Do Tattoos Function Like Amulets?
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> *"I really think tattoos are amulets— it's things that they like, things that they want to take on into themselves, things that they want to gain the characteristics of…"*
> —Don Ed Hardy in Erich Weiss' "Sailor Jerry: The Life of Norman K. Collins"

This paper explores whether tattoos can be considered permanently worn amulets. In addressing that question, this paper argues that the ways in which power is derived from a tattoo by the wearer are similar to the ways in which power is derived from an amulet by the owner. This conversation brings to bear traditional amuletic theory, historical tattoo practices, case testimonies of the motivations behind wearing tattoos, cosmologies that support the powers embedded in both amulets and tattoos, filmic equivalents of amuletic power, successful tattoos-as-amulets, and unsuccessful tattoos-as-amulets.

The paper finds that tattoos do function as successful amulets when, as with traditional amulets, the wearer receives the benediction of the tattoo when they successfully self-identify with the tattoo. The protective qualities of tattoos are determined to be most effectively psychological and social in nature. This sets the terms of "speaking the same language" as an amulet or tattoo-as-amulet, in which *language* means the relationship of sense-data (primarily social, cultural, and ideological) between the amulet/tattoo and the owner/wearer. Ultimately, this paper deduces that even unsuccessful tattoos-as-amulets, which do not give the wearer a psychological or social sense of protection, are in line with traditional amuletic theory because the phenomenon is due to the fact that the wearer and the tattoo do not speak the same *language*. The paper focuses on seafaring tattoo culture—specifically the Sacred Heart flash tattoo design—as a means of concisely demonstrating all of these premises, though the conceptual framework proves itself applicable to the larger social web of tattoo history.

Sacred Heart patch of the French Catholic and Royal Army, (1793) the coeur-chouan, which reads "God the King." The patch was worn for personal identification as a soldier, as identification within a rank, and for its latent sense of religious protection against the dangers of the battlefield.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF AMULETIC THEORY

Amulets are typically worn objects, and worn with the intent of protecting the wearer. Most often, they take the form of a pendant or ornament on a chain. Not every pendant is an

amulet, though—amuletic pendants are differentiated by the belief that they have embedded, magical powers (Paine, 2). Amuletic theory suggests that those powers must be rightly accessed by the wearer in order for the benedictions to take effect. In the pagan and folk religious traditions of amuletic technology, amulets are thought to derive their power from magic and are most often associated with gifts of luck (Paine, 61). In Christian amuletic tradition, amulets must be blessed by a clergyman or holy saint in order to receive their power (Reisner, 25). In secularized or spiritualized iterations of amulet use, the latent energy of the material propagates its vigor. This is how power is thought to enter the body of the amulet; however, the transmission of that power to the wearer entails even more stipulations.

A contemporary production of the "Infant of Prague Sacred Heart" pendant (proposed amulet) from a personal collection in Saratoga Springs, New York. The reverse side of the amulet is an engraved image of the Virgin Mary. The pendant measures approximately 1 ½ inches wide by 2 ½ inches long. It is strung on a 24-inch stainless steel chain.

Some of the original uses of amulets involved preventing or curing disease, warding off evil spirits, or protection from other manifestations of evil. They are carried in necklaces, bracelets, and rings—the wearing of amulets around certain parts of the body oftentimes denotes protection of that specific corporeal part of the wearer (Paine, 21). Yet, there are plenty of instances in which an amulet with its own vested power might not protect its wearer. Their use, even in Egyptian amuletic history, has always come with a set of instructions. The most pressing rule, and the one translated with the most inter-culture prevalence, is that wearers must attune themselves to the language of the amulet (Martínková, 86).

