattoo master. Nobody else ever did this before. With this knowledge, he went back to the United States and opened the first Western tattoo shop inspired by the tattoo parlours of Japan. This was already one of the first steps towards the appropriation process of today, because many other tattooists followed Hardy's example in the 1970s and opened Japanese inspired tattoo parlours as well. Hardy offered custom works only. When he came back from his journey, many insiders already knew about his

apprenticeship in Japan; as he himself explained, 'the word got out in the tattoo community: "Ed Hardy's been to Japan"'.<sup>60</sup>

With his new approach of transforming the traditional Japanese tattoos into a completely new style of art, he inspired completely new trends in the tattooing of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This can be seen in a positive and in a negative way. The positive consequences of this transformation process include the development of artistic 'cross over styles', a way of expressing artistic freedom within the tattoo community. But negative effects include the resulting problems in today's Japan. As mentioned before, traditional tattoo masters are struggling to save their tradition from those Western influences. Ed Hardy's work sped up the effects of these issues.

Another peak point in the spreading of Japanese imagery by Ed Hardy was his involvement in the fashion industry in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These fashion items incorporate traditional Japanese imagery as well, and they became highly commercialised because of this brand. In total, it has to be said that Ed Hardy can be seen as an influential example of executing cultural appropriation in the modern globalised world with both positive and negative consequences.

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# Deviant Fine Art: The Rise of the Tattoo Artificiation and the Problematics of Displaying Tattoo Art and Practices

Sonia Alcaina Gallardo

## INTRODUCTION

*'World sewn together by absence  
Millions of stitched taboos  
Cancerous Past  
Barrage of genuflectors and  
Of the leashed.'*

Henri Michaux<sup>1</sup>

The present paper focuses on the artistic and aesthetic nature of tattoo practices and their many possibilities as objects of visual interest within cultures, both for displaying and collecting, and from the perspectives of art history and visual culture disciplines. Up until now, scholars have been more interested in the anthropological, symbolic and even psychological aspects of tattooing, for this reason, there has been an academic gap concerning the visual facet of tattoos. The analysis included in this paper will follow the research and projects of art historians, sociologists and anthropologists who have already addressed the issue of the importance of tattoos from an artistic approach, such as Matt Lodder, Emma Angel, Mary Kosut and Lauren Kenney. Interviews, field observations in tattoo studios, analyses of exhibitions and different media content will be part of the appointed methodology.

Since their traced existence, tattoos have always had an aura of mystery and attraction. The tattooed individual, in an attempt to establish an assemblage of their own subjectivity and reject the socially prearranged norms, exerts a curatorial practice on his or her own skin, endowing it with a sense of power and authenticity. Due to this self-inflicted power and chosen status, the bodies of those tattooed appeared, on multiple occasions, as fascinating motives for artists such as Picasso, Otto Dix, George Grosz and Toulouse-Lautrec, and recently, tattooing itself has become part and parcel of artistic installations and performances that claim authority over the self and the body. Nevertheless, this recent acceptance of the practice in legitimised artistic circles had to overcome the many negative connotations attached to tattoos. Tattooing was, during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, considered to be a marginal practice and was

even related to criminality in the US, and its reputation remained in decline, especially during the 1960s, due to its relation to health problems and diseases.<sup>2</sup> Presently, the pictorial quality of the tattooed skin transcends the mere motive and the stigma of social deviance once inflicted upon the bearers of tattoos to become part of the recent body of scholarship devoted to studying the iconographic and symbolic value of tattoos within the discourses of art history and visual culture.

The discussion was raised in the 1930s by many art theorists and aesthetics philosophers who debated about the position of tattoo art within the canon of high art and the sphere of fine arts.<sup>3</sup> Yet, it was not until the end of the 1990s that tattoos became integrated, to a certain extent, into the art world in the Euro-American context.<sup>4</sup> Art historians are presently researching the meanings of tattoo imagery in the realm of the 'high' arts. Before them, literature related to tattoos was confined to magazines and non-academic publications. Beyond being motives or inspiration for artists, tattoos establish a reciprocal relationship with the art bubble, thus giving and at the same time taking motives from it as raw material for their own inked designs. Tattoos and art are certainly interconnected, not only on a symbolic or representational level, but also on a processual level: tattooing and painting, or, more precisely, drawing, apparently feel almost the same in their execution, only differing in the medium used, the skin or the paper or canvas.

In recent years, many college-educated artists, aware of the popularisation of the medium, have ventured into the realm of the ink and the needle in order to claim their position as not only tattooists but also as tattoo artists.<sup>5</sup> Conceptualised as an art practice and being performed by academy-trained artists, tattoos are making their triumphant entrance into the gallery space.<sup>6</sup> This shift in the recognition of the traditional craftsmanship as 'high' art translates into the mediatisation, gentrification and commodification of the medium, which is at risk of being considered banal after becoming mainstream.

The signs of exoticism that surrounded the practice are vanishing and transforming, as happened with many other transgressive visual codes that became a trend, fashion or a sign of conformity. In 2012, when one of

the most photographed women in the world admitted to having a tattoo by the renowned artist Lucian Freud, both the fashion and the art world were startled by the idea of tattoos as fine art.<sup>7</sup> Model Kate Moss, who bears two swallows tattooed by Freud on her lower back, opened the door for a discussion of the artistic and financial value of tattoos, giving the final impulse to transform the practice from a 'low' to a 'high' art form. In their linkage with the fashion world, tattoos have not only been elevated in their cultural status, but they have also become a desirable product to be consumed, which contradicts their so-called deviant character.<sup>8</sup>

As Marcia Tucker claimed in her famous article 'Tattoo, State of the Art' in 1981 for *Artforum*, 'the exoticism of the art lies in the idea that tattooing involves the forbidden or taboo'.<sup>9</sup> The popularisation and legitimisation of tattoo art in the art world could have many repercussions for the practice, including its own exhaustion and subsequent extinction. Transforming a traditional practice into a product not only to be consumed or displayed, but also to serve as a means to sell other products, transforms the practice, often disconnecting it from its cultural significance. 'Deviant', as described by Clinton S. Sander and D. Angus Veil in *Customizing the body: The Art and Culture of Tattooing*,<sup>10</sup> means firstly, something harmful for the established social norms, and secondly, something rare, and thirdly, something undesirable.<sup>11</sup> All of these attributes contradict the recently acquired status of tattoos as desirable objects of consumption and display.

Tattooing means permanence and it 'embodies the subject/object relationship to which so much recent art has addressed itself'.<sup>12</sup> Tattoos have a private and ritual character, a material and an intangible cultural value, and consequently, displaying them is a delicate matter. On the one hand, there are ethical issues surrounding the exhibition of the skin or body parts of human beings. On the other hand, displaying such a sacred and personal practice in a public space for a big number of visitors goes against its ritual nature.

Because my aim is to provide an overview of how tattoos became artified, an analysis of the different display methods when exhibiting tattoo art and practice, and how they differ in making meaning of the practice, I

intend to position tattoo art within the context of the fine arts and gallery system. The term artification was coined by sociologists Roberta Shapiro and Nathalie Heinich in 2012 to describe the dynamic processes in which non-art becomes art and the many institutions and social environments involved in its transformation.<sup>13</sup>

In a postmodern context where the pastiche of aesthetic codes prevails and the value of a tradition is easily overshadowed by its commercial qualities, what could be the most appropriate means to represent the semiotic and aesthetic complexity of tattoos without devaluing its artefactual and/or artistic autonomy?

The dilemma of displaying tattoo art will be analysed in the following sections according to different definitions and theories, and lastly in line with my own predicament.

### 'AM I A PIECE OF ART?': THE BIG 'A' AND THE CREATION OF CULTURAL OBJECTS

*'I wish tattooing would be regarded as art, but no, it's not. Art is a big word, you know? I hope people around me would consider me as an artist, not only a tattoo artist because in the end, tattooing is just a medium to make art'.*

Simone Di Pierno ('Floky')<sup>14</sup>

Could tattooed individuals be considered living canvases? This and a myriad of questions arise when talking about the parameters under which tattoo art can be welcomed into the 'high' arts. To begin answering the above-mentioned questions, perhaps the right issue to focus on would be: what is art? It can be inferred that nobody is in the possession of enough conceptual tools and authority to respond to this question, and in the same manner, the term art is as debatable and volatile as the decisions made around it. Nevertheless, there are a few substantial points to take into consideration when talking about the definitions and understandings of art, which I will elaborate on in the following paragraphs.

One little but very influential book that serves as a reference for many scholars concerned with art matters is *But Is It Art?: An Introduction to Art Theory*, written

by the American philosopher of art and professor Cynthia Freeland in 2001. According to Freeland, artistic practices and the role of the artists are extremely diverse and difficult to apprehend, thus there are many tribal people who are still unable to distinguish between what is art and what is an artefact.<sup>15</sup>

Art as ritual is a common theory considered by many. According to this consideration and following Freeland's analysis, the aesthetics of the blood is one of the most primitive but also contemporary approaches that this union between art and ritual proposes. Blood is, in the end, our human essence and has countless expressive and symbolic connotations.<sup>16</sup> It is conceivably its similitude with paint that made blood a beloved medium for artists. Tattooing implies bleeding, and thus it could be regarded as a ceremony where symbolic value is produced. Simone Di Pierno, or 'Floky', an Italian tattoo artist based in London, described in his own words during an interview I conducted with him what, for him, was the major difference between tattoo art and fine arts: 'The biggest difference between tattoo art and fine art is that even when you have to pay for both, in the case of tattoo art you have to pay and also suffer. In order to get a tattoo you have to deserve it, you can't just be rich. Tattoos have a soul'.<sup>17</sup> The Italian piercer Anna admitted during our interview that 'tattooing is both ritual and artistic, the biggest part of the process is the ritual, but the result is a piece of art'.<sup>18</sup>

For the ancient Greeks, art was founded on the principles of 'mimesis', or the imitation of nature and everything that spun around human lives. From this classical conception, it was during the Middle Ages that the arts adopted a divine or religious component. Thomas de Aquino related beauty with god, and since then, many modern ideas about art have prevailed.<sup>19</sup> It is not surprising that tattoo art remained in the lowest level of artistic considerations until a few decades ago, considering that for primitive Christians, the dichotomy 'light as a divine property and material waste regarded as mundane' still remains in the minds of many conservative individuals.<sup>20</sup> Tattoo art is body art, in this context earthly and therefore sinful, devoid of divinity and by extension artistic qualities. David Hume talked about 'taste' when labelling something as art, Immanuel Kant about 'beauty'. For Kant, taste considerations were universal and beauty

promoted pleasure unintentionally based on an internal harmony.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, these aspects are not enough when tackling contemporary art, as not every form of art is ritual, beautiful or tasteful. Some pieces of art are made to disturb the audience and to provoke responses. Lucy Lippard, renowned American art critic, writer and activist, proposed the analysis of art pieces according to three aspects: the formal and material qualities of the piece, the content or meaning of it and its context.<sup>22</sup> Lippard's considerations when assigning the label of art to a piece could be among the most complete. From where I stand, though, the processual quality of certain pieces is one aspect that is worth including in these categories.

In the pluralist context of postmodernity, the art critic and philosopher Arthur Danto wrote the influential essay, 'The Artworld'. In this text, Danto coined the term 'artworld' to refer to the atmosphere in which art theory is embedded. For Danto, there is 'no appreciation without interpretation', 'interpretations are what constitute works'.<sup>23</sup> This interpretation is possible due to a common art theory established within a historical and institutional context.<sup>24</sup> 'Art and the aesthetic', written in 1974 by philosopher George Dickie, followed precisely the premises already established by Danto, claiming that an object is considered a piece of art when representatives of the art world, thus a legitimising institution, recognise it as such.<sup>25</sup>

To gain a better understanding of where tattoo art can be situated within the framework of art theories, it is important to talk about the union of art and experience. Under 'aesthetic experience', philosophers such as John Dewey, Theodor Adorno and Hans-Georg Gadamer found the *raison d'être* of the communion between art and society. 'Aesthetic experience is conditioned by changes in the non-artistic world that affect not only the field of art but our very capacities for experience in general'.<sup>26</sup> The transition from craft, 'tejné', to piece of art that the tattoo is undertaking has its roots in this cultural mediation, interpretation and acceptance within a societal context. Dewey rejected the idea of art as beauty or form and promoted the definition of art as 'the expression of life in a community'.<sup>27</sup> It will be precisely in this interdisciplinary context that tattoo art will find its niche in the art world. According



to anthropologist and animal activist Margo DeMello and her book *Bodies of Inscription: A Cultural History of the Modern Tattoo Community*, it was from the 1980s onward that tattoo art gained recognition as a popular art form.<sup>28</sup> This acceptance wouldn't have been possible without the emergence of the so-called Visual Culture discourses in the 1970s. In a visually saturated world, where art history is rendered an almost obsolete discipline and we are unable to look at every interesting visual object surrounding us, it was necessary to address a new way to look at these unclassifiable visual objects. As art historian and visual culture expert Lauren Kenney states, 'Visual culture is a way of looking at all things visual'.<sup>29</sup> The cultural and historical environments in which a piece of art is embedded appear, in this new line of thought, essential to understanding it. It will be in this realm of the experience, of the process, that tattoo art positions itself to gain autonomy and legitimacy in the art world. Because of the inherent experiential nature of the tattoo medium being cultural representations, rituals on many occasions and identity markers, visual culture discourses enable them to appear as artistic or performative imagery and consequently as part of our visual life.

