

**The Doll**  
The Figure of the Doll in Culture and Theory

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## Introduction



**Figure 1**  
French bisque-headed doll.

Constance Eileen King, in her *Dolls and Dolls' Houses* (1977), describes the doll above (**Figure 1**) as a 'French bisque-headed doll with jointed body, fixed eyes and open mouth. The original costume is very decorative. Marked "\* 95" for Phoenix Baby'.<sup>1</sup> King's description is doll-collection speak, and shows a particular way of looking at

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<sup>1</sup> Constance Eileen King, *Dolls and Dolls' Houses* (London: Chancellor Press, 1996 [orig. 1977]), 75. Hereafter King. King's book is a good source for the history of dolls and dolls' houses and for providing enthusiastic and lively accounts of them. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.



dolls, one which typically identifies the country of origin (French), the name of the doll-series (Phoenix Baby), materials of which the doll is made (head made of bisque, a kind of unglazed porcelain) and any identifying marks it might have, with a particular emphasis on dress and head. This type of doll is usually referred to as a *bébé*, a word registered by French and German manufacturers by 1850 to describe a doll suggesting a child somewhere between the ages of four and twelve.<sup>2</sup> The *bébé* (in **Figure 1**) is a doll alright, but it is a very particular kind of doll, and gives a very particular idea of what a doll is. This doll represents perhaps the most nostalgically stereotypical idea of a doll: it shows a little girl in a pretty dress. If one goes and looks at the range of more modern dolls which clutter the shelves in toy stores--Ginny, Barbie, Cindy, Baby Dribbles, My First Baby, Action Man, Skydancer, Polly Pocket, Cabbage Patch Dolls, Spice Girls dolls, Power Rangers and Star Trek dolls, Furbies, to mention a few--one finds that dolls come representing a huge variety of different ages, social classes, ethnic and national backgrounds, occupations, hobbies. They are made of a variety of materials and combinations of materials; wood, leather, cloth, metal, composition (strengthened *papier mâché*), celluloid, plastic, wax, porcelain, stone. Often they are also what we might call borderline or fantasy human figures, half-monsters, three quarter animals, one third machines, in various combinations. Even though the French *bébé* might be immediately recognisable as a doll, and would conform to a conventional idea of a doll,

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<sup>2</sup> Audrey Vincente Dean, *Dolls* (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 1997), 130. Hereafter Dean. Dean writes that *bébés* represent ages four to eight (Dean, 130), but King claims that they represent ages from eight to twelve (King, 130). I take it that four to twelve, then, covers a considerable variety of *bébés*. Dean's *Dolls*, part of Collins Gems series, is a surprisingly good and wide-ranging little (doll-sized) introduction to dolls. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

it is by no means a typical doll. There is no typical doll.<sup>3</sup>

So, why have I chosen to write of 'dolls' rather than, say, miniature figurations of the human, which might seem to describe better the range of dolls available? It is because 'doll' has an imaginative cultural impact, whereas 'miniature figuration of the human' does not: in other words 'doll' is a part of cultural discourses, a context in language, play, the arts, manufacture, collecting, etc., whereas 'miniature figurations of the human' or some such 'definition' belongs to a (quasi)academic meta-discourse which isolates from dolls a quality which is presumed to identify the object of research, describe and even to an extent explain them. 'Miniature figuration of the human' is theory-before-analysis, 'doll' is more open to odd fractures and unanticipated connections. This work will not put forward a theory or theories of dolls. Rather, I shall trace the fantasmatic and phantasmagorical discursive configurations of and around dolls, and follow some distinctive 'aromas' of dolls. I take the word 'aroma' here from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* (1980), where he discusses the peculiar ease with which we see or recognise the human form, and what it would mean if someone were not able to recognise it:

What is lacking to anyone who doesn't understand the question which way the letter F is facing, where, for example, to paint a nose on?

Or to anyone who doesn't find that a word loses something when it is repeated several times, namely, its meaning; or to someone who doesn't find that it then becomes mere sound?

.... Is it that for him the sentence is not alive (with all that it implies)?

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<sup>3</sup> Dan Fleming's *Powerplay: Toys as Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996) is an absorbing book of the modern toy market. It is particularly good at analysing the modern narrative and media contexts where much of the modern toy play--and doll play--takes place.

Is it that the word does not have an aroma of meaning?<sup>4</sup>

Doll doll doll doll doll doll. Wittgenstein's most stimulating engagement with dolls takes place in *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), which is very much concerned with trying to smell the conceptual aroma of dolls.<sup>5</sup> Why would we so easily see in a doll the likeness of a human being? In the previous quotation, Wittgenstein seems to be suggesting that to be able to put a nose on an 'F' one must also have a nose for language (get some aroma of the word 'facing'). If somebody does not understand what 'putting a nose on an F' means, does not grasp how F could start looking like a human, his/her language 'means' differently: it does not have the same aroma of seeing a human form in something that is nothing like a human to begin with. What is striking in the quotation above is how Wittgenstein presents the idea that the shared aroma of language consists not only of recognising shared meanings, but just as significantly it consists of shared losing or absence of meanings (repetitions which become shared as turning to 'mere sound'). The aroma of language is linked with sharing 'noise', some noise of language, a certain shared insensibility, stupidity to and in language. Language begins to *mean* not simply through inclusion of meanings, but also through precluding some 'meanings' as impossible, irrelevant, mere noise.

At the same time as Wittgenstein is posing questions about meaning and language,

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<sup>4</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol. II*, eds. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), §§464-5. Hereafter Wittgenstein 1980a. This is a bilingual edition with the original German on the left and English on the right of facing pages. Further references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. References to Wittgenstein's work preceded by the symbol § are to numbered sections in the text; otherwise references are to page numbers.

<sup>5</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996 [orig. 1953]). Hereafter Wittgenstein 1996. Further references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

he can also be seen to describe how a human form might be seen to emerge from something that is not in the least like a human. F is nothing like a human face on which one usually encounters the nose. Dolls are little artefacts with bodies, arms, legs, heads, eyes, they look like us, in some ways. Yet, seeing dolls as figures in the likeness of human beings involves something not unlike painting a nose on an F. It requires recognising a shared aroma of meanings, a conventional imaginary leap which, once performed, almost requires no explanation at all: a doll is a figure of a human being because we can clearly see that it is, otherwise it would not be a doll. The importance of sharing a particular aroma of a doll is equally important in what we might call having 'the function of a doll'. In children's play any object can, at least on occasion, take on the function of a doll, become a doll by being treated as a representation of a human being, or even a particular person. A good example of this would be Freud's grandson's famous *fort/da* game with a spool.<sup>6</sup> In Freud's interpretation of the game the spool has a function of a doll, because in the game it represents the grandson's mother. For Freud, the boy's repetition of 'oooo' 'aaaa' was far from mere noise. For him, reading meaning in the noise and seeing the doll function in the spool was like painting a nose on an F. He just had to decide which way the F was facing, which human figure was incorporated by the spool-doll. Anyone agreeing that the spool functions as a doll (has the functional likeness of a human being) shares not only the 'aroma' of the spool, but also the 'noise' of the spool. In recognising the function, we treat the physical details of the object (lack of human resemblance) as irrelevant noise. This shared noise is necessary for the 'doll-

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<sup>6</sup> The *fort/da* game is described in Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. under the general editorship of James Strachey, 24 vols., vol. 18 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953-74), 1-64. Hereafter *The Standard Edition* will be referred to as *SE*.

aroma' of the spool to come through.

Seeing a doll as a likeness of a human being is to be able to put a nose on it, see where the nose goes. Yet, in other respects dolls are nothing like human beings; they are often much smaller than human beings, they do not move of their own volition, they are made of inorganic matter, they do not 'see', 'feel', etc. Almost too self-evidently, they lack 'life'. Yet these lacks are an equally important feature of dolls, even if they are often overlooked, and the rich cultural discursive aromas of dolls come also crucially from this 'lack' of human likeness. In this study, the lack of human likeness is connected with mass production, repetition, stiffness, silence, stoniness, death, all of which reverberate with 'mere noise'. In many ways, I am very much interested in this kind of noise of dolls, too, those discourses which do not quite know how to deal with dolls, what to make of them, how to play with them. These include Freud's psychoanalysis and Wittgenstein's philosophy, and some feminist accounts of Barbie as a representation of women.

With a bit of imagination, F gets a nose, like, say, P might look like a thin person with a sizable conker facing right. At the same time Wittgenstein describes the possibility that someone else might not share your view of where the nose goes; the nose travels around the F. The stamp of the human, or the anthropomorphism exemplified by the nose, is in a state of flux and transformation, disassembling and reassembling, recognisable here and there, differently by different people at different times, and does not always make sense. There is no one, or two, or three, ways of seeing which way an F faces; the same imaginative additions that are necessary to paint a nose, can paint a nose unexpectedly. Instead of F developing a nose to the right like P, it might develop it on the left, the horizontal lines of an F suggesting wind-blown hair, for example.

Dolls are manufactured. Chapter One, 'Dollies, Clones, Copies', offers a reading of the culturally figurative power of the word 'doll' and analyses the name of the most famous sheep in the world, Dolly. Dolly the sheep is the result of arguably one of the most important and far-reaching scientific discoveries of the century, cloning. In this chapter I shall argue that many of the concerns and worries of cloning are already embedded in the name Dolly, and can be detected in our uncomfortable relationship with dolls, especially in our relationship with the most famous and most widely advertised doll, Barbie. I shall also link Dolly and cloning with cultural concerns and stereotypings about blondness and stupidity.

Dolls are made to be loved. Chapter Two, 'Dummy Love: Sex Dolls', elaborates on the idea, already present in Chapter One, that dolls are inextricably linked with sexuality (Dolly the clone is arguably a radically 'new' form of manufactured reproduction) and examines the notion of sex dolls, especially in the context of doll-art. Like Dolly the sheep, sex dolls seem to represent the cultural side-stepping of female sexuality and reproduction. Sex dolls are also often seen as the most subjugated, dominated and suppressed dolls: they embody the apparently unchecked male aggressiveness and the silent female suffering. At the same time they can be seen to pose fundamental questions about sex and sexuality in general. I shall look at sex and dolls in the context of doll art, with an emphasis on the work of 'doll-photographers' Hans Bellmer and Cindy Sherman. In my discussion of doll-sex I shall draw considerably on the work of Leo Bersani, whose discussions of the notion of 'homoness' offer intriguing, if troubling, ways of accounting for sex doll art.

Dolls do not speak. In Chapter Three I shall look at Freud's dolls. Freud collected antiquities, and especially little statuettes. At the beginning of his career, it has been

argued, he also collected cases of women. In this chapter I shall follow the emergence of the doll-body (the rigid, paralysed, fragmented, tableau still-life body) as it appears in the early stages of Freudian psychoanalysis (in Charcot's studies on hysteria, and in Freud's own early women case collections) and later begins to clutter his work desk in the form of the little statuettes. The statuettes have usually been analysed as a rich nexus of Freud's ideas, embodying the ideas almost in a dream-like way: they are often seen to represent psychoanalytic ideas in condensed, displaced, metaphorical forms. However, Freud scarcely ever refers to his collection in his published writings. The collection that he faced on his writing desk is curiously absent from his writings. In this chapter I shall question the earlier ways of accounting for this collection, and suggest that it can also be seen as a collection of psychoanalytical silences (one interesting 'aroma' of psychoanalytic language). I argue that these silences have to do with a certain border of psychoanalysis. Freud's longest and most detailed account of dolls takes place in his essay 'The "Uncanny"', where he, strangely and significantly, attempts to de-emphasize, even erase, the uncanniness of dolls.<sup>7</sup> The dolls' uncanny silence stands for that mental block, that silence in psychoanalysis which exceeds the mental, the psychic.

Dolls do not belong to dolls' houses. In Chapter Four, 'Dolls' Houses and Homesickness', I shall delineate a short history of modern dolls' houses, before looking at how the notion of a doll's house functions in Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* and in Katherine Mansfield's short story 'The Doll's House'. In both texts dolls' houses are connected to homesickness, to a desire to return home, and at the same time they reveal

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<sup>7</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', *SE*, vol. 17, 219-52. Hereafter 'Uncanny'. All further page references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text.

an irrecoverable sickness in the home. Ibsen's play puts itself forward as a magnified doll's house, and its understated playing with the conventions of the theatre problematises the conventional 'liberatory' understanding of this drama. Mansfield's story presents itself as a doll's house, and even asks us to think of the short story as a doll's house (miniature) genre.

Dolls are stupid. In Chapter Five, 'Wittgenstein's Dolls of Stone', I shall offer a reading of how the figure of the doll functions in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Dolls may not be the first thing that come to mind in connection with Wittgenstein, but they play a crucial role in his *Philosophical Investigations*. In the book Wittgenstein examines how certain concepts, such as 'thinking' and 'feeling' are understandable or make sense only insofar as we can give them a sufficiently human-like context. In other words, some concepts anthropomorphise the contexts in which they appear. One of the most fascinating features of *Philosophical Investigations* is the way in which Wittgenstein examines and 'tests' the anthropomorphising concepts of 'thinking' and 'feeling' by trying them out with dolls. He asks questions such as 'Do dolls feel?' 'Are dolls in pain?' These questions lead him to posit a fundamental *contextual* distinction between the living and the non-living, the human and the non-human. However, at the same time his philosophical *performance* puts his own examination in question, and I propose to call this performance--that is, Wittgenstein's philosophising--a doll-philosophy. This form of thinking, I shall argue, is also crucially linked with a notion (and aroma) of stupidity.

Dolls do not die, but are sometimes buried anyway. In the last chapter, 'Deadly Dolls', I shall look at how dolls are linked with death. I shall offer a reading of dolls in Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye*, where, I argue, the narrator Claudia dissects



dolls as if they are cadaver proxies. I shall also offer short analyses of several 'dying dolls', dolls who 'die in effigy'. These include the small dolls found in a little doll graveyard in Scotland, the modern crash test dummy and the crucifix. The effigy effect of dolls such as these is an inseparable part of our reaction to dolls in general.

*The Doll* is concerned with exploring the figure of the doll in all its polyvalency and (ontological, epistemological, empirical) uncertainty. My focus is thus, in a very general sense, on the doll as an uncanny phenomenon: how the figure of the doll disturbs the familiar, puts definitions in a state of unrest. Throughout this work I shall offer and make references to a fair number of pictures (29 in all), which I think are crucial for the appreciation of my discussion. Since modern word-processing programs allow an easy incorporation of pictures into the body of the text, I have chosen to insert pictures on the pages where a reference to them is first made. Hopefully this makes a more integrated and engaging reading experience than the more traditional way of including illustrations in appendices at the end of the work.

## Chapter One: Dollies, Clones, Copies

The best 'definition' of a doll is still the one that Max von Boehn makes at the beginning of his seminal history of dolls, published in 1929, entitled *Dolls and Puppets*: 'The doll is the three-dimensional representation of a human figure,' whose dimensions may 'fluctuate in size from a few millimetres to a considerable number of metres' and 'there is no substance out of which a doll ... cannot be made'.<sup>8</sup> The very generality of this definition is troublesome. Surely there must be a better definition of what is a doll, which, although it may cut across the concept of doll somewhat violently, at least would give a better 'working definition' to this study? Yet, in all its problematic generality, von Boehn's definition still attempts to locate, identify and characterise the object that is a doll, to find the essential quality of this little object-thing which is the centre of his study. At the same time, the very generality of von Boehn's definition already suggests that the doll does not exist as an identifiable object, but it is more a thing in discourse. The indefiniteness of von Boehn's definition points rather to a kind of bustle and 'fluctuation' of 'representations', 'human figures', 'sizes', 'substances'. Any individual doll as such is incomprehensible without this bustle--the repetitions and variations that make the hurly-burly of dolls--which influences our analyses, terms, and reactions. Thus, our notions of the doll are not quite as free as Boehn's 'definition' claims, and a number of different constraints and contexts affect our choice of terms.

Little 3D representations of humans made of hard materials such as stone and metal tend to be called statuettes, bigger ones are known as statues, and both evoke the

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<sup>8</sup> Max von Boehn, *Dolls and Puppets*, trans. Josephine Nicoll (London: George G. Harrap and Company, 1932 [orig. *Puppen und Puppenspiele*, 1929]), 23. Hereafter Boehn. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

context of art, sculpture. Dolls placed in shop windows and inside stores are called mannequins, and they evoke the context of the retail industry and advertising. Dolls characterised by their movement are called puppets or marionettes; the movement of marionettes tend to be regulated more exclusively by strings, whereas 'puppet' can also refer to a hand-puppet or glove-puppet. If you sit a puppet on a ventriloquist's knee it is often called a dummy. Puppet, marionette and dummy are linked with the entertainment industry and performance arts. Puppetry--the manipulation of puppets for the purposes of performance--may nowadays refer to the use of puppets in fields as diverse as the Japanese Bunraku puppet theatre, marionette theatre, shadow puppetry, ventriloquism, toy theatre and table top theatre, giant puppets, animatronics, automata, computer animation and motion capture.<sup>9</sup> Then again, a mannequin in a shop window could be said to be involved in a performance of sorts, a display performance. Manikin, or the lay-figure, the anatomical model used for teaching purposes especially in art and medicine, could also be said to be involved in a performance of display.

Each of the terms mentioned above evokes more or less different kinds of contexts and discourses, which make up the particular specificity of each kind of doll, although, as von Boehn's open definition reveals, the specificity is in a sense nothing other than contextual. I am thus using the term 'doll' to describe not only the fascinating objects of various sizes and of various materials, but also to indicate intriguing formations of contexts and discourses, which, as von Boehn suggests, cut across the whole range of

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<sup>9</sup> An excellent source of information and links of the diverse forms of puppetry can be found on the Puppetry Home Page's 'Puppetry Definitions' page at <<http://sagecraft.com/puppetry/definitions/index.html>>. Accessed 8 September 1999. For an introduction to puppets in modern drama, see Harold B. Segal, *Pinocchio's Progeny: Puppets, Marionettes, Automats, and Robots in Modernist and Avant-Garde Drama* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), esp. Chapter One, 'Puppets and Their Kin in Fiction and Drama' (3-33).

more and less human representations.

A certain conceptual puppetry can be observed in the word 'doll' in other languages. For example, the German word for 'doll' is *Puppe*, which is also used to translate the English 'puppet'. The French *poupée* also covers both the English 'doll' and 'puppet'. Puppet, *Puppe* and *poupée* come from the Latin word *pūpa* meaning 'girl' or 'doll'.<sup>10</sup> Even if 'puppet' in its modern English meaning is connected more to the idea of movement and performance, in its Latin(ate) meanings it would also seem to share the idea of smaller size and childhood. 'Marionette', too, is linked to girls, as it comes from the French diminutive of the name *Marion*, which itself is a diminutive of *Marie*, *Mary* (*OED*). The word *mannequin*, on the other hand, is derived from *manikin* (or *mannikin*, sometimes also 'erroneously' *manakin*), and comes from the Dutch word *manneken* which is a double diminutive of *man*, that is, the English 'man'.<sup>11</sup> 'Dummy' is derived from *dumb*, meaning 'without the power of speech', which heightens the drama between the performing ventriloquist and his/her apparently speaking dummy. At the same time, the related German *dumm* and Dutch *dom* also have the meaning 'stupid', which the English word 'dummy' also has, particularly in its American usage (*Chambers*). A 'dumb blonde' is a familiar stock comedy character.

The etymology of 'doll' is much more dubious. *OED* and *Chambers* suggest that it probably comes from 'Dolly', a familiar diminutive of the name Dorothy. Leslie Daiken, in *Children's Toys Throughout the Ages* (1963), however, claims that it is 'generally accepted' that it comes from the Greek word for 'idol', but that the name

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<sup>10</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). Hereafter *OED*. Further references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

<sup>11</sup> *The Chambers Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1994). Hereafter *Chambers*. Further references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

'Dorothy' may have had some 'some circumstantial connection with the change of terminology'.<sup>12</sup> If we look at the meanings of the English 'idol' we can see that they are at least extremely suggestive in connection with dolls, and many of them will in fact be touched upon in this study: 'idol' can mean an 'image of god', 'an object of worship', 'an object of love', 'a fantasy', 'a phantom', 'an impostor', 'a sham', 'an image of semblance', 'a figure or effigy' (*Chambers*).<sup>13</sup> Both *OED* and *Chambers* seem to feel that something needs to be added to von Boehn's loose definition if we are to arrive at a more modern meaning of the word 'doll'. According to *OED*, the doll is 'an image of a human being (commonly of a child or lady) used as a plaything; a girl's toy-baby', and according to *Chambers* it is 'a puppet; a toy in the form of a human being, *esp.* a baby'. Both *OED* and *Chambers* seem to have something like the image in **Figure 1** in mind. Dolls, puppets, statuettes, mannikins, marionettes all share the element of smallness, sometimes present in the word itself in the form of a diminutive ending ('-ette'). 'Doll' and 'marionette' share a connection to women's names, Dorothy and Mary respectively, thus connecting them to diminutive women (girls), and 'puppet' comes from the Latin word meaning a girl. 'Manikin', or the 'lay-figure', on the other hand, clearly embodies a different miniature gendering. Just as 'manikin' comes from the Dutch *manneken*, 'small man', the earlier version of 'lay-figure' was 'layman', and it comes from the Dutch word *leeman*, meaning a 'joint man' (*Chambers*). Like the dummy, the doll is also suspected of being stupid; one of the modern meanings of the word doll is 'a pretty, but unintelligent or empty person, *esp.* when dressed up; a pretty, but silly or frivolous

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<sup>12</sup> Leslie Daiken, *Children's Toys Throughout the Ages* (London: Spring Books, 1963), 102. Hereafter Daiken. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

<sup>13</sup> *Idol* comes from Gr. *eidōlon*, from *eidos* meaning 'form', from *idein* meaning 'to see' (*Chambers*).

woman' (*OED*).

Dolls, puppets, marionettes, dummies, mannequins, manikins, robots, automata, cyborgs, animation figures, computer game characters, statues, statuettes, stuffed animals, animal toys, corpses, effigies, funerary figures, all invoke each other in different combinations, suggest more or less close relationships, striking links, shared meanings, odd contrasts, unexpected affiliations, and they all involve, in some form or another, a replication of the human figure or (some of) its characteristics. All of these objects stake out different overlapping contexts, but to different degrees and in different areas. Some of the overlaps I have already mentioned in the previous paragraph, and we can easily come up with others: animation figures and computer characters share the element of movement and manipulation with puppets and marionettes, although they do not share the element of public performance in the same way. Effigies, funerary figures and corpses all link dolls with death, whereas robots, automata and cyborgs link them with machines. Yet, the notion of the doll gives some contexts more prominence than others, and the contexts of the doll are, above all, those of childhood, play and the female. Girls play with dolls, which are furthermore often female dolls. We know very well that this is not the whole picture: boys play with Action Men, men play with sex dolls, adults collect Bisque dolls and Barbies. Any inquiry that links up with the notion of the doll, however, has to take into account at least some of the aspects of the stereotypical context of the doll, that is, childhood, play, and the female. In this study these contexts are not dealt with separately; instead they pervade the whole study, sometimes more explicitly, sometimes less.

What makes dolls particularly interesting for study is their figurative power. This is, of course, an aspect that would be in danger of being lost in a perhaps more

traditional delimitation or definition of the topic (one which would focus on an object, a period, a medium, etc.). To illustrate the doll's figurative potentiality at this point I would like to introduce Dolly, 'the most famous lamb in history'.<sup>14</sup> Dolly is a clone, that is, 'born not out of the union of a sperm and an egg, but out of adult genetic material from a sheep's udder' (Kolata). According to Kolata, the reason that the publicization of Dolly the clone in July 1996 attracted the interest it did is because '[i]t was one of those rare events that alter our notion of what it means to be human' (Kolata). Now, as a result of the successful cloning of Dolly, theoretically at least, people too can be cloned. Ian Wilmut, the head of the sheep cloning research in the Roslin Institute in Scotland where the cloning took place explains the rather mundanely economic reason why they used sheep in their research: "'sheep in Scotland are very very very cheap'" (Kolata). More intriguing is the reason—or the 'moment of frivolity', as Kolata calls it—why Dolly is called Dolly. Since the genetic material was taken from a sheep's udder, Ian Wilmut named the clone after Dolly Parton, 'who was also known, he said, for her mammaries' (Kolata). Dolly the sheep, then, brings together technological reproduction and women, breasts and female sex appeal, blondness and sheep, men and the stock-comedy bestial sex appeal of sheep, almost turning one of the most monumental scientific discoveries of the century into a frivolous comedy of questionable taste. Mass production, women, breasts, sex appeal and Dolly the sheep are inextricably linked with the same questions and representations as dolls, and not least because Dolly Parton is sometimes thought of as a kind of 'living doll'.

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<sup>14</sup> Gina Kolata, 'Dolly: Her True Story', *The Sunday Times*, 19 October 1997. Hereafter Kolata. Further references to this article will appear in the main body of the text. The article is based on Kolata's book on genetic research titled *Clone: The Road to Dolly and the Path Ahead* (London: Penguin, 1997). The article is also available in *The Sunday Times* Internet Edition, 19 October 1997, at <<http://www.sunday-times.co.uk/>>.

Before analysing in more detail the link between Dolly and Dolly Parton, however, I would like to look more closely at the cloning of Dolly. Who was this other mammalian celebrity, the Finn Dorset sheep whose udder cells were used to clone Dolly? It is worth noting that it is not quite clear who is supposed to be the mammalian celebrity sheep, Dolly, or the cloned Finn Dorset, perhaps partly because with Dolly this distinction itself becomes questionable; on a cellular level, presumably, the cloned Finn Dorset sheep and Dolly are the same. "She [the Finn Dorset] was put down," Wilmut explained to me [Kolata] over lunch. Some unknowing people butchered her and sold her. The sheep was eaten. Her udder cells were merely cells of convenience' (Kolata). While eating, over lunch (what was it, not lamb I hope?), Wilmut explains how the 'original' cloned sheep was eaten. Not pursuing any further the almost parodistic Christian sacrificial meal (they are discussing the death of the original cloned sheep, who is put to death by 'unknowing' people, but who conquers death, and promises thus a way to 'salvation' for all the sheep yet to be born and eaten), we could still ponder over this lack of the original. The cloned Dolly is just a clone, a copy of an earlier sheep, and at the same time she is the original clone sheep, a clone of a sheep that was already dead when Wilmut came across her frozen udder cells. And to add to this confusion of origins, Dolly is somewhat surprisingly only a supplement to cloning, not the original monumental event of cloning, and not strictly necessary for the history of cloning at all. From a scientific point of view she broke no ground, and in fact was not even the first sheep to be cloned by the Roslin team. Dolly may have been the first sheep cloned from cells taken from an 'adult' sheep, but earlier, in July 1995, Wilmut and the team had already cloned two other sheep, Megan and Morag, from cells grown in the laboratory. Cloning Dolly was from a scientific point of view unnecessary, 'more



of a lark', just to prove a point (Kolata). Megan and Morag were cloned from foetal skin cells of a Welsh mountain sheep, and since these cells were grown in the laboratory before being cloned, it already proved that cloning from grown, 'differentiated', adult cells was possible. Since the cells were foetal cells, the sheep from which they were taken had never been born, had never been alive; but because Megan and Morag are clones, we just know that it would have looked exactly like them. Amazingly, Dolly is the image of a dead (eaten) sheep, Megan and Morag are images of a sheep that never was, that is to say, they are the original sheep, in double. Although Wilmut's team published the success of cloning Megan and Morag in *Nature* (17 March, 1996), it went largely unnoticed. Kolata suggests that the reason for this may have been that the experiment involved farm animals. However, I would suggest that at least the lack of public interest in Megan and Morag has less to do with them being farm animals (Dolly, after all, is a sheep, too) than with fact that they do not tap into the popular media and cultural imagination like 'Dolly' does. It is at least as much a question of a name as it is the breed of the animal.

First of all, and paradoxically for a clone, Dolly is unique, an individual sheep (unlike the doubles Megan and Morag) and as such more easily personifiable. In Kolata's article Dolly's behaviour reads as if from an artist's biography, as the unusual behaviour of a young genius:

Dolly knows she is special. Most sheep are wary of humans and retreat to the back of their pens when people come near. Not Dolly. She rushes to the front of her pen when visitors arrive, bleating loudly. (Kolata)

Megan and Morag live (in December 1999) on the premises of the Roslin Institute, but



**Figure 2**

Dolly the sheep gets the Warholian colour treatment. *The Sunday Times* Internet edition (19 Oct. 1997) presents only three coloured copies of Dolly instead of the ten offered in the paper edition. The effect is still the same. (<<http://www.sunday-times.co.uk>>)

their pen behaviour is irrelevant. Their behaviour is mentioned only in connection with Dolly (with whom they shared a pen for 10 months): 'She [Dolly] would assert herself by turning over her trough as soon as she had finished eating and planting her forefeet on it. Then she would stand, chest puffed out, the queen of the pen' (Kolata).

Another interesting Dolly-knot would be the one that ties together Dolly Parton, mammarian glands and the stereotypical dumb blonde. Blondness and dolls go hand in hand, and the most famous example of this is, of course, the Barbie doll, who, as is so tirelessly pointed out in Barbie-criticism, despite her various skin colours and varieties of racial features (usually only on its face), remains resolutely in the popular imagination as a white blonde.<sup>15</sup> And it is by no means coincidental that the picture in *The Sunday Times* presents 10 copies of the same portrait of a bleating white woolly Dolly in different colours, thus clearly punning on Warhol's--the clone artist before the time of the clones--famous pictures of another blonde, Marilyn (see **Figure 2** above).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See Ann Ducille, 'Dyes and Dolls: Multicultural Barbie and the Merchandising of Difference', in *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, No. 6. 2., 1994, 46-68.

<sup>16</sup> In the Hollywood Legends series, Barbie also plays Marilyn Monroe. Barbie can be found dressed in the famous white dress from Marilyn's 1955 movie *The Seven-Year Itch*, modelled after the sequence where the dress is blown up by a stream of air from the subway; another Barbie wears Marilyn's pink dress worn in the 1953 movie's *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, and yet another Barbie wears a red outfit modelled after Marilyn's dress from the same film's opening sequence. See Marco Tosa, *Barbie: Four Decades of Fashion, Fantasy, and Fun* (London: Pavilion Books, 1998), 130-3. Hereafter Tosa. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. See also Dea Birkett's article 'I'm Barbie, buy me'

Just as Dolly Parton's most famous asset has arguably been her breasts, so too the furore around Barbie doll has often focussed on her peculiar 'measurements', and most notably on the size of her breasts.<sup>17</sup> As a sheep called Dolly, the clone is unavoidably caught up not only in the discourses negotiating questions of cloning, reproduction and reproductive technologies, ethics of gene manipulation and the responsibilities of science, but also in the various discourses negotiating questions of representations of women, identifications and dolls.<sup>18</sup> Not only is Dolly cloned from cells taken from mammary glands, she is also emphatically, almost unquestionably, a ewe, with mammary glands of her own. The blondes, Dolly seems to declare, are dollies as well, and already something like clones to boot. Thus Birkett, for example, recounts a legal wrangle between Mattel (the company which manufactures Barbie) and the nude models now known as Barbi twins. When the twins, two blonde women with money-making breasts, posed for the *Playboy* magazine in 1991, Mattel's 'legal threats forced them to change their name' from Barbie twins to Barbi twins (Birkett). The clone blondes come in doubles (like Megan and Morag, Barbi twins), but the unique clone blonde (Dolly, Barbie) will force them into the background.

One of the criticisms launched against Barbie is that although her vinyl-colour,

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in *The Guardian Weekend*, 28 November, 1998, which reflects on Barbie's influence on Barbie's 40th birthday in 1999. Hereafter Birkett. Further page references to this article will appear in the main body of the text.

<sup>17</sup> Mary F. Rogers, in her *Barbie Culture* (London: Sage, 1999), points out how usual it is for Barbie-criticism to 'extrapolate Barbie's proportions to real-woman ones: Barbie would then be 33-18-31 and stand five feet and nine inches tall' (23). Hereafter Rogers. Further page references to this edition will take place in the main body of the text.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of gender differences in the designs of Barbie and Action Man, see Judy Attfield, 'Barbie and Action Man: Adult Toys for Girls and Boys, 1959-93', in *The Gendered Object*, ed. Pat Kirkham (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 80-98. For a discussion of odour as a doll design concept, see Heather Hendershot, 'Dolls: Odour, Disgust, Femininity and Toy Design', also in *The Gendered Object*, 90-102.

the shape of selected facial features, the colour of her eyes, and certainly her clothes may change to reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of girls who play with it, nevertheless her measurements and her body shape remain the same. Inside the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic diversity--which is only skin deep--lurks a blonde clone:

Although she has made multiple appearances as a brunette since 1959 and occasionally appeared as a redhead, Barbie is also fundamentally blond. Although her eyes change color as readily as her hair, in effect Barbie has the elusive 'bluest eye' Toni Morrison fictionalizes. No matter what racial or ethnic identity she adopts, Barbie strikes me as white-identified, as beneficiary of white-skin privilege, as cultural evidence of white domination. (Rogers, 47)

Barbie is not only inescapably white, she is also inescapably blonde. Rogers sees all the Barbie dolls as somehow only Platonic 'appearances' made by the 'fundamentally' ideal blonde Barbie. However, just as one Barbie doll is hardly imaginable (Barbie is the millions of Barbies sold), the sheep are the most herdable of farm animals, to the extent that one sheep is almost a paradox. A sheep invites multiplication, and some kind of distinctive identifying markings among the multiplications, because like the blonde, it is almost inherently a clone. Hence one, for example, counts sheep to go to sleep, because counting sheep is a useless task; one always counts the same one, over and over again, and the only end to that counting is to fall asleep. That is why both Dolly and Marilyn (and soup tins) succumb with such ease to the Warholian multiplication, to the serially differentiated portrayal, where the differences appear only as painted on the subject, or as a film or lens which creates different colorizations. At the same time, the colorization only draws attention to itself as a separate layer of perception, one which plays with its own variations rather than effects any differences in our perception of the subject of the portraits. The same effect of multiplied colorisation plagues the ethnic

and racial Barbies.

Then, there is of course the question of the dumb sheep. Sheep, the sacrificial victim, the helpless little lamb, the easily herdable farm animal, is also stereotypically a dumb farm animal. Marilyn is (in)famous for her dumb blonde roles. Dolly Parton is likewise famous for her 'silly' Southern giggle. To counterbalance her 'trademark' of silly-endearing laughter, stories of Dolly Parton tend to emphasise her financial acumen so that her blonde hair and cup-size are seen as shrewd moves in the accumulation of wealth. Likewise, Barbie's professions and occupations--by 1997 around 40 more or less different ones (Tosa, 120)--can be seen as an emphasis on her ambitions and intellectual capabilities to counterweight her far more distinctive features: the long blonde hair and the big breasts, both of which stereotypically signify dumbness.<sup>19</sup> In Kolata's account Dolly's pen behaviour, too, is made to emphasize her distinctive and assertive personality to counteract the suspicion of her clone-sheep dumbness.

