

RESEARCH ARTICLE	How to Read Tattoos Semiologically? An Attempt to Understand the Types and the Communicative Purposes	
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Abstract		
<p>Tattoos were practiced by many nations with different shapes and names due to its different techniques, situations and symbols, which ranged from simple shapes and lines to complex drawings and shapes. It contained many messages and meanings of aesthetic, magical, therapeutic, religious, social and even psychological dimensions. It came in a form of a response to individualism tendency at times or the requirements of tribal social affiliation at other times.</p> <p>Accordingly, in this research paper, we will try to examine the conceptual structure and composition of the tattoo by addressing its history and the ABCs of the semiological analysis of its linguistic and non-linguistic symbols. It mainly aims to identify tattoos' communicative purposes that differ according to the symbol, its social and cultural context, and even its different positions on the body. In addition, the study will tackle the dimensions of female tattoos in Algeria, as it is more prevalent among women than other gender groups, which contributes to creating a different meaning.</p>		
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Introduction:

The theoretical perceptions related to the phenomenon of tattooing varied, and differed according to the regions in which they appeared and the peoples who practiced and adopted it. Originally, it is an ancient

phenomenon as old as man, rooted in his ancient history, and it began to retreat among some nations after it was prohibited by some religions. However, it has reappeared strongly in the last few years, in a different

and modern way, according to the requirements of fashion and era.

As the history of tattoos indicates, it was more common among women, as it combined in many cases two contradictions: beauty and pain. Despite the pain it causes, tattooing was a sacred ritual favored by women because they see in it a decorative and aesthetic dimension that satisfies them, pleases, and excites others. For women, tattoos represented an alternative to jewelry due to the geometric and graphic forms it contained, which are simple at times and accurate at other times.

In our discussion of the geometric and pictorial shapes included in tattoos, it must be emphasized that these symbols constitute the most mysterious and interesting part of research and investigation. This is because the true meaning of these symbols has disappeared or obliterated in many cases due to the ancient history of the tattoo, as previously mentioned, or the lack of interest in documenting it. Nevertheless, the researcher believes that the importance of a study increases as the difficulties in achieving it and reaching its goals increase. In this study, I tried to address the most important points related to the subject of tattoos with a special focus on its dark "symbolic" angle, which is the angle that is difficult to highlight without the use of the semiological analysis of the symbols included in the tattoo. Based on that, our study, which tries to reveal the implications of tattoo symbols, is based on the following problematic:

How can feminist tattoo symbols be read and understood semiologically?

-Within this problematic, there is a group of sub-questions:

-How is tattoo stamping on the body? What are the tools used?

-What drives women to have tattoos on their bodies? What are its most important dimensions?

-Where are the symbols of female tattoos derived from? What is its significance?

-Does the meaning of the tattooed symbol differ according to its position on the female body?

Study objectives:

The study aims, by asking the essential question and a set of questions, to address the most important symbols that can be included in tattoos on a woman's body and tries to understand their meaning in popular cultures within the limits of popular belief and the environment in which it is practiced. Moreover, it also aims to reveal the importance of semiological analysis in simplifying the meaning of symbols and understanding them, since semiology is concerned with researching the deep structures of the symbols, whether of verbal or non-verbal.

The researcher also seeks to understand the most important elements of the topic related to the stages of the body tattooing and its various positions, as well as the simple or modern advanced tools used in the process of drawing tattoo symbols. This is in addition to tackling the different colors of the tattoo depending on the

material used during the drawing process, as well as presenting the motives that may push the tattooed to embrace this popular practice that has transformed with time into a fashion.

Study significance:

Our study covers two areas of research: tattooing and semiology. The topic of writing on the body, as a manifestation of popular culture, is one of the most symbolic and indicative forms of communication because it contains cultural symbols that reflect the privacy of communication among groups whose tattoos are common.

As for the importance of exposure to semiology in the study as a way to ensure understanding of tattoos as a rich symbolic pattern, it is due to the nature of the subject itself, which requires a method of researching the deep structures of the communicative messages that the tattooed individual adopts. The researcher tries to emphasize the necessity of semiology in understanding these messages and revealing the intentions and purposes of tattooing, its significance as it provides an opportunity to interpret and analyze the various tattooed symbols. The latter consists mainly of points, shapes and lines that have their own significance, which mainly express emotional states experienced by the tattooist and the tattooed woman, whose source may be the similarity or analogy with the lived experiences of both parties.

The study approach:

The study relies on the descriptive approach, which is consistent with the research objectives related to the familiarity with and awareness of the phenomenon of female tattooing among many peoples and tribes. In addition, the study presents models and examples of tattoo symbols that Algerian women carry on their bodies in different places in order to pass a symbolic communicative message with multiple dimensions and motives. It is also based on semiological research which relies in its initial stage on description and assistive reading and then inclusive reading and analysis.