This is not language in an explicit sense, though it can be. While common amuletic substances include gems, simple stones, coins, and encased drawings, inscriptions appear just as frequently—words said in certain circumstances, letters of particular encoded note, and the like. Regardless of whether the amulet's characteristics are more imagistic or linguistic in nature, its *language,* as I will term it, is that of its sociocultural posterity. If the wearer belongs to the same social and/or cultural strata that the amulet's history is entwined with, the chances of establishing

a through-line to the amulet's power is much greater. The two speak the same *language* of self-identification.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SEAFARING TATTOOS

What compels a person to get a tattoo? Depending upon whom you ask, or where you are looking in the temporal history of tattooing, the answers will vary widely. Tattooing has been practiced world-wide since the Neolithic era, though verbal justification for the practice of tattooing is clearly not documented until much later.

In Filipino culture, tattooing has been practiced since before the Hispanic colonization of the Philippine Islands (Dye, 44). Among Bontoc warriors, head hunters, and heads of household, tattoos signified rank and accomplishment. They were also believed to have magical qualities (Dye, 45). The trend is much the same in early Polynesian and Pacific Island tattooing, wherein tattooing is a matter of dedication to cultural traditions. Both the wearing and giving of tattoos were passed down via familial hierarchies; the archetypical tribal armband designs of today have their roots in Polynesian and Samoan expressions of devotion to their families and larger tribal heritages (Gell, 13).

For tattoo wearers of today, these traditions look formally quite different. In place of months-long hand-poking sessions, a single full-back tattoo can be completed by a tattoo machine within the span of a day. In place of composite inks made of charcoal and other disparate materials, tattooing has been hygienically streamlined and its materials refined to produce the most crisp visual results. One is left to consider whether or not tattoo wearers have distanced themselves from the original, bold motivations of tattooing: self-individuation and self-identification within a wearer's most meaningful social strata.

Above: Two stills from Erich Weiss' "Sailor Jerry: The Life of Norman K. Collins." The documentary explores many relevant themes of traditionalism and superstition within the seafaring tattoo tradition. These stills render the same Rose of No Man's Land flash tattoo design from two different tattoo artists over a period of forty years, a testament to the social web of tattooing and its ability to preserve, crystallize, and encode sense-data.

To address this question, consider the tattoo traditions of American and European sailors. Tattoo practice boomed amongst sailors after Captain James Cook's crew landed in the Pacific and was made privy to the preestablished tattoo culture there (Bruns, 11). Though this adoption of tattoo practice originally entailed some problematic examples of cultural appropriation, sailing tattoos historically became more readily identifiable with the American "Old School" style of tattooing. This style became one of the more popular traditions among mariners and seamen,

cultures that were already rich in tradition. Tattooing constituted a graphic language, at once of self-expression and of self-identification within a larger social rank.

Insofar as history can chronicle cultures of superstition, seafaring men are among the most intensely superstitious (Bruns, 14). The tattoo came to embody this mentality. For example, the images of a pig and a hen were tattooed on the feet as wards against drowning: though both animals are incapable of swimming, pigs and hens often survived shipwrecks because the material of their crates made them buoyant (Dye, 4). A North Star or Compass Rose tattoo lent sailors the strength of a renewed belief that they would be able to find their way home.

Pig and rooster foot tattoos, unidentified original source, via wearethemighty.com: These tattoos are an expression not only of one of the most superstitiously fueled, assumedly magical nautical flash tattoo designs, but are also a depiction of the "American Old School" style of tattoo application.

Western European and American sailors also took quickly to the application of religious tattoo designs (Bruns, 16). The unmatched difficulty of life at sea was manifold: it involved isolation from family members for prolonged periods of time, social ostracization, grueling physical labor, hazing rituals, ridicule, full exposure to harsh weather conditions, nearly unlivable quarters, dismal food, and myriad other relentless struggles. By applying religious imagery to the body, sailors consciously believed that they might be saved from the rigors of their work. A sailor's sightline was always set on home; many religious tattoos represented those hopes of self-preservation—that they might not be one of the many to fall sick, wreck, or drown. In this, they offered a sense of personal protection.

THE SUCCESSFUL TATTOO-AS-AMULET

Encoded Data

The Sacred Heart tattoo made its way onto the flash sheets of Old School tattooists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was one of the tattoos drawn and applied to sailors for its sense of protection. Visually easily identifiable, the Sacred Heart design nonetheless has a wealth of encoded information largely due to its religious classifications and broad ekphrastic tradition. It suggests the sense-data of social strata, of cultural background, and of benediction. It has a sociocultural language.