Then, there is the question of technological serial production, which troubles the notions of identity and personality. This is counteracted by names. For example, we know that there is no such thing as a Barbie--a Barbie which would be 40 years old in 1999, or who would have had around 40 different professions by the end of 1999--the name Barbie identifies only a fantasmagorical 'object', which is nevertheless over and over again reproduced in Barbie criticism as a relevant object of criticism.<sup>20</sup> Yet, Barbie

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<sup>19</sup> Dolly Parton's first big recording success was a song called 'Dumb Blonde' (1967). Perhaps the most exhaustive Dolly Parton information is available on a website called *Dollymania* at <<http://pages.progidy.net/duanel/dolly.htm>>. An extremely detailed recording history can be found at <<http://pages.progidy.net/duanel/chron.htm>> and her entertainment 'story' at <<http://pages.progidy.net/duanel/story.htm>>. Lyrics for 'Dumb Blonde' can be found, for example, at <<http://dolly.simplenet.com/archives/lyrics/dblonde.shtml>>.

<sup>20</sup> Giving Barbie a 'life-span' is particularly common in newspaper styles of writing, but it is regularly reproduced in more academic accounts as well. For example, Rogers writes: 'By now, Barbie is approaching midlife. In 1999, she turned forty despite all evidence to the contrary' (Rogers, 58). Later she writes even

(in the singular) exists only as a name Barbie. This is why Mattel is so sensitive about any use of the name 'Barbie', and goes to extraordinary lengths, even by the highly competitive standards of corporate big business, to impose limits to the use of this name. There is nothing in the toy world that would respond to the singularity of this name: there is almost an unaccountable number of dolls, in a myriad of variations, with differently portrayed occupations and capabilities. Mattel, of course, exploits this designed conflation, the mix and match of identity and difference. The same mix and match does not happen with other industrial product to the same extent: one hardly speaks of vacuums cleaners, cars, trainers or soft drinks in this way. With Hoovers and Mazdas one speaks of products, with Barbie-dolls one speaks of Barbie, the 40-year-old forever young miracle and abomination of nature, the ever-anorexic ever-wealthy happy single young woman with gravity defying breasts.

The name 'Barbie' tries (and apparently also manages) to transcend production in an imaginary act of identification, combining the myriad of dolls under a life-span, history, development, personality. The name 'Dolly' is in some ways more interesting, because it (unwittingly, perhaps) also plays with the idea of production, which is something that the name 'Barbie' tries very much to avoid. 'Barbie' does not call attention to itself as the name of a product, but tries to pass itself over as a name and a

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more enigmatically:

We know what she [Barbie] *does*, we know how she *looks*, we know what she *appears* to be. Ultimately, though, Barbie eludes us. Her personality is inchoate, even ethereal; her morals and values are more implicit than expressed or affirmed; her intimate life--her dreams, her passions, her abiding attachments--remain a mystery. Barbie is a nextdoor neighbor whom we keep meaning to get to know better; she is a co-worker with whom we are friendly but not friends; she is the babysitter whose judgement we trust but whose life we know not. (Rogers, 136)

And I thought that Barbie was a child's play-thing, until suddenly she turned into my neighbour, perhaps even my sister. Some of the effects of this kind of personification and psycho-analysis of dolls are topics of later Chapters.

doll which one can identify with. One of the traditionally frightening and uncanniest aspects of cloning is that clones are the mass-products of an industry. For example, Megan and Morag were in a batch of 14 embryos transferred to 14 surrogate mother sheep, five of which resulted in birth, out of which only Megan and Morag survived, while Dolly is the result of the only successful pregnancy of a batch of 29 embryos transferred to surrogate mother sheep (Kolata). The name 'Dolly', with its links to Dolly Parton's pair of breasts, is almost numerologically haunted by another pair, Megan and Morag. But instead of getting caught up in the problematic identification and naming of many clones which are actually the same (what makes Megan Megan and Morag Morag?) 'Dolly' functions like a brand name in the manner of 'Barbie'. It identifies what is no longer one, but is instead mass produced, a copy of only one end-product in an assembly line, which was, though, at the time of Dolly's and Megan and Morag's production, perhaps unusually ineffective by late capitalist industrial standards. Five months after Dolly the same team in the Roslin Institute produced Molly and Polly, the first sheep cloned by the same nuclear transfer technology that was used to clone Dolly, but also bearing a human gene. The name 'Polly' is an 'alternative' (a kind a mix and match name double) of Molly, which is another pet name for Mary (*Chambers*). The name Polly, again, is a well-known typical name of a parrot, and links up with speaking dolls. The speaking parrot is a kind of a living phonograph, a speaking dummy which speaks (or rather repeats) without understanding, without any 'living' connection with a meaning voice. Like a speaking doll, it has a non-living voice.<sup>21</sup> Just as Polly the sheep

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<sup>21</sup> For example, the first entertainment use for which Edison's phonograph was envisioned, and manufactured, was to give voice to a doll. The Edison Factory produced talking dolls between 1889 and 1890, but the construction was quite fragile and broke easily. A good account of the development of Edison's phonograph can be found at the Library of Congress Edison page <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/edhtml/edcyldr.html>>, and a picture of Edison's speaking doll at Quebec's Edison Phonograph

carries a human gene as a foreign body in her, a speaking parrot and a speaking doll carry human voices as foreign bodies.

In this Chapter I have been focussing on the largely unanalysed (and unacknowledged) figurative power of dolls, on the doll as a figure in discourse. I have explored this through an analysis of how the name 'Dolly' links up with the concerns of cloning. The early (current) history of cloning is inextricably linked to our concerns with dolls, and I suggest one way of making sense of what is worrying and disturbing in cloning is to consider what worries and disturbs us in dolls. The next Chapter, 'Dummy Love', will offer a fuller investigation of the idea that dolls are linked with sex and sexuality, a connection that is often perceived as unnatural and troubling.



## Chapter Two: Dummy Love

The focus of this chapter is sex dolls. With 'sex doll' I refer not only to the modern sex toys, love dolls and blow-up dolls, but also to other dolls, dummies and mannequins that serve for sexual arousal and titillation, or which are renowned for their eroticism. Making use of dolls for sexual purposes is a multifaceted activity; as are the artistic explorations of what it is that constitutes a sex doll, what sexualises dolls, what doll sex is. We could again take Barbie as an example. Barbie is based on a German doll Lilli, which originated in a comic strip that appeared in a German newspaper *Bild Zeitung* in 1952. The comic strip's heroine was a sexy blonde young woman Lilli, who was busy keeping her admirers at bay, amidst 'mildly sordid double entendres' (Tosa, 27). The sexy Lilli was so popular that she was soon made into a doll, which was initially for sale only in 'smoke shops', targeted at an adult male audience and 'was never intended for children' (Tosa, 28).<sup>22</sup> Mattel acquired the patent and rights to Lilli, and adapted it to what they considered to be American tastes and fashion. Barbie, then, has a 'smoke shop' past which will not let go, but surfaces regularly, particularly in unofficial Barbie-accounts and Barbie-fiction. A. M. Homes's 'A Real Doll' (1990), for example, tells a story of a boy who becomes obsessed with his sister's Barbie.<sup>23</sup> In the story Barbie remains doll-sized throughout, but she talks, expresses undeveloped 'Barbie-like' thought and wishes, and the narrator-boy develops a strange erotic relationship with her,

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<sup>22</sup> Mattel would appear to try to de-emphasise Barbie's Lilli-past, but even Janine Fennick's Mattel-approved *The Collectible Barbie Doll* (London: Apple Press, 1996) calls Lilli's wardrobe 'extremely provocative' (11). Mattel pursues currently one of the most aggressive brand purification policies in America, and particularly all Barbie-parodies linking Barbie with sex run the risk of being taken to court for unauthorised use of the name Barbie, as in the case of the Barbi twins mentioned earlier.

<sup>23</sup> A.M. Homes, 'A Real Doll', in her *The Safety of Objects* (London: Anchor, 1998 [orig. 1990]), 165-89. Hereafter Homes. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

which also includes sex: 'We fucked, that's what I called it, fucking' (Homes, 187):

I was on top, trying to get between her legs, almost breaking her in half. But there was nothing there, nothing to fuck except a small thin line that was supposed to be her ass crack.

I rubbed the thin line, the back of her legs and the space between her legs. I turned Barbie's back to me so that I could do it without having to look at her face.

Very quickly, I came. I came all over Barbie, all over her and a little bit in her hair. I came on Barbie and it was the most horrifying experience I ever had. It didn't stay on her. It doesn't stick to plastic. I was finished. I was holding a come-covered Barbie in my hand like I didn't know where she came from. (Homes, 177)

Where do sex dolls, so to speak, come from? There is something very uncomfortable, disturbing, even horrifying about sex dolls. Dolls have no sex, 'nothing to fuck', and yet, stereotypically, sex dolls are the embodiment of the sexual objectification of women. To put it bluntly, a woman as an object is a sex doll. Conversely, dolls as figures of women, as representations of women, as woman-objects, are from the start suspected of being sex dolls, as the Barbie in A. M. Homes's story demonstrates. Erica Rand's *Barbie's Queer Accessories* (1995) begins with the use of Barbie as--what she considers to be--a subversive sex doll:

Founding Tale 1: In the fall of 1989, when I was teaching at Northeastern Illinois University, my friend Joanne Kalogeras sent me a recent issue of the lesbian sex magazine *On Our Backs* because it contained a photo-essay called 'Gals and Dolls' that featured a woman inserting a Barbie (feet first) into her vagina. I loved it, and immediately wanted to teach it in my art history/women's studies class. I had scheduled a unit on popular culture, and the photographs seemed like a refreshingly direct response to the often-asked feminist query, how can pop culture be subversively refunctioned for women's pleasure?<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Erica Rand, *Barbie's Queer Accessories* (Durham and London: Duke Univ. Press, 1995), 1. Hereafter Rand. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

Barbie is transformed from a sex doll into a doll dildo, into a sex toy, and what is involved here is a difference between a doll and a toy, and a different interpretation of 'use'. Sex dolls are 'used' differently than sex toys. Sex toys are used as instruments, sex dolls are used as women. In the context of sex dolls, 'use' almost inevitably implies violence. Rand sees the re-use of Barbie as subversive in the sense that an image of stereotypical female (even 'compulsory heterosexual') sexuality which signifies pleasure for men, is here transformed into women's pleasure (Rand, 9). What I would see as most significant in this 'refunctioning' (if it amounts to that), however, is that Barbie is no longer a Barbie-personality in the sense that it is, for example, in Homes's story. The Barbie inserted in the vagina does not, for Rand, represent a woman stuck in a vagina. If the *On Our Backs* pictorial as described by Rand has something to do with subversive pleasure, it also has something to do with sex detached from personality and identity (more about doll-identity later in this chapter).

The idea in this chapter is to explore the specific link between dolls and sex as it appears in the context of art. If I choose to use the somewhat highbrow, and somewhat vague-sounding notion of 'art' here, it is because one of the issues in this chapter is to see how in the early part of the 20th century dolls came into contact with what was then referred to as art, and how dolls have been affected by that contact. In the course of this chapter I shall examine some little anecdotal accounts about the love of dummies, lay-figures, dolls. The principal doll artists featuring in this chapter are Pygmalion, Oskar Kokoschka, Lester Gaba, Hans Bellmer, Lotte Pritzel and Cindy Sherman. I shall follow the discussion of dolls growing up in the opening decades of the 20th century; growing up into art and at the same time growing into sexuality. The German doll-maker Lotte Pritzel will provide me with a dummy-pivot on which the various encounters between

art and dolls turn. When the sex doll discussion turns more explicitly to sadism (and the quotations from Holmes and Rand already suggest that we cannot talk of sex dolls without talking of sadism), I shall engage with Leo Bersani's ideas on sadism, masochism, sex and the relational, before regarding them in the light of sex dolls.

A 'dummy', as the *OED* tells us, is first of all 'a dumb person', where 'dumb' means 'one destitute of the faculty of speech'. The doll cannot speak. This characteristic is particularly a theme in children's literature, where a recurrent topic is the fantasy of what the doll would say if it could speak, what emotions it could tell us, what lessons it could teach. A good early example of a dumb (and all but deaf) doll is Richard Henry Horne's *Memoirs of A London Doll, Written by Herself* (1846).<sup>25</sup> The doll's 'Memoirs', according to the title page edited by Mrs Fairfax, tell the story of a doll called Maria Poppet from her the earliest inklings of consciousness, through various owners to her last residence where she feels to be 'settled for life' (Horne, 125). The two 'qualities' of the doll which give the *London Doll* memoirs their drama and twists are the immobility and speechlessness of the doll, for example, when she has a narrow escape in the opera:

Lady Flora was placed near the edge of the box, as this was her first visit to the Opera. She held me in her arms with my head hanging a little over the edge. Oh, how frightened I was as I looked down! The height was dreadful! .... 'Oh', cried I to myself, 'if my mamma *would* but hold me tighter--I am so frightened!' (Horne, 52)

Being made of wood Maria Poppet feels no pain, although in moments of calamity, like when she is pecked by a parrot in a zoo, chewed by a dog, or when she eventually falls

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Henry Horne, *Memoirs of a London Doll, Written by Herself* (London: Andre Deutch, 1967 [orig. 1846]). Hereafter Horne. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

from the box in the opera into a gentleman's top hat, she tends to faint. Coupled with Maria Poppet's inability to speak her mind, we read her 'memoirs'. How she would have acquired the ability to write is, perhaps understandably, never explained. She just has a fully aware and learning mind in a completely helpless wooden doll body; consequently all her sensations are mental or 'psychical', and she feels no physical sensations.

In the context of art, 'dummy' means primarily 'a block, model, or lay figure on which clothes, hair, etc. are displayed' (*OED*).<sup>26</sup> One of the earliest recorded occurrences of the word 'doll' in the English language takes place in the context of display, appropriately and slightly paradoxically, in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in September 1751, where it is reported that 'Several dolls with different dresses made in St James's Street have been sent to the Czarina to show the manner of dressing at present in fashion among the English ladies' (quoted in Dean, 8; see also Daiken, 102). Dolls are the first travelling *haute couture* fashion models; and as such not only precursors of the shop window manikin, but also of the modern fashion models. 'Dummy' also means 'a counterfeit object made to resemble the real thing, a sham or empty package' (*OED*). A sex doll is often considered to be a counterfeit object, counterfeiting both woman and sex, displaying sexuality where there is none, and this makes the doll's sex and sexuality an object of anger and ridicule, bewilderment and fascination. I shall later look at some descriptions and critiques of sex dolls, and will

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<sup>26</sup> For an interesting reading of the self-reflexive use of lay-figures in a Dutch artist Jan Miense Molenaar's painting *Atelier or Painter's Studio* (1631), see Hillel Schwartz's *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles* (New York: Zone Books, 1996), 107-9. Hereafter Schwartz. In Schwartz's rich and exhaustively referenced book dolls are most extensively analysed in a Chapter titled 'Self-portraits' (89-141), where 'the historical problem at the core' of the chapter is 'how the portraits we make of ourselves have lost their capacity to anchor and extend us' (Schwartz, 132). Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

put these in the context of both Hans Bellmer's and Cindy Sherman's work. Both Bellmer and Sherman have in their work constructed and photographed dolls in ways which also pose crucial questions about sex and dolls.

If a sex doll is a doll that can be used for sexual gratification, an early example would be the three-dimensional figure described by Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79). In *Natural History* he recounts the story of a man who becomes so obsessed and aroused by Praxiteles' statue of Aphrodite of Knidos that he hides himself one night in the temple where it is displayed, and masturbates on the statue. Or as it is put in *Natural History*: 'There is a story that a man who had fallen in love with the statue hid in the temple at night and embraced it intimately; a stain bears witness to his lust'.<sup>27</sup> A more 'literal' sex doll extension of this story would be the myth of Pygmalion. In Ovid's version of the myth Pygmalion makes a statue with which he then falls in love, treats the statue as if it were a living woman, prays that it would come alive, until suddenly it does. Pygmalion seems to use the statue as a sex doll; sleeping with it, handling it roughly enough to fear that if it were alive it would be bruised:

He speaks to it, caresses it, believes  
The firm new flesh beneath his fingers yields,  
And fears the limbs may darken with a bruise.

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He laid her on a couch of purple silk,  
Called her his darling, cushioning her head

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<sup>27</sup> Pliny the Elder, *Natural History: A Selection*, trans. by John F. Healy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), 346. The story is also paraphrased in Lynda Neal, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1992), 87. Hereafter Neal. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. Christine Mitchell Havelock writes in *The Aphrodite of Knidos and her Successors: A Historical Review of the Female Nude in Greek Art* (Ann Arbor: The Univ. of Michigan Press, 1995) that although not much is known about Praxiteles, '[t]here is, however, one major point of agreement: the female nude as a subject for art in three-dimensional and monumental form was introduced by the late classic sculptor Praxiteles. The work was the statue of Aphrodite purchased by the city of Knidos in about 350 B.C.' (1)

As if she relished it, on softest down.<sup>28</sup>

Pygmalion desires the statue to be alive, and after having prayed for Venus to bring it to life, Pygmalion returns home to his love:

And he went home, home to his heart's delight,  
 And kissed her as she lay, and she seemed warm;  
 Again he kissed her and with marvelling touch  
 Caressed her breast; beneath his touch the flesh  
 Grew soft, its ivory hardness vanishing,  
 And yielded to his hands, as in the sun  
 Wax of Hymettus softens and is shaped  
 By practiced fingers into many forms,  
 And usefulness acquires by being used. (Ovid, 233-4)

J. Hillis Miller's *Versions of Pygmalion* (1990) gives a more suggestive translation to the line 'Called her his darling' (*apellat tori sociam*) and renders it as 'called it his bedfellow'.<sup>29</sup> Even though one of the 'obvious' reasons behind the statue's coming to life is a divine intervention on the part of Venus, another crucial reason would seem to be the 'use' of the statue. Or as Miller puts it: 'What the word "use" literally names here is all that caressing and stroking by Pygmalion of the ivory statue' (Miller, 8). By using the statue as a sex doll, Pygmalion, as if by divine intervention, brings the statue to life.

The early Greek and Roman sex statues are not the first ones. The history of representation coincides with the history of sex statuettes. Among the earliest

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<sup>28</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A. D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), 233. Hereafter Ovid. Pygmalion's story is part of the linked stories in Book X, ll. 243-97 (in the Latin text), but since Melville's translation is not line to line translation, my references are to page numbers. In this edition the story of Pygmalion is on 232-4. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

<sup>29</sup> J. Hillis Miller, *Versions of Pygmalion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), 6. Hereafter Miller. The first chapter of Miller's book, 'Pygmalion's Prosopopeia' (1-12) offers an interesting reading of the links between the stories in Book X. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.



**Figure 3**  
 Venus of Willendorf.  
 c. 30,000-25,000 BCE. Oolitic limestone.  
 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (11.1 cm) high.  
 (Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna).

representations of humans are the Upper Paleolithic so-called 'Venuses', the most famous ones being the 'Venus of Willendorf' and the 'Venus of Lespugue' (see **Figure 3** above and **Figures 4-5** below).<sup>30</sup> The figures are coarse, yet interestingly detailed at

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<sup>30</sup> Frederick Hartt, *Art: A History of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*, 2 Vols., Vol. 1, *Prehistory, Ancient World, Middle Ages* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976). Hereafter Hartt. According to Hartt, the Venus of Willendorf (found near Willendorf in Austria) is dated between 30,000-25,000 BC. It is made of limestone and its height is 4 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches. (Hartt, 26-7). The Venus of Lespugue (found near Lespugue in France) is tentatively dated much later about 20,000-18,000 BC. It is made of ivory and its height is 5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches. (Hartt, 26-7) Further page references to Hartt's book will appear in the main body of the text. For problems about dating the Paleolithic statuettes, see, for example, Paul G. Bahn and Jean Vertut, *Images of the Ice Age* (New York: Facts of File, 1988), 53-8. The fact that these figurines (and other Upper Paleolithic little female figurines found over a considerable geographical expanse from Pyrenees to Russia) are 'jocularly' called 'Venuses' places these figurines in the context of a much later tradition of Western art where the depiction of an aesthetised female figure is a major concern. Hence Hartt and others refer to them as 'sculpture' or 'statuettes' rather than as 'dolls'. A selection of pictures of Upper Paleolithic dolls can be found, for example, in P. M. Grand, *Prehistoric Art: Paleolithic Painting and Sculpture* (London: Studio Vista, 1967). Hereafter Grand. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. A good WWW- source for images and short accounts of prehistoric 'Venuses' is Christopher





**Figure 4**  
Venus of Lespugue,  
front. 20,000-18,000  
BCE. Ivory. c. 5 ¾  
inches (14.7 cm)  
high. (Musée des  
A n t i q u i t é s  
Nationales, Paris).



**Figure 5**  
Venus of Lespugue,  
back.

the same time: they have only rudimentary arms and legs, often no hands or feet, and no delineation of faces. The most conspicuous aspect of them is the enlarged focus on sexual details: they exhibit large breasts, wide hips, big buttocks, and female genitalia. Some of them also feature markings for hair, especially detailed in the 'Venus of Willendorf', and clothing, especially the 'Venus of Lespugue'. (Grand, 94; Hartt, 26)

There does not seem to be an agreement as to what kind of meaning should be ascribed to these figurines: magic, shamanism, house decoration, art, totemism, fetishism, celebrations of matriarchy, or some combination of these. Von Boehn, for example, interprets these dolls as simply 'magical' or 'fetish' figures (Boehn, 38, 57). Neal claims that it is 'commonly recognized' that these dolls are 'images of fertility'

(Neal, 19).<sup>31</sup> Georges Bataille, in his *Prehistoric Painting: Lascaux or the Birth of Art* (1955) is unhappy with the interpretation of these dolls as fertility figures, and is more fascinated with their lack of facial features.<sup>32</sup> Thus he writes that they 'consistently leave in shadow those very aspects of human appearance which we highlight today' (Bataille, 124). At the same time Bataille is very restrained in his comments about the 'exaggerated' sexual details of the dolls, aspects which, we could say, are constantly highlighted today, almost overexposed, and only remarks somewhat cryptically that this line of inquiry would lead us 'towards that obscure, profound disorder that is the heart and essence of the realm of the sexual' (Bataille, 123).

As the title of Bataille's book already suggests, these Paleolithic dolls are often seen as among the earliest examples of art. Whether dolls are sculptural works of art or not became an imperative problem in the early 20th century. It is, for example, with this specific problem that von Boehn begins his history of dolls. I quote from the very beginning of von Boehn's book (which also includes the already quoted 'definition' of the doll):

The doll is the three-dimensional representation of a human figure, a

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<sup>31</sup> Also Hartt calls them 'fertility symbol[s]' (Hartt, 26). Ann Sieveking, in her *The Cave Artists* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), sets the female dolls aside from Paleolithic art altogether, because the majority of Paleolithic art comprises 'a very restricted inventory of animals, accompanied by groups of schematic signs' and contends that 'obviously the Venuses are a distinct cult' (208-9). For Russell G. Handsman, in 'Whose Art Was Found at Lepenski Vir?', in *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*, eds. Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 329-65, 'the idea that a prehistoric art will always be about [women's] reproductive, procreative function' is by now 'a familiar and oppressive story' (334). For a critique of identifying this imagery on the axis of male/female, and the 20th century presuppositions of the 'female' imagery as cultural commodification, see Margaret W. Conkey, 'Contexts of Action, Contexts of Power: Material Culture and Gender in the Magdalenian', in *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*, eds. Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 57-92.

<sup>32</sup> Georges Bataille, *Prehistoric Painting: Lascaux or the Birth of Art*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (London: Macmillan, 1980 [orig. 1955]), 124. Hereafter Bataille. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

plastic creation, which, however, is far removed from the sphere of fine arts. It has about as much in common with art as the ape has with homo sapiens. Both enjoy a complete freedom from dependence on material: in all three realms of nature there is no substance out of which a doll or a work of art cannot be made. In their dimensions also they are so far alike that each may fluctuate in size from a few millimetres to a considerable number of meters. Apart from that it is easier to feel the difference between them than to frame an undisputable definition. (Boehn, 23)

Von Boehn wants to link dolls with apes, and 'fine arts' with humans, to advocate the idea that dolls and sculpture share the same origin, but that dolls are a uniquely primitive form of sculpture. Von Boehn thus posits an evolution of 'the three-dimensional representation of a human figure': just as humans evolved from apes, so the fine art of sculpture evolved from dolls. The primitive doll-man must grow into a civilised sculpture-man, and this is the main reason why von Boehn describes the 'Venus of Willendorf' as a doll. It would not suit well his evolutionary schema if the first objects of primitive representation were already sculptures. Art cannot just appear from nowhere, because it is a human endeavour, and because humans have evolved, art must have evolved. What is striking in von Boehn's description is the way in which he moves from a clear assertion that dolls and sculpture are species apart (ancestors, 'far removed'), but ends up saying that they are ancestors so close that the difference between apes and men and between dolls and sculpture, whatever it is, wherever it is, how small or big it is (all articulation eludes him), can nevertheless be felt, and should thus in principle be able to be articulated. Von Boehn's description is from the very first troubled by the wish once and for all to ascertain the difference between dolls and sculpture, and the immediate inability to do that. The difference between his contemporary early 20th century sculpture and dolls is then glossed with reference to

the psychological depth/surface -model:

Art, in rejecting the non-essential and the fortuitious, has striven to present the reflection of the soul; the doll has renounced this psychological motive in order to accentuate and intensify the shallow and the external. ... It [the doll] can come surprisingly close to nature, but the nearer it approaches its goal the farther it is removed from art.... (Boehn, 24)

This is the old (or should I say almost primitive?) argument against 'shallow' verisimilitude in art, although the shallowness of dolls is curiously accentuated and intense in von Boehn's account. Simple copying of nature, no matter how exact, only adds to the fortuitious and the non-essential, contains no 'reflection of the soul', no depth of psychology, and drifts inescapably further away from art. In von Boehn's account, sculpture belongs to the soul, dolls belong to the surface: sculpture is soul-reflecting, dolls are soul-deflecting. With the surprising intensity of shallowness, however, von Boehn leaves open a route from dolls to sculpture, a route which, as he later in the book acknowledges, has already been taken by the German doll-maker Lotte Pritzel: 'Clever fingers have composed all kind of pretty things, but this type of doll [decorative doll] first became art under the hands of Lotte Pritzel' (Boehn, 219).

Lotte Pritzel (1887-1952) is an intriguing and surprisingly elusive figure in the early decades of this century, a figure who can often be found in the background when dolls come into contact with art. Pritzel became famous in Germany in the 1910s and 1920s for her small wax dolls, 'mostly young women in frilly clothes and elaborate wigs who were clearly designed to create a strong erotic charge' (see **Figure 6** below).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Peter Webb, with Robert Short, *Hans Bellmer* (London: Quartet Books, 1985), 21. Hereafter Webb. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. I have not been able to find informative texts on Lotte Pritzel in English, nor a good selection of pictures of her dolls. She is omitted from the usual accounts of collectable dolls (or credited only in a cursory fashion), and does not



**Figure 6**  
A seated figure by Lotte Pritzel.

These were seen as 'artistic' dolls designed for adult appreciation as opposed to children's play-dolls, made around the same time, for example, by the famous German doll-maker Käthe Krüse.<sup>34</sup> Pritzel's fame spread when the dadaist writer Theodor Däubler wrote an article about her dolls, which was published with pictures of Pritzel's dolls as a book called *Das Puppenbuch (The Doll Book)* in 1921 (Webb, 21). Pritzel's dolls are said to have inspired Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elegies* (1915), as well as

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seem to qualify as an artist, either. A doll artist, it seems, is a dummy artist.

<sup>34</sup> According to King's *Dolls and Dolls' Houses*, the turn of the century brought about an interest in the psychology of childhood, and this is reflected in dollmaking: the earlier 'beautiful vision' dolls are replaced by 'true-to-life' babies, which were supposed to leave 'more room for the play of the child's imagination' (King, 102). Käthe Krüse is famous for making imitation babies, some of which, for example, were filled with sand to imitate the actual weight of a baby. The idea behind Krüse's 'character dolls' (a term which began to be used in the context of 'realistic' dolls from 1910 onwards) reputedly came from her sculptor father. (King, 102-4) When von Boehn writes about dolls coming 'surprisingly close to nature' yet being so far from art, he seems to have something like Krüse's dolls in mind. Modern 'true-to-life' baby dolls take the imitation of 'life' further, and tend to give it a clearly 'functional' emphasis and specialization. The most popular baby dolls are usually advertised according to their particular life-like play functions such as bathing, feeding and potty-training, taking the temperature and applying plasters, etc.

motivating him to write 'Dolls: On the Wax Dolls of Lotte Pritzel' (1913-14).<sup>35</sup> Although Rilke's essay purports to be about the wax dolls of Lotte Pritzel, only the first two paragraphs and the last paragraph of the essay comment on Pritzel's dolls: the rest of the essay concerns itself with childhood reactions towards dolls. As such, Rilke's essay is a nostalgic remembrance of a childhood with/of dolls which, with the advent of Pritzel's dolls, he suggests, is now irrecoverably past. Rilke begins his essay by stating that 'the precondition for their [Pritzel's dolls'] origin would be that the world of childhood is past', and he further describes these dolls as 'grown up' and 'prematurely old' (Rilke, 26-7). For Rilke, Pritzel brings dolls into an uncanny sexual maturity: their 'prematurity' would seem to suggest that they are at the same time still childhood dolls, and unnaturally sexually mature.

Von Boehn claims with reference to Pritzel's dolls that what is '[f]ascinating, bewildering, tormenting if you like, is the sexlessness of these dolls; in their expression and their indeterminate dress they possess something excitingly ambiguous' (Boehn, 220). At the end of the essay Rilke makes a strikingly similar observation, where he almost laments the newly acquired sex appeal of dolls: 'Sexless like our childhood dolls themselves, they experience no decline in their permanent sensuality, into which nothing flows and from which nothing escapes' (Rilke, 38-9). Even though von Boehn and Rilke profess that Pritzel's dolls are 'sexless', clearly the very 'exciting' ambiguous response by both writers to the dolls is intimately linked with a notion of sexuality, to

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<sup>35</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, 'Dolls: On the Wax Dolls of Lotte Pritzel', trans. Idris Parry and Paul Keegan, *Essays on Dolls*, ed. Idris Parry (London: Syrens, 1994 [orig. 1913-14]), 26-39. Hereafter Rilke. Further page references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text. Parry's note to Rilke's essay informs us that Rilke saw Pritzel's dolls in a Munich exhibition in 1913, and that Pritzel's dolls enjoyed great artistic success then and in the 1920s (fn. 1, 26). Parry further describes Pritzel's dolls as follows: 'These elongated and emaciated dolls were mounted on small baroque stands and dressed for the most part in weird gauzy costumes, their postures and limbs and long scrawny fingers suggestive of dance and decadence' (fn. 1, 26-7).

the very uncertainty of their sexuality, to the unreal (yet effective) permanence of their sensuality. While for von Boehn the eroticism of Pritzel's dolls is thrilling and titillating, for Rilke their eroticism is tinged with melancholy. Von Boehn sees dolls mainly in the context of growing out of decoration and into art, whereas Rilke sees them in the context of growing out of childhood and into adulthood. Where von Boehn sees a future of dolls opening up, Rilke sees a past of dolls that is now irrecoverably lost. Rilke seems to think of the future of dolls as a strange 'adult' mix of sexless objects and eroticised representations, which will perhaps even change the whole way in which we view dolls. As the earlier discussions on Barbie have already shown, in some ways Rilke's evaluation of the situation has been surprisingly accurate.

The success of Pritzel's dolls seems to have spread awareness of dolls and suggested the unexplored possibilities of dolls among artists, sometimes with rather strange effects. In 1918, for example, the painter Oskar Kokoschka asked Lotte Pritzel to make him a life-size doll because of his desperate longing in the wake of his failed relationship with Alma Mahler (Webb, 21). Pritzel decided she could not work on that scale, and the doll was eventually made by Hermione Moos, and delivered to Kokoschka in 1919. This doll figures in some of Kokoschka's paintings, for example in 'Woman in Blue' (1919) and 'Self-Portrait with Doll' (c. 1922). Kokoschka's relationship with this doll seems to have gone well beyond the conventional relationship between an artist and his or her dummy. Kokoschka called the doll his 'fetish', and he is reported to have often taken it with him when he went out to dinner or to the theatre (Webb, 21). Kokoschka's own account of the 'fetish' in his autobiography *My Life* (1971) plays down the element of obsession with the doll, and elaborates the myth of

a bohemian sexual and artistic experimentation.<sup>36</sup> According to Kokoschka, the doll arrives during his 'affair' with a servant girl, and he then 'commissions' the servant girl to spread rumours of the 'Silent Woman'; rumours, for example, that Kokoschka 'hired a horse and carriage to take her out on sunny days, and rented a box at the Opera in order to show her off' (Kokoschka, 118). Kokoschka also tells the story of one rambunctious party, during which a 'Venetian courtesan' insists on seeing the doll because she thinks of it as her rival. According to Kokoschka, she inquires repeatedly whether the doll resembles anybody he has been in love with, whether he sleeps with it, etc. Later everybody gets drunk, the doll is doused with red wine and at some point it loses its head. The following morning the police come around to check a report that a headless body, drenched in blood, has been seen in the garden. They find the headless, wine-stained doll and the crime is solved, though the police still report Kokoschka for causing a public nuisance (Kokoschka, 118).<sup>37</sup>

In Kokoschka's paintings the doll doubles both as a woman and a doll, as indicated by the titles 'Woman in Blue' and 'Self-Portrait with Doll'. In the paintings his 'fetish' then perhaps came closest to fulfilling its reported promise of replacing Kokoschka's ex-lover, because the dollness of the doll is not visibly marked in the paintings. In the paintings the doll, then, is effectively a woman just as well as it is a doll. The 'Self-Portrait' also sets into motion an interesting 'dollification' of all figures

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<sup>36</sup> Oskar Kokoschka, *My Life*, trans. David Britt (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974 [orig. 1971]). Hereafter Kokoschka. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

<sup>37</sup> Kokoschka's affair with the doll is charted in *Oskar Kokoschka und Alma Mahler: Die Puppe. Epilog einer Passion* (cat.) (Frankfurt am Main: Städtische Galerie im Städel, 1992). In addition to several essays on Kokoschka's fetish, the book also contains pictures of Kokoschka's paintings of the doll, Kokoschka's correspondence with Hermione Moos, including the detailed instructions of what the doll should look and feel like, and also the three surviving photographs of the doll. Judging from the photographs, the fetish looks like an oversized hairy monster with an exfoliation mask on its face; but with surprisingly realistic looking lips.



in Kokoschka's paintings. Since the only indicator of the 'dollness' of the doll in 'Self-Portrait' is provided by the title (nothing in the painting marks one of the figures as a doll), the painting puts the portrayal of the doll and the portrayal of the 'self' in the painting on the same level of representation. The presumably different ontological status of the doll from the 'self' in the portrait is undercut: how can one tell apart the 'dollness' of the one and the 'humanness' of the other in a painting? Kokoschka 'Self-Portrait' effectively flattens the levels of representation. Kokoschka's fetish is a representation of a woman, but in Kokoschka's representation the doll's nature as already a representation is rendered invisible, and invalidated. So for the doll to successfully replace the intended woman, which takes place most effectively in painting, Kokoschka must paint himself as a doll, must allow his 'self' to become a doll. So when the doll is at its most 'womanly', it poses with the most 'dolly' Kokoschka.

