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Tattooing in Polynesia

Alfred Gell

CLARENDON PRESS · OXFORD

GN
670
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1996

Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford New York

*Athens Auckland Bangkok Bombay
Calcutta Cape Town Dar es Salaam Delhi
Florence Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madras Madrid Melbourne
Mexico City Nairobi Paris Singapore
Taipei Tokyo Toronto*

*and associated companies in
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*Published in the United States by
Oxford University Press Inc., New York*

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*First published 1993
First issued in paperback 1996*

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Gell, Alfred.*

Wrapping in images: tattooing in Polynesia / Alfred Gell.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

I. Tattooing—Polynesia. 2. Body, Human—Social aspects—Polynesia. 3. Art and anthropology—Polynesia. 4. Symbolism in art—Polynesia. 5. Polynesia—Social life and customs. I. Title. II. Series.

GN670.G35 1993 306.4'7—dc20 93-1780

ISBN 0-19-827869-1

ISBN 0-19-828090-4 (Pbk.)

*Printed in Great Britain
on acid-free paper by
Biddles Ltd., Guildford and King's Lynn*

PREFACE

This book is entirely based on library research, and was mainly written during a sabbatical year (1990–1), for which I must record my gratitude to my employers, the London School of Economics, and my colleagues in the Department of Social Anthropology.

Not being a Polynesianist of long standing (hitherto my 'area' has been Melanesia) I have been more than usually dependent on the work of others. I hope it is a real tribute to the present generation of Polynesia specialists that an interloper like me could so swiftly gain access to an ethnographic realm of such breadth and complexity as traditional Polynesia. Were it not for the existence of such supremely useful and inspiring works as Goldman's 'Ancient Polynesian Society'—however one evaluates its theoretical argument—then such raiding across ethnological frontiers would be out of the question. I am equally indebted to the marvellous studies of particular Polynesian societies which have been published by the likes of Oliver (on the Society Islands), Thomas (on the Marquesas), and the Hansons (on the Maori), to name only a few on a much longer list. I have likewise profited greatly from A. Kaeppeler's studies of Polynesian art and society. And I would have made more reference to the work of Raymond Firth had I not decided to exclude the Polynesian Outliers from the analysis, but I hope his influence is still to be detected in these pages, emanating from the LSE anthropology department which he presided over and shaped.

These are debts to contemporary Polynesianists. But I would also like to acknowledge the work of Polynesianists of earlier generations because I think that they are less appreciated than they should be as creative anthropologists rather than as dull but useful data-providers. I am thinking here of the likes of H. L. Roth, A. Kraemer, the two Handys, Sir P. Buck, and K. von den Steinen. My friend Nick Thomas complains that Polynesian ethnology is too much served up in heavily processed form, in the *Bishop Museum Bulletins* and back numbers of *JPS*, and that we need to get back to the archival sources. This is probably quite true, but it also has to be said that unless I had had access to a largely pre-masticated Polynesia, I would never have been tempted to join the feast. For better or worse.

Now to my personal debts. This book started as a draft of Chapter 2, written in 1989, which was read by George Milner, Bradd Shore, Steve Hooper, Derek Freeman, and Nick Thomas. At this point I would have abandoned the topic had I not had useful and encouraging feedback. All these

readers responded favourably and provided most useful comments, which did not just modify the text, but actually shaped the subsequent construction of the whole book. I am grateful to all of them, but I would like to record a particular debt to Bradd Shore, who took time out at an AAA conference to give me a private tutorial which was certainly the most concentrated learning-experience on Polynesia I have ever had. I later enjoyed useful discussions with George Milner, and with Nick Thomas, whose pervasive influence on this book will be instantly apparent, and who read over my Marquesan chapter. Howard Morphy, and participants in seminars at University College London, Cambridge, the LSE, Oxford, and St Andrews made useful observations as well. Naturally I alone am responsible for such errors of fact and interpretation as remain.

I am sure that I would not have been able to write this book in the space of not much more than a year did I not have the good fortune to live in Cambridge and have access to two enormous and user-friendly anthropological libraries: the Cambridge University Library and the Haddon Library, whose staff were expert and helpful, especially Aidan Baker and Bryan Garrett. Figures 3.3, 4.7, 6.4, and 6.11 are reproduced by permission of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library. Figures 2.2, 5.1, and 5.2 are reproduced by courtesy of the Bishop Museum.

That only leaves the home base. Thanks to Simeran for looking after me for all these years and for doing so much to enliven my existence. This book is dedicated to ROHAN GELL, who must read it carefully, and strive, like its heroes, to be 'uppermost'.

A. G.

February 1993

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Theoretical Introduction

1.1.1. The Problem Defined

The purpose of this book is to bring together the facts concerning tattooing in Polynesia and to offer an interpretation of them. To what extent, and in what ways, were the Polynesians tattooed, during the historical period for which documentation exists? What can we now recover of the cultural significance of this once widespread practice? The extant evidence which bears on these questions is in some respects quite full, because tattooing was a visible trait which tended to attract the attention of early observers of the customary practices of south sea islanders; yet often enough the evidence peters out just as we appear to be approaching the heart of the matter. In order to make the fullest possible use of the ethnographic material bearing specifically on tattooing it becomes necessary to range quite widely over the field of Polynesian studies. So there are many pages, among those to come, on which the word 'tattooing' fails to make an appearance. This digressive format is an unavoidable necessity, and in consequence this book takes the form, at least in part, of a general introduction to Polynesian culture and society, besides being a specialized treatment of one particular feature of these societies.

It is not just that some knowledge of the social context and cultural background is required in order to grasp the nature and symbolic associations of Polynesian tattooing. It is rather that tattooing practices played such an integral part in the organization and functioning of major institutions (politics, warfare, religion, and so on) that the description of tattooing practices becomes, inevitably, a description of the wider institutional forms within which tattooing was embedded. These institutions themselves pose theoretical and interpretative dilemmas, which are the stuff of the ongoing debates between specialists in Oceanic anthropology. Many of these general questions and debating points will be addressed in what is to follow.

The idea which germinated this work is a simple one. It occurred to me, in the process of writing some lectures for a course on 'The Anthropology of Art', that one way of exploring regular co-variation between art style (body art, in this instance) and the socio-cultural milieu would be to collect together the information on tattooing styles for a number of Polynesian societies, and then to align these data with the corresponding social systems (i.e. degree of

hierarchy, presence or absence of centralized government, and so on). Would it turn out that there were intelligible correlations between the tattooing styles and broader social and political parameters among the samples of Polynesian societies? Accordingly I took the social-typological scheme contained in Goldman's *Ancient Polynesian Society* (1970) and collated it with tattooing information from the main ethnographic sources. The resulting collage was not without some interesting features: Hawaii, reputedly the furthest evolved towards state-formation of all the Polynesian societies, was also the society showing the least cultural emphasis on tattooing; Tonga, next in line in this respect, also seemed to underplay body art. But the Marquesas, at the opposite end of the political spectrum—the most strife-torn, the least state-organized (i.e. the most Open according to Goldman's scheme)—had the most elaborate tattooing of all.

There seemed, on first inspection, to be some kind of 'elective affinity' between societies with elaborate tattooing and an Open (competitive) status hierarchy, and conversely, there seemed to be disaffinity between Closed (stratified) societies and the existence of a culturally stressed tradition of body art. But, as I did not fail to point out in my lecture, this crude application of the logic of correlations produced as many puzzles and blatant mismatches as it did interesting-looking results. There were reputedly stratified societies, such as Mangareva and Tahiti, which practised tattooing extensively. And there were societies which were not at all stratified but which had even less tattooing than Hawaii, such as Niue (Open) and Pukapuka (Traditional). These non-correlations could be accounted for in two ways, which were not by any means mutually exclusive; either there was something wrong with the way in which Goldman had classified Polynesian social systems, or there was something wrong with the idea that one should expect to find correlations between body art and the socio-cultural milieu—or at any rate, simple, easy-to-get-at correlations.

The typological question concerning how best to classify Polynesian societies for comparative purposes can be deferred until later—though the deficiencies of a typology which puts strife-torn New Zealand and peaceful Pukapuka in the same pigeon-hole hardly needs to be underlined. But the other problem has to be confronted without delay, because it is essential to the whole project. Vague holistic intuitions apart, on what conceivable grounds should one anticipate a 'fit' between patterns of sociological variation and variation in tattooing styles and institutions? Some kind of recondite but inescapable causal linkage between body arts and political arrangements? That has rather a dubious ring to it. Yet nothing less seems to be implied in the search for body-art/society correlations.

How might it come about, even in principle, that there would be consistent, interpretable relationships between body art and other social variables? In answer to this, I would maintain that body art does indeed co-vary intelligibly

with other social factors to the extent that, and because of the fact that, it is functionally implicated in the maintenance and reproduction of the encompassing social system. Of course, this remains to be demonstrated, by means of arguments which must needs be more subtle and methodologically roundabout than the construction of crude tables of correspondences. But I believe that it is possible to show that the distribution of different types of tattooing in Polynesia did not simply reflect the existence of a prior socio-political milieu, but, in certain instances, and in combination with certain other factors, was actually constitutive of it. That is to say, tattooing, as a technique (one of the large category which Mauss (1979) identified as '*les techniques du corps*'), made possible the realization of a distinctive type of social and political being.

In the Polynesian setting, tattooing had an intrinsic functional efficacy as a means, a linking element in the sequence of social intention, action, and result. It formed part of the battery of such technical means on which the reproduction of social life once rested. One could say the same of the techniques involved in canoe-construction or weaving mats. As a technical means of modifying the body, tattooing made possible the realization of a particular type of 'subjection' (Foucault 1979; Sheridan 1980) which, in turn, allowed for the elaboration and perpetuation of social and political relationships of certain distinct kinds. I base this argument on the premiss that the perpetuation of a given polity—a given distribution of power, honour, and access to resources—is contingent on the formation and intergenerational transmission of self-understandings which are congruent with the prevailing milieu. Notions of the person (Mauss 1979; Lukes *et al.* 1985; M. Strathern 1988), its powers and attributes, must coincide as far as possible with political necessities. The significance of Mauss's 'body techniques' often stems from the fact that it is through the body, the way in which the body is deployed, displayed, and modified, that socially appropriate self-understandings are formed and reproduced. Tattooing (and, conversely, non-tattooing where tattooing is expected and normal) is a very specific and recognizable way of modifying the body, and, via the body, reconstructing personhood according to the requirements of the social milieu.

Foucault (1979: 25) writes of a 'microphysics of power' exercised over the body: 'the body is directly involved in the political field; power relations have an immediate hold over it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs'. Polynesian tattooing, as I will show, did all these things; it was a species of political gesture which marked the body, tortured it, ceremonially prepared it for war and sexuality, and which made it emit signs. But, as Foucault immediately goes on to point out, this power exercised over and through the body, is not the privilege of a dominant class—not even in western societies and still less so, of course, in Polynesian chiefdoms—but is diffused everywhere, amongst the dominated

settlers could not reinvent culture, language, and society in their entirety, to accord with the circumstances in which they found themselves. All the same, it was not the tug of common origins which kept Polynesian culture within delimited bounds—if indeed it is possible to say that there are any such bounds—but the strictly localized demands made by the processes of social reproduction. A different cultural apparatus could have procured the survival of human populations in the eventual Polynesian habitat. The organizational and technical means relied on by the Polynesians are not the only possible ones. But they were the ones the Polynesians happened to have at hand, and which they pressed into service and modified as time went by.

On these grounds I would reject the imputation that willingness to engage in comparisons between Polynesian societies implies acceptance of a global, constraining Polynesian culture of the kind Leach criticizes. I shall treat the various island and archipelagic polities under consideration here as independent entities rather than as refractions or transformations of any underlying cultural archetype. I am concerned with Polynesia, not as a whole of any kind, but as a collection of ethnographic examples of societies which differ interestingly from one another. These interesting differences are arbitrary with respect to those factors, relating to origins, in the light of which Polynesia is one. Thus, it is not on continuities and similarities that I am going to lay the greatest stress, but on contrasts and divergent developments.

Nor shall I wholly respect the conventional ethnological boundaries of 'Polynesia' which Thomas (1989a) has with some justification identified as the source of misleading contrasts between 'hierarchical' Polynesian societies and 'democratic' Melanesian ones (cf. Sahlins 1963; 1989). I shall not, it is true, deal extensively with tattooing in Melanesia, but I include Fiji in the discussion of tattooing institutions in western Polynesia for reasons which will become immediately apparent once the discussion gets under way in Chapter 2. And this is not because I think that Fiji ought to be Polynesia, in defiance of the cultural and linguistic data suggesting otherwise, but because Melanesian Fiji was intimately articulated to Polynesian Tonga/Samoa while remaining culturally quite distinct (Sahlins 1981a; Kaeppler 1977).

1.1.3. Social Reproduction and Tattooing

The plan behind this study is, therefore, to pursue the differences between various Polynesian societies (plus Fiji), and to correlate these with differences in body art, with a view to clarifying the role body art plays in social reproduction. At this point I am obliged to open a parenthesis in order to explain what I mean by 'social reproduction' in this and the other contexts in which I employ this form of words. Social reproduction is not reproduction carried out by societies (which are not agents and which cannot be the subjects of

transitive verbs like 'reproduce'). Nor do 'cultures' reproduce themselves for the same reason. Social reproduction is reproduction carried out by reproductive agencies (individuals and groups sharing a common reproductive interest) in a social context. Reproduction has been achieved when certain locally conventional criteria of reproductive success have been met. Among these criteria may be the physical reproduction of offspring, but not necessarily, and certainly this is hardly ever the sole requirement. The criteria of reproductive success, seen from the point of view of the reproducers, encompass the production of 'successors' who have all the attributes (moral qualities, status attributes, possessions, titles, etc.) they ideally should have, not just physical bodies. Successful reproduction (or even averagely unsuccessful reproduction) cannot occur without the active co-operation of the successors (reproducees) in the reproductive activities of the reproducers, for it is their attributes which provide the yardstick of reproductive success. Reproduction thus encompasses the activities of the reproduced, in so far as they seek to fulfil the expectations placed upon them by parents, authorities, and role models—including the expectation that they, in turn, should become successful reproducers. And so on.

This network of agentive relations, the agency of the reproducers in bringing into being their successors, and the agency of the reproducees in bringing themselves into being in conformity with the obligations and expectations placed upon them, and thereby assuming responsibility for their reproducers' reproductive success, is, in sum, the process of social reproduction (Meillassoux 1975; Godelier 1978). It is important to note that social reproduction is not intrinsically a conservative process, which seeks only the replacement of a 'generation' of reproducers by successors who are their exact counterparts—Xerox copies, as it were. On the contrary, it is inherent in this definition of social reproduction that reproducers may seek to produce successors who are different from themselves (e.g. their superiors with respect to rank or wealth) and, conversely, successors can seek to outdo their antecedents in whatever respect is necessary to magnify their reproductive success.

Social reproduction is guided by collective representations, in so far as the conventional criteria for reproductive success are arbitrary, even though they cannot escape from material constraints. I make the general assumption that societies continue to exist, or change or decay, become extinct, etc. on the basis of the interaction between locally prevailing collective representations governing social reproduction and the presence or lack of the necessary material and other conditions on which the implementation of these reproductive schemes depends.

The argument I am putting forward is that tattooing played a distinctive part in social reproduction in certain Polynesian cultural settings, but not in all of them, and not always in identical ways. It would be going too far to say that tattooing was essential to the reproduction of these societies, though the

as much as the dominant. In Polynesia the physical subjection involved in tattooing expressed hierarchy and domination, yet it was most ardently sought where, in effect, it was most obligatory. Power over the body comes from the subjection of the 'soul' (p. 26), the 'element in which are articulated the effects of power in reference to a certain type of knowledge' (Sheridan 1980), 'knowledge' in this instance not being the codes, so minutely explored by Foucault, which underlie western 'bio-power' (Rabinow 1984: 17) but the indigenous conceptions and mythologies of the person, the cosmos, and the social order which lend thematic consistency to Polynesian societies.

It is the subjection/subjectification of the 'soul' through tattooing institutions—always in conjunction with a wide array of parallel institutions, techniques, and bodily codes—which constitutes the main topic of this work. Why tattooing in particular should be susceptible to analysis along these lines is a matter which I will discuss in detail in a moment (Sect. 1.2.1).