Nevertheless, the 'artworld' will continue to establish its own parameters to define art, criteria that are far from being simply aesthetics or beauty, ritual or experience. In most cases, aesthetic categories are very much dependent on particular actors and institutional changes that constitute what is eligible to be considered art. In his book *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, James Clifford, historian and professor in the History of Consciousness Department at the University of California, establishes what he called 'the art-culture system: a machine for making authenticity', a system to evaluate the traffic that determines the many moves that an object has to make in order to become culturally valuable.<sup>30</sup>

According to Clifford, there are two opposites in the system: the authentic masterpiece being a piece of art valued for its singularity and originality, and the inauthentic artefact, regarded as non-art for being easily reproducible.<sup>31</sup> In the other extreme, the authentic artefact appears to include crafts, material culture and ethnographic objects, opposing the category of

inauthentic masterpiece, which includes so-called anti-art objects that don't belong, at least yet, to the cultural field.<sup>32</sup> Most of these zones are clearly interrelated and reciprocal in their movements, even the opposing ones; it is never impossible for an object positioned in the lower zones to elevate to the upper ones and vice versa.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, it is clear that in order to enter zone 1, the art market or 'artworld' and its actors need to be involved.<sup>34</sup>

In the case of tattooing, one of the movements that promoted the craft to the category of fine arts was the launching of the Jo Waterhouse book *Art by Tattooists beyond Flash* in 2009.<sup>35</sup> Waterhouse moved the practice from the peripheral or lower zones to the centre of mainstream culture by showing images of tattooists regarded as artists and presenting their work on different mediums other than skin.<sup>36</sup>

Despite Waterhouse's efforts to increase the visibility and cultural appreciation of tattooing, tattoo art and fine arts are presently not valued in the same measure: it is evident that, together with Kantian ideas about art, concepts derived from a long art history tradition still remain as fundamentals of art. Layla, trained as an artist in an art school, former tattoo artist and now manager of Jolie Rouge Tattoo, a tattoo parlour in London, claimed that tattooing was on its way to becoming part of the fine arts: 'within my friend circle, tattoo art is regarded as fine art but outside of it perhaps not. I am happy that the attitude towards tattoo art is slowly changing, ten years ago nobody would have even questioned the position of tattoo within an artistic frame whereas now, tattoos have come along so far'.<sup>37</sup> Simone Di Pierno, 'Floky', declared that 'tattoo is a form of art that I hope one day will be exhibited as such, but in the arts there are people who control everything'.<sup>38</sup> Anna, former tattoo artist, piercer and current manager of the parlour Tribu Tattoo, affirmed that she considered tattoo as a form of art, but outside of the tattoo circles it wasn't: 'we are slowly getting there, the body is a canvas in the end'.<sup>39</sup>

The 'artification of tattoo', as cultural sociologist and professor Mary Kosut conceptualised it, is a phenomenon that is literally and symbolically changing the medium of tattooing and is very much dependent on societal forces.<sup>40</sup> Shapiro and Heinich defined artification as 'a "process of processes", including displacement, renaming,

recategorization, institutional and organizational change, patronage, legal consolidation, redefinition of time, individualization of labor, dissemination and intellectualization'.<sup>41</sup> As Di Pierno insisted when referring to the 'artworld' pretentiousness, 'in the arts, there are people who control everything',<sup>42</sup> hence, 'artifying', as happened with the production of other cultural items, is in the case of the tattoo very much linked to institutional support and economic constraints.

Kosut distinguishes between two generations of tattoo artists: a first generation characterised as being

*'self-taught; working-class economic background and habitus; [with] little or no knowledge of the Western art canon; born between 1900 and 1950's; or tattooists who worked in the profession prior to the tattoo Renaissance of the 1970s–80s'.<sup>43</sup>*

Today, the new group that has emerged and is claiming their rights to be considered artists are those belonging to the second generation of tattoo artists: those with '[a]cademic training; some knowledge of the fine art canon; middle class economic background and habitus; born after 1965; or people who entered the field of tattooing after 1985'.<sup>44</sup> Nowadays, the common scenario is finding academically trained tattoo artists who see tattooing as an alternative career. This shift in the field has naturally provoked the emergence of a new tattoo aesthetic based on creativity, originality and exclusivity. They do not work from 'flash' and are committed to unifying the worlds of tattoo culture and fine art. One of the most famous representatives of this second wave of tattooists is Ed Hardy, perhaps known for becoming a fashion brand and bringing tattoos into a scene of glamour. This new context, which is responsible for giving credentials to tattoo art, has been its gateway to the gallery system. If tattooing is regarded as art, it needs to be exhibited. Yet, the complexity of exhibiting a living canvas and a practice that is considered to be ceremonial for many cultures adds a new dimension to the debate.

If someone bears a couple of tattoos, are they a piece of art? Are they for this reason a collection of art, a living gallery? These questions inevitably arise when talking about the topic of the legitimisation of tattooing as fine

art. The answer is, as the question itself, a debatable one: they might be, but in this case, how can they be exhibited as such and under which criteria would they be considered part of the art circuits?

## MEANS OF DISPLAY OF TATTOOING, OR WHY REPRESENTATIONS MATTER

*"Now", he said, "I am the canvas. Where will you place your canvas?"*

*"As always, upon the easel."*

*"Then place yourself upon the easel. This is where you belong."*

Roald Dahl<sup>45</sup>

'Skin', a short story that Roald Dahl wrote in 1952, has become one of the most cited texts when tackling the idea of collecting and exhibiting tattoos from the point of view of the 'artworld'. 'Skin' tells the story of a tattooist who, admiring the work of a young artist, showed him how to tattoo the portrait of his wife on his back, and how many years later he became a collectible for bearing that tattoo.

Far from being fictional today, 'Skin' deals with many of the material problematics of exhibiting tattoo art that are being discussed in academia. In his dissertation, Matt Lodder addresses the issues of authorship and the materiality of the means of displaying tattoo art, while Kenney examines the notion of the tattoo as a collectible.

Lodder affirms that 'tattoos sit antagonisingly between the static and permanent form of painting and the brief, temporally-specific performance piece; ethically problematic and technically difficult to hang on a gallery wall but more durable than a performative happening'.<sup>46</sup> It seems that tattoo art, due to its material limitations, is an unmarketable form of art, which explains why it hasn't entered the gallery system until recently. Nonetheless, there are various modes in which tattoos and tattoo art have been exhibited, and they will probably continue to expand their domains.

For the purpose of this paper, I will look at Kenney's examination of the modes of collecting and displaying tattoos, Lodder's notion of the 'body as somaesthetic object' and its implications as such and tattoos displayed in contemporary art.<sup>47</sup> For Kenney, there are three means of looking at tattoos in the culture of collecting: 'as a living museum on the body of the tattooed subject, as a skin specimen separated from the body and displayed in a variety of museum settings, and as an image abstracted from the body in the form of photographs of tattooed sitters'.<sup>48</sup> Naturally, there are other forms of collecting and exhibiting tattoo art, such as tattoos depicted in art, but for the scope of this essay, the analysis will remain in the realm of tattoos as art.

The body has been regarded as a fascinating piece of art since ancient times, and again, the metaphor body-as-artwork appears as a theological theme.<sup>49</sup> The relation of the body with the divinity makes not only its modifications controversial, but also its representation. If the body is a creation of god, then human beings do not have authority to modify their own body and exhibit it as they consider appropriate. The modifications of one's body are a transgressive way to exert ownership over it and to create one's own identity independently of that imposed by god or by a genetic lottery. A tattooed body is nothing less than a curated collection of art pieces, 'a somaesthetic object' that determines its own experience, appreciation and creative modification.<sup>50</sup>

The skin and face as canvas metaphor appeared in the 18th century in the context of physiognomy and pathognomy, and derived from that analogy, it can be inferred that its pictorial and documentary relevance were made evident.<sup>51</sup> Thus, that the skin resembles a blank canvas doesn't necessarily mean that it is. The skin is a human sensory organ that is permanently attached to a living body. The tattooed subjects decide to engrave designs in their skin, creating their own collection and eventually becoming an artefact or mirabilia. But is it necessary to bring them indoors to the exhibition spaces? The London-based tattoo artist Maxime Büchi stated during an interview for *The New York Times* that tattoos shouldn't be preserved: 'The value of the tattoo lies in the fact that it does not belong to the artist in that way, to preserve it would be to devalue it. Its value is that it will die with you'.<sup>52</sup> However, there are different

opinions concerning this topic.

One of the most debatable exhibition methods for tattoos has been the display of post-mortem preserved skin. There are several museums, including the famous Dr. Fukushi's Skin Museum at Tokyo University, which holds a collection of body-suits, or the Wellcome Collection in London, which has nearly 300 tattoo fragments.<sup>53</sup> By means of preservation and display, these fragments function parallelly as art objects and human remains. According to Lodder, 'Once the body has become art (or the site of art), it assumes a new set of potentialities'.<sup>54</sup> The major controversy concerning these kinds of public exhibits is ethical; it is, in most cases, unclear where these remains came from, under which consent were they obtained and how they became traded. On the other hand, exhibiting skin fragments can be regarded from the point of view of the history of exhibiting ethnographic objects.

Museum professional Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett referred to 'the poetics of detachment' when talking about the ethnographic object, its fragmentation and how its appreciation is made possible.<sup>55</sup> The longing for the missing parts creates a certain pleasure and incentivises the creation of artificial ones. These 'feelings of melancholy and wonder' are closely related to the notion of the sublime.<sup>56</sup> Collectibles thus gain their status as singular objects by means of scarcity, rarity and ephemerality, attributes interweaved in the exhibition of tattooed preserved skin.<sup>57</sup> In order to acquire a better insight into the aforementioned notion of the fragment and by extension our understanding of the whole, it is necessary to make a distinction between two different modes of display: in-situ and in context.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett referred to in-situ exhibition as methods to analyse objects that are displayed as a part of a bigger absent whole. Through metonymy and mimesis, the objects appear as an 'ethnographic atrophy', dislodged from their 'physical, social, and cultural settings'.<sup>58</sup> The object is a mere product to be looked at and its meaning appears to be blurry and excised. Art historian Mechthild Fend not only considered the material fragmentation and the loss of meaning of an exhibited piece of tattooed skin, but also the issue of the identity of the tattooee: 'a crucial difference between a

tattooed piece of skin preserved in a jar and a tattoo on a living person: the former is isolated from the body to which it once belonged: This is important insofar as a tattoo thus fragmented loses its function as marker of identity'.<sup>59</sup>

As opposed to in-situ exhibitions, there is another option for presenting objects. In-context displays deal with the interpretation of an object within a certain 'theoretical frame of reference'.<sup>60</sup> Using labels and other explanatory means, an object is situated among others and in relation to other, and the audience is given the opportunity to make interpretations based on information conveyed in the exhibition. In order to save the fragment from its trivialisation, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett proposes treating it as a document, and in the case of skin with tattoos exhibited post-mortem, it can not be more applicable. As the pursuit of 'the whole' in exhibitions appears to be a challenging endeavour, exhibiting a fragment, in this case a human remain, requires an in-context exhibition method. It could be argued that an exhibited piece of skin lacks the potential to be an artwork, but it certainly could be regarded as a document. Remembering Lucy Lippard's categories for considering an object a work of art (the formal and material qualities of the piece; the content or meaning of it and its context), a piece of skin exhibited post-mortem appears as an index and ethnographic specimen. To be considered a piece of art, the formal and material qualities of the piece need to be linked with the intention of an artist to convey a certain meaning or create a new significance. In the case of mere skin fragments, the meaning necessary to be regarded as a piece of art is absent and its documentary value triumphs.

A new lexicon of tattooing and its subsequent connotations has been expanding in the field of performance art. When created with the intention to convey an artistic message using a tattoo and its various inherent meanings, a performance piece can function as a bridge to bring tattoos to the category of art within the context of the 'artworld'. Material, meaning and context appear to come full circle. Nevertheless, the value of the tattoo art itself vanishes in the ocean of meaning of the performance that it serves. Perhaps one of the most well-known pieces of performance art involving tattoos is 'Tim, 2006' by the controversial Belgian artist Wim

Delvoye. Delvoye, in line with Dahl's short story, tattooed and signed the back of Tim Steiner, who is currently a mobile exhibition until the moment he dies, when his skin will be posthumously preserved and exhibited. In 2008, Delvoye sold the piece to a German collector, showing that the unmarketable character of the tattooed skin has come to an end.<sup>61</sup> Another performance artist who is using tattoos as a way to fulfil the significance of his pieces is the Spanish artist Santiago Sierra, who creates highly social and political art to denounce the living conditions of socially neglected individuals. In 2000, for *160 cm Line Tattooed on 4 People*,<sup>62</sup> Sierra explained that he hired four prostitutes addicted to heroin and tattooed them on their backs for the price of a shot of heroin.<sup>63</sup>

The Irish artist Sandra Ann Vita Minchin also made use of tattoo art for her performance *Art Lives Longer Than Life, Ars Longa Vita Brevis* between 2011 and 2012.<sup>64</sup> Minchin hired a tattoo artist to depict a 17th-century painting by the artist Jan Davidsz de Heem on her back, and to not only preserve it posthumously, but also to auction it.<sup>65</sup>

There are other types of tattoo art displays, such as installations. Between 2017 and 2018, the National Maritime Museum in Cornwall hosted the exhibition *Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed*, in which 100 prosthetic arms depicted the original designs of the most prominent tattoo artists in Britain.<sup>66</sup> The installation, by means of its context within the confines of the museum and the thematic frame of 'tattoo art', could be regarded as a piece of art. However, by simply displaying a sample of the work of each artist without further additions, the intentionality and the meaning of the piece appear rather weak. The shadow of the fragment appears, in this case, more threatening than ever; it could work as an educational display of visual interest but not as an art piece.

The last method of display I will analyse is that of photographic reproductions depicting tattoo art. Tattooing has mostly been dependent on reproductions, and photography has enormously helped its spread and commercialisation. Furthermore, exhibitions showing tattooed individuals have gained relevance in the field of portrait photography, and therefore they have been



displayed in various exhibition circuits.<sup>67</sup> The same diaphanous quality of the skin is to be noted in traditional photography, and similarly to the photographic medium, 'images transplanted into the skin are eternalised beyond the death of a person'.<sup>68</sup> Photography has more in common with tattooing than it first seems. Both register information, the skin being a medium for tattooing, a sort of 'communicative membrane',<sup>69</sup> and the photographic film a light sensitive fine surface. Both act as an index and function as a document, a medium to record and store information. Following Mechthild Fend, it is not a coincidence that the film negative in Romance languages shares its denomination with the skin, 'pellicula' from the Latin 'pelle', meaning skin.<sup>70</sup>

The case of the 2011 *Garage Magazine* cover by photographer Hedi Slimane featuring a Damien Hirst tattoo design<sup>71</sup> discloses a further significance in the case of photography as a display method. On the one hand, the cover itself is destined to serve commercial purposes. On the other hand, the photograph of a tattoo by a renowned artist elevates the value to the category of quasi-art. Dasha Zhukova, the editor of the magazine at that time, approached highly influential art world individuals such as Hirst and Jeff Koons with the idea of designing tattoos for the issue. Once more, the line between art and tattoo art blurred, evidently bringing the context of the 'artworld' and its legitimating power into scene.

As the case may be, the complexities regarding the representation of tattoo art can be analysed from different perspectives, but opinions will always differ considering the nature of tattoo art as an intangible practice that materialises in the body of a living human being and eventually transforms into art or a document by means of display.