Above left: *Catholic holy card depicting the Sacred Heart of Jesus, circa 1880, Auguste Martin collection, University of Dayton Libraries (1880).* Above right: *Ancient prayer prayer-card of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with Sister Mary of the Divine Heart Droste zu Vischering, placed in the public domain by the Congregation of Good Shepherd Sisters.* Bottom: *An original flash sheet from prominent nautical tattoo artist Sailor Jerry, dated around 1940.* Among the three, consider the stylistic similarities of the ekphrastic art history of Sacred Heart depictions and the modern American tattoo design renditions of the Sacred Heart design. The arrow is the most prominent nexus here, but other varieties of Sailor Jerry flash also include the explicit cross, the flames, the crown of thorns, and the lightly emanating background.

In contact with the skin, the tattoo's agency becomes even more complicated. The tattoo is simultaneously a physical transmutation of the skin and something akin to a second skin (Gell, 28). It is simultaneously the self and an ornament on top of the self. In physically puncturing the skin, tattooing has a latent eroticism—it turns the inward self *physically* outward, and is subsequently an outward means of accessing information about the private self of the wearer (Gell, 39). The tattoo is transmuted skin, but is also *transmutable* skin, bridging the gap between inwardly enfolded, personal ideologies and outward unfolded social identity. The protective qualities of the tattoo-as-amulet, in these regards, are largely psychological and social in nature.
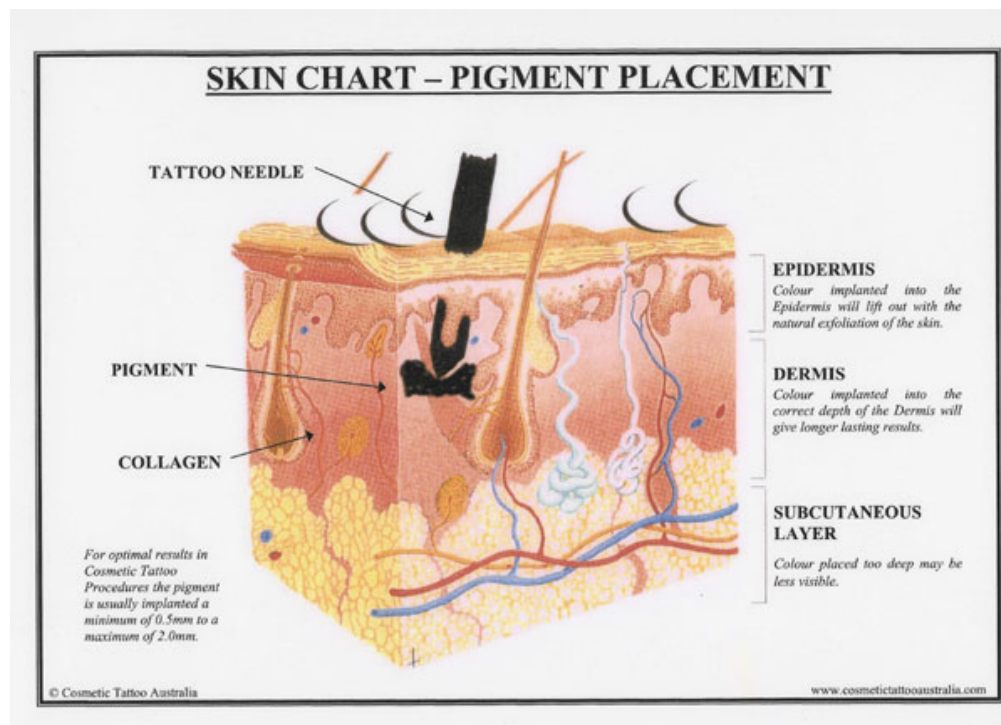

Figure courtesy of the Cosmetic Tattoo Association of Australia. The eroticization of the inward-outward duality of the tattoo is more apparent with a visual treatment; because a tattoo breaches the outermost barrier of the self of the wearer, it becomes a body with barriers and selfhood *inside* of another body with barriers and selfhood.