1.1.2. 'Polynesia'

Island-by-island, society-by-society comparisons within the Polynesian region have been a very popular form of exercise for the anthropological imagination for a very long time, and no wonder (Goldman 1970; Sahlins 1958; Buck 1938a; etc.). But is this type of island-by-island comparison really a perfect 'laboratory' of social forms as Margaret Mead once claimed? Recently, scepticism was expressed on this very point by Edmund Leach in one of the very last of the onslaughts on anthropological complacency to which he devoted his career. In a postscript to the volume *Transformations of Polynesian Culture* (Hooper and Huntsman 1985: 222) whose title alone indicates the intellectual pitfalls he had in mind, he expressed the opinion that 'Polynesia' was 'not quite, but very nearly . . . [a] figment of the ethnographic imagination'. He denounced the tendency to essentialize 'Polynesian culture' and to study this abstraction and its purely symbolic vicissitudes, instead of focusing attention where it should be focused, on the real world and its concrete historicity. And he went on to say that the apparent cultural consistency of 'Polynesia' was a result of the filtering and distorting of the ethnographic record, as a necessary by-product of colonial and missionary penetration. The cultural and historical depiction of the south seas was codified and transmitted via Europeans who were (1) participants in the creation of (post-European) societies which were none the less represented as traditional and who were (2) committed to the grandiose schema of 'Polynesia' as a unified whole.

Leach's doubts about 'Polynesia' are overstated. But he was surely right to denounce the complacent assumption that the cultural spectrum of Polynesia reflects a 'cultural logic' such that each society individually represents a rational transform, according to a global law governing 'Polynesia' as a whole,

of every other one—much as if the relation between these societies was akin to the transformational relationships which can be said to exist between variant versions of a myth. At the very least, this cultural logic would have to be demonstrated. What is so insidiously tempting is the *petitio principii* which bases arguments purporting to explore the interconnected transformations undergone by diverse Polynesian societies on an implicit appeal to the principle that this interrelatedness exists intrinsically.

How can the choice of 'Polynesia' as the frame for comparative studies be justified, without appealing to the idealized concept of pan-Polynesian culture? The short answer would appear to be that the unity of Polynesia is based on archaeological, linguistic, and historical facts. Pre-historians, such as Bellwood (1978) and Kirch (1984), are entirely uninhibited in making reference to the 'Polynesians' as a people with a culture which can be traced to a unique and identifiable origin in time and space. The linguistic picture is equally unequivocal: the languages spoken in the Polynesian triangle, as conventionally defined, are far more closely related to one another than they are to any other Austronesian languages (Pawley and Green 1975). In the light of these well-established findings, Leach's outburst against the concept of Polynesian culture must seem perverse.

But the matter is not so simple as that. The shared origin and innumerable resemblances between different Polynesian societies are not in doubt: what is at issue is the implicit assumption that, in so far as Polynesian cultures are actually different from one another, their differences are such as to be attributable to regular transformations of a shared cultural substrate. The similarities between Polynesian societies are a consequence of the historical facts surrounding their origins. However, the divergencies between Polynesian societies, which are hardly less marked, are equally the outcome of historical facts—the same historical facts. In order to account for the dissimilarities between Polynesian societies one can refer to all manner of historical processes, ecological shifts, social and ideological contrasts. But the temptation is always to explain the residual similarities, such as they are, by reference to a principle of cultural inertia, 'a common Polynesian heritage' which survives (tautologically) wherever the contingent processes of history have not swept it away.

This heritage or cultural inertia clearly has no status as an historico-explanatory principle on a par with the identifiable contingent processes which have caused different Polynesian societies to pursue different historical and developmental trajectories. If Polynesian societies resemble one another in such a way as to make detailed comparisons possible, it is because the very same historical processes which caused Polynesia to diverge, historically and culturally, from the 'Lapitan' prototype (Kirch 1984: 41–67) also caused the preservation and reproduction of certain cultural elements under altered circumstances and perhaps with altered meanings. Each wave of canoe-borne

settlers could not reinvent culture, language, and society in their entirety, to accord with the circumstances in which they found themselves. All the same, it was not the tug of common origins which kept Polynesian culture within delimited bounds—if indeed it is possible to say that there are any such bounds—but the strictly localized demands made by the processes of social reproduction. A different cultural apparatus could have procured the survival of human populations in the eventual Polynesian habitat. The organizational and technical means relied on by the Polynesians are not the only possible ones. But they were the ones the Polynesians happened to have at hand, and which they pressed into service and modified as time went by.

On these grounds I would reject the imputation that willingness to engage in comparisons between Polynesian societies implies acceptance of a global, constraining Polynesian culture of the kind Leach criticizes. I shall treat the various island and archipelagic polities under consideration here as independent entities rather than as refractions or transformations of any underlying cultural archetype. I am concerned with Polynesia, not as a whole of any kind, but as a collection of ethnographic examples of societies which differ interestingly from one another. These interesting differences are arbitrary with respect to those factors, relating to origins, in the light of which Polynesia is one. Thus, it is not on continuities and similarities that I am going to lay the greatest stress, but on contrasts and divergent developments.

Nor shall I wholly respect the conventional ethnological boundaries of 'Polynesia' which Thomas (1989*a*) has with some justification identified as the source of misleading contrasts between 'hierarchical' Polynesian societies and 'democratic' Melanesian ones (cf. Sahllins 1963; 1989). I shall not, it is true, deal extensively with tattooing in Melanesia, but I include Fiji in the discussion of tattooing institutions in western Polynesia for reasons which will become immediately apparent once the discussion gets under way in Chapter 2. And this is not because I think that Fiji ought to be Polynesia, in defiance of the cultural and linguistic data suggesting otherwise, but because Melanesian Fiji was intimately articulated to Polynesian Tonga/Samoa while remaining culturally quite distinct (Sahllins 1981*a*; Kaeppler 1977).

1.1.3. Social Reproduction and Tattooing

The plan behind this study is, therefore, to pursue the differences between various Polynesian societies (plus Fiji), and to correlate these with differences in body art, with a view to clarifying the role body art plays in social reproduction. At this point I am obliged to open a parenthesis in order to explain what I mean by 'social reproduction' in this and the other contexts in which I employ this form of words. Social reproduction is not reproduction carried out by societies (which are not agents and which cannot be the subjects of

transitive verbs like 'reproduce'). Nor do 'cultures' reproduce themselves for the same reason. Social reproduction is reproduction carried out by reproductive agencies (individuals and groups sharing a common reproductive interest) in a social context. Reproduction has been achieved when certain locally conventional criteria of reproductive success have been met. Among these criteria may be the physical reproduction of offspring, but not necessarily, and certainly this is hardly ever the sole requirement. The criteria of reproductive success, seen from the point of view of the reproducers, encompass the production of 'successors' who have all the attributes (moral qualities, status attributes, possessions, titles, etc.) they ideally should have, not just physical bodies. Successful reproduction (or even averagely unsuccessful reproduction) cannot occur without the active co-operation of the successors (reproducees) in the reproductive activities of the reproducers, for it is their attributes which provide the yardstick of reproductive success. Reproduction thus encompasses the activities of the reproduced, in so far as they seek to fulfil the expectations placed upon them by parents, authorities, and role models—including the expectation that they, in turn, should become successful reproducers. And so on.

This network of agential relations, the agency of the reproducers in bringing into being their successors, and the agency of the reproducees in bringing themselves into being in conformity with the obligations and expectations placed upon them, and thereby assuming responsibility for their reproducers' reproductive success, is, in sum, the process of social reproduction (Meillassoux 1975; Godelier 1978). It is important to note that social reproduction is not intrinsically a conservative process, which seeks only the replacement of a 'generation' of reproducers by successors who are their exact counterparts—Xerox copies, as it were. On the contrary, it is inherent in this definition of social reproduction that reproducers may seek to produce successors who are different from themselves (e.g. their superiors with respect to rank or wealth) and, conversely, successors can seek to outdo their antecedents in whatever respect is necessary to magnify their reproductive success.

Social reproduction is guided by collective representations, in so far as the conventional criteria for reproductive success are arbitrary, even though they cannot escape from material constraints. I make the general assumption that societies continue to exist, or change or decay, become extinct, etc. on the basis of the interaction between locally prevailing collective representations governing social reproduction and the presence or lack of the necessary material and other conditions on which the implementation of these reproductive schemes depends.

The argument I am putting forward is that tattooing played a distinctive part in social reproduction in certain Polynesian cultural settings, but not in all of them, and not always in identical ways. It would be going too far to say that tattooing was essential to the reproduction of these societies, though the

high priority often assigned to the extirpation of tattooing by agents of change, such as missionaries, whose aim was to establish a largely new set of criteria of reproductive success, may reflect a quite genuine cultural insight, on their part, that tattooing institutions played a key part in sustaining the 'pagan' mentality. But one must not exaggerate; my motivation in devoting so many pages to tattooing is that tattooing is an exceptionally interesting subject, not that it is an exceptionally 'important' one (though it does link up with important subjects, like politics, religion, alliance, etc.). Avoiding excessive solemnity, therefore, one may say that tattooing played a significant, if tangential, part in social reproduction in the following ways:

1. Tattooing institutions, and the subject experiences engendered by becoming tattooed and interacting with (differentially) tattooed social others, helped produce a certain mind-set, a certain frame of social classification, a certain notion of person, self-hood, and empowerment, which was an enabling factor in the reproduction of the specific types of social and political regimes found in various parts of Polynesia (not in all, and not everywhere to the same extent).

2. Tattooing institutions entered more directly into the process of reproduction in that they were often directly articulated to the life-cycle and thereby the social mechanisms for the distribution of (reproductive) life-chances.

3. **Tattooing was itself** a reproductive device in the imaginary or artefactual mode. Human beings don't just reproduce themselves as other human beings, but also as artefacts (carvings, canoes, fine textiles, buildings) and as intangible entities such as songs, myths, spirit beings, etc. As I will describe later, tattooing brings into existence and populates the world with subsidiary beings, spirit selves, which surround and protect the tattooed subject. It can sometimes be the case that the multiplication of this throng of familiar spirits and fantasized 'companions' inscribed within the skin can actually be a surrogate for reproduction in the more mundane (physiological) sense, so the tattooed person is *ipso facto* a reproducer, vicariously, if not in reality.

1.2.1. *The Sailor and the Native*

Let me consider another source of preliminary doubts. On what grounds have I singled out tattooing, of all things, for a comparative survey? Is tattooing a clearly definable phenomenon, which can usefully be studied cross-culturally? Why should tattooing in culture A necessarily have anything to do with tattooing in culture B? The short answer to that is that there is no reason at all why tattooing in culture A should have the same cultural significance as tattooing in culture B. Tattooing is by no stretch of the imagination a cultural universal with an invariant meaning. The minimum definition of tattooing, the

basic technical schema of puncturing the skin and inserting pigment, cannot by itself suffice to delimit any particular symbolic meaning. The age and sex of the tattooing subject, the nature and extent of the designs made, their positioning on the body, the institutional framework of the tattooing process, and many other factors, make all the difference in the world, even within a single 'tattooing system', let alone in cross-cultural perspective.

Although tattooing can carry a very wide range of cultural meanings, even in Polynesia, as will be shown in later chapters, it is also true to say that this variety is by no means infinite. The basic technical schema of tattooing—the fact that it involves puncturing or cutting the skin, that it involves inserting something into the body, and at the same time letting blood, and that the marking left behind when the scars have healed is permanent—gives rise to certain elective affinities between a finite range of cultural meanings and this possible means (among others) of giving expression to them. Just on the basis of its underlying technical schema, tattooing has a certain functional valency. In Polynesia, I will argue, this functional valency was widely exploited in the formation and inculcation of a personal construct which may be interpreted in political terms. Tattooing was part of the 'technology' for the creation of political subjects, and hence the reproduction of political relations.

In asserting this rather essential proposition, I do not mean that tattooing played a uniform role in Polynesian social reproduction. As I have just emphasized, 'Polynesia' is here being considered as a cluster of differentiated systems, held together by no overarching principle of Polynesian socio-cultural consistency. As politics varied, so did the manner in which the basic technical schema of tattooing was exploited in the creation of subjectivity; certain aspects of the totality of possibilities inherent in the basic schema are foregrounded according to the demands of the local system, others being suppressed.

The basic technical schema of tattooing, which will be considered in greater detail in a moment, gives rise to a finite (but inconsistent) range of potential significations only some of which are locally manifested in (relatively) consistent guises. And it is important to recognize that the meaning of tattooing in 'local' tattooing systems is never autonomous; the technical schema is read not just by itself, but always in conjunction with other technical schemata—other mutilation, other treatments of the bodily envelope, including clothing, other art forms and forms of prestige production, and so on.

My intention, so far as possible, is to get at these local meanings, rather than to propose a universal interpretation. But how to be sure of these local meanings? Is the information available good enough? Can it be interpreted in a methodologically sound way? Let me recall another of Leach's admonitory remarks, cited earlier: the very record on which one might attempt to base such a reconstruction is itself the product, as he says, of 'European categories of thought' (1985: 222).

Problems with the insufficiency of data, and the difficulty of disentangling the precise historical context within which certain observations were made will be discussed later, in the course of the analysis itself. But this is the moment to consider the wider methodological implication of what Leach has said here. Is it possible for a European-based anthropologist, making use of predominantly European-produced documents, to arrive at a correct understanding of the practices of dead-and-gone Polynesians who unfortunately left few revealing or explicit statements as to the meaning they attached to them?

Leach is not without hope, since he sees it as possible to 'deconstruct' the (biased, Eurocentric) documentary sources so as to reconstruct indigenous meanings. This is one of the tasks of anthropological theory. But before this purificatory process can be embarked on, one must have a clear idea of the European categories of thought relevant to the questions under consideration. Accordingly, it seems wise at this point to take a more than cursory look at 'western' notions about tattooing.

This raises a difficulty. Western notions about tattooing are an amalgam of western notions about tattooing in the West (i.e. in Europe, Anglo-America, etc.) and western notions about exotic tattooing (Polynesia, the Orient, etc.). Tattooing, as it is now practised in western countries, originated as a consequence of European expansion into the Pacific, as is witnessed by the Polynesian origins of the word 'tattoo'. It is consequently impossible to make any clear distinction between western ideas about tattooing which derive from educated perceptions of the practice as a characteristic of the 'ethnic Other'—the tattooed native—versus perceptions of tattooing as a stigma of the 'class Other'—i.e. the tattooed sailor or the tattooed criminal. On the other side of the class divide, the enthusiasm demonstrated by European sailors for tattooing, which surfaced from the very first moment that European sailors and Polynesians came into contact with one another, suggests that this form of bodily decoration was employed spontaneously, an expression of class position, lifestyle, or the mariner's *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977). In making tattooing their own, and incorporating it into popular culture, the European sailors, adventurers, etc. who became tattooed did not act on impulses which could be accounted for in purely European terms. They were engaged in social-exchange relationships with the Polynesians from whom they received their tattoos, and were playing the game, at least in part, according to Polynesian rules (for testimony to this effect, see Vason 1810, and later, Melville 1846). To some extent, the significance attached to tattooing by the islanders themselves accompanied the transmission of the practice to their foreign visitors. To make matters even more complicated, it was often the case that the Polynesians themselves conceptualized tattooing as a foreign practice; and of course the fact the Europeans responded to tattooing in the way they did subsequently inflected the history of tattooing practices in Polynesian societies during the period for which we possess documentation.

In short, we are here in the presence of a fused mass of interrelated elements of ethnic and class practices forged in a complex historical dynamic which the historians of European/Polynesian interactions have only recently begun to unravel (Denning 1980; Thomas 1989*b*; Sahlins 1987). It would be futile to pretend that it is now possible to reconstruct Polynesian tattooing practices as if the encounter between European and Polynesian cultures had never taken place. We can draw no hard and fast line between western ideas about tattooing and Polynesian ideas—the ones we know about, anyway—because both are the historical residues of a historical episode in which both Europeans and Polynesians participated.

It is true, of course, that the Polynesians had tattooed themselves for millennia prior to the arrival of Europeans in their area. It is also true that I will often describe Samoan tattooing, Marquesan tattooing, etc. as faithfully as possible as indigenous traditions of body art, without reference to the circumstances under which these traditions came to be recorded. That is the most convenient way of communicating the known ethnographic facts. But the interpretation of these facts is quite another matter, and the peculiar cultural fusion between tattooing as a western (class) practice and tattooing as a Polynesian (ethnic) practice cannot be hygienically bracketed away because, in the final analysis, that is our point of contact with the long-dead Polynesians. This is not a matter of imposing western values on Polynesians, but of exploiting the historical resonances which the encounter between us and them produced. The source of the interpretations of practices provided in the ensuing chapters is western in the sense that it is critically, but explicitly, founded on the western perception of tattooing as a component of a certain class *habitus* or lifestyle, rather than being conjured out of thin air and purified ethnography. Why be coy about where hypotheses really come from? But just as Sahlins (1987) says that cultural schemes are 'put at risk' by the contingencies of historical conjunctures, so is this western perception when decontextualized and pressed into service here. Polynesian tattooing is not a class practice, or a sign of criminality. But in order to begin to form a clearer idea of what it really was, it is necessary to explore the constellation of ideas which makes it into these things for us, because it is only in this way that one can begin to respond to its guiding metaphors.