## CONCLUSION

*'The magic is inside the studio'.*

Simone Di Pierno ('Floky')<sup>72</sup>

After reviewing the many processes involved in the legitimisation of tattooing as 'high' art, the rise of their cultural value and their subsequent commodification as material objects, it is clear that an 'artification' of tattooing is happening and it will continue to unfold as long as tattoos are exhibited in recognised cultural institutions.

This legitimisation process wouldn't have been possible without the new era of museums and the arrival of the discipline of visual culture, which established a bridge between art and society, facilitating the exchanges that we can all experience today.

Nevertheless, there is the latent threat of the gentrification and trivialisation of this form of art through its mediatisation, as happened before with other underground practices. In the realm of the tattooers or tattoo artists, there are contradictory opinions about the positive sides of artifying tattoos. Layla from Jolie Rouge Tattoo affirmed that she is tolerant of the changes, but she is also nostalgic for the old times: 'a part of me wishes it would remain still a bit more underground, but the other part of me is very happy with what it has been done to the industry'.<sup>73</sup> The recent recognition of tattoos as fine art provides a frame for conceptualising and investigating issues of authorship and display methods.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, tattooing inherently has a private nature and exhibiting it always brings different problems. The artist and tattoo artist Mike Bakaty confessed during an interview to Marcia Tucker that tattooing is 'the only form of human expression we have left that has magic to it. Everything else is academic'.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, whereas its entrance into academia sets the parameters for theorisation, the ritual and non-public character of tattooing might get lost.<sup>76</sup>

Regarding the most adequate method to display tattoo art, I prefer the photographic reproductions. As Anna mentioned during our interview in London, the photographic material already offers a filter and a medium

through which the tattoo can transform into art without the need for exhibiting the skin directly. I doubt that exhibiting a body-suit in a cultural institution could ever be regarded as 'art', per se. Following Maxine Büchi's opinion, the value of the tattoo remains in its perishable nature, and therefore exhibiting it as a decontextualised fragment doesn't qualify as art, since it's devoid of artistic intention or meaning. Walter Benjamin said that the aura of an art object is tied to the 'here and now',<sup>77</sup> and this couldn't be more true than in the case of tattoo art.

Despite the value of some performances, including tattoo art such as Ulay's *Ulay. Gen.e.t.ration. Ultima ratio*,<sup>78</sup> in which the famous artist combined an artistic action with a series of polaroids, from where I stand, it is the metaphorical resemblance of the photographic medium to the skin that makes it an excellent medium to translate its indexical nature and sensorial attributes in a dignifying manner. A photographic act of preservation honours the nature of the tattooed person when they were (or are) alive, shows the tattoo in all its splendour and respects its ephemeral quality. Furthermore, photographs have the ability to document and present a process rather than a mere product. Anna from Tribu Tattoo in London affirmed that for her, photography was the best medium to exhibit tattoo art. According to her, 'I have many friends who are photographers and prefer to take photographs of people with tattoos, it feels a bit further than simply objectifying the person'.<sup>79</sup>

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Layla Carter, former tattoo artist and manager of Jolie Rouge Tattoo Parlour, London.  
Photo: Sonia Alcaina Gallardo (2019).



Detail of Layla's tattooed hands during the interview.  
Photo: Sonia Alcaina Gallardo (2019).



Simone Di Pierno, "Floky", Italian tattoo artist working in London.  
Photo: Sonia Alcaina Gallardo (2019).



Anna, former tattoo artist, piercer and manager of Tribu Tattoo showing her tattoos.  
Photo: Sonia Alcaina Gallardo (2019).

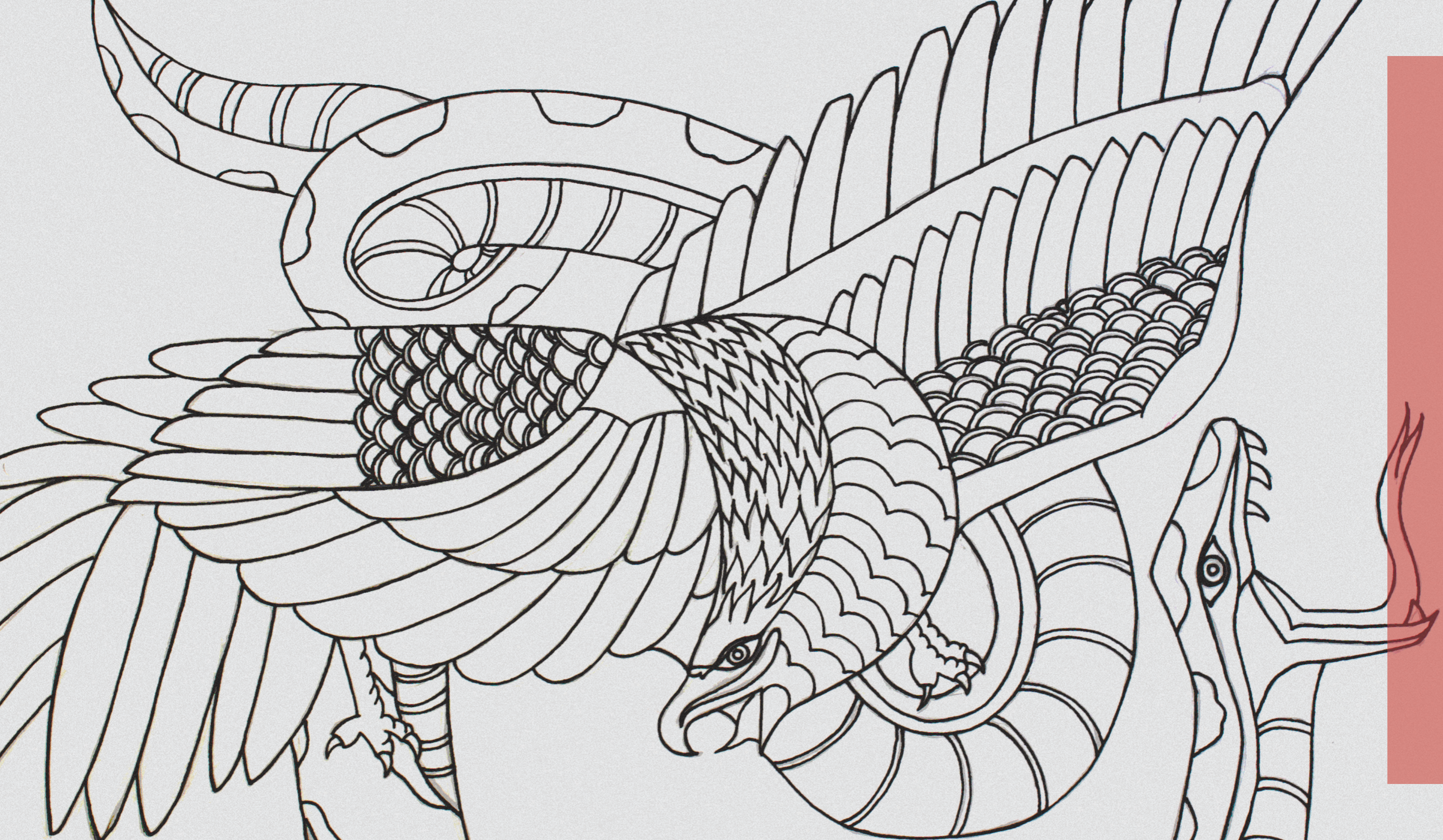


Detail of tattoo designs at A.S.K Tattoo & Piercing in Camden Town.  
Photo: Sonia Alcaina Gallardo (2019).



Entrance of Jolie Rouge Tattoo Parlour in London.  
Photo: Sonia Alcaina Gallardo (2019).





Space





# Mapping as a Part of Methodology in Assessing, Organising and Communicating Heritage Applied in London's Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper elaborates on the diverse methodologies of mapping, relating to the research work we have conducted during this study project in the National Archives and the British Library in London in January 2019. The paper shall help provide an understanding of the general method of mapping and spacial cartography in particular, first through examples in the history of mapping and secondly through narrative methods like 'deep mapping'. The basis for this builds upon archival material researched during our case study. Regarding our case study 'Tattoo Taboo', the special aspect of 'how to map intangibility' arises together with the intangible practice of tattooing.

The first attempts to deal with data in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in London by translating it into a map, visualising a certain set of information and transforming this data into an inherent part of the built structure of a city, were clearly made with the maps of cholera by John Snow in 1853 and Charles Booth's maps of poverty from 1889 and 1898–9. Initially, the methodology of Charles Booth's street study was to classify every street, court and block of buildings, as well as examining the conditions of poverty and the occupations in East London. But with this method it was not possible to cover the whole city in a short time, so Charles Booth and his team decided to change their methodology to recording statistics on poverty on a 'street-by-street basis'.<sup>1</sup>

As I do not want to discuss social cartography with only these examples, I also wish to introduce the reader to two types of maps for a special use: first the *Ordnance Survey Maps* from the executive agency of the UK Government Land used as register entries and second, the so called Goad plans made by Charles E. Goad, which served as fire insurance plans with very specific details.

With this set of plans in mind, I will shift to the question of 'how to map intangibility' and therefore deal with the topic of mapping as a part of a methodology for assessing, organising and communicating heritage—both tangible and intangible, tangible in terms of buildings (here the building of the Royal Aquarium in the

City of Westminster), and intangible in terms of making correlations between the practice of tattooing and its manifestation in the urban fabric. As an example of this manifestation in the urban fabric, I will mention the memories of the tattooist George Burchett related to the Royal Aquarium. His memories operate as a subjective spatial narrative and function as an example of 'deep mapping'.

As a conclusion, during this research study it is necessary to mention the importance of being critical of literature and sources, and of cross-checking primary sources with secondary literature. The general curiosity for researching primary sources in the archive was muted by the fact that the seemingly primary source of the memoirs of George Burchett turned out to be a 'series of half-truths',<sup>2</sup> as Matt Lodder described it in his article.

## DEALING WITH DATA: HISTORY OF SPATIAL MAPPING

### DEALING WITH DATA: DISEASE – POVERTY – RELIGION

Medical Cartography - Maps of Cholera by John Snow, 1853

As the focus of our study project relies on London as the place of action, I would like to start with the history of mapping related to this metropolis. With the Industrial Revolution and rapid city growth, negative repercussions arose, such as housing shortages and growing slums. These dense living conditions, especially among the working class, led to bad hygienic conditions, which evolved into epidemic diseases such as cholera, which spread quickly in certain areas. The very first striking examples in the history of cartography are the maps of cholera by John Snow in 1853, which helped to tackle the phenomena of the spreading of cholera. His methodology was to collect data related to the incidents of deaths from cholera, as well as data on the location of water pumps, and illustrate this data on a map. These mapped statistics led to the hypothesis that cholera is spread through water. This illustrated to a broad audience the correlation between a cluster of cholera cases and contaminated water from the pumps.<sup>3</sup> John Snow's



*Street Map of Soho* from 1853 is one of the first examples of using mapping 'to observe, communicate and analyse statistics'<sup>4</sup> and to show the spatial relationship between a set of data. The cholera epidemics acted as a turning point in the general acknowledgment of the importance of public health issues with the support of the methods of medical mapping. The *Public Health Act* of 1848 intended to improve the quality of housing, and with this the improvement of the urban layout—shifting away from the extremely dense dwellings.<sup>5</sup> It aimed to build drains and remove sewage with sealed pipes. The following *Public Health Act* of 1875 acted on these intentions and enforced the improvement of water sanitation and quality as well as on-site inspections of housing standards.<sup>6</sup>

#### Social Status: Maps of Poverty, Charles Booth

When it comes to an analysis of cause and effect through mapping, the next step in the history of spatial mapping is the switch from medical mapping to social mapping. The correlation between disease and poverty, as well as the correlation between poverty and its spatial setting became part of the focus of scientific attention. This was partly due to mass immigration that had occurred as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, and the attractiveness of London as a vibrant and economically viable metropolis during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> Poverty during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and so during Booth's enquiry, was considered a moral problem that arose as a result of personal failure.<sup>8</sup>

The root of poverty was believed by many to be a result of, for example, alcohol abuse or the absence of churchgoing. The Trafalgar Square riots in 1886 are seen as a turning point in public perception of mass poverty,<sup>9</sup> and shortly thereafter Charles Booth started to conduct his study on poverty in East London.

The street study of Charles Booth and his first series of maps, started in 1889, were named the *Descriptive Map of London Poverty 1889*. An important source of data and information came from School Board visitors.<sup>10</sup> Their task was to understand the children's duty of school attendance in the families. Families with very low living conditions would not have to pay school fees. So these School Board visitors recorded the living

conditions of the families and those records became a very important source of data for the Booth maps.<sup>11</sup> The aim of Charles Booth and his team was to find out the amount of inhabitants who lived in poverty as well as its correlation with under- or unemployment. Therefore, Booth conducted studies on the working conditions among the most important businesses in London.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of his studies, Charles Booth invalidated the widespread belief that poverty is a result of personal failure of the individual.<sup>13</sup> He instead argued that the distribution of economical stability among the working class was a result of a secure labour market with less fluctuation of workforce.<sup>14</sup> Poverty occurred, for example, among people working in the tailoring industry, which fluctuated because of the demand of the market, and resulted in an unstable and unreliable income.<sup>15</sup>

Charles Booth's first edition of his maps, the *Descriptive Map of London Poverty 1889*,<sup>16</sup> were made on a very detailed scale, 6 inches to 1 mile,<sup>17</sup> and were coloured according to the different categories of poverty classes. It started with shadings of black, dark blue and light blue for the lowest grade, the very poor and the standard poverty. In these categories were occasional labourers, casual labourers and labourers with small earnings. Areas on the map marked with purple shading were both, mixed with poverty—small earnings, irregular earnings and casual labourers. The category marked with pink shadings represents those with working-class comfort, and the lower middle class of small tradesman. Red shadings stand for 'well-to-do, middle-class families who keep one or two servants', and finally, the yellow shading represents 'wealthy families, whose houses are rated at 100 pounds or more' and keep several servants.<sup>18</sup> Difficulties in interpreting the map and its colours arise when considering certain classes in detail on a street or even on a house/block level. Basically, they show certain trends of a dominant class in the area. Sometimes a 'combination of colours' is used in the maps 'to indicate that the street "contains a fair proportion of each of the classes represented by the respective colours"'.<sup>19</sup>

The first edition of Charles Booth's *Descriptive Map of London Poverty 1889* is one sheet covering London's East End. In 1891, the map was enlarged 'to four sheets - covering an area from Kensington in the west

to Poplar in the east, and from Kentish Town in the north to Stockwell in the south'.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to his first series, *Descriptive Map of London Poverty 1889*, the second edition of his study, *Map Descriptive of London Poverty, 1898-9*, covered an even larger area of London. Ten years after his first investigations and collection of data, Charles Booth was so convinced by the impact and importance of his work and the value of social mapping that he started a revision of his maps and the enlargement of the area it covered.<sup>21</sup> These twelve sheets covered an 'area from Hammersmith in the west, to Greenwich in the east, and from Hampstead in the north to Clapham in the south'<sup>22</sup> and were published between 1902 and 1903. These maps use the 1897 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 maps as their base.<sup>23</sup> The revision of the maps and with it the street classification was led by information and data from police notebooks. In these police notebooks are comments and impressions of each street by social investigators accompanied by policemen.<sup>24</sup> Due to the slum clearance programmes that took place during this decade, there was a noticeable difference between the maps of 1889 and 1898-9.<sup>25</sup>

#### Religion: The Map of Jewish East London by George Arkell, 1901

There was a special development in social mapping in the East End after Charles Booth due to a large wave of Jewish immigrants who arrived from 1881 onwards in London due to a series of pogroms against Jews in the Russian Empire.<sup>26</sup> George Arkell, Charles Booth's team member, recorded data on the relative density of settlement patterns in Jewish east London.<sup>27</sup> The map of *Jewish East London* was published in 1901 by Arkell as a response to the migration wave.<sup>28</sup> Same as Booth, Arkell used data from school investigators, who collected information on the families' religion during their visits. In both maps, the map of poverty and the map of Jewish East London, the unit of analysis is the street and not on the smaller scale of the building or even the lot. Even though the map by Arkell is a neutral collection of data on the religion of each family, the map gave the impression that the Jewish community in a certain area was much more present and problematic than it really was—which was misleading, and could have easily been misused for other purposes, such as spreading

racist ideologies.<sup>29</sup> It's a reminder and an example of the importance of reading a map critically,<sup>30</sup> and being aware that a map can cover only a single aspect of a far more complex issue.