Personal ideologies of the wearer—the sociocultural language of the wearer— are an inward enfoldment (Gell, 7). These include religious affiliations, heritage, familial ties, morals, and belief systems. But the self does not individuate solely based on interiority. The self is inherently an inward- and outward-facing body. It derives its power from the machinations of its own psyche as well as from social relationships with everything outside of the self (Simondon, 22). Personal sense-data, like cultural background, ideologies, and belief systems are a matter of resolution of the psyche, which is protective in nature (Simondon, 23). Self-identification then corresponds with broader social relationships and social identity, which is also a matter of the resolution of the psyche and thus also protective in nature (Simondon, 43). The wearer individuates in a multilayered personal and social sense.

Potential Cosmologies of the Encoded Data

Like its wearer, the tattoo also individuates within a two-or-more-part system. A tattoo has a self-identity, composed of its cultural and ideological sense-data. As such, a tattoo also has a social identity. Multiple individuation of the tattoo means that it is both blessed unto itself and receives external blessings, to its cumulative power. A wearer's personal relationship to a tattoo is a matter of resolution of the psyche, which is protective in nature. A wearer's personal relationship to a tattoo corresponds with a broader identity in the social web of tattooing, which is a matter of the resolution of the psyche and thus also protective in nature.

The protective power of the tattoo, then, is embedded in the tattoo itself and derived from the social web of tattooing. In visually mapping the sense-data inputs of a tattoo and its wearer as the following, one finds that it imitates a sort of Deleuzian fold in terms of the storing of sense-data in the interiority of the body (Deleuze, 242). However, this is complicated when the body of the wearer and the tattoo function as two separate monads occupying, if not qualitatively the same point of view, as close as possible to the same point of view. Furthermore, each point of the fold is a point of contact, meaning that it should be multiplied an indefinite amount to account for the infinitum of inputs of sense data operating over these arcs:
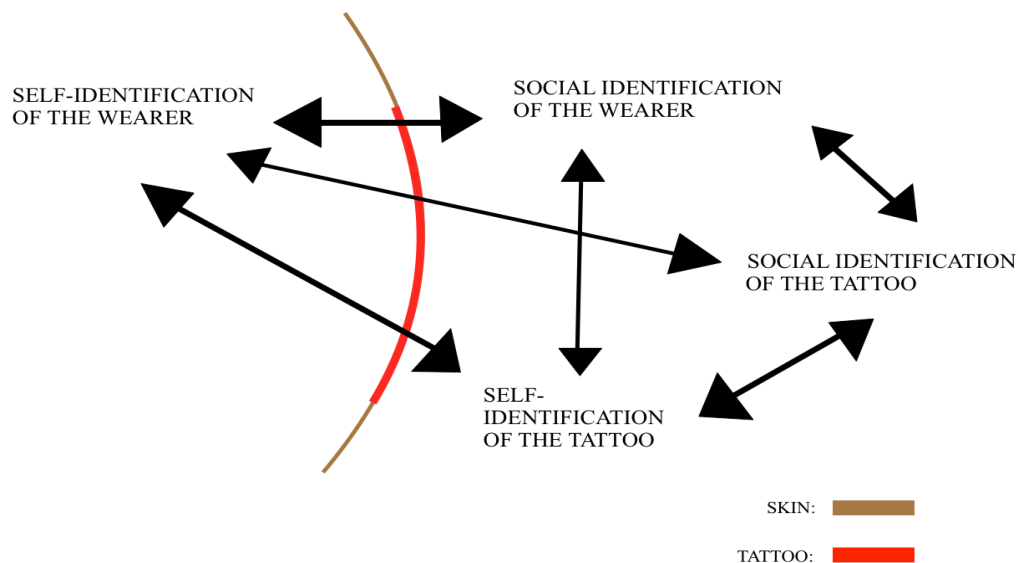
Despite the occluded point of view of the monads of the wearer and of the tattoo—at once separate and the same— it is possible to apply a Deleuzian cosmology in order to track the power of the tattoo as it subsumes different meanings in different contexts (Perniola, 6). A tattoo's effects can transform as it passes through different intermediaries— social and self-ideological. Likewise, the same process is in constant flux for the human wearer. At the most intimate point, the tattoo and the human exert agency on one another that must also be taken into account when chronicling the overall sense-data of the tattoo application. The harmony of all of these inputs directly affects the potential of derivation of the tattoo's power by the wearer.