1. Semiology and the term problematic:

Semiology is a modern discipline compared to other disciplines, as it holds a new vision in dealing with human affairs and its issues, formulating its limits, defining its volume and measuring its extensions. As such, it is based on inclusiveness and universality in an attempt to monitor the various signs and study the essential nature of each "semiosis". (Yekhlef, 2012, p. 9)

Nevertheless, among the many things that we notice during the attempts to define semiology is the terminological disorder and chaos that may go back to the "progress of the term" itself. A group of researchers indicates that it "bears an Arabic root, and carries an Arabized foreign phoneme and accepts addition, combination, and derivation" (Yekhlef, 2012, pp.13-14). In the West there are two terms, one of which is European (sémiologie) attributed to "Ferdinand de Saussure (F. de Saussure) and the other is American (semiotic)

attributed to "Charles Sanders Peirce". However, in the field of Arab research, there are more than the two terms, and all of which are synonymous, such as: *alsymywlwlyja* (السيمولوجيا), *alsymywltyqa* (السيمويطيقا), *alsymya'* (السيمياء), *alsymya'eyat* (السيمياتيات), *alsymantyq* (السيمانتيك), *'elm alrmwz* (علم الرموز), *'elmaldalh* (علم الدلالة) (Lahmeur, 2011, p.7) and *aldalayiliah* (الدلائلية), *cilmaliisharatw aliisharatiah* (علم الإشارة و الإشاراتية), *cilmalealamat w alealamatiah* (علم العلامات و العلاماتية) and many others. (Yekhlef, 2012, p. 13).

From De Saussure's point of view, semiology is "a science that studies the life of signs at the heart of social life" (Giroux, 1988, p. 23) for it is concerned with the structure of signs, whatever their type, origin, and their relationships in this universe. This means that semiology studies different sign types (Giroux, 1988, p.9). It is that science that researches the coded indicative linguistic signs systems. (Serghini, 1989, p.5). As for "Pierce", he believes that semiotics means a general theory of signs and their patternings in human thought, whether linguistic or non-linguistic. (Yekhlef, 2012, p.15).

In this way, semiology is not unique to its own topic. Rather, it is concerned with all subjects that belong to the human experience, provided that they are part of a semantic process. Among the semioticians who support this trend is Umberto Eco, who includes many non-verbal signs within the basic themes of semiology, including: animal signs, olfactory signs, tactile communication, code of taste, visual communication, patterns of sounds and intonation, medical diagnosis, body movements and postures, music, pictorial languages, written languages, unknown alphabets, rules of literature, ideologies, aesthetic texts and rhetoric. The list of signs may go beyond what was mentioned by "Eco" because the importance of the semantic extension is being constantly discovered in the world and its formations. (Yekhlef, 2012, pp. 9-10).

In fact, we can only talk about semiological behavior if we look at the action outside its direct manifestation. In other words, what comes from man is not seen in isolation, but is perceived as a human condition included in a cultural law that is a result of the existence of a society, and the existence of society in turn requires the presence of signs. Whatever culture puts in our hands is basically signs that tell us about the details of this culture and reveal its identity (Pinkrad, 2003, p.19), thus making all the modes of communication that a person uses in creating dialogue and interaction with the other a subject for semiological study. (Pinkrad, 2003, p.20).

From the foregoing, it becomes clear that researchers who are interested in this science have differed about its topic and methodology, and this is due to two main reasons: The first is the late recognition of it, i.e. the novelty of the term. The second is the breadth and complexity of its topic, and the multiplicity of issues that focused its attention on. However, despite this

difference, there is a common denominator among all those interested in it. They agree on at least two basic matters: The first is that the subject of semiology is signs, and the second is that these signs operate as a formal system. (Touhami al-Ammari, 2004, p. 264)

Nevertheless, in spite of the development and complexity that semiological research has known, it must be recognized that general semiology to the present day "is still in its infancy" (Abdullah Ali and Alghanimi, 1996, p.83). This is due to the continuous developments in the directions, tools and approaches of research it experienced, and this multiplicity, in most cases, does not refer to incoherence but to complementarity, diversity and richness of semiological research.

As for the relationship of the body to semiology, it is not possible in any way to analyze any communication material and ignore the presence of the human body in it, whether in its static or moving position, which in all cases carries its different connotations according to the different cultural indicators of the semiological reading. The latter allows accurate research in the deep levels of the iconic or linguistic messages by examining all aspects of the message, whether psychological, social and cultural. In this context, it is necessary for the researcher to adhere to neutrality towards the message on the one hand, and to strive to achieve integration on the other hand (Rachedi, 2012/2011, p. 19). This is in order to reach the true meaning of the studied signs, given that any analysis is not correct except with an accurate understanding of the symbols (Serghini, 1989, p.11), and because both functions and their connotations are products of a specific culture, their reading differs even in the context of reading. Thus, the semiological analysis allows reading all aspects of human behavior, starting from simple emotions, passing through rituals and social customs, ending with major ideological systems (Pinkrad, 2003, p. 25), regardless of their type or nature.

2. Definition of tattoos in the light of the conceptual overlap:

2.1. Denotative definition of tattoos:

It was narrated by al-Jawhari (الجوهري) in *al-Sihabi* (الصحاح) that if the hand was tattooed, then it was stitched with a needle, and then a substance called "*al-mnauur*" (النؤور) in Arabic is sprinkled on it, which is a fat with which the tattoo is treated until it turns green. As for the book "*Tahdheeb al-Lughah*" (تهذيب اللغة) by Al-Azhari (الأزهري), it was said: someone whose job is putting tattoos on people is a 'tattooist', and the other whose getting this tattoo is a tattooed woman. Ibn Shamil (ابن شميل) say that: Tattoos and markings means the signs. (Al-Bahnasi, 1997, p. 138)

As for the British Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, it was stated that tattoos are "a habit to impart specific marks on the human body through needle stitches, cauterization, or other customs" (Hosseini, 2013, p.30).