#### MAPS FOR SPECIFIC TECHNICAL AIMS

##### Land Register Entries: Ordnance Survey Maps as Condition and Consequence of the Renewal of London's Sewage System

The basis of Charles Booth's Poverty Maps and George Arkell's map of Jewish East London were the Ordnance Survey maps. These maps use the Ordnance Survey maps from 1897, which was the most detailed series of mapping in London by the Ordnance Survey.<sup>31</sup> They were published in a volume of 729 sheets and were made and revised from 1891 until 1895.<sup>32</sup> In this chapter, I would like to give an overview of the background of this type of map, which became a major source and a primary foundation for the history of social mapping.

As mentioned in the beginning of this paper, London had to deal with a variety of urban problems during the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as public health concerns due to the spread of epidemic diseases and the lack of an intact sewage system. In order to encourage local authorities to care about the insufficient or even non-existing sewage system, the Poor Law Commissioners advised the Ordnance Survey authority to make detailed maps.<sup>33</sup> As a result of the *Public Health Act* of 1848, local health authorities were established in urban areas.<sup>34</sup> They were in charge of ensuring there was a clean water supply for their districts. They were also given the power to check and control the sewage system and were responsible for the cleaning of the streets. Edwin Chadwick and other health campaigners ensured that a first survey was conducted between 1848 and 1850 at a five-foot to the mile or 1:1,056 scale. This very first survey was carried out by the Metropolitan Commissioners of Sewers.<sup>35 36</sup> The accurate information on heights was an essential part for the planning of sewers. Also the coverage of this large-scale survey played an important role for the development of the urban sanitary system. Due to the approval of a large-scale investigation in 1863 by the Ministry of Finance, a

new milestone for the Ordnance survey maps was set. The investigation took eight years to complete and it took five more years to draw out the sheets of the maps, which were finished in 1876.<sup>37</sup> The revision of the 1890s map mentioned in the beginning of this chapter is based on this original survey.

Fire Insurance Plans: Goad Plans by Charles E. Goad

The Goad plans should be mentioned in this paper because they play an important role when considering historical mapping in London during the late 19th century. As Laura Vaughan emphasises:

*'The development of mapping technology and practices, from the Ordnance Survey to temperance organisations, from municipal boundary commissions to Goad fire insurance plans, all emerged in the context of the nineteenth-century enthusiasm to map the uncharted 'urban interior' of cities as well as to bring scientific rigour to analysing and solving the many ills that had befallen cities.'*<sup>38</sup>

The aim of the Goad fire insurance plans<sup>39</sup> was not to show the sewage systems, but to show details of the structure of buildings, which is essential information for the fire brigade in the case of an outbreak of fire.<sup>40</sup> Their speciality and uniqueness lie in their very strong detailing, which is different from the Ordnance Survey maps. As a consequence of the rapid city growth, and with it the growth of dangerous industrial activities within the city, the possibility of an outbreak of fire was more likely.<sup>41</sup> These fire insurance maps were produced to support insurance companies in evaluating fire risks.<sup>42</sup> The leading company in producing these maps was Charles E. Goad Ltd.<sup>43</sup> The scale of details included addresses for each building as well as details on its use, such as, for example, if it was a building for commercial use or residential use. It also included details such as the height of the building and its construction materials, e.g. if wood or bricks were used, which is important information in the case of a fire, and for planning for the safety and evacuation of a building. The maps also gave information on a possible place of assembly in a building,

and on large groups of people staying in a building. Furthermore, the maps hold information on fire services and water supplies. Charles E. Goad and his company published these fire insurance maps between 1895 and 1924 in several editions.<sup>44</sup> The maps were published in full colour and were made at the metric scale 1:480 (1 inch to 40 feet).<sup>45</sup>

In the previous chapters I mentioned the most important types of maps that were produced and used during the late 19th century in London. They build the basis for the history of mapping in London during this period, but as they can only visualise a specific topic each, it is needed to go one step further and elaborate on the topic of how to map intangible heritage in the context of the intangible practices related to tattooing.

## HOW TO MAP (INTANGIBLE-) HERITAGE?

### MAPPING AS A TOOL FOR VISUALISING HERITAGE VALUES

Even though Charles Booth's Poverty Maps and his 'methodology for social investigation [...] combined direct observation with statistics'<sup>46</sup> dealing with complex problems requires both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the issue of poverty in this case. So the collection of notebooks as a source of, data and the collection of personal stories through interviews are a key part of Booth's estate. The Booth collection includes police notebooks as well as notebooks recording case studies of inmates in workhouses, and notebooks related to the textile trades, called *Jewish notebooks*. These gave insights into the work and life of Jewish employers and workers during the 1880s and 1890s. The police notebooks include descriptive information of the street life in London, with key themes being prostitution, public drinking and drug abuse. The notebooks were written by different police officers and give insights also into their personal subjective observations. An example for comments on prostitution can be found in George H. Duckworth's notebook from 1898:

*'As to prostitution. King's X Metropolitan station is a meeting place for prostitutes and juvenile thieves. Zenthon thinks that the old and ugly woman does as good a business as the younger and better looking.'*<sup>47</sup>

Another vivid example for comments on public alcohol and drug abuse can be found as well in George H. Duckworth's notebook from 1897:

*'[...] the trousers which he wore hung loosely round his hips and legs showing the outlines of his bones and joints which had evidently not been born to wear trousers. The man was an Indian, a Hindoo, and the woman English or perhaps Irish. They were man and wife and kept an opium den. As we entered they were just going to start smoking. Two pipes were reached down from racks on the wall.'*<sup>48</sup>

Personal stories and memories such as these examples are part of the history of a place, the *genius loci* of a certain period of time in London. These personal memoirs, with their subjective character, shape the cultural and historical heritage and the perception of history apart from popular political views and opinions. Considering the variety of values regarding heritage aspects, both tangible and intangible, these very personal stories can emphasise and function as examples of historical value, cultural value and social value according to the *Burra Charter*<sup>49</sup> and illustrate the 'cultural significance'<sup>50</sup> of tattooing as an intangible heritage practice. Apart from the examples that have been historically used for mapping, as mentioned in the beginning of this paper, like topics on poverty or health issues, mapping can also be used as a tool for visualising and communicating these heritage values.

### COMMUNICATING HERITAGE VALUES: CULTURAL MAPPING AND DEEP MAPPING

Cultural Mapping

What is cultural mapping? To mention one definition from the Bangkok Office of UNESCO, cultural mapping

is defined by the following aspects:

*'Cultural mapping has been recognized by UNESCO as a crucial tool and technique in preserving the world's intangible and tangible cultural assets. It encompasses a wide range of techniques and activities from community-based participatory data collection and management to sophisticated mapping using GIS (Geographic Information Systems).'*<sup>51</sup>

The methodology of cultural mapping comprises the integration of personal stories by community members or single persons at a site, reflecting their subjective interpretations. Cultural mapping can go beyond the simple perception of mapping as two-dimensional cartography. With it, the factors that influence people's opinions and actions can be identified and understood better. The documentation of local cultural sources is a key element for the initial basis of cultural mapping. This kind of data includes intangible aspects like memories and personal histories as well as tangible aspects like distinctive buildings or sites related to those memories. Therefore, data can be edited and presented in several ways, such as, for instance, in community activities or projects. The overall aim of this technique is to preserve the identity of a community and 'to help communities recognize, celebrate, and support cultural diversity for economic, social and regional development'.<sup>52</sup> The methodology of deep mapping and creating spatial narratives is one of a wide range of techniques related to cultural mapping.

Deep Maps and Spatial Narratives

The special focus of deep mapping lies on the interaction of human relations, behaviours and their environment. Because of its nonlinear and subjective nature, mapping these issues can become very difficult. 'In many ways deep maps seek to "map" the unmappable and therein lies the challenge', as Trevor M. Harris mentions in his essay 'Deep Geography-Deep Mapping: Spatial Storytelling and a Sense of Place'.<sup>53</sup> Deep maps belong to the category of 'humanistic disciplines maps'<sup>54</sup> and reflect especially on people's personal stories and



memories. These types of reflections have historical dimensions, and the term ‘depth’/‘deep map’ refers to this historically deep dimension. Ethinton and Toyosawa claim that ‘Deep mapping and spatial narratives are interwoven’ because ‘its historical depth gives a narrative dimension’.<sup>55</sup>

Deep maps place themselves in a position where human interactions have historically taken place, and can be fixed both geographically and mentally. Deep maps can be distinguished in two different forms of representation: in pictorial mapping and in textual mapping.<sup>56</sup> With pictorial mapping, we talk about a mainly two-dimensional map that functions by simultaneity. Textual, or semantic, mapping by its nature operates narratologically. Each method of communicating spatial narratives can emphasise its own strength—either in visual terms or in descriptive terms.<sup>57</sup>

The methodology of deep mapping can be applied to the memories of the Tattooist George Burchett, who was an active part of the tattoo culture during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in London. In the book *Memoirs of a Tattooist*,<sup>58</sup> many historical places and specific sites in London can be identified, and are described through a subjective perspective. It needs to be mentioned that these memoirs are edited by Peter Leighton, a pseudonym for a man whose actual name was Edward Spiro, as Matt Lodder elaborates in his Essay *George Burchett: The Man, The Myth, The Legend*, a review of Jon Reiter’s book *King of the Tattooists - the Life and Work of George Burchett*.<sup>59</sup> The actual facts in those memoirs need to be analysed critically. Nevertheless, the memoirs will function as a tool and an example to illustrate the method of deep mapping.

#### George Burchett and His Memoirs of a Tattooist

Although memories can always have poetic and fictional parts attached to them, and despite factual discrepancies in the book *Memoirs of a Tattooist*, these memories can be used as a case study because they are part of an actual subjective narration from the time of the tattoo history of London’s late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fiction and ambiguities belong to the nature of human memories,

and inventing truths, worldviews and ideologies have always been a part of the human world.

There are a few specific sites of importance to Burchett, which are mentioned in the book. I would like to mention here in this context the first episode of Burchett’s life in London, which started off with the memories of the Royal Aquarium in Westminster. George Burchett was born in 1872 in Brighton as a shopkeeper’s son. Impressions of the variety of goods and gifts of his father’s shop were ‘always full of strange exciting shapes and patterns like china glass and porcelain, pots and pans, figurines (...) and engravings’<sup>60</sup> and, these shaped his childhood experiences. His father decorated and sold stones, pebbles and plates as ‘Souvenir[s] from Brighton’.<sup>61</sup> Growing up close to the sea in Brighton, he already had close contact to sailors who were nearly all tattooed. In his memoirs, it’s said that he allegedly started to tattoo his schoolmates, but the school board was not pleased about it. Burchett left school when he was twelve years old and was sent to London to live with relatives.<sup>62</sup> In his memories he describes Hackney, in London’s East End, as having ‘grubby but lively streets’.<sup>63</sup> He began an apprenticeship as a boot repairer in a shop in Hackney,<sup>64</sup> but his ‘soul was in the Westminster Aquarium’. Soon he got himself a job as a billiards-maker in the Aquarium, where ‘the ushers and attendants discovered that he could do tattoos’.<sup>65</sup> The Aquarium is described as a place of heaven for him, ‘It was lined with tanks containing fish, snakes, chameleons and, nearest and dearest to my heart, octopi’.<sup>66</sup> But to his displeasure, ‘the extraordinary Londoners did not even bother to look at the tanks, they came to listen to the concerts’<sup>67</sup> and other attractions, like ‘the dancing Zulu troupes, the swimming ladies from the South Seas and Zazel “Eight Wonder of the Worlds”. He was shot out of mammoth cannon three times nightly’.<sup>68</sup> He also mentions ‘human oddities: dwarfs, bearded ladies and “tattooed savages”’.<sup>69</sup> Soon he ‘made friends with “the tattooed savages” and earned silver money through tattooing the staff’ and ‘occasionally a patron of that great establishment’.<sup>70</sup> By the time he turned 13 in 1885 ‘and saved his first gold sovereign’ from his job in the Royal Aquarium, he decided to go back to Brighton to his parents and to join the Royal Navy. He returned to London in 1896,<sup>71</sup> where he gained his salary from tattooing and shoe repairing. From then on his career as a professional and established tattooist took its course.

Nevertheless, these memories need to be analysed with caution because not all facts are proven to be true. At least they give an impression of what daily life was like at the Royal Aquarium and illustrate why George Burchett, or at least the editor of his memoirs, Peter Leighton, had been fascinated by it. The narrative description of those ‘memoirs’ gives an insight into a forgotten space and time, which disappeared in 1903 through the demolition of the Royal Aquarium in Westminster. This semantic description of intangible memoirs of a certain, but no-longer-existing place, could then be spatially contextualised through a pictorial map, a cartographic representation of a certain area. In this case, narration is achieved pictorially, through ‘visual layering and sequential arrangement of historical data’.<sup>72</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, the issue of how mapping can function as a part of a methodology for assessing, organising and communicating heritage, accompanied by examples of both historical types of maps and more ‘modern’ types of maps like ‘deep maps’, has been elaborated.