Todd Haynes' *The Velvet Goldmine* (1998) establishes a successful amuletic relationship both in form and in content,[1] making a useful parallel with seafaring tattoo practices. The

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[1] *The Velvet Goldmine* is a film that exerts itself on the surroundings. The ornamentation, jump cuts, and zooms that fixate on clothing, jewelry, and other types of material individuation and uniqueness all serve this end. The film's

sequencing of the film is non-linear, adopting a Citizen Kane-like path backwards into retrospect as the journalist protagonist unfolds the plot to the present moment. In this way, the narrative arc reads like equal parts external and internal discoveries by the rock-journalist protagonist. The film also employs a physical amulet, one that seems to be more attuned to certain wearers than others.[2] Much as the amulet within the movie functions as a sort of relic of embracing the peculiarities of the self— it comes into characters' lives in moments where they begin to embrace their own autonomy— seafaring tattoos (like the double-breasted, mirrored swallows) are at once a self-identification within an insular, protected social circle, and an image of amuletic benediction, a safe return home. Put simply, in *The Velvet Goldmine* as in seafaring tattoo culture, self-identification is a source of self-protection.[3] Self-identification within a larger social stratum happens in conjunction with this first self-identification in the application of a tattoo or amulet, and also functions as a source of self-protection.

non-linearity takes this a step further by suggesting that exertion of the self on the past and exertion of the self on the future are also possible. The tattoo-as-amulet is likewise a means of exerting the inward self on the outward world for the sake of self-protection.

[2] The disjointed narrative structure is accomplished via ornamentation— hair, makeup, and wardrobe progressions— as well as by tone, situating the same mise-en-scène in different temporal structures via darker or lighter colorations, more or less shadow, rose-gold hues or the stark hues of the film's present day. Haynes' imagistic and color stylings invoke the authentic glam rock experience without demystifying it, as the mystification of it is paramount. The obscuring of color with stage fog, cigarette smoke, and shadowy rooms lends itself to a sense of unknowing, and a curious eroticization of what might be obscured. This is also evident in the composition of certain shots, such as the reveals of the character Jack Fairy, in which focus is often pulled so closely that only small parts of Fairy's face are distinguishable and one is meant to build a whole from the successive shots of an eye, a pair of lips, and an ear bearing the amulet.

