

Gender Trouble, Resistance and the Will to Power: Experiences and
Societal Perceptions of the Tattooed Female Body.

by

Claire Louise Beale.

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
Masters of Philosophy in Gender and Sexuality Studies.

College of Arts and Law Graduate School

College of Arts and Law

University of Birmingham

Edgbaston

Birmingham

B15 2TT

September 2013

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

Abstract.

The aim of this paper is to analyse and identify gender differences in the societal experiences of tattooed men and women. How tattooed women negotiate the 'double-edged sword' phenomenon as well as what makes tattooed female bodies resistant in today's society will also be addressed. A combination of online forums and surveys was used to collect data, and a content analysis was conducted to interpret the results. My participant's accounts of their tattoos demonstrated gender differences according to the image and location of their tattoos, as well as within the frequency of negative societal and familial reactions, of which the female participants reported more negative experiences. It was also found that the resistant element of my female participant's tattoos can be found in their reaction to these negative experiences rather than in the image or location of their tattoos.

I would like to dedicate this paper to my Uncle Jim, who passed away Christmas 2011. Although he never approved of my choice to get tattooed, I knew that he loved me anyway and that he was very proud of me for starting this degree.

Acknowledgements.

I would like to say a big thank you to my thesis supervisors, Dr. Charlotte Ross and Dr. Emma Foster for all their help and support (as well as for putting up with me!).

You are both such an inspiration to me!

Thank you to all my friends and family who have supported me over the past 2 years, especially to my parents Carol and Dave Beale for loaning me the money to pay for this degree.

Thank you also to my participants for taking part, I am so grateful to you all for taking the time to share your experiences and tattoos with me.

Table of Contents.

| | |
|---|--------|
| <u>Introduction</u> | p. 1 |
| <u>Chapter 1: Literature Review</u> | p. 5 |
| • Part 1: Feminist Perspectives of the Body..... | p. 5 |
| • Part 2: Tattooing and Gender Norms..... | p. 14 |
| • Part 3: Tattooing as Signifier of Subversion..... | p. 24 |
| • Conclusion of Literature Review..... | p. 33 |
| <u>Chapter 2: Methodology</u> | p. 35 |
| <u>Chapter 3: Data Analysis</u> | p. 50 |
| <u>Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Study</u> | p. 80 |
| <u>Reference List</u> | p. 84 |
| <u>Appendices</u> | p. 94 |
| • Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet..... | p. 94 |
| • Appendix 2: Information and Consent Form/Post..... | p. 98 |
| • Appendix 3: Interview Questions for Forum..... | p. 100 |
| • Appendix 4: Interview Schedule for Forums..... | p. 103 |
| • Appendix 5: Interview Questions for Surveys..... | p. 104 |
| • Appendix 6: Data from Forums..... | p. 107 |
| • Appendix 7: Data from Surveys..... | p. 133 |

List of Tables.

| | |
|--|-------|
| <u>Table 1: Participants from the Forums</u> | p. 51 |
| <u>Table 2: Participants from Surveys</u> | p. 52 |
| <u>Table 3: Tattoo Image</u> | p. 53 |
| <u>Table 4: Tattoo Meaning</u> | p. 55 |
| <u>Table 5: Size and Location</u> | p. 56 |
| <u>Table 6: Tattoo Locations</u> | p. 56 |
| <u>Table 7: Tattoos that can be Covered</u> | p. 58 |
| <u>Table 8: Experiences in Society</u> | p. 61 |
| <u>Table 9: Views on Gender and Societal Perceptions</u> | p. 63 |
| <u>Table 10: Family Reactions to Tattoos</u> | p. 66 |
| <u>Table 11: Tattoos as Rebellious</u> | p. 70 |
| <u>Table 12: Tattoos as Trendy</u> | p. 73 |
| <u>Table 13: What is a Rebellious Tattoo?</u> | p. 74 |

Introduction.

Tattooing has been practised around the world for centuries, and has even been traced back as far as prehistoric times (Demello 2000, 12). It was however a practice long forgotten in Western cultures until it was reintroduced by Captain James Cook in the 18th century after his voyages to Polynesia (ibid). Since its reintroduction the tattoo has been constantly met with both judgement as well as widespread popularity. The history of the tattoo in the West has seen tattooed bodies exhibited for entertainment purposes, as well as used as a way to determine norms of appearance (Atkinson 2003, 21). The practice has also been used as a way to define class and gender, due to its popularity amongst working class males from the 1920s (ibid, 38).

This adversely affected the small role women played in the history of the tattoo in the West, and ensured they were kept away from the practice, due to its growing associations to those with a disreputable character (Demello 2000, 36). This led to the development of a negative stereotype of tattooed women, with those women who were tattooed being perceived as trappy, deviant and possibly lesbian or 'butch' (ibid, 60). However, the tattoo grew in popularity, which is in part due to women's increased involvement in the practice during the 1970's at the height of 2nd wave feminism (Mifflin 1997, 67).

The tattoo is more widely accepted than it has ever been, with some tattoo designs considered as a fashion accessory (Atkinson 2002, 46). Even though the tattoo is now a common sight in the majority of Western cultures, it can still be met with scrutiny throughout society. This has been described as the 'double- edged sword' phenomenon (Demello 2000, 32). It has been argued that this is something

experienced primarily by women, who may be scrutinised in society for their tattoos more than tattooed men, due to the continued prevalence of society's perception of the practice as a masculine activity (ibid, 31). This has not only positioned tattooed female bodies as 'other' in society, but has also led to the establishment of gender norms within the tattoo community to allow women to be tattooed but in an appropriately feminine way.

In order to gain a full understanding of tattooed female embodiment, feminist perspectives of the body need to be analysed first. In the literature review, I identify difference, dominance and agency as the primary areas within the feminist focus on the body in which to begin a discussion of tattooed female bodies. Following this I discuss the importance of the post-feminist conceptualisation of the body and the impact of consumer culture on the construction of feminine identities. The establishment of gender norms within the community is explored next. Here, the development of the negative stereotype of tattooed women is discussed through an analysis of the history of tattooed women in the West. The impact this has had on tattooed women today is considered as well. The effect of power relations on the body will then be discussed using Foucault's concepts of discourses, docile bodies and the aesthetics of the self alongside Nietzsche's theory of the will to power. This section will establish how the tattooed female body can be seen as both a site of resistance and of compliance.

In reviewing the existing literature in the above areas, it became clear that little attention has been paid to the experiences of tattooed bodies within society and the differences between gender and these experiences. This is the main aim of this paper; along with an examination of how tattooed women negotiate the 'double-edged sword' regarding perceptions of their tattoos, as well as what makes a

tattooed female body resistant in today's society. This research will not only address the gaps in the knowledge as mentioned above but will also examine the prevalence of traditional gender norms, roles and expectations that still exist in our society. In order to address the issues regarding the gender differences in experiences of tattooed embodiment, my research questions can be defined as:

- How do women experience and negotiate the 'double- edged sword' regarding the acceptance and judgement of those with tattoos?
- What makes women's involvement in tattooing resistant to dominant ideals of femininity, despite its current widespread availability?
- What do the experiences of tattooed men and women reveal about the gender norms and ideals that surround the presentation of the body that are still prevalent in our society?

I decided to use online forums as a way to collect my data. This allowed me to ask semi- structured interview style questions to an already established focus group. However I did encounter some problems with this method, one of these being fragmented narratives. In order to combat this I used an online survey which meant the participants could answer all of the questions in one sitting rather than having to return every few days. I conducted a content analysis in order to interpret my data which allowed me to identify themes and patterns within my results.

One of the main findings of my study was the existence of gender differences regarding the image, meaning, size and location of my participants tattoos. My participants' accounts also demonstrated gender differences in their societal experiences and familial reactions, with more negative reactions being experienced by the female participants to their tattoos. My findings also revealed how the female

participants of my study negotiate the 'double- edged sword', in that they were not affected by the negative reactions they had experienced, and instead enjoyed 'causing a stir' as one participant stated. I suggest that this is a display of their will to power, and that it is this type of reaction to a negative experience that makes the tattooed female body resistant in today's society. It is necessary at this point to state that throughout this paper I will be focusing primarily on the experience of western tattooees, unless otherwise stated.

I would like to briefly reflect on my personal reasons for studying this topic. I have been interested in tattoos since my early teens, and have been tattooed myself since I was 18. After focusing my undergraduate dissertation on the role of tattoos in the development of personal and social identity, the topic of gender and tattoos was an area I wanted to continue further study on. My idea for this project and the focus on societal reactions came from reflecting on my own experiences of being a tattooed woman as well as from discussions with tattooed friends about their experiences. I hope that a study like this can add to the developing understanding of tattooed female embodiment.

Chapter 1: Literature Review.

The aim of this chapter is to review the literature surrounding women's involvement in tattooing. In order to gain a full understanding of the tattooed female body, this chapter begins with a discussion of Feminist perspectives regarding the body and gender. This is due to Feminism's focus on the body as a site of investigation regarding women's subordination (Hong 2001, 3). It will then be necessary to look at gender norms within tattooing. This will allow for a better understanding of how these norms have developed within the practice, as well as how they affect perceptions and the experiences of tattooees. This part of the literature review will discuss the small, yet prominent role women have played in the history of the tattoo in the West. The impact this has had on how tattooed women are perceived and reacted to today will also be explored. This will be followed by a discussion of power relations and the body in part 3 of this chapter. Using Foucault and Nietzsche's understandings of power, resistance and the body, the tattooed female body as a site for resistance as well as compliance will be analysed. After reviewing the literature and exploring different theoretical perspectives regarding the body and gender, I suggest that a focus on social relationships and individual experience is missing from the understanding of tattooed women.

Chapter 1: Part 1: Feminist Perspectives of the Body.

The female body has long been considered as something in need of control, and was described by 19th century medical professionals as a 'malfunctioning organism that embodied society's ills' (Hong 2001, 3). This attempt to control perceptions of

the female body not only maintained male superiority, but is also significant to the social construction of gender and is therefore central to the feminist focus on the body (Terry and Urla 1995, 12). This has led contemporary feminists to regard the female body as the object of processes of domination and control as well as a site of subversive practices. Three areas of interest have been identified within feminist approaches to the body which include difference, dominance and subversion (Davies 1997, 7) and these will be analysed in the first section of this chapter. Following on from this will be a discussion of the post- feminist perspective regarding the body and the active construction of feminine identity via consumerism (Gill 2009).

Section 1: Feminism and the Body: Difference, Dominance and Subversion.

Throughout history, the body has represented how people fit into a specific social order. Young (1990b: 122) describes how the body is used by dominant cultures to designate certain groups as 'other'. Subordinate groups are defined by their bodies, and according to norms which degrade them as 'ugly, loathsome or deviant' (123). This 'aesthetic scaling of groups' (Davis 1997, 10) has led to the categorisation of the body into socially significant groups such as male- female, black- white and so on (ibid). Feminism has addressed this issue of difference and dominance as it relates to female embodiment, which has led to the development of various strands regarding difference. One of the strands I have decided to focus on rejects the body as an explanation of difference altogether. This is because bodily difference is seen to legitimise gender inequality and social relations of dominance as unavoidable and normal (Davies 1997, 7). This rejection of bodily difference relies on the sex/gender

distinction, in which gender is seen as socially constructed, leaving the material body as a substrate upon which gender is expressed.

Butler (1990:178) provides the most radical refusal of gender difference, in which she argues that gender is an effect. She further indicates that it must be understood as the various acts, gestures and desires that produce the effect of an internal core on the surface of the body as a gendered identity (ibid, 179). Gender can therefore be described as an expression or performance rather than a natural or given distinction (ibid, 33). According to Butler gender is performative and the body is the domain in and through which individuals enact sex in compliance with heterosexual norms. This is sometimes done in ways that disrupt these norms, therefore causing 'gender trouble' (ibid, 176). One way in which these norms can be disrupted is through the performance of drag and parody. She suggests that parodies are resistant to gender norms because they are 'imitations which effectively displace the meaning of the original' (ibid). This means that parodies imitate the myth of originality itself and question the origin of gender as biological (ibid). In other words, parodies expose gender as a performance and as socially constructed.

However, the female body is still subject to domination. Bordo (1993:93) considers how this domination is enacted upon and through female bodies by exploring how contemporary body discourses of control and mastery produce a normalising politics of the body. According to Bordo (1993:94) constructions of femininity are homogenizing and normalizing, erasing class, race and other differences, insisting that all women aspire to a coercive standardised ideal. These normalizing constructions of femininity are transmitted to women via the dominant discourses within the media (ibid). This indicates a shift in focus in feminism from women's experience of oppression to how images of the female body are implicated

in power relations (Davis 1997, 11). For instance, women now gain information regarding femininity through bodily discourses and images purported by the media (Bordo 1993, 94). Disguised as an empowering discourse in this way, these images of the modern female body are used within gender power relations to keep women feminine and subordinate sexual objects. Butler (1993:232) supports this idea of discourses, and describes how sexual and gendered differences are performatively installed by and in discourse. In her work 'Bodies that Matter' she provides an account of the discursively constructed body that cannot be separated by the linguistic acts that name it and constitute it (Butler 1993, 42). She uses the example of a doctor declaring the gender of a baby to indicate this. For instance when a doctor declares 'It's a girl/boy!' they are not simply reporting what they see, they are assigning a sex and a gender to a body that does not exist outside of discourse (ibid, 232). Therefore the 'it's a girl/boy!' declaration is performative and inscribes the body as a particular gender.

It can be argued that a focus on the constraint of the female body has obscured women's active, and to some extent, knowledgeable engagements with their bodies (Davis 1997, 12). These critiques have led to the development of the third area of interest to the feminist approach to the body, that of agency and subversion. The focus on agency and the body explores the active role individuals play in contemporary body regimes and how the possibilities and limitations of their own embodiment have been negotiated throughout history. This has led to an emergence of the body as a site for acts of rebellion and resistance as well as compliance (Davis 1997, 12). Related to this area of agency and subversion is one of the many strands regarding difference in feminist thought on the body. This strand sees difference as essential for understanding embodiment (Davies 1997, 9). The

embracing of difference within feminism highlights the disadvantages of the sex/gender distinction, in that too much emphasis was placed on the social consequences of gender rather than on how individuals interacted with and through their bodies (ibid, 8).

French feminism has been particularly influential within this area, and suggests that women's bodies and sexualities should be celebrated as a site of pleasure and arousal (ibid, 9). Feminine embodiment is seen as empowering rather than oppressive in this perspective (Allen and Young 1989, 127). For instance, the French feminist Cixous (1975: 347) in her essay 'The Laugh of the Medusa' appeals for women to 'write their own bodies', and engage in a writing practice that tells their story through the eyes of feminine experience (ibid, 348). Cixous is therefore encouraging women to experience their bodies, femininity and desires as pleasurable through something other than phallographic, masculine language. This new sense of female self expression has been described as creating new possibilities for body aesthetics and feminine identity (Braunberger 2000, 3).

Tattooing can be utilised by women to create these new possibilities as well as be a significant symbol of resistance to feminine ideals. Although the stereotypical masculinity of tattooing has led to female tattooees being seen as stealing a 'secret language' from men, Braunberger (2000: 4) suggests that it is this use of masculine language to express femininity that makes the tattooed female body subversive. Queer theory can be a significant addition to this idea that tattoos can create a resistant female body. According to Halperin (1995:62) queer theory has now evolved to 'include any form of identity that is at odds with the normal, legitimate and the dominant'. This definition means that queer can be a term applied to tattooed

women because the tattooed female body can be described as queering normative ideals of femininity (Sullivan 2003, 41).

However, the tattooed female body can also be considered as a site for compliance (Bartky 1988, 141). This is due to the creation of feminised designs along with certain regulations within society concerning what is an 'appropriate' body part for a woman to get tattooed (Demello 2000, 20). If adhered to, these aspects not only make the tattooed female body compliant, but could also be considered as reproductive of gender norms. This will be an issue I will discuss further in part 2 of this chapter, *Tattoos and Gender Norms*.

After considering how the female body can be an active site for resistance as well as compliance, it is necessary to consider the post- feminist view of the body. This is because post- feminism focuses on a feminine identity that has been actively constructed via the body and consumer culture rather than on the restrictions of femininity as has been the focus of previous feminist thought.

Section 2: Post- Feminism and Woman as the Neo- Liberal Subject.

One way in which Post-feminism has been described is as a reaction to second-wave feminism (McRobbie 2004, 257). This assumption is based on the belief that feminism has succeeded in its goal of ameliorating sexism (Hall and Rodriguez 2003, 882). Post- feminism is also seen as a backlash to previous feminist thought, as it rejects the pessimistic views of sexuality that second- wave feminism posits (Brooks 1997, 13). Furthermore, post- feminism allows women to be feminine and feminist without losing integrity (ibid, 14). Another way in which to describe post-feminism is as a redefinition of feminism that promotes independence and individual choice through consumerism (Hall and Rodriguez 2003, 883). It also includes a

renewed focus on the female body and the importance of female rights to freedom and choice (Adriaens 2009). Post- feminism is a highly debated topic, especially as the term *post-feminism* itself is ill-defined and used in inconsistent ways. McRobbie (2004:257) argues that adding the prefix *post-* to *feminism* not only undermines the achievements of feminism, but also ignores the work that still needs to be done in order to reach equality. This means that post-feminism gives the impression that equality has been achieved for everyone and that feminists can now focus on something else entirely (ibid). For the sake of this paper, I will be using the definition of post- feminism that suggests it is now a label for a wide range of theories that take critical approaches to previous feminist discourses and challenges some of the ideals of second-wave feminism (Wright 2000, 21). I will also focus on the consumerist aspect of post- feminism as well its ideals regarding the expression of femininity and individuality via the body. This is because these specific aspects can be applied to the tattooed female body, of which a more detailed account follows.

Due to its emphasis on consumer culture, as well as individualism and agency, post- feminism has clear links with neo- liberal ideologies (Adriaens 2009). Harvey (2005:2) describes neo-liberalism as a political and economic practice that sees market exchange as an ethic in itself. According to Ong (2007:12), neo-liberalism celebrates qualities such as self- management, autonomy, and entrepreneurship. These can also be described as qualities of the ideal neo- liberal subject (Gill, 2007, 25). This neo- liberal subject strongly resembles the active, freely choosing, self- reinventing subject of post-feminism; particularly as consumer spending is important to the construction of both identities (ibid). It has been argued that women have been constructed as the ideal neo- liberal subject due to their

greater and more active participation in consumer culture (ibid, 26). Women are expected to constantly regulate and transform their appearance to a much greater extent than men and they are therefore more likely to buy things within which to do this. Neo-liberalism could then be said to be gendered (ibid, 27).

McRobbie (2007:5) supports this by suggesting that 'girls, including their bodies, their labour power and their social behaviour are now the subject of governmentality to an unprecedented degree'. This has led to the construction of the 'can- do girl' and the 'at-risk girl' (Harris 2004, 14). The 'can- do girl' is career-focused and success is based on their display of a consumer lifestyle whereas the 'at- risk girl' suffers from a lack of ambition and opportunity (ibid). The development of girls has always been a highly managed process, which ensured the maintenance of traditional gender relations (ibid, 15). As young women have experienced an increased investment in them as workers, consumers and citizens (ibid, 16) it is still a process that needs to be managed correctly. Therefore, the binary opposite of the 'can- do girl' and 'at- risk girl' identities work to ensure young women today 'grow- up right' and meet the needs of the market place (ibid, 19).

The tattooed woman could in some instances be described as adhering to these values of post-feminism, as their bodies and their tattoos can indicate independence and individual choice as well as making a bold fashion statement (Adriaens 2009). Furthermore it can be argued that tattooed women can be described as an example of a neo- liberal, post- feminist subject. This is because they can be considered as independent agents in control of their own bodies as well as being consumers (ibid). Furthermore a tattoo can now be regarded as part of a consumer lifestyle. This is because getting a tattoo can in some instances be considered fashionable as well as expensive (Atkinson 2003, 19). This means that a

tattoo can be seen as a mark of successful membership to Western consumerism (Demello 2000, 71). It can then be argued that tattooed women can be considered as a 'can- do girl' in today's society. However, tattooing is still considered as a risk-taking behaviour and can therefore be more indicative of the 'at- risk girl' (Harris 2004, 31). This binary of the 'can- do girl' and the 'at- risk girl' regarding tattoos is representative of the concept of the 'double- edged sword' as related to perceptions of tattooed women. This is an issue that will be explored further in the next part of the chapter.

Summary.

The 3 main areas regarding difference, dominance and agency as addressed by feminist perspectives of the body can be useful to the understanding of the resistance and compliance as performed through the tattooed female body. A post-feminist conceptualisation of the body is also significant to the understanding of the impact of consumer culture on the tattooed female identity. These issues regarding feminism, the body and tattooed women have provided the groundwork for the second part of this chapter *Tattooing and Gender Norms*. In this part of the literature review, I will focus on how negative stereotypes of tattooed women have been created and transmitted throughout history. I will then explore how tattooing can be reproductive of gender norms, and its effect on women's involvement in the practice today.

Chapter 1: Part 2: Tattooing and Gender Norms.

The history of tattooed women in the West and the development of a negative stereotype of these women have had a significant impact on how tattooed females are perceived in society today (Mifflin 1997, 12). This negative stereotype has ensured the prevalence of gender norms regarding a woman's body and image within society as well as defined the tattooed female body as deviant (ibid, 13). However, due to the recent popularity of the tattoo as a fashion accessory, the practice can be considered as conforming to ideals it was previously resistant to (Demello 2000, 71).

By the end of this section of the literature review, the gender norms within the tattooing community will be identified, along with an in depth discussion of the history of the tattooed woman in the West, through which the stereotypical notion of the tattooed female form and its origins will be identified. The effect of this stereotype on perceptions of female tattooees today will also be discussed.

Section 1: History of Female Tattooing in the West.

Key moments in the history of tattooing in the West can be arranged according to eras such as the colonist/pioneer era (1760s- 1870s), the circus/carnival era (1880s-1920s), the working class era (1920s-1950s), the rebel era (1950s- 1970s), the new age era (1970s-1990) and finally the supermarket era (1990- present) (Atkinson, 2003, 30-46). In each era, the practice of tattooing was popularised as well as met with judgement and scrutiny (ibid, 30). This pattern is not only reflected in the current perception of tattoos in Western society, but also indicates how cultural

understandings of tattoos have been formed in relation to long standing stereotypes, particularly of tattooed women (ibid, 31). Within this section I will discuss the experiences of the female tattooee during each era and consider how this has affected the experiences of tattooed women today.

- *The Colonist/Pioneer Era (1760s- 1870s)*

The colonist/pioneer era saw the beginning of the negative stereotype regarding tattoos. Tattooed men and women were brought from the New World to London as exhibitions (Demello 2000, 47). The women quickly became the main attraction (Blanchard and Bancel 2008, 21) and they were presented as uncontrollable, libidinal and savage by the exhibition promoters (ibid). These exhibitions sought to reaffirm the European understanding of their own development and cultural progress (Atkinson 2003, 31).

According to post- colonial theory, these presentations of tattooed natives sought to define and regulate normative and deviant behaviour through this juxtaposition of the deviant, promiscuous tattooed native to Westernised civilised culture (Loomba 2005, 128). This comparison implied that these people were in need of leadership or control (ibid, 135), and therefore served to generate support for the continuation of colonisation at that time (Blanchard and Bancel 2008, 28). The representation of tattooed natives, (particularly women) during this time indicates the beginning of the cultural understanding of the tattooed body as something exotic, primitive and deviant.

- *The Circus/Carnival Era (1880s-1920s)*

The treatment of the tattooed body as entertainment prevailed, as did the stereotype of the uncontrolled, libidinal tattooed female body into the next era of tattoo history. This era is known as the circus/carnival era and is defined by the freakshow acts involving tattoos of this time. Soon being tattooed became an occupation, particularly for women as they quickly edged tattooed men out of the freakshow business (Demello 2000, 54). These acts were also seen as titillating as the women tended to dress provocatively, and would sometimes strip for the audience (Atkinson 2003, 35). This not only added to their popularity, but also furthered the stereotype of the tattooed woman as having an unyielding sexuality, thus creating a greater sense of eroticism and exoticism around the tattooed body (Putzi 2006, 16).

