



Introduction

- Semiotics and Tattoos
- History of tattoos
- Learning outcomes –understanding of key terms (learning outcome 2)

Semiotics and tattooing

- Evidence of tattooing in early civilisations
- Marked group belonging, social status



Symbolic

- Stories, key moments and developments
- Tattoos speak to the world semiotically
- Barthes *Mythologies*
- Saussure – signs drawn from language
- Signified and Signifiers
- What they are not
- Reader is important
- Tattoo culture – past and present



Tattooing

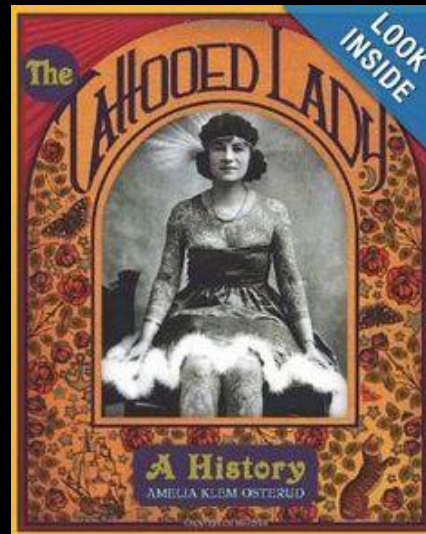
- Scars that speak
- Maori Moko tattoos
- Picts tattoos
- Crusades
- Cook- tattooing widespread
- Tahiti – ta-tu



Maori Tattoo

Disrepute

- Lombroso (1835-1909) – tattooing as sign of inherent criminality
- Circus/Carnival Era (1990s-1920s)
 - Viewing tattooed bodies



Symbolic associations



Wisdom and
eternity



strength



Love and
constancy

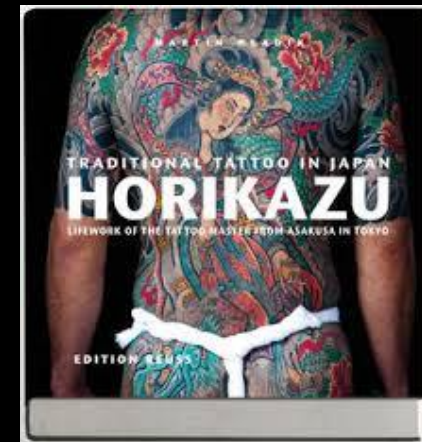
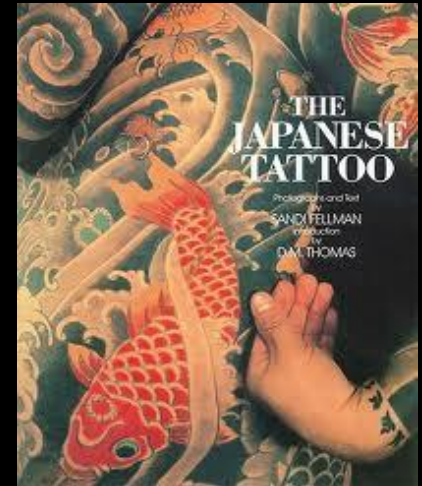
Rebel Era

- Disrepute (post WWII)
 - Rebel Era
 - Youth gangs and tattoos
 - Prisoners and tattoos



Tattooing around the globe

- Japan
 - 5th century BC to 5th century AD
 - Revised 13th century – marking criminals
 - Irezumi – underground practice
- Russia
 - Prisoners tattoos, secret codes
 - Social and political significance
- U.S.
 - 60s tattooing denoted gang affiliations



Symbolic contexts



Russia – skull represented thief



New Age Era

- 1970s onwards
- Tattooing as symbolic expression and statements of self
- Group affiliation
- 80s onwards viewed more positively

Tattoos as storytelling

- Designs may symbolise personal issues, interests, hobbies, fandom,
- Magazines tend to have designs around
 - Religious iconography
 - Cinematic horror icons
 - cultural and historical figures
 - Popular culture



What type of symbolic associations?



religious



Horror icons



Popular culture icons



Film, television and media



Consumer culture



Celebrity tattoo artists

Media

- Series of documentary. Reality television shows 2005 onwards
- *Miami Ink, LA Ink, London Ink, NY Ink,*
- *My Tattoo Addiction* (0.40 mins)
- https://youtu.be/fTWfEq_t53E (21.27 mins)



Context

- Stable and lasting in unstable postmodern society
- May be interpreted different to what the wearer intends

Celebrities and Tattoos



Summary

- Tattoos can be linked to identity through personalisation and symbolism (attached or pre planned).
- May have group symbolism related to tattoos
- Global culture and interpretations regarding tattoos
- Celebrities with tattoos

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