[3] This prompts discussion of whether the ornamental aspects of tattooing qualify it more as clothing or as a veritable second layer of skin. Investigation of the use of surface ornament, lighting, wardrobe, and stylistic image composition in *The Velvet Goldmine* is aligned with this—how much agency is ascribed to the wearer, and how much agency is ascribed to the thing that is worn? In Brian Slade's progression through different looks, different styling, and different music genre, how much of his organic self is retained and turned outward? How much of the ornamentation of his external body is autonomous unto itself, moving inward to act upon his identity? Does the ornament—or the tattoo—bring as much of its own personal autonomy to the skin as the wearer does? Herein lies one of the most important pillars of this connective argument: the tattoo and the wearer of the tattoo must speak the same language in order to unlock the power of the tattoo, just as the amulet and the user of the amulet must be aligned with one another in order to be granted its benediction.
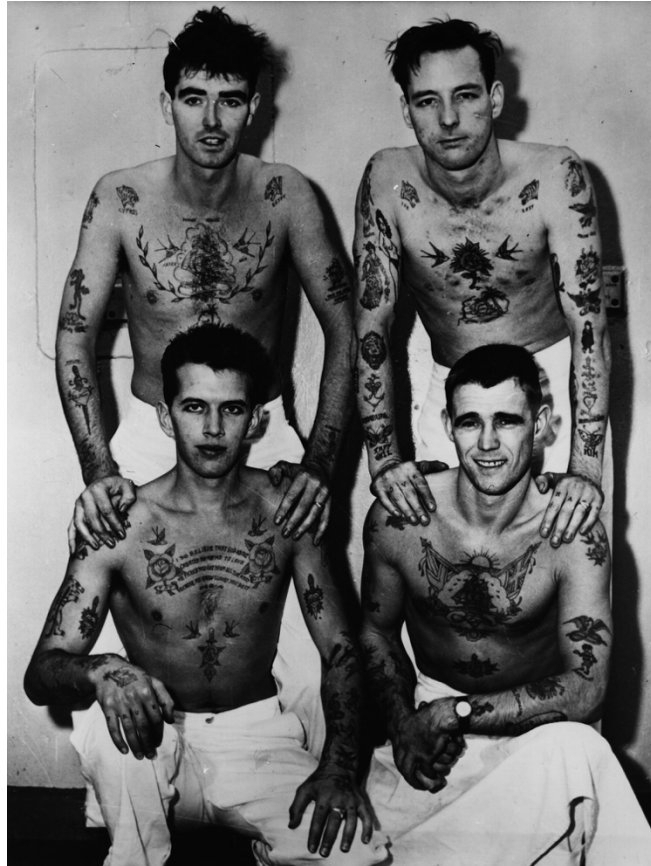
"Four cooks from HMS Belfast showing off their tattoos" in the Central Press: Note the uniformity of the tattoos, and the social intimacy of the poses. This photo was clearly intended to put the cooks' tattoos on display, and the extension of their arms shows that they are proud to show them. The likenesses between the tattoos is a visual analogue for the social web of tattoo, particularly among the tradition-rich seafaring populace.

By structuring a triad of historical archival information about amuletic tradition with cosmologies of social relationships and with individuation theory, one finds that a tattoo functions as a more immanent amulet. In an effort to elucidate and consolidate this sense-data, the following chart depicts *languages* that, when shared by the wearer and the Sacred Heart tattoo, allow the tattoo's protective qualities to work:

	Wearer	Sacred Heart Tattoo
Social	• Social web of wearers of tattoos, generally • Social web of wearers of the same design • Identification with social institutions in which the image is prominent (schools, colleges, hospitals, parishes, religious orders)	• Ekphrastic art history • Social web of wearers of the same design • Identification with social institutions in which the image is prominent (schools, colleges, hospitals, parishes, religious orders)

Cultural	- Arts-cultural appreciation - Interest in the devotions of the Holy Wounds - Interest in naturalism and/or Nestorianism - Interest in symbolic images of love and redemption - Interest in symbolic images of mercy	- Arts-cultural history - Identification with the devotions of the Holy Wounds - Identification with naturalism and Nestorianism - Identification with symbolic images of love and redemption - Identification with symbolic images of mercy
Ideological/belief system	- Identification with Roman Catholicism, Western Rite Orthodoxy, Anglican Communion, or the Lutheran Church - Identification with the compassion of the heart of Christ or of Divine Heart of Mary - Identification with early predecessors of Catholic mysticism	- Identification with Roman Catholicism, Western Rite Orthodoxy, Anglican Communion, or the Lutheran Church - Identification with the compassion of the heart of Christ or of Divine Heart of Mary - Identification with early predecessors of Catholic mysticism

THE UNSUCCESSFUL TATTOO AS AMULET

In Mistranslation

To reiterate, the protection of a tattoo is amuletic in quality because it depends upon the wearer and the tattoo speaking the same sense-data language. The multiple layers of individuation of the wearer need to be in tune with the multiple layers of individuation of the tattoo in order to access its power, which offers psychological and social senses of protection.