Regarding the first uses of the term, SawsanAmer indicates that the word first appeared in an English reference written by Levi Brull. However, it appears that it was used before that, as Dr. FouadKazem (فؤاد كاظم) mentioned according to the traveler, James Cook, who in his travels, discovered the island of Tahiti in 1769 and watched its inhabitants practice tattooing using needles and colored powders, (El Jattari, 2000, p.66). This coincides with the saying of "William Caruchet", who confirmed that the Indians of Tahiti used to imprint on their bodies some marks they called "Tatou", which according to the English translation of (Tatou) means the drawing on the skin, and the word "prick" was used to illustrate this meaning as well. (Kerkouche, 2015, p. 258)

Many famous travelers also learned about tattoos among the tribes of the regions that they discovered. "Christophe Colomb" spoke about it among the people of Cuba, and "Fernando Magellan" knew it among the indigenous people of the Philippines, as Marco Paolo also spoke of it in some of the small villages between Permani and Thailand. (El Jattari, 2000, pp. 66-67).

2. 2. Connotative definition of tattoos:

Simone Wiener defines tattooing as the process of engraving a symbol on the skin. It represents a kind of permanent writing for its stability on the skin, or it represents a kind of fleeting drawing as it expresses or reflects a specific period of life. It causes a scratch and an injury on the body so that the symbol and the image stand out on the body, meaning that it is located between a binary intersection that combines the imaginary and the symbolic. (Kerkouche, 2015, pp. 258-259).

It is usually manifested in the permanent marking of the skin using colors by pricking or using oxides, acids and colors on the hand, arm or thigh. Moreover, it may be associated with cupping and striping as a sign of sadness, as it may be to protect from the evil eye or to highlight class privilege, tribal bond, or social standing. (Talaat, p. 12).

Tattoos are like a stamp on the skin, they date back to ancient times since humans invented and developed the mechanisms of caring for their body. The tattoos with which rural people adorn their hands, chests, lips and faces were not drawn in vain ... Rather, it goes back to ancient history when people lived in a primitive life in which they sanctified some animals and feared some aspects of nature, such as waves, wind, rain and thunder. (Zohra, 2009, p. 128)

As such, tattoos are "a writing that tries to perpetuate the transient and to make the transitory a resident, it is writing with blood that seeks to preserve the memory and consolidate the gift in the void" (Helmy, p. 168). In other words, it is a bloody practice in which symbolic elements, whether cultural, civil, or historical, are preserved from disappearance. This is through making them an integral part of the tattooed person, so it turns from a transient, fleeting memory to a permanent piece that reflects the talent of the tattooist in tattooing and

enables him to fill spaces in the tattooed body. According to Zoroastre, the style of writing with blood on the body is the one type that he likes among all the types of writing, he thus says "Write with blood and you will realize that blood is a soul" (Helmy, p. 169).

On the other hand, tattooing is one of the important folk arts that abounds in many formative units with spontaneous lines and rhythms of expression. The aesthetics of tattoos as an art form lies in the overlapping of lines and shapes in exchange for accuracy and simplicity of expression (Talaat, p. 2).

2. 3. Similar terms:

"Tattoos" are related to several similar processes that are close to it in terms of practice and purpose, which aim at temporary change, and some of which seek permanent change. Some of them are printed on the prominent or hidden organs, and some are held for the purpose of adornment, whereas others are practiced with the aim of treatment and prevention of disease, the evil eye and envy. In addition, some of them are even considered a test to measure endurance, and passing it means success in passing to a higher social stage. Among the most important of those tattoos: (Ghamiri, 1987, pp. 52-53)

-Painting: It includes all types of decoration that use colored materials such as powder, varnish, lime or some non-permanent colors.

-Staining: It requires coloring the skin with materials that have the characteristic of the -relative -durability and continuity in coloring the skin, such as henna and nail polish.

- Dissection /incision: It includes making a set of incisions in the skin longitudinally or crosswise, and a small scalpel is used in this procedure, then the dye is applied to the place to be dissected.

Pictures (01) (02): represent models of facial dissection among African tribes



Source: Joana Choumali, "Looking for identity in the scarified flesh" (Elle cherche l'identité dans les chairs scarifiées), GEO, n°451, September 2016, pp.100-101

-Pyrography: means creating a symbol or sign in the human or animal body by ironing with fire using a nail heated on coals or another tool in order to determine

the ownership of a specific person or tribe (Arqawi, 2009). Moreover, a needle and thread that is covered with soot (a black, carbonaceous substance produced during incomplete combustion of coal, wood, oil, etc.) may be used to enter under the surface of the skin and make this type of tattooing. Another way to make it is using a piece of iron after it is heated in coals and place it on one of the body parts.

-Scarification: it occurs by scratching, cutting, piercing, or burning the skin or in another way that causes scars and is usually deep, while a large scar that is characterized by the depth of its wound is called a "keloid". "Sometimes tattooing with scarification is used in conjunction with color tattoos, because the latter is more apparent and clearer than the previous one, and it has intricate ornaments with a contrasting and precise arrangement of the segments." (Lips, 2006, p. 37)

These practices are similar to tattoos in their endeavor to create a physical effect on different places of the outer surface of the body with a sharp instrument that varies according to the desired effect and its location on the body.