These tattooed women confounded typical ideals of femininity and expectations of female behaviour (Atkinson 2003, 35). They also had their own income, and exerted control over their own bodies (Mifflin 1997, 30). This allowed them to be independent in a way that had rarely been seen before. Therefore it can be suggested that these acts were a powerful display of female liberation, despite how unaware they may have been of this aspect at the time. However, the striptease element of some of the performances contradicts this argument. This is because despite being heavily tattooed, the performer's bodies was displayed in a way that would appeal to the male gaze (ibid, 32).

Towards the end of the 1940's, the carnival freakshow act fell out of favour with the general public. It became a thing of the past, leaving behind with it a widespread association of tattoos with disrepute (Atkinson 2003, 36).

- *The Working Class Era (1920's-1950's)*

The next era of tattooing is known as the working class era, and is defined by the growth of tattooing as a business that tended to cater to military personnel and the working class (ibid, 36). The practice became associated with deviance during this era due to the pathologisation of its working class customers as lewd, criminal, overtly masculine and uneducated (Demello 2000, 60). Its popularity amongst this group meant it became a socially legitimate way of distinguishing class (Atkinson 2003, 38).

The tattooed female body is not a prominent one in this era, as women were pushed out of the practice of tattooing almost altogether. Steward (1990:127), a tattooist in the 1950s recounts in his memoirs of the need to establish a policy regarding the tattooing of women, 'I would refuse to tattoo a women unless she was 21, married and accompanied by her husband, with proof of the marriage. The only exception was the lesbians', This attitude not only served to perpetuate the stereotype that lesbians are 'butch' (Demello 2000, 74) but has also led to the labelling of straight tattooed women as lesbian primarily because of their tattoos (ibid). Halberstam (1998:9) suggests that this has occurred because behaviour considered to be masculine performed by a woman is instantly labelled as butch or lesbian. However, the fact that Steward allowed lesbian women to be tattooed without the permission from a male guardian suggests that lesbians were considered to be in control of their own bodies and therefore granted a level of independence that married women were denied (Mifflin 1997, 43). This independence began to be associated with tattoos, and therefore they became symbols of freedom for women despite sexual orientation (ibid).

Steward goes on to explain that his refusal to tattoo women unless they were married or lesbian is due to the idea that 'nice girls don't get tattooed' (Steward 1990, 71). Therefore the tattooist, like the woman's other male keepers took it upon himself to keep 'nice girls from turning into tramps' (ibid, 72). This perpetuated the stereotype of the tattooed female body as having an uncontrolled 'trampy' or deviant (in this case being a lesbian) sexuality. This pushed women away from the practice completely and reaffirmed tattooing as a distinctly working class male pursuit.

- *The Rebel Era (1950s-1970s)*

Women in this era continued to be kept away from the practice of tattooing. Defined by prison, gang and biker tattoos, this era saw the stereotype of the tattoo reach its height in terms of its association with social deviance (Atkinson 2003, 39). The few women who did get tattooed during this time tended to be 'biker molls' (Demello 2000, 68). Their tattoos represented their identity as a biker, who can in some instances be a group on the fringe of society (Atkinson 2003, 40). This means that the biker moll's involvement in tattooing added to the now very deviant associations with tattooing, particularly for female tattooees. The biker identity combined with the 'nice girl' ideal perpetuated the tattooed female stereotype more than ever before as deviant, uncontrolled, sexual, and dirty. This led to a clear separation in society of nice, normal, pure and unmarked girls and tattooed women of disrepute (Braunberger 2000, 12).

- *The New Age Era (1970s-1990)*

The practice of tattooing was changed forever during this period, and it has been argued that this was due to the increased involvement of women and the middle class (Demello 2000:137). The self help, New Age and feminist spirituality movements that were fashionable at this time led to the popularisation of deep, spiritual and meaningful tattoos (ibid, 138).

Female tattooing rose in popularity as 2nd wave feminism changed women's lives forever (Mifflin 1997, 67). Stressing the emancipatory nature of the tattoo, women used tattooing to recreate themselves in a way that completely contrasted with the dominant construction of the frail and powerless female body (Hewitt 1997, 21). The tattooed female body became a site of agency, self determination, liberation, and sexual exploration, rather than one that is uncontrollable, savage and deviant.

Although the tattooed female body was more prolific than ever, and the stereotype of tattooed women was being redefined, these women and their body modifications were still met with scrutiny within society. After all, they were challenging dominant notions of the female body (Atkinson 2003, 45). Due to this, the tattoo became a sign of social resistance as opposed to criminal deviance (Pitts 2003, 77). This simultaneous acceptance and judgement regarding tattoos in society is known as the 'double- edged sword' and will be described further in section 2.

- *The Supermarket Era (1990- Present)*

The Supermarket era is primarily defined by choice and availability (Atkinson 2003, 46). Tattoos are more popular than ever in this era, with young, affluent middle class

adolescents and professionals making up the majority of customers (ibid, 47). Custom tattoo designs represent the 'choice' element of this era, which enables tattoo artists to accommodate a wide range of tastes and preferences. This reflects the broader cultural attitude of hyper-individuality within this era as well as neo-liberal values of consumerism (ibid, 48). The popularity and increased availability of the tattoo has led to it being seen as a fashion accessory, with differing trends in certain tattoo images and locations on the body (Demello, 2000 34).

Tattooed celebrities and sports stars such as Jonny Depp, Christina Aguilera and David Beckham (to name just a few) have enhanced the appeal of tattoos (Porcella, 2009: 23). Celebrity interest in tattooing can be described as an influential factor regarding the popularisation of the practice due to their fame and position as fashion icon, role model and public figure (ibid, 24). Society therefore looks to celebrities to set social norms. The public display of celebrity tattoos serve as a statement of acceptance, as they debunk the stereotype of tattooed individuals as deviant outsider on the fringe of society (Koust, 2006: 1038). This in turn elevates the practice to a higher status (ibid). Those wishing to express themselves through tattoos felt they could do after seeing celebrities proudly wearing them (Porcella, 2009: 24). Wilson (2008:14) also describes celebrity influence as a key factor in the popularisation of tattoos especially amongst women, and states that tattooed individuals today seem more concerned with how they could fit in with the mainstream, rather than moving away from it.

Tattooed women in this era are more prominent than ever, and can be seen in all areas of society. The increase in upmarket tattoo studios providing better aftercare, the wider choice in custom and flash tattoo designs is in part responsible for this (Mifflin 1997, 86). These women can also be described as the ideal post-

feminist subject, due to their involvement in consumer culture and the re-modelling of the body through tattooing.

This era also brings up the question of what makes a body resistant to normative ideals of appearance. Visible tattoos are now commonplace within society, due to the widespread popularity and fashion accessory status of the practice (ibid, 39). This means that not only are they no longer seen as symbols of social resistance, they may in fact be considered as complying with fashionable expectations of appearance (Pitts 2003, 77). However, it could be argued that the resistant elements of a tattooed body can be found more in the size and location of the tattoo and its design or in other, more extreme body modifications such as branding or scarification. This is particularly true for women, whose involvement in tattooing has become subject to traditional values of femininity (Mifflin 1997, 39). The reproduction of gender norms within the tattoo community and their effect on women's tattooing will be discussed further in the next section.

Section 2: Tattoos as Resistant or Reproductive of Gender Norms? The Double- edged Sword of Tattooing.

The debate regarding tattoos in the present day seems to revolve around whether or not it can still be considered as a resistant practice, particularly for women (Demello 2000, 39). This is because of the notion that tattooing can be reproductive of prevailing gender norms in society. This aspect of the debate involves considering the issue of tattoo flash designed specifically for women, differentiation between masculine and feminine places to be tattooed and sexualised representations of tattooed women.

According to Beeler (2006:40) the masculine aesthetic that dominates tattooing is the primary issue regarding the debate surrounding tattooing and gender norms. He argues that this has reinforced the representation of women as objects of male sexual desire in many ways throughout the tattoo community. It is clear that the male aesthetic has had an effect on women's involvement in tattooing, which can be seen in the smaller, more feminine images that are available. These were designed to be an appropriate way for women to be tattooed and still be considered sexually attractive (Beeler, 2006 40). These images are also subject to certain rules in terms of their location, and certain body parts have become appropriate places for women to have tattooed. For instance the lower back, wrist, behind the ear, and ankle are all considered to be feminine locations for a tattoo (Atkinson 2002, 221). Braunberger (2000:21) argues that this categorisation of tattoo designs and locations as either masculine or feminine ensures that tattooed women are still adhering to Westernised expectations of female appearance.

Another way in which this masculine aesthetic can be seen in the tattoo community is in the sexualised presentations of tattooed women, the most obvious of which can be found at the popular 'best tattoo' competitions at tattoo conventions (Demello 2000, 31). The women who enter these competitions are being judged as much for their physical appearance as for their tattoos, particularly as the women who get the most attention tend to have the most skin showing (ibid). These sexualised presentations of tattooed women is not dissimilar from that of the carnival era women as mentioned above, in that they appear to have control and power over their bodies through their tattoos, but the titillating display of them begs to differ (Mifflin 1997, 32). Mifflin (1997:121) argues that these displays of women's tattoos

within the community contribute further to women's objectification because they are designed to appeal to the male gaze.

Although this is true, it has been suggested that heavily tattooed women cannot avoid being the object of voyeuristic viewing within society from men and women in general (Demello 2000, 31). Furthermore, in relation to the competitions at tattoo events, it is clear that both male and female bodies are on display for an audience who appreciate tattoos (Demello 2000, 31). It can also be argued that lesbians can enjoy these presentations of tattooed women from a queer gaze as well (Sullivan 2003, 199). These points make it difficult to entangle tattoos as an act of subjective agency from the notion of the objectifying male gaze and the effect of the masculine aesthetic on women's tattoos.

Summary:

This section of the literature review looked at how the stereotype of the tattooed woman has developed throughout the history of the tattoo in the West and its continued impact on today's society. Although the traditional stereotype of tattooed women as trappy, butch, and deviant has been partially cast off as tattooing has come to be redefined as a middle class activity (Demello 2000, 137), it is clear that a negative stereotype does in fact still exist. This is due to the reproduction of gender norms within some areas of the tattoo community (Mifflin 1997, 38). For instance, the differentiation of masculine and feminine tattoo designs and body parts to be tattooed can be said to be responsible for the prevalence of this negative stereotype. Furthermore, a clearly masculine aesthetic dominates tattooing (Beeler 2006, 40) and can be seen in the sexualised presentation of women as tattoo images (ibid),

and of tattooed women (Atkinson 2002, 221). This has reinforced the representation of women as objects of male sexual desire throughout the tattoo community (Beeler, 41). After discussing the relevant issues regarding tattooing and gender norms, the next chapter of the literature review will explore the effect of power relations on the body, and how tattoo's can act as a signifier of subversion to these relations.

Chapter 1: Part 3: Tattooing as Signifier of Subversion.

This part of the literature review will focus on the effects of power relations on the body. In order to do this I will discuss Foucault and Nietzsche's understandings of power and resistance as they are particularly influential in this area. Foucault's notion of discourses, his conceptualisation of docile bodies as well as his analysis of the panoptican prison design and self- policing subjects will be addressed. I will also explore his later work on the aesthetics of the self. Nietzsche's theory of the will to power will also be discussed. I will apply these theories to the issues surrounding the tattooed female body to further explore how the bodies of tattooed women can be a signifier of subversion, or one of compliance.

Section 1: Foucault and Nietzsche: Power and Resistance.

Foucault sees power as dispersed, fluid and pervasive, rather than as something wielded by way of sovereign acts of domination or coercion (Seppa 2004). He terms this technology of power 'bio-power', suggesting that it 'relates to the practice of modern nation states and their regulation of subjects through various and diverse techniques for achieving the subjection of bodies and the control of populations'

(Foucault 1976, 140). According to Foucault (1976:93) 'power is everywhere and comes from everywhere'. In this sense, power is not an agent or a structure, but rather a 'regime of truth'. This term refers to the way in which power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding and truth (ibid, 97).

Nietzsche (1901:266) saw power in a similar way, as coming from knowledge. He suggests that 'knowledge works as a tool of power; hence it increases with every increase of power' (ibid). He also proposed that everyone possesses what he terms the 'Will to Power'. This term refers to an 'insatiable desire to manifest power or as the employment and exercise of power as a creative drive' (ibid, 333). Nietzsche also sees power as coming from everywhere, but in a very different way to Foucault. He suggests that this 'will to power' continually encounters similar efforts on the part of other bodies. This is because every specific body strives to become master over all space and to extend its force, or its will to power (ibid, 340). This conflict ends by an arrangement or union being created by those involved and thus they conspire together for power (ibid).

Foucault and Nietzsche saw power as being inscribed on the body as well as being a site for resistance to these power relations. What follows is a discussion of these aspects and how they can be related to the tattooed female body.

Section 1a: Power and its Inscription on the Body:

Foucault suggests that power can inscribe itself on the body through the use of discourses. According to Foucault (1975:23), discourses are a 'corpus of knowledge, a technique that became entangled with the practice of power to punish'. In other words, it is a method that uses knowledge to regulate the behaviour of the body and

creates what Foucault calls a 'docile body' (ibid). This concept of a docile body was developed during his analysis of punishment in the penal system of the 18th century. He found that it was during this period that the body became the object and target of power (Foucault 1975, 136). A body was created that could be 'manipulated, shaped and trained. It is also one that responds and obeys' (ibid, 136). In other words, a 'docile body' is one that can be subjected, used and transformed (ibid). This led to an uninterrupted coercion of the body and supervision of the processes of the activity rather than its results. This coercion was exercised according to a codification that partitioned as closely as possible the time, space and movement of the body (ibid, 137). These methods of control or disciplines of bodily operations have turned the body into a passive economic machine. Foucault proposes that this is due to the dissociation of power from the body by the constant subjection of individual forces, which has led to an increase in obedient bodily forces (ibid, 138).

Foucault's (1975:201) analysis of the effects of the panopticon prison design is a good example of how dominant discourses work to create these docile bodies. The effect of the panopticon is to 'induce a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power' (Bartky 1988, 131). Foucault (1975:201) suggests that this is done through a process of internalisation of discourses by those who are the target of subjugation. These individuals then begin to take it upon themselves to police and manage their own behaviour, appearance and language in order to conform to these discourses. This in turn creates self policing subjects like the inmate of the panoptical prison, committed to constant self surveillance (Bartky 1988, 149). By creating self managing subjects the need for an all encompassing sovereign power is eliminated, and an obedient, productive workforce is born.

Discourses are also used as a way to regulate the behaviour of female bodies. Bartky (1988:138) suggests these discourses ensure the regulation of women via the transmission of traditional feminine virtues. For instance, the construction of femininity involves a process of disciplinary practices (such as applying make- up etc) which are communicated to women through discourses (ibid, 139). These discourses are then internalised as the norm and they become actively adhered to, therefore leading to the production of the ideal and regulated feminine body (ibid). In other words, a docile female body is created. This also reflects Butler's (1990:178) theory of performativity, in that gender is an expression performed via the body in accordance with heterosexual norms (ibid, 33). These performances of gender become internalised and considered as biological (ibid). Anything that does not adhere to these norms is considered as unnatural or 'other'. The internalisation of dominant discourses regarding femininity via the media has led to the creation of self- policing female subjects (ibid, 141), much like the self- policing inmates of Foucault's panoptican prison concept.

Nietzsche also proposed that power can inscribe itself on the body as a way to establish order. These inscriptions are used as 'the cultural condition for social obedience' (Nietzsche 1887, 73). He suggests that pain is the key term in maintaining social order, 'civilisation instils its basic requirements only by branding the law on bodies through a mnemonics of pain, a memory fashioned out of the suffering and pain of the body' (ibid, 61). This is similar to Foucault's docile body in that social order is maintained via the inscription of power on the body. However, Foucault's concept of power is not based on pain or suffering of the body, but rather on the internalisation of discourses and an awareness of permanent visibility.

Section1b: Resistance and the Body:

Nietzsche's sees the body as a site of resistance that is constantly met with the will to power from other bodies. According to Nietzsche (1901:346) 'the will to power can manifest itself only against resistances'. This means that the will to power cannot exist without some form of power relation and resistance to that relation. His notion of pleasure and displeasure can best describe this resistance. He proposes that the 'innermost essence of being is the will to power, therefore pleasure is every increase of power, displeasure is every feeling of not being able to resist or dominate' (Nietzsche 1901, 369). According to Nietzsche (1901:373), what every man wants is an increase in power, and a feeling of pleasure or displeasure follows from that striving. This suggests that everyone is looking to increase their power by constantly resisting the feeling of displeasure that is experienced through the memory of pain inflicted and inscribed upon the body by dominating forces as mentioned above. This concept can be applied to women's tattooing, especially when used as a form of rebellion for the female tattooee. In these instances, being tattooed can create feelings of pleasure of rising above and being resistant to dominant culture (Nietzsche 1901, 369). Therefore the tattoo can be considered as a way to increase power as well as inscribe the body as a site of resistance.

The body of Nietzsche's active subject is not only the site for the will to power, but also an energetic and active locus for all cultural production (Grosz 1994b, 147). He argues that 'the form has merely been invented by us and however often 'the same form has been attained, it does not mean it is exactly the same, what appears is always something new' (Nietzsche 1901, 282). According to Nietzsche, we are constantly reproducing new forms and identities, using our increase in knowledge

and therefore power each time something new is created. We use this power to shape our society and therefore 'the world seems logical to us because we have made it so' (ibid, 283). In terms of resistance, an individual may not find 'mainstream' culture logical, so then they use their will to power to create their own culture and therefore their own version of logic. This supports Nietzsche's idea of cultural production, in that new forms are created as a resistance to older ones (ibid, 282). Tattooing is an example of this idea, in that the practice of tattooing marks the body as a site of cultural resistance.

Foucault also suggests that wherever there is power, there is resistance (Foucault 1976, 95). According to Foucault power is best understood as a set of relations, the existence of which allow for the possibility of resistance (Hartman 2003, 3). The best example of this can be seen by returning to Foucault's concept of discourses. Although they transmit and produce power, 'discourses can also undermine and expose power, render it fragile and make it possible to thwart it' (Foucault 1976, 101). This is what resistant discourses aim to do, and they can inscribe themselves on the body and mark it as resistant, in the same way as dominant discourses mark the body as obedient or docile. Women who practice tattooing can be seen as displaying the mark of a resistant discourse on their bodies, one that opposes the dominant discourse of beauty and normative feminine appearance (Demello 2000, 195). Their tattooed bodies in this sense can then be considered as a signifier of subversion.

Foucault (1984) develops this idea in his later work on the aesthetics of the self. He suggests that those who are disadvantaged by the limits of personal freedom can develop aesthetic strategies to effect change (Seppa 2004). He further suggests that by turning one's life into a work of art, it is possible to overcome the

isolation and alienation of the modern subject (ibid). Foucault saw freedom as a term referring to the possibilities to create ourselves and transgress the limits imposed on us by society by illuminating them and critically testing them (Foucault 1984, p47). By individually creating and designing ourselves, we can free ourselves from the restrictions of our time. However, Foucault was aware of the fact that personal aesthetics of the self could be influenced by various outside forces. Therefore, despite efforts to create an individual or 'free' aesthetics of the self, they can remain tied to control mechanisms such as discourses (ibid, 49). Although this means that we may not be entirely free when creating ourselves, Foucault did suggest that this should not make us passive, 'for to abandon self creating is to abandon the craving for freedom' even if it is a self based on fiction (ibid). This indicates how the body, in particular the stylisation of the body can be used to indicate resistance.

Foucault's work on the aesthetics of the self can be applied to the subversive nature of the tattooed female body. Tattoos and other body modifications can be used as a way to recreate and remodel the body, insofar as they do not become part of the dominant discourse of the era (ibid, 51). They also have the possibility of literally turning the body into a work of art (Seppa 2004). This idea combined with the resistant nature of these practices makes them a significant way of freeing the body from the limitations imposed on us by the agreed upon values of society (Foucault 1984, 48). Therefore, women can use tattooing as a way to free themselves from societal expectations of femininity, or least alter it so it is less restrictive.

Section 2: Tattoos as site of resistance or compliance?

Using Foucauldian and Nietzschean understandings of power relations supports the concepts discussed in the previous parts of the chapters regarding tattooing as a resistant practice for women. Tattoos as a site of compliance was also discussed in these chapters, particularly in the way they can be reproductive of gender norms. In this section I will apply Foucault and Nietzsche's theories of power relations to this issue of tattoos as compliant.

As discussed in *Tattooing and Gender Norms*, the rising popularity of the tattoo has led the practice into the cultural mainstream. This means that a once resistant practice is now considered 'safe' within dominant discourses regarding appearance (Demello 2000, 197). This means that tattooing is part of these discourses and plays a role in their 'transmission and production of power' (Foucault 1976, 101). In relation to women's involvement in tattooing, these discourses have made tattooing a safe way for women to 'feel' like they are resisting. This can be seen in the reproduction of gender norms within the tattoo community as discussed in part 2 of this chapter. Bartky (1988:148) indicates support for this argument in her suggestion that 'as modern industrial societies change and women themselves offer resistance to patriarchy, older forms of domination are eroded, but new ones arise, spread and become consolidated'. This indicates a Foucauldian understanding of power as a relation and therefore as something that is constantly changing.

Nietzsche's idea of cultural production provides an explanation as to how resistant practices can become part of the dominant discourse (Grosz 1994b, 147). Nietzsche suggests that cultural production occurs as new forms are created as resistances to older ones (Nietzsche 1901, 282). This means that the old forms

become part of the norm, which leads to the development of a new and resistant cultural product (ibid). This can be applied to women's involvement in tattooing, and the evolution of tattooing as a dominant discourse through the method of cultural production can be traced. For instance, women began to use tattooing to resist dominant norms, which led to its rise in popularity and fashion accessory status. This then led to its widespread acceptance and increased visibility throughout society, and therefore it can be described as part of a dominant discourse. It can then be argued that because of this tattooing is no longer a resistant practice. It is more of a site of compliance particularly if people are getting a tattoo in order to follow fashion (Demello 2000, 56).

The Figurational Sociologist Elias supports this idea of cultural production. He describes how 'pro-tattooing' ideologies are making their way into our collective habitus (a term used to describe a socially learned second nature) (Atkinson 2003, 8). Furthermore, he suggests that social changes in the relationships between people lead us to continually grow more accepting of and fascinated with tattooing body projects (ibid). This is reflective of one of the main concepts in Figurational Sociology, which suggests that we can only come to understand a certain social behaviour if it is 'contextually embedded within long term social processes' (ibid, 7). In other words a social behaviour or activity eventually becomes part of our popular culture, thus supporting the notion regarding the cultural production process. However, cultural production is a continuing process, and new forms of bodily practices are always being created as a method of rebellion. This means that there will always be an element of resistance to the practice of tattooing. According to Foucault's work on the Aesthetics of the Self, tattooing as part of a dominant discourse does not necessarily mark the body as passive. Although outside forces

can mould and influence the creative methods available, to continually work on the aesthetics of the self is to 'crave freedom' (Foucault 1984, 49). Therefore someone who employs tattooing as a method to aesthetically create the self can be described as an active subject (ibid, 50). This suggests that actively choosing to be tattooed is one of the resistant elements of the practice.

Summary:

By analysing Foucault and Nietzsche's theories regarding power relations and the body, it is clear that the tattooed female body can be both a site for a resistance as well as compliance. In terms of a Foucauldian understanding, this is due to the fluid nature of power relations, in that they are constantly changing. Therefore what is considered resistant will possibly be considered as part of mainstream culture. According to Nietzsche, this is done via cultural production. Elias supports this idea by suggesting that over time, the changes in social relationships leads to the increased acceptance of new behaviours and activities.

Conclusion of Literature Review:

It is clear that the majority of the research regarding tattooing and gender has focused on the tattoo community, the history of the practice, and what tattoos people have and why. For instance Demello (2000) explored the creation of the tattoo community as we know it today, and Atkinson (2002) looked at gender differences and tattooing. The societal experiences and relationships of tattooed people is missing from this body of work. I suggest that the way in which tattoos are seen

depends on the values held by the individuals viewing it, as well as the individual with the tattoo. This is based on Elias's concept of the fluidity of social relationships and how they enable better understandings of different behaviours. Therefore how people experience their tattooed bodies in society will be the focus of my research. I will also consider how gender may affect reactions from society regarding tattoos. Furthermore, an exploration of what makes a tattooed female body resistant in today's society will also be revealed.