What are common to all mentioned maps are the time period and the place—London in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Each of the mentioned maps, however, focus on different aspects of historical and cultural heritage. Some focus on medical aspects (maps of cholera), socio-economic aspects (poverty maps) or technical aspects (Goad plans). Charles Booth’s data collection for his poverty maps also show descriptive aspects, as is observed in cultural mapping and respectively in deep maps. These descriptive aspects help to identify a solution to the question of how to map intangibility. The intangible practice of tattoo culture can be preserved through personal stories. Memoirs can function as spatial narratives to document memories in their intangible nature, as located and specified through tangible aspects, such as a historical building like the Royal Aquarium of Westminster City.

## ENDNOTES

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- 3 Vaughan, *Mapping Society*, 2018, pp. 35–7.
- 4 Ibid, p. 37.
- 5 Ibid, p. 39.
- 6 Yelling, J.A. (1986) *Slums and Slum Clearance in Victorian London*. London: Allen and Unwin, p.13.
- 7 Feldman, D. (1989) ‘The Importance of Being English: Jewish Immigration and the Decay of Liberal England’, in: Feldman, D. and Stedman Jones, G. (eds.) *Metropolis, London: Histories and Representations Since 1800*. London: Routledge, p. 56.
- 8 Vaughan, *Mapping Society*, 2018, p. 69.
- 9 Ibid, p. 69.
- 10 Gibson-Brydon, T.R.C. (2016) *Moral Mapping of Victorian and Edwardian London: Charles Booth, Christian Charity, and the Poor-but-Respectable*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, p.22.
- 11 Vaughan, *Mapping Society*, 2018, p. 71.
- 12 Vaughan, *Mapping Society*, 2018, p. 69.
- 13 Gibson-Brydon, *Moral Mapping of Victorian and Edwardian London*, 2016, p. 139.
- 14 Vaughan, *Mapping Society*, 2018, p. 70.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 To search the map, see: London School of Economics and Political Science Library. (2016) *Charles Booth’s London: Poverty Maps and Police Notebooks* [Online Archive]. Available at: <https://booth.lse.ac.uk> (Accessed: 12 February 2019).
- 17 6 inches to 1 mile correspond to the metric scale 1:10.560–6 inches are equal to 0.1524 meters, 1 mile is equal to 1609.34 meters (1609.34 meters divided by 0.1524 meters means 1 meter corresponds to 10560 meters).
- 18 Vaughan, *Mapping Society*, 2018, p. 71.
- 19 London School of Economics and Political Science Library. (2016b) ‘What were the poverty maps?’, *Charles Booth’s London: Poverty Maps and Police Notebooks* [Online]. Available at: <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/learn-more/what-were-the-poverty-maps> (Accessed: 12 February 2019).
- 20 Ibid.

- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Many of these notebooks have been digitised and can be accessed here: London School of Economics and Political Science Library. (2016) *Charles Booth's London: Poverty Maps and Police Notebooks* [Online Archive]. Available at: <https://booth.lse.ac.uk> (Accessed: 12 February 2019).
- 25 Vaughan, *Mapping Society*, 2018, p. 85.
- 26 Ibid, p. 144.
- 27 Ibid, p. 146.
- 28 Ibid, pp. 144–5.
- 29 Ibid, pp. 150–1.
- 30 Ibid, p. 150.
- 31 National Library of Scotland (2018) *Ordnance Survey Maps, London, Five Feet to the Mile, 1893-1896* [Online]. Available from: <https://maps.nls.uk/os/london-1890s/info.html> (Accessed: 20 February 2019).
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Pennybacker, S.D. (1995) *A Vision for London, 1889-1914: Labour, Everyday Life and the LCC Experiment*. London: Routledge, p. 13.
- 35 National Library of Scotland, *Ordnance Survey Maps*, 2018.
- 36 In the beginning, the very first editions of Ordnance Survey (OS) maps had been printed from engraved copper plates. The 1890s maps were printed by zincography. Advantages of Zincography lay in cheaper productions costs and an easier correction of possible errors. The maps created with Zincography had thicker lines and larger fonts than the engraved copper plates maps. Usually the Ordnance Survey maps were uncoloured.
- 37 National Library of Scotland, *Ordnance Survey Maps*, 2018.
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- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 1 inch to 40 feet correspond to the metric scale 1:480–1 inch is equal to 2.54 cm and 40 feet are equal to 1219.2 cm, (1219.2 cm divided by 2.54 cm means 1 cm corresponds to 480 cm or 4.80 m).
- 46 Vaughan, *Mapping Society*, 2018, p. 87.
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# Urban Space, Social Practices and the Tattoo: Tattooing in Tothill Street and Jermyn Street, London, 1894–1903

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## INTRODUCTION

This essay will explore the urban development of London in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in relation to the practice of tattooing. Specifically, it will look at how urban space interacted with and influenced the popularity and development of social practices such as tattooing. Two largely upper-middle-class areas of Westminster will be used as case studies to determine how the social make-up of certain districts of London influenced late-19<sup>th</sup>-century tattooing practices. The Turkish Baths on Jermyn Street and the Royal Aquarium on Tothill Street were two sites that witnessed the first professional heyday of tattooing amongst the upper classes of London.<sup>1</sup> Although neither the Aquarium nor the Baths can be classed as traditional tattoo parlours in the modern sense, they were nevertheless spaces where the practice of tattooing was cultivated, and then made fashionable, for affluent Londoners. As follows, this essay will examine how the urban structure of London and its accompanying social fabric influenced the practice of tattooing in these two sites between the years 1894, when tattooing as a profession was first listed in the Post Office London Directories and hence legitimised as an occupation, and 1903, when the Royal Aquarium in Tothill Street was destroyed.

Indeed, by the time the Royal Aquarium was demolished, tattooing amongst the middle and upper classes had already begun to fall from fashion, and as a consequence, became increasingly seen as a degenerate and marginalised practice.<sup>2</sup> The following essay will therefore consider how the popularity of cultural practices such as tattooing was influenced by the changing use of urban space in the context of the London metropole. Archival sources such as the Post Office London Directories and Charles Booth's Poverty Maps will be used to consider how class distinctions were manifest in the urban landscape, and how this contributed to the gradual decline in the popularity of tattooing amongst upper-class Londoners after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Accordingly, this essay will explore the link between the fashion of tattooing amongst the upper classes and the urban growth patterns and societal changes that occurred in Jermyn Street and Tothill Street during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

More broadly, this text will examine how certain economic, social and political contexts impact the way space is used in a city, especially regarding the practice of tattooing in London's Tothill Street and Jermyn Street. By exploring societal practices alongside their geographic placement, this essay will argue that space and society both depend on and influence each other. As follows, a sociology of space approach will be used, which is an area that is concerned with how the urban space impacts, interacts with and prompts social, political and cultural developments.<sup>3</sup> Urban space should not just be regarded as a site of social, political and cultural developments, but rather as an important element that both interacts with and prompts these changes. Consequently, this essay asserts that the popularity of tattooing amongst London's upper classes was linked to the urban structure and social context of Westminster during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## INDUSTRIALISATION AND THE CITY OF LONDON

Industrialisation had a profound impact on the district growth, urbanisation and residential social fabric of London. Occurring roughly between the years 1760 and 1840, the Industrial Revolution radically altered the rhythms of everyday life.<sup>4</sup> Smaller, agrarian societies that had previously been dictated by slower and habitual routines converged in the larger, more fast-paced urban spheres such as London, a city dominated by large-scale industry and factory work. Technological developments such as the invention of the steam engine had a profound impact on the increased interconnectivity of London, which in turn helped facilitate urban expansion. The invention of steam power also allowed factories to be located in or near large cities, which contributed to the combined industrialisation and urbanisation that Britain underwent during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>5</sup> From the 1820s onwards, urban life was fundamentally transformed through such developments as street lighting, paved roads, the telegraph and the telephone.<sup>6</sup> The opening of the London Underground in 1863 was especially important for 'shortening' distances within the metropolis, as well as enabling residents to leave the city centre for more spacious suburban developments.<sup>7</sup> Facilitated by more sophisticated transportation, in the



second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the suburbs of London expanded across the county line, and by the outbreak of the First World War, into areas beyond the Greater London boundary.<sup>8</sup>

The technological developments and ensuing societal changes spearheaded during the Industrial Revolution had a profound impact on the residential and societal structure of London. Social, political and economic divisions between the east- and the west-ends quickly became apparent. Loosely described as the industry-city divide, the east-end, with its hard industry and factories, became seen as a site of migration and the working class<sup>9</sup> and was accordingly associated with 'depravity, destitution and danger'.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, the west-end, with its service industries, luxury goods and textile manufacturing, became associated with wealth, opulence and the upper classes.<sup>11</sup> Poverty zones could be found around the dock areas, despite the slum clearances, which took place in London throughout the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> Increasing numbers of people moving into the city from the countryside, coupled with a lack of organised city planning, exacerbated the problem of a closely packed band of poverty districts situated by the docks area.<sup>13</sup> Paradoxically, the docks were also seen as the 'ultimate symbol of commercial and imperial modernisation' because they represented the power of the British Empire and the subsequent increase in wealth and global influence of London.<sup>14</sup> In many cases, the slum areas circling the docks were surrounded or interspersed by more prosperous areas such as the generally salubrious borough of Westminster.<sup>15</sup> Divisions between the rich and poor in London were therefore not simply divided between the east-end and the west-end. Rather, areas that were predominately occupied by the upper-middle class such as Westminster could also neighbour slums that were mere streets away from opulence and wealth.

### THE CITY AS A SOCIO-SPATIAL PROCESS: SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

The way in which these class divisions were manifest in the urban landscape is important for understanding

how societal developments are both conceived from and influence the material structure and geography of a city. Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sociologists increasingly began to explore the relationship between populations and their urban environment.<sup>16</sup> Carrying on from this school of thought, modern sociologist Laura Vaughan argues that the 'City' can be conceived of as a 'socio-spatial process' that is comprised of three aspects: the social, economic and political.<sup>17</sup> As follows, the social structure of the city consists of households, communities, kin relations and ethnic and social groups; as an economic structure, the city is characterised by interlinked markets in goods, land and labour; and as a political structure, the city is composed of networks of institutions and interest groups.<sup>18</sup> Because metropolises can be thought of as both geographical spaces and societal structures, it follows that cultural practices such as tattooing can be linked not only to the social, political and economic contexts of their time, but also to the very urban structure and space of the city itself. Accordingly, this essay will examine how the popularity of tattooing in Tothill Street and Jermyn Street was linked not only to the cultural context of London society during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but also to the physical fabric of these urban spaces.

### POVERTY AND OPULENCE: THE VICTORIANS AND MAPPING

In a response to increased urbanity, Victorian Britons used several strategies to both understand their cities and counteract threats to the order of society, one of which was mapping.<sup>19</sup> Victorians documented and described their cities through many forms of maps, the more notable of which recorded the spread of disease or poverty, which are of course interlinking conditions. The more famous of these maps are the Charles Booth Poverty Maps, which depict the poverty lines of London at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> By surveying London districts between 1897 and 1900, members of the Booth Inquiry recorded and therefore made visible how class distinctions were manifest in the city's urban-landscape.<sup>21</sup> Districts such as Westminster were recorded as predominately upper middle class or 'well-to-do', whilst areas directly across from the Thames River, such as St. Paul and St. Alphege, were documented as being

occupied by the lower class 'poor', and in some cases the lowest class of all: the apparently 'vicious, semi-criminal' class.<sup>22</sup>

The way poverty and opulence were recorded in the context of the London metropolis reveals how certain Victorians viewed and understood their city. London's physical form and layout were likened to a rabbit warren, with wider, more open streets associated with cleanliness, the upper class and opulence, whilst the more narrow, cramped streets associated with corruption, depravity and poverty.<sup>23</sup> Overcrowding in the Victorian context was therefore linked to immorality, whilst poverty was associated with the insect world, the implication being that the poor were apparently 'non-human' in their behaviour.<sup>24</sup> Animal imagery used to describe some of the city's 'lesser' inhabitants was accompanied by the idea that a flourishing city should function in the same manner as a healthy human body. For example, new sewerage systems were 'intestines' that allowed waste to be disposed of; parks were 'lungs', allowing fresh air in; and the streets 'circulatory systems', which had to flow freely for optimal health.<sup>25</sup> Predominately upper-middle-class areas such as Westminster, with its straight, wide streets and location near Green Park and Hyde Park, were examples of how a well-functioning 'city-as-body' could act as a remedy for the squashed, narrow streets that housed London's 'undesirable' slums.

### INDUSTRIALISATION, THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS AND TATTOOING

The rise of the middle class during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was an important development that facilitated the first heyday of professional tattooing in Britain. Most Victorians saw their society as divided into three hierarchical spheres: the working class, middle class and upper class.<sup>26</sup> By 1850, the middle class made up almost one-quarter of London's population, and between 1851 and 1871, the number of middle-class families doubled.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to the working class, the British middle class was never predominantly associated with manufacturing and industry, but rather orientated towards service industries and the sale of commercial goods.<sup>28</sup> The growth of the middle class during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was in a large part attributed to the expansion of clerical and

sales work, which allowed aspiring working-class men and women to become lower middle class.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the emergence of large shops such as department stores proliferated this 19<sup>th</sup>-century retailing culture and its associated fascination with luxury.<sup>30</sup> The rise of textile industries, supported by the expanding British Empire, also propounded this middle-class consumer culture. Indeed, the southeast of England was dubbed 'the world's first large-scale consumer society'.<sup>31</sup>

For certain members of British society, the standard of living rose considerably post-Industrial Revolution. This was especially true for the expanding middle class, whose members enjoyed a more disposable income and higher standard of living than the working class.<sup>32</sup> After the mid-century, the middle class had extra income to spend on more decadent pleasures such as alcohol, leisure pursuits and holidays.<sup>33</sup> The rise of services such as cafes, clubs and places of recreation also meant that service workers both provided and enjoyed many of these urban leisure activities that were coming into vogue in late Victorian Britain, such as participation in sport, travel and games.<sup>34</sup> This 'fashionable' consumption that characterised the late 19<sup>th</sup> century middle class culture also included tattooing, which remained a popular, albeit unorthodox, activity for the upper classes until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>35</sup>

### DECADENCE AND THE 'CULTURAL ELITE': TATTOOING AND THE UPPER CLASSES

The link between the popularity of tattooing amongst the upper classes and a corresponding 'onslaught of decadence' within the cultural elite is explained by historian Alistair O'Neill in his book *London: After Fashion*.<sup>36</sup> In this publication, O'Neill argues that the pursuit of tattoos amongst the upper classes was associated with three main factors; a rejection of bourgeoisie values; a fascination with the 'exotic'; and an interest in art as a form of exploration.<sup>37</sup> A captivation with decadence, defined as the superiority of artifice and a visual interest in the depraved and the extreme, thus contrasted the apparently well-to-do salubrity of Westminster.<sup>38</sup> Thus, although tattooing was an accepted

form of artistic pursuit for the upper classes during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the fascination with the practice exemplified the paradoxes implicit within the decadent, consumerist culture of the upper classes. The juxtaposition of the visual luxury and wealth of Westminster with more risqué pursuits such as tattooing ensured that the upper classes could flirt with 'acceptable' levels of notoriety and extremity without bearing the prejudice that would later associate tattooing with pathological criminality.