A somewhat similar story to Kokoschka's, but set in the window-display and fashion world of America in the 1930s, is told about a prominent American mannequin sculptor, Lester Gaba. In creating a mannequin in the likeness of the model Cynthia Wells he was so impressed with the result that he had one cast just for himself. The Cynthia mannequin caught the attention of Gaba's circle of acquaintance, and was soon invited to an opening in a fashion salon. After a successful introduction into society the mannequin started receiving invitations to elegant events with Gaba as her escort.<sup>38</sup> In 1937 the American magazine *Life* ran a story about the romantic weekend of Gaba and Cynthia, with pictures of their jolly social life, but also some four shots showing Cynthia naked and hairless, Cynthia from the waist down, Gaba dismembering Cynthia,

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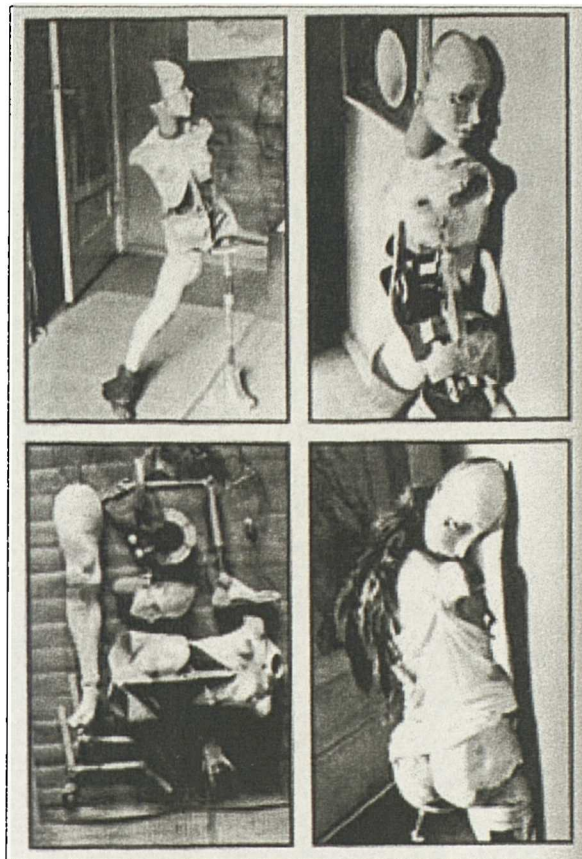
<sup>38</sup> Sara K. Schneider, *Vital Mummies: Performance Design for the Show-Window Mannequin* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995), 48. Hereafter Schneider. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.



**Figure 7**  
Hans Bellmer, from 'Variations sur le montage  
d'une mineure articulée'.

and ending with a picture of the bulging black bag that contains her at the end. The pictorial shows the indecent undressing of the mannequin, the sex doll nakedness of the mannequin, which leads to an upsetting end to the weekend. Like Kokochka's fetish, after turning from a social tea party and opera doll into a sex doll, the end of Cynthia the socialite is both sexually titillating and horrifyingly violent. From Pygmalion onwards, the sex doll cannot escape violence.

Perhaps the strangest and most famous doll artist between the first and second World Wars, and often associated with the surrealists, is Hans Bellmer (1902-1975). In the early 1930s he made dolls of wood, metal, plastic pieces and ball joints, which he then manipulated and photographed in different positions (see **Figure 7** above and **Figures 8-10** below). With Lotte Pritzel's help Bellmer came up with the idea of a ball-joint for the second doll. Together they found in a museum an articulated wooden doll



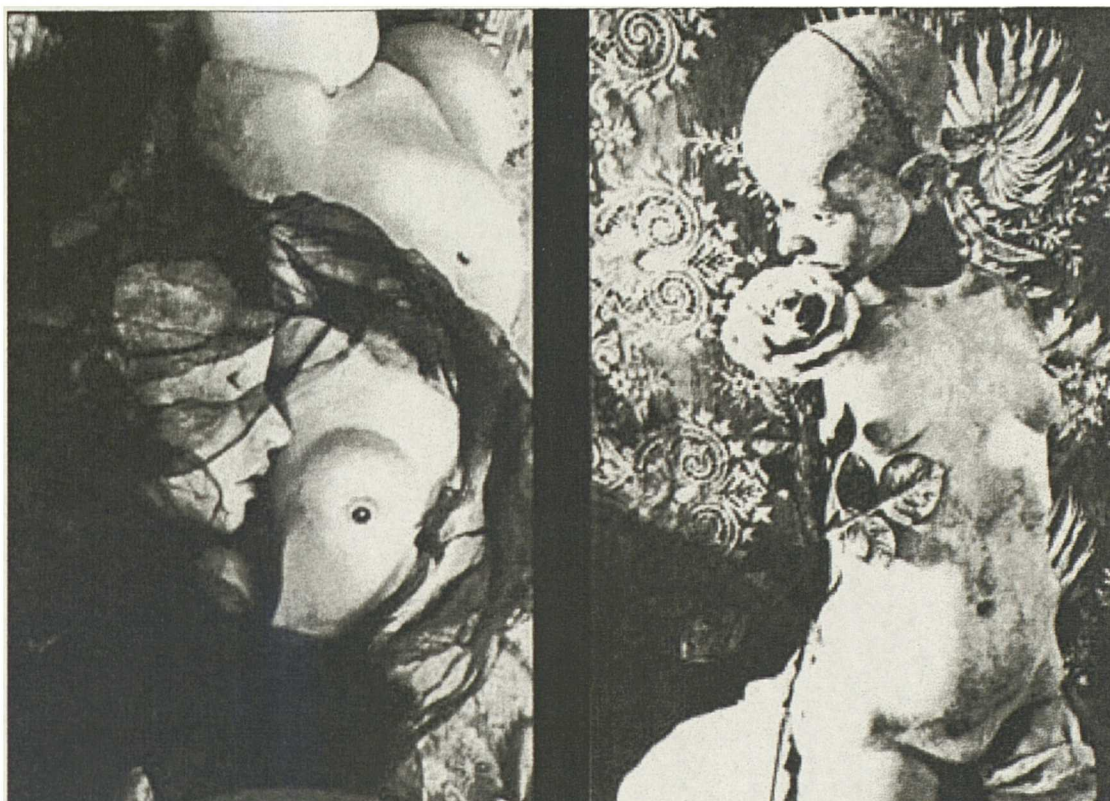
**Figure 8**  
Hans Bellmer, from 'Variations sur le montage d'une mineure articulée'.

'from the circle of Albrecht Dürer', the types of which were used both as anatomical models for painting and as expensive sex toys (Webb, 57). Bellmer had heard about Kokoschka's strange request for a doll from Pritzel, and had read Kokoschka's letters to his fetish-maker Hermione Moos, which had actually been published in 1925 (perhaps further suggesting that Kokoschka saw his fetish as a form of performance) (Webb, 21).<sup>39</sup> Bellmer first published 10 photographs of the doll privately (*Die Puppe*, 1934), before a larger selection of 18 photographs were published in the Surrealist

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<sup>39</sup> Bellmer is also said to have been inspired to build to doll after having seen Offenbach's operatic version of *The Tales of Hoffman* in 1932. The doll Olympia in Hoffmann's story also inspired Freud more than a decade earlier (and more of Freud and Olympia in the next chapter). See, also, Alain Jouffroy, 'Hans Bellmer', trans. Bermand Frechtman, in *Hans Bellmer* (Chicago: William and Norma Copley Foundation, nd) np; and Lucy R. Lippard, in her biographical note on Bellmer in *Surrealists on Art*, ed. Lucy R. Lippard (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 63.





**Figure 9**  
Hans Bellmer, from 'Variations sur le montage d'une mineure articulée'.

magazine *Minotaure* in 1935.<sup>40</sup>

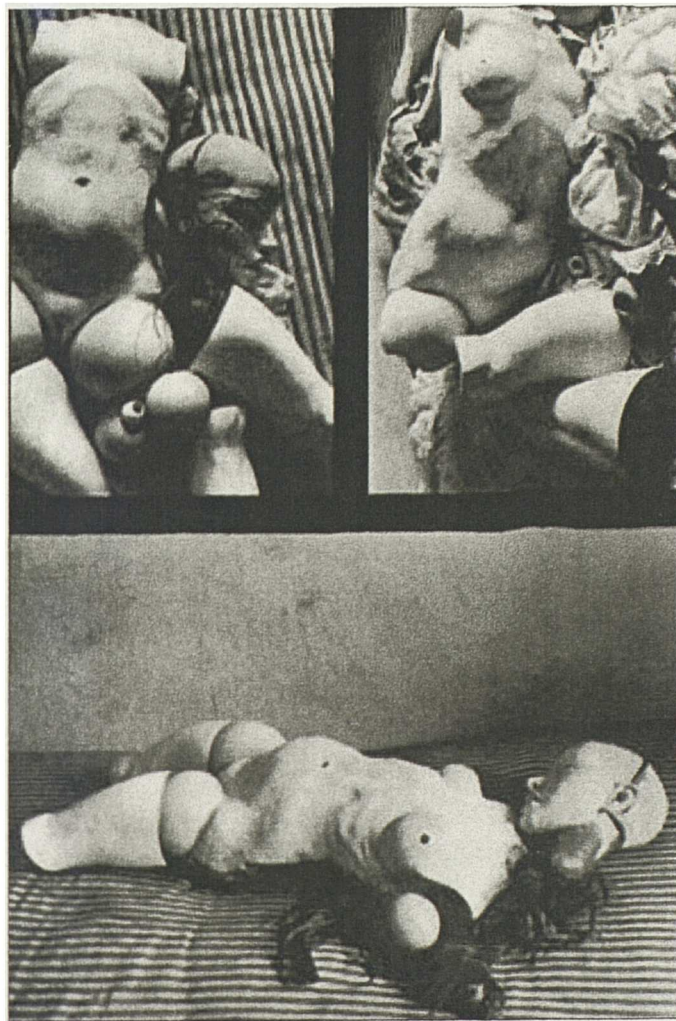
According to Hal Foster in his *Compulsive Beauty* (1995), at the time of the publication of these photographs the figure of the doll was already established in the surrealist repertoire, but nevertheless Bellmer's photographs of the doll 'spurred the use of mannequins by many other surrealists'.<sup>41</sup> In Foster's account, Bellmer's photographs also constitute a summary of the most important surrealist concerns:

uncanny confusions of animate and inanimate figures, ambivalent

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<sup>40</sup> Hans Bellmer, 'Variations sur le montage d'une mineure articulée', *Minotaure*, Nro. 6, Winter 1934-1935.

<sup>41</sup> Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1995), 257, n. 5. Hereafter Foster. Foster discusses Bellmer's doll in detail especially in Chapter Four, 'Fatal Attraction' (Foster, 100-122). Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. See also J. H. Matthews, *The Imagery of Surrealism* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1977), where he writes that Bellmer's dolls brought 'something indispensably unique to surrealist imagery' (199). Bellmer's doll has also been described as a prototype of a 'distinctive sub-genre--the surrealist mannequin' (Webb, 46).



**Figure 10**  
Hans Bellmer, from 'Variations sur le montage d'une mineure articulée'.

conjunctions of castrative and fetishistic forms, compulsive repetitions of erotic and traumatic scenes, difficult intricacies of sadism and masochism, of desire, defusion, and death. With the dolls, the surreal and the uncanny intersect in the most difficult and desublimatory ways--which is one reason why Bellmer is marginal to the literature on surrealism, devoted as it mostly is to the sublimatory idealisms of Breton. (Foster, 101)

Most famously the surrealist mannequin took to the streets in the *International Exposition of Surrealism* in 1938. The setting of the exposition was a maze of streets, and sixteen artists exhibited a mannequin each under a different fictitious street sign: the suggestion being that the visitor encountered the exhibits like surreal doll-prostitutes

at street corners. Robert Belton, in his *The Beribboned Bomb: The Image of Woman in Male Surrealist Art* (1995), gives a description of the exhibition, which also gives the idea of mannequins in it:

Three of the strange creations were covered from head to foot. Hans Arp's was completely draped with a shroud of sorts; Wolfgang Paalen's wore moss, mushrooms and a bat's-wing headdress; and Max Ernst's was a widow shrouded in black, trampling a man underfoot like the Hindu Goddess Kali, who also inspired Masson. The connotative string of prostitute/black widow/mantis/goddess/castration threat is disambiguated in the extreme. All the others were at least partly nude. Dalí's wore only a mask, a pair of gloves, and dozens of spoons. Oscar Dominguez did not clothe his at all, choosing only to wrap one arm in twine while a nearby syphon sprayed a jet of fabric past her waist. Marcel Duchamp's wore a man's hat and jacket, with a red light bulb in the breast pocket; it was nude from the waist down. ... Marcel Jean's was a water-nymph caught in a net, while Joan Miró's was similarly snared in what might be described as a wire drawing--automatic of course--in space. Man Ray's wept crystal tears while clay pipes blew bubbles in her hair, and Yves Tanguy's contribution was entirely nude but for two spindles looking much like Alberto Giacometti's malevolently phallic *Disagreeable Object* of 1931.<sup>42</sup>

Belton's description proceeds from the clothed, sexually threatening mannequins towards ones snared in nets, weeping crystal tears, and completely naked, thus emphasizing what he perceives as a misogynistic treatment of mannequins (and the misogynistic art of surrealism in general), 'exemplifying the established patriarchal dichotomy' (Belton, 114). This is a rather simplistic account of surrealism, and yet, I would argue, Belton's reaction to surrealist mannequins is interestingly and instructively

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<sup>42</sup> Robert Belton, *The Beribboned Bomb: The Image of Woman in Male Surrealist Art* (Calgary: The Univ. of Calgary Press, 1995), 114. Hereafter Belton. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. Photographs by Dennis Bellon from this exhibition can be found in *La femme et le surrealisme*, (cat.) Exposition au Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts Lausanne du 21 novembre 1987 au 28 février 1988, eds. Erika Billeter and José Pierre (Lausanne: Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts Lausanne, 1987), 26-8. Photographs by Man Ray from the exhibition can be found in Nicole Parrot, *Mannequins*, trans. Sheila de Vallée (London: Academy Editions, 1982), 154-8.

symptomatic; not perhaps so much of surrealism, but of conventional conceptions of mannequins and dolls.

According to Foster's more acute, psychoanalytically-informed account, dolls function for the surrealists as a charged 'punctum of the uncanny', or as Foster understands it, a 'point where contraries meet' (Foster, 102). I agree with Foster that Bellmer's photographs of dolls pose questions that concern 'identity, difference, and sexuality' 'in the most desublimatory ways'. However, Bellmer's photographs of dolls have almost without exception been read as sadistic and misogynistic. An extreme reading is provided by Robert Belton, who attacks Bellmer's photographs for their 'unrepentant ferocity,' and presents us with a sense of Bellmer as someone whose 'impassioned curiosity allowed him to take apart, so to speak, the bodies of young girls, whose only mistake it was to be at the tender age of a presumed sexual awakening' (Belton, 118). Even a generally sympathetic reader of Bellmer's work, such as Peter Webb, cannot keep himself from describing the violent fantasies which Bellmer's photographs are supposed to generate, and portrays Bellmer's dolls as victims of crime perpetrated by the fantasy of the one looking at the pictures:

[The doll's] passivity invites our attentions, whether kind or cruel, to rumple her beribboned hair, to make up her lips, to mark her with love-bites, to paint bruises on her knees and to splash with mud her long, pink, schoolgirl's legs. Bellmer's photos of her and of the sisters that followed are like records from the crime-squad archives. (Webb, 50)<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> On Bellmer, surrealism and sadism, see also Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron, *Surrealism*, trans. Vivian Folkenflik (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1990 [orig. 1984]), 5, 140; and Whitney Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), where she writes that 'it is in Bellmer's Dolls that the idea of corporeal metamorphosis and violent attacks on the integrity of the female body find their most concrete and literal expression' (110). Also Foster, despite his mainly sympathetic reading of Bellmer's dolls, ends his chapter on Bellmer by writing: 'The poupées produce misogynistic effects that may overwhelm any liberatory intentions. They also exacerbate sexist fantasies about the feminine ... even as they exploit them critically' (Foster, 122). Rudolf E. Kuenzli, in 'Surrealism



It has been suggested that one of the problems of these readings is that they sometimes too unproblematically equate Bellmer's dolls with women. As Foster puts it: 'If we see the dolls as sadistic, then the object of this sadism is clear: woman. But if we see the dolls as representations of sadism, then the object becomes less obvious' (Foster 1995, 115).<sup>44</sup> I would say that things get more complicated already before we think of these photographs as representations of sadism. Why do the photographs portray such a 'clear' picture of power relations? Why should seeing the photographs as sadistic make the dolls turn into women?

One way of thinking about the power relations in Bellmer's photographs is offered, perhaps surprisingly, by Leo Bersani's radical readings of pornography, violence, powerlessness and sex in an essay titled 'Is the Rectum a Grave?' (1988), and in more recent book succinctly titled *Homos* (1995).<sup>45</sup> In his essay Bersani tests the

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and Misogyny,' *Surrealism and Women*, ed Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf E. Kuenzli, Gwen Raaberg (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1990), 17-26, contends simply that of the male surrealists 'none was more sadistic than Hans Bellmer, whose photographs of violated puppets and dolls were published in surrealist magazines' (20).

<sup>44</sup> Presumably, when Foster writes that 'If we see the dolls as sadistic' he actually means that the *photographs* present the dolls as objects of sadism, not that the dolls themselves would be sadistic. In the same way, in the following sentence he would appear to be talking about the *photographs* of dolls as representing sadism, not that the dolls themselves would be representations of sadism. Foster goes on to suggest that the sadism in Bellmer's photographs should be seen as 'second-degree', as 'reflexive' sadism aimed at revealing the sadism of the 'fascist father and state' (Foster, 115). Foster is reading the dolls as Bellmer's reaction against his father and against the Nazism of early 1930s Germany. By 'second-degree' sadism he means that by destroying the doll Bellmer is participating in the fascist imaginary, but that at the same time he is thus exposing the sadism of the armoured Nazi (extreme patriarchal) aggressivity, is making the 'diffusive' and 'destructive' manifest and reflexive. Foster's reading of the 'fascist imaginary' relies on Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies*, and Foster sees Bellmer's treatment of the body in direct opposition to such 'celebrated' Nazi sculptors as Arno Breker and Josef Thorak (Foster, 119).

<sup>45</sup> Leo Bersani, 'Is the Rectum a Grave?' in *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Criticism*, ed. Douglas Crimp (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1988), 197-222. Hereafter Bersani 1988. Further page references to this essay will take place in the main body of the text. Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1995). Hereafter Bersani 1995. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.



limits of Dworkin's and MacKinnon's argument that pornography eroticises the violence of the inequality between men and women, and that pornography is at the same time the most accurate description and most effective promotion of that inequality (Bersani 1988, 214). According to Bersani, if pornography is the most accurate description and most effective promotion of inequality, then 'so-called normal sexuality is already pornographic' (Bersani 1988, 214). Pornography's violence does not reside in the fantasies which are only marginal to so-called healthy people, nor is it a by-product of social inequality. By following the logic of Dworkin and MacKinnon, Bersani asserts that *sex in itself is pornographic* in so far as it involves a necessarily unequal relation, because: 'the effects of power are inherent in the relational itself (they are immediately produced by "the divisions, inequalities and disequilibriums" inescapably present in every relation from one point to another)' (Bersani 1988, 216).<sup>46</sup>

Even though Bersani criticises Dworkin and MacKinnon in the 'Rectum' essay for their attempts at a '*redemptive re-invention of sex*', he also sees as valuable their refusal to 'prettify' it, that they publicise those aspects of sex which are 'anticonmunal, antiegalitarian, antinurturing, antiloving', aspects which Bersani sees as radically valuable (Bersani 1988, 215). In *Homos* Bersani then continues to explore what he sees as positively 'anticonmunitarian impulses' which he associates with 'homosexual desire' (Bersani 1995, 7). Expanding the implications of the 'Rectum' essay explicitly on the level of 'politically disruptive aspects of homo-ness' (Bersani 1995, 7), Bersani considers homosexual sadomasochism as 'a kind of X-ray of power's body, a laboratory testing of the erotic potential in the most oppressive social structures' (Bersani 1995,

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<sup>46</sup> Bersani is here quoting from Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981).

89). One of his claims is that oppressive social structures continue to exist, as S/M reveals, because, for the sake of erotically stimulating power play, 'human beings may be willing to give up control over their environment' (Bersani 1995, 95). The way in which Bersani extrapolates larger social concerns and structures from what he perceives as heterosexual fear and disgust of homosexual 'buggery' is fascinating reading. Nevertheless, I would argue that in radicalizing the specificity of homo-ness, he also to an extent lets go of that which mobilises his argument in the first place: the violence of the relational.

One of Bersani's claims in *Homos* is that '*homo-ness itself necessitates a massive redefining of relationality*' (Bersani 1995, 76), because homo-ness, for him, leads to a positive de-valorization of differences and to what he calls a 'non-threatening supplement to sameness' (Bersani 1995, 7). His reading of Gide's *The Immoralist* can be seen precisely in the light of this 'non-threatening supplement to sameness', particularly when he proposes that the most radical aspect of Gide's novel's portrayal of sex is that 'it eliminates from "sex" *the necessity of any relation whatsoever*' (Bersani 1995, 122). What is at issue in a discussion of the relational is the specificity of homosexual sex, on which so much depends in *Homos*. Or as Bersani puts it:

The desirable social transgressiveness of gayness--its aptitude for contesting oppressive structures--depends not on denying a gay identity, but rather on exploring the links between a specific sexuality, psychic mobility, and a potentially radical politics. (Bersani 1995, 56)

When Bersani discusses the relational in detail (and quotes the same passage from Foucault's *History of Sexuality* as he does in the 'Rectum' essay [Bersani 1995, 82-3]), he discusses S/M. Although Bersani's discussion of S/M begins with Foucault's

discussion of homosexuality and homosexual S/M, and although the chapter is titled 'Gay Daddy' (Gay Daddy perhaps referring to the 'top' in an S/M relation; but also to Foucault as Bersani's Gay Daddy in the form their [textual] relationship as being S/M; Foucault as fertile, but perhaps not conventionally reproductive), Bersani's discussion of S/M is in no way homosexually specific (in fact he often uses words such as 'human', and even 'organism' in the chapter). The only thing that is (perhaps) in Bersani's discussion evoked as specific to or as characterizing homosexual S/M is 'the reversibility of roles' (see esp. 86, 96), which is, conceivably, at least in some sense more symmetrical than in heterosexual S/M. However, when it comes to the value of 'the reversibility of roles' Bersani is not very clear. First he writes critically of the reversibility of roles in S/M that it is a 'relatively mild challenge to social hierarchies of power' (Bersani 1995, 86). The reversibility of roles only guarantees that everybody acquires some access to power, while the privilege itself is never contested; furthermore the temporality of the changes of roles only fortifies socially sanctioned positions of power (Bersani 1995, 86-7). But later in the chapter, while suggesting the primacy of masochism over sadism, he draws support from the reversibility of roles in S/M, and writes:

The reversibility of roles in S/M does more than disrupt the assignment of fixed positions of power and powerlessness (as well as the underlying assumptions about the natural link between dominance and particular racial and gendered identities). From that reversibility we may also conclude that perhaps inherent in the very exercise of power is the temptation of its renunciation--as if the excitement of a hyperbolic self-assertion, of an unthwarted mastery over the world and, more precisely, brutalization of the other, were inseparable from an impulse of self-dissolution. (Bersani 1995, 95-6)

Bersani's somewhat uncertain evaluation of the reversibility of roles does not go

together with a call for rethinking of the relational altogether: especially since he later puts forward as valuable Gide's presentation of sex as eliminated from the need of any relation whatsoever (in Bersani's reading Gide's text is presented as an example of the positive value of anticomunitarian, antiloving, antinurturing impulses in gay sex ). But what else does the positive value of reversibility of roles suggest but communitarian sex? The reversibility of roles may disrupt fixed positions of power and powerlessness, but, as Bersani recognised earlier, its disruptiveness is immediately undermined by the fact that it only fortifies socially desirable power relations, which are based on accepted values of loving sociality and nurturing communitarity. And in Bersani's view, these are the bastions of the violence of the relational. To put it bluntly: the very reversibility of power and powerlessness nurtures the violence of the relational.

When Bersani promotes 'non-relational' gay sex he is proposing that this would be an example of the rethinking of the relational, that gay sex would be seen as the 'non-threatening supplement to sameness', where gay sex would equal supplementing the same, and the non-relational would equal the non-threat (since the relational inherently contains violence). But even though this rethinking of the same depends heavily on a certain homo-ness, Bersani's descriptions of this sex are hardly gay-specific. Bersani, for example, writes that the non-relational sex is characterised by 'uncompromising superficiality', it is uncontaminated by 'generally anguished interrogation of the other's desires,' by 'disastrous sublimation of the desire for the other's body to an always unanswered demand addressed to the other's consciousness', and it 'constitutes a challenge to any sexual ideology of profundity' (Bersani 1995, 122). These comments clearly characterise non-relational sex as devoid of psychology of profundity, rather than any gay specificity. Bersani further describes Michel's [character

in Gide's *The Immoralist*] 'intimacies devoid of intimacy' as proposing:

... that we move irresponsibly among other bodies, somewhat indifferent to them, demanding nothing more than that they be as available to contact as we are, and that, no longer owned by others, they also renounce self-ownership and agree to that loss of boundaries which will allow them to be, with us, shifting points of rest in a universal and mobile communication of being. If homosexuality in this form is difficult to know, this is because it no longer defines a self. (Bersani 1995, 128)

This, then, would be part of the process of non-redemptive 're-invention of sex' that Bersani talks about in the 'Rectum' essay (Bersani 1988, 214-5). For him sex is re-invented through a notion of radicalization of homo-ness. However, even though Bersani purports to be describing 'homosexuality in this form' in the previous indented quotation, the gay specificity is present in the descriptions only in the form of an invocation ('If homosexuality in this form...'). What is homosexuality in that form? Bersani's brilliant argument about the violence inherent in the relationality of sex depends crucially on the notion of the self: the notion of self posits relationality, and guarantees violence. So the possibility of non-relational sex depends equally crucially on the non-positing of the self. When Bersani is describing non-relation (shattered-self) sex, I suggest that he is just as well (or actually, more precisely) describing sex with a sex doll. The emphasis on the non-relationality pushes Bersani's argument about gay specificity to the point where it no longer holds: the non-relational, so to speak, collapses the demand for gay specificity. Gay specificity turns out to be, however unconventionally, a form of *humanism* and communality of sex in Bersani, which the non-redemptive non-relational, shattered-self sex undermines.

Bersani's discussion of the role of sadism and masochism is valuable in figuring

out what takes place in the continuous sadism which seems to confront dolls (Homes', Rand's, Kokoschka's, Gaba's, the surrealists', Bellmer's). What is involved is much more than simple expressions of misogyny: it has to do with the positing of the self and the relational. At the same time as the sex doll would appear to offer a relation (and this is of course what sex doll advertising madly emphasises, what Pygmalion so long ago desired), sex doll as a doll denies this relation from the first. The only sex possible with a sex doll is non-relational, implies nothing to be addressed to the other's consciousness, no anguished interrogation of the other's desires. Often, however, the sex doll is confronted with sadism (which, as Bersani argues, presupposes a relation). This is especially true of the modern sex doll in its most stereotypical form, which, in the promise of its full sexual activity and life, is felt to be haunted by its dollness. The following fairly typical description of a sex doll is lifted from a *Sextoys Catalogue*:

NAUGHTY NADIA LOVE DOLL. She is made to please, strong & healthy, active & always ready for sex. She's life-size & fleshy. She has breasts, hips, real hair, soft sensuous mouth, juicy vagina, inviting rectal orifice. She also kneels forward in the most receptive position to enable you to take her doggy-style if you like. Or why not try some safe tailgating with her? Her eyes move realistically & her vagina pulsates & vibrates.<sup>47</sup>

*Sextoys Catalogue* only offers pictures of the boxes in which the dolls come, and the boxes invariably only contain pictures of women (not the dolls). Perhaps the buyer of the sex doll is thus encouraged to identify the often fairly 'primitively' life-like sex doll (see **Figure 11** below) with the image of the live 'model' offered on the box. Sex dolls often have a name which usually comes with a kind of short-hand character description,

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<sup>47</sup> *Sextoys Catalogue* (No publication details; picked from the *Fantasies* sex shop in Edinburgh in January 1999), 41. Hereafter *Sextoys Catalogue*. Further references to this catalogue will appear in the main body of the text.



**Figure 11**

'Norma Jean inflatable Love Doll. Squeeze her and watch her vagina get wet with excitement! She has so many ways to please you: Deep open mouth, lubricated vagina, and special rear entry. You control the speed, power and action with this love doll. She has nice, ripe full tits. 3 penetration spots. Gorgeous life-like hair, kissable luscious red lips, life size mannequin head. Holds 275 lbs. Realistic battery operated internal vibrating vagina. Free 4 oz lube included'.

<<http://www.sextoy.com/dolls/norma.html>>.

Accessed 12 December 1999.

which tries to give the sex doll some 'personality'. They also come with a kind of promise of capacity for love, emotion, reciprocity; hence we get the Naughty Nadia love doll, rather than Nadia doll. The description tries its best to breathe life into Naughty Nadia by mentioning that she is 'life-size & fleshy', thus transporting the qualities of 'life' from Nadia's size to her non-existent, yet posited, 'fleshiness'. The description uses verbs denoting capacity for physical activity (Nadia is 'active', her eyes move, her

vagina 'pulsates & vibrates'), and suggestive of submissive response (her rectal orifice 'is inviting', she 'kneels forward'). Perhaps the most striking of Nadia's life-associated qualities is the safe-sex emphasis: she is disease-free, 'strong & healthy'.

Arguably, the very high-end of the sex doll market at the moment is held by a doll called RealDoll, which is made from silicone rubber and costs between 5000-6000 US dollars (1999).<sup>48</sup> The doll is typically advertised as the most realistic love doll ever made (as its name suggests), but RealDoll is not advertised in ways which would try to make it more life-like. Instead, the focus of RealDoll advertising is on the doll as a technological feat, even as a symbol of avant-garde artistic appreciation (and in this respect reminds us of Kokoschka's fetish). The doll can be ordered in a variety of body shapes, body tones, heads, breast-sizes, hair colours and boasts to be 'anatomically correct', and 'moulded from life casts'. It is further advertised that it bears 'no risk of disease', and is--in an attempt at casual humour--described as being 'cheaper than most alternatives' (<<http://www.realdoll.com>>). Customers are said to include:

futurists, artists, art collectors, film-makers, scientists, health professionals, housewives -- you name it. We provide REALDOLLS to single men, couples seeking to enhance their sex lives, hipsters looking for exotic decorative art, adult retailers who want the ultimate display mannequin, or anyone who desires to possess the world's most realistic love doll (for whatever reason). (<<http://www.realdoll.com>>)

The list is perhaps wishful rather than indicative (and I am not quite sure who are the 'futurists' and 'hipsters'). The mention of film-makers, however, is more than a simply vacuous boast, since in Autumn 1999 the website announced the realease of *Realdoll: The Movie*, the first porn film whose 'cast' (a doubly appropriate term in this case) also

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<sup>48</sup> RealDoll, and all public information concerning the doll, is available only from the company's website at <<http://www.realdoll.com>>.



includes RealDolls.<sup>49</sup>

The description of Nadia from *Sextoys Catalogue* brings to mind perhaps the most stereotypical 'love doll', one 'made to please', doomed to receive. It is this figure of the 'love doll' which receives most sympathy. Sometimes this sympathy comes in the slightly odd form of calling for respect for the doll's dollness; the doll-self, and the uncannily alive doll-mind, is felt haunting the sex doll under the tricks it is made to perform, as if there is another life under the sham sex surface, under the counterfeit sex-slave life it is made to lead. For example, in *The Culture of the Copy*, Hillel Schwartz describes the sex doll's striking adequacy and unreasonable inadequacy as follows:

Inadequate to love, the sex doll is a shoddy forgery. Shoddy, because it belongs to that class of materials and persons 'characterised by the endeavour to pass for something superior to what they really are'. A forgery, because it isolates an act from its original contexts, social, historical, biological. It circulates the false coin of a sex 'disambiguated' of gender, a lovefaking detached from the personal rhythms of hormones and menstrual periods, from the social concerns of syphilis, herpes, AIDS. At best it is a soft but durable good.... In the turn-out of the sex doll's limbs and the rictus of its open mouth we see the 'frightening sadness' (said Bruno Schulz's father) of 'violated matter'. (Schwartz, 129)

This passage reveals nicely some of the uneasy paradoxes surrounding sex dolls. Schwartz rather aggressively accuses the doll of being a forgery, and ends up lamenting the sexual violation of the forgery-doll. But what is the violatable integrity of a forgery in the first place? The sex doll is not fit for love (love here being a euphemism for sex

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<sup>49</sup> Ambrosia Vynne, dir., *RealDoll: The Movie* (Abyss Creations, 1999). The film is described as an 'erotic sexual comedy portraying a man's journey to the perfect sexual partner'. The main character struggles with his sexual confidence, breaks up with his girlfriend, and 'discovers true love and sexual fulfillment in the arms of a RealDoll', which eventually 'comes to life filling his nights with hot sensual pleasures'. (<<http://www.realdoll.com/movie.html>>) Perhaps the myth of Pygmalion was also initiated as a form of early advertising of the sculptor's skills.

as well), nor is it fit to give love. It is a bad forgery because it tries to be 'better' in sex than a 'real' woman: it does not whine when you 'watch football and drink beer', never gets a headache, and 'even kinky sex is OK' (Schwartz, 127). It is a forgery because it takes a sex act out of its 'original' cultural and biological context and puts that act in some other context. It is never explained what the 'original' cultural and biological context of sex is (perhaps sex among living human beings, and the sex doll insinuates itself in this supposed originary 'human-ness' and 'being', which it begins to taint with its counterfeit sex, which puts the primacy of 'human sex' into question). The sex doll is a forgery also because it is not hampered by menstrual periods and 'personal rhythms of hormones', periods when sex in its 'original' contexts is perhaps not always unreservedly enjoyed. Even more, the sex doll is a forgery because having sex with a doll one does not risk catching venereal diseases. Because the sex doll pretends to be less complicated and safer than a 'real' woman (and actually is, that is the implication; here it pretends to be what it is, that is the scandal), it is a forgery. At the same time, through the sex doll, Schwartz makes a distinction between good 'real' sex, and bad 'forged' sex. Good real sex is characterised by the actuality of discomfort, unwelcome lacunae and risk; bad fake sex is characterised by unreal comfort, dependability and safety.