1.2.2. *Taste and Degeneracy*

With this in mind, I will turn to the problems of degeneracy, ornament, and crime, as discussed by Cesare Lombroso (1896; 1911) and Adolph Loos (1962 [1908]), not because I wish to reinstate the intellectual reputations of either of them (especially not Lombroso) but because they provide a point of view on tattooing which is explicitly (rather than implicitly) European, middle-

class, and disapproving. I do so because these very prejudicial attitudes are, in their way, much more revealing than any attempt to confront tattooing from the standpoint of cultural neutrality or sympathy could ever be. Their violent antipathy is indicative not just of class attitudes, but also of the inherent power of tattooing to evoke a response: and who is to say that it was not the response intended?

Before Sherlock Holmes became a detective, he wrote a monograph on tattooing, and the ability to recognize tattoos played an important part in his earliest recorded case. Here, as elsewhere, Conan Doyle reveals his familiarity with the most advanced criminological theories of his day, for the turn of the last century witnessed the development of the earliest scientific investigations of the practice of tattooing, which were by nature criminological. They were inspired by the statistician, lawyer, and 'criminal anthropologist' Lombroso, in his day a social thinker of world-wide renown. One of the founders of modern criminology, Lombroso was an offshoot of the broad stream of nineteenth-century evolutionary thought, and more specifically a representative of the trend initiated in the 1870s by the embryologist Haeckel, which sought to interpret the ontogenetic history of the individual organism as a recapitulation of its phylogenetic past (Gould 1977; 1984).

Lombroso's leading idea was that criminal behaviour occurred where an individual, as a consequence of poor breeding, suffered from an ontogenetic deficit, and never, as a consequence, advanced to the evolutionary stage necessary for fully civilized social life. Criminality was the inborn disposition of 'criminal man', who might be recognized, not just by law-breaking, but even in the absence of law-breaking, by certain physical-biological stigmata. This came to him in a moment of insight while he was examining the skull of a notorious criminal:

At the sight of that skull, I seemed to see all of a sudden, lighted up as a vast plain under a flaming sky, the problem of the nature of the criminal—an atavistic being who reproduces in his person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals. Thus were explained anatomically the enormous jaws, high cheek-bones, solitary lines in the palms, handle-shaped or sessile ears, found in criminals, savages and apes, insensibility to pain, extremely acute sight, tattooing, excessive idleness, love of orgies, and the irresistible craving for evil for its own sake, the desire not only to extinguish life in the victim, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh, and drink its blood. (Lombroso 1911: pp. xiv–xv)

It is thus as a quasi-biological atavism that tattooing first became the object of scientific speculation in the West. Lombroso was, of course, well aware that tattooing had to be artificially applied to the criminal types who displayed it. Not the tattoo itself, but the irresistible disposition to become tattooed was biologically given, in conjunction with other psychological propensities, such as a love of ornament and gaudy clothes, a passion for obscure demonstration, jargon, and, most importantly, deficient moral sensibilities.

These moral deficiencies were made evident, not only by the acquisition of tattoo markings, but also in the sentiments expressed in words and images. Lombroso listed these carefully, emphasizing the presence of radical/anarchist political slogans, defiant assertions of loyalty to criminal organizations and to the honour which reigns among thieves, and a wide variety of references to sexual themes. Lombroso also noted the fatalistic ethos expressed in many criminal tattoos. 'The notorious criminal Malassen was tattooed on the chest with a drawing of a guillotine, under which was written the following prophesy: "J'ai mal commencé, je finirai mal. C'est la fin qui m'attend". A prostitute's tattoo showed devil amid hell-fire accompanied by the motto: "A toi mon âme".' (1911: 47) On the basis of these and similar tattoos which seem to indicate resigned acquiescence in the inevitable consequences of a misspent life, Lombroso concludes that criminals have a dumb, animal-like, acceptance of their fate, an inherent awareness that, come what may, they are just not capable of virtue.

It is easy enough to detect, nowadays, in Lombroso's exposition of the atavistic nature of criminal man, the simple projection of middle-class antagonism towards unsuitably dressed, tasteless, ill-spoken, and potentially dangerous class enemies and/or victims, tricked out in pseudo-scientific terminology. But it is not enough to be suitably indignant about Lombroso's bland prescription that such disagreeable persons should be confined to a vast system of eugenic *gulags*—for their own good, of course. Lombroso, in treating tattooing the way he does, is doing more than giving vent to class prejudice; he is also reflecting aspects of a cultural system which, there is every reason to think, embraced the very classes whose common humanity he was at such pains to dispute.

Lombroso's biological theories are worthless, but the factual basis upon which they were erected cannot be disregarded entirely. It is as true now as it was in Lombroso's time that criminals and the insane are very often tattooed, while criminologists, judges, and psychiatrists, on the whole, are not. The statistical basis of Lombroso's association between tattooing and incarceration is as strong as ever (Moran 1980; Haines and Hufferman 1958) and is only undermined by his failure to provide 'matched samples' from the non-incarcerated population to test for the genuineness of the causal linkage he asserts (cf. Gould 1984). Even so, the high incidence of tattooing among prisoners could hardly be regarded as a matter of chance. Neither may the content analysis he makes of criminal tattoos be dismissed simply as a projection of class prejudice. In tattooing slogans like 'born to be hanged' or the insignia of commorist gangs on their bodies, Lombroso's criminals appear to have played deliberately into his hands. They have biologized their criminality, stigmatized themselves, just as he is prepared to biologize them and stigmatize them. They want to be seen as Lombroso sees them, or, at least, they want it to appear that an act of will, codified in permanent form in the very tissues of

their bodies, preceded the predicament of criminality in which they have become enmeshed. The only difference between the tattooed criminals and Lombroso is that he pretends to see behind the act (or imagined act) of wilful commitment to the criminal way of life, an inescapable biological necessity, while for the criminals the determining factors are primarily social ones: honour, ambition, the need to struggle against poverty and degradation, and the mental toughness needed to recognize, in advance, that the struggle is a hopeless one.

It seems to me that Lombroso's treatment of tattooing as a biological atavism has a certain revelatory power about it, not because it is biologically sound, but because Lombroso's theory expresses in a disguised way the actual symbolic processes motivating the practice of the tattooed criminal class. Honour among thieves, commitment to criminal associates and a criminal life, fatalism, making a virtue of necessity—these are necessary adaptations to very pressing social conditions, yet, at the same time, they are particularly susceptible to expression by means of mutilations of the body. These mutilations evoke the permanent, scar-like imprint of lifelong struggles with adversity, and testify to the lifelong commitments which the common struggle engenders. Lombroso's biologization of the criminal disposition is countered by an oppositional practice, a demotic culture of the body which chooses biological metaphors for social impulses, and consequently coincides on essential points with the prejudicial notions advanced against it by the criminologist. Or to be more specific, the powerful metaphor which is implicit in the basic schema of tattooing works identically in both instances, but is interpreted differently.

In order to grasp more fully the metaphoric burden implicit in the tattooing schema, it is necessary, I think, to enquire more deeply into the role of the skin in relation to the body-image and the psyche in general—a task which has hitherto mainly been attempted by certain psychoanalytical writers, whom I will discuss in due course. Meanwhile there is another aspect of Lombroso's assertion of the natural affinity between tattooing and criminality which deserves notice, especially in the present context. Lombroso believed that tattooed criminals were lower on the evolutionary scale than 'civilized' persons. Predictably enough, he regarded 'savages' as born criminals as well, and for the same reasons. Savages were representatives of the 'childhood of man', criminals not in the sense that actual crimes could be attributed to them, because in the rude societies in which they lived no laws existed for them to break, but certainly criminal in their lack of moral refinement. The fact that tattooing is a practice which united contemporary European criminals and 'Stone Age' savages could not fail to escape his attention. But Lombroso's antipathy towards tattooing is only an aspect of his far more encompassing condemnation of ornament in all its forms, which he traced back not just to the shallow impulsiveness and emotionality of the savage, but to the basic

condition of animality itself—since where does one find showiness epitomized if not in the animal kingdom?

Savages and criminals (and children, the prototype of both) share with animals their love of finery, which demonstrates their moral inferiority (Lombroso 1911; cf. Gould 1984). In elaborating these views, Lombroso played a part, not only in the development of modern criminology, but in the history of modernist aesthetics. It is not by chance that the period of Lombroso's greatest fame coincides with the period (between 1885 and 1925) during which decorative detail in art and design fell into ever greater disrepute, leading to the promulgation of the aesthetic of functional (decoration-free) forms.

The designer and critic Adolf Loos exercised a decisive influence over the development of the modernist attitude towards decoration, and in his essay 'Ornament and Crime' one can easily see direct borrowings from the Italian criminologist, as the title would suggest.

The child is amoral. The Papuans are equally so for us. The Papuans slaughter their enemies and eat them. They are not criminals. If, however, a man of this century slaughters and eats someone, he is a criminal and a degenerate. The Papuans tattoo their skins, their boats, their oars, in short, everything within reach. But a man of this century who tattoos himself is a criminal and a degenerate. . . . I have found the following law and present it to mankind: the evolution of civilization is tantamount to the removal of ornament from objects of use. (1962, cited and tr. in Gombrich 1984)

This passage perfectly expresses the rationale behind the negative image enjoyed by tattooing in educated circles in contemporary western societies. Tattooing is archaic; and it runs counter to a very basic idea in western thought, long antedating Loos, that the human body, unadorned, is beautiful, and is so because of its functionality. Gombrich (1984) has provided a brilliant account of the history of taste with respect to decoration applied to 'objects of use' and the pendulum swings between pro- and anti-decoration sentiment. But even during the most ebullient periods of European taste, mutilation of the body by scarring or tattooing has rarely been openly promoted among the privileged classes. Loos, brusquely imposing the 'denial of synchrony' *vis-à-vis* the 'savage' Other criticized by Fabian (1983), consigns it to the 'Papuan' doubly displaced to the evolutionary-historical past and the ontogenetic phase of childhood amorality.

I cite this passage, not simply because it exemplifies a still-widespread middle-class perception of tattooing, to wit, that it is barbaric, but because it signals a basic theme of the ensuing study. Loos's objection to tattooing is not, truly, that it is criminal, but that it is in poor taste. How has it come about that in the West, tattooing has remained such an obdurately 'tasteless' practice? Even a recent glossy volume including chapters on contemporary tattooing in California and entitled, significantly but unconvincingly, *Marks of Civilization*

(Rubin 1988) fails to indicate that the clientele of up-market West Coast tattooing parlours are tasteful folk, rather than would-be exhibitionists. For some reason, within the confines of our cultural system, tattooing is not susceptible to aestheticism within the accepted canon of art forms in the way that many popular crafts and practices—quilt-making, for instance—have been. The answer lies, as has been suggested already, in the specific relation between tattooing, the body, and subjectivity, which has an irreducibly political dimension.

In recent years we have been made aware of the relation which exists between taste and power in its more recognizable forms. The notion of the body and its healthy appearance are intrinsic to the contemporary middle-class *habitus*, as Bourdieu (1979) has shown with copious examples. Yet, granting this for the moment, we are still left with an intellectual puzzle. What, if any, is the carry-over, so to speak, between the apparently unbreakable linkage between social repression/marginality and tattooing in our cultural system, and the role which tattooing plays in (non-class) social systems in which tattooing is accepted practice?

Loos, in the passage cited, suggests that there is this carry-over: savages are childlike and uncivilized, they are motivated by the same impulses which govern the behaviour of children and degenerates in our society, and that is why they succumb to the impulse to become tattooed. The difference is only one of the population mean of evolutionary advance, so to speak; among the Papuans the atavistic types are in the majority, while among men of this century they are (or should be) the minority. The atavistic Papuans are not criminals only because they constitute the majority, but they behave as criminals. Their conduct is dictated by the same impulses as those which produce criminals and degenerates in a civilized milieu.

Loos, in other words, is postulating a universal nexus between primitiveness/criminality/ornamentality, in opposition to civilization/restraint/functionality. This opposition works along two axes, first to discriminate, within western society, standards of taste (linked implicitly to social class) and secondly to discriminate between western civilization and barbarism. Here we detect the ideological consequences of the fusion I spoke of earlier between class and ethnic stereotypes and practices, which arose directly from the historical coincidence of the development of industrial class society and world-wide colonial penetration.

One can respond to this fusion in a variety of ways. One strategy is to attempt to impose a barrier between class and non-class societies in the name of anti-ethnocentrism. It is ethnocentric to form interpretative analogies between class practices in class societies and ethnic practices, even when these practices are superficially identical. The alternative strategy—a much more dangerous but possibly more productive one—is to take class practices as the starting-point for the analogical reconstruction of the significance of

practices in non-class societies on the basis of the postulate of the intrinsic functional valency of practices under whatsoever circumstances they occur.

This is not to absolve Loos of gross ethnocentrism. It is clear that he knows little and cares less about the Papuans and Red Indians he uses as stock figures in his tirade against ornament. Investigation will show that he is far from correct in attributing body decoration, or other decorative arts, to motives of childish gratification. But that really goes without saying in the present context. Rather than restrict oneself to simple-minded denunciations of ethnocentric prejudice, it is much more interesting to preserve certain of the logical elements in Loos's thought while revaluing his values.

Consider the tentative conclusion reached just now in relation to Lombroso's discussion of criminal tattooing, namely that Lombroso and the criminal classes are in different ways responding to a single core metaphor centred on the schema of tattooing. Can one not follow an analogous train of thought with respect to Loos's opposition between primitive ornamentation and civilized refinement? Is it not conceivable that 'barbarous' ornamentation has exactly the significance (the reverse of 'tasteful') which Loos ascribes to it, but in the context of a value-system which revalues this significance, reversing the polarity of good and bad but leaving everything else unchanged?

Consider the alternative, which is to suppose that the body decorations which Loos regards as uncivilized are locally understood in quite the opposite sense, as culturally approved indications of conformity to tasteful standards of ornamentation. For many examples along these lines we need look no further than the collection *Marks of Civilization* edited by Rubin (1988) which has already been mentioned. This phrase occurs again in the text, in an article by Vogel on the Baule of West Africa '[whose] scarification can be seen as a mark of civilization in general' (1988: 97). The Baule, by scarifying themselves, are seeking to distinguish themselves from 'bush creatures' and to show themselves as 'real human beings' according to Vogel. They are placing themselves on the side of culture (denoted by the presence of artificial scars) as opposed to nature.

But this conclusion does not seem particularly secure in the light of the following facts reported by the same author.

1. Carvings of nature spirits show elaborate scarifications. So do carvings of animals. This does not support the idea that scarification denotes culture as opposed to nature to the Baule. (And on the difficulties inherent in employing the nature/culture opposition in ethnographic analysis, cf. M. Strathern 1980; and below, Ch. 2.)

2. Scarifications were done by foreigners, outside the Baule area. Designs were widely imitated across tribal boundaries. For instance, one common design was called 'slave' and imitated the markings of Senufo slaves. If the standard for civilizedness for the Baule is set by the Baule themselves, it is

hard to see why they should travel to distant places to acquire scarifications known to be associated with different (possibly hostile) ethnic groups and even slaves.

3. It was common to scarify children and give them 'rubbish' names, so as to divert spirit attacks. Here scarification is evidently a matter of mutilation rather than beautification. Other scarification was medicinal. It seems that Baule had a variety of different reasons for engaging in scarification, connected to the indigenous theory of the body, but these had nothing to do with projecting a civilized image.

4. The Baule, despite preserving their distinctive culture and ethnicity, abandoned scarification many years ago—but without presumably inferring that they have retreated to a pre-human condition. On the contrary, it must be that for contemporary Baule being civilized strongly entails not being scarified. To attempt to counter this by arguing that what counted as civilization traditionally (and which was expressed via scarification) has been replaced by a new, modern but implicitly equivalent civilization (which expresses itself via non-scarification) is to imply that the difference between traditional and modern Baule civilization is a matter of switching one set of arbitrary signs for another, without really changing anything. This hardly amounts to a tenable view of the history of the last two centuries.