3. Tattooing method:

In the past, tattoos were pierced with needles that take the form of three to seven needles attached to a bead or paste and pulled by a thread. After that, the needles are dipped in soot or charcoal, taking into account keeping away from the arteries in the process of tattooing, and the tattooed should avoid water until the blood dries up. The process of tattooing is quick, accompanied by unbearable pain and cries of the tattooed, and needles can be dipped into the gallbladder of a rooster or birds to obtain the greenness of the tattoo. (Barakāt, 2008, p. 68)

In addition, in the tattooing process, a thin needle is used to inject various substances in the form of granules under the skin. Among those materials, there are organic materials to give different colors; carbon gives blue color, iron oxide black color, chromium oxide green color, sulfur blue color and mercury sulfide red color, in addition to plant mixtures that give different colors. (Swilem, 2013, p. 12)

In Egypt, needles and scalpels are used, where they are dipped in the place to be tattooed with the required image until it is bleeds, then a Chinese ink, soot or crushed charcoal are placed on it after dissolving them in water. Red brick or minium (red lead oxide) powder is also used according to the color and degree required by the tattooed person. (Saleh, 1987, p. 20)

Julius Ernst Lips believes that many African tribes rely on scraping the skin during the tattooing process by making holes with a pointed knife and then rubbing the areas of these sores with burnt dyes so that the human skin acquires colors different from its basic color, and then the wounds are healed leaving prominent notable tattoos. (Hosseini, 2013, p. 50) In addition, some tribes in "Nigeria" have their faces and bodies decorated with overlapping patterns that are delicately drawn and col-

ored with vegetable juices. The most common type of decoration is "Scarification", in which the body is cut and wounds are massaged with a drug that they believe has magical properties. This drug is used for several purposes, some of which are personal and some that are preventive, curative, or even aesthetic. (Trowell, 1960, pp. 54-55)

As for some tribes from central Africa, they use a file to make cuts in the face and body, then the blue color fixing dye is poured with a reed or a feather, making these scratches a special drawing. (Hosseini, 2013, p. 53)

In Sudan, the scarification is mixed with tattoos that take the form of colored units. They create it through making a wound with a weapon edge in the skin and rubbing the area of those sores with ashes and some types of weeds or the mucilage of plants. As soon as the sores are rubbed with this mixture, the tattoo will swell and protrudes on the surface of the skin. (Hosseini, 2013, pp. 50-51)

The drawings, methods, and places where tattoos are applied to the body of the tattooed differ from one country to another according to the social and climatic nature, and even the combination of customs and traditions that prevail in the country or society. However, tattooing in general is done according to two main techniques: the first is with skin-piercing tools such as needles and fine knives that can cause skin wounds, and the second technique is based on animal dyes and different powders of kohl, charcoal and plants sap. (Al-Hag, 2003, p. 654) Therefore, tattooing requires the use of sharp tools and colored chemicals that are inserted into the deep layer of the skin, ensuring that it lasts for a long time, in a painful process. (Ahmad October 2012, p. 4)

However, tattooing developed with the spread of the phenomenon and its prevalence in many parts of the world and the emergence of modern technologies. In the late nineteenth century, the American "Samoel Orelly" invented a device for tattooing that works on electricity. With this innovation, the tattooing process became easy to implement, which contributed to its popularity, especially among soldiers, sailors, and circus workers during the two world wars, in order to highlight their affiliation and send messages of multiple connotations. (Talaat, p. 20)

Recently, a group of Japanese companies produced precision instruments to use them in the laser tattooing process. Tattoos not only developed in terms of the machines used, but extended to the development of the tattoo content itself, as the shapes and colors varied and became more complex to include paintings by well-known painters, yet the tattooing process is still painful. (Ahmad, October 2012, Pp. 13-14)

Through our review of many researches on traditional and modern tattoo techniques and methods, it can be said that there are many materials used in tattooing (Ahmad, October 2012, p. 15). The most important

ones are: Kohl, charcoal, fire ash, plants sap, colorants of animal origin, metal oxide (iron, cobalt), sulfur granules, mercury added to vegetable dyes, yellow spices (saffron, turmeric and dung), and tattoo ink composed of heavy metals (iron, copper, lead, lithium and mercury ...)

All these materials and others, differs and varies during the tattooing process, reflecting a multiplicity of colorful tattoos. For example: (Talaat, p. 23) sulfur granules (yellow color), iron rust (black color), chromium oxide (Green color), cobalt (a light blue color), mercury and vegetable dyes (the redcolor)...

4. Motives and forms of tattooing:

4.1. Motives of tattooing:

The researcher, "Abd al-Hakim Khalil," (عبد الحكيم خليل) in his study on the "Symbolic Manifestations of Tattoos" indicates that tattoos may express many motives, including psychological, social, and even personal ... all of which are related to the tattooed person's context and circumstances. He summarized it in three main motives: (Ahmad, October 2012, pp. 16-17)

A) Hostile motive: This type of tattoo reflects a negative psychological impulse for the tattooed person. The tattoo expresses his/her pent-up emotions in an artistic

A) Medical or therapeutic tattoo:

Many primitive societies and tribes in the countryside believe that tattoos protect them from diseases, prevent envy and drive away demons. They also consider it a popular healing and treatment against diseases, as it is also used to hide defects and deformities, such as: the absence of hair or the appearance of vitiligo spots (Swilem, 2013, p. 12). However, its use among African tribes is related to their belief that the scars and marks left by the tattoo scratches remove internal toxins in the human body and strengthen the internal nerves, as it is a treatment to the eye and head diseases and headaches that are carried out by the elderly or the master of the tribe. (Ahmad, October 2012, p. 26) Tattoos are also placed on the forehead or on the top of the temple, around the knees or on the shoulder and back, on the feet or on the ankles ... as a treatment to neurological diseases (Barakāt, 2008, p.70). The ancient Arabs used to put tattoos on the face of the patient and the sides of his/her head when/he felt a headache, as well as on the back, hands and feet when s/he suffered from pain in the spine or joints of the limbs. (Ahmad, October 2012, p. 26)

way, such as drawing a dagger to express the rebellion against the group, as some prisoners do, or even writing some phrases that reflect the exasperation of the tattooed or his complaint about a certain situation or the state of hatred for a specific person or thing.

