

Tattooing and the Gender Turn

Emerald Studies in Popular Culture and Gender

Series Editor: Samantha Holland, Leeds Beckett University, UK

As we re-imagine and re-boot at an ever faster pace, this series explores the different strands of contemporary culture and gender. Looking across cinema, television, graphic novels, fashion studies and reality TV, the series asks: what has changed for gender? And, perhaps more seriously, what has not? Have representations of genders changed? How much does the concept of 'gender' in popular culture define and limit us?

We not only consume cultural texts but also share them more than ever before; meanings and messages reach more people and perpetuate more understandings (and misunderstandings) than at any time in history. This new series interrogates whether feminism has challenged or changed misogynist attitudes in popular culture.

Emerald Studies in Popular Culture and Gender provides a focus for writers and researchers interested in sociological and cultural research that expands our understanding of the ontological status of gender, popular culture and related discourses, objects and practices.

Available Titles in This Series

Gender and Contemporary Horror in Film – Edited by Samantha Holland, Robert Shail and Steven Gerrard

Gender and Contemporary Horror in Television – Edited by Steven Gerrard, Samantha Holland and Robert Shail

Gender and Contemporary Horror in Comics, Games and Transmedia – Edited by Robert Shail, Steven Gerrard and Samantha Holland

From Blofeld to Moneypenny: Gender in James Bond – Edited by Steven Gerrard

Gendered Domestic Violence and Abuse in Popular Culture – Edited by Shulamit Ramon, Michele Lloyd and Bridget Penhale

Gender and Parenting in the Worlds of Alien and Blade Runner: A Feminist Analysis – Authored by Amanda DiGioia

Navigating Tattooed Women's Bodies: Intersections of Class and Gender – Authored by Charlotte Dann

Gender and Female Villains in 21st Century Fairy Tale Narratives – Edited by Natalie Le Clue and Janelle Vermaak-Griessel

Gender and Action Films 2000 and Beyond: Transformations – Edited by Steven Gerrard and Renée Middlemost

Gender and Action Films: Road Warriors, Bombshells and Atomic Blondes – Edited by Steven Gerrard and Renée Middlemost

Gender and Action Films 1980–2000: Beauty in Motion – Edited by Steven Gerrard and Renée Middlemost

Forthcoming Titles in This Series

Gender, True Crime and Criminology: Offenders, Victims, and Ethics – Authored by Louise Wattis

Gender and the Male Character in 21st Century Fairy Tale Narratives – Edited by Natalie Le Clue

This page intentionally left blank

Tattooing and the Gender Turn: Labour, Resistance and Activism in a Male-Dominated Industry

BY

EMMA BECKETT

University of Warwick, UK



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL

First edition 2023

Copyright © 2023 Emma Beckett.
Published under exclusive licence by Emerald Publishing Limited.

Reprints and permissions service

Contact: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80262-302-4 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80262-301-7 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80262-303-1 (Epub)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*For Sid and Woodrow –
may you grow into fierce feminist allies.*

This page intentionally left blank

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-------------|
| About the Author | <i>xi</i> |
| Acknowledgements | <i>xiii</i> |
| Chapter 1 From Freak Shows to Feminism | 1 |
| Chapter 2 Gender, Subcultures and Tattooing: Bringing Women to the Front | 17 |
| Chapter 3 Being a Sub-cultural Professional | 33 |
| Chapter 4 Making ‘Woman’ Work | 59 |
| Chapter 5 Resisting, Reframing and Rethinking the Tattoo Industry | 83 |
| Chapter 6 Conclusion: Deconstructing Binaries, Exposing Paradoxes | 109 |
| Bibliography | <i>119</i> |
| Index | <i>129</i> |

This page intentionally left blank

About the Author

Emma Beckett is a Lecturer in Health and Social Care at New College, Swindon (UK), and an honorary research fellow in the Centre for the Study of Women and Gender at the University of Warwick (UK). Her research interests include Sub-cultures; Gendered and Emotional Labour and Gendered Capital – specifically within the service industries and traditionally ‘male’ dominated spaces; and the Sociology of Health. Emma is also interested in exploring ways in which feminist activism and feminist pedagogy can be successfully employed in the classroom.

This page intentionally left blank

Acknowledgements

My first thanks go to the wonderful tattoo artists who were so generous with their time and conversation, without whom this book would not have been possible. I enjoyed the fieldwork so much and was incredibly lucky to speak to some truly amazing people.

Dr Nikki Rivers – it is hard to put into words how thankful I am. A confidant, counsellor, proof-reader, hilarity provider – this book would not have been possible without her, and she will never truly know how appreciative I am, for so many things.

Thank you to Dr Samantha Holland for inspiring me with ‘Alternative Femininities’ all those years ago, and since then, believing in this book, and championing my research – the support and positivity means so much.

I would like to thank Dr Maria do Mar Pereira, whose encouragement, inspiration and motivation gave me the confidence to develop my ideas into something I am proud of – I am extremely grateful for all that Maria has brought to this project over very many years!

Behind every woman there is a gang of warrior women, raising her up and rooting for her, and for this I’d like to thank Abby, Ioana, Gosia, Sarah, Tessa, Tammy, my sister Lucy and step-mum Amanda for years of endless laughter, friendship and encouragement.

Thank you to my Dad, Alan, for normalising tattoos for me and never judging me in whatever choices I’ve made. And to The Greens (all of you!) for always being there when I have needed you.

Thank you also, to The Sociological Support Goop (spelling intended) – Dr Liz Ablett, Dr Carli Ria Rowell, Dr Iro Konstantinou and Dr Sara Bamdad – for your reassurance, motivation and continuous belief that we are capable and good enough. Thank you.

Finally – I would like to thank my Mum, Chris, for her endless and unconditional belief and support – she is a constant inspiration to me and someone to whom I am forever grateful.

And Thom – far too many things to be thankful for... thank you.