

ANTHROPOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON TATTOOS AMONGST PUNK WOMEN

by

MEGAN A. O'SHEA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Anthropology
in the College of Sciences
and in The Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term 2009

Thesis Chair: Dr. Ty Matejowsky

ABSTRACT

The relationship between identity and tattooing regarding female members of the punk community has not been fully explored by the academic community. Through the exploration of the anthropological history of tattoos as markers of identity, the pro-social aspects of this form of body modification can be illustrated. Placing emphasis on punk women, tattoos are shown to positively affect individual identity and reinforce social bonds.

The pioneering nature of punk music and the outright rejection of cultural norms creates an atmosphere in which women can more adequately express their identity through the use of body modification. In this open environment where societal norms regarding body modification are rebuked, tattoos are also used to reinforce social bonds amongst those willing to permanently display their dedication to a non-mainstream aesthetic.