Chapter 2: Methodology.

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodology used in order to conduct my study. I begin by looking at online forums as a way to collect data for my project. This will include information regarding why I chose the forums I used as well as the benefits and limitations of using this method. Following this will be an explanation of how I overcame these limitations by introducing another method, that of online surveys. I will then go on to discuss how I designed my study. This section will include information related to how I created my interview questions, an outline of the participant criteria, as well as a detailed account of the ethics I needed to consider whilst using this method. This is of particular importance as I interviewed people in their community regarding a sensitive topic. The chapter will then move onto the next section, which will look at how I analysed my data. In order to do this I used a content discourse analysis method. This allowed me to identify various themes within the data. I could then organise this information according to my research questions.

Section 1: Using Online Forums as a Qualitative Research Method.

In order to study tattooed men and women, I decided to use online forums. This method allowed me to ask semi-structured interview style questions to an already established focus group. Therefore, it is a time and money efficient method, which provides anonymity and less pressure for participants (Im and Chee 2006, 268). Using interviews allowed me to gather qualitative data, which gives a richer insight as to why certain phenomena occur in society (Bryman 2008, 364). In terms of this research, whether or not there is a difference in perceptions and societal

experiences of tattooed men and women is revealed. I used several online forums, which allowed me to gather a larger amount of data. The forums included:

- www.tattoo.tv (8132 members).
- www.thetattooforum.com (5421 members).
- www.bigtattooplanet.com (26,525 members, 643, 310 posts).
- www.bodyjewelleryshop.com/forum (886,102 members, 1.392.992 posts).
- www.tattooartists.org (6527 members).
- www.thetattooshop.co.uk (data was not available).

I decided to use these forums as they were on the first page of results in a Google search for 'tattoo forums'. This led me to assume that they were the most popular as well as the most accessible sites. The three sites I have collected the most data from include bigtattooplanet.com, bodyjewelleryshop.com and tattoo.tv. They also had the most members and posts. This information indicates that a forum with a higher number of active members generates the most data. In terms of the quality of my sample, this meant that I had a lot of people available to be studied.

Section 1a: Benefits and Limitations of Online Forums.

One of the more significant benefits of using online forums is that it is a time and money saving method compared to face-to-face interviews (James and Busher 2009, 6). This is because the researcher does not have to arrange to meet the participants, and therefore allow time and money for cancellations, travel fares etc

(ibid, 7). Another time saving aspect of this research method is that there are already plenty of online forums that are specifically set up for discussing certain topics, meaning that the participants have already been gathered. Therefore the researcher does not have to go through the lengthy process of waiting for suitable participants to respond to advertisements (Im and Chee 2006, 268).

Members of online forums need to create a username or nickname in order to sign up to these sites rather than use their real names (James and Busher 2009, 22), therefore their anonymity can be guaranteed. This is one of the major benefits of using online forums as a research method (ibid, 23), particularly as confidentiality and anonymity of participants is a huge ethical concern. Another benefit to the online forum as a research method is that the participants can access it in their own home at a time that suits them. This will make the participant feel more comfortable, which may encourage them to provide more detailed responses (Bryman 2008, 375). Furthermore it also ensures the safety of the researcher (James and Busher 2009, 58). The non face- to- face characteristic of online forums also makes it a good method for dealing with sensitive topics such as the body, health etc (Im and Chee 2006, 271). This may lead to more open and honest answers that could not be gathered so easily in a face- to- face interview. However, the non face- to- face aspect can also be a disadvantage, particularly as non-verbal cues are lost that would otherwise be present in a face to face interview (ibid). However more sophisticated use and widespread understanding of chat rooms, forums and in particular social networking sites has led to a new way to express non-verbal cues as text. For example these can include emoticons or ‘smileys’ as well as the use of overly long spaces to indicate certain things such as an awkward silence , etc (Ibid, 272). However there is no universal definition for internet jargon, and the meanings

conveyed can differ. This means that the researcher will need to decide what the use of things like emoticons or long spaces might mean if it is not clear. Another problem relating to this issue is that these online versions of non- verbal cues may get lost in transcription (ibid). However this will be easy enough to avoid as long as the emoticon is put in or described within the text.

Another limitation regarding the non face- to- face aspect of using online forums as a research method is that it may be hard to build a rapport with participants (James and Busher 2009, 30). This is because topic- specific forums tend to be very tight- knit communities. Therefore members may feel resistant to being researched in this way in a place they feel comfortable and able to share without worry or anxiety (ibid). This was an issue I had faced in one of the forums I had signed up to. My discussion thread was closed down after my first post containing some information about me and the study. The members of this particular forum did not want to be take part, and some made it clear by posting negative comments about me and the project. One member expressed their opinion that I should have got to know them and spent time on the site before I began my research. I felt that this was a good point, but I wanted to remain open and completely honest from the start about who I was and what I was doing on the forum. What I have taken from this experience is that when conducting research in online forums, it is best to find some 'middle ground' in terms of being open about being a researcher as well as getting to know the members of the forum before you begin your study. I decided to leave this site after the thread was closed, but did post an apology before I deleted my account. I believe that this was the best course of action regarding this site.

Another issue I encountered was that of joke responses. These were to the first set of questions I posted, and I decided not to post again on this site. This was because I felt that the joke responses were a sign that I was not wanted in that forum as a researcher and did not want to experience a repeat of what I have described above. However I will still use these responses as data in my analysis. I also received no responses from two of the forums (www.tattooartists.org, www.thetattooshop.co.uk). I again decided the best course of action was to leave these sites so as not to bother the members. However, I have had two members email me from these sites expressing their interest in taking in part. I have only had further correspondence with one of them. I sent an email reminder to the other one but did not hear back.

Members of online forums communicate asynchronously which means that interaction with each other is not in 'real time' like it would be in a chat room. This means that participants can post whenever they like, which makes using an online forum less intense for the participants than an interview might be (Im and Chee 2006, 269). This also adds to the participant's comfort. However, one of the biggest limitations of the online forum method is this type of interaction, particularly as it means that saturated data is hard to achieve. This is because researchers are not actively and directly involved in the discussion so cannot clarify confusing comments or probe further when the participant responds (James and Busher 2009, 45). This is something I encountered in my research. On the sites I got good responses from (www.bigtattooplanet.com, www.bodyjewelryshop.com/forum and www.tattoo.tv), I started out with about 10-15 participants until the 4th set of questions when the participants involvement became less frequent. I assumed that they had not checked back to see the next set of questions, so to combat this I sent them a personal

message to remind them to check back. A couple of participants came back due to this but there were some who didn't come back at all. This appears to have created some fragmented narratives. I also regularly posted a re-cap of the questions posted so far to make it easier for participants to keep track or to keep up if they had just joined the thread. This was one way to keep on top of the problems caused regarding asynchronous online interactions.

Another issue that has been raised by past researchers using an online forum is that of security. For instance, Im and Chee (2006:274) encountered problems with hacking attempts. However, I have good anti-virus software on my computer, and the forums I used are equipped to deal with hacking attempts and other security breaches. It is also important to note that using online forums as a research method means that only those who know how to use a computer and can afford internet access are included (Brownlow and O'Dell 2002, 691). They would also need to have good typing skills and a general knowledge of computers and IT skills. This means that an unknown population are excluded from a study such as this.

In considering the above problems, I decided that a mixed methods approach would be more beneficial in terms of gathering data. Whilst coming to the end of my time on the forums I created an online survey in order to combat these issues and collect more saturated data. This method did not have the problem regarding negative responses from forum members as I was not entering an established community. Also the problem of fragmented narratives created by participants who did not return to the discussion was eliminated. This was because the participants had to answer the questions in one sitting rather than keep returning to the forum. This may have been more appealing to participants as less commitment is required of them. Although creating an online survey overcame all of the challenges faced

whilst conducting my study, there is still the limitation of only computer-literate people being included.

Section 2: Study Design.

This section will look at what I needed to consider when designing my study. This includes question design, participant criteria, ethics as well as a step by step guide of how I conducted my study.

- *Question Design:*

My interview questions were designed to collect information regarding the participants and their tattoos, the participant's experience of being tattooed, as well as information about the societal perceptions of their tattoos. I had found these to be the main areas I could use to identify patterns and differences between the participants experiences of being tattooed. I also designed my questions to be open, so as to allow for the participants to answer with as much or as little explanation as they wanted (Bryman 2008, 238). I also made sure I used non-specialised or technical words in my questions (James and Busher 2009, 67). For instance, I used 'rebellious' instead of 'resistant' in one question. Both words have the same meaning, however 'rebellious' would be more familiar to the participants. The term 'resistant' is more widely used in feminist literature than in everyday vocabulary. Using words in which the participant is more familiar with ensured that they were able to fully understand the question and therefore provide richer answers (ibid, 68). This also removed any potential of a researcher- participant power relationship in which the participant would feel inferior to the researcher. This is more likely to

happen if participants can't understand the questions due to the use of technical terminology (ibid, 68).

- *Participant Criteria:*

One of the main criteria for my participants is that they must be 18 and over due to UK law regarding tattoos, which states that to get a tattoo, one must be 18 and over. The other requirement is that they must have at least one tattoo. This is because the focus of my study is on the experience of being tattooed in society. I did not enforce any limits on gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation though I did ask participants for this information so that I can identify potential patterns across these categories. I could then analyse whether or not they are relevant markers of diversity in relation to tattooing. I did not enforce any limits on location either. However because the forums are based in the UK and USA the majority of members come from a Westernised background.

- *Ethical Considerations:*

All sociological research is subject to ethical guidelines as proposed by the British Sociological Association (BSA). This is to ensure that the physical and psychological wellbeing of participants is not adversely affected by taking part in research (The British Sociological Association 2002). For this study, the standard ethical guidelines were adhered to, which included informed consent; confidentiality of data and the right to withdraw at any time (The British Sociological Association 2002). It could be argued that using an online forum to research a potentially sensitive issue such as the body can be considered as more ethical than other methods. This is due to the anonymity of forum members, as well as the non face- to- face interaction. These are

important features to consider when researching a sensitive topic.

Consent was obtained after providing the potential participants with information regarding the purpose of the study and what was expected of them as participants. This was done within my first post on the discussion forum. As the study was conducted online, instead of asking participants to sign a consent form, I asked participants to begin their first post by stating that ‘they have read and understood the consent form and that they wish to take part’. This post also included information regarding the participant’s right to withdraw as well as the confidentiality of their data.

- *Step- By- Step of My Study:*
 - First of all I became a member of the forums and created a profile including information about myself and my interests. I even included a picture of my tattoos which helped to build trust by giving the participants something to relate to.
 - Then I emailed the moderator of the forums to inform them of my study.
 - After getting approval from the moderator, I began a discussion thread with the information package post.
 - I then posted my first question, and a question every other day after that.
 - I recorded the responses as I received them in a word document as a direct copy and paste from the forum.
 - When all the questions had been posted and all the data had been collected from the online survey, a content analysis was conducted in order to identify any themes.

Section 3: Analysing the Data.

This section will look at the method used to analysis the data, as well as consider the reliability, validity and generalisability of the data collected. Any limitations regarding these aspects of the data will also be discussed here.

Section 3a: Using Content Analysis.

Data collected via interviews is difficult to interpret until it has been condensed and a coding scheme has been applied. This process is called Content Analysis (Krippendorff 2004, 238). Holsti (1968:608) defines it as 'any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of the message'. In other words, a coding system is used to identify meaningful patterns and processes (Krippendorff 2004, 238).

In order to create this coding system, an open reading of the data transcript must be done first (Seale 1998, 236). This involves reading through the data and making a note of the common words, phrases and themes within it. This can then be used to define the units of analysis and categories of the coding system. The unit of analysis will be specific words or phrases, and a category is used to group together words, phrases and themes that have similar meanings (ibid, 237). Once these have been identified, the transcript can be coded (ibid). In order to code my data, I assigned each category a colour. I then highlighted each word or phrase that related to a category in its chosen colour. I repeated this process 4 times to ensure I had a full analysis of the data. I also kept a tally of the frequency of certain responses. This allowed me to identify patterns amongst the participants.

One of the benefits of using content analysis is its cost- effectiveness. The materials required to conduct a content analysis can be easily acquired and inexpensive. It can also be done with just one person (Krippendorff 2004, 258). However, it can also be a time- consuming method. This is because the categorising and coding of data needs to be repeated a number of times to ensure nothing is missed (ibid). Another limitation of content analysis is that much of its rigour lies on the structure of the categories used (Seale 1998, 236). They must first be exhaustive, in that they cover all possible categories relating to the data. Secondly, they must be mutually exclusive, in that they don't overlap (ibid). Developing a coding framework that adheres to this criterion can prove difficult. The categories I used to analysis my data included meaning/purpose of tattoo, size/location of tattoo, negative reactions from society/family, positive reactions from society/family, their opinions on societal reactions/perceptions, gender as having an effect/no effect on tattoos, and tattoo's as rebellious/trendy. I felt that these categories covered the relevant parts of the data. The categorising of data can also be open to interpretation (Krippendorff 2004, 258), which relates to the issue of reliability when using content analysis. Despite its limitations, I considered it to be the best method for analysing my data. This is because it allowed me to identify themes and their frequency in relation to the use of key words and phrases amongst certain participants.

Section 3b: My Data as Reliable, Valid and Generalisable.

In this part of section 3, the reliability, validity and generalisability of my data will be analysed. It is important to note here that feminist principles regarding research tend to be critical of the use of reliability, validity and generalisability. Feminist research is

based on the assumption that the world is socially constructed. It therefore displays a rejection of value-free research and an aversion to positivist methodology (Haig 1997, 23). According to Dubois (1983: 34), what has been named "universal" knowledge is actually male knowledge, derived from male scholarship and is therefore fundamentally flawed.

However, it is not correct to say that all feminist research takes an anti-positivist stance (Harnois 2012, 14). Feminist researchers who do not adhere to this philosophy ensure that standards regarding validity, reliability and generalisability are followed (ibid). Although some feminist researchers do not specify the conditions under which these principles are followed (ibid, 15), I have decided to consider them in my research. This is because my research topic, that of gendered constructions and perceptions of the tattooed body is an under researched subject. This means it requires more analysis regarding the reliability, validity and generalisability of the data. Westmarland (2001:28) supports my argument by suggesting that 'feminists need broad-based knowledge as much as they need individual women's experiences'. In other words, feminism requires different types of knowledge produced by a plurality of different research methods (ibid).

- *Reliability:*

Joppe (2000:1) defines reliability as referring to 'the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study'. He also states that 'if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, they can then be considered reliable'. According to this definition my results are reliable. If another researcher was to use these online forums as a way to research tattoos, they would find similar results. This is because my results are representative of that specific population. Furthermore the individuals that make up

this population will hold similar values and opinions, which indicate that they are likely to give similar responses, therefore leading to the production of reliable results.

. The categories that are used to code the data using a content analysis method can lead to reliability issues. This is because the categories could be interpreted differently each time the study is conducted, therefore leading to unreliable results (Seale 1998, 236). One way to overcome this is to use inter-coder reliability (ibid). This involves a number of different researchers coding the same data using the same set of categories. This also includes using the same definitions and guidelines for assigning words and phrases to these categories (Krippendorff 2004, 259). However, the fact that the researchers agree with each other, does not mean that anyone else (i.e. the audience) will agree with them (Seale 1998, 237). This leads to the generation of reliable invalid data.

- *Validity:*

The following definition of validity comes again from Joppe (2000:1), who suggests that 'validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are'. In other words, does the research method allow you to answer your research questions? (Golafshani 2003, 599). My results in relation to this can be considered as valid, as they do provide answers to my research questions. However, the above definition refers to the validity of quantitative data. Some researchers have questioned how applicable this definition is to qualitative data (ibid, 601). Recognising the need for a way to measure their research, these researchers have adopted terms such as rigour, trustworthiness and quality to describe their concept of qualitative validity (ibid, 602). This means that validity, in qualitative research, refers to whether the findings of a

study are true and certain. Research considered to be 'true' indicates that the findings accurately reflect the situation, and 'certain' findings are supported by the evidence. Therefore results that are found to be 'true and certain' within a qualitative study can be described as trustworthy. According to this definition then, my results are trustworthy, because they reflect a situation that is supported by evidence. However, according to Stenbacka (2001:552), the quality of research is related to the generalisability of its results.

- *Generalisability:*

Bryman (2008:102) defines generalisation as 'the application of research results to cases or situations beyond those examined in the study'. This refers to how far the findings can be generalised to the wider population. My data is hard to generalise because it focuses on a specific population, which is made up of forum members with tattoos. There was little variation regarding the age, sex and nationality of my participants. All of the participants were white, from the UK or USA and the majority were in their early 20's. This means it is hard to generalise the results to other nationalities and age groups. However there was some variance between the sexuality of the participants, but the majority were straight. There were also more female participants. As mentioned above, there are an unknown number of excluded participants from this study. This is due to the fact that the participants would need regular access to a computer as well as the internet in order to take part. These factors mean that my results are not generalisable beyond the study (Golafshani 2003, 602). However, they do provide a snapshot of the experiences of individuals who play an active role in the online tattoo community.

Summary.

This chapter has identified and discussed the various issues that need to be addressed before conducting research. I began by considering the advantages and limitations of online forums as a research method, and described some of the problems I encountered regarding these limitations during my research. As a solution, I decided to use an online survey as a way to gather more saturated data. I then discussed the various elements regarding my study design which included question design, ethical guidelines and participant criteria. I also provided an explanation of how I used a content analysis method to interpret my results. Following this, I considered how reliable, valid and generalisable my data was. The results of the study will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Analysis of Data.

In this chapter I will present and discuss the results of my study. In conducting a content analysis of my data, I was able to identify some common themes and patterns in the data. The results are presented in this chapter according to these themes, which include gender and tattooing, experiences in society, family reactions, and rebellious tattoos.

Section 1: Summary of Participants.

Overall 30 participants took part in this study, 14 from the forums and 16 from the surveys. 21 were female and 9 were male. The tables below demonstrate the details of each participant regarding their gender, location, sexual orientation, age and ethnicity. They have been organised according to whether the participant took part via the forums or the survey.

Table 1: Participants from the Forums

| Participant Number | Age | Gender | Location | Sexual Orientation | Ethnicity |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Participant 1 (F1) | 19 | Female | West Virginia, USA | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 2 (F2) | 20 | Female | Scotland | Bisexual | Caucasian |
| Participant 3 (F3) | 33 | Female | England | Bisexual | Caucasian |
| Participant 4 (F4) | 18 | Female | Ohio, USA | Bisexual | Caucasian |
| Participant 5 (F5) | 43 | Female | Arizona, USA | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 6 (F6) | 23 | Female | Birmingham, England | Bisexual | Caucasian |
| Participant 7 (F7) | 29 | Female | Wiltshire, England | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 8 (F8) | 34 | Female | Fife, Scotland | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 9 (M1) | 24 | Male | Glasgow, Scotland | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 10 (M2) | No answer | Male | No answer | No answer | No answer |
| Participant 11 (M3) | No answer | Male | London, England | Straight | No answer |
| Participant 12 (M4) | 26 | Male | Ireland | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 13 (M5) | No answer | Male | UK | Straight | No answer |
| Participant 14 (F9) | No answer | Female | London, England | Straight | No answer |

Table 2: Participants from Survey

| Participant Number | Age | Gender | Location | Sexual Orientation | Ethnicity |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Participant 15 (F10) | 30 | Female | San Diego, USA | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 16 (M6) | 20 | Male | Baltimore, USA | Homosexual | No answer |
| Participant 17 (F11) | 23 | Female | Cheltenham, England | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 18 (F12) | 25 | Female | County Durham, England | Queer/ Bisexual | Caucasian |
| Participant 19 (F13) | 29 | Female | Gloucestershire, England | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 20 (F14) | 28 | Female | Nottingham, England | Bisexual | Caucasian |
| Participant 21 (F15) | 25 | Female | Leeds, England | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 22 (F16) | 29 | Female | Gloucestershire, England | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 23 (M7) | 25 | Male | England | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 24 (F17) | 52 | Female | Isle of Man | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 25 (F18) | 27 | Female | Cheltenham, England | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 26 (F19) | 27 | Female | England | Queer | Caucasian |
| Participant 27 (F20) | 34 | Female | Cheltenham, England | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 28 (F21) | 25 | Female | Gloucestershire, England | Straight | Caucasian |
| Participant 29 (M8) | 30 | Male | No answer | No answer | No answer |
| Participant 30 (M9) | 30 | Male | Birmingham, England | Straight | Caucasian |

I will be referring to the participants throughout this chapter using their assigned code which can be seen in the above tables below the participant number.

Section 2: Gender and Tattooing.

Whilst analysing the data, gender similarities and differences within the participant's accounts of their tattoos became clear and can be categorised according to the tattoo image, its meaning and its location.

Section 2a: Gender and Tattoo Image.

In order to make sense of the gender differences regarding my participants tattoo images, I have organised them into different categories. The table below demonstrates the frequency of each category amongst the male and female participants:

Table 3:

| Tattoo Image | Animals | Words/script | Nautical | Mythical/ fantasy | No Answer |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Male | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Female | 9 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| Total | 10 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 5 |

| Tattoo Image (continued) | Nature: Flowers/ Fauna | Symbols: Chinese, zodiac etc | Music/ film/ book | Traditional: hearts, stars, skulls etc | Style |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Male | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| Female | 8 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 6 |
| Total | 10 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 9 |

There is clearly some difference regarding gender and choice of tattoo image. For instance the female participants were more likely to have tattoos of flowers or fauna. There are also differences to be found within the categories. This can be seen by

comparing the animal tattoo images of the male and female participants. 4 of the female participants had images of birds, 5 had images of butterflies, and 2 had the animal of their zodiac sign. For instance F11 had a scorpion and F12 had a crab (appendix 7). The male participant (M4) with the animal designs had an image of a wolf pack, as well as an image of 4 stags (appendix 6). Although these images can be put into the same category, there is clearly a difference regarding the types of designs that appeal to men and women. This supports the findings of Demello (2000: 38), who suggests that feminine tattoo designs were created so that women can be tattooed, but with an appropriate design that conforms to gender norms.

However only 6 of the female participants stated that they had deliberately chosen designs that were feminine. 8 described how their tattoos could be seen as feminine, but that this was not a feature they had thought about at the time, and 9 reported how gender had no effect on their tattoo image. They picked their design based on what they considered was the best representation of the meaning of their tattoos. This suggests that these women are more active in their choices, even if the design is unintentionally feminine. This is reminiscent of Foucault's (1984: 47) notion of 'aesthetics of the self' in which he states that freedom is a term that refers to the possibility to create and design ourselves. Although he argues that this creation is subject to outside forces, it should not however make us passive. We should continually seek to self-create, even if it is a self based on fiction (ibid, 49). This indicates that women's tattooing can be resistant even if it is influenced by a discourse that suggests there should be appropriate tattoo images for women. This is because it is still a way for them to re-design themselves and therefore according to Foucault, this allows for the possibility of freedom. These female participants can also be described as ideal post- feminist subjects, due to their control over their own

bodies and their choice to re-create and re-model the body using tattoos.

Section 2b: Gender and Tattoo Meaning.

All of the participants reported that at least one of their tattoos had a meaning or purpose to its imagery. The table below indicates the most common types of meanings between the male and female participants:

Table 4:

| Tattoo Meaning | Overcoming something | Remember: Strong/hopeful | Family/ friend | Spiritual | Patriotic | liked Style/image |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Male | 3 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Female | 0 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 8 |
| Total | 3 | 3 | 13 | 6 | 3 | 12 |

| Tattoo Meaning (continued) | Rebellious | No meaning | Time/event | New start | No answer |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Male | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Female | 1 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 2 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 3 |

There is some gender difference regarding the choice of meaning. For instance, 3 of the males described having a tattoo that represented their patriotism. M1 had a tattoo of the Glasgow City coat of arms, M4 had a Celtic style griffin to represent being Irish (appendix 6) and M7 had a tattoo that symbolised his German heritage (appendix 7). None of the women reported a tattoo with this meaning; therefore in this sample, patriotism can be described as a theme that appeals more to men. There was also a clear difference regarding gender and the choice of image to represent similar meanings. This can be seen in the comparison of a male and female participant who describes their tattoos as representing their family. F16 used

flowers (appendix 7) and M4 used an image of a wolf as well as stags (appendix 6). The flowers are widely considered as a feminine tattoo design (Mifflin 1997, 71), and the wolf could be described as an image that may appeal more to men.