I would argue, however, that when Schwartz sympathises with the doll (sees its 'frightening sadness'), this is the moment when the doll is violated. It is perhaps worth emphasising that for Schwartz the doll does not stand for a woman; a woman is not violated by the lovefaking he talks about, only the doll is. What takes place in the quotation from Schwartz above is a double ventriloquism. Schwartz lends himself to being spoken by 'Bruno Schulz's father' by way of a quotation, and Bruno Schulz's

father lets the sex doll's 'frightening sadness' be heard through his voice. But this ventriloquism is double in another way as well: since there is no 'sadness' that the father could take upon himself to give his voice over to (it is only a dummy, a forgery, and a shoddy one at that: it does not speak, is not frightened or sad), the sadness is thrown upon the doll rather than received from it. The voice is thrown upon the doll, thrust into it, and it is made to speak someone else's sadness. The same applies to Schwartz: in purporting to let 'Bruno Schulz's father' speak through him, he is in fact throwing his voice into it, covering it with the illusion that it is the authentic voice of Schulz's father that we hear, however momentarily, when in fact the ventriloquiser is in control of the show, the PA-equipment, the lips and the breath: but it is enough to entertain the illusion that we hear the quoted one in his voice, that the dummy speaks.

If there is a 'violated matter' it is perhaps this ventriloquism which violates it, rather than sex. After the initial violation, in Schwartz's account, the 'matter' of which the doll is made is also violated: the violation spreads so that even the rubber and the synthetics are defiled and desecrated. In its fake perfection, the sex doll is mere matter; but by projecting his voice onto it and then presuming to let itself be heard, Schwartz posits a personification (the self of a sex doll, however ridiculous that may sound), which then allows for the violation and the violence through sex to take place. This is exactly what Bersani means when he writes that it is the self which provides the basis on which sexuality is associated with power (Bersani 1988, 218). Next I would like to look at one way in which the establishing of the doll-self (the violence of the relational) is mapped in Bellmer's photographs.

When is a doll a doll? How many dolls are there in Bellmer's pictures (see **Figures 7-10** above)? Mostly critics have been content to refer to Bellmer's

photographs in terms of a sort of vague plurality of dolls. This eludes what I would see as an important question. Basically, this is a similar kind of inquiry as the one I proposed concerning Barbie dolls and the name 'Barbie'. How many Barbies are there? How, and in what conditions, does the name 'Barbie' mean in the plurality of Barbie dolls? When Belton refers to Bellmer's dolls as 'girls' he is not seeing any dolls, but a multiplication and intensification of sadism in the plurality of what he sees as representations of young girls. For him, the dolls could just as well have been replaced by girls. When Foster writes that there are two dolls (Foster, 102-3), he is not referring so much to Bellmer's photographs, but to two separate technical features that Bellmer used in the construction of dolls (one with and one without a ball joint). But in *Variations*, which appear in *Minotaure* on facing pages, for example, is there one doll, manipulated and photographed in different positions, or are there anything up to 18 dolls, each photographed once? Or are there none, just doll parts, from various dolls or from no identifiable doll whatsoever, variously assembled?

If we see the photographs as presenting one doll (based, for example, on the perceived 'sameness' of the face in pictures where a face appears) we may be tempted to say that there is one doll, manipulated, made to pose over and over again. If we see the photographs as presenting, for example, two 'stories', on the one hand the story of the construction of the doll (**Figures 7-8**), on the other hand the story of the manipulation of the more 'fleshed out' doll (**Figures 9-10**), we might be tempted to argue that there are two dolls. Or we could say that there are two dolls, the upright doll in **Figures 7-8**, and the mangled one on the bed in **Figures 9-10**. Or we could say that each photograph presents us with a completely different doll. What is often overlooked in Bellmer's dolls is the *construction* laid open in the photographs, the circulation of

pieces, which *not once* form a doll in its entirety, a complete doll. There is not one photograph that would even try to sustain an illusion of completeness; for example, a doll framed so that the framing alone would account for pieces having been missed out, thus to an extent at least fostering the illusion of wholeness *outside* the frame. On the contrary, all photographs show doll pieces brought together in ways that leave the viewer in no doubt that the doll is not a whole doll. What is at issue in the interpretations that see a doll, or identifiable dolls in the photographs, is the construction of a doll-self, or doll-selves. Instead, I would argue that there is no doll; there are doll pieces. We can think of Bellmer's *Variations* as a kind of modelling kit (exemplified by the picture in the low left hand corner in **Figure 8**): build yourself a doll. Bellmer's pictures are not so much representations of sadism, but pictures and reflections of the construction of sadism. By manipulating the doll-elements Bellmer is testing not only the sort of stress-points which turns dolls into girls, but also testing points where particular combinations of doll pieces turn into 'doll-selves': which combination lures our sympathy, which at the same time establishes a power-relation making sadism possible.

The numerous readings which locate sadism in Bellmer's photographs of dolls are based first of all on the perceived identity of a doll (a doll-self), and then on a perceived powerlessness of the dolls, and this is what makes the sadism so effective. The powerlessness of the doll appears so self-evident and complete that it posits an aggressor: someone is doing violence to the doll. I would argue that part of what makes the aggressor appear so undeniably sadistic (and thus sexually motivated) results from the complete power of the perceived aggressor in relation to the complete powerlessness of the doll. At the same time as the doll pieces are put together into a doll and the doll-

self is posited, the doll enters into the relational in the extreme. The sex doll/sadist couple in a way presents us with the strongest form of violence of the relational: the sadist has all the power and the doll has none.

The powerlessness of the Naughty Nadia type of sex doll was what bothered Schwartz. Naughty Nadia is of course not the only kind of sex doll available. From the *Sextoys Catalogue*, we can also find, for example, 'BIG JOHN KELLY, VIBRATING MALE LOVE DOLL' who comes recommended 'for HER (or for him)', with '[s]teel blue eyes, black hair, trained body, & impressive penis--20 STIFF cm long!! Inflates to life-size. Open mouth. Rear orifice' (*Sextoys Catalogue*, 41). The activity of Naughty Nadia is replaced by the steely stiffness of Big John Kelly. Big John Kelly is so hard that if one takes some old flaccid centimetres to measure his penis, he even stiffens the centimetres to their maximum length. His orifices are mentioned in factual, almost laconic tones, in contrast to the exciting possibilities offered by the multitude of Naughty Nadia's orifices. There is also no suggestion of the constant availability for sex as there is with Naughty Nadia.

Perhaps in traditional gender terms the most complicated sex doll scenario in this *Sextoys Catalogue* is offered by 'LUSTY LESLIE BISEXUAL LOVE-DOLL' where '[p]rice also includes a pair of latex dildo pants with a multi-speed vibrating 23cm penis' (*Sextoys Catalogue*, 41). We are not given clear indications as to how this putative bisexuality should be interpreted (what could it possibly mean that a doll is bisexual?), or who should be fitted with those vibrating dildo pants or when. Thus, Lusty Leslie rehearses a certain artificial detachability of sexuality. Lusty Leslie brings up the rather laughable possibility of a scene where sex takes place between dolls and dolls



**Figure 12**

'John Holmes and the Coed Love Doll having sex. John Holmes shows what a stud he is as the hot Coed Love Doll engulfs his manhood.'

<<http://www.sextoy.com/dolls/johncoed.html>>.

Accessed 12 December 1999.

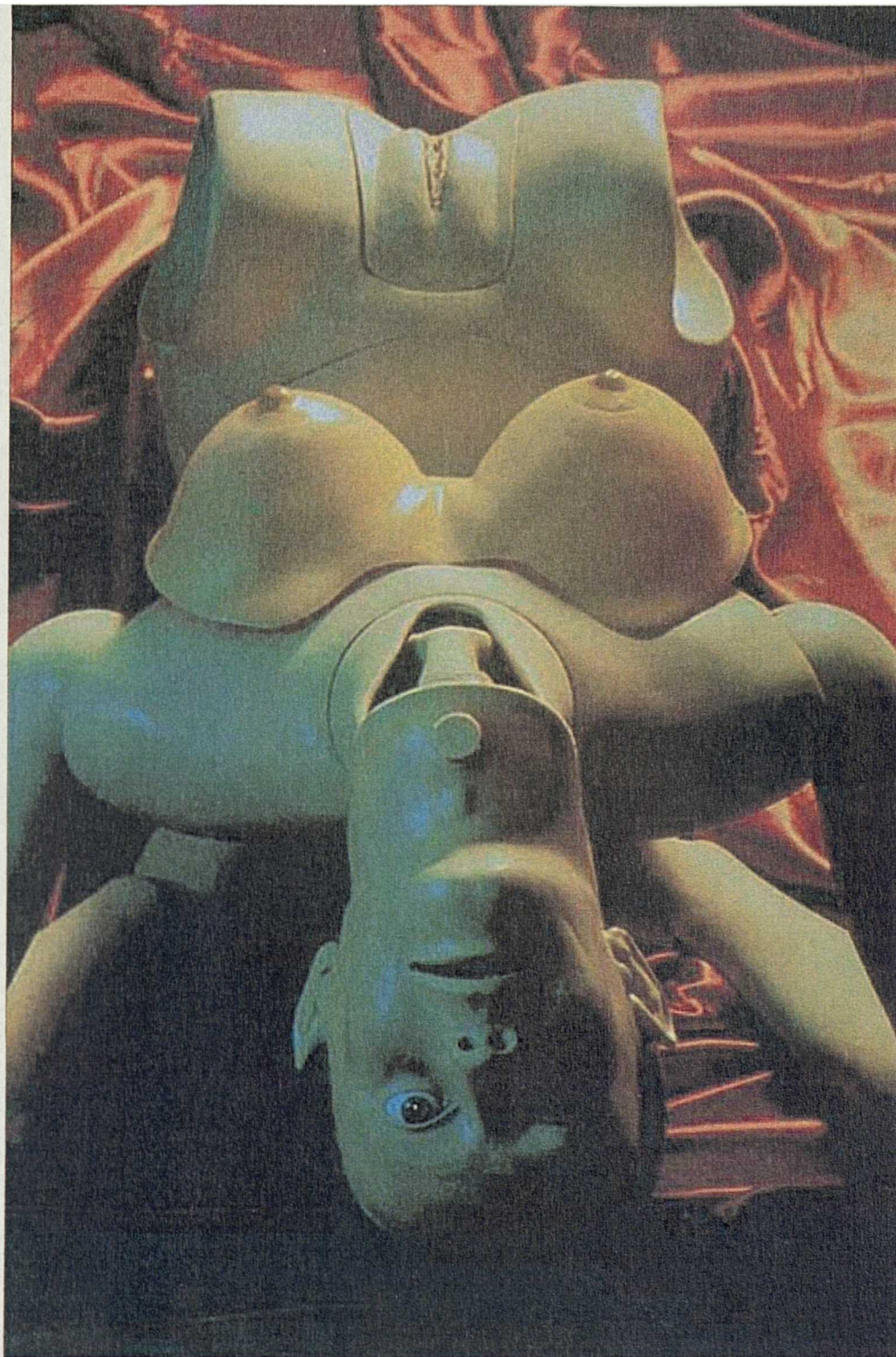
with dildos. (For one interpretation of this sex doll comedy, see **Figure 12** above.)

The Cindy Sherman sequence of photographs usually known as 'Sex Pictures' (from 1992) are often compared to Bellmer's dolls. Whereas Bellmer's dolls are mainly seen to have to do with sadism, Sherman's dolls have been seen as demonstrating the objectification of women by stripping the mannequin/doll of male fantasies and idealization.<sup>50</sup> It is not difficult to see Sherman's 'Sex Pictures' as a catalogue of early

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<sup>50</sup> See, for example, Margit Brehm, 'The Body and its Surrogates', trans. Mary Fran Gilbert & Keith Bartlett in *Cindy Sherman* (cat.), (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 1996), 108-20. See also Rosalind Krauss, 'Sex Pictures', in *Cindy Sherman 1975-1993* (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 207-12. Krauss recognises that choosing to use dolls is, after Bellmer, clearly a statement on Sherman's part, but throughout the essay Krauss remains unsure and uncomfortable as to how to interpret that statement.



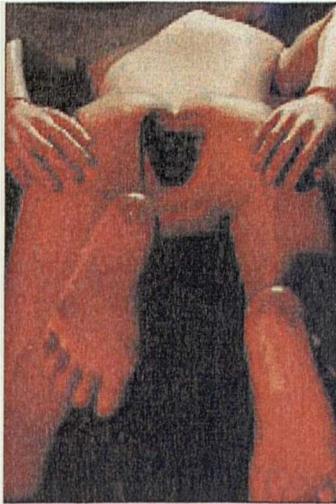


**Figure 13**  
Cindy Sherman, Untitled #261.

RealDoll experiments gone awfully wrong (see **Figures 13-16** above and below).

What makes Sherman's pictures interesting in this context is the way in which they spare-part sexuality: the usual inventory parts in sex doll advertisements (hips, hair,

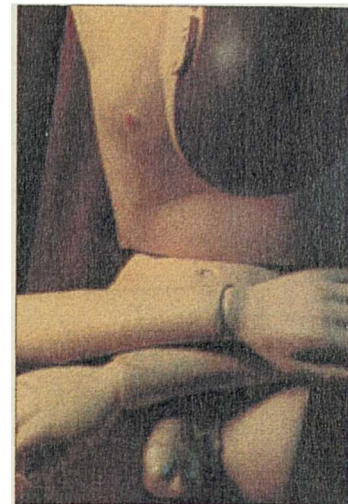




**Figure 14**  
Cindy Sherman, Untitled #258.



**Figure 15**  
Cindy Sherman, Untitled #253.



**Figure 16**  
Cindy Sherman, Untitled #259.

breasts, vaginas, penises) are circulated, omitted, or (mis)placed in ways that makes the perceived sex of these sex dolls disturbingly unclear, but also subversively comical. In her 'Sex Pictures' Sherman is elaborating on the Lusty Leslie comedy of sex dolls, but also elaborating that often forgotten aspect of sex dolls, which is that in popular media sex dolls are almost exclusively presented as comedy props and are seen not only as improbable sources of sex, but also as deeply humiliating sources of sex. This is, of course, what the comedy on sex dolls centrally relies on, and especially in the form of the blow-up doll. On evidence of John Holmes and the Coed Love Doll (in **Figure 12**), the sex trade seems to be fully aware of the irrepressible comedy of sex dolls. Even Norma Jean (in **Figure 11**) can be seen as playing on the discrepancy between the 'gorgeous', kissable' doll of the description and sex-zombie monster of the picture. A literary example can be found in Tom Sharpe's farcical novel *Wilt* (1976), where the eponymous hero finds himself in a drunken party tied to a blow-up doll, experiencing with a 'sensation that something with all the less attractive qualities of a mousetrap, or a vice, or a starving clam, had attached itself implacably to what he had up till now

considered to be the most private of his parts'.<sup>51</sup> Unable to deflate the doll and extricate himself from it he is forced to go on the move. In a bathroom he trips up and passes out, but is rescued by the other party-goers amidst 'hysterical laughter' (Sharpe, 63). Later in the novel, in humiliated drunken agony Wilt uses the doll for a dummy run to practise murdering his wife, tries to bury the doll in a hole in a building site, but gets arrested and questioned by the police. The whole incident of 'mistaken identities' has more than a passing resemblance to Kokochka's ridiculous fetish party.

Because of Sherman's circulation of spare-part markers of sexuality, and the underlying humiliation and comedy of the dollification of sexuality, it is difficult to attempt to enter into a relation (sadistic or sympathetic) with Sherman's sex dolls. There is not enough doll-self in these sex dolls to establish sympathy, there is too much of a comedy of spare parts to posit the sadist. This is also perhaps where a certain difference between Bellmer's and Sherman's photographs could be seen to lie: Bellmer's photographs are serious studies in sadism, Sherman's are comic studies in humiliation and sex.

In the next chapter I shall shift the focus from dolls and sex towards dolls and silence, and look in more detail at the relationship between Freud's dolls and psychoanalysis. Although I shall not discuss Bersani explicitly, the following chapter will explore from another angle the idea of 'non-relation' to dolls.

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<sup>51</sup> Tom Sharpe, *Wilt* (London: Pan Book, 1978 [orig. 1976]), 57. Hereafter Sharpe. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

### Chapter Three: Freud's Doll Collection

In this chapter I shall look at Freud's doll collections, which, as I shall argue, include his collection of antiquities, and his collection of cases, and that these collections are linked. After introducing the collection I shall problematise the beginnings of this collection. Rather than simply collecting cases of women at the beginning of his career, one important element in Freud's early case collection is a need to get rid of the notions of doll and puppet. Freud wants to listen to his hysterical women patients, and to do so he must cut through the accumulated and hardened social (doll) moulds which restrain his patient's expression, and he must listen to *their* stories (rather than the ones that he might, even inadvertently or unconsciously, suggest to them). However, as has been argued, Freud's psychoanalysis remains crucially open to forms of remote-control, puppetry, which in fact have led to new readings of psychoanalysis and new theorisations of the unconscious. The observation that guides my reading of Freud's statuette collection is the fact that even though over the years the statuettes increasingly invaded Freud's study (which is his writing and theorising space), he makes practically no direct references to his collection in his theoretical and analytical writings. There is a remarkable silence about this collection in his writings, a silence which, I argue, impinges on psychoanalysis like a foreign body, but a foreign body that is also different from, say, hypnosis and telepathy. There is a curious doll-silence in the midst of the 'talking cure', a silence which does not unproblematically communicate with psychoanalysis.

By the time Freud died in 1939, he had a remarkable collection of Egyptian,



**Figure 17**  
Freud's study, London.

Greek, Roman, Near Eastern and Asian objects.<sup>52</sup> This collection is perhaps the most immediately striking aspect of Freud's home in Maresfield Gardens, London, now the Freud Museum. When one enters the museum one sees items in display cases, on cabinets, tables, shelves and walls, on Freud's desk, on almost every available surface. One perhaps expects to see the famous couch, book-cases, pictures, cabinets, desks and other home and office paraphernalia, but there is practically nothing in Freud's writings nor in the popular idea of psychoanalysis that would let the visitor to expect a collection

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<sup>52</sup> Pictures and descriptions of a selection of Freud's collection can be found in *Sigmund Freud and Art: His Personal Collection of Antiquities*, eds. Lynn Gamwell and Richard Wells (New York: State University of New York, 1989), 33-131. Hereafter Gamwell and Wells. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. A good online source for pictures of Freud's rooms and collections in Vienna in 1939 can be found at the Vienna Freud Museum website <<http://freud.t0.or.at/freud/index-e.htm>>.

of antiquities in the Freud Museum. The London Freud Museum is surprising, because it is also a museum in a completely different sense than the visitor might expect, in a much too common sense: its most enigmatic feature is that it contains antique objects. The Freud Museum is at least two museums occupying the same space: the Freud Museum (a museum of Freud's work) and the antiquities museum.

The number of objects in Freud's collection varies from one account to another. When James Fenton, in his *On Statues* (1995), mentions the number of objects as 'several hundred' he is clearly only talking about the figurines in the form of human beings.<sup>53</sup> Lynn Gamwell, in 'The Origins of Freud's Antiquities Collection' (1989), writes that there are 'more than two thousand' objects,<sup>54</sup> whereas John Forrester, in "'Mille e tre": Freud and Collecting' (1994), contends that there are 'something over 3000 pieces'.<sup>55</sup> Over half of Freud's collection consists of Egyptian objects, and primarily he himself bought sculpture, especially statuettes (Gamwell, 21). Many of the objects are also gifts from friends and admirers.<sup>56</sup>

Sculpture, art, antiquity; Freud's statuette collection has all the 'cultural sanction

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<sup>53</sup> James Fenton, *On Statues*, The Ernest Jones Lecture 1995 (London: Syrens, 1995), 3. Hereafter Fenton. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

<sup>54</sup> Lynn Gamwell, 'The Origins of Freud's Antiquities Collection', *Sigmund Freud and Art: His Personal Collection of Antiquities*, eds. Lynn Gamwell and Richard Wells (New York: State Univ. of New York, 1989), 21-32, quotation 21. Hereafter Gamwell. Gamwell's informative essay is valuable to me throughout this chapter. Further page references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text. For a discussion of the number of antiquities Freud actually possessed and the criticism of the selection of objects in *Sigmund Freud and Art*, see S. R. F. Price, 'Freud and Antiquities', *Psychoanalysis in its Cultural Context*, eds. Edward Timms and Ritchie Robertson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1992), 132-7.

<sup>55</sup> John Forrester, "'Mille e tre": Freud and Collecting', *The Cultures of Collecting*, eds. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), 224-51, quotation 227. Hereafter Forrester. Further page references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Gay, 'Introduction', *Sigmund Freud and Art: His Personal Collection of Antiquities*, eds. Lynn Gamwell and Richard Wells (New York: State University of New York, 1989), 15-19. Hereafter Gay. Further page references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text.

of respectability' (Forrester, 237). At the beginning of his *On Statues* James Fenton suggests that if one tries to think of Freud's statuette collection outside the cultural sanctions of art and antiquity, this would entail something scandalous:

In September 1938, Freud moved into his last home at 20 Maresfield Gardens, along with his collection of several hundred antique statuettes. How shocking, how hostile the previous sentence would be, if for antique statuettes one substituted the phrase 'fluffy toys.' It's the fluffiness that would shock, though, the frivolity of it--not the idea that Freud had toys, and played with them all his life. (Fenton, 3)

Fenton suggests that the statuettes Freud collected were Freud's toys, and that Freud in fact played with toys throughout his life. Fenton evokes the possibly silly aspect of Freud's collection of statuettes by substituting 'fluffy toys' for 'antique statues', substituting the foolish fancy of more modern consumable softness for the venerable preserved hardness of antiquity, dismissing such a substitution already beforehand as ridiculous, even 'hostile.' But when Fenton compares the statuettes to 'fluffy toys', he perhaps goes too far in his comparison, even comfortably too far, because by evoking 'fluffiness' he can bypass the perhaps more disconcerting suggestion of *dolls* (disconcerting by way of requiring a more responsive and responsible account), which nevertheless seems to be suggested by the idea that the statuettes would be toys. Later in the essay Fenton tries to show how thinking of these 'toys' as statues might change our view of them. He imagines Freud moving with a collection of several hundred statues and comments: 'What an event that would have been' (Fenton, 7). He writes that statue, statuette and doll belong to a 'family of meanings', but he never speculates on a scene of Freud moving with dolls (Fenton, 6). The fluffiness of toys would be shocking and hostile, 'statues' would create a monumental event; what about dolls? The

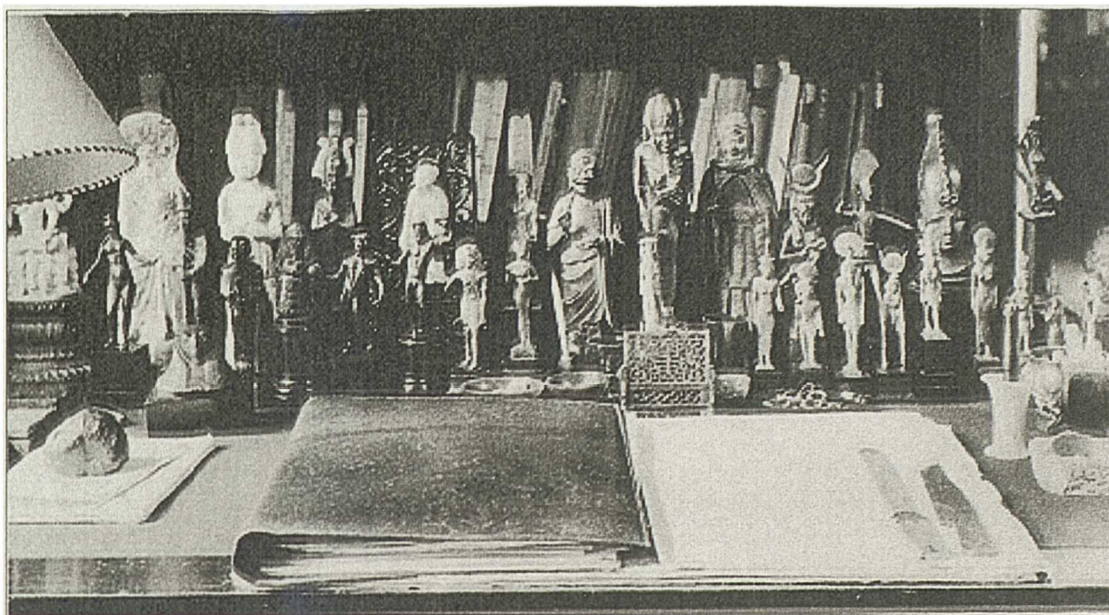
word 'doll' brings with it a multitude of cultural connotations and appears at first to over-dress the statuettes in childish garments with clashing colours, in pinkish blonde significations: doll as toy, doll as particularly a toy for little girls, doll as 'an over-dressed and rather silly woman', doll as any 'young woman', doll as a 'puppet' (and all the connotations of puppetry; manipulation, control from a distance, ventriloquism). Dolls have different wardrobes than 'statuettes' or 'statues'. They come, for example, accompanied by different stories than the venerable antique statues or statuettes (from myths to fairy tales), by different theoretical and conceptual models (from archaeology to doll-collecting). And yet, in another sense the word 'doll' simply brings out more clearly the status and standing of a statuette: 'statuette' feminizes 'statue' and diminishes it in size. The suffix '-ette' is used to indicate '(1) female, as *usherette*; (2) small, as *kitchenette*; (3) *esp* in tradenames, imitation or substitute, as *leatherette*' (*Chambers*). Gathering these meanings of '-ette' in one expression, we could say that '-ette' indicates a small female imitation.

Evoking in passing an 'infantile component' in Freud's interest in being surrounded by statuettes, Fenton goes on to ask two questions which he nevertheless only toys with: 'Did he [Freud] talk to his statuettes? Did they talk to him?' (Fenton, 4). Fenton is unnecessarily condescending in surmising that the collection of statuettes just shows how in his old age Freud again resorted to taking pleasure in childish things:

. . . and it might well be that those who arranged Freud's possessions in Maresfield Gardens felt, as they set out the statuettes upon the desk, that they were making the old man happy, as one seeks to make a child at home by taking its dolls to the hospital bed. (Fenton, 4)

It seems to me that eventually Fenton is unable to get over the idea that these





**Figure 18**

Freud's desk in Vienna, 1938. A group of statuettes is standing between Freud's papers and some books, which were perhaps used as source material for his writing work.

statuettes are frivolous as long as they are connected with something doll-like. As soon as the emphasis is shifted away from the doll-aspect of these statuettes to a certain notion of a statue, the statuettes gain importance in relation to Freud's thinking, gain stature from the antiquity and from myths.

Yet, Fenton's focus on human figurines is not as eccentric as may first appear, because Freud collected mainly dolls, and he kept his favourite ones on his writing-desk (see **Figure 18** above). It has been suggested that the dolls on his desk were an inspiration, that they acted both as an audience and as muses for Freud. We could then say that, in a sense, the dolls made Freud's apartment in Vienna and his house in London museums already before they were officially made so: one of the meanings of *museum* is 'home or resort of the Muses' (*Chambers*). Freud's work shares a plane, a desk, a writing space with the dolls. Freud's desk is almost too cluttered with them for comfort. Dolls impinge on Freud's space of writing, and the room to write and formulate psychoanalysis appears almost under pressure from them; as if psychoanalysis



were written face to face, against, in an encounter with the dolls. If we think of the dolls as Freud's muses, we can also picture Freud's work as apostrophized to the statuette-muses, apostrophized, more precisely, to little dolls absent from his work.

Giancarlo Carabelli writes *In the Image of Priapus* (1996) that:

The comparison between archaeological fragment and doll was introduced at the time Herculaneum and Pompeii were discovered. In 1768, in *De l'usage des statues chez les anciens*, Ottaviano Guasco wrote: 'For an antiquary statues are treasures, the lover caresses them as his delights, they are dolls for the rich and ostentatious man....'<sup>57</sup>

Freud was not a particularly rich and ostentatious man, but he was particularly fond of human figurines. Freud also compared the act of collecting to a sexual conquest: 'Every collector is a substitute for a Don Juan Tenerio, and so too is the mountaineer, the sportsman, and such people. These are erotic equivalents.'<sup>58</sup> Forrester suggests that after the death of Freud's father, Freud began collecting 'not only the antiquities, but also the case histories of women' and that this is 'the mark of his [Freud's] own, as opposed to his father's, or anyone else's, originality and sublimated "sexual megalomania"' (Forrester, 234). Perhaps inadvertently, Forrester moulds for us a figure of Freud as a doll collector: collector of statuettes, collector of women; both acting as his 'muses'. In some way this is where Freud's psychoanalytic collection then begins: perhaps it is a reaction to his father's death, but it also involves women and collecting.

Freud's collection is interestingly situated in relation to the supposed polarities between his home and work, the personal and the scientific, the private and the public

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<sup>57</sup> Giancarlo Carabelli, *In the Image of Priapus* (London: Duckworth, 1996), 107-8. Hereafter Carabelli. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

<sup>58</sup> *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, ed. J. M. Masson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985), 24 January 1895, 110. Quoted in Forrester, 233.



**Figure 19**  
View from Freud's consultation room looking towards his study in Vienna, 1938.

Freud. Forrester offers an intriguing account of the way in which the collection was physically placed in Freud's apartment in Vienna:

He [Freud] kept them [objects in the collection] in the two rooms he worked in, making a distinct separation from the other family rooms, which were decorated in ordinary turn-of-the-century style, with heavy, contemporary furniture and lots of family photos. This is a clear indication that his collection was both something private for him, to be kept separate from his familial existence, and that it was something bound up with his work, both as a writer and analyst. (Forrester, 227) (See **Figure 19** above)<sup>59</sup>

The collection is not part of Freud's private family environment, but part of his working environment. It is part of his work as a writer and an analyst, but it is *private* to him. What Forrester means by *private* in the latter case is that the collection 'was essentially

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<sup>59</sup> Pictures of Freud's collection in his apartment in Vienna can be found in Edmund Engelman, *Berggasse 19: Sigmund Freud's Home and Offices, Vienna 1938* (New York: Basic Books: 1976). These pictures show even more clearly the pervasiveness and density of the collection in Freud's work rooms. When Freud moved to London in 1938, the collection in its entirety was shipped over to his London address in Maresfield Gardens. Freud's house in Maresfield Gardens is larger than his apartment in Vienna, and still the collection seems dauntingly ubiquitous.

for the personal enjoyment of the owner' (Forrester, 228). However, the family Freud is never simply separate from the psychoanalyst Freud, the private Freud is never simply separate from the public Freud. Forrester's account alerts us to a certain 'privacy' of the collection, which is not Freud's personal or family privacy, but, rather curiously, his work privacy.<sup>60</sup> The collection is not separate from Freud's psychoanalytic work in general; on the contrary, its distribution in his house suggests that it belongs to the psychoanalytic collection, accumulation and archivization of cases, dreams, jokes, parapraxes, which are copiously discussed and archived in Freud's writing. Yet, this collection stands in silence, and for a certain haunting doll silence, in Freud's work, because these dolls are, precisely, not discussed in his work.

In the accounts of the collection the strangeness of a 'work privacy' is perhaps too easily overcome, and the collection is made to fit into Freud's psychoanalytic work and interests. Writings about the collection have had four fairly distinct focuses:

1) Personal life: the act of collecting, the collection as a whole or individual pieces in the collection are linked with events in Freud's private life, which are then seen as influencing his work and his writing. Here the collection implies 'passion', and this passion may concern the act of collecting, or individual pieces in the collection, as long as this is constrained through a prioritizing of Freud's 'life', before linking this 'passion' to his work.

2) Myths: individual pieces (especially figurines of gods) in the collection are linked to Freud's use of Egyptian, Greek and Roman myths, and the figurines are seen

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<sup>60</sup> Marianna Torgovnik, in 'Entering Freud's Study', which forms Chapter Ten of her *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago and London: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990), 194-209, further comments that Freud purchased his collection 'solely from the proceeds of his psychoanalytic practice, other monies (from teaching, for example) being reserved for the family' (195-6). Hereafter Torgovnik. Further page references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text.

as illustrative of Freud's sustained interest in these myths. Here the emphasis is on individual pieces, which are seen to give further evidence for the importance of various myths in Freud's thinking.<sup>61</sup>

3) Archaeology: the collection is emphatically one of antiquities, and this is linked to Freud's interest in archaeology, which in his work provides perhaps his favourite analogy to the work of psychoanalysis, and also provides him with a set of conceptual tools.

4) Collecting: the act of collecting antique objects is seen as a part/extension of Freud's psychoanalytical method of collecting cases, dreams, jokes, parapraxes, etc.. Here the emphasis is on collecting as an act or activity, and on the specificity of psychoanalysis in its capacity to collect what was thought to be uncollectable and/or not worthy of collecting.

Gamwell and Forrester link the collection to Freud's private life when they point out, for example, that Freud acquired his first art objects only two months after his father's death in December 1896. Gamwell writes:

To consider that he began his collection in some sense as a reaction to his father's death seems unavoidable; not only the timing but also the content of Freud's early collecting suggests its strong connection with the loss of his father. (Gamwell, 23)

In December 1896, Freud bought his first statuettes. In a letter to Fliess on December 6, 1896 Freud writes: 'I have decorated my study with plaster copies of Florentine statues. They were a source of exceptional renewal and comfort for me' (quoted in

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<sup>61</sup> Interestingly, though, the Asian (mainly Chinese) items in Freud's collection are never mentioned in this case. There is a certain indecipherability in the Asian objects, an indecipherability which suggests that perhaps also the other objects in the collection are less transparent as regards their relevance to Freud and psychoanalysis than is usually assumed.

Gamwell, 24). In a larger 'personal' context of Freud's Jewishness, Ellen Handler Spitz, in her 'Psychoanalysis and the Legacies of Antiquity' (1989), argues that Freud's collection is 'emblematic' of how 'Freud's choice of ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures constituted, for him, a conflicted legacy in which feelings about his Judaic birth and heritage were deeply implicated'.<sup>62</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, in 'The Purloined Kiddush Cups: Reopening the Case on Freud's Jewish Identity' (1989), focuses on the Jewish objects in Freud's collection.<sup>63</sup> Yerushalmi ends the essay by implying that, with future work, Freud's Jewish identity will be discovered:

...the very fact that the Jewish objects, the Talmud, and the other materials now on view were kept as part of his scrupulously arranged private ambience is sufficiently noteworthy and (such are the surprising vicissitudes in the unfolding story of Freud) may yet, with other discoveries perhaps still to come, prove significant. (np)

Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1996) is in part a reading and a critique of Yerushalmi's work.<sup>64</sup> Rather than saying that Yerushalmi's optimism and openness towards the future is simply unwarranted, Derrida argues that Yerushalmi's gesture is legitimate, but that Yerushalmi still misses the point: 'It goes without saying, if one can put it this way, that Freud's phantom does not respond' (Derrida 1996, 47). When Yerushalmi wants to see Freud's identity as Jewish identity (and hence

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<sup>62</sup> Ellen Handler Spitz, 'Psychoanalysis and the Legacies of Antiquity', *Sigmund Freud and Art: His Personal Collection of Antiquities*, eds. Lynn Gamwell and Richard Wells (New York: State Univ. of New York, 1989), 153-71, quotation 153. Hereafter Spitz. Further page references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text. See also Torgovnik's *Gone Primitive*, which looks at the notions of 'primitive', 'civilised' and 'Jewishness' in Freud's work in the context of the Nazi Germany of the 1930s.

