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In the following newspaper article from the Daily Mirror 23rd June 2012, Tony Parsons offers his views on the subject of tattoos.

Making my skin crawl: Tattoos scream for attention

AS soon as the sun starts shining, I realise with a sinking heart that Britain is now a tattooed nation.

Tattoos are everywhere. You see them on firm young flesh and on wobbly, middle-aged flab, as common now on the school run and in the supermarket queue as they are on some footballer or his wife.



I feel like the last man left alive whose skin crawls at the sight of these crass daubings. I feel like the only person in the world who sees David Beckham modelling his swimming pants on the cover of Elle magazine and thinks – oh, how much better a handsome guy like you would look, David, without all those dumb ink stains stitched into your skin. I feel like nobody else looks at little Cheryl Cole – so pretty, so smiley – and recoils at the sight of the florist shop she has permanently engraved on her lovely body.

Tattoos scream for attention. Tattoos say – look at me! I guess the person with the tattoo imagines that – somehow – having a martial arts symbol or a badly drawn flower or a sentimental heart expresses their individuality. The end result is a million simple souls all with exactly the same primitive daubings, all telling you what an individual they are.

On Tuesday, a tattooed lady called Joanna Southgate – pretty, blonde, young – swerved past the dress code at Royal Ascot by waiting until she was inside before revealing that her arms are covered in what looks like a three-year-old's finger paintings. Joanna looked so proud. But why? She has ravaged her natural good looks with what, at best, looks like cartoons done by someone who flunked their art GCSE.

Tattoos were her choice. But tattoos are self-mutilation. Tattoos are a tragedy. Having tenth-rate art on your body for life is now part of the national fabric. Did I say that Britain is a tattooed nation? Strike that – Britain is the tattooed nation.

Tattoos are so widespread, so ugly and so very, very permanent. You can, in theory, have them removed – but a large chunk of your living flesh will go with it.

The tattooed nation will live to regret this voluntary disfigurement. Already I sense that some of our celebs are covering up – you don't see Cheryl Cole's florist shop nearly as often as you used to.

A tattoo doesn't make you look like an individual. A tattoo makes you look a thicko. You'll all look silly when you're 60.