Section 2c: Size and Location of Tattoo.

This section will look at the gender differences regarding the size and location of my participants tattoos. The table below indicates the participant’s responses as to whether or not gender has had an effect on the size and placement of their tattoos:

Table 5:

| Gender effect on size and location | Had effect on size | Had effect on location | No Answer |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Male | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Female | 6 | 8 | 2 |
| Total | 6 | 10 | 5 |

None of the male participants described gender as having an effect on the size of their tattoos, compared to 6 of the females. Location appeared to be more of a concern for both male and female participants. This table shows the body parts the participants had tattooed:

Table 6:

| Tattoo Locations | Arm: Bicep, forearm | Lower back | Upper back | Hands/ fingers | Wrist | Chest | Hip/ ribs | Leg: thigh, calf | Neck/ ear | Ankle/ foot | No Answer |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Male | 6 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Female | 9 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 2 |
| Total | 15 | 4 | 11 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 8 | 5 |

The female participants showed more variation regarding the placement of their tattoos, whereas the men have stuck to traditionally masculine locations. 6 of the male participants had upper- arm tattoos, and 3 of them described how this was considered a masculine place to be tattooed. For instance M8 said 'I guess the upper arm might be a more popular area for men to get tattooed' (appendix 7). M7 described how his tattoos 'made him feel more masculine' (appendix 7) and M9 states how he 'went for a more masculine style design' (appendix 7). The lower back, wrist, hip/ribs and neck/ear were all body parts that the male participants did not have tattooed. These findings support the work of Atkinson (2002:31) and Demello (2000:40) who both suggest that there are gender specific locations to have tattoos. This is also supportive of Bordo (1993: 94), who looks at how constructions of femininity are part of mainstream body discourses that insist all women should aspire to a hetro-normative ideal. It is clear from my data that these discourses of femininity are also apparent within the tattoo community and have affected some of the participant's choices regarding their tattoos. These tattoos can be described as a literal inscription of the discourse regarding gender norms within the tattoo community on the body. This relates to Foucault's concept of discourses and how power is inscribed on the body, marking it as a 'docile body' (Foucault 1975, 136).

However it can be argued that the creation of feminised designs is part of a developing feminine aesthetic in tattooing, and has given women a method in which to 'write their own bodies' (Braunberger 2000, 4). In other words, tattooing can be used by women to rewrite notions of feminine beauty within society as well create themselves according to their own image. This is supported by my findings as well as related to Foucault's concept of aesthetics of the self, with 7 of the female participants describing how they did not think their gender had an effect on their

tattoos location, and 8 did not think it affected the size. Their decision was based on whether or not they would be able to cover it for work, as well as what they considered to be aesthetically pleasing. F2's response regarding size and location is indicative of this; 'the only real reasons behind the placement are where I thought they would look best, and for my leg piece, because it was too big for anywhere else' (appendix 6).

Regardless of this, 8 of the females did consider gender as having an effect on the location of their tattoos. They also described the ankle, wrist, hip, foot and lower back as feminine places to have a tattoo. This was because they are 'discreet' and can be hidden easily. This can be seen in a response from F20 'I wanted my tattoo to be somewhere discreet; the only time they are exposed is when I am the beach' (appendix 7). Overall, the female participants were more likely to have a tattoo that they could choose to cover up or show off. Table 7 indicates this:

Table 7:

| Tattoos that can be covered | Choose to cover/show off | Don't cover/ not bothered if visible | Not in visible location | No Answer |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Male | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Female | 12 | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| Total | 14 | 7 | 7 | 5 |

As F6 explains, 'my cross tattoo is on my left leg, just above the ankle... it's a nice place where the tattoo can be on show or hidden as needs be' (appendix 6). F21 describes how she chose to have a tattoo on the middle of her back (appendix 7) to ensure it could always be covered in case she ever began to dislike it, as well as to avoid negative associations. Meanwhile, the male participants were indifferent

towards the visibility of their tattoos. Only 2 described how they deliberately choose to have their tattoos in locations that could be covered. As M9 said 'I wanted it to be in a place that wasn't always visible so I could choose when and where to have it on show' (appendix 7). 4 of the male participants said they had not thought about it. For instance M8 said 'I don't actively display my tattoos in any particular way, I'm not bothered if the general public see them or not' (appendix 7). This means that having a tattoo that can be easily covered or visible depending on the social situation is more important to the female participants.

An interesting point to make here is that 5 of the women with arm tattoos and the 2 with chest tattoos were heavily tattooed. They also had the most tattoos out of all of the female participants and mentioned how they were 'not bothered' about them being constantly visible. These women can be seen as resistant, due to having tattoos in more masculine locations. It can therefore be suggested that these women are causing 'gender trouble' (Butler 1990, 176). This is because their tattoos disrupt gender norms within society as well as the tattoo community. Furthermore, these participants can be seen as a parody of masculinity, according to Butler's definition of parody in her theory of performativity (please see Part 1 of Chapter 1). This is because the heavily tattooed female body can be described as imitating the original meanings of masculinity and then using this to rewrite traditional performances of femininity (178).

Summary of Section 2:

This section looked at how my findings are indicative of gender differences in tattooing. The image and meaning as well as the size and location of my participant's

tattoos were discussed. A clear difference was found in the type of images that appeal to the male and female participants of this study. There is also a difference regarding the choice of image to represent the same meanings for the participants. Gender differences can also be seen in the size and location of my participants tattoos. The upper arm is considered a more masculine location, whereas wrist, ankle, hip and foot are thought of as more feminine. These findings indicate evidence of gender norms and tattooing amongst my participants and support the previous work of Atkinson (20002) and Demello (2000). Furthermore, my hypothesis that gender norms still exist within some parts of the tattoo community is supported by my participant's accounts of their tattoos.

Section 3: Gender Differences and Experiences in Society.

This section will look at the participant's experiences of being tattooed within society and consider the gender differences of these experiences.

Section 3a: Differences between Negative and Positive Experiences.

First of all it is necessary to take a look at the frequency of positive and negative experiences amongst the participants. This is demonstrated in this table:

Table 8:

| Experiences in Society | Negative Experience | Positive Experience | No negative or positive experiences | No Answer |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------|
| Male | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Female | 8 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Total | 9 | 9 | 7 | 9 |

More female participants described a negative experience regarding the display of their tattoos in public. 3 of these participants described this negative reaction as one that came from a male. F12 described a bad experience involving a man touching her tattoos without asking ‘one night I was stood at a bar and a man came up behind me, licked his finger and ran it down the back of my calves (where most of my tattoos are)... he said he was just checking to see if they are real’ (appendix 7). This participant also reported how she had been told that she would be more attractive without her tattoos in another incident. 2 males reported a negative societal reaction. M7 said how this was due to a misunderstanding regarding the symbolism of one of his images ‘when a friend saw my iron cross tattoo on a night out, he instantly assumed I was a neo- Nazi... it almost went physical’(appendix 7).

The higher number of negative experiences amongst the female participants demonstrates that there was a difference between male and female societal experiences of being tattooed. The negative experiences reported above by the female participants have also been caused by a male, which is indicative of gendered values regarding the female body in society. One such value is that the female body needs to be regulated and remain attractive for the male gaze (Murdock 1990, 78). As the tattooed female body can be described as displaying a mark of resistance, it could be argued that the negative reactions experienced by the female participants occurred as a method of regulation and to prevent further resistance.

Another explanation regarding why the female participants were more likely to report a negative public reaction is due to the prevalence of the stereotypical tattooed woman as 'trampy' or 'deviant' (Steward 1990, 71). This is also evident in my findings. F21 described how she purposely chose to have a tattoo in a hidden area so as not to be associated with pre-conceived connotations of tattooed women. The connotations she described included being seen as a 'tramp' or a 'slut' (appendix 7). These tend to be associated with tattoos on the lower back for women, or as they are otherwise known: 'tramp stamps' or 'targets' (Mifflin 1997, 82). 4 of the female participants and 1 male acknowledge this stereotype. F18 describes how this has become an in-joke between her and her friends, 'we have laughed about the 'popularity' of my back tattoo!' (appendix 7). Whereas F16 describes how she resents the stereotype 'I have seen lots of articles saying that 'tramp stamps' and tattoos are unattractive and undesirable... it makes me angry' (appendix 7). These findings support the idea that the reason for the negative experiences of the female participants is related to the stereotype of tattooed women. However 3 of the females who reported a negative experience also described experiencing positive feedback as well.

There was not any gender variation regarding the positive experiences of the participants as 4 males and 5 females reported positive reactions. This mostly consisted of positive comments, and general admiration of their designs. F11 reported that 'many people have commented on my back piece, saying that it is very colourful and beautiful' (appendix 7). The participants who said they had not experienced any negative or positive reactions said that this was due to the fact that they tended to cover their tattoos in public. M6 is one such participant 'I do not receive much reaction as my tattoos are not usually visible'. The reason most of the

participants give for covering up their tattoos is for work and uniform regulations. F11 explains how she covers up her tattoos at work to 'show respect for clients and other members of staff who may not be comfortable around tattoos' (appendix 7). F12 describes how her job as a health care professional has a uniform regulation that prevents her from getting any tattoos below the elbow (appendix 6).

The majority of the participants agreed that tattooed women were more likely to be judged negatively in society. Table 9 demonstrates this:

Table 9:

| <i>Participants views on gender and societal perceptions</i> | Women are judged more negatively | Seen as more acceptable for men | Did not see gender as a problem in tattooing | No Answer |
|--|---|--|---|------------------|
| Male | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Female | 9 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| Total | 14 | 5 | 1 | 12 |

14 participants overall saw tattooed women as more likely to be stereotyped or judged in society. For instance M6 states that 'women are generally seen as more trashy if they have visible tattoos...society is sexist' (appendix 7). 3 Females and 2 males also described how tattooing was more of a male practice. For instance, as F16 explains; 'I think in 'general society' it is still more acceptable for men to be tattooed, however I do think this is slowly being watered down the more women are having tattoos. I think the acceptability is linked to tattoos historically being a 'male pursuit' in our society' (appendix 7). These findings indicate that the participants are aware of society's perception of tattooed women and that the negative stereotype is related to the perceived masculinity of the practice of tattooing.

Section 3b: Reactions to Negative Experiences.

7 of the participants who described a negative reaction to their tattoos said it was something they could easily ignore. These participants also stated how they viewed those who judged them negatively for being tattooed as people they did not want to interact with. For instance M4 described how the people who didn't like his tattoos were people he doesn't have much in common with anyways, 'their attitudes don't affect me, as I don't hold their opinion in high regard. Not because of their attitudes towards tattoos, but their attitudes in general' (appendix 6). This is reflected in other participant's reactions towards those who view tattoos negatively. F16 sees these people as 'narrow minded and dull' and declares that 'the way people respond to my tattoos is their business and does not have any influence on whether I decide to have them on show or not' (appendix 7). She also describes how she 'enjoys causing a bit of a stir' regarding the display of her tattoos. F11 explains that a negative reaction is a very outdated view. She goes on to say that 'although I would never hold someone's opinion against them, I will not be hiding my tattoos from them' (appendix 7). It can be argued that the experiences and opinions of F11 and F16 are examples of a tattooed female body displaying the will to power. According to Nietzsche (1901:340) the will to power cannot exist without some resistance to it from similar efforts from other bodies. When Nietzsche's theory is applied to my participants and their experience of a negative reaction, this can be described as an encounter with someone else's will to power. As a response, they did not change how they displayed their tattoos and even enjoyed this type of reaction; therefore they can be described as exerting their will to power using their tattooed bodies. This

indicates how tattooed women can still be seen as resistant as well as using their tattoos as a display of their will to power.

However, one of the female participants (F12) felt that her bad experiences and reactions from society have encouraged her to cover up her tattoos in certain social situations. 'I now tend to wear tights a lot more just to avoid the hassle when I am going to be around lots of people that I don't know, or at places where I know people will be more judgemental'. She goes on to describe how she feels that she has been judged negatively because of her tattoos 'I feel like some people have prejudged my character, and assumed I would be a rude, uncaring, un-thoughtful, aggressive person just because I am tattooed'. She also explains how this judgement has been sexual as well 'my tattoos have caused me to be judged... sometimes in an overtly sexual manner...and I feel as though some people have made assumptions about my sex life because of my tattoos' (appendix 7). This participant's account supports the work of Demello (2000:74) in that assumptions are sometimes made about tattooed women's sexuality in society of which being considered as 'trampy' or as a lesbian is part of the negative stereotype of tattooed women.

Summary of Section 3:

It is clear that negative and positive reactions have been experienced by both male and female participants. However, the frequency of bad experiences is higher amongst the female participants. I suggest that this is due to the negative stereotype of tattooed women that is still prevalent in our society. This supports my hypothesis, in that a difference between the societal experiences of men and women was found

amongst my participants. It also provides evidence for the existence of the ‘double-edged sword’ regarding perceptions of tattoos in society, as well as suggests that it is more likely to be experienced by women. Most of the participants indicate that that they were not bothered by the negative reactions. 1 female participant described how she enjoyed the negative reactions, whereas another said she would not cover up because of them. This provides support for my hypothesis that tattooed women can still be considered as resistant. According to my results, the resistant element appears in the reactions to negative judgement rather than in the actual image or location of the tattoo and can be described as a display of Nietzsche’s concept of the will to power.

Section 4: Gender and Family Reactions.

Reactions from family members were another recurring theme throughout the data. Various gender differences were apparent and occurred not just across the participant’s experience of these reactions. Gender differences could also be seen regarding which parent was the most disapproving. Table 10 demonstrates the number of negative and positive family reactions amongst the participants:

Table 10:

| Family Reactions to Tattoos | Positive | Negative | No reaction | No Answer |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Male | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Female | 4 | 6 | 3 | 8 |
| Total | 7 | 7 | 4 | 11 |

Section 4a: Negative Family Reactions.

As can be seen in table 10, male and female participants described experiencing negative as well positive reactions from their family. However the female participants had experienced more negative, with 6 reporting a bad reaction from family. 3 of these participants stated that they had not told their parents or at least one parent. 1 of them had not told their father. F8 said she 'cannot imagine a situation where I would ever tell my Dad, I'll go to my grave with that secret' (appendix 6) and F5 explains how she kept her tattoos hidden from her father when she was younger, 'I thought I was being so clever at that age and that he wouldn't see all the tattoos I had all over the place. I was wrong about the ones on my hand!' (appendix 6). F17 described how she waited till she was 40 due to family disapproval. She goes on to say how her mother is not happy about her choice to be tattooed (appendix 7). Only 2 of the male participants described a negative reaction from family members. M8 explains that although his parents don't like his tattoos, they are now used to them (appendix 7).

It can be argued that the higher number of negative reactions from family members towards the female participants indicates the existence of pre-conceived gender roles of family members. For instance, the father is still considered to be the male keeper of the female members of the family (Chambers 2012, 64), and would be required to keep them away from activities such as tattooing. This is in keeping with the values of the 'Working Class Era' of tattooing, in which the attitude that 'nice girls don't get tattooed' was prevalent. This is clearly a value that some people still hold today regarding female tattoos. 2 of the female participants described how the older members of their family view tattooing according to traditional stereotypes. F11

explains how her older family members think her tattoos are inappropriate because 'they have outdated views on all types of body modification' (appendix 7). F16 describes a similar situation; 'my grandparents love to remind me that only sailors, prisoners and prostitutes had tattoos in their day...they also say it's a generational thing and wouldn't have happened like it does now in their day' (appendix 7). This also indicates the existence of traditional values regarding tattooed women.

Both the male and female participant's who reported a negative response from their family described how their mothers were disapproving of their tattoos. F12 believed that this was due to her mother worrying that she might regret her tattoos rather than actually disliking tattoos altogether. 'My Mam has mixed feelings about them, and worries that I will regret them' (appendix 7). F5 describes how her mother didn't understand tattoos; 'my family like my tattoos with the exception of my Mum... she just doesn't understand why people have tattoos. So whilst she doesn't dislike them, she doesn't like them either' (appendix 6). This also suggests evidence of the perceived gender roles of family members, in that the mother is seen as protective of their children, even when they become adults (ibid, 67). It could also be argued that this is a reason for the persistence of negative reactions to tattooed women, in that women are meant to be protectors of others from activities such as tattooing, not the ones actively participating in them. Another reason for the negative familial reaction that my female participants have experienced could be due to the perception of tattooing as a risk taking behaviour, and therefore females who get tattooed are considered to be 'at-risk girls' by their families.

Section 4b: Positive Family Reactions.

7 participants described positive reactions from their families. M7 described how his parents let him get tattooed at the age of 16¹ (appendix 7). F20 said that her father was 'surprisingly ok with it!' (appendix 7). The fact that she was surprised by his positive reaction relates to the point raised in the previous section, in that fathers may be seen to be more disapproving of tattoos. F8 explains that even though she will never tell her father about her tattoos, she has told her mother; 'she was shocked, but also kind of delighted at the same time... it helps that she really likes the style... she had never seen tattoos like that before' (appendix 6). F8's experience with her family and her tattoos is an example of the 'double-edged sword', as she has experienced acceptance from her mother, yet hasn't told her father as she believes he will disapprove.

Section 4: Summary:

Both male and female participants had experienced negative as well positive reactions from their family. However this was higher amongst the females, with 6 reporting a bad reaction. The negative reactions from the family to the participant's tattoos clearly suggest that traditional gender roles still exist in society, particularly regarding the expectations of family members. For instance, fathers are still considered as 'head of the household' and mothers are seen as 'protectors'. These traditional roles also ensure the prevalence of a negative stereotype regarding tattooed women. It was also suggested that the female participants experienced

¹ UK law states that with parent's permission, an individual can get tattooed at 16.

more negative reactions from their families regarding their tattoos due to the association of tattoos to 'at-risk girls' and risk taking behaviour. My participant's accounts of their familial reactions to their tattoos support my hypothesis by demonstrating a difference between the societal perceptions of tattooed men and women.

Section 5: Rebellious Tattoos.

Another theme that became apparent during the analysis of my data was that of 'rebellious' tattoos. This includes whether the participants thought their tattoos were rebellious as well as what they thought was a rebellious tattoo.

Section 5a: Participants Tattoos as Rebellious.

Table 11 demonstrates the number of participants who thought their tattoos were rebellious:

Table 11:

| <i>Participants tattoos as rebellious</i> | Yes | No | No Answer |
|--|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Male | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Female | 6 | 6 | 2 |
| Total | 9 | 9 | 6 |

6 females and 3 males considered their tattoos to be rebellious. The reasons the participants gave as to why their tattoo was rebellious varies. 4 of the female participants described how their tattoos were rebellious when they first had them

done. For instance as F5 reports 'something rebellious? They most certainly were when I first started to get them!' (appendix 6). F18 gives a similar response 'they were rebellious, but now they are just part of me and my life history' (appendix 7). F16 explains how they are less rebellious for her now that she is older, as well as because tattoos are more common place in society (appendix 7). F17 describes her tattoos as rebellious because her mother disapproves 'only a little rebellious, as my mother wasn't happy' (appendix 7). F11 also described how her mother saw them as rebellious; 'I don't see them as rebellious myself, but my mother would disagree with me'. This data indicates that none of the female participants saw their tattoos as deliberately rebellious, or at least not in this way at present. This can be seen in the older participant's responses as they were aware of how their tattoos had lost their rebellious element as they had grown older. The younger participants acknowledged how society as well as their family members may perceive body modifications as rebellious. They also described how the practice of tattooing had changed in to a form of self expression or art. According to these participants, this aspect of the practice meant it was not rebellious.

The reasons the male participants gave as to why their tattoos were rebellious also vary. M6 describes how his tattoos aren't very masculine (appendix 7) and was glad he had tattoos outside of the convention. This is different to the other male participants who described how their tattoos made them feel masculine (see section 2c above). M8 saw his tattoos as deliberately rebellious and as a way to express his choice in being an alternative person: 'they are an expression of my dedication to choose my own path in life and not follow the mainstream' (appendix 7). M7 explains how others may perceive his iron cross tattoo as rebellious, but that this was because they were unaware of its representation of his heritage (appendix 7). This

data indicates that 2 of the male participants described their tattoos as having a deliberately rebellious aspect, which differs from the female responses above.

6 of the female participants and 3 of the male participants described how their tattoos were not rebellious. 3 of the female participants and 1 male participant described how this was because it was now part of the mainstream. For instance as F3 explains; 'rebellion is an act of defiance or authority, seeing as a lot of people have body modifications these days I think that not having a tattoo would probably be seen as going against the trend!' (appendix 7). The other 3 female participants and 1 male described how it was more about art and self expression. As F20 reports; 'its self expression and we all have a right to be who we are and who we want to be (Appendix 7). M9 explains how he sees tattoos as 'more personal and more artistic' rather than rebellious (appendix 7). M4 describes how he doesn't see any of his tattoos as a sign of rebellion because he waited till he was in his twenties and discovered who he was as a person first. He further states that 'rebellion was never a motivation for me. I smoked as a teenager for that!' (appendix 7). This indicates how the majority of the participants did not see their tattoos as a form of rebellion or resistance.

However the majority of the participants were keen to describe their tattoos as non- trendy and reported how they were unaware of tattoo trends. It could be suggested that this is a resistant element of their tattoos. Table 12 demonstrates the number of participants who described their tattoos as trendy/non-trendy:

Table 12:

| Participants tattoos as trendy | Trendy | Non-Trendy | Did not know of trends/fashion | No Answer |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Male | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Female | 2 | 12 | 6 | 9 |
| Total | 2 | 15 | 7 | 14 |

Only one male participant and 2 female participants described their tattoos as trendy. For instance, F12 explains that the style she chose is considered fashionable (appendix 7) and M6 states that he got his chest tattoo 'because of the trendiness factor' and that 'cool kids have chest tattoos' (appendix 7). F16 describes how she thinks she has 'been influenced by some 'trends'' (appendix 7). 3 male participants and 12 female participants described their tattoos as being non- trendy. F21 reported that she did not want to follow the lower back trend (appendix 7) and F11 describes how she 'is not one to follow trends' (appendix 7). 6 females and 1 male pointed out that they were unaware of tattoo trends or fashions. As F3 states, 'No my tattoos are not affected by trends, not that I know of'. M6 also agrees (appendix 7). This means that the data suggests that trends and the following of fashion are not seen positively by the participants. This may be due to the shift in perceptions of tattooing as an art form that represents a deep and personal meaning. Due to this aspect of tattooing it could be argued that the participants did not want to think that their meaningful tattoos could be seen as a trend or fashion accessory. This finding suggests that a refusal to follow trends or fashion is what makes the participants tattoos resistant. It also suggests a dislike for Western consumerism that fashion and trends represent amongst my participants. This is an aspect that is inconsistent with the features of the 'Supermarket Era of Tattooing' as identified in the literature review. Furthermore,

this inconsistency suggests that neo-liberal values and consumer culture are not ideals that my participants adhere to regarding their tattoos.

Section 5b: What is a Rebellious Tattoo according to the Participants?

Table 13 below indicates what the participants considered to be a rebellious tattoo:

Table 13:

| <i>What is a rebellious tattoo?</i> | Face tattoo | Fascist/Nazi/Racist imagery/Symbols | Little thought put into it | Anything meant to offend | Against authority | No rebellious tattoos | Women's tattoos as rebellious | Other modification as more rebellious | No Answer |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Male | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Female | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 12 |
| Total | 3 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 15 |

As the table demonstrates, the majority of participants saw a 'rebellious tattoo' as one that was either: a face tattoo, one that consisted of fascist, racist or Nazi imagery/ symbols, one that had little thought put into it, something that went against authority, or anything meant to offend, upset or make others uncomfortable. For instance F1 states that a rebellious tattoo to her would have to be 'something that obviously says f*** you to something, like a burning flag' (appendix 7). M9 describes how a face tattoo is rebellious 'because you can't cover it up' (appendix 7). This was something that M3 and F12 agreed with. F12 explains how she believes that face tattoos 'have massive implications in all areas of life from work to social situations'. F20 describes how she saw Fascist/racist and Nazi tattoos as rebellious because they were meant to offend; 'I think the only rebellious tattoos would be racist or Nazi ones that obviously are meant to hurt, upset or make people feel

uncomfortable' (appendix 7). F3 described how extreme body modifications were more of a rebellious act 'tattooing is much more socially acceptable than scarification etc' (appendix 6).