B) Narcissistic motive: In this case, the tattoo expresses an excessive self-love identity as an attempt to confirm it and search for the truth. It is believed that tattoos are an invigorating force due to a weak body. Thus, the appearance comes to give a costume to the body in order to attract attention and restore respect to the tattooed individual, or even to express a personal admiration for the body, such as in cases when a person makes a tattoo of his/her name or the first letter of it on one of his/her body parts.

C) Affiliative impulse: It expresses the superego under the name of religion and belief. A tattoo of a cross or the name of Jesus, for example, is a sign of the strength of the relationship and belonging to a specific religion, and in this case, it expresses that the body is a collective property of the group of belonging and not a personal property.

4. 2. Types of tattoos:

Picture (03): represents a therapeutic tattoo for a knee tumor

Picture (04): a medicinal tattoo for an enlarged thyroid gland



Source: captured by the researcher

B) Cosmetic Tattoos:

Cosmetic tattoos are spread in the Arab region by coloring the lower lip and the chin in green, and it may extend from the bottom of the lips to the bottom of the chin. (Swilem, 2013, p.12) It is also used as a method of beauty and femininity to decorate the edges of the eyelids in black and to define the eyebrows or frame the lips. (Swilem, 2013, p.12) The Amazigh woman used to tattoo for the purpose of adornment in the absence of colored powders in order to be distinguished from men. The Danish painter, Haeckel Frenkel described the beauty of the tattooed Berber woman, saying: "Many times you find them in the fields and rugged paths in the mountains singing songs of unparalleled intensity and beauty except by seeing those shapes drawn very carefully on their cheeks or chins, and sometimes their necks and hands. They are women in whom the myth of the symbol and the drawings replete with green and blue unites with mythical faces and beauty spots insisting on challenging the cruelty of nature, difficult living conditions and daily hardships. It is a beauty in which reality unites with imagination, nature with man, colors with features, images with sounds, and singing with drawings on the body." (Mechedal, 2017)

Picture (05): represents a decorative tattoo on the top of the temple



Source: captured by the researcher

C) Occasional tattoos (life-cycle rituals tattoos):

Usually, they take part in social events and events related to the life cycle of the individual and the group interspersed with some traditional or new ritual customs and practices, including the "tattooing" practiced by individuals during the period of birth, marriage or even death:

-Birth tattoos: (Ahmad, October 2012, pp.19-20) Tattoos are pierced on children during their first ages in visible areas of their bodies, such as the face. Their parents believe that tattooing protects them from envy, evil eyes and from psychological and nervous diseases. They are also tattooed to recognize them if they are lost. The Christian religion demands piercing the cross on children, especially during "martyrdom ages", for fear of the child's religious identity in case their parents died, so that s/he is not considered a member of one of the other religions. In Guinea, however, it is used as a sign of the transition of boys to the stage of manhood, as an expression of the teeth of the gods that bitten the tattooed boys.

-Marriage tattoos: (Ahmad, October 2012, pp. 20-21) The ancient man used to adopt the apparent adornment in his body, and he pierced on it different

geometric and symbolic shapes until he separated from his inner self and associated himself with external elements, as he began to embellish his clothes, tools and jewelry. Therefore, women who were about to marry used to tattoo in

order to express their willingness to take on marital responsibility in exchange for the pain of piercing. The historian "Tin Lin" talked about the rituals of the inhabitants of the island of "Hai Nai", where girls use tattoos during weddings, as tattooing means completeness, sexual maturity and signs of fertility. The tattoo is, thus, only for the girl eligible for marriage. This is what George Cranval confirmed in his talk about tattoos in Morocco. He said that: "Tattoos in this country among women are an announcement of the stage of maturity and readiness to receive the man and the position of marriage ... it is a gateway to the age of adulthood and with it comes the signs of marriage ... Through it the young woman wishes to present her charms and announce her feminine maturity." Some researchers also say that the tattoo is a sign of the completeness of the beauty of the tattooed, and perhaps this is also related to sex and hidden desire, as indicated by Sigmund Freud. Tattoos, with all their pain, were used to curb the libido of the girl, because tattoos were pierced in hidden parts of the woman's body as a therapeutic measure of excessive sexual energy.

- **Tattoo of death:** (Ahmad, October 2012, p.22) Tattoos have been associated with some deaths, especially in families whose newborn children die, as the mother tattoos her last child in the hope that s/he will live. Women in Upper Egypt tattoo the deceased virgin girl on her face and hands with decorative motifs because she is of marriage age and she deserves to be accepted among the houris of paradise, as this is a procedure for her bridal washing of life after death.

Dr. Khalid Al Ghamdi (خالد الغامدي) also identified five main types of tattoos: (Ahmad, October 2012, p. 8)

A) Injury tattoo: It is a tattoo that results from the entry of materials such as asphalt or pencil lead into the skin as a result of injury in a traffic accident or otherwise.