It is apparent that the strategy of criticizing the ethnocentric response to body arts such as the Baules', by turning the accusation of primitive barbarism on its head and claiming that our 'barbarous' is the Baules' 'civilized', is inadequate. It is no less ethnocentric to project on to the Baule or the Papuans a definition of civilization as we define and value it, than it is to condemn them, as Loos does, as displaced (archaic, child-like) counterparts to modern men. What is needed is a theoretical approach which squares the circle between standard ethnocentrism and/or class bias, represented by Lombroso and Loos, and the more devious ethnocentrism of cultural-relativist apologists for primitive man who insist that, despite appearances, he is a liberal and gifted with perfect taste in matters of Art, Culture, etc. This circle-squaring cannot be achieved without taking serious account of certain aspects of the Loos/Lombroso position, and I would like to spell out what these are.

1.2.3. The Epidemiology of Tattooing

Grossly speaking, tattooing, and its sister-art scarification, are characteristic of (1) preliterate tribal societies, (2) repressed or marginalized minorities within more complex state systems. There are many exceptions, but this is the general case. Lombroso and Loos, by invoking the concept of hereditary atavism, provide no satisfactory explanation for this state of affairs, but they do at least respond to it and reflect it. A purely relativist analysis would regard

tattooing cultures in category (1)—in Polynesia, for instance—as having nothing to do with the tattooing subcultures in category (2). But to do this is to reify cultural boundaries and leads, as we have briefly indicated, to reverse ethnocentrism just as debilitating as the straightforward variety.

Alternatively, we can take this global observation as a starting-point for the elaboration of more positive and plausible hypotheses. Instead of retreating into cultural relativism, one can develop Loos and Lombroso in the following direction. Tattooing in the West is characteristic of marginal subcultures, especially those which suffer repression (e.g. criminals, common soldiers and sailors, lunatics, prostitutes, and so on). As a particular form of bodily mutilation, it seems to have an elective affinity for a certain constellation of lifestyles, a certain class of being, which always stands in opposition to the dominant canons of taste in bodily presentation and adornment. (Incidentally, this constellation is precisely reproduced in the Far East, Japan particularly: cf. McCallum 1988.)

Outside the West, in tattooing cultures of the preliterate/tribal category, tattooing is not subcultural in this sense, but it is perfectly possible that the lifestyle and values associated with subcultural tattooing in the West continue to be associated with the practice, the only difference being that these are now socially dominant, constituting the majority culture and no longer the minority one. In other words, these are societies which are dominated by criminals, soldiers, and prostitutes, not societies which repress them. This conclusion, obnoxious to standard anti-ethnocentrism, is not wholly true, as more detailed investigations will reveal, but it cannot be rejected out of hand because it appears to denigrate non-western societies. What this hypothesis does is to run counter to deep-seated middle-class doubts about the moral worth of criminals, soldiers, and prostitutes. That an anthropological hypothesis should conflict with these moral standards is no reason at all for rejecting it, because it is precisely these deep-seated moral evaluations which constitute ethnocentrism, not the assertion that other people are possibly free of them.

Following this train of thought, it can be suggested that tattooing has a world-wide distribution which can be interpreted according to consistent 'epidemiological' principles. In speaking of an 'epidemiology' of tattooing I am invoking Sperber's (1985) proposal for an 'epidemiology of cultural representations'. Sperber's metaphor is an apt one, because tattooing resembles a dermatological complaint, and has been the subject of learned dermatological discussions, very much as if it were a somatic illness. Sperber suggests that many 'representations' (he has in mind such common notions, found in many cultures, as that kings are like lions, or that offerings please the gods) are widespread because they conform to certain basic cognitive requirements of the human mind.

It is well within the spirit of Sperber's ideas that I should put forward the 'basic schema of tattooing' as a candidate representation for epidemiological

treatment. Tattooing does indeed have a pattern of occurrence, when considered comparatively, which resembles the uneven, but at the same time predictable, incidence of an illness; there are 'ultra-susceptible' populations where incidence rises to near 100 per cent (recidivists) and 'resistant' populations who are hardly ever touched (university teachers). Sperber's proposal has the outstanding merit of simplicity: once having charted the distributional pattern of the causal factors, in the structural properties of the human cognitive apparatus, which are responsible for the representation being 'catching' for some subjects, and not so for others.

Accordingly, having charted the distribution of tattooing, either on a global stage or on a more restricted (regional) one, the objective can be stated as the discovery of the factors which explain the observable distribution. This Sperberian project is very much what will be attempted here, without openly employing the epidemiological metaphor any further, since this is quite incidental to the basic idea Sperber has in mind. I differ from Sperber in one rather important respect, though, in that I am far less convinced than he is that cognitive psychology provides the key to the epidemiological understanding of all conceivable candidate representations. The incidence of tattooing (considered as a representation) certainly cannot be explained on the basis of any theory in cognition known to me, though cognitive factors may explain satisfactorily the distribution of other types of collective representation. Tattooing is also, of course, not one representation but a protean family of representations, and the problem is less a matter of charting the incidence of a single specific cultural 'disease' than of explaining the varied symptoms traceable to this 'disease' among the different populations it affects. In Polynesia, tattooing is often far too intimately embedded in a complex matrix of technical schemes and symbolic associations for the degree of abstraction of a representation from its context, implied in Sperber's proposal, to be really possible. None the less, it may be helpful to the reader to bear in mind the epidemiological metaphor, for purposes of general methodological orientation, if not working-out in detail.

If anything like Sperber's epidemiological model is to work, however, it must be that a certain principle of identity has to apply to the 'target' representations: the idea that 'kings are like lions' as found in cultural system A has to count as the same idea (representation) when encountered in the repertoire belonging to cultural systems B, or C, or N. This is the feature of the model which is most likely to raise doubts. In what I have said up to now, I may have appeared to equivocate between the position that there is no connection, in principle, between the significance of tattooing in any two cultural systems where it is present while I have also repeatedly referred to a basic schema of tattooing which may possibly be universal. Now is the moment to deal directly with this delicate question.

1.2.4. Core Metaphor, Divergent Readings

I have just suggested that tattooing is primarily associated with two sociologically defined categories (1) marginalized subcultures and (2) preliterate tribal societies. I have further hinted that this distribution is explicable because there is elective affinity between tattooing as an expressive mode and certain lifestyle attributes and value orientations, and that these are the common properties of both categories (1) and (2). It would seem to follow that I must have in the back of my mind some universalist interpretation of what tattooing means. It is indeed true that I have a certain general interpretative idea, but I hope that this need not imply that I am hell-bent on forcing all the available ethnographic data, from whatever source, into a single procrustean bed of 'tattooing-theory'.

For a start, I am at present only interested in responding to the overall trend of the evidence, rather than in explaining every single instance of tattooing in one way. For instance, in Polynesia tattooing is not regarded as therapeutic in any obvious way. Nor, as it happens, is therapeutic tattooing much a feature of western practice. But there are parts of south Asia in which the basic technical schema of tattooing is exploited primarily in this connection, to the relative exclusion of the kinds of meanings which tattooing has either in the West or in Polynesia. An account of therapeutic tattooing among the Shan (on the Thai/Burma border) has recently been published by Tannenbaum. She states: 'Shan tattoos are not decorations; they are medicine, in the broad sense, and can be thought of as analogous to vaccinations against various diseases' (1987: 693). Here the basic tattooing schema generates a particular metaphoric coding of the therapeutic process, in which the idea of injection (of evil-spirit-deflecting or bullet-deflecting sacred power) is involved. This idea is not found everywhere, and not in Polynesia so far as I know. Similarly, the Shan tattooist is either a Buddhist monk or a person of high spiritual standing, and the therapeutic effectiveness of the tattoo depends on the keeping of religious precepts and food taboos. Merit is absorbed directly via the ink used in the most potent 'five Buddha' tattoo, which contains as an ingredient the exfoliated skin of a monk. This extraordinary idea has no parallels elsewhere and, in the tattooing cultures I will be describing later, tattooists are neither attributed with spiritual gifts nor the power to confer them. It is necessary therefore to give full recognition to the relative autonomy of the complex of ideas underlying Shan tattooing which, as Tannenbaum well demonstrates, are intimately connected to popular Buddhism. None the less, when Tannenbaum uses the following terms to describe Phi Lo ('cannibal ogre'), the most powerful of all the Shan's armoury of protective tattoos: 'The tattoo is the body of a monster, rectangular in shape, the face contains a mouth with pointed teeth or, alternatively, the face

is covered with the spirit's hands. . . . Phi Lo are said to close off a person, making him completely impervious [to bullets]', certain Oceanic parallels come immediately to mind (e.g. the Marquesas: Von den Steinen 1925).

Just as there is more than one possible reading of the tattooing schema, so can there be many quite distinct ways in which tattooing practices can be incorporated into lifestyles. Just to give one striking example it is worth remarking on the fact that, despite Loos's claim that only criminals and degenerates were tattooed in early twentieth-century Europe, in fact, at that very moment, the crowned heads of England, Germany, and Russia were all (discreetly) tattooed, having each of them submitted to the operation while travelling abroad as young men (Scutt and Gotch 1974). And so, of course, were thousands of perfectly respectable gentlemen who had been involved in military or mercantile activities which usually involved living away from home but which were otherwise far from criminal. Joseph Banks, who obtained a tattoo in Tahiti, was perhaps the original tattooed aristocrat. These individuals, and still less the tattooed royals, can hardly be discussed in the same terms as the archetypal tattooed prisoners of Lombroso's pages. We are always obliged to respect the distinction between genuine subcultural tattooing and the kind of tattooing an aristocrat might acquire, which incorporates a reference to low-life practice, but which cannot be mistaken for the real thing (the 'Prince Hal' syndrome). The Felon, the Aristocrat, and the Good Soldier may all be found to have identical tattoos, but depending on their actual circumstances in life, quite different linkages may exist between this particular element in the social personae and the remainder of the elements which enter into its composition. The prisoner's tattoo may best be interpreted as a component of 'oppositional practice' (Hobsbawm 1969), the soldier's as group-identification, and the aristocrat's as mark of distinction, to be revealed only to chosen companions who can be relied on not to misinterpret its significance. All these complexities are possible without compromising the idea that in each of these cases the same core metaphors are being invoked for different purposes.

I believe that it is possible to do justice to the empirical diversity and, indeed, ambiguity of the ethnographic material relating to tattooing practices, without abandoning the notion that tattooing, by virtue of its basic technical schema, is comparable wherever it occurs, and that this schema generates metaphorical readings which, though distinct, are related to one another. The schema can be taken up and metaphorically exploited in different ways and for different purposes, but because it retains its unique character (which is defined in physical/technical terms) in the final analysis all these readings are interconnected, and each carries with it all the others as a series of more or less prominent overtones. How precisely the tattooing schema is read, and which of the possible readings assumes the dominant role and which are covered up, depends on the overall context: the political context, and the

culture of the body which is part of it, and the position of the tattooed individual in relation to this political milieu. These are the factors which will be examined in later chapters in relation to Polynesian tattooing. The analytical strategy I propose is universalist only in this sense: tattooing provides a unique source of powerful political metaphors; but I remain relativist in thinking that this unique source provides not one, but a number of different metaphoric possibilities, and that these are exploited differentially, according to the context. To phrase this in terms of Sperberian ideas, I am concerned to chart, within a delimited area, the epidemiology not of one representation but of a family of representations, which are generically interconnected but which are individually perfectly distinguishable.

1.3.1. *The Skin as a Symbolic Form*

In order to take this idea further, it is obviously necessary to begin to specify the basic tattooing schema in rather greater detail. Only then will it be possible to evaluate the claims I have made both as to its universality and local variability. The best way to approach this topic is via a consideration of the skin itself, since tattooing (and scarification, body-painting, etc.) are technically produced modifications of this very important but not really very well-understood organ of the body.

Anthropologists and other historians of culture, in the course of their researches, have amassed enough material to make a cross-cultural study of the role of skin as a symbolic form a perfectly feasible and indeed enticing research project. The material I am about to adduce on Polynesian tattooing is part of this mass of relevant ethnographic material. I hope that some of the interpretative ideas I am going to put forward might also be contributions to a more general understanding of this subject. But it would be true to say that, with a few exceptions, anthropologists have not focused on skin as specifically as they might, and that anthropological theory in this area is still somewhat inchoate.

Among the outstanding exceptions, to date, are T. Turner's essay on 'The Social Skin' (1980) and, less directly on the subject but still very relevant, Marilyn Strathern's 'The Self in Self-Decoration' (1979; cf. A. Strathern and M. Strathern 1971). More recently, some other writers on Melanesia have emphasized the role of skin as a basic focus of symbolic elaboration (e.g. O'Hanlon 1983; 1989).

I do not intend to subject this literature to much by way of scrutiny here, since to do so raises many issues which require detailed ethnographic exposition, which would not be germane. However, there is one crucial point which a number of anthropologists have stressed and which needs to be highlighted. T. Turner expresses this key idea in the following words: 'the

surface of the body becomes, in any human society, a boundary of a peculiarly complex kind, which simultaneously separates domains lying on either side of it and conflates different levels of social, individual, and intra-psychic meaning. The skin (and hair) are the concrete boundary between the self and the other, the individual and society' (1980: 139). Marilyn Strathern has developed this idea in her analysis of the way in which the spectacularly decorated bodies of New Guinea Highlanders allow them to express their 'true' selves, in defiance of our prejudices concerning the basic mendaciousness of cosmetics and adornment (1979).

For at least some people, the social skin is the support or vehicle for the expression of social relations. There is a contrast here with conventional western attitudes. We tend to reason in this way: the skin is on the outside of the body → what is outside is always less important/true/real than what is inside → hence the skin cannot tell us about the real person. But there is another way of looking at this, which occurs more naturally to the kinds of people T. Turner and M. Strathern are talking about. This reasoning runs: the skin is on the outside of the body → the outside of the body is the part which is public and which comes into contact with other people → people are the sum total of their relations with other people → the person is his/her skin. The notion that the skin is a constitutive element of the social person and provides the means of conducting social relationships is clearly a very significant one, though of such generality that, by itself, it is not very informative.

There has, however, been one attempt to provide a more generalized account of the role of the skin in cross-cultural perspective which, unlike T. Turner or M. Strathern, explicitly attempts to examine the transition between the symbolic significance of the skin (and skin treatments) in so-called primitive societies and more evolved societies such as pre-modern states and latter-day modern societies. I am here referring to a work by Maertens which hovers between anthropology, evolutionary reconstruction, and psychoanalysis and is consequently rather difficult to classify. Maertens's work is valuable and inspiring, though casual enquiries among francophone colleagues of mine have so far failed to unearth any details about this anthropologist whose book *Le Dessin sur le peau* (1978) I ran across quite by chance in the library of the Warburg Institute.

Maertens is a follower of the French psychoanalyst Lacan. Consequently he locates the origins of all symbolic significations in a 'severing' provoked by language, which occurs during the so-called mirror stage of psychic development. At this developmental stage, psychological (as opposed to physical) separation from the mother occurs, and the notion of the 'other' and the subject-object distinction comes into existence. Subsequent growth of the psyche takes the form of a series of recapitulations of this initial traumatic separation; a series of parturitions which restate the original child-mother//self/other//signifier/signified birth-events in different disguises.

These successive parturitions can be arranged in a sequence corresponding to individual ontological development (this is orthodox Lacanian psycho-analytic theory). Maertens, in the tradition of post-Freudian, analytically inspired social theory, supposes that this ontological sequence of individual parturitions can be aligned with a sequence corresponding to the evolutionary stages of human civilizations, which he borrows more or less unaltered from Morgan. The evolutionary scheme he proposes consists of the three-stage sequence proceeding from 'tribal' (non-hierarchical) societies, via 'barbarian' (hierarchical, pre-capitalist) kingdoms, to modern industrial states.

In gross terms, he asserts that in societies at the tribal level body art flourished as part of a mythical discourse centred on the primary separation of the fusional body-mother and the social self. Body-marking practices in barbarian societies introduce a second severance between the 'profane' (sexual) body—the one which is ritually celebrated in primitive rituals—and a 'sacred' body. Thus, while in primitive rituals we observe a 'parturition' which could be represented as:

fused body-mother → own (social/sexual) body.

In hierarchical but pre-capitalist systems this parturative sequence is reduplicated as follows:

fused body-mother → own (social/sexual) body → sacred (a-sexual) body.

The relation between the profane body and the sacred body is a hierarchical one and provides a basis for hierarchy in general—an idea not so different from some expressed by Dumont (1970). Capitalism, via the fetishization of commodities, introduces a further severing. The body becomes a possession that one owns as a thing, and that others may own as a thing. Capitalist body-rituals are about creating, via cosmetics, clothes, accessories, and body-culture in general, this uniquely desirable but vulnerable possession.