<sup>63</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, 'The Purloined Kiddush Cups: Reopening the Case on Freud's Jewish Identity', published as a supplement to *Sigmund Freud and Art: His Personal Collection of Antiquities* (New York: Abrams, 1989), n.p.

<sup>64</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996). Hereafter Derrida 1996. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

psychoanalysis as a Jewish science), Derrida shows how Freud's personal, private, and psychoanalytic Jewishness is irrevocably silent and 'virtual', and at the same time already more pervasive and effective than Yerushalmi thinks.

In addition to reproducing photographs of objects in Freud's collection, *Sigmund Freud and Art* also attempts to link some individual objects in the collection to 'Freud's thought' (Gamwell and Wells, 33). Describing the bronze statuette of Imhotep (architect of the Step Pyramid at Saqqara), the editors write: 'Freud may have especially favored this figure because of Imhotep's identification during classical times with the Greek god of healing, Asklepios' (Gamwell and Wells, 44).<sup>65</sup> Describing the Shabti Figure of Senna, the editors expound the importance of a mummified figure to the founder of psychoanalysis as follows:

Freud was fascinated by the way in which the dead continue to influence the living, that is, to live intrapsychically--in mummified form, one could almost say--and to work for and on the living mind. Freud discovered a different kind of life after death: the coercion of the commands, prohibitions, fears, and wishes of the deceased on the minds and actions of those who live on. (Gamwell and Wells, 65)

Perhaps the most often mentioned single figurine in the collection is that of Athena, because Freud seems to have displayed special interest in it. It had a place at the centre of his desk, and he also chose it as the sole object to be smuggled out of Austria when his whole collection was in danger of being confiscated by the Nazis. The editors write of Athena that:

This statuette and Freud's manifest attachment to it illustrate his commitment to a construction of female sexuality in terms of its

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<sup>65</sup> Freud refers to Asklepios's healing powers in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, SE, vol. 4, 34n.



**Figure 20**  
Athena in Freud's collection. Roman, 1st or 2nd century A. D., probably after a Greek original of the 5th century B. C. Bronze, height 4 $\frac{1}{8}$  inc. (10.4 cm). This one displays the customary Medusa on its breastplate.

relation to a male norm. Athena is a masculinized female whose lacks are manifest: her spear is missing, the Medusa on her breastplate displays no snakes, she has no phallus. (Gamwell and Wells, 110) (See **Figure 20** above)<sup>66</sup>

What transpires from these accounts is that even the most important of Freud's statuettes only 'illustrates'. His favourite doll does not amount to anything more than psychoanalytical and theoretical decoration, and, for that matter, its illustrative quality

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<sup>66</sup> The importance of the lack of spear perhaps comes from a comment of Freud's reported by H. D. in her *Tribute to Freud* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1985), where she writes how Freud once wanted to show her an object:

It was a smallish object, judging by the place left empty, my end of the semicircle, made by the symmetrical arrangement of the Gods (or the Goods) on his table. 'This is my favourite,' he said. He held the object toward me. I took it in my hand. It was a little bronze statue, helmeted, clothed to the foot in carved robe with the upper incised chiton or peplum. One hand was extended as if holding a staff or rod. 'She is perfect,' he said, '*only she has lost her spear.*' I did not say anything. (68-9)

H. D. does not comment why '*only she has lost her spear*' is emphasized; whether Freud at that point spoke with emphasis, or whether it is meant to reveal a later insight on the part of H. D. H. D. goes on to describe at length and in detail how fascinated she was by the quality of Freud's voice and his English.

comes from the editors and not from Freud. In Freud's short essay 'Medusa's Head' (which the editors refer to) the Athena-doll does not even illustrate.<sup>67</sup> The doll's relevance to Freud's essay can be surmised only after a kind of double excavation: Athena is physically excavated, and later acquired by Freud. References to this doll cannot be found in Freud's texts as such, therefore (so the accounts imply) it must be buried in his text, and if the doll itself cannot be found, at least its burial must be archived in the texts; the burial has left traces, which can be followed and located. So the act of reading the relevance of the doll becomes a matter of exhuming it from Freud's 'Medusa's Head'. This, however, is tricky, because Freud does not talk about the Athena-doll in the essay, he only writes about the myth of the Medusa. Is the doll really buried in the text? It is as if the Athena on Freud's desk has become a kind of index, pointing at both the myth of Medusa and Freud's text of the same name, designating these as relevant. In the process it deletes itself or designates itself as only indexical, irrelevant in itself. This is the way in which the editors of *Sigmund Freud and Art* treat Freud's collection, even though they sometimes clearly find the indices and links difficult to establish. Of all the given descriptions which spell out the relevance of individual pieces to Freud's thought most amount to 'may have' (Gamwell and Wells, 39, 44, 57, 58, 112). Sometimes, as if exasperated by the vagueness of the collection to the point of not being able to make even a 'may have' connection, the editors choose to leave it for the reader to uncover the connection between one of

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<sup>67</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Medusa's Head', *SE*, vol. 18, 273-4. Freud writes: 'The sight of Medusa's head makes the spectator stiff with terror, turns him to stone' (273). As if in terror of the petrifying, dollifying, inanimating effect of Medusa's head, Freud interprets the stiffening as what we might call an 'animated' erection: 'For becoming stiff means an erection' (273). Turning to stone also means not being able to write, in Freud's case leaving the impressionistic piece 'Medusa's Head' in its unfinished, fragmented, decapitated state, unpublished during Freud's lifetime. 'Medusa' calls for a discussion of dolls and petrification.



Freud's objects and one of their own sentences describing his work. The relevance of the collection is clearly felt to be enormous in Freud's 'personal' life, in Freud's 'private' work, and in the theory of psychoanalysis, and at the same time hardly locatable within these domains. For example, writing of a bronze figure of a vulture, the editors comment in a non-committal way:

Basing his discussion on ancient Greek authors such as Plutarch, Freud wrote that the Egyptians regarded the vulture as a symbol of motherhood, believing that only female vultures existed and that they could be impregnated by the wind. (Gamwell and Wells, 51)

What actually is the connection or the relevance of this description to the bronze figure? Sometimes the editors of *Sigmund Freud and Art* give an object an interpretation, the relevance of which for Freud is then explicated. For example, a Balsarium with two faces on opposing sides is made relevant by interpreting it in terms of dualism, and then dualism is connected to Freud's thought:

Freud, the profound dualist, owned several two-faced figures. ... Likewise, central to this object is the notion of the basic bisexuality of all human beings, which Freud discussed in his fundamental work, 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality'. (Gamwell and Wells, 108)

The balsarium seems to contain the balsam of dualism, which is then lavishly applied to Freud. In a way the editors are doing a Freudian dream-analysis by reading his collection in connection with his writings, treating them together as a picture-puzzle, which uses metaphors, metonyms and displacements to come up with determining thoughts and links. It is always Freud's written work, however, which is made to accommodate his collection, never the other way round. Not once is the collection as a whole, or any single piece in the collection, seen to question or problematise Freud's

work, nor contribute to his work. Is this not a rather strangely quiet and compliant collection, fracturing itself into individual items, grouping and re-grouping itself always comfortably to 'illustrate' Freud's thought, but never appearing to have an energy, pull, gravity or mass of its own?

Relating the dolls to Freud's favourite analogy between psychoanalysis and archaeology might be one of the more interesting readings of this archive. Here the statuettes stand as a testimonial to Freud's interest in archaeology, and to the metaphor of archaeology in Freud's writings as informative of the whole thrust of psychoanalysis. This is also the context in which Derrida's *Archive Fever* sees Freud's obsession with statuettes:

Each time he [Freud] wants to teach the topology of archives, that is to say, of what ought to exclude or forbid the return to the origin, this lover of figurines proposes archaeological parables. (Derrida 1996, 92)

Derrida sees Freud's collection of figurines as part of Freud 'the classical metaphysician', returning towards the origin, and thus caught in 'the incessant tension' between archive and archaeology, the archive that cannot be reduced to memory, and the archaeological dream of effacing the archive and hearing the origin speak by itself, as a kind of live memory (Derrida 1996, 92). For Derrida, the culmination of Freud's archaeological invigoration is the 'nearly ecstatic instant Freud dreams of' in *Studies in Hysteria*, where Freud interjects: "'Stones talk!'" (Derrida 1996, 92-3). Malcolm Bowie also writes in *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction* (1987) about Freud's 'hyperbolic archaeology': 'The archaeological object *par excellence*, for Freud ... is a complete, three-dimensional, tangible, tractable thing, an "antiquity", an explanation

of itself, an answer to its own question'.<sup>68</sup> In this connection Bowie also refers to Freud's 'collection of antiquities' as 'continu[ing] to play its part in the mythology of the psychoanalytic movement' (Bowie, 20), and quotes the only direct reference I know of that Freud makes in his psychoanalytical texts to his collection:

I then made some short observations [to the Rat Man] upon *the psychological differences between the conscious and the unconscious*, and upon the fact that everything conscious was subject to a process of wearing away, while what was unconscious was relatively unchangeable; and I illustrated my remarks by pointing to the antiques standing about in my room. They were, in fact, I said, only objects found in a tomb, and their burial had been their preservation: the destruction of Pompeii was only beginning now that it had been dug up. (*SE*, vol. 10, 176; quoted in Bowie, 20.)

Pompeii is a fascinating late 19th and early 20th century locus for archaeology and the literary imagination. For example, Théophile Gautier's 'The Tourist' (1852) and Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva* (1903) both tell the story of a foreign tourist in Pompeii, where the protagonist falls in love apparently with a woman from Pompeii's past.<sup>69</sup> Gautier's protagonist is enraptured by an imprint of a woman's breast in the lava of Pompeii, Jensen's protagonist is fascinated by a bas-relief found in Pompeii, which portrays a young walking woman with a curiously raised foot. These fantasies situate Pompeii as a site of fetishistic, even pornographic, fascination. Carabelli writes *In the Image of Priapus* that:

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<sup>68</sup> Malcolm Bowie, *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), 19-20. Hereafter Bowie. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

<sup>69</sup> Théophile Gautier, 'The Tourist', in *My Phantoms*, stories selected and trans. by Richard Holmes (London: Quartet Books, 1976 [orig. *Arria Marcella: Souvenir de Pompéi*, 1852]), 105-38. Wilhelm Jensen, *Gradiva: A Pompeiian Fancy*, trans. Helen M. Downey (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1993 [orig. *Gradiva: Ein pompejanisches Phantasiestück*, 1903]). This edition also contains Freud's essay 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*'.

The term 'pornography' entered the common European vocabulary only after 1850, used mainly in a technical archaeological context to indicate the paintings in the bordellos of Pompeii. It meant the 'description or painting of prostitutes'. (Carabelli, 110)

At the same time as the concept of 'pornography' was emerging into vocabularies and knowledges in Europe in the middle of the 19th century, it also began to designate the repression and re-burial (censorship) of what it described. According to the logic Freud put forward to *Rat Man*, this amounts to a preservation (burial = preservation, excavation = destruction). 'Pornography' becomes a site of excavation and destruction (destroying pornography by locating, revealing, identifying, cataloguing it), burial and preservation (covering, hiding, repressing that which is apparently destroyed).

Rather than being destroyed, dolls found in Pompeii end up being collected in Freud's rooms. Even if they are thus (physically) subject to wear, conceptually they are immediately 're-buried'. The accounts of the dolls quoted earlier suggest that this conceptual burial takes place in Freud's work in the form of 'private work'. 'Private work' is close to being an oxymoron, suggesting a privacy at work within 'work' that is public; it suggests a network of unperceived connections, links, etc. underlying the surface of publicity. The reason why the explanations given to this collection have been mythologising in character is that these accounts assign to the 'private' work the value of 'unperceived' activity (the activity of 'another' conceptuality), and they work to locate that activity that previously went unnoticed. Sometimes the conceptual burial itself is seen as the only 'private' work, especially when the 'buried conceptuality' is seen just as complimentary to the public and published one (if the buried conceptuality only repeats Freud's 'thought', adds nothing to it, is it work at all?). Yet, there is no

reason to assume that the silent 'private' work actually has the activity of work, or if it has, that it would be contiguous with the 'public' work. What, after all, is the activity of silence? The present chapter does not claim to escape a certain mythologisation of the collection, but neither is it interested in preserving its mythologico-illustrative character, continuing the psychoanalytic fantasmatic burial in Freud's texts in order to preserve it intact, and then exhuming it in the form of illustrative examples. Rather, if anything, I want to try to weigh the collection, listen to its silence, which is also psychoanalytic silence. In their silence Freud's dolls can be thought of as analysts (analysts of Freud, perhaps, but also analysts of psychoanalysis), but they can analyse only if they remain silent, do not right away start speaking psychoanalese.

Forrester and Derrida link the collection of antiquities to psychoanalysis as a form of collecting and archiving. Forrester writes:

The first collection was his [Freud's] set of cases; but even within each case, the work consisted in collecting 'scenes', collecting 'memories', and establishing the links between these discrete items and thus making overall sense of them. The second collection was of dream texts and their analyses.... ... And then there was the third collection, perhaps the most unusual ...: slips of the tongue, misreadings, mistakes, misnomers, mislayings, misprints, faulty actions.... It is alongside these distinctively Freudian collections that we should place his contemporaneous collection of antiquities. (Forrester, 234-5)

What we have is the most traditional scientific method of collecting, and drawing conclusions from the gathered material, coupled with collecting unscientific and traditionally uncollectable material, intangible 'scenes', 'memories', 'parapraxes', collecting the refuse of the traditional sciences. Derrida's *Archive Fever* ends with a discussion of this tension in Freud's archives: the Freud who thought about collections

and archives like the traditional 'scholar' and the Freud whose work makes possible 'a new theory of the archive' which carries in itself 'an unknowable weight' (Derrida 1996, 29).

What is the weight of Freud's doll archive? Derrida is interested in the unknowable yet effective 'non-weight' of archives: how archival technique overflows the singularity of an event (Derrida 1996, 62), archivizations of apparent absences of memory and archive (Derrida 1996, 64), the '*archive of the virtual*' (Derrida 1996, 66), for example. The subtitle of Derrida's *Archive Fever is A Freudian Impression*, and Derrida gathers three ways of understanding *impression*: 1) 'impression' suggests that archive is to be thought of as a 'notion' rather than as a concept; 2) 'impression' in its typographic meaning, leaving 'a mark at the surface or in the thickness of a substrate'; 3) 'Freudian impression' suggests a mark left by Freud, left in Freud, in us living after Freud (Derrida 1996, 26-30). Distance is necessary to leave an impression, but as Derrida shows, in Freud there is the desire to catch the impression without distance, '[i]n the instant when the imprint is yet to be left, abandoned by the pressure of impression' (Derrida 1996, 98). This observation by Derrida takes place amidst a reading of Freud's reading of Jensen's *Gradiva*. Freud's focus zooms closer and closer to the moment where the imprint would speak without archivization, where Gradiva's step would be at one with its imprint; and Derrida focuses on Freud's fever to catch this impossible moment, the imprint of Gradiva's step on the hot ashes of Pompeii, where the stone would speak without archival distance. It is this moment which is archived in the relief of Gradiva, hanging on the wall of Hanold's study in Jensen's story, and which



**Figure 21**  
A relief of Gradiva on the wall, above and to the right of Freud's couch in Vienna, 1938.

also hung on the wall of Freud's consultation room in Vienna (see **Figure 21** below).<sup>70</sup>

Hanold's and Freud's, perhaps also Derrida's fetishism of focusing on the relief's raised foot is necessarily somewhat blind, oblivious to the rest of the body to which the fetishistic item is attached. What about the relief of Gradiva, which in fact gives the impetus to the whole impression-fever? Derrida locates in Freud the desire to duplicate Hanold's quest of finding the trace left by the curiously raised foot, to unearth:

...a more archaic *impression* ... to exhibit a more archaic *imprint* ...  
an impression that is almost no longer an archive but almost confuses  
itself with the pressure of the footstep that leaves its still-living mark  
on the substrate, a surface, a place of origin. (Derrida 1996, 97)

The relief of Gradiva, however, multiplies the questions regarding the impression. First of all, a relief is apparently the opposite of an imprint and impression; 'relief' meaning

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<sup>70</sup> Also in 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*', *SE*, vol. 9, 7-95, Freud makes no references to Gradiva as a plaster cast in his collection, but writes only about Jensen's story. In some sense this relief stands apart from the rest of the collection: it is one of the few reproductions in Freud's collection, because usually Freud preferred 'original' antiquities. More about Freud and the 'origins' of his collection later in the Chapter.

in plastic arts 'the elevation or projection of a design, or parts of a design from a plane surface' (*OED*).<sup>71</sup> A relief is rising out of the surface, but has it been lifted, elevated (as the etymology would seem to suggest), or have the surroundings been pressed in? Or perhaps the surroundings have been elevated from the other side, leaving the as-if-elevation we call the relief of Gradiva on this side; or is it impressed from the other side, a reverse impression, so to speak? Difficult to know which way to look, where to locate the substratum, where to locate the impression. Reliefs are on the threshold of three-dimensionality: of course they are three-dimensional, but at the same time they fuse with the perceived two-dimensionality of the surface from which they emerge. If anything, Gradiva leaves an uncanny impression.<sup>72</sup>

What about the other figurines and their impression? They are clearly an archive, which Freud left, but what about its impression in Freud? As I tried to suggest earlier, what is first of all noteworthy about this archive is the way in which it has left hardly any impression in his work or in his text. If one looks for its impression, it stands out like a relief; this archive's impressions are so to speak around it, when the archive itself is pushed outside the text. It appears to be simply an illustrative, decorative, charming, personal archive, which does not inform, throw light, clarify, problematize or in any way make contact with Freud's work other than in the form of a remainder; a kind of surplus archive, a doll-wonderland from the past. To make the collection co-incide with Freud's work is a form of fetishism: trying to trace the originary moment where it is one

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<sup>71</sup> According to *OED*, the English word 'relief' is based on (is a relief upon) the Italian *rilevare*, 'to raise, elevate'. German and French also use the same word, *relief*.

<sup>72</sup> '(I have attempted elsewhere to show, and cannot go into it here, that each time the word *unheimlich* appears in Freud's text--and not only in the essay of this title, *Das Unheimlich* [sic]--one can localize an uncontrollable undecidability in the axiomatics, the epistemology, the logic, the order of the discourse and of the thetic or theoretic statements...)' (Derrida 1996, 46).



with its impression, in the ashes of Freud's work. It serves to remind us that Freud used archaeology as a powerful metaphor, and although the metaphor in itself problematises Freudian psychoanalysis, the figurine collection as such does not. It tells us that ancient myths and narratives were important for Freud, and those myths and narratives in fundamental ways forged psychoanalytic theory and practice, but as a collection or as individual pieces the dolls do not contribute to the energy of the same furnace. The collection archives Freud's personal traumas and desires, but these are only interpretable insofar as there are texts which first inform us of those events in his personal history, and then the dolls stand as memos and mementoes of those events and their interpretable impact.

How is the doll archive then linked with the other collections, in what relation does it stand to them? Unlike Derrida, Forrester seems to think that these diverse psychoanalytic collections immediately communicate with each other, that they are produced by the same archive fever, they contribute to the same effect, speak the same language ('Stones speak!'). Just as Derrida locates a desire in Freud to make the dolls speak what he perceives to be the language of archaeology, so we can locate in Forrester the desire to make the dolls speak the language of psychoanalysis. Derrida links Freud's doll archive to his desire to return to the origin, to make the stones speak, while at the same time Freud's theorisations of the archive suggest the impossibility of that return. The same tension to do so can be found in Freud's figurine archive: he began his collection by collecting Florentine plaster casts, and only later became concerned with the authenticity of the pieces in his collection: the origin of the collection, so to speak, lies in imitation, reproduction, repetition. The collection can be linked to myths, narratives, archaeology, psychoanalytic collecting, but the psychoanalytic context does

not exhaust the relevance of this archive, especially in regard to its status as Freud's 'private' work. The doll collection stands on Freud's desk and in the rooms as a relief of and from privacy, which is also significantly, stonily silent.

It is sometimes mentioned that collecting was a source of relief for Freud, alleviating stress and anxiety, lessening discomfort (see, for example, Gamwell, 25; Fenton, 6; Forrester, 232-3). But it has not yet been suggested that Freud's collection might have offered him also psychoanalytical and theoretical comfort. If, as Derrida points out, archaeology was both a source of energy and discomfort for Freud (archive fever) in that it appeared to promise the route to the origin, but only ever led to archives, might we not also say that this archive is the archive of unfulfilled relief? The doll archive works, serves, as a silent substratum on which psychoanalytic talk, connections, meanings, interpretations work, but also stands out as a relief which remains silent in relation to this work, deaf and oblivious to it. In uncomfortable silence, it non-psychoanalyses psychoanalysis. This is perhaps the uncanniest and hardest thing about the stony doll collection: it remains, is as remains, silent.

Usually the dolls are portrayed as Freud's mentors or muses, as his audience that kept vigil, whispered suggestions, gave him inspiration. But what we can also see taking place is another scenario, in which the whole of Freud's psychoanalysis is written *against* these 'remains', *in spite* of some unknowable doll-weight within psychoanalysis. These dolls are not simply Freud's benevolent audience, but the necessary junk of psychoanalysis; dolls kept out of the text and its impressions, only to appear as private reliefs on his walls and on his desk: the muses and the museum of psychoanalysis. This makes Freud's doll archive very much a virtual archive, an archive of the silence in and of psychoanalysis, and yet we cannot say that this is an archive of

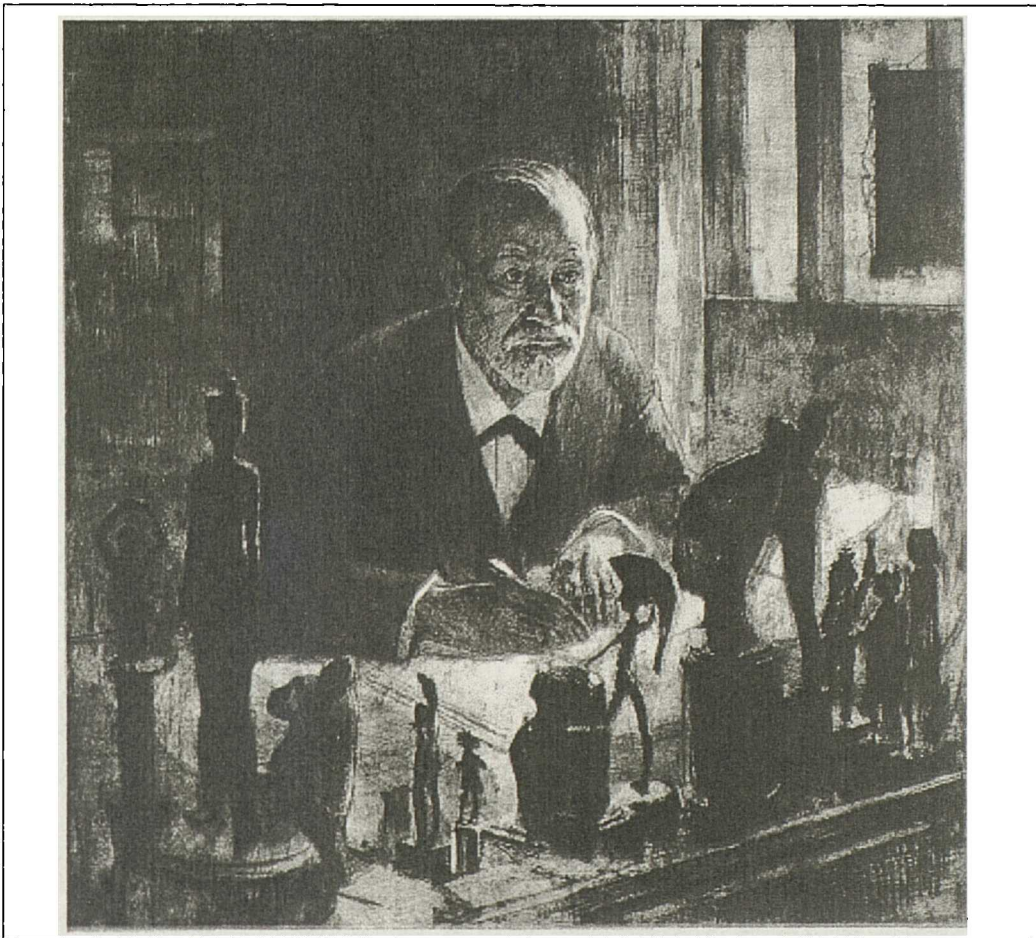
a certain necessary repression, either, because this archive is something that no longer simply responds to what 'repression' designates. It is, in a sense, insensible to psychic gravity; or has a completely different weight.

In the context of the suggestion that the dolls on Freud's desk were a source of inspiration, acted both as an audience and as muses for Freud, Gamwell paints a rather jovial picture of Freud and his 'audience':

Several accounts reveal that Freud treated these figures as his companions. He was in the habit of stroking the marble baboon [the baboon of Thoth], as he did his pet chows, and of greeting the Chinese sage every morning. (Gamwell, 27)

In the same vein Ellen Handler Spitz recounts that 'Freud had the habit of occasionally bringing the newly acquired purchase, such as a statuette, to the dinner table and placing it in front of him as he ate, then returning it later to his desk' (Spitz, 155). Both Gamwell and Spitz give a picture of Freud whose relationship with the statuettes does not stop at the appreciation of their aesthetic or cultural value, but instead also contains a personal, endearingly 'obsessive' element.

A stranger sense of the statuettes is conveyed by Max Pollack's etching of Sigmund Freud at his desk, 1914 (see **Figure 22** below). There are papers on the desk, and Freud has a pen in his hand, which is resting on a piece of paper. We are looking at Freud from behind the statuettes, which clutter the front of the picture; we see Freud's face, but only the backs of the statuettes. The light from the right of the picture hits the papers on the desk, reflecting some light onto Freud's face, but making all the statuettes in front of the picture appear black. This makes them appear less like objects of antiquity, and more like gothic fairy-tale dolls which have come to life. Some of the



**Figure 22**  
Max Pollack, 'Sigmund Freud seated at his desk'. Etching, 1914. Freud Museum Publications.

statuettes appear to be turned towards Freud, so that their focus is on him; they form an almost uncomfortably attentive audience. Freud is staring in front of him, his eyes apparently not focused, as if he is not seeing anything, and he seems to have paused in his writing and to be deep in thought. In Pollack's etching, the statuettes have an active, yet eerily silent and observing presence and Freud a passive absence. Freud is turned into a statue of a scribe, whereas the statuettes just seem to have dropped by, and wait to walk off again. Spitz writes that Freud not only "'worked" with his collection' but that the collection also dramatises the way in which 'his collection may have "worked on" him' (Spitz, 155). I would suggest, rather, that Pollack's etching dramatises in a very effective and disturbing way how Freud's work is 'petrified' and 'blanked' by the

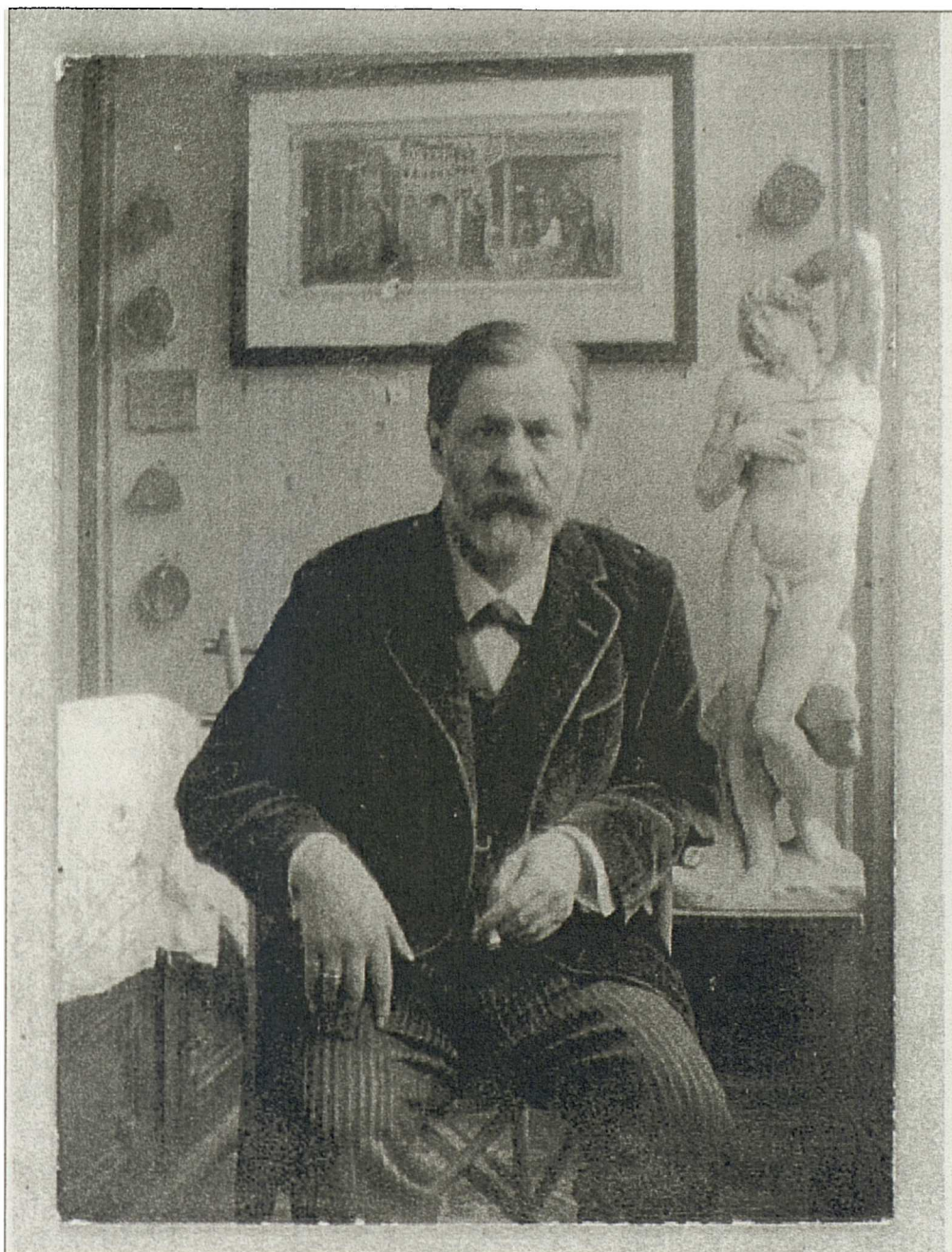
statuettes (Freud's distracted immobility is coupled with an apparently blank page in front of him). The activity of the statuettes takes place only when they are not witnessed by Freud and during a pause in Freud's work.

Gamwell argues that Freud began his collection as a reaction to his father's death, and that 'not only the timing but also the content of Freud's early collection suggests its strong connotation with the loss of his father' (Gamwell, 23). He points out the photograph of Freud in his study (c. 1905) with a plaster cast of Michelangelo's *Dying Slave* to enforce the link between the death of Freud's father and the beginning of Freud's collection (see **Figure 23** below). According to Gamwell, the statue (made for the tomb of Pope Julius II as a symbol of the arts) functions as 'the idealized statue of [Freud's] father', as the 'ideal father' who, unlike Freud's real father, 'would have known classical literature and the arts' (Gamwell, 25-6). The photograph itself is very strange.<sup>73</sup> Freud is sitting on a chair, staring straight at the camera, while on the right hand side of the photograph a plaster cast of a voluptuous nude male figure is apparently in the process of dying, as the title of the statue indicates. The juxtaposition between Freud in a conservative black suit, sitting on a chair, his eyes focused of the lens on the camera, and the white, naked sensuousness of the statue is striking. Freud seems to be oblivious of the statue. Unlike in Pollack's etching, here Freud's look is extremely focused; but again the statue seems to be engaged in an 'activity' which escapes Freud. In Pollack's etching, Freud appears to be absent to the extent that he does not see the

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<sup>73</sup> Michelangelo's *Dying Slave* was probably among the first plaster casts that Freud acquired during his trip to Florence while his father's health was seriously failing. What the other plaster casts were--he refers to them in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess on December 6, 1896--or what happened to them is not known. (Gamwell, 24)





**Figure 23**

Freud in his study, c. 1905. On the right hand side of the picture we can see a reproduction of Michelangelo's *Dying Slave*.

statuettes observing him in thought. In the photograph with the *Dying Slave*, the statue is just outside Freud's field of vision. The statue(ettes) behind Freud, in front of him, around him, cluttering his desk, elude his attention, or his attention is elsewhere.