B) Amateur tattoo: It is a tattoo that a person or another pierces, where ink or ash is applied to the skin, and then the skin is pricked with a pin or needle to enter that dyeing material into it. In this type of tattooing, the shape of the tattoo is not elaborate and on a surface level.

C) Professional tattoo: It is a tattoo done by specialized people using a device to insert the desired color under the skin, and it is done with perfection and in multiple colors and usually contains materials placed in deeper levels of the skin layers.

D) Temporary tattoos: This type of tattoo is used in religious occasions and rituals, and it disappears with these occasions' disappearance, where fading dyes and colors are used in it. In "Northern Ghana" men engrave their bodies with white clay in preparation for the rituals and draw a network of lines so that they resemble skeletons. They practice this ritual with singing, and by that, they are referring to death, the order of the universe around them, and the total forces controlling them. In times of war, however, they tattoo their bodies and faces in black, as the colors differ for different occasions. (Talaat, p. 22) In the Arab region and in some Asian countries, some areas of the body are tattooed with henna that is also a fading dye, especially during weddings and special occasions.

E) Light tattoo: This type of tattoo is drawn with special dyes that can only be seen in the dark. When the skin heals from the initial tattooing process, the tattoo will disappear, but it will reappear only in the dark. Anne Lowman has indicated her fear that the radiant energy of this tattoo could cause serious illnesses. (Talaat, p. 23)

All the mentioned forms of tattoos are nothing more than a permanent or temporary tattoo. As for the permanent ones, they include traditional and modern forms that can only be removed by surgery. As for the temporary, it can

be removed or it remains for a certain period of time and gradually disappears, such as henna tattoos or modern cosmetic dyes. (Ahmad, October 2012, p. 8)

5. Tattoos Symbols and Their Meaning:

Tattoo symbols throughout its ancient history, especially in the totemic period, included geometric shapes or a group of lines in which there was no image of the totem, but rather it was used to symbolize it, according to the principle of arbitrariness of evidence and agreement of the social group on it. This type of tattoo abounds in the late clans in the field of painting and photography, as the indigenous people of Australia. In addition, in other tribes, some parts of plants or animals may be used as a symbol for a totem, to represent a specific clan, such as the bear that symbolizes Russia and the rooster that refers to France. Therefore, we find that the totemic symbol of the clan is affixed to the bodies and clothes of its members, their headdresses and weapons, the coffins of their dead and their graves ... because the members of the tribe believe that they share nature and sanctity with their totem. In order to prove their communion, blood is used in the religious rituals of the same tribes, so when a person is to be mixed with his totem, the blood must come out so that the fusion is both physical and moral. Thus, this is how the habit of drawing on the body first emerged. (Barakāt, 2008, p.68)

The habit of revering the totem still has many residues up to the present era, and in Christian societies the individual takes his/her protection from the apostles or saints. Moreover, some European groups plant a tree on the day a newborn is born, where they take care of it just as they take care of their newborn, for they believe that the fate of the latter is linked and related to the fate of the tree and its condition. As for the pre-Islamic Arabs, they believed that every human being has a bird that lives what s/he lives and dies with his/her death and is called "*al-hamah*" (الهامة). In case a person was killed, his/her bird remains deserted until it takes revenge for his owner. One of the poets said, "Until al-hamah says: water me ... "and it is like a myth that expresses intellectual beliefs that have their value in the nomadic imagination of those societies. (Barakāt, 2008, p.68) excavations

Several excavations found in the Arab region also indicate primitive red tattoos. They include among their units some triangular shapes, or specifically a (V) shape, topped by four vertical lines, each of which is placed on the tattooed belly (Hosseini, 2013, p. 36). As for the curvy and

parallel lines, they may express the movement and ripple of water, while the shapes that have parallel lines crossed into rectangular shapes, they are more like the teeth of a comb. (Hosseini, 2013, p. 44) The indigenous people of Egypt were not the only ones who were tattooed in the country. Even the Arab prisoners of Ramses tattooed their bodies, in addition to the Jews in Egypt who were forced by one of the Ptolemaic kings to tattoo a "plant leaf" in honor of the god "Backus". (Hosseini, 2013, pp. 47-48).

The names of tattoos vary according to the multiplicity of its symbols, which include simplified form units for many animals. For example, the so-called "deer tattoo" is related to the lives of the Bedouins accustomed to hunting deer (Aḥmad, October 2012, p. 8). It is customary for women in North Africa to pierce this type of tattoo according to what is indicated by a pottery bride unearthed by the "Nagada" excavations (Hosseini, 2013, p. 41). There is also the "King's Girl's Pillow Tattoo" which is usually pierced on the soles of the forearm and the "palm tattoo" that is pierced on the palm, in addition to the waist, the bear's claws, the snake's comb, the rose, the points, (Aḥmad, October 2012, p. 8) Scorpio, ostrich. Moreover, the palm tattoo in ancient Egypt expresses fertility, production and abundance, while the green bird symbolizes victory and goodness, and it goes back to the myth of "Osiris & Isis" (with its symbols of the victory of good over evil that the simple folk exploited in his various popular practices.) (Amer, 1976, p. 108). As for the fish, it symbolizes the abundance of offspring, and it means the woman as a symbol of fertility and protection. (Barakāt, 2008, p. 69). Many village girls used to tattoo the "fish" prior to marriage in the Egyptian market, as a symbol of fertility and abundance of offspring (Amer, Tattoos, 1965, p. 65). In addition, women in the Egyptian Upper Egypt tattoo the lower lip until the chin in green as a form of beautification and adornment, and this type of tattoo has preserved its ancient character that dates back thousands of years, as it was found in some ancient Egyptian mummies. (Barakāt, 2008, p. 70)

The people of Upper Egypt are also distinguished by tattooing the sign "Nefar", meaning the beautiful women, which was found on some ancient Egyptian mummies. As for the lower lip and chin, it often takes the green color that carries an aesthetic meaning for Upper Egyptians and is an attraction for men in cases of marriage (Aḥmad, October 2012, p. 11). Christians used to make the sign of the cross on their foreheads so that they could get to know each other (Aḥmad, October 2012, p. 5).