This account is historically oversimplified, but Maertens fills out his scheme with an impressive array of well-selected examples to which any interested person may turn for more details. I intend to concentrate on only one aspect of his treatment of the subject, namely the contrast he draws between non-hierarchical and hierarchical societies. In non-hierarchical societies (for which Maertens includes all tribal or archaic societies) body-painting and tattooing are expressions of the original unity of the fusional body. The coat of paint, or pattern of tattoo markings, envelops the body and is integral with it, recapitulating the original fusion between own body/enveloping maternal body. At the same time these body-markings are exteriorisations of the inner hidden self (here Maertens's ideas coincide with those of M. Strathern 1979). The self and the enveloping integument which unites the self and the world (i.e. the mother) are revealed as one. But there is an important difference between body-painting and scarification/tattooing.

Body-painting (which is seen as more primitive) is temporary, primarily visual, and generally erotic. Scarification and tattooing, by contrast, have more of a renunciatory character, being permanent, tactile as well as visual, and 'associated with birth and death'. Scarring expresses the definitive loss of the mother object, whereas body-painting is regressive, nostalgic, recalling the original fused state.

Maertens argues that tribal body art serves in ritual contexts to establish social relations of solidarity on the basis of shared renunciation of the mother, and this renunciation is achieved by first of all recalling the fused state, and then consequently re-enacting the original act of separation. Paint is donned, the mother is regained, but the paint always has to be washed off again. Tattoos and mutilations serve as 'lived' signs of common participation in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth; they provide permanent insignia of renunciation, scar-tissue left where the original splitting of the fusional body took place.

However, once society begins to be organized hierarchically, according to Maertens, the periodic return to origins enacted in primitive ritual is no longer socially admissible. Scars and tattoos display, for all to see, the original body; but once 'eschatological' discourse is established, the body is further split into two: on the one hand into an avowed body which is dedicated to work and holiness, and on the other hand into a denied (sexual) body. The relation between the valued and devalued bodies becomes the model for the relation between valued and devalued elements making up the social whole. So that, whereas in non-hierarchical societies body-markings reveal an immanent self which is inside the body and which can be made to appear on the skin, in hierarchical societies body-markings are brands imposed from without, and signify the suppression of the devalued body and what that body represents.

The diacritical use of body-markings to identify marginal/outcast status is indeed an old and widespread feature of pre-modern state systems. The Romans had to deal with the 'Picts' (painted men) harrying their frontiers, while within them, slaves were customarily branded. The Mosaic law prohibiting marking the body (Leviticus 19: 28) and its Koranic equivalent reflect the idea that the marked body is an abomination, which cannot be brought into proximity with the sacred (just as a leper or a deformed person is an abomination). Outlaws (beginning with Cain) were mutilated so as to exclude them from social and religious life. But against these marks of infamy have to be set the more unusual marginalizing marks which betoken extraordinary sanctity: the scars left by exceptional devotions, the stigmata of the saints, and the wounds endured by Christ himself.

Maertens shows how tattooing in modern industrialised society continues to be associated with marginal (though not uniformly low) status. He makes the very interesting point that tattooing thrives in those marginal groups which are

confined in society, but which are denied the opportunity to reproduce within it and have little personal stake in it, apart from their own continued bodily existence. He suggests that these non-reproducing groups—prisoners, soldiers and sailors, prostitutes—tattoo themselves with designs which both seek to compensate for a rootless existence (MOTHER in large letters across the chest) and simultaneously express fatalistic acceptance of social exclusion.

Lombroso had earlier remarked on the linkage between tattooing and fatalism, the philosophy most characteristic of the criminal classes, but he accounted for it merely as a consequence of animal dumbness. Maertens shows, more sympathetically, how the permanent inscription of the hostile attitudes of the dominant group, so that they become absorbed into the very substance of the body, can be interpreted as an attempt to achieve reintegration, an encompassing wholeness, even if the practical effect of tattooing a device such as BORN CRIMINAL on to the body is to make social reintegration even more of an impossibility than it was before. The prisoner who does this accepts once and for all that he is a criminal and seeks to reconstruct the world on that basis; either by challenging the forces of order or, more typically, by representing passive acceptance of destiny as the symbolic equivalent of exercising mastery over it.

Tattooing is thus a bodily code for registering social forces as part of the person on whom these social forces impinge, thereby creating a conceptual closure, a unity, out of what is, in fact, a relation of marginality and exclusion. Thus soldiers and sailors (especially in old-style armies in which enlisted men had little chance of marrying and having families) tended to cover themselves with national flags, regimental badges, plus sundry female figures, identified as mothers, girlfriends, wives, etc. so as to create an enveloping social matrix as a symbolic surrogate for the domestic envelope which their circumstances in life made it impossible for them to develop satisfactorily.

Maertens's discussion of tattooing, body-painting, and cosmetics is in many ways highly instructive (cf. Thevoz 1984). But, quite apart from the issue of the plausibility of Lacanian psychoanalysis, it is unsatisfactory in that it is based on an excessively simple paradigm of social evolution. In particular, from the standpoint of the present work, it is unfortunate that Maertens's social-evolutionary scheme appears to have no place at all for societies such as those in Oceania which are distinctly hierarchical, but which are none the less not states nor prone to eschatological discourse of the Judaeo-Christian kind. Maertens is either unaware of, or at least does not mention, any instances of tribal societies with repressive codes of sexual morality, which exist in plenty,—for instance Manus (Fortune 1935) or Kaulong (Goodale 1980)—nor any pre-capitalist hierarchical societies with permissive sexual regimes, which are also not uncommon (e.g. the Society Islands; cf. Ch. 3). Such a crude stereotype of cultural evolution cannot provide a secure basis for the kind of global theory Maertens is aiming at, which most anthropologists would

regard as hopelessly ambitious anyway. This does not mean, however, that Maertens is necessarily wrong in all of his detailed analyses, some of which carry a good deal of conviction.

I also entirely disagree with the idea that stages of social evolution can be correlated with stages of psychic development. This is exactly the same 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny' idea as inspired Lombroso, only this time it derives from another of the intellectual sons of Haeckel, i.e. Freud (Gould 1977). Maertens does not deprecate archaic societies, as Lombroso did, being more inclined to romanticize their egalitarianism and fusional integration, but it comes to the same thing. He is at his most convincing when he is writing about states and about modern society, where the temptation to write about social behaviour as if it were the direct expression of infantile fantasies is clearly much less. That leaves the question of the basic plausibility of the Lacanian framework Maertens uses—which has, of course, other anthropological supporters (e.g. Morton 1987).

This is not the place to deal with the subject of the long and intricate relationship between anthropological symbolic exegesis and psychoanalysis in detail, since all I wish to do is to clarify my own position. I take the view that the specific interpretations provided by psychoanalysis (e.g. of ritual acts) can be evaluated independently of the psychoanalytic theory of the intra-psychic 'events' which are claimed to be responsible for the origination of these symbolic forms. It does not really matter whether or not I am sceptical of psychoanalytical claims to be able to intuit the mental processes of babies (I am) since these can be bracketed away when applying analytical ideas to the task of finding coherence and pattern in cultural materials. For anthropological purposes, therefore, psychoanalysis can be treated as a parallel exegetical discourse rather than as a causal-explanatory theory.

But even in this role, as a source of interpretative readings, rather than a causal theory, I feel that Maertens's Lacanian approach is gratuitously narrow, and that his account suffers as a consequence. More recently, however, a psychoanalytical work has appeared which bears directly on the theme of this book, which lacks the narrow sectarian focus which tends to render psychoanalytical discussions unhelpful in the context of cultural and sociological investigations. I am referring to the work of Anzieu on the 'skin ego' (1989).

1.3.2. Anzieu: The Skin-Ego

In this book, Didier Anzieu outlines a theory of the ego which merits very careful consideration from anthropologists, because it tends to confirm, from a psychological perspective, the very proposition which I extracted earlier from Turner and from M. Strathern, i.e. that the skin is, in many ways, the social person himself/herself. Turner deals with this in terms which strikingly

anticipate those used by Anzieu, and which also explicitly refer to psycho-analytical concepts, when he writes:

At one level, the 'social skin' models the social boundary between the individual actor and other actors; but at a deeper level it models the internal, psychic, diaphragm between the presocial, libidinous energies of the individual, and the 'internalised others' or social meanings, that make up what Freud called the 'ego' and 'super-ego'. At yet a third, macro social level, the conventionalised modifications of skin and hair that comprise the 'social skin' define, not individuals, but categories or classes of individuals... The 'social skin'... [is]... the boundary between social classes. (1980: 140)

The formula /social skin → social person/, which in the hands of T. Turner, Maertens, or M. Strathern amounts to an insight rather than a theory, becomes in the work of Anzieu (1989) the basis for a radical re-formulation of ego-psychology. He prefaces his work with the observation that the very organ with which we think, feel, know, and experience—the cortex of the brain—is embryonically a development of the surface of the early foetus, an introverted and reticulated 'skin'. But we are prone to habits of mind which make us blind to the significance of facts like these:

Since the renaissance, western thought has been obsessed with a particular epistemological conception, whereby the acquisition of knowledge has been seen as breaking through an outer shell, to reach an inner core or nucleus. This notion has now been exhausted... we are faced with a paradox. The centre (the cortex) is at the periphery. (1989: 9)

He goes on to point out the way in which the development of bodily organs (the brain and other organs as well) typically occurs, *in utero*, through a folding-up process technically known as 'invagination', the process which creates the endlessly complicated array of folds, envelopes, tubes, caps, and pockets of which the body is made. He sees this as preparing the ground for a process of psychic development which can be seen in metaphorically the same way. And not just metaphorically, either, because the psyche is grounded in bodily existence and bodily structures at every point. His theory of the skin ego is designed specifically to integrate the understanding of psychic development with the understanding of physical development, a somatically based ego-psychology.

The key to Anzieu's approach is contained in the insight into the double-sidedness of the skin, which both protects the 'primal cavity' of the body from the external world, yet at the same time reveals and communicates the internal state of this primal cavity to the external world. The skin has an 'outside' which serves as a shield, creating the boundary between the self and the world, but this protective shield is also acutely sensitive to the world, and liable to accumulate a complex texture of marks which bear witness to the impinging external forces. The skin also has an 'inside', an inner-facing

surface which 'holds in' the body contents, but which is no less sensitive than the outer surface; registering the inner state of the cavity—its emptiness, repletion, well-being, or malaise. The inside-facing and outside-facing skins are, meanwhile, one indivisible structure, and hence the skin continuously communicates the external world to the internal one, and the internal world to the external one. This traffic, mediated by the skin, is the formative principle of the ego's basic sense of selfhood in the world.

Psychoanalytically, Anzieu argues, the skin ego originates in babyhood, when the infant is brought to recognize that it does not share its mother's skin but has one of its own, and that its inner senses of pleasure and pain are determined by the way in which this skin relates to other skins—originally to the mother's. He emphasizes—following Winnicott (1958)—the significance of holding and caressing in the process of allowing the child to develop a secure sense of self, and he discusses clinical cases, which unfortunately cannot be considered in detail here, of children whose (psychological) skins fail to develop properly (a little girl who believes that her head is full of holes, an older patient who scratches her face until it bleeds, and so on). The psychoanalytic implications of Anzieu's theory are not what is important for present purposes, though I will have occasion to refer later to his basic hypothesis that babies initially share one skin with their mothers and that ego-formation necessitates the rupture of this skin. For the present I wish to concentrate on Anzieu's admirably methodical descriptive account of skin as a basic symbolic form in mental life, since this provides one with a series of useful leads which can assist in formulating interpretations of cultural practices which involve modification of the skin.

Anzieu lists nine 'functions of the skin ego' (Ch. 7). Very briefly, they are as follows.

1. Maintenance and support. The skin-ego maintains the psyche and its development or interiorisation of the holding maternal embrace. The person's sense of self is a derivative of early attachment, clinging, support, reassurance, all communicated through the skin.

2. Containing. The skin-ego is a container, an outer bag, which keeps something in. This inner self is frequently identified as spontaneous, appetitive, 'instinctual'—very much on the lines suggested by Turner in the passages cited above.

3. Protection. The skin-ego is a protective layer which shields the inner self. The protective skin may be reinforced in various ways. Anzieu notes clinical cases of patients' obsessional body-building as a means of developing a 'muscular second skin'—a skin of muscle, under the skin itself, as protective reinforcement in clinical cases of defective (psychological) skin-formation. The protective role of skin will play an important part in the analysis developed in later chapters.

4. Individuation. Anzieu regards the development of a skin as critical in the process of acquiring an individual identity. This refers both to the specifically psychoanalytical thesis of the emergence of the individual psyche from a state in which ego's identity is submerged within an unbroken skin-sharing relation with the mother, but it is obviously entirely consistent with much more familiar sociological ideas about identity (cf. M. Strathern 1988).

5. Intersensoriality. The skin is not a homogeneous envelope, but is marked out by pockets containing specialized sensory organs, the mouth, nose, eyes, genitalia, etc. These sensory pockets are co-ordinated via the global relation which situates them all within one common structure, i.e. the skin-ego.

6. Support of sexual excitation. The skin is also marked out into areas of localized erogenous significance. The skin-ego is the structure which co-ordinates the sum of differentiated erotic zones (and in pathological cases, is the source of confusion between them).

7. Libidinal recharging. The skin-ego is the structure which registers the steady accumulation or sudden depletion of libidinal desire.

8. Registration. The skin is the register or mirror of external reality. 'The skin ego is the original parchment which preserves, like a palimpsest, the erased, scratched-out, written over, first outlines of an 'original' pre-verbal writing made up of traces on the skin', says Anzieu (p. 105). Here Anzieu cites Bettelheim (1955), a psychoanalytic authority whose views are familiar to anthropologists, and suggests that mutilations, tattoos, etc. can be understood as registrations of separation from the mother, much as Maertens does as well.

9. Self-destruction. This is the pathological function of skin turned against its owner, as in auto-immune skin diseases, or mythological incidents such as Hercules' self-flaying in the course of his vain effort to rid himself of the shirt of Nessus.

Many, indeed most, of these nine functions of the skin-ego can be implicated in the interpretation of body art and body mutilation in the Polynesian material to be introduced in later chapters. As a source of orienting ideas about skin, Anzieu's discussion is extremely useful, even if one retains a degree of scepticism concerning his account of psychic ontogeny in all its details.

1.3.3. The Basic Schema of Tattooing

Using Anzieu's nine functions of the skin-ego as an armature, I can now begin to fill out in more detail some of the possibilities inherent in the basic schema of tattooing.

Function 1 (Support). The tattooing interpretation of this function has already been indicated to a certain extent, in the discussion of Maertens's work (see Sect. 1.3.1). It will be recalled that this writer interprets tattooing (particularly e.g. the type of tattooing practised by soldiers and sailors invoking Home, Mum, Best Girl, Flag, Comrades, etc.) as the creation of a substitute envelope enfolding an otherwise exposed social persona in a protective, implicitly maternal, embrace. Evidence will crop up later that in Polynesia tattooing was sometimes quite explicitly conceptualized as the culminating stage of the birth process, and there is no doubt of the association between birth, rebirth, and tattooing in these instances. The idea here is that tattooing, by providing an extra skin, over the skin, a wrapping for the person which is not separate, but integral, permits the recapitulation of the original situation of an unmediated single-skin relationship with the mother while at the same time—and somewhat paradoxically—marking the final stage of renunciation of that original relationship. I do not intend to press this idea too far, at least not where the question of the primordial relation with the mother is concerned, because to do so is to venture too far into the domain of purely psychoanalytic theory. For the purposes of social and cultural analysis of tattooing institutions, this function is effectively merged with function 4 (individuation, see below).

Function 2 (Containing). It is under this heading that the idea that tattooing holds in the inward person can be considered. This inward person is restrained by the tattooed envelope yet, just as with any container, what is inside reveals itself indirectly through what is outside (as the shape of a violin-case communicates the shape of a violin). Thus it is often found that muscles, organs, bones, etc. are indicated in the formal arrangement and specific motifs in tattoos. Sometimes tattoos are bindings which physically restrain the organs beneath. Here there are complicated interactions between the tattooing schema and clothes and other types of body-binding which will be considered in due course.

But what is inside? Is it correct to assume, as Turner does (in conformity with psychoanalytic tradition) that the inside person is always spontaneous, libidinal, etc. and that control is exercised by social Others (authority figures, etc.) from the outside? This seems to me too restrictive an approach, and one which reflects the traditional (western) presumption that the real person is inside the exterior mask. For the present, the contents of the contained inside can be left unspecified; what is at issue is only the role of tattooing in making manifest the function of the skin as a container, and the dialectical way in which the tattooed skin as a container communicates and at the same time conceals that which is contained.