Gamwell points out that Freud would have seen the *Dying Slave* in the Louvre in 1885, when he was studying under the famous French physicist and psychologist Jean-

Martin Charcot in Paris (Gamwell, 25). Even though Freud did not begin buying statuettes until 1896, we could argue that in some sense his collection already begins earlier by repeating other collections:

In 1885, on his trip to Paris, the twenty-nine-year-old Freud had been impressed that the home of his mentor, French psychiatrist Jean Martin Charcot, who collected Indian and Chinese antiquities, was 'in short, a museum', and that the Louvre's collection of Egyptian and Near Eastern antiquities created 'a dreamlike world'. (Gamwell, 24)<sup>74</sup>

It is only appropriate that Freud's home should have turned into a museum, and thus joined the repetition necessary for any act of collecting, and any 'beginning' of a collection. When Freud 'began' his collection in 1896, one of the first things he bought was a copy of a statuette that was in the Louvre (*Dying Slave*) when he was studying under Charcot. The very idea of collecting can be seen as partly copying the admired Charcot. Charcot's influence is also otherwise present in the photograph of Freud with *Dying Slave*. Hanging on the wall behind Freud is another reproduction: Masaccio and Masolino's *The Healing of the Paralytic and the Raising of Tabitha* (1426-82) from the Brancacci Chapel in Florence (see **Figure 23** above) (Gamwell, 31, n. 27). The study and healing of hysterical paralyses featured prominently in Charcot's school, and after his stay in Paris Freud also worked on a paper on paralysis (more of paralysis and

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<sup>74</sup> Gamwell's quotations from Freud's letters to his future wife Martha Bernays on October 19, 1885 and January 20, 1886 are taken from *Letters of Sigmund Freud*, ed. Ernst Freud, trans. Tania and James Stern (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), 185 and 207. His letter on October 19 is a beautiful example of a dreamlike experience he felt in the Louvre: 'I can barely remember what I did yesterday', he writes (183), and then goes on at length about his visit to the theatre on the night of the 17th (which gave him a headache). After that he traces his walk on the 18th, which eventually brings him to the Louvre: 'Then comes the Louvre. Now I remember, of course--yesterday I went to the Louvre, at least to the Antiquities wing which contains an incredible number of Greek and Roman statues, gravestones, inscriptions, and relics. ... What attracted me most was the large number of Emperor's busts, some of them excellent characterisations. Most of them are represented several times and don't look in the least alike' (184-5).

dollish hypnosis in Charcot's school later).<sup>75</sup>

The origins of Freud's collection seem to be caught in simulation, repetition, reproductions and copies. Gamwell writes that even though Freud's first purchases were reproductions, later he focused almost exclusively on 'original objects, in much the same spirit that he wanted to uncover the most undistorted childhood memories of his patients' (Gamwell, 23). Freud regularly had his purchases authenticated, and if he found he had bought a fake, he usually gave it away. Nevertheless, some forgeries survived in his collection, some of which had even been authenticated by the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum in Freud's lifetime (Gamwell, 23). Gamwell shows a certain anxiety about the forgeries still remaining in Freud's collection, and even about some of the copies:

While Freud avoided forgeries, he was comfortable with acknowledged reproductions. Over the years he bought reproductions of the marble relief *Gradiva* and of Ingres's *Oedipus and the Sphinx*. But it is worth emphasizing that Freud wanted to own authentic antiquities, which were the core of his collection. (Gamwell, 23)

Freud may have been also comfortable with reproductions, but Gamwell appears to be less so, and wants to emphasise Freud's quest for 'authenticity'. When does Freud, then, begin his collection? With the first plaster casts bought in Florence, or with the first 'authentic' items, the 'core' of his collection? As if according to a logic of the copy without original, or the schema of archive fever, not only are there no records when

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<sup>75</sup> Freud begins his paper 'Some Points for a Comparative Study of Organic and Hysterical Motor Paralysis', *SE*, Vol. I, 160-72, as follows: 'At the time at which, in 1885 and 1886, I was a pupil of M. Charcot's, he was kind enough to entrust me with the task of making a comparative study of organic and hysterical motor paralysis based on the observations of the Salpêtrière, in the hope that it might reveal some general characteristics of the neurosis and lead to a view of its nature. For accidental and personal reasons I have long been prevented from carrying out his commission, and even now I am only bringing forward some results of my researches, leaving on one side the details necessary for a complete statement of my opinions' (160).



Freud would have purchased his first authentic items, but also his first 'plaster cast trip' to Florence has been cast in doubt; some of his biographers suspect that he may not have made the trip to Florence at all (see Gamwell, 30, n.22).

In some sense, one of the beginnings of Freud's doll collection is in Paris, at the Hospital Salpêtrière, where he followed Charcot's famous lectures, and where Charcot displayed the use of hypnosis on hysterical patients. Freud gets his early interest both in hysteria and in hypnosis from Charcot. Charcot was famous for his public spectacles of hypnotising hysterics, or as Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester describe it in *Freud's Women* (1992), for his 'dramatic enactments of [a] sequence of trances and convulsions, with all their overtones of sexual excess.'<sup>76</sup> By 'sexual excess' Forrester and Appignanesi perhaps suggest that the hysteric's body is somehow more sexual than the normal body, or that it displays or enacts its sexuality somehow more excessively. Freud and the other doctors, however, also got to know another, more silent symptomatology: 'the quieter and more stable symptoms: local paralyses and contractures, together with local anaesthesias and hyperaesthesias (pains)', 'a medley of pains and paralyses, loss of sensitivity, localized and chronic bodily ailments...'  
(Appignanesi and Forrester, 64). In Charcot's school the symptomatology of hysteria was resolutely bodily, and the hysteric's body was torn between contradictory symptoms: local paralyses and spasm, loss of sensitivity and hypersensitivity, loss of sensory activity and extraordinary refinement of sensory activity, attacks of coma-like

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<sup>76</sup> Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester, *Freud's Women* (London: Weinfeld and Nicolson, 1992), 64. Hereafter Appignanesi and Forrester. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

sleep and scenes of passionate movement.<sup>77</sup>

The hysteric's body seems to have been torn between a tendency towards rigidity and numbness (paralyses, loss of sensory capacity, coma) and a tendency towards unstoppable, heightened bodily sensations and passions (spasm, tics, extraordinary sensitivity of senses, dramatic gesticulation). In 1885, for example, during the time that Freud was in the Salpêtrière, in at least two demonstrations Charcot went on to hypnotise a patient known as Greuz. [sic], in whom he produced the identical hysterical symptoms of paralysis and anesthesia that had been diagnosed in two other patients, Pin and Porcz. [sic].<sup>78</sup> The anaesthesia was then verified by subjecting the arm to violent torsions and conducting electricity to the hypnotically paralysed arm to the extent of causing violent contraction of the muscles, but Greuz. showed no sensation on her face (see Owen, 119). Another 'favourite' demonstration by Charcot was to produce artificial mutism by hypnotic 'labio-glosso-laryngeal paralysis' (Owen, 120-1). Charcot's demonstrations showed how one's body does not appear to be a fully autonomously living body, but rather a dramatically 'playable' body.

Paralysed, the hysteric's body can be compared to the that of a doll: as a hyperaesthetic body it can be compared to the body of a puppet. While the doll-body is characterised by rigidity, stasis and loss of senses, the puppet-body is characterised by excessive movements, and a bodily sensitivity heightened to a degree in which it does

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<sup>77</sup> See, for example, Freud's essay 'Hysteria', *SE*, vol. 1, 41-59, originally published as an article on hysteria for Villaret's encyclopaedia *Handwörterbuch der Gesamten Medizin* (1888), where Freud gives a lot of emphasis to the contradictory nature of the hysteric's symptomatology.

<sup>78</sup> See, A. R. G. Owen, *Hysteria, Hypnosis and Healing: The Work of J.-M. Charcot* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1971), 119-20. Hereafter Owen. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

not appear to be limited to one's own bodily senses.<sup>79</sup> The paralyses of hysteria appear to draw attributes of life out of one's body, turning one's body into an uncanny inanimate doll, whereas the hyperaesthesia of hysteria extends the life of one's body outside the body (and perhaps this is part of what Appignanesi and Forrester mean to suggest by 'sexual excess'), even to the extent that the life of the body appears to be controlled from somewhere else.<sup>80</sup> The hysteric's body is an uncanny body, unnaturally animated, unnaturally inanimated, where the doll-rigidity of the contracted, paralysed body is at times peppered with a puppet-theatricality of passions.

A little before Freud went to Paris, Charcot and Paul Richer set up cataloguing the patients in the Salpêtrière by taking photographs of them. The photographs eventually appeared in an illustrated journal *La Nouvelle Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, which was published between 1888 and 1904. Hypnosis was used not only to dramatic effect in Charcot's lectures, to still the life of the patient under the gaze of the observer, or to produce dramatically theatrical effects in patients; it was also used to archive patients; to arrange the hysterics in exemplary postures and keep them still for the twenty or so minutes it took to take a photograph in the late 19th century (Appignanesi and Forrester, 66). Hypnosis was used to effect a temporary full paralysis of the hysteric's body, which was then permanently 'stilled' in a photograph. The

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<sup>79</sup> One of the definitions of 'hyperaesthesia' is 'excessive sensitivity to stimuli; an abnormal extension of the bodily senses assumed to explain telepathy and clairvoyance' (*Chambers*).

<sup>80</sup> Nicholas Royle, in 'The Remains of Psychoanalysis (i): Telepathy', in his *After Derrida* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press, 1995) cites Freud's letter to Ernest Jones on March 7, 1926, where he announces his 'conversion' to telepathy, and writes: "'When anyone adduces my fall into sin, just answer him that calmly that conversion to telepathy is my private affair like my Jewishness, my passion for smoking and many other things, and that the theme of telepathy is in essence alien to psychoanalysis'" (65). Hereafter Royle 1995. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. The 'many other things' that Freud mentions include, I argue, the things on his desk, things which in some ways correspond to his other 'private' interests such as telepathy, hypnosis, and superstition.

archival 'stasis' here can again be compared to the 'archive fever' in Freud: the paralysed doll-body is in a sense already an archived body, a stilled case-example, a body after the drama of the body. The passions of the body can be archived (that is: recognised, studied, understood) only on the condition that they are paralysed, dollified. Freud's archive of statuettes is thus where psychoanalysis must not stop (the archive), but which it must get through to 'hear the stones speak', in their own voice, to understand the origin (reason and necessity) of the archiving. But it is the very existence of an archive which makes this impossible (stones only speak in an archive, we never get through the archive). In this sense the statuette collection is also the remains of psychoanalytic technique.

Later in his career Freud moves away from Charcot's theatrical approach and hypnosis. This move can also be seen as involving moving away from the Salpêtrière type of hypnotic puppetization of patients. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's argument in his essay 'Hypnosis in Psychoanalysis' (1992) is that Freud wanted to get rid of hypnosis mainly because it compromised the integrity of the patient's 'own' reminiscences.<sup>81</sup> If under hypnosis the patient can be suggested to do almost anything the hypnotist wants, who is to say that the memories surfacing under hypnosis are not also, perhaps even unconsciously, suggested to the patient by the hypnotist? To put it another way, a

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<sup>81</sup> On hypnosis and Freud, see especially Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's collection of essays, *The Emotional Tie: Psychoanalysis, Mimesis, and Affect*, trans. Douglas Brick et. al. (Stanford, California: Stanford Univ. Press, 1992). Hereafter Borch-Jacobsen 1992. Especially relevant essays are 'Hypnosis in Psychoanalysis' (39-61) and 'Talking Cure' (75-97). Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. Also apposite is Borch-Jacobsen's earlier book, *The Freudian Subject*, trans. Catherine Porter (London: Macmillan, 1989). Hereafter Borch-Jacobsen 1989. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. On telepathy and Freud, see especially Jacques Derrida's 'Telepathy', trans. Nicholas Royle, *Oxford Literary Review*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1-2, 1988, 3-41, and Nicholas Royle's *Telepathy and Literature: Essays on the Reading Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). On the notion of the 'foreign body' see especially Nicholas Royle's essay 'Foreign Body: "The deconstruction of a pedagogical institution and all that it implies"', in *After Derrida*, 143-58.

hypnotised patient can always be suspected of being a puppet-patient. Borch-Jacobsen further argues that Freud actually never got fully rid of hypnosis, but that hypnosis returns and is retained in psychoanalysis in the forms of suggestion and, later, transference. Or, as we could put it here, psychoanalysis never quite managed to get rid of the suspicion of puppetry.

In his first book, written together with Joseph Breuer, *Studies in Hysteria* (1893), all Freud's case studies exhibit middle-class women, and all the hysterics mentioned even if only in passing are women (Appignanesi and Forrester, 70). Appignanesi and Forrester further note how sustained the division between middle-class women and lower-class women is in Freud's writing: 'The trope of contrasting the neurotic, sexually inhibited middle-class women with the honest and expressive, animal sexuality of the lower classes was to make its way into Freud's cases in *Studies in Hysteria*, and would continue in his later work' (Appignanesi and Forrester, 69). Appignanesi and Forrester write that, despite his often overbearingly authoritative and imposing interpretations, Freud was also among the first who genuinely listened to women to find out what makes the hysteric, as it were, tick:

The interpreting Freud ... listened acutely to his female patients and heard--beyond tics, paralyses, phobias, losses of voice--what they said, however disruptive this content may have been to current opinion. It was this thoroughly unconventional Freud who dignified women's intimate, secret confessions into a public sexual discourse--a discourse which for the first time gives non-judgemental voice to women's sexual feelings and testifies to the equal strength of women's sexuality. (Appignanesi and Forrester, 4)

We could say that in his early studies in hysteria Freud aims to find the healthily 'expressive' sexuality (associated with the lower-classes, understood as less controlled

by social codes) behind the hysterical middle-class woman; in other words, Freud aims to find the 'sexual woman', the living 'animal' sexuality under the socially constructed and inhibited doll. The thrust of Freud's psychoanalysis is to see behind the doll and the puppet, to cut through the social mould and into the healthily expressive psyche.

Here we can also detect two levels and stages of puppetry in psychoanalysis. One level of puppetry is that which involves the relationship between the patient and the analyst: the analyst is suspected of using the patient as his/her puppet. This puppetry has to do with the methodology of the cure: hence the practice of psychoanalysis is arranged so that this suspicion can be as far as possible removed. So Freud rejects hypnosis as a cure, organises the psychoanalytic encounter so that the patient would be the one directing the course of the 'talking cure' as much as possible, even does away with the eye-contact between the patient and the analyst during sessions. Another level of dollification and puppetry is that of the first women patients: it could be argued that Freud sees the first hysterics as imprisoned in a doll mould (social and psychological) which must be broken, cut through to allow them to 'remember' their sexuality.

Here I would like to gather together some of the threads that I have been following so far. Freud goes to Paris where he studies hysteria and hypnosis under Charcot. What makes the hysteric's body interesting for psychological study, and for Freud, is that it comes across as an uncanny body: it surpasses the normal human body both in terms of its sensitivity and insensitivity. As a hyperaesthetic body the hysteric's body 'senses' beyond the usual, its 'life' flows beyond (or comes from beyond) the normal body boundaries, and hence it gives the appearance of being controlled from a distance, from outside of the body (by physically distant 'other minds'). Later, remote-control also includes the idea of control from within the body (by chronologically distant memories).

Freud's rejection of hypnosis and his 'private belief' in telepathy show just how resolutely Freud later focuses on the internal remote-control (one's 'own' unconscious), and attempts to 'purge' from psychoanalytic theory all remote-control from outside of the body. As Borch-Jacobsen and Royle show, both hypnosis and telepathy 'return' to psychoanalysis as 'foreign bodies'. They also show that psychoanalysis cannot retain the ideality of the body boundaries, but remains suspected of remote-control puppetry, even to the extent that notions such as 'identity' and 'subjectivity' remain crucially inseparable from certain hypnotic and telepathic traffic. Like hypnosis and telepathy, the 'insensitive' body can also be seen as 'returning' to psychoanalysis, or more precisely, can be seen as having never left it. This 'hysteric' insensitivity, the paralysed body, remains figured in the form of little statuettes on Freud's desk.

It is customary to see the hysteric's body as a communicating body, and Freud as among the first who paid full attention to its peculiar forms of communication (see, for example, the already quoted Appignanesi and Forrester, 4). This is more or less implicit in the accounts of hypnosis and telepathy as well: they both involve communication from outside of the body, and thus challenge Freud's exclusive focus on remote-control only from inside the body.<sup>82</sup> However, what I would like to suggest is that another way of seeing in particular the paralysed body to which Freud became exposed is that it involves no communication, or if it communicates something, it is also *does not communicate through and through*. As soon as the hysteric's body is seen as a form of communication (albeit unconscious), the whole body tends to become interpretable through and through, that is, turn into potential communication. However paradoxical

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<sup>82</sup> A similar challenge is also present, for example, in Lacan's emphasis on language, and in post-structuralist and post-colonial accounts of psychoanalysis in general, which underline the importance of the 'cultural unconscious'.

this may sound, we should perhaps pause (prior to communicating anything) to give due weight to this paralysed insensitivity of the body before making it into a form of communication, and see the possible distributions of this weight. This pause and silence is especially important in a body of thought (and we might say, a hysterical, or hyperaesthetic body of thought called psychoanalysis), which lays so much emphasis on the 'talking cure' (an expression coined by the 'first case', Anna O., in *Studies in Hysteria*).

In the essay 'Foreign Body' Royle suggests, referring to Derrida, that we might think of the foreign body as something which 'works *over* our language', and which would correspond to what Derrida calls the "'other of language'", or the "'force'" of language:

The foreign body, like the trace, would also demand to be thought in relation to the ahuman or inhuman--that is to say, in relation to Derrida's contention that there is nothing essentially human about language.... (Royle 1995, 146)

Both Derrida's and Royle's accounts, by emphasising the foreign body as 'work' and 'force', seem to imply that it would involve some subterranean or unrecognised (even unrecognisable) activity and effects. It is just as important to recall, however, that the 'parasite' of the foreign body "'never quite'" takes place' (Royle 1995, 147). In effect, it never quite 'works', its force never quite makes itself felt. The foreign body 'itself' is parasited by other foreign bodies. In the context of psychoanalysis, I suggest, the doll would not be a bad example of this kind of foreign body. For might we not think, for example, that even though the hysteric's body is a form of communication, it does not communicate through and through? That it might have zones and moments (paralyses,



contractures, comas) which do not partake in communication, which are insensitive to communication? What are those rigid, contracted, petrified bodies and body-parts of a hysterical patient, which are drained of nothing less than the 'life' of the body, not to mention the 'psychical'?

Here we might note that the whole idea and concept of a 'psychic trauma' came to be developed during investigations into railway accidents in the late 19th century.<sup>83</sup> Many of the victims who suffered concussions also became paralytic, aphasic and amnesic. However, some victims developed similar symptoms without any apparent physical injuries. It appeared that psychological reasons must have been behind these shocks. Charcot began to develop this idea at the Salpêtrière, and showed that he could produce similar symptoms of paralysis, aphasia and amnesia by hypnosis. Thus he came to the conclusion that a nervous shock was a form of auto-hypnosis that could manifest itself objectively in the form of paralyses, aphasias and amnesias. From here it was relatively easy to move on to suggest that hysterical states in general (since they also often contained similar immobilities to train-shocks) were caused by emotional shocks, memories which remained in the "hypnoid unconscious" and erupted on the bodies of the hysterics (Borch-Jacobsen 1996, 58). We could say that the search for the modern unconscious is thus linked not only to late 19th century technological transportation/transmission malfunctions, in particular railway accidents, but also to the paralyses (of the body, tongue, memory) they produced. It is almost as if the uncanny speed (and uncanny form of mechanical, non-living movement) of the trains,

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<sup>83</sup> See Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *Remembering Anna O: A Century of Mystification*, trans. Kirby Olson in collaboration with Xavier Callahan and the author (London: Routledge, 1996). Hereafter Borch-Jacobsen 1996. The following gloss on the history of 'psychic trauma' is based on Borch-Jacobsen's outline, 56-61. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

when spectacularly crashing, also crashed the movement out of the body caught up in the crash.<sup>84</sup>

Charcot's lectures were sexualized, choreographed dramas. Since hysteria was considered to be primarily a female disorder also the lectures involved mostly women (although Charcot did not think it was an exclusively female illness). At the same time Freud was most puzzled by contractures, paralyses, sudden insensitivities of the body. This is partly where Freud chose his own focus, the less theatrically sexual symptomatology than that which mostly interested Charcot, who, for example later arranged the hysterical attack in a narrative succession that sounds like the gist of a plot from a hard-core porn-flick: 'threat', 'appeal', 'amorous supplication', 'eroticism', 'ecstasy'.<sup>85</sup> Freud's early interest is in the quieter, less theatrical and less spectacular symptomatology of the doll-body, in the curiously insensitive, dollified body, which is nevertheless linked with sexuality.

To collect 'women' psychoanalysis cannot collect dolls, must not be drawn into the puppetry-shows and *tableau-vivants* of Charcot, and must not be seen puppetizing women.<sup>86</sup> One way of thinking about this paralysed, petrified doll-body which appears

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<sup>84</sup> Freud would not tolerate for very long this kind of 'accidental unconscious', an unconscious produced by an accidental crash of some kind, a malfunction, or by chance here or there, but had to universalise it philosophically and create a scientific framework for it. We could say that in some sense his early seduction theory is based on a chance crash in the normal functioning of the family. For accounts of psychoanalysis and the notion of 'chance', see a collection of essays titled *Taking Chances: Derrida, Psychoanalysis, and Literature*, eds. Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan (London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984).

<sup>85</sup> See, for example, Jon Stratton, *The Desirable Body: Cultural Fetishism and the Erotics of Consumption* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1996), 107. Hereafter Stratton. Stratton also writes about Charcot's photographic archive that: 'Although Charcot seems to have had some male patients, these photographs were all of women' (Stratton, 107). Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

<sup>86</sup> On *tableau-vivant* and its transformation into striptease, see Chapter Three, 'The Spectacularization of the Female Body' of Stratton's *The Desirable Body* (Stratton, 87-115). Stratton uses the term *tableau-vivant* to refer to Charcot's spectacularization of the female body. *Tableau-vivant* basically

in various forms at the beginning of psychoanalysis is that its dynamics are different from Freud's notion of the 'psychical'. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's *The Freudian Subject* crisply defines the 'psychical' in Freud:

The *cogitatio*--Freud's term for it is the 'psychical'--exceeds and overflows consciousness at every turn, where consciousness is understood as certainty and presence of self in representation. This thinking thinks *without me*, without ceasing to think, moreover (as we see, for example, when it calculates, or makes a joke). *It* thinks, then--and it *thinks*. (Borch-Jacobsen 1989, 4)

Although one aspect of the hysterical 'meaningful' body is precisely the 'overflow' and 'excess' of the psychical, the other aspect, as I have suggested, is how the hysterical body appears to 'empty out' the psychical. The Freudian ceaseless activity within me, without me, regardless of me, turns into a frequent inactivity within me, regardless of me; where *it does not think*. But rather than seeing this as something 'bodily', seeing the bodily as opposed to the 'psychical' I suggest that it is rather something like a foreign body, not simply in the order of the communicable. I think that Borch-Jacobsen quite rightly comments that:

...*the desire of/for psychoanalysis* (the relation is to be understood in both senses, subjective and objective) *is a desire of the subject*, not that of another--and therein lies, as it were, its full *originality*. (Borch-Jacobsen 1989, 51)

Although Borch-Jacobsen's analysis is here concerned with 'the other subject' constitutive of subjectivity in general (that is, the 'psychical' as overflowing the

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refers to the idea of presenting a painted scene (*tableau*) by using living people (*vivant*). *Tableau-vivant* might thus add more 'life' to a scene in a painting, but the idea of people as 'frozen' into a scene in a drama like Charcot's turns *tableau-vivant* more into something like *tableau-mort*, or more accurately, to coin an expression, *tableau-poupée*.

Freudian subject, most clearly visible in hypnosis, where, according to Borch-Jacobsen, the hypnotised subject *is the other*), he does still curiously work within a notion of the 'psychical' (and which is also through and through human) subjectivity. But rather than looking at how 'the other subject' haunts psychoanalysis (and the 'other subject' here suggesting subjectivity constitutively 'outside' the psychoanalytical subject; puppetry at the origin, so to speak), I would like to look at how the 'not quite' psychical foreign body, a non-communicable 'mental block', adds weight to Freud's work. I propose to do this by looking at Freud's most extensive treatment of dolls which occurs in his essay 'The "Uncanny"'.<sup>87</sup>

Freud begins his essay 'The "Uncanny"' with a linguistic inquiry into the elusive etymology and sprawling definitions of *unheimlich*. Freud puts his essay in relation to the only other work on the subject of the uncanny he knows of: Ernst Jentsch's paper 'On The Psychology of the Uncanny' (1906).<sup>88</sup> Freud acknowledges the value and merit of Jentsch's paper—which he calls 'fertile but not exhaustive' (219)—but wants to work out the crucial differences between himself and Jentsch on this subject. He does this by offering a reading of E.T.A. Hoffmann's story 'The Sandman' which differs from Jentsch's reading of the same story. In Freud's view, the crucial difference between his reading and Jentsch's reading concerns the importance of a doll called Olympia in Hoffmann's story. Jentsch thinks that the uncanniness of the doll in the story tells us something important about uncanniness as a whole; Freud sees the uncanniness of the doll as irrelevant in relation to what really causes uncanniness in the story: the fear of

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<sup>87</sup> The German clarifications to quotations from 'The "Uncanny"' are from 'Das Unheimliche', *Gesammelte Werke*, XII, ed. Anna Freud et al. (London: Imago, 1947-52), 229-68.

<sup>88</sup> Ernst Jentsch, 'On the Psychology of the Uncanny', trans. Roy Sellars, *Angelaki* 2:1 (1995), 7-16. Hereafter Jentsch. Further page references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text.

losing one's eyes. Freud's own contribution to the understanding of the uncanny thus depends on his being able to diminish the importance of the doll as a generator of uncanniness.

In his paper Jentsch, however, never explicitly refers to Hoffmann's story 'The Sandman', but only to Hoffmann's stories in general, and only in one sentence. The doll Olympia is thus in fact Freud's point of departure, never Jentsch's. The doll as a point of argument, a point from which to articulate differences, emerges as if from nowhere and begins to trouble Freud's essay.

Freud returns to the notion of the doll several times during the essay. By returning to the notion of the doll, by attempting to articulate the imaginary and haunting difference between himself and Jentsch--a difference which there was no need to make to begin with, because there was no dispute--it is not surprising that Freud never manages to articulate the difference. Naomi Schor, in *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (1987), also notes how Jentsch haunts 'The "Uncanny"':

Jentsch, it turns out, serves not merely as a bibliographical alibi, but also as a psychological foil for Freud's psychoanalytic investigation. Once one becomes aware of the polemical thrust of Freud's essay, Jentsch appears to haunt the text, creating an uncanny effect of his own, what I will call the *Jentsch-effect*. ... The Jentsch-effect is the uncanny impression evoked in the reader by the insistent recurrence throughout Freud's text of allusions to his predecessor's theory--a theory which Freud does everything in his power to discredit, but which exhibits a remarkable resistance to analytical annihilation.<sup>89</sup>

I shall argue that what Schor calls the 'Jentsch-effect' is inseparable from the doll, from

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<sup>89</sup> Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 135. See especially Chapter Nine, 'Duane Hanson: Truth in Sculpture', 131-40. Hereafter Schor 1987. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. See also Forbes Morlock, 'Doubly Uncanny: An Introduction to "On the Psychology of the Uncanny"', *Angelaki* 2:1 (1995), 17-21, where he points out how Freud's opposition to Jentsch dissipates when one compares Jentsch and Freud.

the doll as something which does not fit into Freud's analyses. The doll, then, has a double-effect in 'The "Uncanny"': it marks the spots where Jentsch haunts Freud's essay, where Freud insists on staking out his turf as separate from Jentsch's, only to find himself standing on Jentsch's plot, and it embodies examples which do not fit in Freud's analyses. Some part of the doll persistently remains outside Freud's analyses.

In 'The "Uncanny"' Freud first introduces Jentsch's observation about what can cause a feeling of uncanniness as his 'starting-point' ('Uncanny', 226), and which he at this point calls 'very good' ('Uncanny', 226) and even 'undoubtedly a correct one' ('Uncanny', 227). This observation concerns--Freud writes, quoting Jentsch--"doubts [*Zweifel*] whether an apparently animate being is really alive; or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not be in fact animate" ('Uncanny', 226). Examples of these include impressions made by waxwork figures [*Wachsfiguren*], mechanical dolls [*kunstvollen Puppen*; 'ingenious' rather than simply mechanical] and automata [*Automaten*], epileptic fits and manifestations of insanity. All these, Freud says, 'excite in the spectator the impression of automatic processes at work behind the ordinary appearance of mental activity' ('Uncanny', 226).

Freud then proceeds to test the idea of 'doubts' on Hoffmann's story 'The Sand-Man'. Freud acknowledges that the uncertainty [*Zweifel*] of whether the doll Olympia is living or inanimate *is* uncanny, but according to him it is 'quite irrelevant' in the Hoffmann story when compared to the theme of being robbed of one's eyes, which is a 'more striking instance of uncanniness' ('Uncanny', 230). In the same paragraph, where he writes that the uncertainty of whether Olympia is alive or inanimate *is* uncanny, Freud renounces Jentsch's idea altogether: 'Jentsch's point of intellectual uncertainty [*intellektuelle Unsicherheit*] has nothing to do with the effect [of

uncanniness]' ('Uncanny', 230). And in the following paragraph Freud writes: 'There is no question therefore, of any intellectual uncertainty [*'intellektuelle Unsicherheit'*; in quotation marks] here.... The theory of intellectual uncertainty [*intellektuelle Unsicherheit*; the German does not promote it to a 'theory'] is thus incapable of explaining that impression [of uncanniness]' ('Uncanny', 230-1).

Why does Freud so strongly renounce the importance of the uncertainty of whether the doll is living or inanimate as a factor causing a feeling of uncanniness? What actually happens in Freud's text to the uncertainty concerning the distinction living-mechanical or living-inanimate, exemplified by the doll Olympia, which Jentsch picked as an example of uncanniness? We can follow the course of this doll in 'The "Uncanny"' by following the 'uncertainty' which it generates in Freud's essay. In many ways Freud's essay is about uncertainty and a troubling of definitions in general, beginning with Freud's linguistic inquiry into the tongue-twisting etymology and definitions of the word *unheimlich*. Already from that point of view the amount of emphasis and the force of the rejection of 'intellectual uncertainty' is, I think, particularly interesting. Let us look, then, at the ways in which Freud operates with 'uncertainty' and 'intellectual' uncertainty and how dolls are constantly involved in these operations.

Freud puts 'uncertainty' into motion with varying emphases. He does this apparently to get rid of Jentsch's notion of 'intellectual uncertainty', or at least to be in control of its circulation. At the same time Freud does not seem to notice that 'uncertainty' is already in motion in his choices of words. First of all, in German he uses *Zweifel* and *Unsicherheit* almost interchangeably (except in the phrase *intellektuelle Unsicherheit*, which comes from Jentsch), as if he were uncertain whether to talk about

*Zweifel* or *Unsicherheit*.<sup>90</sup> He also gives the phrase *intellektuelle Unsicherheit* in quotation marks at the point of the most emphatic rejection, lifts it from the text as if to say: 'Look, here it is, this useless thing, I am going to get rid of it now'. But *intellektuelle Unsicherheit* nevertheless crops up every time Jentsch and dolls are mentioned. For example, Freud is later in the essay drawn to comment on the uncertainty whether the doll Olympia is alive or inanimate because it is a theme on which Jentsch 'lays stress' [*hervorgehoben hat*] ('Uncanny', 233). As far as Freud is concerned, Jentsch has been definitely proven inadequate and lacking pertinence, but since he 'lays stress' on the intellectual uncertainty, Freud is willing to prove him wrong once more. Freud writes:

Jentsch [*diesem Autor*; this writer, as if mentioning Jentsch's name after his rejection would leave a bad taste in his mouth] believes that a particularly favourable condition for awakening uncanny feelings is created when there is intellectual uncertainty whether an object is alive or not, and when an inanimate object becomes too much like an animate one. Now, dolls are of course rather closely connected with childhood life. ('Uncanny', 233)

Freud is moving onto his own territory, the psychology of childhood, and reappropriates the doll accordingly as a child's toy. In Hoffmann's story, however, the doll Olympia is not a child's toy; it is an adult-size mechanical doll and the object of the protagonist's romantic desires. But by reinscribing Jentsch's argument in the context of childhood, Freud can call on the behaviour of children towards their dolls to dispel the uncanniness

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<sup>90</sup> *Zweifel* means hesitation between two things; a sense nicely caught by the English *doubt* which comes from L. *dubitare*, 'related to *dubius*, doubtful, moving in two (*duo*) directions' (*Chambers*). *Unsicherheit* means uncertainty in a sense of being unsure, not secure, maybe even with a connotation of apprehension as well. What is their difference? Clearly these definitions point in two directions, and Freud remains undecided as to how to choose: one points in the direction of the double, the other in the direction of fear. What is the difference?



of 'living dolls': 'We remember that in their early games children do not distinguish at all sharply between living and inanimate objects, and they are especially fond of treating their dolls like live people' ('Uncanny', 233). Because children play with their dolls as if they were alive, without the slightest feelings of repulsion or distress, uncertainty as to whether something is alive or inanimate cannot explain the feeling of uncanniness generated by Hoffmann's story. Freud's uncanniness is related to what is frightening [*Schreckhaften*], feelings of dread and horror [*Angst- und Grauererregenden*], repulsion and distress [*abstoßenden, peinlichen*] ('Uncanny', 219). So if children are not the least afraid of their 'living' dolls, and even *wish* that their dolls were alive, to call this particular uncertainty (of whether something is living or inanimate) uncanny would lead to a contradiction:

But curiously enough, while the Sand-Man story deals with the arousing of an early childhood fear, the idea of a 'living doll' excites no fear at all; children have no fear of their dolls coming to life, they may even desire it. The source of uncanny feelings would not, therefore, be an infantile fear in this case, but rather an infantile wish or even merely an infantile belief. There seems to be a contradiction here; but perhaps it is only a complication, which may be helpful to us later on. ('Uncanny', 233)

The above quotation ends the explicit discussion on Hoffmann's story 'The Sandman'. The 'contradiction' turning into a 'complication' that Freud refers to involves keeping hold of the 'infantile fear' but redirecting it away from dolls and into another infantile fear: for Freud the whole point of Hoffmann's story is to arouse a childhood fear of losing one's eyes, which is then identified as the castration complex ('Uncanny', 231). For Freud the doll is relevant only insofar as it underlines the importance of a childhood context, and can be linked with the castration complex.

Towards the end of 'The "Uncanny"' the bringing-up-only-to-repudiate strategy which Freud has practised throughout the essay comes up one more time, in a kind of condensed form:

We have heard that it is in the highest degree uncanny when an inanimate object--a picture or a doll--comes to life: nevertheless in Hans Andersen's stories the household utensils, furniture and tin soldiers are alive, yet nothing could well be more remote from the uncanny. And we should hardly call it uncanny when Pygmalion's beautiful statue comes to life. ('Uncanny', 246)

'We have heard...': Jentsch's status has declined from a respected source to a suspicious rumour. Reference to Hans Andersen's fairy stories puts dolls (tin soldiers) again firmly in the context of childhood, and proves that the uncertainty whether something is alive or inanimate is not uncanny. And since Pygmalion's statue is beautiful, that is, not related to feelings of repulsion or distress, it, too, cannot be uncanny.

On the following page, however, Freud makes a surprising concession to Jentsch, without mentioning his name, in connection with death. Evoking the child's feelings of fear and danger when s/he is confronted with silence, darkness and solitude, and linking these with the fear and danger of death, Freud writes: 'And are we after all justified in entirely ignoring intellectual uncertainty as a factor, seeing that we have admitted its importance in relation to death?' ('Uncanny', 247). It seems that for Freud one can retain one's 'intellectual uncertainty' in the face of death and still be in the grip of the feeling of uncanniness. Death is a special case. Or dolls are a special case--and Freud here recognizes, in a kind of sudden flash, that after all he has been agreeing with Jentsch all the time. But that is unacceptable, because it would significantly undermine the argument and, indeed, the whole point of his essay. In the essay Freud employs a

two-fold strategy to make his case appear significantly different from Jentsch's: firstly, he extends the field of reference of the 'uncertainty' by applying it to fiction, and secondly, he lays a heavy emphasis on the uncertainty as 'intellectual'.