In his study of the Tassili Caves in the Sahara Desert in southern Algeria in 1958, "Lot" mentioned that many of the wall paintings included groups of snipers and hunters who were painting their bodies with geometrical paints and stamped parts of their bodies with tattoos in the form of compact dots forming longitudinal lines along the leg and shoulders. Some of them adorned their bodies in quadruple shapes, with a horizontal line in the center, in

addition to a woman who tattoos her forehead with certain shapes. (Hosseini, 2013, pp. 42-43)

Not only do all the African tribes of "Congo" practice the art of scarification on an intricate and subtle level, but they also incorporate delicate and beautiful models that cover the whole body. Tattoos may also be just in a form of rows of parallel wounds, but the common among all forms of scarification is the pain and torment that they cause on all parts of the body from the forehead to the cheeks, neck, arms, chin, abdomen, sacrum, and thighs with the legs. (Trowell, 1960, p. 55)

The decorative elements on the tattooed body bear many moral and magical connotations. For example, the sword tattoo symbolizes heroism and courage, the crescent moon and the star are Islamic symbols symbolizing optimism, while the crow and the owl are symbols of doom and desolation, roses and flowers express friendship, while the jug and prayer rug symbolize purity and virtue (Aḥmad, October 2012, p. 12).

6. Dimensions of the female tattooing in Algeria:

Before examining the different dimensions of female tattooing, it must be noted that each of them has a name, a position, and a special function that does not differ much from the symbols carried by other popular cultural practices that women practice in their daily lives. For example, the shapes that we find in textiles, carpets, clothes and jewelry, and even clay, copper and silver utensils, which have purposes related to belief and magical functions, which developed over time to acquire aesthetic dimensions as soon as women took them as part of their own adornment. (Kamli, The origins of folk beliefs and their manifestations in the region of Sidi Bel Abbès, 1991-1992, p. 61)

Therefore, the discussion of female tattooing is often linked to its aesthetic dimension. Thus, even if the symbols, positions, interpretations, and connotations they carry differ, they share the fact that most tattoo symbols on a woman's body have an aesthetic dimension that is reflected in the harmony of shapes and their symmetry, including points, lines and circles arrows, triangles, squares, and even representative drawings of animals and plants ...

That is why we find that the beautiful woman (white with a long neck) has many tattoos in order to highlight her charms, to feel her beauty, and to become more beautiful in the eyes of those around her. It may also be used by women of moderate beauty to attract attention and fascinate the others with her charms. As for the brown woman, her tendency to tattoo diminishes because the tattoo symbols do not appear on the color of her skin, so she resorts to scarification in specific countries such as Sudan. Green and blue are the most used colors for tattooing in Algeria and most North African countries, "Amazigh", due to the prevailing perception of the magic of the blue color, which is believed to ward off evil spirits. The blue color of the tattoo is extracted in Kabylie, Chaouia and other regions of Algeria using "kohl" during the tattoo coloring process. It is a natural product that is still used

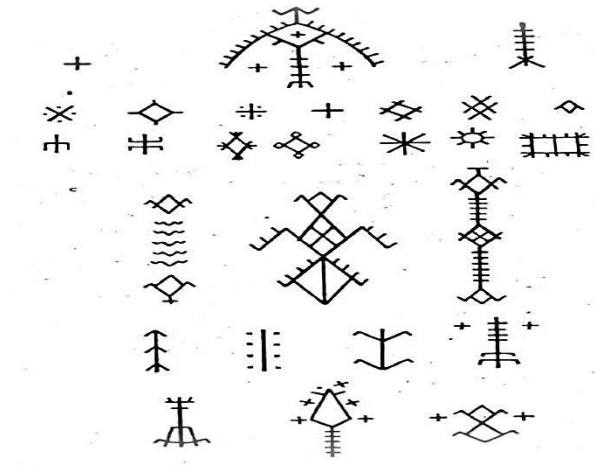
until now in the adornment process. Alternatively, "*Lehmoun*" may be used, which is the residue of wood burning on the bottom of the clay "tagine" used in the cooking of bread. (Bendaas, 2013, p. 7)

In the same context, Lucienne Brousse raised a question about the nature of women who wear tattoos, and she answered by saying: "They are light-skinned women without distinction in social rank or tribal or clan affiliation ..." (Brousse, 2012, p. 27). Aesthetic tattoos are often placed in women in apparent places on their bodies, such as the neck, cheeks, lips, nose, and even chin, as they are physical places that express a woman's natural beauty in the first place, so that tattoos are a cultural complement to the divine natural beauty. This can be justified by the relationship between natural and cultural in several humanitarian issues. Each region has special spots for tattooing. For example, Chawi women have been used to applying tattoos to various places on their body since ancient times, not only on the face forehead, cheeks, chin ... but they also tattoo their hands, arms and legs. (Bendaas, 2013, p. 5) In the Kabylie region, women do not tend to tattoo on the cheeks, but they rather pay more attention to tattoos on the neck and chin.