Function 3 (Protection). One non-Polynesian instance of protective tattooing has already been briefly discussed (cf. Tannenbaum 1987, quoted above, on the Shan). Polynesian examples will be discussed in due course.

The close linkage between tattooing and violence is everywhere in evidence, and can hardly be emphasized sufficiently. The underlying idea here is that the tattooed skin is either reinforced or becomes the locus of harm-deflecting powers. I think that it is under this heading that one should consider the painfulness of the tattooing process, since there seems to be a spontaneous cost/benefit inference at work here; i.e. the advantage secured by means of a tattoo is proportional to the pains endured in the process of acquiring it. Protective tattooing seems thus to be a way of mastering dangers by preempting them.

But it would be incorrect to think of the protective function of tattooed skin exclusively in this directly magical/instrumental framework. There is a much wider sense in which tattooing can be understood as protective. Here, following Anzieu, I would like to invoke a concept introduced by Wilhelm Reich in the year 1929, namely the so-called 'character armour'. At this period in his career, Reich was especially concerned with psychoanalytic 'hard cases'—patients who simply could not submit or be persuaded to lie down on the couch and Tell All. Accordingly, he developed a special theory about the way in which the 'difficult' patient's psychological malaise is itself the source of his inability to submit to the psychoanalytical treatment which alone might cure it.

This is not the moment to decide whether this is a deep insight into human nature or merely a device to ensure that psychoanalytic theory could never be said to have failed, even if psychoanalytical treatment proved totally ineffective, or perhaps both. What is useful is the idea that the social person ('character' in Reich's terminology) may be understood as fundamentally a defensive structure, something which is there to resist or absorb assaults. In fact, there is no need to assume that character armour conceals, or is produced by, damage to the psyche. Character armour could equally well be considered a most useful acquisition, and those who remember the 1960s will perhaps agree that partly Reich-inspired efforts to be divested of it did not produce very attractive results.

Later on in his career, Reich developed the notion of character armour in an interesting direction, though by this time he had become decidedly cranky. He became preoccupied with the musculature, which he thought of as a second muscular skin. Muscular tension physically represented the effort to form an impenetrable carapace to resist intrusions into repressed psychosexual disorders, or bottled-up desire (Reich described the sadistic person as 'like a balloon full to bursting' (1950)). Once again, there is no need to restrict these ideas to their original context of abnormal psychology. These metaphors of carapaces, balloons, etc. and their bodily referents are often met with as components of the standard culture of the body, not by any means confined to the mentally unbalanced.

I think that the idea of character armour can be taken up in this connection

as a general cover term for the elaboration of defences around the social person. The expression contains a useful ambiguity, in that it can be understood both as an armour 'for' the character, and an armour 'consisting of' the character. Tattooing can be regarded in this way as character armour which defends the social person (an apotropaic second skin) and simultaneously, at a higher level, as a component of the social person as a whole, regarded as a defensive structure. In this way one can think of tattooing as simultaneously protecting and also constituting the person. Moreover the physiological connotations of the concept of character armour allow one to forge the link between the social person as a basically defensive structure, and the social person as a body, consisting of layers wrapped around a core, and with an outside and an inside.

The very common linkage between tattooing and violence has just been mentioned. But the point which needs perhaps to be stressed in this connection is that this violence is essentially defensive. I have never come across an instance of tattooing (the self) as a means of inflicting harm directly on some other person. Tattooing does not confer omnipotence, but invulnerability. In our contemporary system of body culture invulnerability is sought explicitly through body-building and Anzieu discusses this practice as a means of developing an extra-resilient second skin around the 'real self' (he has some interesting clinical examples). Likewise, in our culture, there is a linkage between tattooing and body-building (tattooing aficionados are often body-builders as well) and both tattooing and of course body-building are much practised among the prison population, often simultaneously. The tattooing/body-building nexus has perhaps no precise parallels elsewhere, but it is common enough to find tattooing associated with growth, strength, prowess, etc. in the more general sense, particularly the tattooing of adolescents just arriving at military or reproductive age. I suggest that this type of tattooing can be interpreted as the construction not just of the tattoo but also the new grown body as a whole, of which the tattoo forms an integral part. Thus, on my reading of the evidence, character armour provides as good a summary definition 'core metaphor' of Polynesian tattooing as I can conceive, though of course tattooing has many aspects to it, not just this one alone.

Function 4 (Individuation). The creation of personal identity is probably the factor which is most regularly invoked in the sociological literature as the source of the motive to become tattooed, at least in the West. Individuals mark themselves with indelible insignia which, by their singularity, testify to their unique personal relations, achievements, etc. and also their personal fancy in the choice of this or that design. At the same time they adopt emblems (of gangs, military units, etc.) indicating group-affiliations which support their social identity *vis-à-vis* outsiders and enemies.

Anzieu, as a psychoanalyst, sees individuation in terms of establishing separation from the mother on satisfactory terms, and failure to arrive at a

satisfactory sense of individuality as a consequence of unresolved mother/child difficulties from an early infancy. Seen from this point of view, tattooing may be interpreted, as Maertens suggests, as a symbolic scar, indicating separation from the mother, and her renunciation. There is clearly only a partial overlap between the psychoanalytical understanding of 'establishing a social identity' and the more neutral sociological definition, which does not require any psycho-dynamic interpretation. At this point there is no need to choose between them; either way, there are features of the Polynesian tattooing material which can be related to the individuating function of skin.

But caution is necessary for another reason. The concept of individuation is a derivative of the concept of the individual, but this concept is both slippery and controversial. 'Individuals' in the sense implied by 'social individuality' in the western context has been claimed not to exist in other cultures (e.g. India: Dumont 1965; 1970). Within Polynesia, some societies may be said to be more individualistically oriented than others (this is partly the basis of the Traditional versus Open contrast proposed by Goldman (1970) for typological purposes). If tattooing is to be seen as a means of establishing a certain individuality, what that means has to be specified in terms of local factors governing the definition of the individual. Indeed, there is no logical link whatsoever between identity and individuality, since a social identity could be purely categorial/relational, without implying any individuality at all, in the sense of independence, boundedness, self-containedness, etc.

Functions 5 (Intersensoriality) and 6 (Sexual Excitability). These two functions may be dealt with together, and that only very briefly. This is not because they are unimportant, but because they can more profitably be considered later, in relation to more specific data. Essentially, these functions are relevant to tattooing because tattooing is always localized on some part of the body envelope, and the placement of tattoo design is always a factor in understanding its significance.

Function 7 (Libidinal Recharging). Missionaries in Polynesia, if not Polynesians themselves, left abundant testimony that they regarded tattooing as a major incitement to vice and lewdness (Ellis 1831; Clavel 1885). It is in fact true, as will be described later, that tattooing ceremonies were followed by erotic displays, dancing, etc. and there is no lack of evidence that some, if not all, Polynesians resorted to tattooing for erotic purposes.

It is a moot point, though, whether libidinal recharging really fits the case, in the Polynesian context, because the concept of libido is not universally appropriate for understanding cultural representations of sexuality outside our own system. I have not come across any evidence of the skin as a pressurized container of accumulated libido in the Polynesian sources, and I do not think they thought of desire in quite that way. None the less, the linkage between tattooing and the expression of sexuality is clear enough. How should one interpret this linkage? It is altogether too simple (not to say circular) to put this

down to the fact that tattooing beautifies the body and thus provokes the admiration of the opposite sex. Why should marked skin provoke desire though unmarked skin does not?

Marked, patterned, or scarred skin draws in the gaze of the onlooker, exercises the power of fascination, and lowers certain defences. The eye isolates and follows the mazy pathways of the design and eventually, so to speak, enters the body of the other, because the peculiarity of tattooing is that it is inside the skin rather than on its surface. Thus to view a tattoo is already to be in a position of seduction; it provokes, not an aesthetic response but a kind of bodily looking which is intrinsically sexualized, especially when the design is localized in a way which reflects on the erotic possibilities of the body (i.e. in the light of function 6).

Not only is the act of looking at a tattoo an analogue (and hence a provocation or incitement) to sexual intercourse, but the technical schema of tattooing sets up a further series of analogies which tend towards the same end. The sight of a tattoo evokes imagery of sexual subjection, piercing, and flux, which are equally resonant seen from the perspective of either sex; these resonances arise from the manner in which tattoos are made. More narrowly, there is an analogy between tattooing and defloration which will be discussed later. Thus even as the onlooker's eye is drawn into the body of the other through the fascination exerted by the design, the 'fringe' of resonances of the tattooing process reinforces this sexualized looking. The relation between eroticism and tattooing, in other words, is intrinsic.

Function 8 (Registration). Psychoanalytically, the registration function is conceptualized in terms of registration of separation from the mother and/or pre-emptive castration to divert anticipated (paternal) retribution for Oedipal longings (Bettelheim 1955). Once again there is no need to restrict registration to a narrowly psychoanalytic definition. Perhaps the more illuminating way of conceptualizing this function, which is not inconsistent with psychoanalytic dynamic interpretations, but which does not require them either, is to consider the skin as a kind of external biographical memory, a kind of ever-present, inbuilt, system of 'memory places' (Yates 1966) for reconstructing the person as a locus of remembered events. Commemoration is frequently encountered as a pretext for tattooing, and still more so, funerary scarring and mutilation, as will be discussed later. Recent work by Kuchler (1988) has shown how important it is to consider certain types of Oceanic art as the embodiment and cause of memories, and there is no reason to think that bodily art, as well as sculpture, painting, etc. cannot be profitably analysed in this light.

But there is another and rather more general significance that can be attached to registration which needs to be spelt out. Any tattoo—indeed any mark of any kind—on the skin, is a registration of the causal factors which produced it, and hence a symbolic residue of the totality of causal factors

events, social obligations, individual and collective relationships impinging on the social person. Thus a tattoo—let us say a tattoo which is purportedly there at the whim of the individual—is always a registration of an external social milieu, because it is only in relation to that milieu that the tattoo has meaning. The apparently self-willed tattoo always turns out to have been elicited by others, and to be a means of eliciting responses from others, the tattoo being the permanent record or trace of this process of social exchange as well as one means of conducting it.

Tattoos register the impinging social milieu on the skin: sometimes tattooing is compulsory, in which case tattoos register power/authority relations; in other instances it is voluntary, in which case tattoos register the strivings of individuals in relatively open competition. In either case, however, the fact that tattoo designs are permanent inscriptions means that there is an affinity between them and that sense of commitment to certain overwhelming social demands which is not lacking—which is indeed often exaggerated—in the most ‘competitive’ systems. In Hawaii and New Zealand, where ‘slaves’ were kept, they were tattooed in special ways, in effect branded. This is the extreme instance of the compulsion/authority pole. But one cannot say that a Marquesan chief (and we will introduce later the testimony of one chief to this effect), the least ‘constrained’ Polynesian imaginable, could afford not to get tattooed. Obligation takes many forms: subjection is inescapable, even when it seems to come in the guise of the most absolute autonomy. Tattooing is the objective correlative and permanent reminder of the inescapable.

Function 9 (Self-destruction). From the dermatologist’s point of view tattooing is a self-inflicted skin disease; from the point of view of a psychiatric specialist it is masochistic self-punishment; while the sociologist of criminality sees it as a voluntary act of social self-stigmatization. The tattooed skin may indeed be considered as the skin turned against its owner or, more precisely, the subject turned against himself via his own skin. This negative evaluation is evidently shared by a number of the tattooed themselves. Experimental programmes dispensing free tattoo-removal operations in prisons drew an enthusiastic response and it is recorded that as many as 83 per cent of affected prisoners interviewed expressed a wish that they had never acquired their tattoos (Maertens 1978). This ought to occasion no surprise, since as I have just noted, the prisoner’s tattooing is the physical registration of the objective milieu which dictates his lifestyle and criminality. What these prisoners are really saying is that they wish they could somehow have avoided becoming criminals. The tattoo is the consequence of the exercise of the prisoner’s own will over his body so, equally, is his incarceration. Tattooing regarded as a form of self-stigmatization is not so much a special masochistic syndrome as a paradigm case of the paradoxical situation in which a stigmatized existence is determined by factors beyond the subject’s control while, at the same time, the responsibility for the subject’s predicament lies in-

as a general cover term for the elaboration of defences around the social person. The expression contains a useful ambiguity, in that it can be understood both as an armour 'for' the character, and an armour 'consisting of' the character. Tattooing can be regarded in this way as character armour which defends the social person (an apotropaic second skin) and simultaneously, at a higher level, as a component of the social person as a whole, regarded as a defensive structure. In this way one can think of tattooing as simultaneously protecting and also constituting the person. Moreover the physiological connotations of the concept of character armour allow one to forge the link between the social person as a basically defensive structure, and the social person as a body, consisting of layers wrapped around a core, and with an outside and an inside.

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has been applied externally prior to being absorbed into the interior. The basic schema of tattooing is thus definable as the exteriorization of the interior which is simultaneously the interiorization of the exterior.

One can understand this as a process of involution, the creation of an extra layer by folding the skin over upon itself, making an inside of an outside and an outside of an inside. (For an analogous idea, cf. Mosko 1985.) This double skin, folded over on itself, creates the possibility of an endless elaboration of interacting components of the social person. The body multiplies; additional organs and subsidiary selves are created; spirits, ancestors, rulers and victims take up residence in an integument which begins to take on a life of its own. External powers impose themselves and leave their indelible traces; they are everted and turned back against themselves in a display of defiant subservience, passive heroism, pitiable grandeur. The character armour is in place. It is time to turn to the task of understanding in more detail the rich variety of forms this armour assumed in Polynesia.



FIG. 2.1 (far left) Ivory image of twin goddesses made in Ha'apai (Tonga); collected in Fiji by Sir A. Gordon; Haddon Museum, Cambridge.

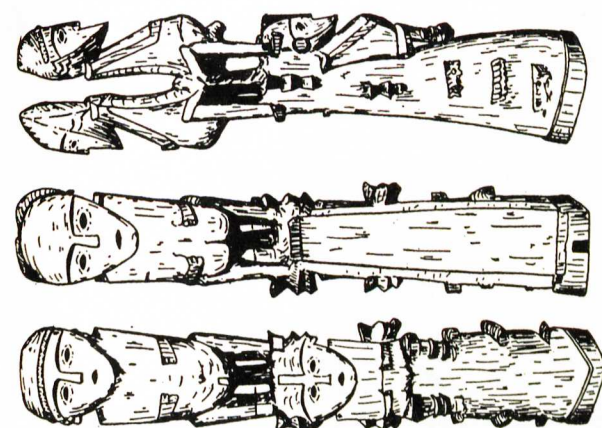
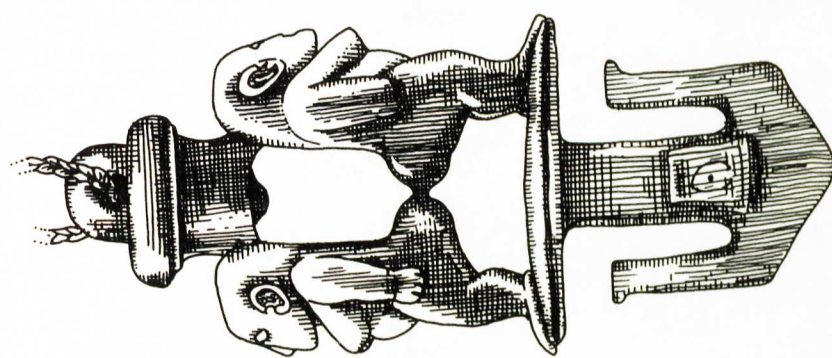


FIG. 2.2 Siamese-twin images: *a* (above left) Atutaki, Cook Islands; Buck 1944; *b* (above right), and *c* (left) Marquesas; Von den Steinen 1925.