. What was interesting from the data, was that only one male participant (M9) described female tattooing as rebellious; 'perhaps a female with a tattoo is considered more of a 'rebel' than a male with a tattoo' (appendix 7). This indicates how the participants did not consider women's involvement in tattooing as something rebellious. However, the majority of the participants described how women may experience more negative reactions from society in being tattooed.

As the majority of the participants did not consider their tattoos to be deliberately resistant or rebellious at all, this finding can be described as an example of Nietzsche's notion of cultural production and how resistant practices become part of the dominant discourse (Grosz 1994b, 147). This is particularly evident in the data as most of the participants stated how their tattoos are more of an artistic form of self expression. This also indicates the shift that has occurred regarding the perceptions of tattooing as rebellious and associated with disrepute to becoming more widely recognised as a deeply spiritual and symbolic practice or as a fashion accessory (Demello 2000, 137). Tattoos such as this can be described as becoming part of a dominant discourse via cultural production. Elias's (1994:34) idea of how 'pro-tattooing' ideologies are making their way into our collective habitus is also supported by my data regarding the participant's perception of their tattoos as non-rebellious. A combination of the cultural production process and Elias's suggestion that social changes in relationships lead us to grow more accepting of practices like tattoos can provide a reason as to why the participants did not consider women's tattooing as deliberately rebellious. For instance, as tattoos have become more

popular, the resistant element of women's tattooing in particular begins to weaken, and they eventually become part of the dominant discourse.

The process of cultural production also allows for new forms of resistance to be created as the old ones become norms (Nietzsche 1901, 282). This means that new forms of bodily practices are always being created as a method of rebellion. According to my participants this is either a face tattoo or a more extreme form of body modification such as branding or scarification. The existence of the 'double-edged sword' regarding perceptions of women's tattooing in particular suggests that there will always be an element of resistance in tattooing.

Section 5: Summary.

This section discussed 'rebellious tattoos' and what the participants thought to be a rebellious tattoo. All of the participants except for M8 described how their tattoos were not deliberately rebellious, or that their tattoos had lost this aspect as they had grown up. The majority of the participants did not consider women's involvement in tattooing as rebellious. These findings indicate a shift in perceptions regarding what makes tattooing rebellious or resistant. It appears that tattooing has become a form of self expression rather than a form of rebellion as it was in the Rebel era and for women in the New Age era (Demello 2000, 68). Because of this shift as well as the widespread popularity of the practice, this has led to tattoo trends. The majority of the participants of this study described how their tattoos were not influenced by trends, therefore it could be suggested that this is a resistant element of their tattoos.

Summary of Data Analysis Chapter:

In this chapter I discussed the main findings of my research and how they relate to my hypotheses. In order to do this, I discussed the results in relation to the themes and patterns that became apparent in my data. These included gender and tattooing, experiences in society, family reactions, and rebellious tattoos.

The first theme explored in this chapter was 'gender and tattooing'. This section looked at how the participant's responses were indicative of gender differences in tattooing. The image and meaning as well as the size and location of my participant's tattoos were discussed. A difference in the type of images and meanings that appealed to the male and female participants of this study became apparent. Gender differences could also be seen in the size and location of my participants tattoos. The upper arm is considered a more masculine location, whereas wrist, ankle, hip and foot are thought of as more feminine amongst my participants. These accounts from my participants regarding their tattoos indicate that gender norms exist within the online tattoo communities I studied. This finding also supports the previous work of Atkinson (20002) and Demello (2000).

The second theme that was discussed was 'experiences in society'. It was found that negative and positive reactions have been experienced by both male and female participants. However, the frequency of bad experiences was higher amongst the female participants. I argue that this was due to the negative stereotype of tattooed women that is still prevalent in our society. This finding demonstrates a difference between the societal experiences of tattooed men and women amongst my participants. Evidence for the existence of the 'double- edged sword' regarding perceptions of tattoos in society is also provided by this finding and suggests that it is

more likely to have been experienced by the female participants. It was also found that most of the participants indicated that that they were not bothered by the negative reactions. 1 female participant described how she enjoyed the negative reactions. I therefore argue that a shift has occurred regarding what makes a tattoo resistant, and that the rebellious element appears in the participant's reactions to negative judgement rather than in the actual tattoo image or location. I also suggest that this is a display of Nietzsche's (1901) concept of the 'will to power'.

The chapter then looked at 'family reactions'. Both the male and female participants had experienced negative as well as positive reactions from their family. According to my data this was higher amongst the females. The negative reactions to the participant's tattoos from their family members suggest that traditional gender roles regarding the expectations of family members still exist in society. It can be argued that traditional roles also ensure the prevalence of a negative stereotype regarding tattooed women. My participant's accounts of their families' reactions are indicative of how perceptions of tattooing are still subject to gender norms, as well as demonstrating a difference in the societal perceptions of tattooed men and women.

Section 5 discussed 'rebellious tattoos' and whether the participants thought their tattoos were a form of rebellion. It was found that the majority of participants did not consider their tattoos as rebellious, or at least they didn't as they had grown older. This was due to a shift in perceptions of the practice, and tattooing was widely thought of as a form of self expression amongst the participants. It was also found that the participants did not consider women's involvement in tattooing as deliberately rebellious. This finding indicates how the practice of tattooing is not thought of as a form of rebellion for women as it was previously considered. I argue that this is due to cultural production, as new forms are constantly created as

resistances to old ones. However, the majority of the participants described how their tattoos were not influenced by trends. I suggest that this is a resistant element of their tattoos.

It is clear that within my data, patterns relating to the existence of gender norms and differences within the tattoo community were identified. Furthermore, gender differences regarding perceptions and reactions from family and society were also discovered.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Study.

The aim of this paper was to discuss the societal experiences of tattooed men and women and to examine the occurrence of any differences. In order to do this I began by exploring the feminist perspectives surrounding the body. 3 primary areas which include difference, dominance and agency were identified as useful to the understanding of the resistance and compliance that is performed through the tattooed female body. A post- feminist conceptualisation of the body was also analysed due to its focus on the active construction of feminine identity via consumerism (Gill 2009). Gender norms within the tattoo community were also considered, and the development of the negative stereotype of tattooed women was discussed in relation to the history of tattooed women in the West. Following from this was an analysis of power relations on the body, using Nietzsche's notion of the will to power, and Foucault's concept of discourses and the docile body. After exploring these areas I suggest that how people experience their tattooed bodies in society is missing from this body of work, and will therefore be the focus of my research. I also consider how gender may affect societal reactions regarding tattooed bodies as well as what makes a tattooed female body resistant in today's society.

I then discuss my methodology used to conduct my study. A combination of online forums and online surveys was used to collect data and a content analysis was conducted to interpret this data. This allowed me to identify themes and patterns within my results. In this section I also discussed the reliability, generalisability and validity of my collected data. Overall my data can be considered reliable because if the study were to be repeated using the same forums, similar data would be

collected. My data is also valid as it is based on my participant's accounts of their experiences, as well as supportive of findings of other studies in this area, such as Demello (2000) and Atkinson (2002). My sample size is small, which means my results lack generalisability. However, despite this, patterns of gender norms were discovered, and rich data was gathered relating to the experiences of tattooed embodiment.

My main findings indicate that there was a difference in the type of images, meanings, size and locations that appealed to the male and female participants of this study. I also suggest that the heavily tattooed female participants were parodying masculinity, and as such could be considered as causing 'gender trouble'. A higher frequency of negative societal reactions as experienced by the female participants was also found. I argue that this was due to the negative stereotype of tattooed women that is still prevalent in our society. This also suggests evidence for the existence of the 'double-edged sword' regarding perceptions of tattoos in society as well as it being more likely to be experienced by the female participants.

How the participants negotiated the double edged sword was also discovered and it was found that some of the female participants were not bothered by the negative reactions to their tattoos. I therefore argue that this is the resistant element to their tattoos, and that it is also a display of their will to power through their bodies.

Another of my main findings relates to the negative reactions to the participant's tattoos from their family members. I argue that this suggests that traditional gender roles regarding the expectations of family members still exist in society and that they also ensure the prevalence of a negative stereotype regarding tattooed women.

It was also discovered that the majority of my participants did not consider their tattoos as rebellious. I suggest that this is due to a shift in the perception of tattoos, as they are now widely recognised as self expression. However, the majority of my participants did describe how their tattoos were not 'trendy' or fashionable. I therefore argue that this can be considered as a rebellious element to my participant's tattoos, particularly as it suggests that my participants did not adhere to the neo-liberal values of consumerism that is a primary feature of the Supermarket Era of Tattooing, which is thought to be the present moment in Atkinson's (2003) categorisation of tattooing eras. This also supports the notion that although the process of cultural productions means that new forms are created as resistances to old ones, in terms of tattooing, there will always be a resistant element to the practice. This is due to the persistence of the 'double edged sword' regarding the practice, as well as the prevalence of negative stereotypes regarding tattooed women.

After summarising the main findings of this study, I would like to make some recommendations for further study. I propose that a longitudinal study may be a more suitable method to research tattooed embodiment and gender differences. This is because it would allow the researcher to follow participants from when they get their first tattoo and onwards. This means that the whole tattoo journey could be documented, starting from their decision to be tattooed and what their first tattoo would be and why, then moving on to look at how these decisions progressed, what influenced this progression, as well as explore their experiences of public and family reactions. However this sort of study would be difficult to conduct, as it would be hard to find participants getting their first tattoo who would be willing to have all their

encounters with the tattoo world documented in such a way. This would also lead to the similar problems that I have encountered regarding small sample sizes.

Overall, I hope that my research will contribute to the existing knowledge and further study of gendered constructions and perceptions of the female tattooed body.

Reference List.

Adriaens. F. (2009), 'Post Feminism in Popular Culture: A Potential for Critical Resistance?' [online], <http://www.politicsandculture.org/2009/11/09/post-feminism-in-popular-culture-a-potential-for-critical-resistance/> [Date accessed 3/1/2012].

Allen. J and Young. I. (1989), 'The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy', Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

Atkinson. M. (2002), 'Pretty in Ink: Conformity, Resistance and Negotiation in Women's Tattooing' in *Sex Roles*, vol 47 (5/6), p219-235.

Atkinson. M. (2003), 'Tattooed: The Sociogenesis of a Body Art', Toronto, University of Toronto Press.

Bartky. S. (1988), 'Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernisation of Patriarchal Power' in Conboy. K, Medina. N and Stanbury. S (eds), *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, (1997), p129-154, New York, Columbia University Press.

Beeler. K. (2006), 'Tattoos, Desire and Violence: Marks of Resistance in Literature, Film and Television', North Carolina, McFarland and Company Inc.

Blanchard. P, and Bancel. N. (2008), 'Human Zoo's: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires', Liverpool, Liverpool University Press.

Bordo. S. (1993), 'The Body and The Reproduction of Femininity', in Conboy. K, Medina. N and Stanbury. S (eds), *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, (1997) p90-112, New York, Columbia University Press.

Brownlow. C and O'Dell. L. (2002), 'Ethical Issues for Qualitative Research' in *Online Communities. Disability and Society*, vol 17(6), pp. 685–694.

Braunberger. C. (2000), 'Revolt Bodies: The Monster Beauty of Tattooed Women', in *NWSA Journal*, vol 12 (2) p1-23.

Bryman. A, (2008), *Social Research Methods*, 3rd edition, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Butler. J. (1990), 'Gender Trouble', New York, Routledge.

Butler. J. (1993), 'Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex', New York, Routledge.

Chambers. D. (2012), 'A Sociology of Family Life', Cambridge, Polity Press.

Clough. P. (1994), 'Feminist Thought: Desire, Power and Academic Discourse', Cambridge, Blackwell Publishers.

Davis. K. (1997), 'Embodied practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body', London, Sage Publications.

Demello. M. (2000), 'Bodies of Inscription: A Cultural History of the Modern Tattoo Community', London, Duke University Press.

DuBois. B. (1983), 'Passionate Scholarship: Notes on Values, Knowing and Method in Feminist Social Sciences' in Bowles. G. and Klein. R. (Eds.), *Theories of Women's Studies*, pp.105-117, London, Routledge.

Elias. N. (1994), 'The Civilising Process', Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

Flynn. E. (2002), 'No Feminism Beyond Modernism', Illinois, Southern Illinois University Press.

Foucault. M. (1975), 'Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison', translated by Sheridan. A. (1977), London, Penguin Books.

Foucault. M. (1976), 'The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality, Volume 1', translated by Hurley. R (1978), London, Penguin Books.

Foucault. M. (1984), 'What is Enlightenment?' in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, (ed. D. Hoy), Oxford, Blackwell.

Gill. R. (2007), 'Post- Feminist media culture: elements of a sensibility', *European Journal of Cultural studies*, vol 10 (2), 147- 166.

Gill. R. (2009), 'From Sexual Objectification to Sexual Subjectification: The resexualisation of Women's Bodies in the Media', [online], <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2009/gill230509.html> [Date accessed 4/1/2012].

Gill. R and Scharff. C (2011), 'Introduction', in Gill. R and Scharff. C, (eds), *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity*, London, Palgrave.

Golafshani. N. (2003), 'Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research' in *The Qualitative Report*, vol 8(4), pp. 597-606, [online] <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-4/golafshani.pdf>, [page created 07/04/2004 page accessed 23/08/2013].

Grosz. E. (1994), 'Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism', Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

Haig. B. (1997), 'Feminist Research Methodology', in J. Keeves (Ed), *Educational Research Methodology and Measurement*, (2nd ed), pp97-302, New York, Pergamon.

Halberstam. J. (1998), 'Female Masculinity', London, Duke University Press.

Halperin. D. (1995), 'Saint- Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography', Oxford, University Press.

Haraway.D. (1984), 'Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936', *Social Text*, no 11, 20-64.

Harding. S. (2004), 'Introduction: Standpoint Theory as a Site of Political, Philosophic and Scientific Debate' in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, Harding. S. (ed), New York, Routledge, pp 1-17.

Harnois. C. (2012), 'Feminist Measures in Survey Research', London, Sage Publications.

Harris. A. (2004), 'Future Girl: Young Women in the 21st Century', London, Routledge.

Hartman. J. (2003), 'Power and Resistance in the Later Foucault', *Paper Presented at the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Foucauldian Circle 28th February to the 2nd March*, John Carroll University, Cleveland [online], http://mypage.siu.edu/hartmajr/pdf/jh_fouccirc_03.pdf.

Harvey. D. (2005), 'A Brief History of Neo-Liberalism', Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Hewitt. K. (1997), 'Mutilating the Body: Identity in Blood and Ink', Wisconsin, Popular Press.

Hong. F. (2001), 'Freeing Bodies: Heroines in History', in Mangen.J, and Hong. F (eds) *Freeing the Female Body: Inspirational Icons*, p1-7, London, Frank Cass Publishers.

Im. E and Chee. W. (2006), 'An Online Forum as a Qualitative Research Method: Practical Issues' in *NursRes* 55(4), pp 267-273.

James. N and Bushner. H. (2009), 'Online Interviewing', London, Sage Publications.

Joppe. M. (2000), 'The Research Process', [online] <http://www.htm.uoguelph.ca/MJResearch/ResearchProcess/default.html>, [page created 21/05/2006 page accessed 23/08/2013].

Koust. M. (2006), 'An Ironic Fad: The Commodification and Consumption of Tattoos', in *The Journal of Popular Culture*, vol 39 (6), 1035- 1048.

Krippendoff. K. (2004), 'Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology', London, Sage Publications.

Lash. S. (1984), 'Genealogy and the Body: Foucault/ Deleuze/Nietzsche' p256-281, in Featherstone. M, Hepworth. M and Turner. B. (eds), *The Body: Social Process and cultural Theory*, London, Sage Publications

Loomba. A. (2005), 'Colonialism/ Post- Colonialism', 2nd edition, London, Routledge.

McRobbie. A. (2004), 'Post Feminism and Popular Culture', in *Feminist Media Studies*, vol 4 (3), p254-264.

McRobbie. A. (2007), 'Top Girls?', *Cultural Studies*, vol 21 (4), 718- 737.

McRobbie. A. (2009), 'The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change', London, Sage Publications.

Mifflin. M. (1997), 'Bodies of Subversion: A secret History of Women and Tattoo', New York, Juno Books.

Murdock. M. (1990), 'The Heroines Journey: Women's Quest for Wholeness', Massachusetts, Shambhala Publications Inc.

Narayan. U. (1989), 'The Project of Feminist Epistemology' in *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, Bordo, S. and Jaggar. A. (eds), Rutgers, Rutgers University Press, pp 256-272.

Nietzsche. F. (1901), 'The Will to Power', translated by Kaufmann. W and Hollingdale. R. (1968), New York, Vintage Books.

Ong. A. (2007), 'Neo- Liberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty', London, Duke University Press.

Pitts. V. (2003), 'In The Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification', Hampshire, Macmillan.

Porcella. A. (2009), 'Tattoo: A Marked History', California, University of California Press.

Putzi. J. (2006), 'Identifying Marks: Race, Gender and the Marked Body in 19th Century America', Georgia, University of Georgia Press.

Ramsey. T. (2012), 'My Tattoo Addiction, Channel 4, Review' <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/9618518/My-Tattoo-Addiction-Channel-4-review.html> [online], [date created 18/10/2012 page accessed 27/08/2012].

Seale. C. (1998), 'Researching Society and Culture', London, Sage Publications.

Seppa. A. (2004) 'Foucault, Enlightenment and the Aesthetics of the Self' in *Contemporary Aesthetics*, 2 [online] <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=244> [date accessed 22/10/12].

Steward. S. (1990), 'Bad Boys and Tough Tattoos: A social History of the Tattoo, with Gangs, Sailors, and Street Corner Punks, 1950-1965', New York, Harrington Park Press.

Stenbacka. C. (2001), 'Qualitative Research Requires Quality Concepts of its Own', *Management Decision*, vol 39(7), pp. 551-555.

Sullivan. N. (2003), 'A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory', London, Taylor and Francis.

Swenson. C. (1990), 'Selling to a Segmented Market: The Lifestyle Approach', New York, Quorum Books.

Terry. J and Urla. J. (1995), 'Deviant Bodies', Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

The British Sociological Association (2002), '*Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association (March 2002)*' [online],

<http://www.britsoc.co.uk/equality/Statement+Ethical+Practice.htm>

[page undated, page accessed 17/11/12].

Westmarland. N. (2001), '*The Quantitative/Qualitative Debate and Feminist Research: A Subjective View of Objectivity*' in 'Forum: Qualitative Research', vol

2(1), pp 1-29, [online], [http://www.qualitative-](http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/974/2124)

[research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/974/2124](http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/974/2124), [page dated February 2001, page accessed 21/1/14].

Wilson. S. (2008), 'Marks of Identity: The Performance of Tattoos among Women in American Society', Maryland, University of Maryland Press.

Wright. E. (2000), 'Lacan and Postfeminism', London, Icon Books.

Appendices.

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet: First Post of Discussion Thread.

I, Claire Beale, a postgraduate student studying for an Mphil in Gender Studies at the University of Birmingham U.K, am undertaking a research project on tattooed women.

- Focus of Study:

The focus of this research will be on the experiences and societal perceptions of tattooed women, and how these may differ from those of tattooed men.

This project aims to further understanding of women's experiences of being tattooed and will answer questions such as:

Do women challenge typical gender norms through the practice of tattooing? Or are they creating a new way to express femininity?

Is the tattooed female body considered rebellious within society? What makes it rebellious?

Are the experiences and perceptions within society of the tattooed male body any different to those of the tattooed female body? If so why are they different?

- What is required from you?

You will be invited to take part in an online focus group on the discussion forum site you are currently a member of, in which you will be discussing issues with

other members and me regarding your tattoos, your experiences of being tattooed, your thoughts on the reactions to your tattoos within society, your own perceptions of your tattooed body as well as anything else to do with tattoos and body modifications that you feel is important within the discussion. Please do not hesitate to discuss these issues using anecdotes and stories of your experiences. Your responses will be available on the internet for other members, in the same way any other posts and forum threads on the site are available, however, if you do not want other members to view your response, then it is perfectly fine for you to private message me with your answers rather than post them within the thread. I will be keeping a record of your responses on my personal computer and they will be used in the subsequent write up of the study.

- Place and duration of focus group:

The focus group will take place online in the chosen discussion forum site over a suggested timeline of 2 months. This will allow adequate time for me to post questions and to receive responses. I will aim to put up a new question every other day to allow time for participants to respond. Therefore I suggest that if you want to take part throughout the whole discussion, you should check the thread every other day for new questions.

- Consent and right to withdraw:

You are free to withdraw participation at any point. Participation is completely voluntary. Even during the course of the discussion, if you wish to withdraw or wish not to answer a particular question or questions, you are free to do so. Also I am aware of the nature of online discussion forums, and that some people may only want to post once on a thread, therefore you will not be expected to keep on

posting, and may respond as often or as little as you like. If you would like to discontinue your posts on the thread you are free to do so and do not need to contact me to inform me of your decision to do this. However, if you would like your previous posts withdrawn from the project, then you would need to contact me with your username so I can remove your responses from my notes, but I cannot guarantee I can remove them from the website (this depends on the website and their terms and conditions on posting and removal of posts). If you do wish to withdraw your responses, please inform me by May 2013 at the latest. This will give me time to remove your results before my final write up of the project.

- Data storage:

The raw data will not be passed on to anyone in future for personal use of any kind. I, Claire Beale, the only investigator in this study, shall be responsible for the information when the study is over. I will ensure that it is stored safely in its original format and in accordance with the University of Birmingham's Codes of Practice for Research.

- Confidentiality:

Due to the interviews being conducted through an internet discussion forum, it is likely you will use a user-name or nick-name rather than your real name, meaning that your identity is anonymous to an extent, but most forums require a real name to sign up and/or create a profile, so you will be traceable, and therefore not completely anonymous. I will however assign each participant an ID code for the write up of this study, so you will not be identifiable and therefore your responses will remain confidential if mentioned.

- Right to information:

If you so wish you will be given a chance to check your data. If you have requested to be anonymous, you can ensure that nothing is included which may identify you. Also, a summary of the research will be made available to the participants, as well as a copy of any publications resulting from the research, if desired.

- Further queries:

If you have any other questions and require further clarification, please email me: clb103@bham.ac.uk. I will be happy to answer any questions. Also feel free to email my supervisors if you would like to discuss anything with them:

Dr Charlotte Ross

rossce@adf.bham.ac.uk

Dr Emma Foster

fosterEA@adf.bham.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Information and Consent Form/Post.

If you wish to participate in this study and you can answer 'yes' to the following questions, then please state this in your first post 'I have read and understood the 'Information and Consent post and wish to take part'. Thank you.

Questions:

Are you over 18?

Have you read and understood the information presented to you regarding this study?

Have you been given the opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns regarding this study?

Do you feel that you have been given enough information regarding this study to understand what the study is about and what your participation entails?


Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study, at any time, without giving a reason for your decision?

Do you consent for the information you provide to be used in this study?

Have you been made aware that your data will remain confidential, due to each participant being referred to by an ID code rather than their usernames or real names in the write up of this study?

Your posting of the statement 'I have read and understood the information and consent posts and that I wish to take part' will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study having read and understood the information in the sheet for participants. It will also certify that you have had adequate opportunity to discuss the study with an investigator and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

This consent post, along with the participant information post will be available to view online at the beginning of the discussion thread as long as the study lasts for you to peruse and refer back to at anytime.

Thank you again, Claire Beale. Email: 

Appendix 3: Interview Questions for Forum.