The discussion of aesthetic tattoos for Algerian women is also related to the symbols themselves, where we find that they pierce simple or complex geometric and plastic shapes that express their cultural history inherited from one generation to another through customs, practices or traditions. Among the most prominent symbols that are used in the Amazigh tattoo we find the sun, stars, scorpion, bees and even an olive branches and a snakes... etc. In the Kabylie region in Algeria, we may find symbols expressing the olive tree and its leaves. As for the desert in the south of Algeria, we find the symbol of the palm tree instead of the olive tree. They are, thus, symbols inspired by the natural and geographical environment surrounding the tattooed woman, as they are simulations of the visual shapes in reality emanating from a sacred space dominated by the mythical and priestly character. (Kamli, *Tattoos Semiotic and Rituals: Reading in the Language of Shapes and Symbols, Contemporary Writings: Arts and Sciences*, 1998, p.49) they also express the natural and cultural specificity of the region to which the tattooed woman belongs. This is in addition to symbols with other connotations related to the history of the tattoo owner and the tribe to which she belongs, as each tribe had tattoo symbols that distinguish it from other tribes. This is what Abd al-Rahman al-Jilali (عبد الرحمن الجليلي) referred to in his book "General History of Algeria / 3" by saying: "The Algerian tattoo is intended to distinguish between clans so that the women of the tribe do not mix with others in wars and in the areas of revolutions and conflicts." Nevertheless, it is difficult to distinguish the symbols of each tribe due to their intermingling with intermarriage and social development. (Kamli, *The origins of folk beliefs and their manifestations in the region of Sidi Bel Abbes*, 1991-1992, p. 60) As for the symbols that are found on the breasts,

they usually indicate fertility in the offspring and may be associated with puberty.

Picture (06): Examples of tattoo symbols in the Aures region



Source: Rivière. T, Faublée Jacques, "The tattoos of the Chaouia of l'Aurès", In: Journal of the Society of Africanists, 1942, p.74

Tattoos may also carry many other connotations, such as conveying a communicative message between the tattooed woman and another part, and it is the central function of any tattoo with a difference in its theme. Especially since many conservative societies lack direct contact specifically between a man and a woman. Therefore, women resort to rooting what she wants to say on her skin, so it is a communicative process that is practiced to prove itself within a specific societal context. One of the most common communication messages in the feminist tattoo discourse is its adoption of the plus sign (+) in all its forms and branches, or what is believed in many areas to be a small cross. In Amazigh societies it means the letter *Ta* as "Tifinagh", which symbolizes the first letters of the word (Tamtouth) meaning the beautiful woman in the Amazigh language (El Jattari, 2000, p.74). However, the meaning of the plus sign (+) in world culture is broader than that as it expresses the cross that generates the square, and denotes the four seasons, the four basic points and directions, the four stages of the evolution of the moon, the four units of time (day, night, moon, year). It also symbolizes the stable world from the middle (Moreau, 1976, p. 73). All of them are interpretations indicating the importance of the symbol of the orthogonal lines and their multiplicity in view of the environment that produced it.

7. Conclusion:

From the foregoing, it can be said that women in different cultures and with different social affiliations have used all their physical organs to communicate with the other using non-verbal contact. She speaks with her body as she speaks with her tongue, and uses body symbols just as she uses linguistic symbols that carries conceptual connota-

tions just like words, but without precise and specific meanings because the physical units have meanings that are colored by the colors of their uses and their contexts. Thus, for a woman, the body constitutes her whole and her part, and expresses her femininity in both cases and her simplest and most complex speeches in many different ways.

Tattoos are among the most important things that women have always used as a form of physical contact, by writing on different places of their body despite the hardship and pain that this writing carries. Thus, the pain of tattooing is added to the many other pains that a woman's body endures, such as the pain of labor and marriage. Among the important matters that the researcher tried to highlight in her article is to clarify the symbolic and communicative dimension of tattoos on the body by addressing the most important communicative messages that women can formulate through simple or complex symbols derived from natural or animal forms surrounding them. She praises the aesthetic dimension at times and the therapeutic magical dimension at other times, based on cultural and contextual factors related to the environment of the tattooed woman and her socio-psychological status, as tattoos in many cases are considered a relief from the state of social oppression and emotional pressure that woman suffered from.

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However, the common thing between all these dimensions and others is mentioned in detail on the main body of the study. It is the delivery of a message with a specific meaning and significance whose subject matter becomes clear by analyzing its symbols semiologically. As for the matter that makes the researcher's task difficult in studying and analyzing various symbols is the fact that most of them are not documented and preserved. This is despite the fact that it is a social gain and a cultural legacy transmitted by the collective memory in a limited temporal context, until it has almost become today a habit of unknown or ambiguous meaning.

This ambiguity in meaning was the researcher's starting point in the study and her scientific justification for adopting semiological analysis as a methodological support, as every attempt to define the depth of meaning and its rhetoric must pass through the dismantling and reconstruction of the symbols included in the tattoo discourse. This is what should be done in any semiological study of tattoo symbols.

Conflict of interest:

This article expresses scientific facts and cultural facts that do not, in any way, reflect a conflict of interests.

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