### 19<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY PERCEPTIONS OF TATTOOING: EUROPE AND BRITAIN

However, perceptions surrounding the act of tattooing and the tattooed during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century differed considerably between the continent of Europe and Britain. In the European context, tattoos were more readily associated with deviant behaviour and criminal intent. These negative perceptions of tattooing were increasingly supported during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when lawyers began the practice of concluding a person's moral standards and criminal intent from their exterior appearance.<sup>39</sup> By the 1880s, criminological discourse argued that the pursuit of tattoos was symptomatic of an apparently 'collectively pathological criminal class', with 19<sup>th</sup>-century criminal theorist Cesare Lombroso citing 'vengeance, vanity and superstition' as the alleged primary motivations behind acquiring tattoos.<sup>40</sup> In the European context of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, therefore, tattoos were associated with 'deviant' and 'counter-normative' bodies.<sup>41</sup>

In contrast, tattoos in late-19<sup>th</sup>-century Britain, especially in London, were a much more accepted form of body modification, partly due to their short-lived popularity amongst the upper echelons of society. Not fully stigmatised until post-WWII due to their association with tattooed Nazi camp survivors, tattooing during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in London enjoyed both popularity and notoriety amongst the upper classes. Indeed, O'Neill argues that the upper class fascination with tattooing during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was symptomatic of a wider condition of 'cultivated languor and self-conscious reflection' that characterised the culture of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century privileged class.<sup>42</sup> Seen

as a kind of leisure activity, body modifications such as tattooing could be acquired in public places of recreation, such as the Turkish Baths in Jermyn Street and the Royal Aquarium on Tothill Street.

### TATTOOING AND THE TURKISH BATHS: SUTHERLAND MACDONALD

The Turkish Baths were one such site that witnessed the rise and fall in the popularity of tattooing amongst the upper classes in London during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Located at number 76 Jermyn Street and opened 1862, the Turkish Baths were situated in the middle class, well-to-do area of Westminster.<sup>43</sup> Enconced amongst gentlemen's fashion retailers, tailors, hotels and barber shops, the Baths became known as a site of opulent relaxation, leisure and tattoos. Establishing a tattoo practice at the Baths in 1882, Sutherland Macdonald was the first tattooist in Britain whose profession was recorded, and therefore legitimised, in the Post Office London Directories in 1894, where he apparently remained London's only tattooist for four years.<sup>44</sup>

As the self-declared 'leading tattooist' in London, Macdonald offered a unique and boutique experience especially designed to entice upper class customers.<sup>45</sup> Obtaining the first British electric tattoo machine patent in 1894, Macdonald was also the first British tattoo artist who established a permanent studio where he tattooed paying members of the general public, which in this case was situated in the downstairs rooms of the Turkish Baths.<sup>46</sup> A large factor in Macdonald's popularity amongst the upper classes was the fact that he advertised his practice in the London Post Office Directories. Associated with a fee, the inscription of a profession into the Directories demonstrated Macdonald's existing wealth and presumed success even by 1894, when he first advertised his studio. In addition, advertising in the Directories ensured that Macdonald attracted a certain kind of clientele, who had both the privilege and literacy to access the registers and acquire a tattoo. Therefore, by advertising in the Directories, Macdonald's practice gained a certain kind of legitimacy that was propelled by the situation of his parlour in the upmarket Jermyn Street. Contributing to this reputation of exclusivity and

prestige, the location of Macdonald's studio amongst the tailors, gentlemen's clubs and art dealers of Jermyn Street was in keeping with his high-class studio and its associated popularity amongst the upper echelons of society in late-19<sup>th</sup>-century London.

The high-quality work of Macdonald also contributed to the exclusive and posh reputation of his studio, thereby attracting the upper echelons of society. Macdonald's artistic style ranged from flags, badges, initials and dates to larger, more colourful depictions of dragons, tigers and copies of famous prints and salon paintings.<sup>47</sup> An article on his work appearing in the *Boston Daily Globe* in 1892 asserted that through Macdonald's designs, tattooing had been 'elevated to a place among the arts' and also made into a 'great fad'.<sup>48</sup> Macdonald was later praised as 'the most artistic tattooer in the world', made famous for his 'exquisite colouring and softest gradations of tint'.<sup>49</sup> The fact that Macdonald enticed his clientele with high-quality 'artistic' designs was in keeping with the parlour's situation in the generally salubrious, luxury area in and surrounding Jermyn Street.

Furthering this reputation of exclusivity and prestige, Macdonald also claimed to have invented the term 'tattooist'. By using the name 'tattooist', an expression derived from abbreviating the words 'tattoo artist', Macdonald distinguished his practice from that of a mere 'tattooer', which he suggested associated his profession too closely with the 'workaday business' of a plumber or a bricklayer.<sup>50</sup> By using a select term to distinguish his practice from everyday labour, Macdonald legitimised his practice of tattooing as a kind of exclusive profession, thereby attracting the attention of the decadence-driven members of upper class London society. Working in the basement of the Baths, and 'well turned out in a suit and bow-tie', Macdonald's studio also offered cigarettes and drinks to his clients, which enticed a specific, higher-echelon clientele, who then proliferated the association of tattooing as a decadent leisure pursuit.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, throughout his career Macdonald boasted about an elite clientele that included King George VI, the Tsar Nicholas of Russia and Lord Lonsdale.<sup>52</sup> The heady atmosphere of the Baths, coupled with Macdonald's underground, albeit luxurious tattoo studio therefore contributed to the exclusive, hedonistic quality that defined tattooing practices in Jermyn Street.

### TATTOOING AND THE ROYAL AQUARIUM: TOM RILEY AND ALFRED SOUTH

However, Macdonald was not the only high-class tattooist in Westminster. The Royal Aquarium was also a popular location for aspiring tattooists, as well as the backdrop of a tattoo fashion-craze that captivated the upper classes during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Opened in 1876 by the Prince of Wales, the Royal Aquarium was advertised as a place of 'entertaining education'.<sup>53</sup> Situated on Tothill Street, the Aquarium encapsulated the kind of decadent leisure that mesmerised upper-class Victorians during this period. By the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, working-class leisure had become more commercialised and travelling exhibitions showcasing weird and wonderful attractions became increasingly popular forms of amusement.<sup>54</sup> This kind of entertainment was frequently showcased at the Aquarium, where the attractions often descended into risqué spectacles and salacious entertainment, such as the exhibition of heavily tattooed men and women.<sup>55</sup>

Between the years 1896 and 1899, Tom Riley held a tattoo stall at the Aquarium.<sup>56</sup> As a professional, Riley's tattoos were advertised in the *Sporting Times* in 1898, where he boasted of introducing colours into the art.<sup>57</sup> Targeting a clientele interested in individuality, Riley promised 'designs to suit every taste, 200 of which are original'.<sup>58</sup> Although individuality and non-conformity contradicted the widespread popularity of tattooing amongst the upper classes, Riley's advertising was in keeping with the more bohemian, non-conformist activities that occurred at the Aquarium. In this sense, whilst tattooing at the Aquarium was directed at the upper classes, it differed from the elite exclusivity publicised at Macdonald's Jermyn Street practice. The advertising of tattooing practices at the Aquarium depicts how the pursuit of decadence, especially in relation to tattooing, expressed the upper class's desire to indulge in non-conformist, bohemian activities that took place alongside more risqué, salacious activities at Tothill Street.

After occupying Riley's stall in 1899, Alfred South took over tattooing activities at the Aquarium.<sup>59</sup> Advertising in the *Sporting Times* in 1899, South, like Macdonald, directed his tattoos towards an elite clientele, boasting 'high-class' tattooing and 'first-class workmanship' that



had backing from the 'highest testimonies from leading members of Society'.<sup>60</sup> Whilst Riley's advertisements focused on originality, South's advertisements were similar to Macdonald's in that they proclaimed high-class, boutique artistry. South's late-19<sup>th</sup>-century commercials therefore indicate a re-emphasis of tattooing as high-class artistry at the Aquarium, which was a conception of tattooing that Macdonald had initiated in Jermyn Street in the early 1890s.

However, by 1900, South had moved on from the Aquarium and to a new studio located in Charing Cross, also in the borough of Westminster.<sup>61</sup> An advertisement published in the London Directories in 1900 offering 'hundreds of original and copyright unique and grotesque designs to choose from', revealed a shift in the conception of tattooing from a cultivated and refined upper class pursuit.<sup>62</sup> Although boasting the 'highest testimonials from...leading members of society', the use of the word 'grotesque' to advertise a decadent pursuit exemplifies just how closely the practice of tattooing for the upper class flirted with the profane.<sup>63</sup>

## TATTOOING AND THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Indeed, by the end of the Victorian era in 1901, the popularity of tattooing amongst upper class Britons began to fade. The widespread use of the electric tattoo machine after the turn of the century made tattoos easier to both acquire and execute.<sup>64</sup> The idea that the tattoo was a signifier of individual identity therefore shifted once tattooing became available to 'lower' classes, and not just those who could afford to spend the time and means to adorn their bodies with art. As the practice gained popularity and became more and more ubiquitous, it lost that exclusive, decadent quality that had drawn the upper echelons of British society to the practice in the first place. The literal and figurative cheapening of the activity ensured that the risqué exclusivity that had encircled the art during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century gradually disappeared. Paradoxically, that upper class craze that had assigned tattoos their popularity in London during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was what eventually denoted the art as a marginalised and degenerate practice in the post-Victorian era.

In addition, the increasingly negative association of tattooing with deviance and criminality, first spearheaded in Europe, meant that by the time the Aquarium was destroyed in 1903, the practice had already fallen from fashion amongst the upper classes.<sup>65</sup> Tastes began to shift and the line between decadence and degeneracy gradually blurred. Once seen as an exclusive and privileged activity in which upper class Britons indulged, by the turn of the century tattooing began to be associated with the kinds of lascivious and debauched activities that had increasingly taken place at the Aquarium. Indeed, after the Aquarium's destruction it was re-erected as a Methodist Central Hall, which ended the era of tattooing practices that had taken place in this urban establishment.

Although Jermyn Street and Tothill Street remained upmarket areas throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the upper class craze that encircled the practice of tattooing during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century progressively diminished. London's growing prosperity meant that the privileged classes could afford to move away from the overcrowded inner city, lessening their presence in the city centre and ensuring that the activities that took place in these urban spaces changed to accommodate different classes.<sup>66</sup> At the same time that the middle classes gradually moved away from the city centre, tattoo studios and parlours converged in central yet apparently undesirable zones such as the historically poor dock areas. Despite Macdonald's Jermyn Street studio remaining in business until his death in the late 1930s, the practice's descent into ubiquity and popularity paradoxically ensured its decline in popularity amongst the upper classes. Symbolically, the Turkish Baths were closed in 1941, just weeks before the buildings were destroyed in the London blitz in April of the same year.<sup>67</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This essay attempted to consolidate a history of the tangible urban spaces of London with the intangible heritage associated with tattooing practices. It tracked how the changing urban environment and social fabric of the area of Westminster affected the popularity of tattooing amongst the upper classes, specifically in relation to tattooing practices at the Turkish Baths in Jermyn Street and the Royal Aquarium on Tothill Street. By exploring the city's historic urban development and social fabric in these two streets, this essay considered how the urban structure of London influenced the perception and practice of tattooing from 1894, when tattooing was first inscribed into the London Directories as a legitimate profession, until 1903, when the Aquarium was destroyed. By looking at the interaction between urban space and social practices, this essay contributes to the wider 'Tattoo Taboo' study project by exploring how the perception and practice of tattooing in Westminster and the context of the London metropolis changed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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# Mapping Tattooing Practices in London: Westminster between the 19th and the 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

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## INTRODUCTION

### RESEARCH AIMS

This paper aims to present the mapping of tattooing practices in Westminster, London, by analysing what businesses developed alongside the Hammam Turkish Baths and the Royal Aquarium between the years 1890 and 1903. The research looks closely at the specific types of businesses that were established around two places of interest, the Hammam Turkish Baths and the Royal Aquarium, and attempts to identify the general clientele of the immediate surrounding neighbourhoods. With this and further research, one could draw conclusions about the general social acceptance and urban integration of tattooing practices. Using data related to the types of businesses that made up the urban fabric of areas of Westminster, London, from 1890 - 1903, the paper aims to demonstrate that the two areas of interest were characterised by leisure and consumption, and were mainly frequented by members of the upper social classes, which can be concluded from its exclusive establishments such as special men's clubs, private hotels,<sup>1</sup> wine merchants<sup>2</sup> and even diamond merchants.<sup>3</sup> Choosing a set time period, we analysed the durability of the settled businesses by considering any strong fluctuations in changing businesses or the stability of established businesses, which were registered in the yellow pages over various years. Overall, the data collected was used to highlight the correlations between the urban fabric and the establishment of tattoo parlours within the two sites of interest.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF LONDON

Industrialisation had a profound impact on both the urban structure of London and the civic life of its inhabitants. Urban developments such as the invention of street lighting, sewerage, paved roads and public transportation transformed the metropolis by shortening travel times and increasing urban development in both breadth and density. The manufacturing industry grew, which prompted waves of migration to the city.<sup>4</sup> Due to a series of pogroms against Jews in the Russian Empire, Jewish immigration increased from 1881 onwards<sup>5</sup> such that a density of settlement patterns in Jewish east

London became identified in 1901 through statistics and maps elaborated by the sociologist George Arkell.<sup>6</sup> More fundamentally, industrialisation altered the regular rhythms of life, which had previously been dictated by the availability of sunlight, small-scale manual labour and the passing of the seasons. As a result of 19<sup>th</sup>-century industrialisation, London became divided, with hard industry and factories defining the East End, and service industries, luxury goods and textile manufacturing associated with the West End, as seen in the borough of Westminster.