- Questions about the participant's tattoos:
 - 1) What is your age, sex, location, ethnicity and sexual orientation?
 - 2) What tattoo/s do you have? Why did you choose that particular design? Does it have a particular meaning for you? Was your choice of tattoo affected by current trends in tattooing at all? If so was there a reason for this? If not, why?
 - 3) Where are the tattoo/s on your body? What was the reason behind the placement of your tattoo/s? If so why? (If there is one as mentioned above).
 - 4) Do you feel that your gender has had an effect on your choice of tattoo design and placement? Did this also affect the size of the design at all? How?
 - 5) Do you believe that your tattoo/s have become part of your self identity? If so, in what ways?
 - 6) Did you undertake any of your tattoos as a way to reinvent yourself and/or your body image? If so why? In what ways?
 - 7) Do you view your tattoo/s as something rebellious? If so how and why?

8) Do you see tattooing and the process of being tattooed as different to the processes involved in other forms of body modification such as piercings? If so how and why?

9) Do you intend to have any more tattoos done? If so why? If not why not?

10) Will the reasons for the choice of design, placement and size be similar to those of your previous tattoos?

- Questions Regarding Experience of being Tattooed in Society

11) What was the reaction of your family and friends to your tattoos (if they know about them)? If they don't know about them, why is this?

12) How about work colleagues? Do you display tattoos at work? If not is there any other reason for this other than uniform regulations? For instance, if your place of work does not have uniform regulations regarding the covering up of tattoos would you still cover them and why?

13) Has your tattoo/s had any effect (positive or negative) on your close, personal relationships at all such as those with partners? If so, please describe this.

14) Do you experience much reaction to your tattoos from the general public in your everyday life? Is this positive or negative? Please describe some of your experiences for me.

15) What comments have you had about your tattoos? How did this make you feel? Has this changed anything about how you present your tattoos in public? If so how and why?

- Questions regarding Perceptions of Participants Tattoos

16) What do you think people think about your tattoos?

17) Tattooing has been traditionally described as masculine, with associations to biker gangs and others on the fringe of society. Due to this and the tribal origin of tattoos, it could be said that a stereotypical description of a tattooed body is one that is male, uncontrolled, exotic, 'savage' and deviant.

18) Do you feel that you have been judged according to this typical stereotype of tattooed people?

19) If so has this experience of being judged (whether positive or negative) changed how you display your tattoos in public? In what ways?

20) What do you think about others with tattoos? For instance, what would make you think negatively or positively about others with tattoos?

21) What would you describe as a rebellious tattoo? Why would you describe these tattoos as rebellious?

22) Do you think tattooed men and women provoke different reactions in public?

How about among family and friends and at work? What are these differences and why do you think they happen?

23) Have your experiences of being tattooed and the reactions of other people

changed any plans you had for further tattoo or body modification projects? In what ways?

Appendix 4: Interview Schedule for Forums.

Questions will be rolled out on the discussion forum over a 3 month period, with one question/set of questions posted every two days. This will allow time for the participants to reply and for me to record their responses. There are 27 questions/sets of questions, which will allow for some extra days in between the first questions in particular, as may take some time to garner interest at first and gain momentum in the amount of responses.

Appendix 5: Interview Questions for Surveys.

Questions had to be grouped together as only 10 questions can be asked on www.surveymonkey.com.

- 1) What is your age, sex, location, ethnicity and sexual orientation?

- 2) What tattoo/s do you have? Why did you choose that particular design? Does it have a particular meaning for you? Was your choice of tattoo affected by current trends in tattooing at all? If so was there a reason for this? If not, why?

- 3) Where are the tattoo/s on your body? What was the reason behind the placement of your tattoo/s? If so why? Do you feel that your gender has had an effect on your choice of tattoo design and placement? Did this also affect the size of the design at all? How?

- 4) Do you believe that your tattoo/s have become part of your self identity? If so, in what ways? Did you undertake any of your tattoos as a way to reinvent yourself and/or your body image? If so why? In what ways?

- 5) Do you view your tattoo/s as something rebellious? If so how and why? Do you see tattooing and the process of being tattooed as different to the processes involved in other forms of body modification such as piercings? If so how and why?

- 6) Do you intend to have any more tattoos done? If so why? If not why not? Will the reasons for the choice of design, placement and size be similar to those of your previous tattoos?

- 7) What was the reaction of your family and friends to your tattoos (if they know about them)? If they don't know about them, why is this? How about work colleagues? Do you display tattoos at work? If not is there any other reason for this other than uniform regulations? For instance, if your place of work does not have uniform regulations regarding the covering up of tattoos would you still cover them and why? Has your tattoo/s had any effect (positive or negative) on your close, personal relationships at all such as those with partners? If so, please describe this.

- 8) Do you experience much reaction to your tattoos from the general public in your everyday life? Is this positive or negative? Please describe some of your experiences for me. What comments have you had about your tattoos? How did this make you feel? Has this changed anything about how you present your tattoos in public? If so how and why?

- 9) What do you think people think about your tattoos? Tattooing has been traditionally described as masculine, with associations to biker gangs and others on the fringe of society. Due to this and the tribal origin of tattoos, it could be said that a stereotypical description of a tattooed body is one that is male, uncontrolled, exotic, 'savage' and deviant. Do you feel that you have been judged according to this typical stereotype of tattooed people? If so has this

experience of being judged (whether positive or negative) changed how you display your tattoos in public? In what ways?

10) What would you describe as a rebellious tattoo? Why would you describe these tattoos as rebellious? Do you think tattooed men and women provoke different reactions in public? How about among family and friends and at work? What are these differences and why do you think they happen? Have your experiences of being tattooed and the reactions of other people changed any plans you had for further tattoo or body modification projects? In what ways?

Appendix 6: Data from Forums.

www.bodyjewelleryshop.com:

886,102 members.

1,392,992 posts.

F1:

Question 1:

I'm 19 and female. I live in West Virginia, USA. I am Caucasian and straight.

Question 2:

I have a cartoon style lily. My best friend and I decided on this design. It is a very low key kick to a favourite movie of ours, and to us it represented a new life after high school. I have very little knowledge of trends so I will say no. It is on our left ribs. We wanted it to be hidden but be able to show it off if we decided to.

Question 3 and 4:

Yes. I would say my gender affects my designs greatly, and I feel to some extent it affects my placement too. All of my designs are very feminine. I think if I was a male my placement options might seem different. In my community arm tattoos are pretty common on men but almost non-existent on women. I try to keep my tattoos in places that are easily covered. I do not believe it has affected size though.

Question 5:

I wouldn't say that my individual tattoos have become a part of my identity, but being tattooed has.

Question 6:

Yes. My first and currently only tattoo I got after high school. My life had not gone according to plan and I wanted to reinvent myself and my life after high school.

Question 7:

No I don't see how my tattoos as rebellious.

Question 8:

Yes, piercings are more temporary and I am more willing to jump into a piercing because I know if I don't like it can come out. Where with a tattoo, I am zealous in my search for a perfect design, artist and placement, as I know I've got one chance to do it right.

Question 9:

Yes one because the design is ace, and one to cover scars, and maybe more.

Question 10:

No not at all. All of my tattoo/designs are vastly different, in different areas and all for different reasons.

Question 11:

My friends and the members of my family from my generation like it. My parents and above do not know. They don't like piercings or tattoos and I just got tired of hearing how stupid I am for getting piercings.

Question 12:

Mine is on my ribs so it is covered by clothing anyway. I've been tempted to get a wrist tattoo and I would wear it uncovered.

Question 13:

I wouldn't think one way or the other. Someone's tattoos don't concern me.

Question 14:

For something to be rebellious to me it would have to be something that obviously says 'F*** you' to something, like a burning flag.

Question 15:

I think women are more discriminated against about tattoos, but not by much. Body mod's in general are pretty uncommon in my area. I have 11 piercings and one hidden tattoo and my family is very unsupportive. The general public just ignores them or asks questions.

Question 16:

In a way, my family has affected it. I really want a few more piercings (philtrum, daith) but I am afraid to with my family. I think my tattoo plans are pretty much the same though. I like easily hidden tattoos.

F2:**Question 1:**

Age- 20, sex- female, location- Scotland UK, ethnicity- Caucasian, sexual orientation- bisexual?

Question 2:

I have an autumn leaf, a realistic lily, a Japanese inspired piece and a dot work lotus. I chose the leaf because Autumn is my favourite season, I got the lily because I really liked it and me and my best friend got tattooed together, the Japanese piece is a memorial tattoo, I got the lotus because I love dot work. No meaning except for the Japanese themed tattoo which is in memory of my Grandma. I don't think any of mine are affected by tattoos; I don't really follow trends, especially on things that are going to be one me forever!

Question 3:

My leaf is behind my left ear, my lily on my right forearm, my Japanese piece on my right thigh and my lotus on my right foot. The only real reasons are where I found them to be aesthetically pleasing and for the leg piece because it was too big for anywhere else.

Question 4:

My gender has kind of affected my tattoo choice, I really like feminine tattoos and I'm conscious of the fact that a floral/nature based sleeve is far more readily accepted in the workplace than some other styles.

Question 5:

Not hugely in my self-identity (but obviously in a way they are part of me and permanent and I love them way) but definitely in my identity to others.

Question 6:

Nope, did not see them as way to reinvent myself 😊.

Question 7:

No don't see my tattoos as rebellious 😊.

Question 8:

Totally different IMO, its far more permanent than a piercing, but I also find the process a lot less scary (I'm big wimpy wimp about piercings) and tattooing is also more socially acceptable than scarification etc.

Question 9:

Absolutely! If I thought I could be covered and still work in the field I wanted I would be!

Question 10:

The designs I already have are all different sizes, styles and location so I guess they would continue to be similar in their difference?

F3:**Question 1:**

Age- 33, sex- female, location- England UK, ethnicity- Caucasian, sexual orientation- bisexual.

Question 2:

Tribal style design, 2 swallows, a heart with wings (now covered), a leaf. The one I had on my arm I had done at 18 just because I wanted a tattoo and liked the look of it. The heart I got at 19 and just felt like it. My swallows I got because my dad had several swallow tattoos. The leaf because it relates to a story in my past. The swallows are to represent me and my dad as he passed away so I wanted to represent our bond. The leaf is because of a silly day with my mum when we were playing badminton and a leaf fell down. No my tattoos are not affected by trends, not that I know of. The tribal design and the heart were a snap decision, the swallows and leaf were planned and relate to the above and were drawn up uniquely by my artist.

Question 3:

Tribal- upper left arm, heart- left shoulder blade, swallow left and right shoulder/back, leaf behind ear. Tribal- no idea just went for it, heart- wanted it hidden if needed, swallows- they just flow nicely that way and it covered the heart too, the leaf I wanted a more visible tattoo and wanted to know what it felt like to get my head tattooed.

Question 4, 5, 6:

No to all of these 😊

Question 7:

Not really no.

Question 8:

Totally different to piercings, piercings are over and done in seconds, you can remove them, change the look of them with different jewellery etc.

Question 9:

Yes, because I like them and feel the desire for more art on my body 😊

Question 10:

I don't think so but they may follow similar themes roughly. I like organic things rather than words or patterns what I have planned tends to be living (human, plant, animal etc). As for size and placement no.

Question 11:

They all like my tattoos with the exception of my mum who thinks they look nice but generally doesn't understand why people have tattoos or piercings so whilst she doesn't dislike them she doesn't really like them either.

Question 12:

I work for myself from home so there's no issues, if I worked somewhere that didn't have regulations I wouldn't cover them up to hide them particularly.

Question 13:

Nope.

Question 14:

Not much no, get a few comments in summer about my back tattoos when I show them off and they've always been positive.

Question 15:

Only really had people say they were nice and compliment me on them. It doesn't change how I present them in any way.

Extra Question:

How come you don't see your tattoos as rebellious? What would you consider as a rebellious body modification? And why?

Rebellion is an act of defiance or authority, seeing as a lot of people have body modifications these days I think not having any would probably be seen as going against the trend haha! I don't see how I look or present myself being anything to do with going along with or against authority.

Question 16:

Can only comment on what people have said but on the whole people like them and think they're pretty even the one that's rubbish I get complicated on but I get heavily positive compliments on the good one on my back and behind my ear because they're well done. So I reckon people like them but I also expect some people to dislike them or possibly even think they're not that original but it doesn't bother me 😊

Question 17:

Not really no, only ever had one person look at them and just say she doesn't understand why someone would get tattooed but wasn't offensive or judgemental to me directly.

Question 18:

No.

Question 19:

I don't judge a person based on their tattoos so I wouldn't think positively or negatively about anyone solely based on their tattoos.

Question 20:

I would say something with an adult theme; harsh/offensive language as well as being totally prominent would come under that. I'd say they're rebelling because it's not what you'd normally see.

Question 21:

To some people yes. I feel that women get judged and questioned more about their appearance in general and this extends to tattoos.

Question 22:

No and I never will.

F4

Question 1:

I'm from Ohio, USA. I'm Caucasian and I'm bisexual.

Question 2:

I have the word 'Hope' surrounded by cosmos flowers. I chose this because at the time I was going through a really tough time and needed a constant reminder that Hope is still there. The flowers came a few months later because I love cosmos flowers and wanted something extra. No, it wasn't affected by current tattooing trends. I also have an eagle. This represents freedom and spirituality, as eagles are mentioned spiritually in the Bible multiple times as "God will raise you up on eagles' wings." Eagles are free to fly and be who/what they are. No, it wasn't affected by trending tattoos.

Question3:

The Hope with cosmos flowers in on my right wrist, so I could always look at it in a time of hopelessness feeling. The eagle is on my side, just hardly below my ribs.

There wasn't a reason for that placement other than the fact it looked best there with the stencil.

F5:

Question 1:

43, F, Phoenix AZ, Caucasian, straight.

Question2:

Fancy K on my left below my belly button that I got when I was 15. My boyfriend Kenny was in the Navy and his friend did it. My name also starts with a K so...eh. A "K" and a backwards "R" intertwined on the inside of an ankle for me and my best friend Ronnie. Did that one when I was 17. A heart on my back shoulder when I was 13. Small and simple, it was my first tattoo. A cross on the inside of my middle right finger in blue when I was 13 and another cross on my left hand between my thumb and index finger. Hey, I went to Catholic school, what can I say? I thought I was so clever at that age and that no one, especially my Father would see all the tattoos I had all over the place. I was wrong about the ones on my hands but the others I got away with for years. After I grew up, got married and had all my kids... I have a cherry blossoms wrapping around my leg, ankle to the top of my left foot. No reason, just liked them. I have a tribal design on my lower back aka trap stamp. Just liked the design. And the location. I have Japanese flowers, water and a dragonfly spread over my right shoulder, down my arm, the front of my shoulder and more than halfway across my back. My mom's

name is Violet so I picked purple for some of the flowers. I like the symbolism behind the dragonfly.

Trends have never had an impact on me. I have always marched to the beat of a broken drum.

Question 3:

Just about all of them can be covered when I am dressed in professional attire and that was all that really mattered. I also want to be able to see them which is why my last tattoo crawled from my back over my shoulder and down my arm.

Question 4:

Did my gender have an effect on the design? Maybe. I like pretty. I did pick a lot of flowers after all now that I think about it.

Did my gender have an effect on placement? Definitely! I didn't want anything to be seen that might prevent me from getting a job. I am an accountant after all 😊 and we ladies still have enough trouble getting good jobs without any additional challenges. Besides, hidden tattoos can be rather sexy! When they are only seen peeking out of your clothing I constantly have people ask to see the rest.

Question 5:

Part of my self- identity? Hmm. Not really.

Question 6:

A way to reinvent myself? A little. Back to the whole pretty thing. No matter how tired I look, at least I know my tattoos look good!

Question 7:

Something rebellious? They most certainly were when I first started to get them! No doubt about it. I was a total trouble maker when I was young, forced to go to private

Catholic school after my parents divorced blah, blah, blah. Then I grew up and figured, I already have them so how about some more!

Question 8:

Different to the processes involved in other forms of body modification such as piercings? I am not a fan of body mod's or piercings - at all. Sorry, I know a lot of people on here are but...I see tattoos as art. Let just say I don't see piercings in the same light.

www.bigtattooplanet.com

26,525 members.

643,310 posts.

F6:

Question 1:

23, female, Birmingham (though raised in rural Devon), white british and bisexual.

Question 2:

Fairy- This one was dedicated to the women in my family, the fairy was for my Gran (the musical notes in her wings=my gran was a pianist and to this day I credit all my musical interest and talent to my dad who got it from her), the flowers are mine and my mothers favourites, and the butterflies are actually copies of my mum's butterfly tattoos. And just to complete the set, it was done on my sisters birthday. In many ways it was going against what I knew as tattooing at the time. I'd never seen an artist doing tattoos without the heavy black outlines, I loved the watercolour style of the pieces in her portfolio and went for that. If I was getting it done again then

I'd probably find someone better, but honestly at the time I was looking hard, but without the knowledge to back it up.

Cross with biker jacket- It's a copy of a picture my mum drew when she was a teenager. I'm proud of the fact that my parents are bikers and wanted a tattoo to mark me getting my own license and first bike (though the time frame was somewhat removed, this was done a couple of years after passing my test). When I found this picture that mum had drawn with the bike jacket, it just fitted. The dotwork was already part of the design.

Third: Anime I don't have a picture of the tattoo itself to hand, but it's the doll and duck from this. This is the one that has zero meaning and was kind of influenced by tattoo fashion in that I saw all the bright colourful cute tattoos posted on here and felt jealous, I wanted something silly and fun and as anime is something I like I could think of nothing cuter than Uzura-chan (the doll) from Princess Tutu.

This is my proudest to date. It has meaning, but it didn't start out that way. At first it was as simple as thinking "A nine tailed fox would make a cool tattoo" then I looked more into the mythology, and how the fox spirit grows a new tail every 50/100years, so more tails = more experience. I was coming to the end of my degree and was coming up to 1 year free of self harming so it just all fit so beautifully. The drop from 9 tails to 3 tails was largely aesthetic.

Question 3:

Fairy: right arm, at the top. Not sure why, I think it was the nice balance between being able to hide it when I want but also show it off when I wanted to too.

Cross: Left leg, just above the ankle. It just seemed to be the right place. Again it's a nice place where the tattoo can be on show or hidden as needs be.

Anime: Left leg, top of the thigh. Right placement for the design, lots of space to expand which was/is a consideration.

Fox: Ribs, right hand side. I wanted a big space, but I'm not ready to give up my back yet (pretty sure one of these days I'll want a full scale back piece). This is specifically placed so one of the tails wraps round my hip to cover over some of my old self harm scars, not because I want them hidden, but to mark that I'm past that now.

F7:

Question 1:

Age: 29, 30 next week. Feel free to send me presents everyone. Sex: female, Location: Swindon in sunny Wiltshire, ethnicity: White British, sexual orientation: Sex, what the hell is that. It's been so long I feel like they might have changed it. I'm gonna say straight though.

Question 2:

I have 30 in total mainly old school. Getting number 31 on the 19th. Some pics on my profile. Just because I liked them mainly. However on my back I have "take the pieces and build them skywards" a Biffy lyric. It had a lot of meaning to me as it was at the time I was suffering the worst with my depression. The other one that has a meaning will be the robot my daughter drew for me. It has a ghetto blaster. No. I just get stuff that I like.

Question 3:

All over I plan on covering as much as possible.

Question 4:

No not at all. I go for traditional style tattoos which can be seen just as much as on men as women these days.

Question 5:

I suppose so. I am known as the tattooed girl with the red hair at work and in my group of friends I am the tattooed one. Personally though I don't notice them they are just part of me.

Question 6:

No. I know who I am and it took me a while to find that out. I didn't start on this tattoo journey till I was 27/28.

Question 9:

Yes I do. Why? well cos I want to. Next is on the 19th at the cancer research event.

Question10:

No. I will just seem what happens and what takes my fancy. I don't plan stuff out.

F8:**Question 1:**

I'm 34, I live in Fife, I'm white and straight.

Question2:

I have one tattoo of two goldfinches, one on an apple blossom branch, one in flight. The idea and very rough layout were mine, but the design of the finished piece was the artist's. It doesn't have a special meaning. I do love birds and always have food out for them in the garden - to see a goldfinch is a rare treat. The garden in my parents' house had two apple trees and I just really like the blossom. I've attached two pretty rubbish pictures I've just taken on my phone, but you get the general idea.

didn't look at other tattoos at the time that I was planning mine, except to check out the work of the artists I was thinking of - but I do now! So I didn't know anything about tattooing trends.

Question 3:

The tattoo is on my upper arm and along the line of my shoulder on my back. Like F6 I wanted it to be either visible or hidden depending on the situation. I am thinking of extending it down my arm and continuing the nature theme.

Question 4:

Not especially, but it's hard to say! A few people have said to me that my tattoo is quite feminine but that wasn't intentional on my part. The subject matter - birds and flowers - can be thought of as feminine, but I wanted the execution to be bold and realist rather than 'soft' or stylised (not sure if I'm using the right words here, but hope you know what I mean). I'm not that feminine in many ways. I rarely wear make-up, have very short hair, and I tend towards shirts, trousers, t-shirts, flat shoes etc, but I do take care over my appearance I suppose, and like a bit of tailoring. In terms of placement, I think the upper arm/shoulder is just as much of a male choice as a female one, if not more so? For me it was more about somewhere my tattoos could be visible whilst still wearing clothes.

Question 5:

I don't know. It's only been a few months. I took a lot of time and trouble over the planning of them and the whole process has meant a lot to me so I guess by definition they must be part of my identity, but only to a small extent.

Question 6:

Not to reinvent myself but I think I wanted to wake myself up. I've been at home with two young children for a little while and before I started planning the tattoos I felt a bit

like I'd been sleepwalking. I seem to have a cyclical thing going on in my life where I like to shake things up every couple of years and the tattoos are probably a part of that. In terms of body image I'm lucky that I don't suffer with hang-ups really. I feel strong and healthy and that's what's important to me, but this new idea of my body as a canvas is something that I'm finding inspiring.

Question 9:

Yes I do! Before I got my first one, I just wanted one tattoo. Then it was a case of getting that tattoo added to - it was a finished piece but I'd originally planned another bird and there hadn't been time on the day. Then after that I was truly hooked - now I spend a lot of time, far too much time really, looking at lots of artists' work on the internet and planning out what I want to get next. I keep changing my mind between three main ideas. All of them will be go-ers eventually, but I have a fat tax rebate burning a hole in my bank account and I feel like I need to spend it IMMEDIATELY. Luckily my husband is pretty enthusiastic about the whole thing, though I think he has some reservations about placement - I know he's not keen on chest pieces for example.

Question 10:

Well, placement wise one of my ideas is to continue my bird piece right down my arm, with other flora/fauna on it. So it won't be so easily hidden; I'm getting braver. My other idea is for a thigh piece. I don't often get my legs out as I'm so pale, apart from at the gym or when I'm running. But on the occasions I do it would be very prominent. So I guess I am still going for pieces that I can show off without getting my
kit
off.

The design is part of the reason for my indecision - there are so many artists and

styles that I love, not only can I hardly choose between them but I'm also not sure how they would all look on one body.

Question 11:

Family - my brother has quite a few tattoos himself so whilst he was surprised I think, he wasn't shocked. He was mildly interested in the way that anyone with tattoos is interested in other people's. I showed my mum at Christmas. She was shocked, but also kind of delighted at the same time. We were both pissed on Christmas Day and I don't think she could really believe what she was seeing when I pulled my top down. It helps that she really likes the style (and she also loves birds). She's not seen tattoos like that before. I cannot imagine a situation where I will ever tell my dad, however. I'll go to my grave with that secret - he is ultra conservative and it's just not worth the strife. Friends - hardly any of my friends have tattoos and I think there might have been some raised eyebrows at first, especially when I had two long sittings within the space of a couple of months (annoyingly, right at the time My Tattoo Addiction was on the telly). But people have said mostly very positive things, at least to my face!

Question 13:

My husband has been really supportive of the whole process since I first decided to get a tattoo, and he loves the work I have. I think I still would have done it if he didn't want me to (he wouldn't ever try to tell me what to do) but I'm so relieved it's not caused problems for us.