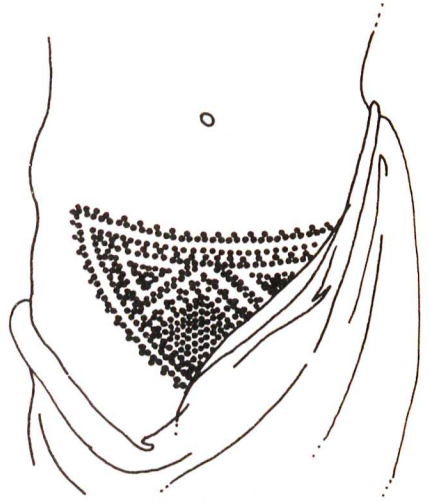
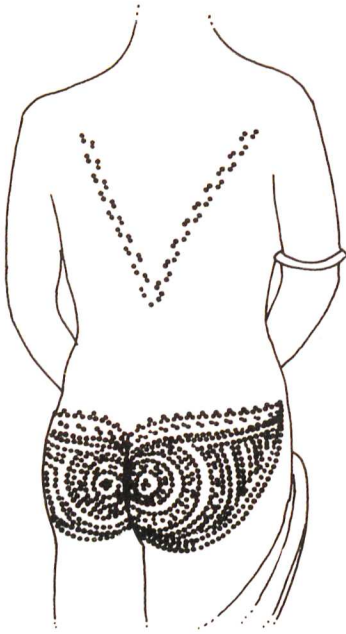


FIG. 2.3 Vitian female tattooing; after Kleinschmidt 1984 (1887).

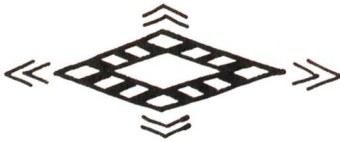
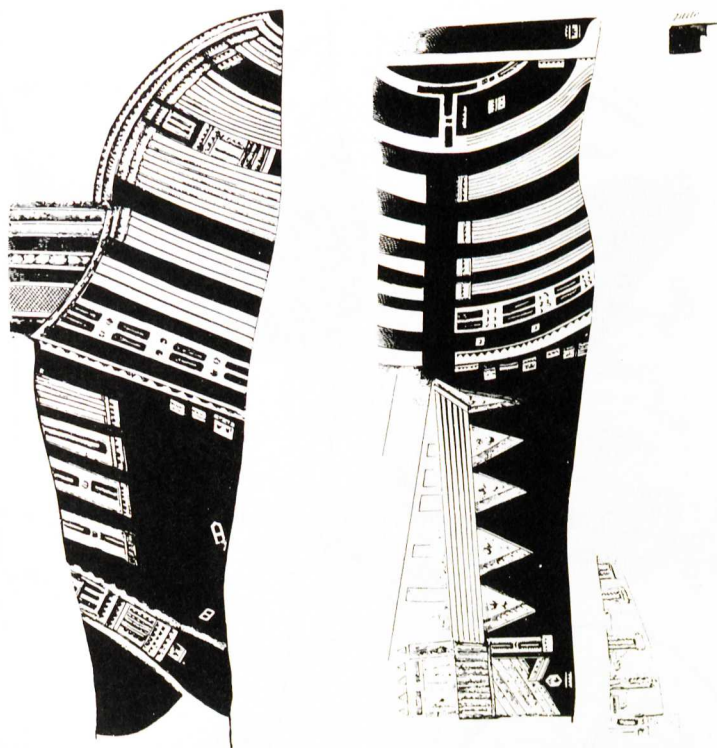


FIG. 2.4 *Malu* designs; after Buck 1935.



FIG. 2.5 Vitian chief wrapped in cloth; after Kleinschmidt 1984 (1887).



FIGS. 2.6 and 2.7 Samoan male tattoo, front and rear view; Kraemer 1902.

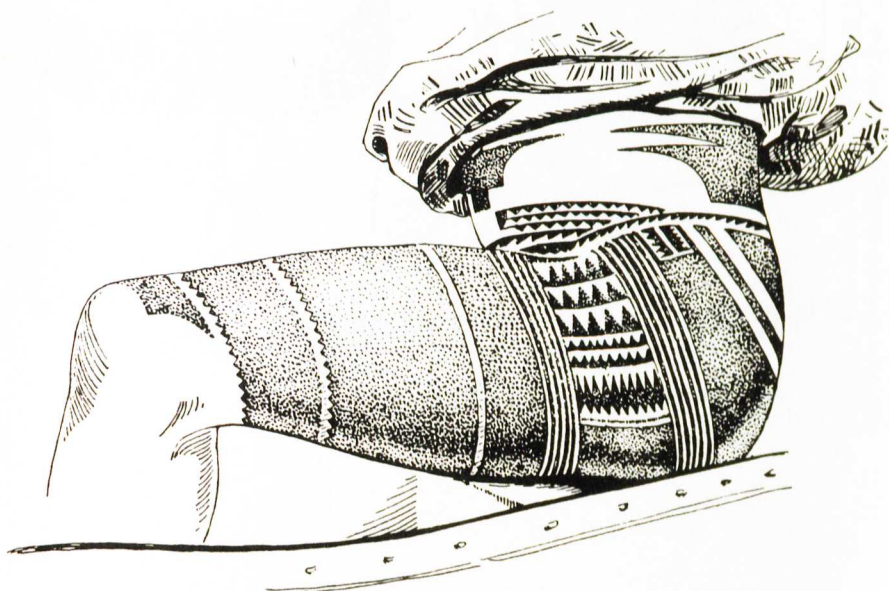


FIG. 2.8 Tapa tattoo, D. H. H. 1941.

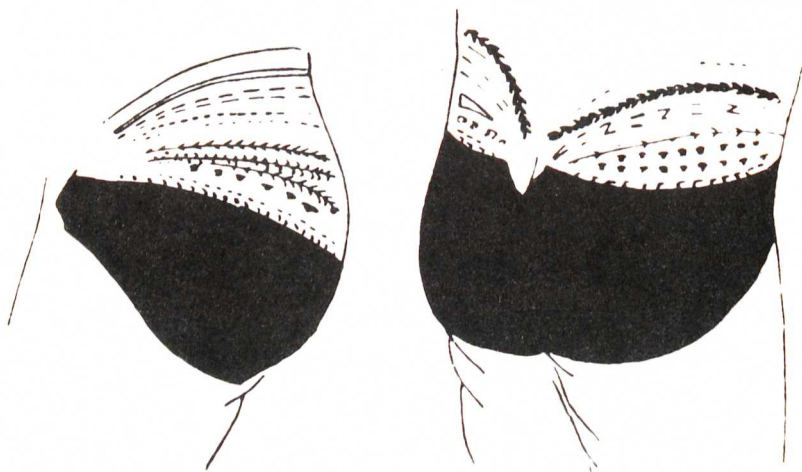


FIG. 3.1 Society Islands' tattoo; after a drawing by Banks in the British Museum.

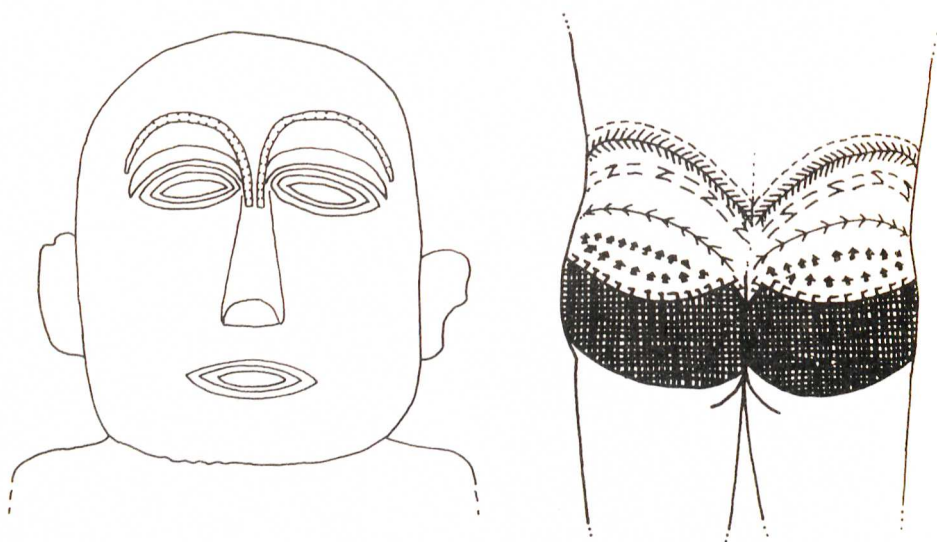


FIG. 3.2 *a* Society Islands' carved *tiki* with 'arched' treatment of eyes;
b Society Islands' tattoo, rear view, reconstructed from Fig. 3.1.

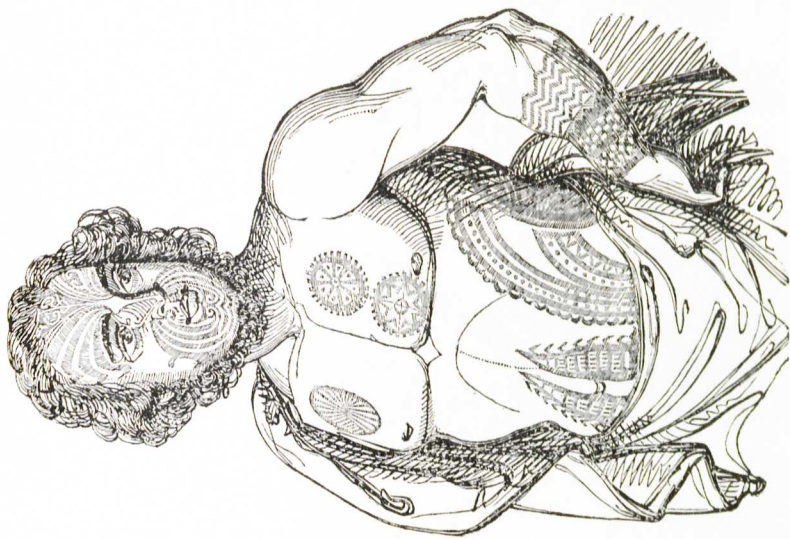


FIG. 3.3 J. Rutherford, beachcomber: facial tattoo from New Zealand; abdomen probably done in Tahiti; Roth 1905. (Photo: Cambridge University Library)

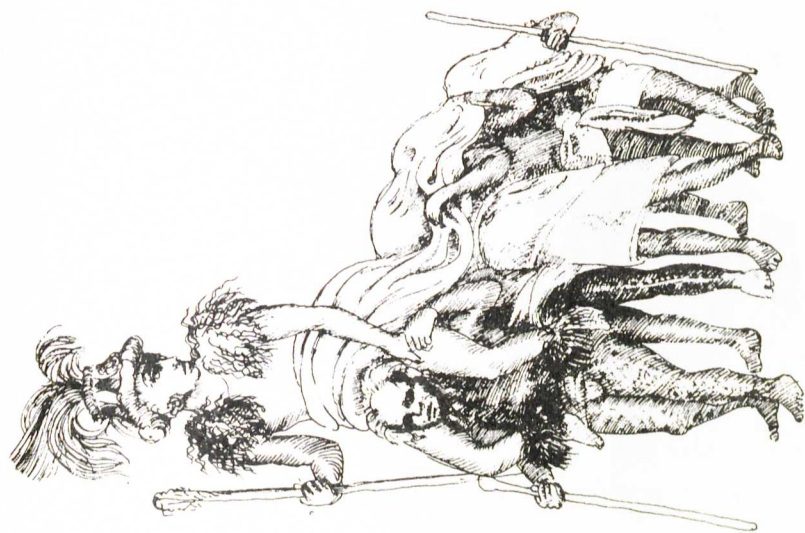


FIG. 4.1 Marquesan ritual tableau; after description by W. Handy 1922 and photograph by Von den Steinen 1925.

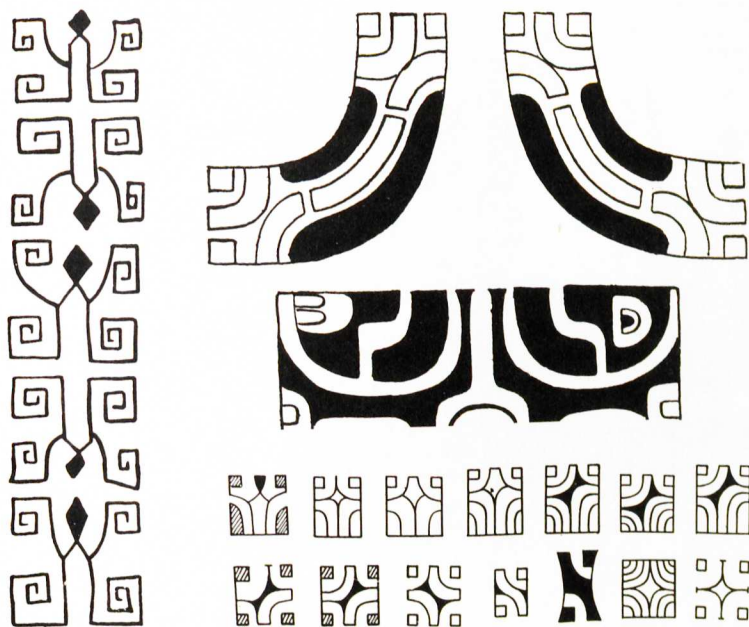


FIG. 4.4 *a* (left) *kea*; *b* (above right) *kake*; *c* (below right) *hope vehine*; Von den Steinen 1925.

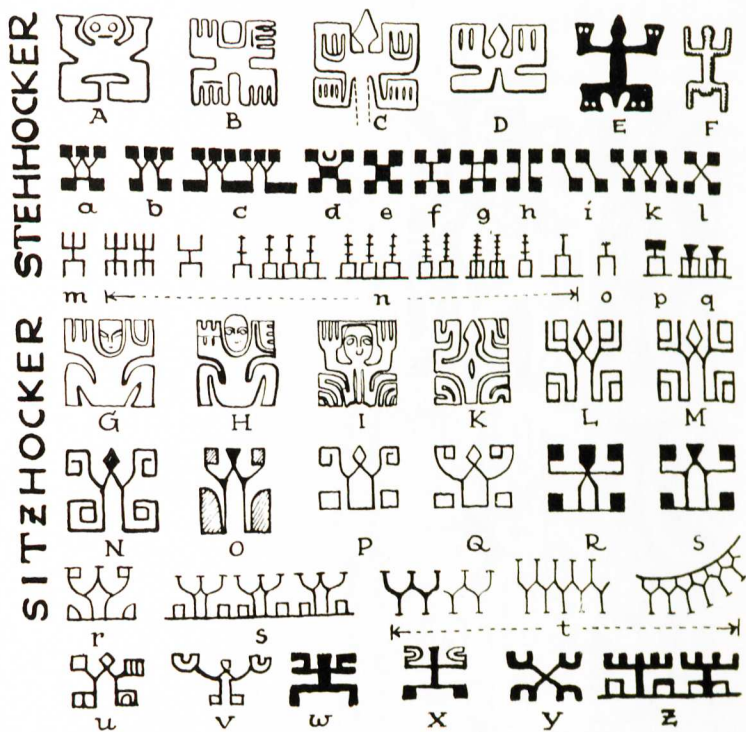


FIG. 4.5 'Etuatafel'; Von den Steinen 1925.

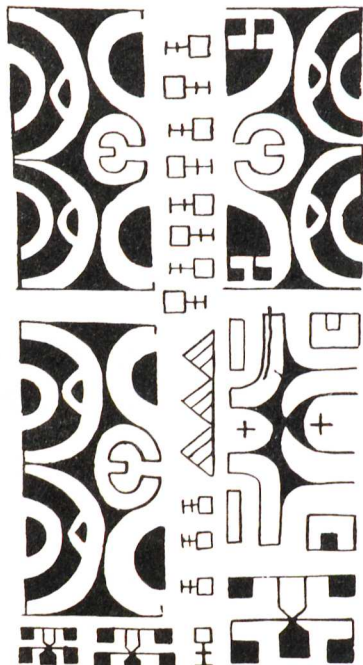
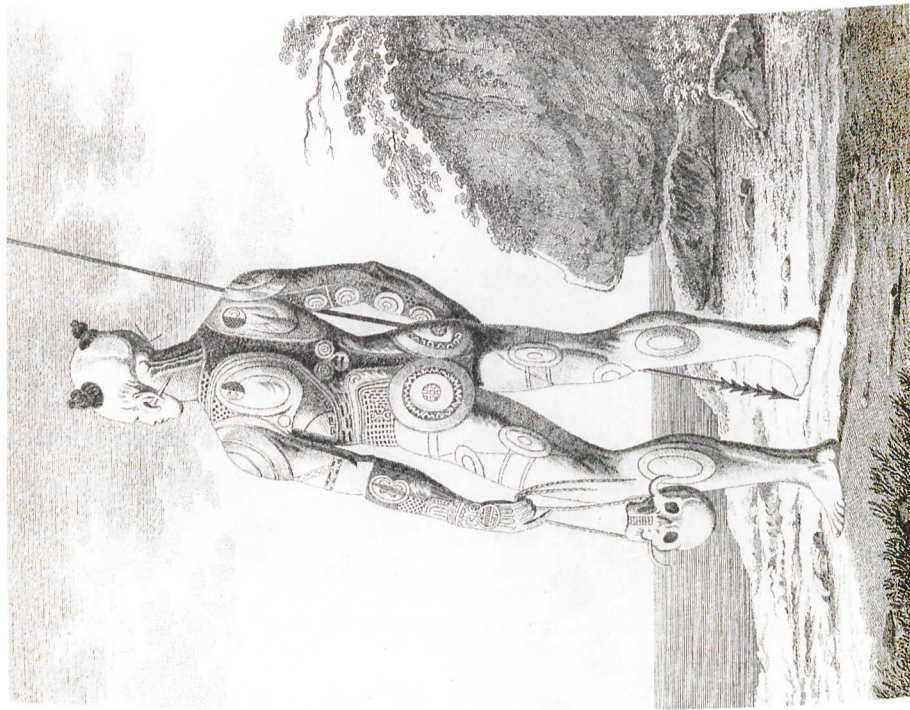


FIG. 4.6 'Secondary faces'; the lower left quadrant shows the interconnected bathing-pools of Kena and Tefio; Von den Steinen 1925.