Two sites that saw the growing popularity of tattooing amongst upper class Londoners during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were the Hammam Turkish Baths in Jermyn Street and the Royal Aquarium in Tothill Street. Both located in the affluent area of Westminster, these establishments bore witness to what art historian Matt Lodder describes as the first professional 'hey-day' of tattooing amongst the upper classes of London.<sup>7</sup>

The fascination with the practice of tattooing amongst the late-19<sup>th</sup>-century upper class was linked to what historian Alistair O'Neill described as the advent of a 'cultivated languor and self-conscious reflection',<sup>8</sup> which he argues came to characterise the culture of the elite just before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> This growing interest in body modification was linked to the increased participation of the upper class in leisure activities such as sport, games and holidays. This shift was largely enabled by an increase in service industries, such as clerical and sales work, which elevated some in the working class to the lower middle class.<sup>10</sup> Facilitated by an increase in service industries, the upper class expanded and the standard of living for its members rose. The upper tiers of society could therefore afford to spend more time and money on leisure activities, which also extended to tattooing practices.

## METHODOLOGY

### ARCHIVE DATA COLLECTION

The field research was carried out in January 2019. In preparation for working in the National Archives, a literature review on the most important representatives

of both tattoo history and practices as well as on mapping sociological phenomena preceded the trip. Literary works and publications on the history of tattooing, especially those by Matt Lodder (e.g. his publication ‘Neo-Victorian Tattooing’ from 2013), were utilised heavily within our research. We also had an in-person interview with Matt Lodder during our fieldwork, which clarified further questions on the history of tattooing in Westminster in our places of interest, the Hammam Turkish Baths and the Royal Aquarium. Laura Vaughan’s 2018 publication *Mapping Society* provided invaluable insight into the work of Charles Booth, including his *Descriptive Map of London Poverty 1889* and its spacial dimensions of social cartography.<sup>11</sup>

To gather the information used to create the maps, we utilised the *Post Office London Directories* available in the National Archives in Kew, England. As our research topic focused on a very early stage of the development of tattoo culture in London, our research efforts concentrated on creating maps that would show the economic activity of Westminster, which could then be used to interconnect the first known indications of tattoo practices in the city within certain economic and social contexts. Initially operating under the commonly held premise that the early development of tattoo culture in Europe was heavily related to military and sailing practices, we expected that activities related to these professions would be located in these areas. However, on the contrary, businesses associated with fashion, food and high culture were much more prevalent, which suggests that tattooing practices in Westminster could be linked to the development of other forms of business establishments surrounding the Hammam Turkish Baths and the Royal Aquarium.

Data from the *Post Office London Directories* was collected for the years 1870 to 1940. The reason for using this large time frame was to obtain as much data as possible relating to trends in the types of business establishments found in the areas surrounding the Royal Aquarium and the Hammam Turkish Baths, as the records are vast and we had limited time for archival work. To set frames and rules for our research and to navigate through the structure of the *Post Office London Directories*, we decided to first concentrate on collecting data on the profession of interest itself: Tattooing. Second,

we looked at the data related to business establishments sorted out by the streets directly surrounding our two sites: the Hammam Turkish Baths and the Royal Aquarium. In the area of St. James, this included the following streets: Bury Street, Ryder Street, Jermyn Street and Duke Street. In the area of Westminster, this included Tothill Street, Dartmouth Street, Parker Street, Lewisham Street and Prince’s Street.

### MAP RESEARCH IN THE ARCHIVES

In the National Archives and the British Library, we researched, photographed and collected data from the following maps: *Ordnance Survey Maps, London, Five Feet to the Mile* and *Ordnance Survey Maps, London, Five Feet to the Mile*, Sheet VII.83 1896.<sup>12</sup>

The original aim of the Ordnance Survey maps was to collect accurate information on heights for the planning of sewers. The public health concerns arising from the spread of epidemic diseases and the lack of an intact sewage system used to be one of the major sets of urban problems that the authorities had to tackle. In order to encourage local authorities to care about the insufficient or even non-existing sewage system, the *Public Health Act* of 1848 prescribed the local health authorities to ensure clean water supply for their districts and to check and control the sewage system, and they were also made responsible for the cleaning of the streets.<sup>13</sup> These Ordnance Survey maps provide a reliable base of information related to plot of land, as well as the properties and the streets of the City of Westminster.

Other important maps researched in the National Archives and the British Library were the fire insurance plans: Goad plans by Charles E. Goad, British Library, Archive, *Insurance Plan of London West*, Volume IX, sheet 208, 1889, British Library, Archive, *Insurance Plan of London West*, Volume A sheet 7, 1891. These plans show details related to the structure of buildings, which is essential information for the fire brigade in the case of an outbreak of fire.<sup>14</sup> This included addresses for each building, as well as details on use—such as, for example, if it was a building for commercial use or residential use. It also included details such as the height of the building and its construction materials (e.g. if wood or bricks were

used), which is important information for planning for the safety and evacuation of a building in the event of a fire. The maps also provided a possible place of assembly in a building, and indicated when large groups of people were staying in a building.

The Goad fire insurance plans by Charles E. Goad became essential tools for our research and for the elaboration of our maps, particularly due to their inclusion of addresses, house numbers and uses of structures.

### TRANSCRIBING DATA

After sorting out and transcribing the data into Excel spreadsheets, we concentrated on the time period between 1890 and 1903 for the maps, as these years were well-represented in the archives and we had limited time for our work. Six categories were developed based on shared themes and were used to organise the types of business establishments collected from the Post Office Directories. The first category was *Manufacturing*, which is defined as businesses in which someone makes things and trades. For example, there is no shop within the workspace of a carpenter. The second category is *Retail*, or someone who sells a product (though they can also make the product). The main stipulation for fitting into this category is that the product was sold in the space itself. The third category is *Leisure*, which includes establishments like gentlemen’s clubs, bars, cafes, taverns and lodging houses. The fourth category is *Food*, meaning groceries and restaurants. The fifth category is *Services*, which includes, for example, solicitors, hairdressers and civil engineers. And the sixth and final category is the *Tattoo Parlours* themselves.

### (RE-)DRAWING A ‘NEW’ OLD MAP

The basis of the map we have redrawn is the Ordnance Survey map edition *Five Feet to the Mile*, Sheet VII.83 1896 for the Area of the Royal Aquarium. For the Area of St. James/Turkish Baths, we used the Ordnance Survey map edition *Five Feet to the Mile*, Sheet VII.72 1895 as the basis for our map. To obtain more detailed information on house numbers and addresses, we

combined these maps with the Goad plans, specifically the edition *Insurance Plan of London West*, Volume A sheet 7, 1891 for the Area of the Royal Aquarium, and *Insurance Plan of London West*, Volume IX, sheet 208, 1889 for the Area of St. James/Turkish Baths.

Together, the Ordnance Survey maps and the fire insurance plans provided a good combination of the general plot system of the considered area and more detailed data for each building. As explained earlier, the Ordnance Survey maps provide a reliable basis for plot of land, as well as the properties and the streets of the City of Westminster. For the detailed information on addresses, house numbers and uses—either commercial use or residential use—the Goad plans, with their very detailed information, served as the other important source. The first step was to redraw the plot system on the basis of the Ordnance Survey maps in order to create the map itself. The second step was to add house numbers and other detailed information found in the Goad plans, such as, for example, information about existing courtyards and uses of certain houses or names of specific establishments (e.g. Mason’s Yard, Boodle’s Club and Portland Club). Comparing the two types of maps revealed their consonance as well as the reliability of their information. Likewise, the consonance between the information on the businesses and establishments provided in the Goad plans and in the *Post Office London Directories* was also proof of the veracity of the data.

### TRANSLATING THE DATA THROUGH A COLOUR SCHEME AND ONTO THE MAP

After transcribing the data in our digital directory, the decision was made to make a set of two maps for each site, the Turkish Baths in Jermyn Street and the Royal Aquarium in Westminster, resulting in four maps total. For each site, one map would show the *Status Quo 1890*, with the existing businesses of this particular year. We chose the year 1890 as a starting point because this year corresponds to the earliest basis of our map: the Goad plan *Insurance Plan of London West*, Volume IX, sheet 208. It was published in 1889, so it offer us a reliable basis for the following decade. Due to the collection of a large amount of data, it was clearly necessary to set a certain scope and concentrate on a limited time



period. We decided to end the time period in focus with the destruction of the Royal Aquarium in 1903. For the first map, *Status Quo 1890*, we indicated each category with the use of one colour and marked each building with the corresponding colour from the associated category. *Manufacturing* is marked in red, *Retail* in yellow, *Leisure* in blue, *Food* in purple and *Services* in green.

The second map, *Status Quo 1903*, deals with the economic development of the businesses from 1890 until 1903, and shows the dominating industries of the time, based on the duration of their operations. We therefore used the same categories. To express the duration of each business, we applied a colour code onto the map: the bolder the colours, the longer the duration of the establishment. In contrast, the buildings that are marked with faint colours were more short-lived. The colour code for the category *Manufacturing* has a spectrum from light red to dark red. *Retail* is marked from a light yellow to an orange tone. *Leisure* has a colour spectrum of light blue to dark blue, *Food* from pink to purple and *Services* from light green to dark green.

We set rules for the colour code as follows: for the map *Status Quo 1903*, we started in the year 1903 and considered all business that we had data for in 1903. Then we counted the years backwards to establish how long this type of business, depending on its category, was in existence. Therefore, the time period of existence determines the colour selection. If information was missing between the years but the data was clear that the same business with the same name appeared in the years before and after, we assumed that this business had existed over the missing years. In many cases, the 1903 map highlighted the fact that in the areas of the Turkish Baths and St. James, there had been long-established businesses that persisted throughout the entire period we examined (1890–1903).

## INTERPRETATION

### CRITIQUE AND EVALUATION

This research is only a fraction of a much larger, comprehensive area of research in the spatial and social history of tattooing, as well as in the fields of urban

planning and art history. The multifaceted and diverse reality of London could be a major benefit for its tattoo communities, but it also makes it much harder to identify the specific influences on its own tattoo culture. While looking at smaller and more defined tattoo communities (i.e. naval organisations, religious communities, prison groups),<sup>15</sup> it can be easier to identify the specific criteria that influenced or impacted that community's tattoo culture by cross referencing with specific cultural, geographic and institutional data points, whereas 'London' is a diverse population that has multitudes of sub-communities with diverse cultural, geographic and institutional data points to examine in reference to tattoo culture.

Currently, this research only has limited data (i.e. business name and type), which provides insight into the types of people in the area, especially when comparing it with the Booth maps, but does not comprehensively examine the existing economic and social influences. For example, we did not gather the price ranges of products or the clientele of these shops, which could help indicate who was frequenting these establishments by examining which economic class of people could have afforded such goods or needed them for their own livelihoods. Also, the fundamental problem with using correlation or causation within this research is that there is no way to prove that customers of these businesses were also customers of the tattoo parlour.

With the sources used, further research is needed into who, exactly, had access to publish within the yellow pages from the Post Office London Directories. If there was a cost, this could be restrictive for some businesses compared to those who had the economic ability to afford an entry. There was a small amount of text advertisements accompanying the listing, which were also referenced. These certainly provide qualitative insight into the time, but were crafted by businesses in order to maximise their clientele and profit, thus a critical lens must be applied to any claims they made (being the 'best' or 'most experienced' tattooist for example).

## CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE URBAN FABRIC AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TATTOO PARLOURS

Within the greater theme of *Mapping Tattooing Practices in Westminster London*, this research and mapping focused primarily on discovering what businesses developed alongside the Hammam Turkish Baths and the Royal Aquarium during the period between 1890 and 1903. Our *Status Quo* maps show the neighbourhoods immediately surrounding tattoo parlours in Westminster London in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the correlation between them and the existing types of industry and businesses and their durability over the course of a specific decade. O'Neill describes the 1890s as follows: 'at the end of the nineteenth century in late Victorian London, a curious vogue for tattooing prevailed for a short time among the upper classes'.<sup>16</sup> The time period of 1890 to 1903 was selected because of the frequent use of the Hammam Turkish Baths and the tattoo parlour of Sutherland Macdonald, which was in the same building as the Baths, during this time, as was described by O'Neill and mentioned in advertisements like those in the *Strand Magazine* in 1897.<sup>17</sup>

This decade also corresponds with the beginning of the street study for Charles Booth's poverty maps in 1889, which depict poverty pockets in late-19<sup>th</sup>-century London.<sup>18</sup> The regularity of income and poverty is correlated, and so the fluctuation of the employment market is one of the most important findings in the Booth maps.<sup>19</sup> As Laura Vaughan mentioned, 'people working in certain industries, such as tailoring, which suffered from ebbs and flows throughout the year, experience similar fluctuations in rates of poverty [...]'.<sup>20</sup>

Our data set shows the fluctuation of industries in the streets surrounding the two sites. One can clearly see that those surrounding the Aquarium are not stable. The dominating businesses fluctuate between retail and services, whereas the maps for the Turkish Baths show a stable economic structure throughout the years (from 1903 backwards to 1890), which were dominated by leisure industries and retail. Comparing the information about the businesses on our map with the data on wealth

and poverty of the Booth maps, the correspondence of long-established businesses in the area of St. James and its wealthy status becomes clear. On the other hand, the Booth maps show very poor areas north of the Royal Aquarium, which leads to the assumption that the fluctuation and instability of the identified businesses on our map are a result, or maybe even an indicator of this social status.

Reliable information on the existence of a tattoo parlour in the Royal Aquarium is not included in our collected data. We only have references from advertisements collected from the British Library, from which the assumption can be made that Alfred South was at the Royal Aquarium in 1899 to tattoo his clients. The same advertisement shows the existence of the tattoo parlour of Sutherland MacDonald at the Turkish Baths in Jermyn Street in 1899. The existence of this tattoo parlour is proven through our data set, as there are entries for it in the yellow pages for the years 1897,<sup>21</sup> 1901,<sup>22</sup> 1902<sup>23</sup> and 1903.<sup>24</sup> According to this data, the tattoo parlour of Sutherland MacDonald was established by 1897, at the latest, and existed until at least 1903. Combined with our maps showing the different types of surrounding businesses and their durability, we conclude that tattooing itself was an established part of the economic structure of St. James.