Question 14:

Well, it's been autumn/winter since I had my first sitting, so the only time I really get my ink out is at the gym, where I get a few double-takes, as it's pretty big and colourful. But that's really it. I have had one woman come up to me to say nice

things. The gym is interesting from that point of view actually, there are all kinds of ink on display, sometimes on the most unlikely looking people, so I feel quite at home.

M1:

Question 1:

24, male, Glasgow, white and straight.

Question2:

Black and grey samurai and cherry blossom tree , Valar Morghulis in black (yeah I have a Game of Thrones tattoo), traditional-style anchor in full colour with Glasgow city coat of arms on , sugar skull cover up, black crappy tribal lion rampant and handpoked dotwork rose.

The bicep was the first tattoo I got (which is why I hate it) but I honestly thought it was a safe, social area to get the first one done. The sugar skull on the inner forearm is a cover up of two black stars I got when I was 19, which is why the dimensions are strange and it doesn't really fit any style. Same with the Valar Morghulis really. The samurai was always planned to go on the outer forearm, kinda military-style but it ended up being a hell of a lot bigger. As for the rose - well, I always wanted to try hand-poke, and my chest seemed perfect place for it. It's nice and hidden, which means most people don't see it very often. It's a rose in memory of my mum (her anniversary was the weekend after I had the rose done) so I like that I'm the only one who really gets to see it.

The only one that really has a 'meaning' as such is the Valar Morghulis. It's a totally made up language, but the phrase can be explained about 3 or 4 different ways. As for the others, the lion was my attempt at being patriotic, but couldn't make up for

being an idiot 18 year old, and I just love Japanese stuff, especially samurais and cherry blossom trees, the whole thing.

Also a big fan of Day of the Dead, so explains the sugar skull. The anchor with the Glasgow coat of arms is my tribute to our naval heritage, and me wanting to join the Merchant Navy and not being allowed to cos of my crappy eyesight 🙄

Where are the tattoo/s on your body? What was the reason behind the placement of your tattoo/s? If so why? (If there is one as mentioned above).

Question3:

Outer right forearm, inner right forearm, left bicep, inner left forearm, back of left forearm and right chest.

M2:

I'd like to answer your second question about general response to my tattoos. Most of the feedback I receive is positive, ok you still get the what are you gona look like when you older (think everyone on here has had that stupid response) but mostly everyone gives you positive feedback. As I travel a lot to get tattooed and spend lots of time in airports, I end up in conversations with random people about my tattoos. The last time an elderly couple beside me were amazed by the work on my arm, said they had never seen anything like it before. The genuinely seemed interested when I was telling them how it was done, was it painful etc. So I have actually met a lot of nice people, who I would never have spoken to if I had no tattoos.

M3:

Question 1:

Location – London, Sexual Orientation - Straight but I also like lesbians 🙋

Question 2 and 3:

I have a full back-piece, a full sleeve, 2 thigh pieces, 2 lower leg pieces. The only tattoo that has any meaning was my very first of Jesus. I am not religious but have lost quite a few friends young and this was the most well known image of hoping that they are all in a better place. All the rest of my tattoos are purely just art that I like, no meanings 😊

Question 4:

Nope.

Question 5:

Nope, it is simply art.

Question 6:

No.

Question 7:

No.

Question 8:

I am fine with all body mod's even though some are far too extreme for me to understand but each to their own.

Question 9:

Yes, because I want to 😊

Question 10:

I don't care about placement as long as it's not on my hands or face due to my business interests. My tattoos will still stay on the surreal, digital art, fantasy side that

I like.

Question11:

They love them!

Question 12:

My work colleagues love my work also but the high end clientele would not appreciate face or hand tattoos and its not something I would like for myself anyhow. I display my sleeve proudly 😊 I do not have regulations imposed on me as it is my company but that said I couldn't employ anyone with facial tattoos either due the clients, which is a shame but the way it is.

Question 13:

Nope.

Question14and15:

I have had nothing but positive comments from the public and even if they were not I couldn't give a shit really 😊 I don't cover my tattoos.

Question16:

I hope they can see beautiful artwork.

Question 17 and 18:

No.

Question19:

I love all tattoo art but as I mentioned because of the nature of my business I could not employ someone with facial tattoos, other than that everything else is positive apart from really bad artwork.

Question20:

Face.

Question21:

They do probably from some socially brainwashed people, which is a shame

Question22:

Nope.

www.tattoo.tv

8,136 members.

M4:

Question 1:

26, male, Ireland, white, straight.

Question 2 and 3:

I have a Celtic griffin on my back, 4 stags weaved around themselves on my ankle, 2 wolves on my upper arm with a Hindu design as background.

Griffin: old Irish manuscript for personal culture reason.

Wolves: me and my brother.

Trends: no affect by current. They're all Celtic style and based on knot- work which I like. The Hindu design was the artist's contribution to decorate it. Why not affected by trends: I don't pay enough attention to tattoo trends to notice or care.

Question 4:

Nope. I think letting your gender hinder anything you do or assuming your gender is a hindrance to what you want to do, is a pretty weak character flaw in a person. I got my tattoo's cause I wanted my tattoos. If I was a woman they'd look just as good.

Question 5 and 6:

While I don't think this, people will talk about tattoos and the comment will be passed that I'm the type of person who would get them. This is not said in a degrading way but I guess other people think it is a part of my identity. The only affect on my body image is the placement of the tattoos. I've a certain symmetry in my head that I'd like covered so I don't look too tattooed and also not to be randomly placed.

Question 7:

I don't think of my tattoo's as a sign of rebellion but I waited till I was in my twenties and discovered who I was as a person when I got them so rebellion didn't factor into it for me.

Question 8:

I see it different, solely on a personal level, as I don't think piercings are nice. It doesn't resonate with me at all and I find it pointless. But that's just me and so I won't do it to my body.

Question 11:

Majority of my friends like my tattoos. Most of my family do too. The older members of my family don't mention much about them.

Question 12:

I'm a second level teacher. Previous members of staff have had it mentioned not to have them on show. Also, if they were, students would bring them up when trying to teach the class so it's easier not to have said distraction. I do regularly have conversations with the seniors about tattoos though.

Question 13:

My tattoos have had no noticeable difference in my relationships. Only noticeable thing is in nightclubs, some women will tend to show more attention... usually tattooed women who used to never give me the time of day beforehand.

Question 14 and 15:

Like I said, in work I do have my tattoo's hidden. In public, depending on the weather, I may have them covered, based on where they are. I'll not be wearing shorts or sleeves t-shirts (which technically is just a shirt I imagine) I've never had any reaction to them to be honest. People just seem to live and let live. Ye get the odd compliment here and there but that's it.

Question 16:

I imagine there is a spectrum of people who think they're disgusting to ones who think they're awesome but the majority of people don't seem to think anything of them as far as I can tell. I do get the odd conversations about how they will look when I'm older but I reply with how crap most people look when they're older anyway and it kinda ends it.

Question 17:

I assume this is a statement to go with question 7. I've been described as some of those things but it was before I had the tattoos. I suppose the end of the spectrum who have judged me may have had those stereotypes but I've never ever had them personally mentioned to me due to the tattoos.

Question 18:

I've never had negative attitudes directed to my tattoos, although I've heard people tell me that they don't like tattoos. In fairness these are people who I don't have

much in common with anyway and I have to talk to due to work/ being my in- laws/ etc. Their attitudes affect me little as I don't hold their opinion in high regards, not due to their attitudes to tattoos but their attitudes in general.

Question 19:

I don't think positively or negatively about others with tattoos. It's an each to their own. Not everyone enjoys them. More so, I judge the tattoo itself. If someone has a shit tattoo, I tell them it's a shit tattoo. That doesn't change my opinion of the person.

Question 20:

I've seen a lot of people getting Swastikas tattooed because it's originally a peace symbol. I suppose that's some sort of rebellion against social attitudes against Nazism or something. Other than that I'd say some sort discriminatory or a 'carpe diem' themed tattoo is what I'd imagine a tattooee would imagine is rebellious. It's hard to give an answer on this and rebellion was never a motivation for me. I smoked as a teenager for that!

Question 21:

In general I think socially tattoos on women are seen to be unsexy and take away from their beauty. To be honest I think this partially due to the style of tattoo since women's bodies are more varied than men's, I think a good tattoo artist need to augment the tattoo to accentuate a woman's natural curves and in half the cases I've seen, they don't. It's not that the tattoo is ugly it's not that the woman is, but the tattoo wasn't applied to compliment her figure and it can end up looking shit.

Question 22:

In my opinion I personally don't like to see full coverage. Again, I like tattoos as decoration but there is such a thing as too much coverage. I think it all looks cluttered. Imagine a wall in your house where you can't see it because it's full of

clocks, pictures, lights, etc. That said, this is literally due to my own personal opinion of attractiveness. The only person's opinion I consider and discuss my tattoos with is my partner. I feel since she will have to look at me for the rest of my life, I owe it to her to keep myself attractive in all facets, physical mental, emotional. So her opinion is taken into account. I've no time for anyone else's opinion.

www.thetattooforum.com

(no data regarding members numbers etc).

M5:

Question 1:

Male, UK.

Question 2 and 3:

The kind made out of ink. I love goats...their beard tickled me when I was little. I do love L.A Ink. Can't get enough of that cat. I'm a fashion whore. Chest and arm-He didn't want to do them on my genitals. W...what?

F9:

Question 1:

Female, London, Straight.

Question 2 and 3:

Lots. I like stars. Like butterfly's. Not really they was just because i could besides my love tattoo was for my daughter although it didn't turn out how i wanted. Nope not affected by trends. Dunno.

Both wrists down my arm and foot and on my back. Also getting an ankle tattoo.

Appendix 7: Data from Surveys.

F10:

Question 1:

30, female, San Diego California, white, straight.

Question 2:

I have about 18 tattoos. Mostly music related. Band names, images, lyric, and portraits, signature of movie star Marilyn Monroe Music is one of the most important things that have shaped my life. I'm a walking dedication to what has helped me get through day to day life. Marilyn Monroe is someone I look up to not for beauty or glamour, but for the person she was and tried to be. Trends don't hold meaning to me. Tattoos aren't a phase or trend, it's part of who you are as a person.

Question 3:

Arms, legs, chest, shoulder blade, neck. I place them where they're most flattering for the design. No one has effected placement. One tattoo I got for my mother and dad are stars on my wrists with mom and dad in them... I originally wanted 3 stars for the 3 letters but the artist had suggested it'd look too busy and not come out right. So he drew both up for me and he was right.

Question 4:

They are part of who I am outside and in. Being made to feel so ugly growing up as a girl, it was something that made me feel beautiful. Showing what beautiful things I have in my life that help me. I have always been the same type of person. I learn and grow but not really been through phases of reinvent ion.

Question 5:

No rebellion. I have both tattoos and piercings. Tattoos are relaxing and to me, very spiritual during the process. I feel cleansed and very clear in a way that nothing else does. Piercings are more like an adrenaline rush but short term. They aren't for those reasons. It's more like something that makes me feel beautiful.

Question 6:

Yes. I have a couple unfinished ones and I want them completed so I can move on to other ones. Delay is mostly due to the expense of it. I want to get a few more to complete the things that have helped shape me. It's an overwhelming peaceful feeling seeing the finished product.

Q7: *Respondent skipped this question*

Q8: *Respondent skipped this question*

Q9: *Respondent skipped this question*

Q10: *Respondent skipped this question*

M6:**Question 1:**

20, male, Baltimore, white, homosexual.

Question 2:

I have the album art from Kimya Dawson's album 'Remember that I Love You' on my inside left ankle. The album rocked my world in high school, and the cartoons were cute. I got it after being discharged from the psych ward. I am not aware of current trends in tattooing affecting this tattoo. I have the cover art from the first anthology of zine Doris tattooed across my chest. It was the book I brought with me to the psych

ward, and I admire author Cindy Crabb. Getting a chest tattoo was definitely because of the trendiness factor. Cool kids have chest tattoos.

Question 3:

The Kimya Dawson tattoo is on my ankle. I could find no better place for it aesthetically - also, I was avoiding areas that would be seen in a professional setting. I do not think my gender had an effect. [I'd also caution you about using "sex" and "gender" interchangeably.] The Doris tattoo is across my chest, because chest tattoos are trendy. My comparative lack of breasts made this an ideal place for a more mural-ish tattoo.

Question 4:

No, I do not see them usually and I do not notice them when I look in the mirror. They are not readily visible to other people. No.

Question 5:

Only in that I think most tattoo art is bad, (too buldgy, cartoony without being cartoony) so I am glad I got tattoos outside of that convention. Tattooing is more intimate, as it is a process, and more painful, and longer. Having both piercings and tattoos, I can say I had a closer relationship with my tattoo artists than my piercers.

Question 6:

Yes, but I don't know which ones, so it's hard to say why. I think they're pretty and I don't see any reason to have blank skin, other than to tattoo it later, but in the meanwhile, I'm wasting time hauling around untattooed skin. I likely will likely get tattoos that could be seen in a professional setting (forearm) in the eventual future.

Question 7:

Everyone has responded positively or neutrally among my family and friends. I have shown my work colleagues my tattoos, but they are not on body parts I would display

in the workplace. Several of my sexual partners have enjoyed my tattoos, if that's what you mean.

Question 8:

I do not receive much reaction. My tattoos are not usually visible.

Question 9:

I do not think I have been judged. My tattoos are adorable cuddly cartoons. They are not very masculine.

Question 10:

Rebellious tattoos address, explicitly or implicitly, a problem in society. "Die Cis Scum" would be a rebellious tattoo. Women are generally seen as more trashy if they have visible tattoos. I don't know about friends and families. Society is sexist. No reactions have changed anything for me ever.

F11:

Question 1:

23, Female, Cheltenham Gloucestershire, White British, Straight-heterosexual

Question 2:

I have a number of tattoos; A Large art deco design with a lily in the centre of my spine a small red rose on my left hip a graphic style flower on my right shoulder Cherry blossoms from my neck to centre back Cantonese symbols on my outer wrists, both hands Right foot scorpion tattoo Right lower calf, the names of my two dogs and a paw print Left ankle zodiac symbol Most of my tattoos have been things that i have drawn myself, others are things that i like and enjoy and that would link well with what i already have. All of my tattoos have meaning, either for times past

that i want to remember or people. No, I'm never one to follow trends, i get what i like when i feel its the right time, also the fact I've drawn a lot of them myself means im in control of the designs and when i want them.

Question 3:

A Large art deco design with a lily in the centre of my spine a small red rose on my left hip a graphic style flower on my right shoulder Cherry blossoms from my neck to centre back Cantonese symbols on my outer wrists, both hands Right foot scorpion tattoo Right lower calf, the names of my two dogs and a paw print Left ankle zodiac symbol Mostly due to the best area for the shape and design of the tattoo, also so that they can be hidden at work. It affected my choice of design; I prefer my tattoos to be in a feminine style, script type, colours etc. I don't think it affected the size of the designs but if i had been a small female I would have had them in keeping with my general frame and body size.

Question 4:

My tattoos are my past and my present and any further tattoo will be my future, they show a part of your inspiration in life at that time. My tattoos are a part of my identity and i believe it is the same for others, even if it is just for the fact that they are a good form of recognisable feature. I don't think I had any tattoos done in order to define me as a person or reinvent myself, more so the tattoos are a way of expressing my creativity for everyone to see.

Question 5:

I don't see them as rebellious as they are very popular with today's society, however I'm sure my mother would disagree with me on that. I see tattooing as a more creative form of body modification, but I do see that they all come under the same bracket.

Question 6:

I could see myself having further tattoos in the future, one to correct a tattoo I have that I would like altered as the tattooist was not of a standard that I had expected, two I have no immediate plans but can see it happening in the future. The reasons for my tattoos will be the same as previous to remember to and to show a time in my life I class as significant

Question 7:

My friends have no comment on tattoos as a lot of them including my partner have tattoos themselves. My parents and older family members did not like them or think they were appropriate; however they do have out dated views on all types of body modification. I do not show all my tattoos at work but some are visible, I cover up tattoos to show respect to clients and other members of staff that may not be comfortable around tattoos. I do however work in a very male orientated sector and therefore tattoos are pretty common place. My tattoos have had no effect on close personal relationships. Me and my partner have tattoos and previous partners, even if not tattooed themselves, have never had a problem with them.

Question 8:

I have had many comments very rarely negative. One negative example would be the older man (70ish) at my gym who commented on my tattoos in the steam room asking, why I had done that to myself but he was not aggressive in his asking. A positive experience would be the many people who have commented on my large back tattoo (mostly in the summer months) saying that it is very beautiful and colourful. It's always nice to hear people think your body art is pretty and well done but i do not take any negative comments to heart, it appears to be a very outdated view from those people but I would never hold someone's opinion against them,

however I won't be hiding my tattoos from them. It's a part of everyday life and why should I hide something that I'm proud of.

Question 9:

Mostly I think people enjoy my tattoos and see them as a form of art. I think many people understand that that is a very outdated view and that tattooing is now widely available for everyone, tattooing has a history as does all type of art work. Impressionism was not understood early on I believe it is the same for tattooing. I will display my tattoos in public if I feel the weather is right for them, but I would never deliberately hide them because of people's views.

Question 10:

A rebellious tattoo is one that you get with very little thought and because someone has specifically told you not to. I wouldn't say that any of my tattoos are rebellious. I think it is more widely accepted by all generations that men can have tattoos but those impressions are changing with new generations. My family would not be happy about tattoos if I was male or female they have just never been exposed to them prior to me getting tattoos. People's views and my experiences from that have not changed my future plans for tattoos.

F12:

Question 1:

I am 25, female, white British, queer/bi-sexual and from the North East of England (County Durham).

Question 2:

I will list my tattoos in the order that I got them. 1. I got my first tattoos when I was 21. These are on the back of my calves and they come as a pair. My left calf is an anchor with a banner saying 'True' and some nautical stars around the main design, and my right calf is a heart with a banner saying 'Love', also with nautical stars around the edges. I had been thinking about this design for about 3 years and while I didn't draw this design myself, it was a custom design. The meaning of this tattoo for me is that I believe in 'True Love', not only in a romantic sense, but in the love I feel for my friends and family. 2. This tattoo is on my right hand side from my ribs to my hip and shows 2 birds with a lock and a key on a chain between them. I got this tattoo because I love birds and bird tattoos. This tattoo doesn't really have a specific meaning for me. 3. My next tattoo is on my left thigh and shows a lady riding a carousel horse, but the carousel horse is a seahorse with a horse's head. I got this tattoo because I like really old carousels and since I was a child I have been fascinated with seahorses. Also I thought it would be an interesting design. This tattoo has no real meaning except for showcasing my love of old things and seahorses. 4. I have a teapot on my left ankle and a tea cup on my right ankle. I got these because I love tea. 5. I got a pair of matching butterflies above my knees. These were a spur of the moment tattoo because a really good artist had a space going at a local studio where I normally get tattooed. 6. On the front of my right thigh I have a crab with an eye on its shell, framed by an anchor. I got this tattoo because I like designs that incorporate sea creatures and I like crabs. 7. My latest tattoos are a pair of traditional portraits on the backs of my thighs. These are of Marie Curie and Rosalind Franklin. Both of these ladies were pioneering scientists. I chose these designs as I am a science geek and these two ladies are particularly inspirational for

me. All of my tattoos are done in a 'traditional style'. Traditional is quite 'trendy' in tattooing but this is not why I chose this style. I wanted tattoos in this style for years before I actually got tattooed for the first time and I was also inspired by the tattoos that my father and my uncles have had since they were teenagers. I think the kind of tattoos I like has evolved with some influence from seeing other people's tattoos but I would never get a tattoo because it was considered 'cool' or 'trendy'.

Question 3:

All of my tattoos are on my legs with the exception of the birds down my right side. I chose these places because I think legs tattoos look rad, but also because for my job (Health Care Assistant) I cannot have any visible tattoos - so my arms below my elbows and hands etc. Also I like the idea of having tattoos that I can choose when to show off. I don't feel as though my gender has affected any of my tattoo design choices or placement choices.

Question 4:

My tattoos make me feel positive about my body and give me a lot more confidence than I ever felt before I started getting tattooed. I cannot imagine my body without them and I find it hard to remember what I looked like before I got tattooed. I did not set out to reinvent myself because I don't think my tattoos changed my life or my personality, I just feel more like me.

Question 5:

As a teenager I saw being tattooed as rebellious but now I view it as a different mode of self expression. I think I used to hold those views because apart from my family, my only exposure to tattoos was the typical 'rebel' stereotype in films and on TV. The process is obviously physically different but has the same motivations, such as self expression, form of therapy etc.

Question 6:

Yes I plan to have a lot more tattoos done! The ones I am planning so far will be of similar sizes and taking inspiration from many different sources such as old tattoos that I love (mainly nautical), books and inspiration from my lifestyle.

Question 7:

My friends and family have been mainly positive - some older family members have been more judgemental than others. And my mam has also had mixed feelings about them. I think her main worry is that I will regret getting them done. My work colleagues know about them but don't really mention them. If they do see them, in the changing room for example, the comments are usually positive. My work has uniform regulations, so I would not be able to get any tattoos below my elbows, but my uniform would cover all my existing tattoos anyway. I don't feel like my tattoos have had any effect on any of my close personal relationships.

Question 8:

I only tend to get comments from the general public about my tattoos when I am wearing a skirt or dress without tights on nights out. These comments are either from other women in the toilets, and have been overwhelmingly positive, or men who (generally, but not always) mention my tattoos in relation to my appearance. For example, one night I was stood at the bar and a man came up behind me, licked his finger and ran it down the back of one of my calves. I turned around and asked him what on earth he was doing and he replied 'just checking to see if it was real'. When I told him to leave me alone and how rude I thought he was he turned very nasty and started calling me names. I have also had men come up to me lots of times (hard to recall specific incidents), and say I would look much prettier/sexier if I didn't have tattoos. I find the comments from men very frustrating as I am made to feel as

though I deserve to have my body commented on in a negative way just because I made a very personal decision to get tattooed. I would not go up to any of these men and ask why they got their haircut that way, or why they wore those particular clothes. I didn't get my tattoos to make anyone be sexually attracted to me. I now tend to wear tights a lot more just to avoid the hassle when I am going to be around lots of people that I don't know, or at places where I know people will be more judgemental, such as a normal bar as opposed to a gig or an 'alternative' space.

Question 9:

I feel like my tattoos have occasionally caused me to be judged in both negative and overtly sexual manners. I feel like some people have prejudged my character, and assumed I would be a rude, uncaring, un-thoughtful, aggressive person just because I am tattooed. And I feel as though some people have made assumptions about my sex life etc because of my tattoos. This has caused me to cover up more in certain situations.

Question 10:

The only tattoos I would associate with rebellion would be face tattoos because they have such massive implications in all areas of life from work to social situations. I think tattooed men are judged to have certain characters (aggressive, 'bad boys' etc) but are less likely to have members of the public make comments directly to them about their tattoos/bodies as it is more normal to see men with tattoos. I think women are judged to either be unfeminine or have questions raised about their sexual practices - such as how promiscuous they are. Also I think people are more likely to make these comments directly to the tattooed women. In my experience people also deem women more likely to regret their tattoos. My plans have not been changed by

the reactions of other people because I get tattooed to please myself and not anyone else.

F13:

Question 1:

29, Female, Gloucestershire, White British, Heterosexual.

Skipped rest of questions.

F14:

Question 1:

28, F, Nottingham, white, bi

Question 2:

2 large Celtic designs on left arm. Both in memory of family members. No influence in choosing design, but was told Celtic is now "unfashionable" by first artist I found.

Question 3:

Both on upper left arm. Traditional placement for tattoos - not too obvious, but can show them when I like. Only affected size in terms of how much space was available.

Question 4:

Perhaps - they are reminders of family members. Never really changed my image, tattoos didn't seem to go against it.

Question 5:

No, tattoos seem very mainstream. Tattoos seem more permanent than piercings which are easy to remove.

Question 6:

Yes. Because there are other events I would like to mark on my life. Probably similar placements.

Q7: *Respondent skipped this question.*

Q8: *Respondent skipped this question.*

Q9: *Respondent skipped this question.*

Q10: *Respondent skipped this question.*

F15:

Question 1:

25, F, Leeds, white British, straight.