FIG. 4.7 (right) A young warrior with an incomplete tattoo; note the back-skull and *honu* (tortoise) on left wrist; Langsdorff 1813-14. (Photo: Cambridge University Library)



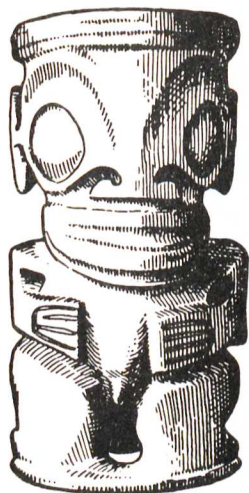


FIG. 4.8 (above) Marquesan carving, showing *etua* with protective back-face; Von den Steinen 1925.

FIG. 4.9 (left) Legs from a ritual bed, showing carved representation of tattooing; after Von den Steinen 1925.

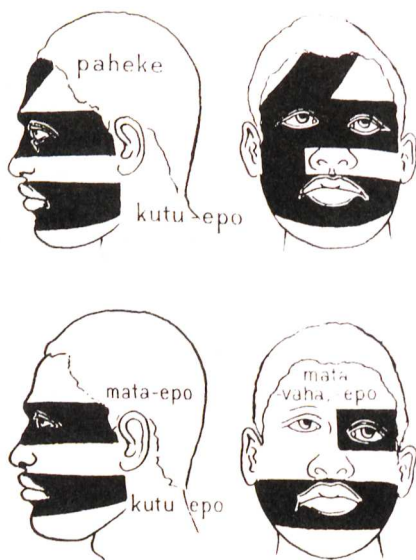


FIG. 4.10 Marquesan male mouth-tattooing; Von den Steinen 1925.



FIG. 4.11 Breast-tattoo of Keatonui's feasting-society; Von den Steinen 1925.

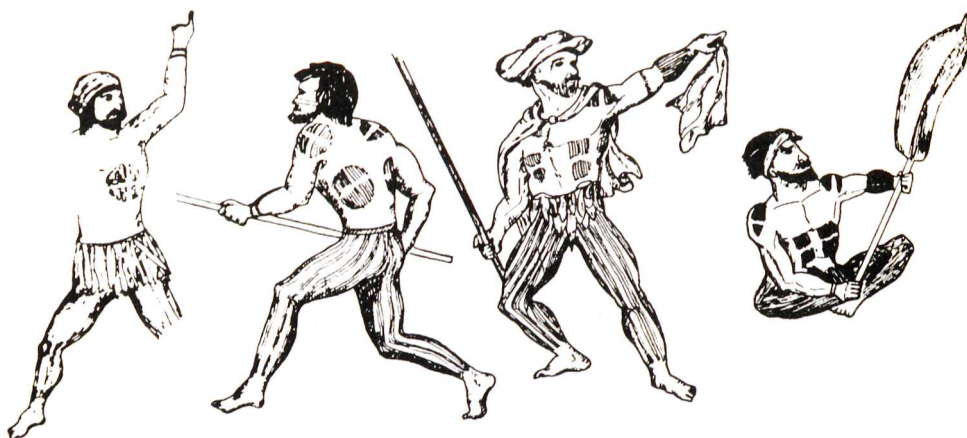


FIG. 5.1 Mangarevan tattoo; Buck 1938*b*.

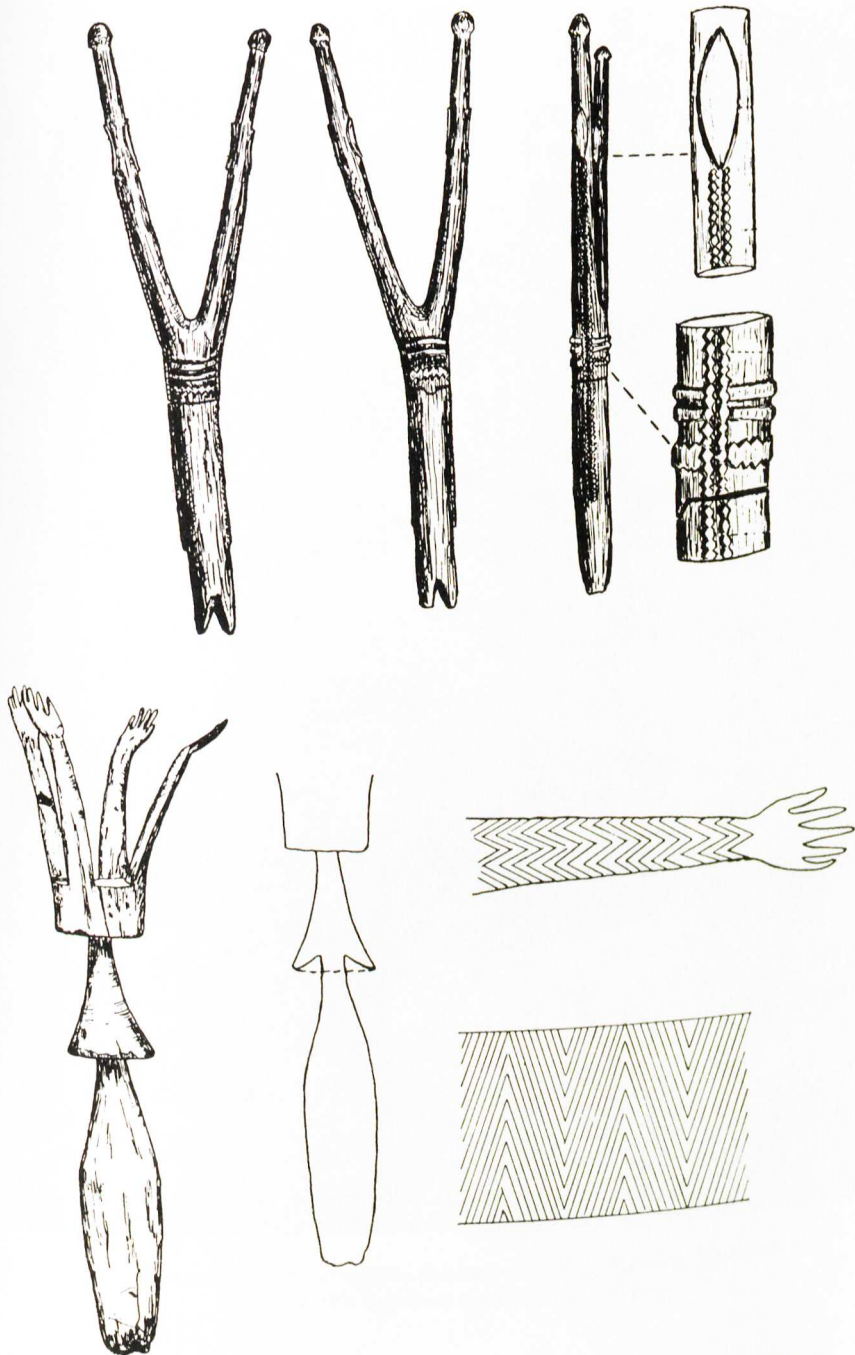


FIG. 5.2 *a* (top row) *Eketee* 'fork' gods; Buck 1938*b*; *b* (bottom row) offering-stand with rat-baffles and 'tattooed' arms; Buck 1938*b*.



FIG. 6.1 Maori male *moko* facial tattoo; Robley 1896.



FIG. 6.2 Maori female facial tattoo; Robley 1896.

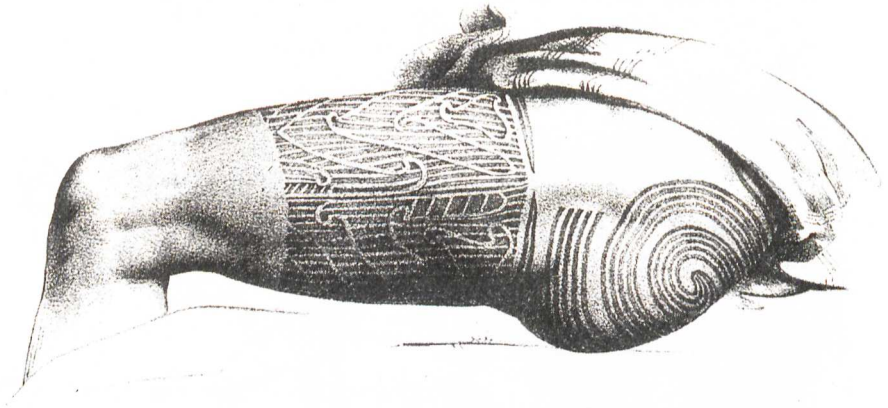


FIG. 6.3 Maori *puhoro* thigh-tattoo; Dumont D'Urville 1841–6.



FIG. 6.4 Man with *puhoro* face-tattoo; Hawkesworth 1773, engraving from sketch by Parkinson. (Photo: Cambridge University Library)

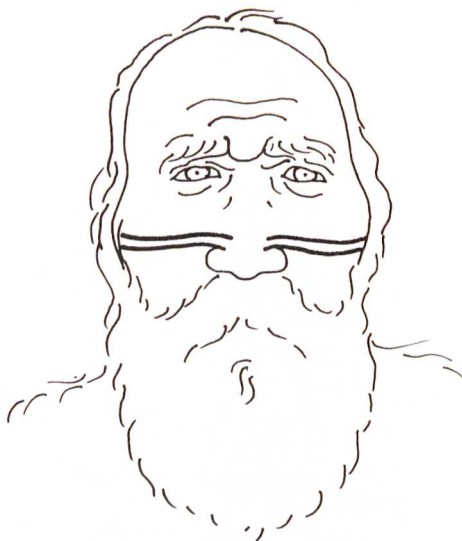
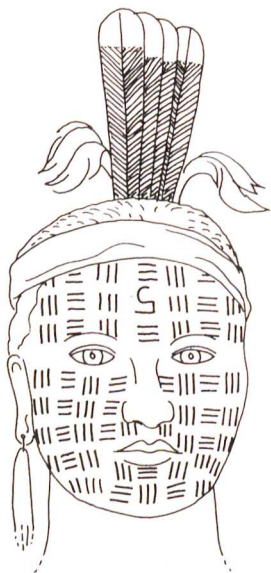


FIG. 6.5 'Dog-tattooing', *moko kuri*: *a* after White 1889; *b* after Cowan 1910.



FIG. 6.6 Carved ancestor-figure; Robley 1896.



FIG. 6.7 Madonna and child, with full male tattoo; Auckland Museum.

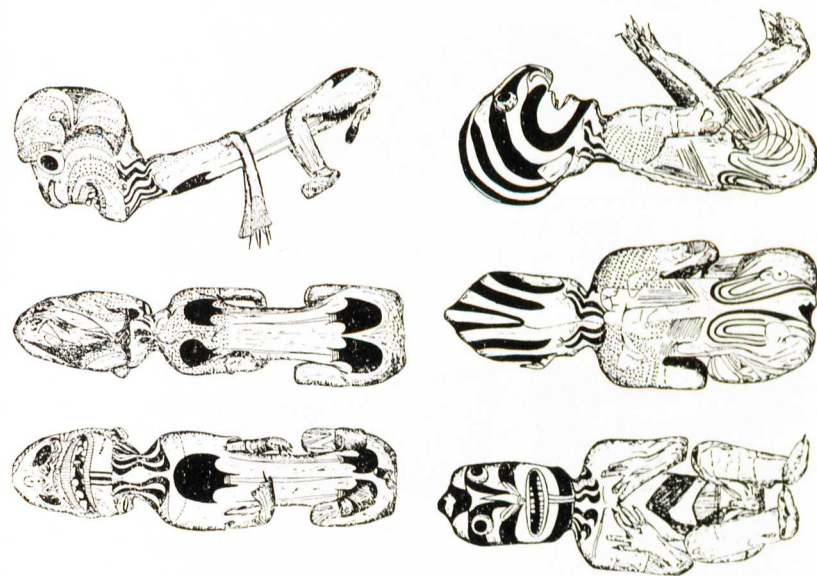


FIG. 6.8 Painted figurines from Easter Island, showing tattoo designs; Métraux 1940.



FIG. 6.9 Easter Island facial tattoo; Stolpe 1899.

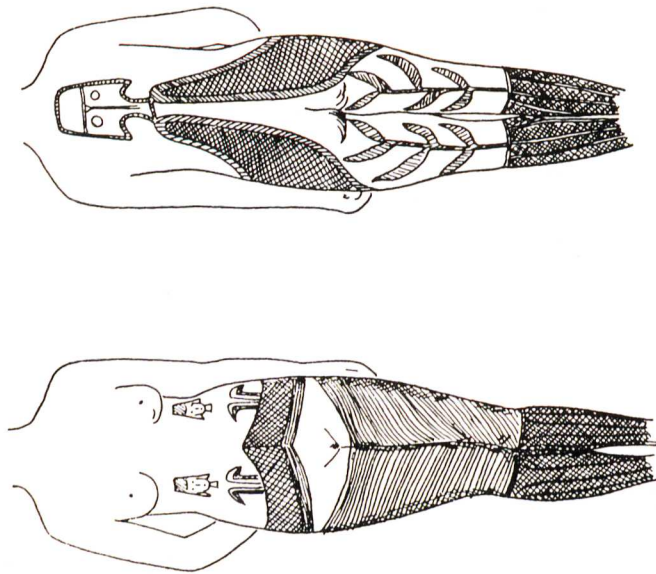
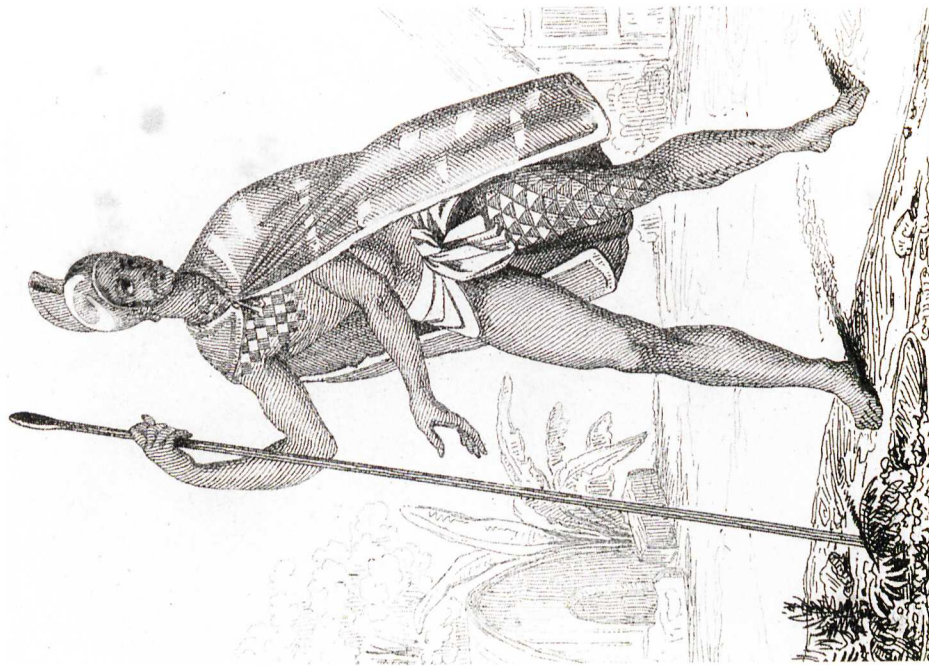


FIG. 6.10 Easter Island back-‘paddle’ design; Thompson 1889.

FIG. 6.11 (far right) Hawaiian ‘asymmetric’ tattoo; Rienzi 1836. (Photo: Cambridge University Library)

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