When a tattoo and its wearer are not attuned to one another, the power of the tattoo is rendered ineffective or potentially harmful. A wearer and a tattoo can be out of sync with one another through nonalignment with personal culture, nonalignment with ideologies or belief systems, and nonalignment with social strata. Taking into account the multilayered individuation of the wearer and the tattoo, a tattoo can be both psychologically and socially harmful when the sense-data language does not translate between the wearer and the tattoo.

Tattoos applied in prison settings, for example, have encoded meanings for individual images. Religious imagery is most common for its aforementioned direct codes of protection and mercy; within that category, the Sacred Heart is among the most frequently applied (Maxwell-Stewart, 135). When adopted onto the skin by individuals who have been stripped of any sense

of autonomy or personal freedom by the prison system, these images are meant to grant the individual a sense of bodily autonomy: psychological personal protection (DeMello, 10). The tattoo also gives an individual a sense of identification with a larger group of tattooed prisoners: social protection (DeMello, 13). However, what is at first a successful amuletic relationship between a wearer and a tattoo does not always remain so.

Just as tattoos more generally subsume different contexts depending upon the social situations of the wearer, the meaning of prison tattoos develops when a convict becomes an ex-convict (Maxwell-Stewart, 118). More often than not, an ex-convict's desire to re-assimilate into public society involves distancing the self from the sense-data of imprisonment. Some of the latent sense-data of the tattoo is inextricably linked to the prison system, if only by nature of where it was applied. The social individuation of the tattoo is therefore also linked to the prison system. What is recurrently reported by re-assimilated ex-convicts who wear prison tattoos is a sense of regret, a sense of dissociation from the tattoo which previously connoted pride, and/or the decision to remove, cover up, or alter the tattoo in some way (Maxwell-Stewart, 129).

This dissonant language of sense-data finds an equivalent in Hollis Frampton's film *(nostalgia)* (1971), which creates a world in which the image—a physical photograph—becomes subject to its environment for its interpretation and identification with a backstory.[4] Each voiced-over anecdote for each photograph is heard one off-beat in succession before the related photograph appears onscreen. This has the effect of situating the viewer at once in the past and the present, making dissonant the actualized story of the image.[5] It is a structuralist film insofar as the mechanics of the cinema itself become the focus. The cliffhanger, when the voice describes a terrifying photograph that we never see, suggests that the film's present interpretations retroactively reform the past, and vice versa. *(nostalgia)* shows that an image is capable of subsuming different meanings in different contexts, but the destruction of the photograph by fire in each successive take demonstrates the inherent danger in sense-data mistranslation.

Another example of potentially dangerous mistranslation is the cross-pollination of tattoo cultures when European sailors encountered Polynesian peoples and Pacific Islanders—realistically more like a subsuming of Polynesian/Pacific Island culture by transient Europeans. When European tattooing began to include Pacific Islanders' imagery, it is a miscommunication of tradition. In the broader conversation of this paper, I look forward to expounding upon what this suggests for the consequences of embedded meanings. In the extreme case, what is the point of getting a tattoo in a foreign language? When a contemporary American tattoo enthusiast is tattooed with a tradition Polynesian armband, tracking this emanation backward to the stored

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[4] This is why the amuletic power of the tattoo relies on the context of the wearer's personal relationship to the tattoo. Upon leaving prison and reentering society, tattoos acquired in prison can perpetuate a wearer's sense of their own prisoner status in a way that is mentally and emotionally dissonant with their current self and situation. The form of *(nostalgia)* congeals different selves and different stories by staying one step removed from perfect alignment of tracked sound and image. However, the whole puzzle is there and presented to be pieced together, much like the living record of tattoos on wearers' skin (in the latter case, for better or for worse).

[5] Why, then, the burning of the developed images? And why in a consistently still frame, so that the burning and curling of the image and the smoke are the only sources of visual motion? This effect situates itself in the destructive nature of the language of the tattoo and the language of the wearer being misaligned. Though the frame does not shift, and though the tattoo is unchanging after application, the disjointed voice (the disjointed *language*) seems to almost set the flame into motion.

history of the tattoo is no longer possible. The wires are crossed in a way that makes transcription of the same meaning impossible.