Question 2:

Small star design on wrist - first tattoo so wanted something small. Got this about 6 years ago, and think it was part of a trend. Seemed a 'safe' choice at the time. I did draw this up myself so that it was slightly original. Myself and a friend got this tattoo together. two blue roses on hip/ stomach, about 10 cm long. I got this tattoo When a friend of mine was working as a tattoo apprentice at a local studio. Wanted him to design something for the location. Something simple but original. Mean something to me because he created them, but not the design itself.

Question 3:

As above, wrist and hip/stomach. I never wanted tattoos in obvious places. Wrist is visible but planned it so that it could be hidden by a watch / bangle if needed for work purposes. Hip was so that it could be hidden but also liked the idea of something that would be a surprise for people who didn't know I had it. Don't think gender had much to do it, although probable relatively 'girly' places to have ink.

Question 4:

No to both. I don't think people think of me as being tattooed - not enough. Definitely not to reinvent myself.

Question 5:

Not rebellious, lots of my friends have them and I've never come across too much shock with them so guess not. Tattooing is definitely different as its more permanent. You can remove metal but not ink. There is more to decide upon and therefore a bigger decision to make. E.g. piercing is just placement and whether you want a bar or ring etc, tattoo is much more.

Question 6:

Yes would love to. Probably yes.

Question 7:

Family- fine, they liked them. If it was something more offensive would have been different. Friend - a lot of them have tattoos, some have tattooed themselves so no issue. Try and cover at work if important meetings / audits where I can but not required of me. Work in an office where I'm the only person with piercings (nose ring, flesh tunnel in ear, other ear piercings i.e Tragus/conch, dermal anchors in wrist) so sometimes I feel I should cover some of these things just in case. No one has ever told me to so not too concerned day to day.

Question 8:

No Rarely.

Q9: *Respondent skipped this question.*

Q10: *Respondent skipped this question.*

F16:

Question 1:

29 Female Gloucestershire White British Heterosexual.

Question 2:

1. Butterfly and stars of various sizes across the bottom of my back (black, no colour) - first tattoo done at 20 yrs. special to me as it was my first tattoo, although no symbolic meaning as such. I chose the design as it was something I liked, my now husband had stars on his back too (tattoo completed at the same time!) so the stars link our tattoos. I don't think my tattoo was necessarily influenced by 'trends' although butterflies and stars are common tattoos. 2. Two swallows in colour (above either hip) and the word 'princess' in script on my lower stomach (between the swallows) - second tattoo done at 23yrs. Chose the design as my name means 'princess' in Hebrew and swallows signify returning home. I am a very homely/family orientated person so felt this was significant. I think it is symbolic to who I am as a person. 3. A rose on each foot - one red, one yellow, with diamonds and script saying 'Alice' and 'Mervyn' - third & fourth tattoos done at 25yrs. These tattoos are tributes to my grandparents who are a big influence in my life, thankfully they are still around to see the tributes! Roses symbolise love and the colours symbolise where they come from (red for Lancashire, yellow for Cornwall) diamonds symbolise strength and stability, so their relationship with each other (married for nearly 60 years) and my relationship with them. 4. Initials 'JD' on my left wrist - 5th tattoo done at 26yrs. The initials of my paternal grandfather who is no longer with us. Simple design, memorial tattoo. 5. Script on my right forearm 'you're part of my entity, here for infinity.' -6th tattoo done at 28yrs. When my husband and I got married we left the ceremony to Biffy Clyro's version of Rhianna's 'Umbrella', this is a line from the song

that we feel is very relevant to our relationship. My husband has exactly the same across his chest. I feel all my tattoos have some symbolic relevance to me and my relationships with others, naturally I think I have been influenced by some 'trends', most of my tattoos have an 'old school' feel to them as I like to have some form of link between them, rather than them being a random selection.

Question 3:

Lower back, stomach, feet, wrist, forearm. Part of the reason for the placement is so I can chose to cover them, should I want to - however this is very rare!! The more I have, the more I want to show them off!! Reasoning behind placement has also been down to where they would 'sit' and look pleasing to the eye. Although I am currently 2 weeks away from giving birth and dreading the prospect of an emergency caesarean in case they damage my stomach tattoo.....! I didn't really think about this at the time I had it done. The placement of my grandparents on my feet was also symbolic as I felt they would always be 'walking with me' for the rest of my life. I think my tattoos are feminine in design, I wanted them to look 'delicate' although I'm not afraid to make a statement in terms of size, also bigger tattoos age better over time so this influenced my choices.

Question 4:

I do feel they are part of my identity. They say something about me and my life and are very personal to me. I am an artist person and like to express myself, I feel tattoos allow me to do so. I do not feel I have tried to reinvent myself or body image.

Question 5:

I do feel my tattoos are a form of rebellion, although less so know I am older and tattoos are more common place in society. My grandparents love to remind me that only sailors, prisoners and prostitutes had tattoos I'm their day! Although they are at

the same time touched by my tribute to them. Being tattooed is a permanent decision and also is an opportunity to tell a story, I feel piercing can come and go - however tattoos are for life so for me, require more thought and consideration.

Question 6:

Yes! I have got the bug and I don't think it will ever go away!! I like being tattooed and I have lots more to add to my 'story'. They will compliment the placement and design of my current tattoos.

Question 7:

My family were fairly accepting of my tattoos, although they are pretty relaxed in general! My Dad has always lectured me about the size and placement of some of my tattoos, particularly my feet - he likes to remind me I will 'never have a good job' or 'get promoted' with loads of tattoos..... Although I feel I have a good, professional, well paid job despite having visible tattoos. My grandparents say its a 'generational thing' and wouldn't have happened when they were young, although they understand my reasons for having them. After being tattooed, my Dad went out and got 3 after having none for 48 years!! My Mum has also spoken about getting one. My friends are generally open minded and accepting of anyone and everything so that's not a problem! Work has been interesting; I am a case responsible officer with the youth offending service. I am an officer of the court and have to do face to face work with young people as well as in court with judges and solicitors. When I went for the interview I intentionally dressed smartly and covered all my tattoos. It was October when I got the job so my boss did not get 'full view' of my feet until the summer and he seemed quite shocked!! I personally chose to cover most of my tattoos when I am in Court, in the same way I dress formally for the occasion as I feel it gives an image of professionalism - although at the same time I have my lip and tongue pierced and

don't take these out! When I am, working with young people and their families my tattoos often provide a bit of a talking point. Some of my tattoos link me to my husband so this has never caused any problems for me.

Question 8:

People often look and talk about my tattoos, I remember a 'summer ball' - a charity fundraiser in the small town I live in (its more like a village than a town!) it was filled with middle class, middle aged 'bores' and the tattoos on my feet got endless amounts of attention, even for those who were pointing at a distance. I actually quite enjoy causing a bit of a stir and it was all contextual. Those are the people I definitely do not aspire to be, so I could not care less about their opinions!! I always find people are 'polite' but I can tell people are often disapproving. The courtroom is the only place I dress 'professionally' and cover most of my tattoos. Other than that I am proud to have them on display, they are often conversation points.

Question 9:

I think some people still have the view that tattoos are 'rough' or that you have to be 'stupid' to have that done. I often see articles in things like the express or the mail saying that people have 'tramp stamps' and that tattoos are unattractive and undesirable. These articles make me angry as I feel people are narrow minded and dull, but unfortunately they tend to be the ones 'running the country'..... The way people respond to my tattoos is their business and does not have any influence on whether I decide to have them on show or not. I am comfortable in myself and with who I am so it does not affect me. I chose to cover them and dress formally in court as it is almost like 'dress up' and playing the 'role' - it helps me to 'perform' in court. I have never been told to cover them, this is my choice.

Question 10:

I don't really see certain things as 'rebellious' - I find tattoos interesting and attractive so placement etc doesn't really bother me, I am always interested to know the story behind the tattoo. I think in 'general society' it is still more acceptable for men to be tattooed, however I do think this is slowly being watered down the more women are having tattoos. I think the acceptability is linked to tattoos historically being a 'male pursuit' in our society. Tattoos are my choice, people's judgement does not influence this.

M7:**Question 1:**

25, Male, England, White, Straight

Question 2:

Drumsticks on my right calf with a ribbon saying "break the chains" The meaning behind it is that I used drums as an outlet to overcome my agoraphobia, giving me more confidence. Heartagram, was 16 and into HIM at the time. Iron cross - I'm half German and really enjoy the culture. And like the look of the medal and the meaning behind it. If I come across a narrow minded person I say its just attached to the heavy metal culture.

Question 3:

There was no real reason why I had them placed where I did. The drum sticks where on my legs because I like wearing shorts when drumming to be honest. Gender had nothing to do with the placement.

Question 4:

I did the drumsticks to remind me of how I overcome a very tough time in my life. My first tattoo was when I was 16 and I thought it was a cool thing to do. In hindsight a band tattoo probably wasn't the best of choices.

Question 5:

I don't see the cross being rebellious at all but it depends on peoples perspective. Tattooing is definitely a bigger statement than piercings. In most cases piercings are just a fashion accessory tattoos tell a story.

Question 6:

I always want more tattoos, once you have one you'll enjoy the rush and go back for more, just like any adrenaline surge. The choice of the tattoo will be based on what's going on in that period of my life.

Question 7:

My family let me get one at 16, so they obviously didn't mind at all. I do display my tattoos at work, it doesn't affect my work standards and I've never had a person comment negatively in my 11 years working. Only a couple of times my tattoos have had a negative effect; When an acquaintance of mine saw my iron cross on a night out, He instantly assumed I was a NEO-Nazi and started pre-judging me, it almost went physical. I also came across a guy with a Star of David, he also assumed the same.

Question 8:

See answer 7. It doesn't change how I present my tattoos; it's my body after all so I'll do as I please.

Question 9:

My tattoos do reflect my lifestyle within the heavy metal culture. My tattoos do make me feel more masculine. They are definitely a good conversation starter.

Question 10:

Any fascist tattoos, anything with a negative shock factor would definitely provoke confrontation. I don't feel gender factors in to how we should judge a person on their tattoos it's entirely up to the person to make that choice.

F17:

Question 1:

52, female, I.O.M, married, British.

Question 2:

Dragons, two of them, always wanted, waited til 40 due to family disapproval. Second one designed for me by tattoo artist.

Question 3:

Upper arm, other shoulder. So I could see them and choose to reveal or cover. Gender, possible, work considered so can be hidden.

Question 4:

Was called 'that woman' when had temp tattoos! Yes! Self expression. Self confidence building.

Question 5:

Only a little, mother not happy. Not that prevalent in 2000. Piercing are reversible. Tattoos are art.

Question 6:

Yes. Love them. No, less concerned about showing them. On calf.

Question 7:

Only mother does not like them. Some work colleagues, but they have issues unrelated to tattoos. Boss not bothered. I am happy to display them when appropriate, summer, evening wear etc. partner ambivalent. Tattooed and proud.

Question 8:

Only ever positive comments in public. Want to see all of bigger one, so I show it. Overheard negatives always a personal attack where tattoo is just another thing to rubbish. I love them.

Question 9:

I think this is an issue of the past. I love tattoos and love to see them on others, male and female. And I like to be an old rebel.

Question 10:

Cut lines, gore, ugly things. People will always judge by their own standards. Some are just jealous. I will have more, when I want to.

F18:**Question 1:**

27, female, Cheltenham, white British, heterosexual.

Question 2:

large black 'tribal' pattern. Chosen because others were having similar designs at the same time. My first tattoo, chosen also because its big and bold, an important statement at the time. small fairy hugging herself, chosen after a massive relationship breakup, supposed to represent me on my own. Design chosen from a friends colouring book! small plain black 5-point star (like the ones you can doodle)

Chosen as it's the same as my sister's. Got at the same time as fairy but on a whim I suppose as she was with me. I wouldn't know about current trends, then or now.

Question 3:

Big tattoo is on my lower back. 2 smaller ones are both on my left hip. The tribal one was placed there because it seemed the obvious place for such a large tattoo as I was quite small, and slim at the time. The ones on my hips were placed because I thought it would be less painful than other areas of my body! My gender really just affected the placement, my own views were what chose the design, I don't think any tattoos are specifically male or female.

Question 4:

They were part of my identity when I first got them, but to be honest they are now something that I have and occasionally forget in fact. I was trying to reinvent myself at the time, youthful genius at work. Unfortunately I chose a design and position for my tattoo that subsequently every girl everywhere chose, or at least similar.

Question 5:

They were rebellious, but now they are just part of me and my life history. Some people are shocked that the person I am now has tattoos but that just makes me laugh, anyone can have tattoos. The difference between tattoos and piercings are, for me, that tattoos are more artistic, more creative and more individualistic.

Question 6:

I would absolutely love to get another tattoo, just need to decide on the right design. This one would be more individual hopefully and would be somewhere I can show more often. It probably won't be a very large one like my first, but definitely noticeable and artistic.

Question 7:

My parents were very shocked about my tattoos, they dislike them completely. My family and friends all thought they were great. The position of my tattoos mean I cannot show them off as often as I'd like but as I work in a school this is easier. I will tell people about them and show them if I can. New boyfriends have liked them. My fiancé now really likes them and wants to get one himself.

Question 8:

As above, my tattoos are unfortunately covered up most of the time but I have never had any negative reaction to them from general public. Positive comments about the design and the reasons for my tattoos are nice, friends have laughed about the 'popularity' of my back tattoo but my hip ones are pretty and people like them.

Q9: *Respondent skipped this question.*

Q10: *Respondent skipped this question.*

F19:**Question 1:**

27, female, white British, queer

Participant sipped rest of the questions.

F20:**Question 1:**

34, Female, Cheltenham Spa, White, Straight.

Question 2:

I have 4 stars. I had these because I have fond memories of watching shooting stars with my mother as a child in Wales on a family holiday and her Father, my

Grandfather, always used to say "You gotta aim for the stars even if you only reach the roof tops" so it seemed suiting to have the stars. I was not affected by current trends or influenced by others in what I chose.

Question 3:

I have three Star Tattoos on my left hip. They represent my Mother (passed) my Father and Sister. I put them on my hip as it feels like my Mother is always by my side, if not in person, and I wanted my Father and Sister there too. I also have a star on my left wrist which I had to cover a scar but sits nicely next to my left hip. This was partly to cover the scar but also to represent the future unknown-as I don't yet know who it symbolises. The three on my hip actually spread over a large space. I did want them to be somewhere discrete and the only time they are exposed is when I am on the beach-but I am proud of them, but like the fact I can hide them when and if I want to.

Question 4:

I don't know about my self- identity, my friends all know of them and have seen them and they are very much a part of me now I can't imagine them not being there. I think I actually like it because when you meet me you wouldn't expect me to have tattoos and most people act surprised as I'm far from quirky, I'm a little . . . normal! Maybe that's why I like them because it does give me an edge? Never thought of it like that! I consciously didn't have them to re-invent myself or I'd have not been so discrete with where I placed them.

Question 5:

No I don't see it as rebellious. When I was younger, even 10 years ago I hated tattoos! Then I mixed in different circles and got to know people for who they are and appreciated the art and work that go into tattoos and that they are just a

representation of the individual and I think it shows character. If you complement people on their Ink 9 times out of 10 people are so chuffed they just tell you their story. No I don't see any difference for the same reasons above-it's self expression and we all have a right to be who we are and who we want to be.

Question 6:

Yes, am getting another in June this year. I just want more! I'm having Hibiscus flowers wrapped around the stars. The reason for the Hibiscus is they are my favourite tropical plant, I love to travel and I love to spend time at the beach and I just feel they sum up me and I always see them while I travel. They will be four large flowers with leaves so quite big but the designs work well together.

Question 7:

My Father surprisingly ok with it! My Sister got a tattoo done a few days before. Friends all thought I was brave because of the pain and a few that I hadn't told but assumed everybody knew were shocked. Work my wrist is on display with the star but the hip is covered but there's never been any work issues. With partner's my two previous partners had tattoos and like them anyway so no issues at all.

Question 8:

No none. People usually just say how they like them. When I had the ones on my hip a guy commented on how nice my ink was and asked if it was my first and I felt good as it showed not everyone is offended by them-they see the person not just the tattoo-if you know what I mean?

Question 9:

I think it has had those associations but it is all about the individual, how you carry yourself, your confidence and maybe the subject matter. We are in a different time now and I think attitudes are changing. I don't feel I'm being judged as I'm still me

and the tattoos are for me so I'm not really too fused if I am being judged. I've never heard any negative reactions and people usually notice them once they know me and people who do have an issue I'm better off without in my life if they're that shallow. I had mine done when I was living in Australia and sooooo many men and women have tattoos out there and their skin is on show 24/7-it's very much just a part of the culture. So if anything I blended quite well.

Question 10:

I think the only rebellious tattoos would be racist or Nazi ones that obviously are meant to hurt, upset or make people feel uncomfortable. I do think women get a worst wrap for it as it's not seen as feminine and there is that judgement that you must be rough and live on a council estate. But I do think attitudes are changing as more and more well- respected actors and actresses are getting ink and they are role models. In 5,10,20 years it will be more accepted. No change, like I said another booked in and I can't wait!

F21:

Question 1:

25, female, Gloucestershire, heterosexual, white British.

Question 2:

Sun on mid spine. Because I loved a pair of earrings and the sun and travelling. A travel companion designed it for me. I got it whilst travelling in se Asia which is sunny! In a geographical location where I feel in love. I consciously did not want it on my lower back as I didn't want a 'tramp stamp' it is also high enough that no one knows it's there unless I'm in swimwear. I didn't want a tattoo which anyone could easily see as I feel there is a judgement of women with tattoo's, especially lower

back ones, so mine is mid back! Current trend was lower back, I didn't want to follow trend for 'stamp tramp' reason, but back is where it could easily be covered.

Question 3:

3/4 of way down spine. Aprox 2" in diameter. Reason for placement- so it could very easily be covered and if I stopped liking it I don't have to see it (only place on my body I have to use a mirror to see) also higher than 'tramp stamp' as did not want the negative language to be applied to me. Gender didn't affect size, that was about personal preference. Did affect position, see above, but a large part was that I don't think tattoo's look professional, on men or women so better if they can be easily covered.

Question 4:

No. My self- identity is about who I am, my values, conduct and how I carry myself. My tattoo does not connect to this. I got one because I wanted to and I'm pleased that I did.

Question 5:

No. No. Of course tattoos are more permanent than piercing, but I hadn't even thought of it as body modification until this question. Of course extreme tattooing, make up tattoo etc is different from one or 5 tattoo's. if the tattoo is changing the features of a person then I guess it's body modification, however everyone I know when tattoo's they are just pictures inked onto the body, it doesn't change how the body works or really even looks.

Question 6:

Maybe, unsure. Because I don't want mine to be seen- see above reason for original position. Therefore unless I go for thigh, which is then likely to get stretched as I am a women and my thighs get bigger! I am limited to areas. I'd rather like a daisy chain

around my ankle, however cost is a factor and that if I go off it I can always see my foot, unlike my back!

Question 7:

Friends, positive. Colleagues- very surprised. 'Didn't think you were the type to have a tattoo' Ex partner- hated it, 'spoiled a naturally lovely body' I cover at work because I do not want it seen (also only visible in backless clothes- not suitable for work. In fact, I always cover it unless in swimwear).

Question 8:

Not applicable because mine is covered. However when it had been visible I have never had a comment from a stranger. Most boyfriends have liked it apart from the one- see above.

Question 9:

Although I haven't been judged- to my knowledge- the position of the tattoo was conscience as I did not want to be judged as loose, slutty etc (yes I know these are terms men originated to be derogatory about women) or have 'a target'. Although I hadn't heard these be applied to myself I have heard them applied to others and I am perceptive enough to know they would be applied to me out of eat shot had my tattoo been lower on my back. I do agree that they are perceived as masculine, however on a recent spa visit I would estimate they over 50% of women there had tattoo's and 25% of men.

Question 10:

No. What would I be rebelling against? Tattooing is more socially acceptable on men and less 'surprising' my choice as to get another is more financial and self awareness that I may go off it, however position is about public opinion,

M8:

Question 1:

Male, 30.

Question 2:

I have a tribal tattoo on my leg, some stars on my thumb, a small inscription on my wrist, two large stars on my shoulder blades and a upper arm sleeve. The tribal tattoo on my leg was my first tattoo which I designed myself. The stars I have are nautical stars, the sleeve I have is a new school design, I like the original sailor tattoos, but wanted something a bit more modern also so the new school style appealed to me. On my sleeve I have a black rose, which represents rebellion and anarchy. I also have a candle which symbolizes a guiding light. I have a skull which doesn't really represent anything but like all my tattoos they appealed to me because they are images that are associated with punk and metal music which I've always loved. On my wrist I have a tattoo saying "seemed like a good idea at the time", I got this one to be ironic and subversive.

Question 3:

I wanted the two stars on my shoulder blades just because the shoulder blade is a nice big area to have symmetrical tattoos, on the one side it flows into my sleeve quite well. My upper arm also seemed like an obvious area as it's mostly hidden for work purposes. As I got older I realised I probably wasn't going to have a job in which visible tattoos mattered so I wanted something more visible, so I got the ones on my wrist and thumb. I think that old school/new school tattoo designs look good on men and women and aren't too gender specific. I guess the upper arm area might be a more popular area for tattoos for men

Question 4:

I got my tattoos as a way to express my choice in being an alternative person. They are an expression of my dedication to choose my own path in life and not follow the mainstream.

Question 5:

I do see my tattoos as rebellious; having a tattoo is a big commitment as they are permanent. Piercings are less permanent so I think that piercings are in the same strain of rebellion as tattoos but maybe are the stage before a tattoo.

Question 6:

I intend to extend my sleeve to below my elbow, it will continue as a new school design because I love the symbolism of this type of tattoo. I plan to go past my elbow so that the tattoo is more visible.

Question 7:

My mother and father don't really like my tattoos, but are used to them now. I don't need to cover my tattoos and never try to cover them. I forget that they are there and it's only when someone takes an interest in them that I remember that they are there!

Question 8:

If I do have a reaction to my tattoos, I don't notice. I think tattoos are popular enough now that people are pretty used to them. The only times people have mentioned my tattoos is when they've taken an interest in their meaning or how long they took etc.

Question 9:

I have never felt that I have been judged like this. I don't actively display my tattoos in any particular way, I'm not bothered if the general public see them or not.

Question 10:

A rebellious tattoo would be something visible and invokes a reaction in people. These tattoos are rebellious because they go against conformity and display individuality. I think it's probably more accepted in the general population's eyes for men to be tattooed but women not so much.

M9:**Question 1:**

30, male, Birmingham, white, straight.

Question 2:

I have one tattoo on my upper right arm which in calligraphy style writing reads 'grant me serenity' above the birth and death dates of my father. The grant me serenity part refers to something regularly said in AA meetings (I am a recovering alcoholic)

Question 3:

Upper right arm. I wanted it to be in a place that wasn't always viewable so I could choose when and where have it on show. I suppose I went for a more masculine style design, but didn't really think too much about the gender implications

Question 4:

My tattoo was part of a personal reinvention and is in part to mark my progress into sober living and in part a tribute/memento to my father. Body image and projecting an image to others didn't really come into it.

Question 5:

I view tattooing as being more personal and more artistic. Piercings are fairly generic unless you're trying to use them to construct an image for others to view, which isn't what I'm about.

Question 6:

No intentions at the moment, I'd only get another tattoo if it also had deep personal meaning

Question 7:

Good reactions from friends and family. Tattoo is covered by uniform at work, but I'll show it to people if the topic comes up. It can be a bit awkward with people I don't know too well, as I have to explain the alcoholism and father's death meanings. But in a way this is a good thing as it forces me to address these issues and my own social awkwardness

Question 8:

My tattoo is generally covered by t-shirt sleeves so don't get much public reaction. Reaction as a whole has always been good.

Question 9:

I don't think I've been judged in that way but my tattoo doesn't look at all tribal or biker gang-esque. I feel that, that stereotype is somewhat outdated now, though it is still used in the media a lot e.g. in home and away the River Boys Gang are all shown tattooed. I think tattoos are now much more acceptable for both genders, though perhaps a female with a tattoo is considered more of a 'rebel' than a male with a tattoo.

Question 10:

A facial tattoo to me is a rebellious tattoo, I think because it can't be covered up.