Jentsch talks about 'uncertainty' only in relation to our being unable to come to a decision whether something is animate or inanimate. Freud, first of all, modifies the uncertainty to concern the distinction between reality and fiction (because 'The Sandman' is fiction, we are unsure whether Hoffmann's story takes place in our so-called 'real' world or in an imaginary world of the writer, which need not conform with our 'reality' at all):

It is true that the writer creates a kind of uncertainty [*eine Art von Unsicherheit*] in us in the beginning by not letting us know, no doubt purposely, whether he is taking us into the real world or into a purely fantastic one of his own creation. ('Uncanny', 230)

Barely perceptibly, but already significantly, Freud changes the angle from which he views the uncertainty: it is no longer as much a feeling of a reader, but rather a skill of a writer. So what is under analysis, then, is not the feeling of uncertainty, but the writer's skill in creating uncertainty, and it is from this perspective (the perspective of Freud's spy-glass) that he can analyse Hoffmann's text so that Hoffmann does not suspend us in the uncertainty between 'real' world and 'fantastic' world. Yet, in accordance with the inevitable absurdity of positing a distinction between the 'real' world and 'fantastic' world in a essay whose topic is the uncanny, Freud ends up wrapping this distinction less than neatly: 'this uncertainty [*Zweifel*] disappears in the course of Hoffmann's story, and we perceive that he intends to make us, too, look through the demon optician's spectacles or spy-glass' ('Uncanny', 230). It is difficult

to imagine what kind of 'real world' we would be able to see through a 'demon optician's' glasses; how making the reader occupy the place of a kinky optician might offer a glimpse of the world which would be unequivocally recognized as 'our reality'.

Freud also emphasises the uncertainty Jentsch writes about as an 'intellectual uncertainty.' In this way, he is able to make Jentsch's argument appear closely related to adulthood (adult vs. child: an adult is more 'intellectual'), to modernity (modern man vs. primitive man; a modern man is more 'intellectual'), to scientific knowledge (scientific knowledge vs. 'our original emotional reaction' ['Uncanny', 242]; science is more 'intellectual' than emotional). In all these couplings Freud thinks that the second term provides a key to the understanding of the first, is more originary: the child explains the adult, the primitive man explains the modern man, feelings explain science. An inquiry into the child's psyche explains the adult's behaviour, a study of the primitive man's beliefs explains feelings which appear simply strange to a modern man, 'our original emotional reactions' to things can be found to be at the bottom of our pursuit of scientific knowledge. Furthermore, the primitive man's animistic beliefs can be traced back to childhood complexes. Thus in 'The "Uncanny"' we come back to children, who, in Freud's final analysis, are not afraid of dolls.

Jentsch does talk about 'intellectual uncertainty' in his paper, but Freud also completely ignores Jentsch's modifications to this phrase. For example, when Freud quotes Jentsch declaring that a good instance of uncanniness occurs when there are "doubts whether an apparently animate being is really alive; or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not be in fact animate", Freud overlooks the ending of Jentsch's sentence. The sentence goes on: '...and more precisely, when this doubt only makes itself felt obscurely in one's consciousness' (Jentsch, 11). Jentsch is by no means talking

of 'intellectual uncertainty' as simply a lack of rational or functional knowledge ('just tell me where the light switch is and I'll dispel this uncanny darkness'). Instead, the uncertainty which he talks about is situated somewhere at the limits of consciousness, and by extension, of the intellectual. Writing about human size wax-dolls or equivalent figures, Jentsch observes: 'For many sensitive souls, such a figure also has the ability to retain its unpleasantness after the individual has taken a decision as whether it is animate or not' (Jentsch, 12). Thus, it can be said that Freud misses the point almost completely when he writes:

On the whole, Jentsch did not get beyond this relation of the uncanny to the novel and unfamiliar [*Neuartigen und Nichtvertrauten*]. He ascribes the essential factor in the production of the feeling of uncanniness to intellectual uncertainty; so that the uncanny would always, as it were, be something one does not know one's way about in [*worin man sich sozusagen nicht auskennt*]. The better orientated in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it. ('Uncanny', 221)

According to Freud, nothing 'intellectual' (apart from our 'intellectual' lack of knowledge about death) can possibly be responsible for a *feeling* of uncanniness. Yet, in Jentsch, 'feeling' and intellectual knowledge about one's environment are not at all mutually exclusive. Thus Freud's assertion that Jentsch's emphasis on the 'intellectual' invalidates Jentsch's argument is more suggestive of Freud's anxiety to get rid of the notion of the doll than of Jentsch's limitations.

According to Jentsch, the feeling of uncanniness is indissociably linked with the 'intellectual', because uncanniness is something that puts precisely the 'intellectual' into unrest; it perturbs those limits and decisions which the 'intellectual' would require to define itself as 'intellectual'. Between Jentsch and Freud the phrase 'intellectual

uncertainty' itself becomes uncanny. It becomes uncertain whether the phrase means uncertainty which is intellectual by nature (as opposed to child-like, primitive, emotional by nature) or uncertainty about what is 'intellect' (and how one could decide between, say, intellectual/child-like, intellectual/primitive, intellectual/emotional). How to choose?<sup>91</sup> The uncanny does not simply take us beyond or through the 'intellectual' to emotions, childhood, prehistory, the unconscious, but makes the delineation between the intellectual and its presumed 'predecessors' questionable. The uncanny, then, could well be characterised as that something where one does not know one's way about in, or around on, or over beyond, as Freud's own writing in 'The "Uncanny"' so beautifully demonstrates.

The 'uncanny intellect' (the intellect that cannot choose between intellect and non-intellect) that emerges from the encounter between Jentsch and Freud is linked with the doll. Since Freud signals his willingness to rethink the importance of 'intellectual uncertainty' in relation to death, we have then reasons to believe that dolls are also at issue here. The uncanniness of death provides a sort of culmination of Freud's essay, bringing to light that which was known from the beginning:

Many people experience the feeling [of uncanniness] in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts. ... We might indeed have begun our investigation with this example, perhaps the most striking of all, of something uncanny, but we refrained from doing so because the uncanny is too much intermixed [*vermengt*] with what is purely gruesome and is in part overlaid [*gedeckt*] by it. ('Uncanny', 241)

Freud did not begin with death and dead bodies, because he feared that he might not be

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<sup>91</sup> With a kind of uncanny etymo-logic, 'intellect' comes from Latin *intelligere*, from *inter*, in between, and *legere*, to choose; in-between-choosing. What would be 'uncanny intellect'?

able to dig up uncanniness under the gruesomeness of dead bodies, or feared that he could not even tell gruesomeness apart from uncanniness; he appears to be uncertain where gruesomeness ends and uncanniness begins. Is it any better now, then? Can he now, after a number of other examples, tell where the 'most striking' uncanniness lies, half buried in this conceptual graveyard, and where an 'irrelevant' piece of uncanniness partly sticks out and partly mixes with gruesomeness? He certainly claims to be able to do so:

We have now only a few remarks to add--for animism, magic and sorcery, the omnipotence of thoughts, man's attitude to death, involuntary repetition and the castration complex comprise practically all the factors which turn something frightening into something uncanny. ('Uncanny', 243)

Nevertheless, further uncanny pieces emerge. These still emerging examples concern uncanniness in 'living beings': epileptic fits, manifestations of madness, severed hands and legs, decapitated heads. These examples, resurfacing after Freud lays to rest the issue of death and dead bodies, can be said to concern the remains of the dead. Perhaps no longer surprisingly, these examples include exactly the ones that were credited to Jentsch at the beginning of 'The "Uncanny"' ('Uncanny', 226). Freud makes no reference to Jentsch at this point, as if Jentsch is finally done with; as if not even a rumour of his work remains. At the same time the last example of this section raises the question of the uncertainty of whether something is alive or not:

Dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist, as in a fairy tale of Hauff's, feet which dance by themselves ... all these have something peculiarly uncanny about them, especially when, as in the last instance, they prove capable of independent activity in addition. ('Uncanny', 244)

When talking about the uncanniness in 'living people' Freud drifts towards a focus on the limits of the living body, which begins to disintegrate: its 'life' begins to break up and fragment into uncanny units. Organs which are integral to the living body should have no autonomous 'living' existence outside the body; yet, once detached from the body they sometimes take on the appearance of autonomous life, and life in pieces is uncanny. Freud again hastens to lean on psychoanalytical knowledge in his explanation: 'As we already know, this kind of uncanniness springs from its proximity to the castration complex' ('Uncanny', 245). But a similar scene of dismemberment occurs already earlier in 'The "Uncanny"', and more specifically in relation to dolls. In a long footnote where Freud offers a paraphrase of Hoffmann's story, he writes:

In the frightening scene in childhood, Coppélius, after sparing Nathaniel's eyes, had screwed off his arms and legs as an experiment; that is, he had worked on him as a mechanic would on a doll. This singular feature [*sonderbare Zug*: strange, odd, peculiar feature], which seems quite outside the picture of the Sand-Man [*ganz aus dem Rahmen der Sandmannvorstellung heraustritt*: steps right out of the frame of Sandman], introduces a new castration equivalent; but it also points to the inner identity of Coppélius with his later counterpart, Spalanzani the mechanic, and prepares us for the interpretation of Olympia. This automatic doll can be nothing else than a materialization of Nathaniel's feminine attitude towards his father in his infancy. ('Uncanny', 232)

In this nightmarish scene Nathaniel, the man who desires the doll, is himself presented as a doll. This scene immediately strikes Freud as significant, but, according to his obsession, he explains it with a diagnosis of castration-complex. For Freud the doll-scene is so odd and peculiar that it steps quite outside the frame of Hoffmann's story, catches the eye outside the 'proper' frame of the story, the frame that Freud set around it. But the doll-scene is not so much 'singularly' outside the frame of the story as it is



strangely, peculiarly, oddly, uncannily smack in the middle of the picture. If the severed body parts in 'The Sandman' are closely related to dolls, maybe the pieces of bodies in 'The "Uncanny"' should be linked to dolls, as well? Bearing in mind the haunting dolls in Freud's essay, we can put together another scenario of uncanniness. The uncanniness of severed body parts would not result so much from a multiplication of penis-symbols (hence castration), but rather function as a multiplication of doll-effects. It also, again, evokes the uncanny idea that a 'living person' may be a doll, or 'consist' of doll-parts.

In the long footnote mentioned earlier, in addition to the castration complex, Freud also reconstructs another possible scenario of psychoanalytic interpretation: Olympia's two 'fathers' (Spalanzani and Coppola) are doublings of Nathaniel's two father-figures. If Olympia is a materialization of Nathaniel's feminine attitude towards his father, then in his love for Olympia, Nathaniel is actually identifying with her: 'Olympia is, as it were, a dissociated complex of Nathaniel's which confronts him in person, and Nathaniel's enslavement to this complex is expressed in his senseless obsessive [*unsinnig zwanghaften*] love for Olympia' ('Uncanny', 232). Even granting that in the story the uncertainty of whether Olympia is a doll or a living being is dispelled, Freud's analysis seems to stop short just at the moment when again it would have been possible to bring Jentsch into the picture. If Nathaniel meets in this doll nothing other than himself, at least a part of himself ('his complex'), how separate can we keep Nathaniel and 'Olympia'? What is this 'obsessive and senseless love' between Nathaniel and his doll-complex? Does it not suggest that Nathaniel is also, uncannily, a doll? It seems to me that even with Freud's inflected paraphrase of Hoffmann's story (to make it appear that the central theme of uncanniness in the story is the fear of losing



**Figure 24**  
View from Freud's study, Vienna 1938. On the left is the chair in which the patient would have sat during his/her initial interview. On the right, in the middle of the window, is the curiously placed small mirror.

one's eyes), Freud cannot avoid the doll.<sup>92</sup>

In a fascinating study of various architectural aspects of Freud's rooms in Vienna Diana Fuss and Joel Sanders, in an essay entitled 'Berggasse 19: Inside Freud's Office' (1996), offer a reading of 'a series of complicated and subtle transactions of power, orchestrated largely by the very precise spatial arrangement of objects and furniture' that a patient of Freud's would have encountered when entering his consultation room for the first time.<sup>93</sup> They argue that when the patient is sitting opposite Freud for the first time, 'from the vantage point of [Freud's] desk-chair, the patient's disembodied head assumes the status of one of Freud's antiques' (Fuss and Sanders, 120; see **Figure 24** above). And here we can again remember what interested Freud most in his first visit

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<sup>92</sup> For Freud's use of the paraphrase, see, for example, Sarah Kofman, *Freud and Fiction*, trans. Sarah Wykes (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), esp. 85-116, and Neil Hertz, 'Freud and the Sandman', in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. Josué V. Harari (London: Methuen, 1979), 296-321.

<sup>93</sup> Diana Fuss and Joel Sanders, 'Berggasse 19: Inside Freud's Office' in *Stud: Architectures of Masculinity*, ed. Joel Sanders (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 112-39. Hereafter Fuss and Sanders. Further page references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text.

in the Louvre was 'the large number of Emperor's busts, some of them excellent characterisations'. But not only does Freud meet his patient as a disembodied head of a statuette, he is also himself turned into one. Freud had a small mirror placed in the middle of the window frame facing the patient sitting on the chair. When s/he sat on the chair, looking over the back of the figurines, the patient saw in the little mirror his or her face. When Freud in turn sat on his chair, his face replaced the patient's face in the mirror. In this way he could suggestively play out already in advance the analyst's role as a 'mirror' to the patient. Fuss and Sanders write that Freud must have looked in the mirror himself, as well, and '[w]hat Freud sees in his mirror is a subject who is, first and foremost, an object, a statue, a bust' (Fuss and Sanders, 124). In some ways, Freud's mirror in his consultation room mirror and Lacan's 'mirror' of the mirror stage have almost an opposite effect. Maud Ellmann, in her 'Introduction', in *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism* (1994), writes that in Lacan, before the mirror stage:

the infant experiences its body as a random concatenation of its parts: a 'heterogeneous mannequin, a baroque doll, a trophy of limbs', in Lacan's words. In contrast to this experience of fragmentation, the mirror offers a mirage of bodily coordination and control....<sup>94</sup>

Lacan's 'mirror' offers a reflection where the doll-parts are brought together to a mirage of coherence and control. Freud's mirror, on the other hand, decapitates, fragments, changes doll-heads.

In a typically Freudian move we could say that Freud's focus on eyes (in 'The "Uncanny"', but also in the play with the mirror) betrays that which he must not see in front on him, all the time on his desk; his dolls. Freud had nothing but analytical eyes

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<sup>94</sup> Maud Ellmann, 'Introduction', *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, ed. Maud Ellmann (London: Longman, 1994), 1-35, quotation 17.

(which in this case also amounts to having no analytical eyes) for the dolls, and those eyes cannot see the dolls. The analytical ear is also useless with dolls. Dolls, intellectually, castrate Freud, stop his analytical work short, leave it in fragments. With dolls he also emphatically faces an intellectual, psychoanalytical and theoretical petrification, a statuesque reflection that stops the analytical traffic.

In Chapter Five, below, I will take a closer look at a certain analytical 'thinking' doll-petrification as it is explicitly explored in Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy. Next, however, I shall leave Freud's psychoanalytical dolls' house and discuss other dolls' houses in more detail. If in this chapter the interest has been the 'unknowable' weight of dolls in psychoanalysis, in the following chapter the interest is the miniaturization, the 'sliding' scale of dolls' houses.

## Chapter Four: Dolls' Houses and Homesickness

In this chapter I shall delineate a short history of dolls' houses, before going on to analyse them specifically in terms of notions of nostalgia and homesickness. I shall then offer readings of Katherine Mansfield's short story 'The Doll's House' and Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House*, in order to see how they both explore a certain sickness identified with dolls' houses. As we shall see, dolls' houses are not healthy places, socially or mentally.

The earliest European record of a doll's house is from 1558, when Albrecht V, Duke of Bavaria, commissions a doll's house for his daughter. Apparently he was so pleased with the result that he included it in his art collection, and rarely allowed the daughter to play with it.<sup>95</sup> Constance Eileen King notes that the Greek and Roman children played with '[s]imple dolls' rooms and furnishings', and that many Egyptian examples survive as well (King, 145). But here, as elsewhere, it is a matter of definition: neither King nor Bristol and Geddes-Brown discuss the Greek and Roman examples, because they are apparently thought to be 'models' rather than dolls' houses, something to be made use of in the afterlife, because many have been found in graves: 'it is extremely difficult to differentiate between toys and models' (King, 145). But was Albrecht V's doll's house a model or a toy? Even though the records show that he ordered it for his daughter, if the daughter was rarely allowed to play with it would seem to suggest that it was not simply a toy, but also art, decoration, a prestige piece,

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<sup>95</sup> Olivia Bristol and Leslie Geddes-Brown, *Dolls' Houses: Domestic Life and Architectural Styles in Miniature From the 17th Century to the Present Day* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 1997), 6. Hereafter Bristol and Geddes-Brown. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. Bristol and Geddes-Brown's beautifully illustrated book is an important source of reference for my discussion of the history of dolls' houses.





**Figure 25**  
Sara Ploos van Amstel's cabinet house, dating from the mid-18th century. Gemeentemuseum, The Hague.

and even an investment. An investment would suggest a legacy, something to be made use of (by others) after one is dead, thus connecting the doll's house back to afterlife.

The German and Dutch fashion of collecting little objects in cabinets in the form of miniature houses spread to England in the early 18th century. American dolls' houses appear in the late 18th century. In general, full-scaled (that is, multi-storied, many-roomed) dolls' houses are common in Northern Europe and America, while, for example, older French dolls' houses are rare, and Southern Europe usually appears to have preferred single-story, open-room settings (Bristol and Geddes-Brown, 112).<sup>96</sup>

The early Dutch dolls' houses are usually called cabinet houses or Dutch cabinets,

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<sup>96</sup> Modern interest in dolls' houses is at least nationally quite widespread, and we can easily find, for example, Mexican, Japanese, Tibetan, Guyanese dolls' houses. A good book for a range of possibilities of what can constitute a 'doll's house' is Faith Eaton, *The Ultimate Dolls' House Book* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1994).

because they do not have any exterior features suggesting a house: they are miniature rooms in a cabinet with doors for displaying and safekeeping of valuable miniatures (see **Figure 25** above). It has sometimes been suggested that these cabinets start being dolls' houses only after their doors began to lose the keys and the locks, indicating that they were no longer 'safes', and their contents were less valuable, thus making it more likely for children to gain access to them. Unlike the Dutch cabinets, the early German dolls' houses often have 'realistic' roofs and side walls, but no facade. The English 'baby houses', as they were first called, usually come with the outside appearance of a house as well, one notable exception being the earliest existing baby house, Ann Sharp's house, which has no roof or facade.

The earliest existing doll's house is a three-story Nürnberg house, which dates from 1611. It is a fairly large house, 2.7 metres (9ft) high (Bristol and Geddes-Brown, 14). Apparently, it was not meant as a toy for children, because it contains some 'adult' material: the detailed mural on the walls of the grand hall depicts a 'riotous' picnic with wine, music, kissing and groping (Bristol and Geddes-Brown, 14-5). Another series of paintings on the walls of the garden-room forms a little narrative, beginning with a nun singing and a monk watching with interest, followed by a picture which shows the nun's dress front lowered to reveal big breasts and a monk caressing the nun; they are consequently found out by a watchman in the next picture, and the last picture shows them both doing penance. The earliest existing doll's house, then, is a miniature theatre or gallery of transgression, a peeping-cabinet. All the other houses from roughly the same period (many from Nürnberg and on display in Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nürnberg), often referred to as 'Nürnberg houses', are 'planned for adult's convenience in viewing' and their size alone 'would have defeated most children'

(King, 151).

The story of the earliest known doll's house in Britain, Ann Sharp's house, is very enlightening about dolls' houses in general:

Ann Sharp was one of the fourteen children of John, Archbishop of York, and was presented with the baby house by her godmother Princess Anne, later to become Queen, whose miniature once hung in the [doll's] house. Ann Sharp was born in 1691 and, at the age of twenty-one married Heneage Dering, the Dean of Ripon. She died in 1771. The family notes that still accompany the house suggest an uneventful life and her sole claim to fame rests in the house which she carefully arranged herself, labelling each of the 'inhabitants' with its name, and, frequently, its station in the household. (King, 168)

King is describing the house in its neglected condition in 1977, when it was not on display as it is now (in Strangers' Hall, Norwich), with all the objects belonging to it. Thus, the miniature portrait of Princess Anne again hangs on the wall over the drawing room fire. The transformation of Ann Sharp's house from its derelict status to a restored museum-piece reflects well the fairly recent change in appreciation of dolls' houses. The English baby houses appear from the first more in the context of childhood, even though the baby house's owner often added to its contents even when she was an adult, as Ann Sharp did. Some of the baby houses appear to have been obtained by adult women, like the baby house at Uppark, which Sara Lethieullier purchased the same year she got married to Sir Matthew Featherstonehaugh in 1747 (King, 172). However, at the same time as the early baby houses are said to be both children's playthings and a form of adult ladies' entertainment, it is quite sobering to come across a relatively rare remark made by Vivienne Greene in her *English Dolls' Houses of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (1955) of what an 'adult' woman in this context means. She points out that since early dolls' houses were designed by well known architects, and their



furniture by famous makers such as Sheraton and Chippendale:

it would seem on evidence that these toys were primarily or even entirely an amusement and occupation for adults: that they were kept on a landing or in a parlour downstairs, we know. There is no irrelevance, however, in reminding the reader that these same adults were often married women of fifteen or sixteen.<sup>97</sup>

The owner always seems to have been a she. When a man is connected with dolls' houses it is usually in a much 'grander' context. When Horace Walpole writes in 1750 of Frederick, the Prince of Wales, that 'The Prince is building baby houses at Kew', Frederick had been hiring local craftsmen to build the hundreds of objects needed to reproduce the entire court in miniature (Bristol and Geddes-Brown, 40). What makes Ann Sharp's house an early landmark of English baby houses is not only that it is one of the earliest examples still surviving, but all the 'little' documentation that comes with it; documentation which suggests fascinating fragments of stories around and in the house. Several furnishings of the house still retain their original price tags, and give an idea of the variety of things available for dolls' houses during much of the 18th century. Many of the inhabitants in the house are identified by little pieces of paper pinned to their clothes. We find, for example, the owner of the house 'My Lord Rochett', servant 'Fanny Long, ye Chambermaid', guests like 'Mrs Lemon' and 'Lady Jemima Johnson'.<sup>98</sup> Such fairly 'stable' roles and descriptions pinned on dolls suggest a sort of romantic ongoing drama taking place in the dolls' house.

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<sup>97</sup> Vivienne Greene, *English Dolls' Houses of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London: Bell & Hyman, 1979 [orig. 1955]), 44.

<sup>98</sup> Excellent pictures of Ann Sharp's house can be found in Bristol and Geddes-Brown, 38. King (167-72) and Bristol and Geddes-Brown (38-9) offer slightly different accounts of the house and its contents.

During the nineteenth century the dolls' houses in general lost some of their appeal for women which they had had in the earlier century, and became more predominantly girls' playthings. An ever-widening middle-class market for the houses also had the effect of reducing their splendour, and the surviving dolls' houses from the 19th century tend to be flimsier and more mundane than the earlier ones, like the one owned by Queen Victoria when a child.<sup>99</sup> Royalty plays a strangely pivotal role in the ups and downs of English dolls' houses: 'Royalty and dolls' houses seem to have an affinity' (Bristol and Geddes-Brown, 110). Ann Sharp's house was given to her by her godmother Princess Anne, later Queen Anne (reigned 1702-14). Taking into account that Ann Sharp's house is a gift from a future monarch to her godchild, King notes that it is surprisingly poor workmanship: 'It is this very crudity of construction which gives the house its appearance of great age though, logically, one wonders why Queen Anne did not order a more finely made object for her godchild' (King, 168). The same crudity of construction seems to be a source of vexation and even slight irritation to King in the case of Queen Victoria's doll's house, which is of 'a simple box arrangement', 'without even the addition of a sloping roof' (King, 234). However Queen Victoria might have felt about her own modest doll's house, she nevertheless continued the tradition of making a gift of a doll's house, sending one to Princess Charlotte of Belgium, for example, in 1848 (King, 236).

According to King, however, the revival of adult interest in dolls' houses did not take place until the early 20th century. Although she does not explicitly mention it, the adult interest here includes collector interest, antique interest as well as hobby interest.

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<sup>99</sup> See also Leslie Daiken, *Children's Toys Throughout the Ages* (London: Spring Books, 1963), 126. Hereafter Daiken. Especially relevant in this context is Chapter Five, 'Dolls and Dolls' Houses', 102-36. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

In the previous century, although dolls' houses were perhaps mainly seen as girls' playthings, nevertheless their owners often appear to have valued their houses and added to them throughout their lives, before passing them on to the next generation of young girls. So in a sense, there has always been an adult interest in dolls' houses, but it did not regain a certain respectability until the early 20th century. Crucial to the revival of the 20th century adult interest in dolls' houses in Britain was Queen Mary, wife of George V (1910-36). Because of her obvious relish for restoring and furnishing dolls' houses she was 'presented with what can only be classed as a baby house of the most complicated type as a gift in 1924' (King, 180). It took three years to build, equip and furnish, because--in emulation of the 18th century tradition--each object for the house was made not by a toy-maker but by a craftsman to which that particular skill belonged. For example, the breakfast service was supplied by Wedgwood, the grand piano by Broadwood, the sewing machine by Singer, the Japanese tree set with diamonds in Queen's bathroom by Fabergé (King, 181-2). The Queen's doll's house could be seen in the British Empire Exhibition, and a number of books and postcards helped to popularise it.<sup>100</sup> The house is currently on display in Windsor Castle.

The doll's house escapism displays itself differently in royalty's dolls' houses and in the other dolls' houses. While Queen Victoria may 'slum it' with her doll's house and

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<sup>100</sup> The most famous of these books is *The Book of the Queen's Dolls' House*, eds. A. C. Benson and Lawrence Weaver (London: Methuen, 1924), which catalogues the house from top to bottom, and several essays explain what effort and consideration went into the building of the house. Hereafter Benson and Weaver. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. *The Book of Queen's Dolls' House Library*, ed. E. V. Lucas (London: Methuen, 1924) catalogues the contents of the doll's house's library, and offers some excerpts from the books in it. The books include several original contributions by well-known writers (such as Kipling and M. R. James), some authors' hand-written copies of their published work, some copies of other works. Several editions concern dolls, such as John Bland-Sutton's *Principles of Dolls' Surgery*, Dum-Dum's [Major Kendall] *Dolls' Songs for a Dolls' House*, Filson Young's *A Toy Philosophy*, and Edward Knoblock's play *The Doll's Dilemma: A Comic Tragedy*. M. R. James's contribution is a little story called 'The Haunted Dolls' House'. Hereafter Lucas. Further page references to *The Book of Queen's Dolls' House Library* will appear in the main body of the text.

get a fantasy dose of a less privileged lifestyle, often old surviving dolls' houses signify property and wealth. Not only do they contain objects which replicate objects of desire in miniature, over time the houses themselves become possessions of value, collectables. One of the reasons for their ever having become collectable in the first place is the royal connection. All the successions associated with royalty (the familial succession to the throne, property passed down the generations, continuing historical attention and concomitant documentation surrounding royalty) create a narrative framework, which makes the objects associated with royalty extremely desirable for collectors. Even though royal dolls' houses are not collectable as such (they are museum pieces), the royal attention to dolls' houses, over time, has facilitated a well-documented history for dolls' houses, a history which is always reproduced in accounts of doll's house histories. Continued royal attention produces, through documentation, not only historical value, but also collectable and antique value to objects which can be culturally accredited with documented 'history'. The fact that the royal family nowadays generates perhaps less culturally accredited history and more soap opera drama--and has become a kind of establishment anachronism--in some ways fits nicely with the fate of the doll's house. As much as a dolls' house is a child's plaything it is and has always been also a form of adult nostalgia: nostalgia for childhood, for past times, a desire to return to a home that only exists (if at all anywhere) in memory. Like the royal family, a doll's house is something from the nostalgic past.

Dolls' houses are not what they used to be. This becomes clear towards the end of Bristol and Geddes-Brown's *Dolls' Houses*, when, having charted the history of dolls' houses from the 17th century to present day, they write:

In the 1990s dolls' houses were no longer a series of little rooms where children could enjoy life in miniature, cook their own tiny scones and put their babies to bed; they had become true fairy-tale fantasies. Their intention was not to evoke adult life in a child's eye but to flee from it into furry creatures, even fruit--just as computer games are set in a world of monsters.

In the 1950s, children played with dolls at the age of 12 or even older. In the 1980s and 1990s, the dolls' house market is confined to younger children. These children want fairy stories, bright colours, situations which have no connection with logic. They are not surprised when manufacturers suggest, and indeed provide them with, strawberry houses to live in and pigs that can fly. (Bristol and Geddes-Brown, 156)

Bristol and Geddes-Brown's account shows how they do not feel at home with the present day doll's house scene, but find the modern fruit-shaped houses and flying pigs painful to live with, and suggest that perhaps the manufacturers have manipulated children to accept these playthings. Strangely, in Bristol and Geddes-Brown's account it is partly the small children's fantasies which have ruined the doll's house. Young children's fantasies have no 'logic', and once doll's house manufacturers started to cater to these fantasies, the doll's house lost its 'logic'. What, then, is the 'logic' of dolls' houses against which the current non-logic is defined? In Bristol and Geddes-Brown's text, the logic of the doll's house is miniaturization. Dolls' houses are miniature houses, and usually miniatures of homes, with which children could enjoy 'life in miniature'. Flying pigs are miniatures of nothing, hence they are monsters in the world of minute replicas. The other 'logic' of dolls' houses is the logic of nostalgia, homesickness.

Bristol and Geddes-Brown write in 1997 of the 1990s as a decade in the past ('In the 1990s the dolls' houses were no longer...'). They write at the same time both from home in the past (when dolls' houses provided a context where children could 'enjoy life' and did not have to 'flee' from it), as well as from future (im)perfect, the 'world

of monsters' where pigs fly. Thus dolls' houses become for them a painful locus of longing, a yearning for home, an earlier time in life, a childhood with logic, the scale and conditions of the past. Bristol and Geddes-Brown desire to return to the 'logic' of dolls' houses, which has disappeared. They would like to go home to the time before the 1990s, which they recognize as familiar, homely, but of course they cannot do it.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, they cannot 'return' and arrive in the 1990s, because it no longer provides a home for their preferred notion of a doll's house.

Susan Stewart, in her *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (1984), sees nostalgia mainly as a form of narrative:

Nostalgia is a sadness without an object, a sadness which creates a longing that of necessity is inauthentic because it does not take part in lived experience. Rather, it remains behind and before that experience. Nostalgia, like any form of narrative, is always ideological: the past it seeks has never existed except as narrative, and hence, always absent, that past continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack.<sup>102</sup>

Because for Stewart nostalgia is 'inauthentic', it is also 'hostile to history': there is no 'object', no historical reality behind it. Longing supplants history only with an 'ideological reality' (Stewart, 23). The nostalgia for 'lived experience' or history as lived experience (as opposed to history as narrative), which Stewart herself seems to display in her book, comes to frame the context in which she sees dolls' houses. Stewart looks at dolls' houses mainly from the point of view of interiorised (that is, in Stewart's

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<sup>101</sup> Actually, Bristol and Geddes-Brown date the decline of the doll's house as beginning in the 1960s and coinciding with the emergency of the modern youth culture, so we could say that their home is somewhere pre-1960s. Youth culture changed the doll's house into a younger child's plaything, and the younger the child, the less 'logic' there is in the child's fantasies.

<sup>102</sup> Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham and London: Duke Univ. Press, 1996 [orig. 1984]), 23. Hereafter Stewart. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

view, distorted) history: 'Transcendence and the interiority of history and narrative are the dominant characteristics of the most consummate of miniatures--the dollhouse' (Stewart, 61). Hence, Stewart focuses on two 'dominant motifs' in dolls' houses: wealth and nostalgia (Stewart, 61). What brings wealth and nostalgia together in the doll's house miniature (houses as such, but also doll's house furniture and dolls) is the notion of 'ideological history': 'It [the doll's house] presents a myriad of perfect objects that are, as signifiers, often affordable, whereas the signified is not' (Stewart, 61).<sup>103</sup> We can afford to buy a silver tea-set for Aunt Jemima doll, although what we would want to do is to buy it for ourselves; but because we cannot afford it and hence cannot use it, we only buy it for our dolls in the doll's house. The miniature tea-set signifies that which we desire but cannot have. In this way, nostalgia in Stewart's account covers up the shortcomings of the 'lived experience', and supplants it with inauthentic longing for something that never existed in the first place.

Arguably, wealth is a 'dominant motif' in all our houses (predominantly our rooms reflect our wealth), but what Stewart is arguing is that dolls' houses reflect a 'desired wealth' (rather than actual one, as our houses apparently do), and in so doing a doll's house becomes a showcase and cabinet of desire, where '[u]se value is transformed into display value' (Stewart, 62). If we accept that our houses exhibit and display wealth (whether real or desired), any use value in their objects is already inseparable from display value, and display value brings in the element of 'inauthentic' desire, a 'felt lack'. Display value adds to the objects what does not 'properly' belong

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<sup>103</sup> But what does she mean by 'perfect'? Why would the miniatures be 'perfect'? 'Perfect' marks the doll's house miniature with desire which is unlike anything in our everyday objects, and thus demarcates doll's house miniatures for a particular type of analysis. A lot in Stewart's discussion depends on this kind of distancing between the doll's house and the 'real' house, and positing this distance is essential for her argument.

to them (use value); display value is, so to speak, our wanting the objects to be more than they are. Transforming, miniaturising an object from our house into the doll's house does not transform use value into display value; the fusion of 'use' and 'display' has already taken place earlier, if they were ever separate. One of the problems with the concepts of use value and display value is that they are themselves nostalgic about the past, and tend to construct an 'authentic' history where objects would have had use value apart from display value, and construct a 'reality' where objects could have use value without display value. For example, much of the nostalgic appeal and emotional tension of the film *Toy Story 2* is based on the distinction between use value and display value.<sup>104</sup> All the characters in the film are toys, the main characters being dolls. One of the main characters, Woody, is kidnapped by an unpleasant and greedy doll-collector. While kidnapped, Woody for the first time becomes acquainted with other dolls who are part of the same western-themed doll-series as he is. Woody's emotional dilemma in the film is whether to stay with the newly-acquainted (original) family, or to escape the doll-collector to join his play-room family. In the film this dilemma is also characterised in terms of whether Woody wants to lead a pleasant and uncomplicated life of display value (in a Japanese doll-museum) or whether he should to lead a life of use value (be one of the toys in the play-room, but risk abandonment when the child grows up). Unsurprisingly, the use value is considered to be of primary importance, the *raison d'être* of a doll, and Woody escapes from the clutches of the evil doll-collector, and happily rejoins a life of play. And here we can also see a way of accounting for the anachronism of the royal family. The royal family, who historically enjoyed also a life

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<sup>104</sup> John Lasseter, dir., *Toy Story 2* (Walt Disney Pictures, 1999).



of use value (political power) are now forced to lead a life of display value (media, tabloid interest): the current excessive display value of the royal family is a sign of lack of use value, that is, power. Thus, they can be seen as the most consummately nostalgic political institution: a nostalgic miniature (one family) of the visibility of power. The power of the royal family is power miniaturized: on display, extremely fascinating in its carefully replicated detail (the rules, regulations, relationships, the stories, the etiquette surrounding the Windsor doll's house), nostalgic about the past but now a tabloid-child's play-thing. The Windsor house is Ann Sharp's house in play action.