In conclusion, this research helps us to understand how the practice of tattooing has been integrated into the urban fabric of the two focus areas in Westminster, London, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the information on the registered tattoo parlours in the Post Office London Directories, one can conclude that tattooing itself was an established practice during this decade in London, and was mentioned in advertisements such as those in the *Strand Magazine*.<sup>25</sup>

## FURTHER RESEARCH

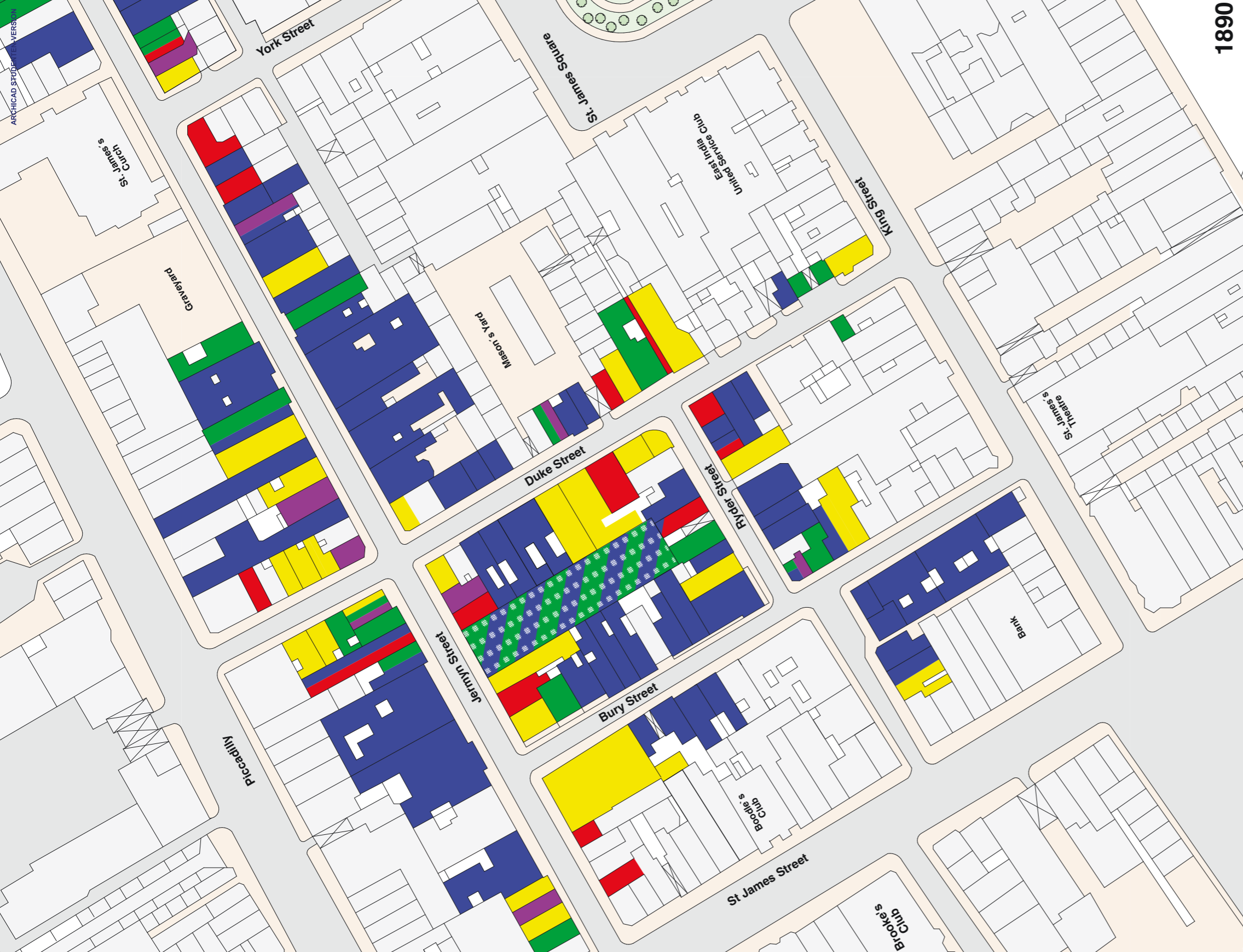
As mentioned previously, this research only scratched the surface of mapping the tattoo culture and practices of Westminster, London, and further research still needs to be done to gain a deeper understanding of the practice and the possible common social acceptance of tattoo culture in late-19<sup>th</sup>-century London, which would

require specifically looking into the clientele of these tattoo parlours. Were tattoos an actual taboo during this time? What were the common social beliefs regarding this topic? How was it perceived in the broader society? Did they cater to the upper class or tourists? Were they from this particular neighbourhood or did they travel specifically to these locations? Exploring socio-cultural references of the time (i.e. literature, art, speeches, personal correspondences and newspapers) could help indicate the social acceptance of tattooing as a fixed part of the local industry and therefore as an inherent part of the social fabric during this decade. Additional research could help provide insight into the historic nature of tattooing in London and its role in the culture and community.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Such as Gelati Elio, private hotel, 84 Jermyn Street, (compare data sheet from 1890 to 1903).
- 2 For example, Raggett Geo. and Sons, wine merchants, 80 Jermyn Street, (compare data sheet from 1890 to 1903).
- 3 For example, Van Praagh Jacques, diamond merchant, 131 Jermyn Street, 1891 (compare data sheet from 1891).
- 4 Feldman, D. (1989) 'The Importance of Being English: Jewish Immigration and the Decay of Liberal England', in: Feldman, D. and Stedman Jones, G. (eds.) *Metropolis, London: Histories and Representations Since 1800*. London: Routledge, p.56.
- 5 Vaughan, L.S. (2018) *Mapping Society*. London: UCL Press, p. 144.
- 6 Ibid, p. 146.
- 7 Lodder, M. (2013) 'Neo-Victorian Tattooing' in: Solicaro, S. (ed.) *Victoriana: A Miscellany*. London: Guildhall Art Gallery, p. 105.
- 8 O'Neill, A. (2007) *London After A Fashion*. London: Reaktion Books, p. 34.
- 9 Ibid, p. 34.
- 10 Steinbach, S. L. (2012) *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Abingdon, England: Routledge, p. 118.
- 11 To search Booth's maps, see: London School of Economics and Political Science Library. (2016) *Charles Booth's London: Poverty Maps and Police Notebooks* [Online Archive]. Available at: <https://booth.lse.ac.uk> (Accessed: 12 February 2019).
- 12 National Library of Scotland. (2018) *Ordnance Survey Maps, London, Five Feet to the Mile, 1893–1896* [Online]. Available from: <https://maps.nls.uk/os/london-1890s/info.html> (Accessed: 20 February 2019).
- 13 Pennybacker, S.D. (1995) *A Vision for London, 1889-1914: Labour, Everyday Life and the LCC Experiment*. London: Routledge, p.13.
- 14 Goad, C.E. (1888) *Ordnance Survey Maps Explanation of Signs* [Map]. The British Library, London. Available at: <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/firemaps/england/northwest/goadlegendmanchester.html> (Accessed: 20 February 2019).
- 15 Lodder, M. (2015) "'Things of the Sea': Iconographic Continuities Between Tattooing and Handicrafts in Georgian-Era Maritime Culture', *Sculpture Journal*, 24(2), p. 201; Barnard, S. (2016) *Convict Tattoos: Marked Men and Women of Australia*. Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, Swann House.
- 16 O'Neill, *London*, 2007, p. 28.
- 17 Ibid, pp. 30–31.
- 18 Vaughan, *Mapping Society*, 2018, p. 70.
- 19 Ibid, p. 69.
- 20 Ibid, p. 70.
- 21 Kelly's Directories Ltd. (1897) *The Post Office London Directories for 1897*, London, p. 456 and p. 1238.
- 22 Kelly's Directories Ltd. (1901) *The Post Office London Directories for 1901*, London, p. 2452.
- 23 Kelly's Directories Ltd. (1902) *The Post Office London Directories for 1902*, London, p. 2474.
- 24 Kelly's Directories Ltd. (1903) *The Post Office London Directories for 1903*, London, p. 2502.
- 25 O'Neill, *London*, 2007, p. 31.






1890


### Categories

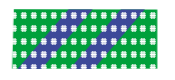
 **Manufacturing** - someone who makes things & trades. No shop within space. (ie carpenter, etc)

 **Retail** - someone who sells, but they can also make the product. Overall goal is to sell the product in the space.

 **Leisure** - gentlemen's clubs, bars, clubs, cafes, tavern, lodging house

 **Food** - grocery, restaurants

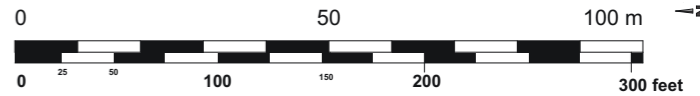
 **Services** - civil engineers, hairdressers, Solicitors, surgeons, financial agents

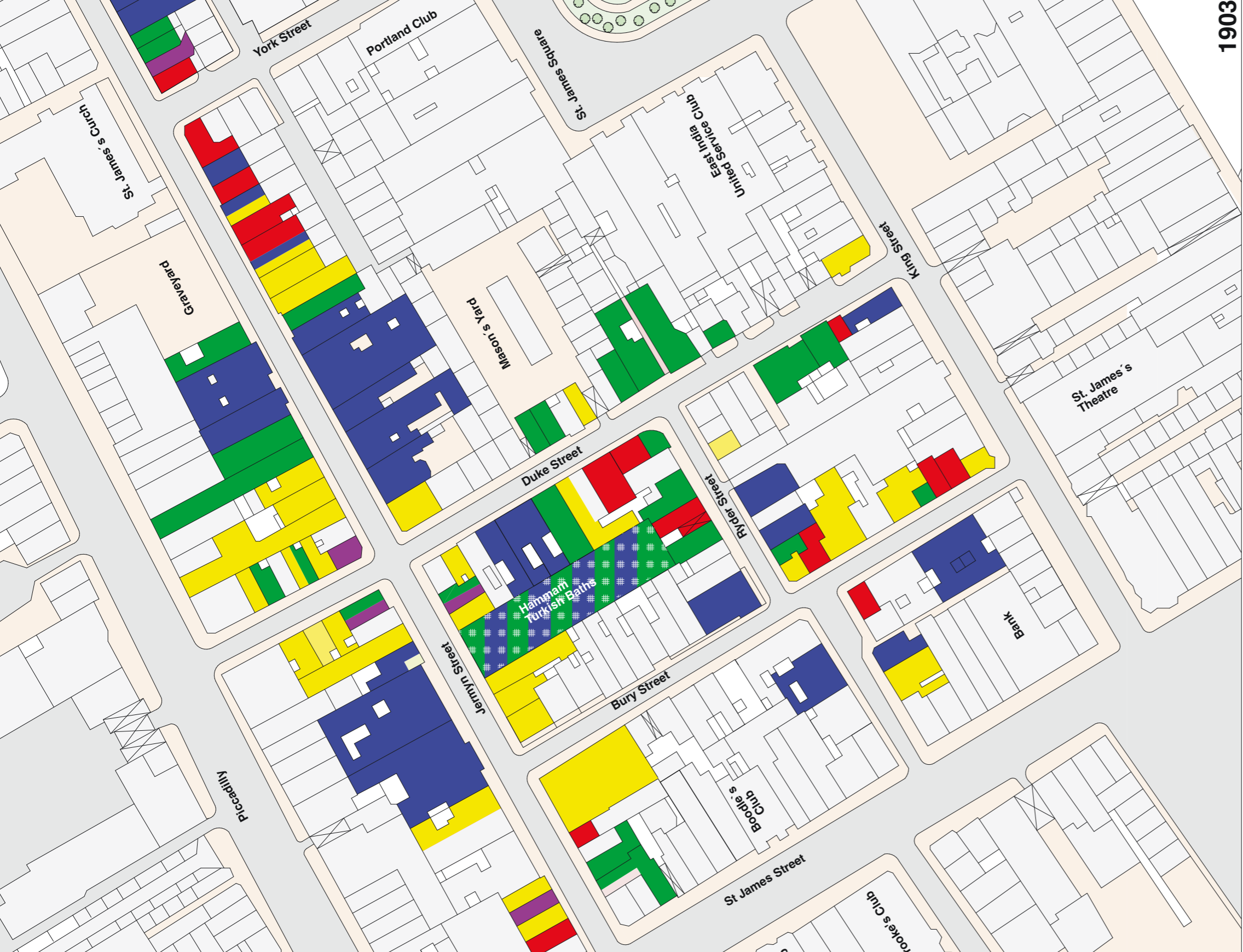


### Tattoo Parlour

M 1:500  
@ DIN A1

Study Project "Tattoo Taboo"  
Seminar, Group Task  
BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg  
Wintersemester 2018/19








1903

### Categories

 **Manufacturing** - No shop within space

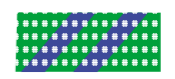
 **Retail** - selling and manufacturing

 **Leisure** - gentleman's clubs, bars, clubs, cafes, taverns, lodging houses

 **Food** - grocery, restaurants

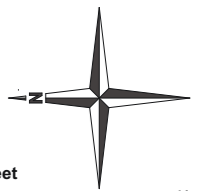
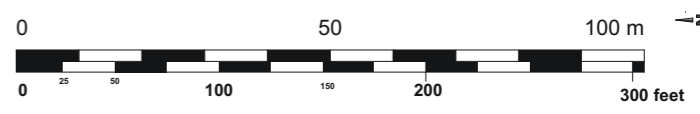
 **Services** - civil engineers, hairdressers, solicitors, surgeons, financial agents

### Tattoo Parlour



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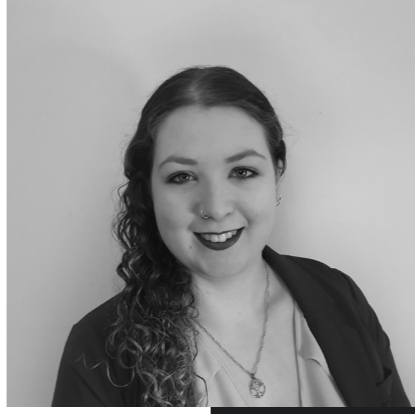
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Available at: <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/firemaps/england/northwest/goadlegendmanchester.html> (Accessed: 20 February 2019).
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- Steinbach, S. L. (2012) *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Abingdon, England: Routledge.
- Vaughan, L.S. (2018) *Mapping Society*. London: UCL Press.

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