A Baroque Context

   Leibniz's first influences on the Baroque— and accordingly on the world of ornamentation which is the wider subcategory of tattoo design— proposed that the world is an aesthetic universe of form-forces fluctuating between states of equilibrium and disequilibrium (Deleuze, 196). Theorists have since reworked this claim to say that aesthetics establishes and instills a theory of *physical* effects (Buci-Glucksmann, 27). By this metric, disequilibrium can have not only negative connotations but also negative physical effects. In disjointed sense-data communication between a wearer and a tattoo, this can take the shape of psychological or social insecurity, or both. The following chart suggests possible mis-aligned sense-data between the wearer and the Sacred Heart flash design, in an unsuccessful amuletic relationship:

	Wearer	Sacred Heart Tattoo
Social	- Social web of wearers of tattoos, generally - Social web of wearers of the same design - No identification with social institutions in which the image is prominent	- Ekphrastic art history - Social web of wearers of the same design - Identification with social institutions in which the image is prominent (schools, colleges, hospitals, parishes, religious orders)
Cultural	- No sense of arts-cultural appreciation - No interest in the devotions of the Holy Wounds - No interest in naturalism and/or Nestorianism - No interest in symbolic images of love and redemption - No interest in symbolic images of mercy	- Arts-cultural history - Identification with the devotions of the Holy Wounds - Identification with naturalism and Nestorianism - Identification with symbolic images of love and redemption - Identification with symbolic images of mercy
Ideological/belief system	No identification with Roman Catholicism, Western Rite Orthodoxy, Anglican	Identification with Roman Catholicism, Western Rite Orthodoxy, Anglican

	Communion, or the Lutheran Church • Agnosticism, atheism, or identification with any religious orders outside of Roman Catholicism, Western Rite Orthodoxy, Anglican Communion, or the Lutheran Church • No identification with the compassion of the heart of Christ or of Divine Heart of Mary • No identification with early predecessors of Catholic mysticism	Communion, or the Lutheran Church • Identification with the compassion of the heart of Christ or of Divine Heart of Mary • Identification with early predecessors of Catholic mysticism

CONCLUSIONS

An ineffective or dangerous tattoo is still in line with amuletic theory, as it demonstrates the importance of a tattoo-as-amulet and its wearer being attuned to one another. The way a Sacred Heart tattoo takes on different meanings at different points of the wearer's life—for example, upon their departure from the prison setting—helps to quantify the identification between multiple bodies in the universe that Leibniz describes: this identification is inherently social in nature, and finds its best analog for transmission in this conception of a *language* of sense-data.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's literalized notions that a thing must be grasped "in the flesh," (Merleau-Ponty, 54) helped to establish the concept of the link between the sensing and the sensed that made the body of this paper possible. I was also inspired by Saige Walton's concept of "Baroque Skin," inspired by Laura Marks' *The Skin of the Film*, in which multiple bodies may establish sympathetic, physical connections—"cutaneous contact"— with one another (Walton, 160). Walton is writing about film and the film's body, a lineage of expressive material surfaces. Film expresses its material surfaces in a way that makes the leap to the skins of all things seem straightforward: all bodies in the universe have skins which are in constant sensitive contact with one another. This contact propagates equilibrium between two bodies in some circumstances, and disequilibrium in other circumstances. Or, in the terms I have been using in this essay, this language protects in some circumstances, and harms in others.

"True Bodily and Spiritual Enlightment of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" in the Church of Saint-Gervais-et-Saint-Protais, Paris, France. This depiction of the Sacred Heart recognizes the heart as separate from the body of Christ, implying that it has embedded imagistic power of its own. According to this piece, that power still has emanatory capabilities—a sensitive emanation outward and downward across bodies.

Future trajectories in this research could seek to apply the concept of the tattoo-as-amulet in other tattoo cultures. They could also explore the ways in which the language of sense-data is like Leibniz's "clear space" of the monad or the occluded perspective of the monad (Deleuze, 233), depending upon whether or not the language is attuned between the wearer and the tattoo. Another paper could look further into the tattoo-as-amulet's relationship to the Baroque.

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