I would like to look at the notion of nostalgia from a slightly different perspective, that of homesickness. *OED* defines 'nostalgia' in its earlier sense dating back to the 18th century as 'melancholia caused by prolonged absence from one's home or country; severe home-sickness' and in its more modern sense as 'regret or sorrowful longing for the conditions of a past age; regretful or wistful memory or recall of an earlier time'. The etymology of 'nostalgia' emphasizes pain: literally translated, nostalgia means 'return home pain' (from Gr. *nostos*, return home; *algos*, pain) (*OED*). Nostalgia is fairly well described by the undecidable pair of 'nostopathy' and 'nostomania'--an abnormal fear of going back to familiar places and an abnormal desire to go back to familiar places (*OED*). Freud's name for this is *unheimlich*. In desiring to return home (and feeling pain for not being able to), one is at a distance from home. On returning home one still finds oneself at a distance from home; the one returning has become the foreigner at home (having returned from outside of home one carries foreignness and distance with oneself). Nostalgia is 'homing in' on home (having home as a destination, always on the way home), and never being able to arrive home, where the desire (*pathy*) to arrive is fuelled by the fear (*mania*) of not being able to arrive, where fear of not

being able to arrive is fuelled by an unconsummated desire to arrive. Another translation for 'nostalgia', and one which neatly takes into account nostopathy and nostomania, is homesickness. One is sick because one cannot return home. Yet, returning home makes one sick, it is not the same home, it is now/still pervaded with sickness, a home that makes one sick, not a home at all. This double homesickness is a powerful focus in Katherine Mansfield's short story 'The Doll's House' (1923).<sup>105</sup>

In Stewart's discussion a doll's house comes across as a display-sick house, that is, an inauthentic house. Similarly in Mansfield's story the displayed doll's house spreads illness. In the story the Burnell children get a doll's house as a present, but because it is summer, and the house is so big, and the paint still smells, it is left outside in the yard:

For, really, the smell of paint coming from that doll's house ('Sweet of old Mrs. Hay, of course; most sweet and generous!')--but the smell of paint was quite enough to make anyone seriously ill, in Aunt Beryl's opinion. Even before the sacking was taken off. And when it was . . . (Mansfield, 383)

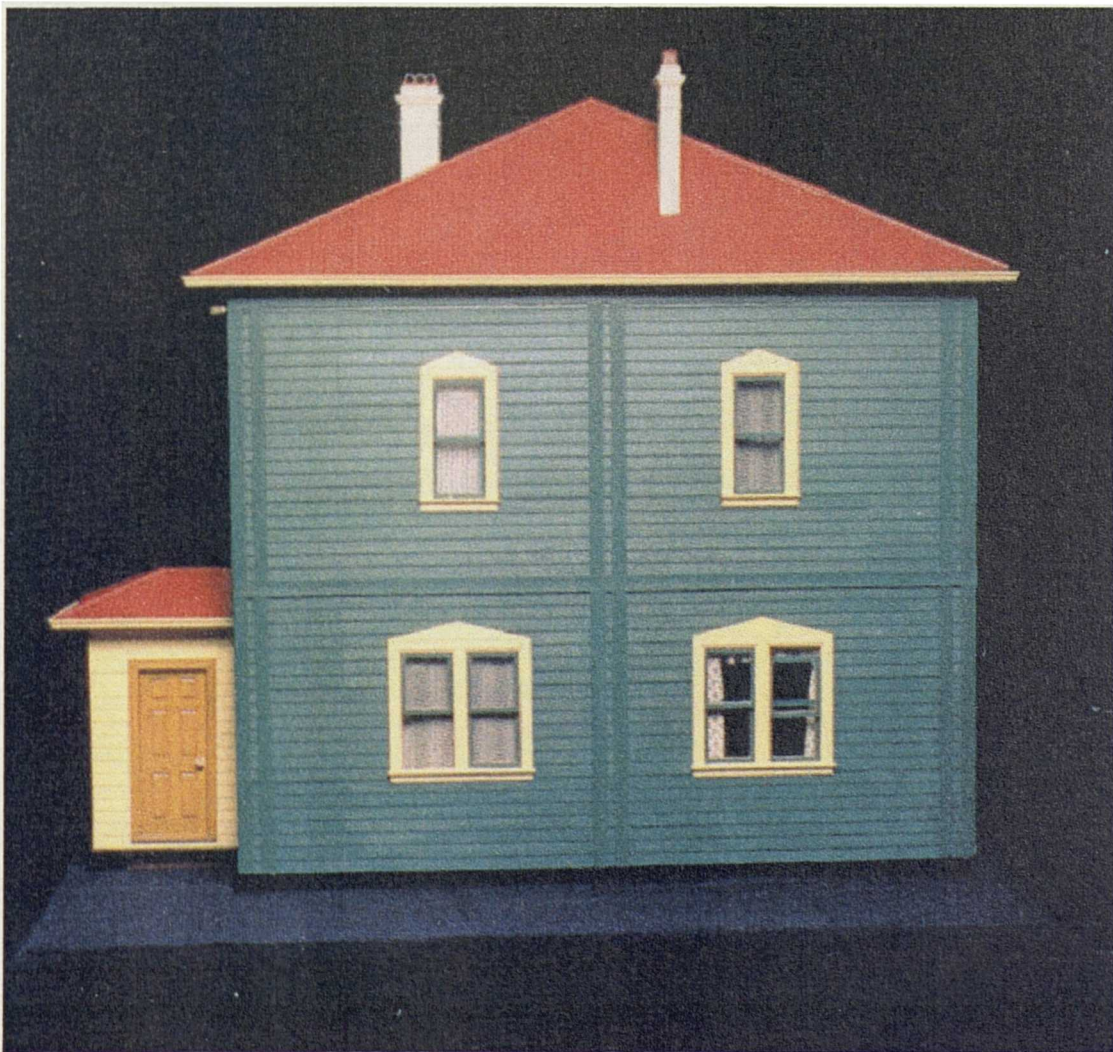
The suspense of the three dots before the sacking is taken off creates tension before the unveiling of the house, the suspense of a not yet fully seen present. The dots also create a sense of spreading invisible illness: if the sickly smell (but 'Sweet..., of course; most sweet') could make anyone ill already before the sacking was taken off, why then, when it was taken off ... the smell became even stronger, quite enough to make everyone ill, perhaps even the reader. This doll's house, and this story, smells from the start, and has

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<sup>105</sup> Katherine Mansfield, 'The Doll's House', in *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (London: Penguin, 1981). Hereafter Mansfield. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. The story appeared originally in a collection titled *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories* (1923).

a sickly sweet effect.

The Burnells' doll's house is not luxuriously or finely made. Not only does the paint smell, but the paint also has a cheapening effect on the house. The windows, although 'real windows', are 'divided into panes by a broad streak of green' and there are 'big lumps of congealed paint hanging along the edge' of the porch (Mansfield, 383). Mansfield's own doll's house is in some ways remarkably similar to the doll's house described in the story, but there are some interesting differences as well (see **Figure 26** below). No big lumps of paint are evident at the edges of the porch. The



**Figure 26**  
Katherine Mansfield's dolls' house. There are some interesting differences between this one and the one described in the story.

windows would also appear to be remarkably neatly and well made, and in perfect working condition (as the lower right hand window, which is slightly open, shows). Mansfield's story, then, can be seen to play with the idea of miniature realism usually associated with dolls' houses; the story's house is less well-made (more 'ill-made') than the 'real' dolls' house that it apparently describes.<sup>106</sup> The careless paint job of the fictional house betrays the realism of the doll's house, and the choice of colours mixes sweet and savoury tastes unappetisingly, offers on the same plate oily spinach and toffee: 'There stood the doll's house, a dark, oily, spinach green, picked out with bright yellow. Its two solid little chimneys, glued on to the roof, were painted red and white, and the door, gleaming with yellow varnish, was like a little slab of toffee' (Mansfield, 383). Nevertheless, when the house is opened, the inside conveys a sense of wondrous detail to the Burnell children:

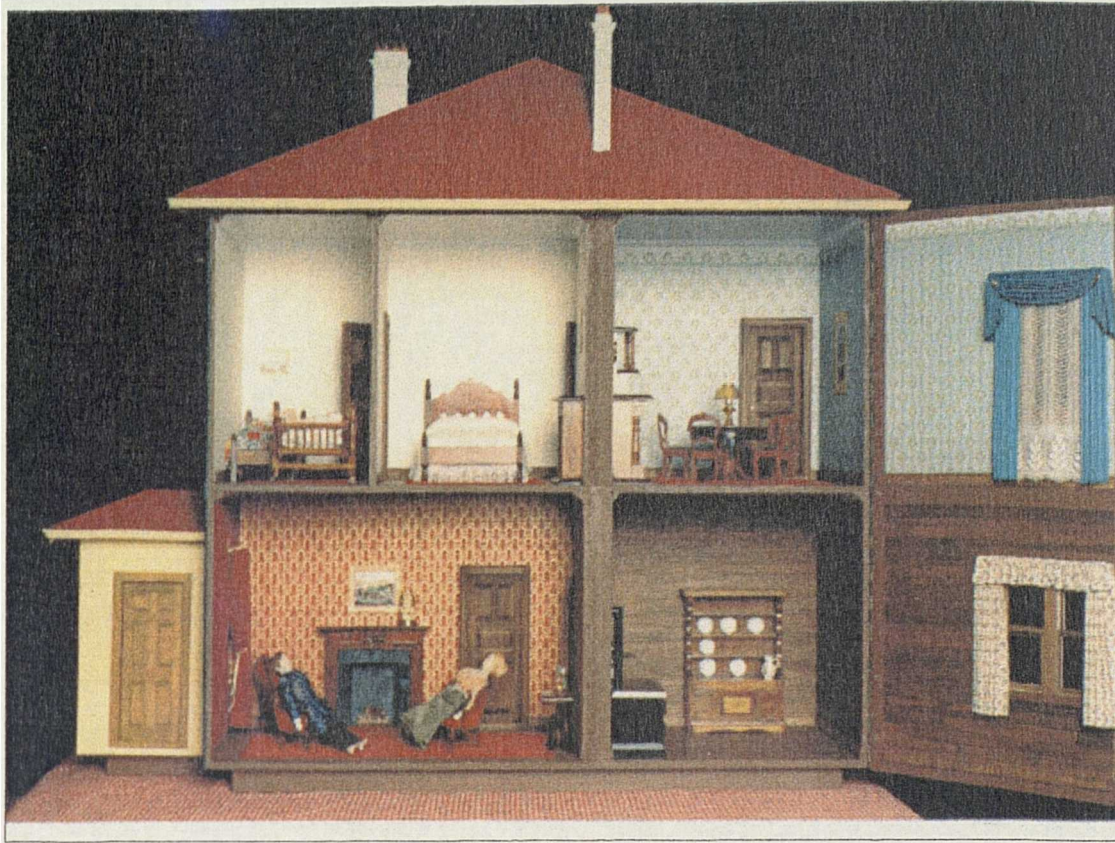
'Oh-oh!' The Burnell children sounded as though they were in despair. It was too marvellous; it was too much for them. They had never seen anything like it in their lives. All the rooms were papered. There were pictures on the walls, painted on the paper, with gold frames complete. Red carpet covered all the floors except the kitchen; red plush chairs in the drawing room, green in the dining room; tables, beds with real bedclothes, a cradle, a stove, a dresser with tiny plates and one big jug. (Mansfield, 384) (see **Figure 27** below)

Again, the use of paint in the house is associated with cheap shortcuts: the pictures are painted on the wallpaper and the frame is simply put around it. The wonder of the house is mixed with 'despair', its exceeding marvellousness (flawed, but not perceived as flawed by the children) almost turning into pain. The rough finishing job of the house in the story is reminiscent of the earlier description of Queen Victoria's doll's house,

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<sup>106</sup> I am grateful to Angela Smith for providing me with photos of Katherine Mansfield's doll's house.





**Figure 27**  
Mansfield's dolls' house opened.

the 'value' of which was also hampered by its lack of miniature precision.

However it is made, the doll's house is an exotic luxury item in the story, and it becomes a means through which social inequalities are created and reinforced. For example, three major families are mentioned in the story, the Burnells, the Logans and the Kelveys. The Burnells and the Logans are well-off, whereas the Kelveys are the poorest, the outcasts of the society. We do not know what the Burnells do for a living (apart from keeping chickens); the Logans have cows, while the mother Kelvey is apparently a washerwoman and the snobbish children speculate that the father Kelvey is in prison. The fact that both the Burnells and the Logans are mentioned as donors of Lil Kelvey's clothes puts the Burnells and Logans in the same well-to-do camp (Mansfield, 386). The arrival of the doll's house is the only thing in the story that

creates hierarchy between the Burnell children and Lena Logan: it is such a desirable item that it sets the Burnell children apart from everyone else and puts them immediately, uncontested, at the very top of school-yard hierarchy. Isabel, the eldest of the Burnells, establishes a new hierarchy by the order in which she chooses the visitors to come and see the house: 'Isabel was choosing the two who were to come back with them that afternoon and see it. She chose Emmie Cole and Lena Logan' (Mansfield, 387). Emmie Cole and Lena Logan later have to confirm their positions in the hierarchy by publicly demonstrating that they stand apart from the Kelveys: 'Emmie Cole started the whisper. "Lil Kelvey's going to be a servant when she grows up"' (Mansfield, 388). Lena Logan goes further and confronts Lil Kelvey during school 'dinner hour':

'Yah, yer father's in prison!' she hissed spitefully. This was such a marvellous thing to have said that the little girls rushed away in a body, deeply, deeply excited, wild with joy. Someone found a long rope, and they began skipping. And never did they skip so high, run in and out so fast, or do such daring things as on that morning. (Mansfield, 388)

In some ways the most arresting thing in the doll's house in Mansfield's story is its occupants. There is a curious casualness and unimportance about the dolls which come with the house. Once they are introduced they are never mentioned again in the story, and, for example, at school the Burnell children boast about all the furnishings in the house, but do not mention the dolls. They also do not play with the dolls, or with the house at all, and that is what the sickly smell of the house is all about. The miniature house--Bristol and Geddes-Brown's ideal logic of dolls' houses--is here presented as monstrous. The dolls do not seem to belong to the house:

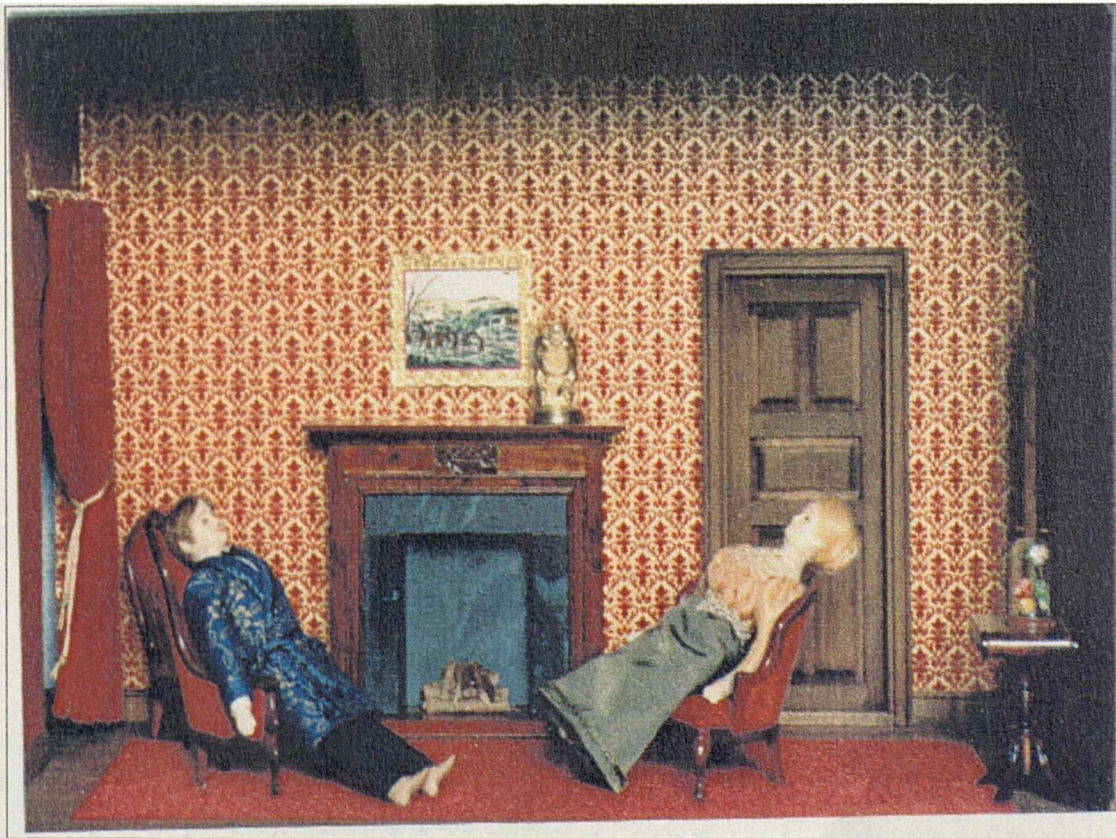
The father and mother dolls, who sprawled very stiff as though they



had fainted in the drawing-room, and their two little children asleep upstairs, were really too big for the doll's house. They didn't look as though they belonged. (Mansfield, 384) (see **Figure 28** below)

The smell of paint making people ill, children almost in despair, dolls fainting; the house is 'too much', and the dolls are already ill. Describing the dolls as 'too big for the doll's house' suggests here that the violent 'reality' of the girls' lives in the school yard is no longer compatible with any simple marvellousness of the doll's house. The marvellous toy object is tainted by the smell of its construction, and the smell contributes to the construction of another bigger ill reality in the school-yard. Hence, the marvellousness of the doll's house is mixed with barely identifiable despair.

Dolls do not really belong to dolls' houses. This idea comes across in many descriptions of dolls' houses. The dolls in Ann Sharp's house, for example, are not



**Figure 28**  
The stiff dolls.

praised because of their exquisite 'belonging' to the house, but because of the cute and unusually detailed and dramatic narrative framework that comes with the dolls. Whatever the doll's house is like, dolls always both catch the attention and diminish the illusion of miniature reality created by the house. This is most forcefully put by Edward Frederick Benson in 'The Dolls of the Queen's Dolls' House' (1924).<sup>107</sup> Benson's essay, despite its somewhat arrogant tone, has a refreshingly irreverent attitude towards dolls. Especially books devoted to collectable dolls often lavish cutesey preciousness on their subject matter. According to Benson, the whole idea of Queen Mary's doll's house is miniaturisation without any loss of detail or functionality ('with gold frames complete', as this ideal is expressed in Mansfield's story):

Each of these luxurious rooms produces a complete illusion, for it appears to be a real room, which by some magical spell has symmetrically shrunk, with all that is in it, to its present microscopic dimensions, and if by a reverse process of magic, you enlarged it again to the normal size, you feel that it would become a real room. But a Doll is not a human being in miniature at all, it never produces the slightest illusion of being a real person magically made small, and anyone can easily imagine what a monstrous deformity a Doll would be if it was magically restored to human size. (Benson, 161)

The microscopic dimensions of the details in the doll's house are supposed to be 'real', only smaller. In Mansfield's story there is the same emphasis on the house containing objects that are magically pure miniatures, and the word 'real' is repeated throughout the story in connection with the objects in the doll's house: 'real windows' (Mansfield, 383), 'real bedclothes' (Mansfield, 384, 387), '[t]he lamp was real' (Mansfield, 384), '[y]ou couldn't tell it [the lamp] from a real one' (Mansfield, 387). Compared to the

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<sup>107</sup> Edward Frederick Benson, 'The Dolls of the Queen's Dolls' House', in *The Book of the Queen's Dolls' House*, eds. A. C. Benson and Lawrence Weaver (London: Methuen, 1924), 159-66. Hereafter Benson. Further page references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text.



levels of realism offered by a doll's house, any doll would be a monster in comparison; not only in the way in which dolls ignore all but the most elementary anatomical details, but they also ignore completely (of course) the material out of which human beings are made (flesh and blood, as the saying goes), and also the functionality of human beings. Just as the dolls in Mansfield's story look as if they have fainted, Benson writes:

For the whole essence of human beings (apart from Guardsmen) is that they can move about and talk and eat and drink and sleep, whereas the only voluntary and self-impelled movement a Doll can make is to fall down, and thus if Dolls are to be allowed in any class of Dolls' house, the only place for them is a Dolls' House for Inebriates. (Benson, 163)

Dolls' houses and 'real' houses, doll's house interiors and 'real' house interiors, can move almost seamlessly from scale to scale: the materials may be exactly the same, the process of production the same, the builders the same, only the scale is different. There is no similar possibility of a 'seamless' slide in the doll/'real' human scale; there is no doll/human scale in the same sense as there is a doll's house/'real' house scale. Dolls are not miniatures. If they are put on a scale of miniaturisation (as often happens), they fit on that scale only as monsters. Dolls do not belong to the world of dolls' houses, because the doll's house miniaturization, for all its nostalgic associations, is also inhuman.

The idea of constitutionally drunken, falling dolls is interestingly portrayed in Charles Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend* (1865).<sup>108</sup> In the novel young lawyers Eugene Wrayburn and Mortimer Lightwood meet a character whom they start calling Mr Dolls, and the young lawyers 'wind up' Mr. Dolls to talk by offering him several measures of

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<sup>108</sup> Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* (London: Penguin, 1997 [orig. 1865]). Hereafter Dickens. Further page references to this edition will take place in the main body of the text.

'[t]hree penn'orth Rum', until 'Mr Dolls then fell a crying, and then exhibited a tendency to fall asleep' (Dickens, 530-1). Mr. Dolls is an overgrown monstrosity, more like a disjointed, fragmented, repulsive (blow-up) doll than an adult character with 'human' individuality: "'I am ill-used vidual'", said Mr. Dolls. "Blown up morning t'night. Called names"' (Dickens, 530). Mr Dolls' 'ill-used viduality' or doll-viduality (as opposed to human individuality) is in pieces: '[m]aking a dignified attempt to gather himself together, but, as it were, dropping half a dozen pieces of himself while he tried in vain to pick up one' (Dickens, 530). Dolls in dolls' houses are ill-fitting pieces of furniture (and more about doll-furniture shortly).

In addition to the parent dolls being stiff in the drawing-room of Mansfield's doll's house, and the children asleep in the bedroom, the other two dolls who do not 'belong' in Mansfield's story are the little Kelveys, Lil and 'our Else', as the younger one is referred to throughout the story. They are dressed like DIY-dolls, their clothes being made of other people's leftover "'bits"' (Mansfield, 386). Lil's dress is made from 'a green art-serge tablecloth of the Burnells', with red plush sleeves from the Logans' curtains' (Mansfield, 384). She is, in fact, dressed with the colours of the Burnells' new doll's house, where red is also plush and green associated with dining: 'Red carpet covered all the floors except the kitchen; red plush chairs in the drawing room, green in the dining room...' (Mansfield, 384). Being dressed in a tablecloth and curtains has also a dehumanizing effect, turning Lil into something of a piece of furniture or a house decoration. 'Our Else' is already doll-sized, 'a tiny wishbone of a child, with cropped hair and enormous eyes' (Mansfield, 386). She is also doll-like in her frozen expression and in her silence: 'Nobody had ever seen her smile; she scarcely ever spoke' (Mansfield, 386). In another sense, the Kelvey-dolls do not 'belong' to the doll's house,

because they are the ones who are explicitly barred access to see it. Yet, their desire to see it is just as big as the others', perhaps even more so, because eventually they go against an explicit injunction not to have anything to do with the Burnells, in order to see it.

The homesickness of the doll's house, then, (re)establishes a violent, social hierarchy at the school-yard, and thus only on a smaller scale what is already present in a larger scale (the hierarchy of the various families in the story); this is the sickness that it 'spreads' beyond itself. It is also a locus of homesickness for the Kelveys, who long to see it, but cannot, and who as the little 'dolls' would be most likely to 'belong' to it, but as soon as they see it, they are shooed away in shame (Mansfield, 390). The effect of the ending of the story is sickly sweet. The Kelveys soon forget the shame and take pleasure in the glimpse of the house (another charity 'bit') that they managed to get:

But now she [Kezia] had forgotten the cross lady. She put out a finger and stroked her sister's quill; she smiled her rare smile.

'I seen the little lamp', she said softly.

Then both were silent once more. (Mansfield, 391)

There is something quite pathetic about the Kelveys' acceptance and pleasure of the 'bits' they get from others.

The doll's house in the backyard doubles as the house in the yard of which it stands. This doubling allows access to the house in the form which is usually unavailable: immediate access to the whole house at once. Achieving the fantasy of immediate access as fully as possible was also one of the main points in the design of Queen Mary's Dolls' House. As Lawrence Weaver writes in his essay on the architecture of the the Queen's Dolls' House:

The problem of revealing the inside of the house, without treating any of its walls as a door, was finely faced and solved. The walls form an outer case which fits closely over the inner fabric, and can be raised and lowered by a highly ingenious electrical contrivance, which is in effect a lift. When, therefore, the exterior is wafted upwards by such invisible means, the interior stands revealed, and as all apartments are lit by external windows and only the back staircase has borrowed light, every corner of the house can be studied by the visitor.<sup>109</sup>

One of the crucial features of any 'real' house is that entrances to it are guarded and regulated by doors, privacy assured by whatever means of blocking vision from the outside. The doll's house, on the other hand, offers a panopticon fantasy to all our houses, and it opens up its contents to an unrestricted vision:<sup>110</sup>

The hook at the side [of the house] was stuck fast. Pat prised it open with his penknife, and the whole house front swung back, and--there you were, gazing at one and the same moment into the drawing-room and dining-room, the kitchen and two bedrooms. That is the way for a house to open! Why don't all houses open like that? How much more exciting than peering through the slit of a door into a mean little hall with a hat-stand and two umbrellas! That is--isn't it?--what you long to know about the house when you put your hand on the knocker. Perhaps it is the way God opens houses at the dead of night when He is taking a quiet turn with an angel.... (Mansfield, 383-4)

This is the fascination with dolls' houses: the thing spread open, displaying all its contents and compartments at once. Opening the dolls' house--and the desire for a full view--is clearly presented in Mansfield's story as a form of voyeuristic violence. You put your hand on the knocker and long to know exactly what? Not only what goes on

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<sup>109</sup> Lawrence Weaver, 'The Architecture', in *The Book of the Queen's Dolls' House*, eds. A. C. Benson and Lawrence Weaver (London: Methuen, 1924), 17-29; quotation 22.

<sup>110</sup> The notion of the 'panopticon' is developed in Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977 [orig. 1975]). See especially a chapter entitled 'Panopticism', 195-228. Hereafter Foucault 1977. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

in the hall (the allowed public view inside), but all the secrets and perversions 'deeper' inside the house, already hinted at by the feel of the 'knocker', the mundane yet suggestive view through the 'slit' revealing a 'hat-stand and two umbrellas'. This laughably yet uncomfortably sexualised house is further emphasised in the image of God hovering from house to house with an angel, opening our houses with his penknife, intruding into our privacy in search of something like peepshow porn. This is also the transgression so pictorially present in the first existing doll's house murals quoted earlier in this chapter.<sup>111</sup> In Mansfield's story this access/non-access is played out between the Burnells' house and the doll's house. While we get immediate access to the doll's house, we never get so much as a glimpse inside the Burnells' house. Or, the only glimpse we get in the Burnells' house in the story is through the doll's house.

The short story is a miniature genre. Bearing in mind the doubling of the houses in the story (the Burnells' house and the doll's house), we could pay attention to one more doubling in the story: the fact that the story itself is titled 'The Doll's House'. The story presents itself as a doll's house, which is emphasised, for example, by the way in which the story opens with the arrival and opening of the doll's house, and ends with Aunt Beryl slamming the house to, and the Kelveys walking away from it. But perhaps more than that, we can see the opening of the doll's house in Mansfield's story as a fantasy of reading, as a fantasy of opening the text fully at once: 'Open it [the doll's house] quickly, someone!' (Mansfield, 383). Why don't all stories open like that? The

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<sup>111</sup> This panopticon, peep-show promise of dolls' houses is perhaps partly behind the popularity of some 'webcams', little cameras transmitting continuous live pictures over the internet from various locations. The most popular ones are located in houses with a mix of occupants. One such fairly popular British webcam site is known as *The Doll's House*, and it advertises itself as follows: 'Meet the Dolls--three amazing babes living in a London house with five cams. Watch their every move, chat with them live, send them email...and give thanks' (<<http://www.bravo.co.uk/dolls/>>).

fascination with the 'reality' of rooms, objects, dolls in the house presented in Mansfield's story is effectively counteracted by the 'effect' of the doll's house: the important thing in the story, after all, is not the construction of the house, but rather the way in which it affects the lives of those who are asked or are not asked to see it. In this way Mansfield's story puts itself forward as a story of power and social inequality: as much as it invites reading and interpretation, including violent readerly openings, it is aware of its own exclusionary power-play. Not everybody is invited to play with this doll's house, even though it would appear to offer a full view of its contents.

Foucault's notion of the panopticon refers to a model of prison, where all the cells are 'like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible' (Foucault 1977, 200). Panopticon offers for Foucault also a 'generalizable model of functioning' of 'political technology' (Foucault 1977, 205), the purpose of which is to induce 'a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power' (Foucault 1977, 201). Control of visibility is power, and in Mansfield's story that power is with the Burnell children. The Kelveys do not 'belong' in the society of other girls, nor do they 'belong' in the doll's house, and yet they are in the doll's house panopticon prison, just as their father is rumoured to be in prison (Mansfield, 388). Their doll's house clothes, name calling ('our Elsie') and their violent exclusion from from the others' society as well as from the doll's house keep them constantly at a distance and in full view of everybody else. (The 'ill-used vidual' Mr. Dolls, you remember, complained about being '[c]alled names', and in fact was in this way constantly 'backlit' into doll's house visibility by the wayward disciplinarians, the lawyers Wrayburn and Lightwood.) This dehumanising, permanent visibility is also something that the Kelveys have

'interiorized'; unquestioningly, they accept their doll's house role. In miniature, the doll's house shows a panopticism at work, or, in Foucault's words, a 'discipline' which 'creates between individuals a "private" link, which is a relation of constraints entirely different from contractual obligation' (Foucault 1977, 222). It is only at the very edges of the social order, with the youngest, the most 'thoughtless' ones, that the discipline can be seen to be breached at all, when Kezia smuggles the Kelveys to see the house. This liberty, however, is short-lived; the auntie-corrective arrives, discipline regains its balance. In fact, the discipline was not breached at all, but rather the guilt brought about by the breach *is* discipline at work. As 'our Elsie's' last piece of dialogue reveals, the Kelveys failed to see themselves in the doll's house, and walk away with the pleasure of a rare privilege. The pleasure, the 'rare smile', here, is the sign of interiorised discipline.

From Mansfield's social power-play in and around the doll's house I would like to move to another theatre, Henrik Ibsen's interiorised doll's house play. Susan Stewart ends her discussion of dolls' houses with a reference to interiority and Henrik Ibsen:

The dollhouse, as we know from the political economy as well as from Ibsen, represents a particular form of interiority, an interiority which the subject experiences as its sanctuary (fantasy) and prison (the boundaries or limits of otherness, the inaccessibility of what cannot be lived experience). (Stewart, 65)

The 'interiority' (sanctuary/prison) of a doll's house is part of the problematic in Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* (1879) and comes together, again, in the figure of the doll in a doll's house. This time, however, the doll's house also suggests more emphatically a

drama of 'psychical' interiority.<sup>112</sup>

The Norwegian title of *A Doll's House* is *Et Dukkehjem*, and translates literally as *a dollhome*. Ibsen's title does not so much suggest 'a house for dolls' (in Norwegian that would be *dukkehus*, or *dukkestue*), but a snug, small neat home, a cosy haven, a world of domestic ideals.<sup>113</sup> It was Ibsen's play which gave *dukkehjem* its pejorative, homesick sense. Before Ibsen's play, however, the English expression 'doll's house' had also already gained the meaning of cosy domesticity. Errol Durbach writes in *A Doll's House: Ibsen's Myth of Transformation* that 'Et Dukkehjem, Ibsen's original Dano-Norwegian title, slips quite easily into its English equivalent *A Doll's House* because an image of cosy middle-class married life had already been well established in the Victorian novel 15 years before Ibsen's play.'<sup>114</sup> Durbach refers specifically to Dickens' novel *Our Mutual Friend*, where we can find a character called Bella Wilfer, who, having recently been married to John Rokesmith, describes their domestic situation as follows:

'And so we live on Blackheath, in the charm--ingest of dolls' houses, de--lightfully furnished, and we have a clever little servant who is de--cidedly pretty, and we are economical and orderly, and do everything by clockwork, and we have a hundred and fifty pounds a year, and we have all we want, and more. And lastly, if you would like to know in confidence, as perhaps you may, what is my opinion of my husband, my opinion is--that I almost love him!' (Dickens, 663)

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<sup>112</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, trans. James McFarlane, in Henrik Ibsen, *Four Major Plays* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998 [orig. 1879]), 1-86. Hereafter Ibsen. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

<sup>113</sup> On the translation of the title of the play, see, for example, Egil Törnqvist, *Ibsen: A Doll's House* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 54.

<sup>114</sup> Errol Durbach, *A Doll's House: Ibsen's Myth of Transformation* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 27.



The passage provides a peculiarly suitable synopsis of the situation at the beginning of Ibsen's play. Already in *Our Mutual Friend* 'doll's house' suggests exactly the *dukkehjem* kind of ecstatic, and troubling, domesticity, punctuated as it is by 'clockwork' regularity, 'almost' love, by the elongated *de-*, which might be read as a prefix, turning 'de--lightful' furnishings into darker, lacklustre ones, and the 'de--cidedly pretty' servant into a less certainly pretty one. *Our Mutual Friend* also questions the sugary romantic happiness of the new doll's house inhabitants by introducing earlier in the novel a character referred to as a Doll's Dressmaker, a small disabled girl, who scrapes a living by making dolls' clothes, mainly dresses for expensive dolls. In this way the novel exposes the unseen labour and expense that has gone into the making of doll's house happiness. The Doll's Dressmaker's father, a feeble-minded drunkard, is the character I discussed a little earlier, Mr. Dolls, and this doll family's happiness and wealth is in stark contrast with Bella's and John's.

Consider the following exchange between Bella and her husband:

'I want to be something so much worthier than the doll in the doll's house.'

'My darling, are you not?'

'Not half, not a quarter, so much worthier as I hope you may some day find me! Try me through some reverse, John--try me through some trial--and tell them after *that*, what you think of me.' (Dickens, 663)

A doll's house seems to dollify, above all, the woman in the house. And it is precisely this sort of trial which Bella talks about that Nora undergoes in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Bella's wish to be more than a doll is curiously deflated by her wish thus to add 'worth', merit and rectitude to herself. This deflation is further emphasised by her thrusting the conduct of the trial upon John, which is an appeal to make herself more valuable for

*him*. Ibsen's play is concerned with a different kind of social and psychic phenomenon, namely the *process of individualization* of a doll character.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the snippet of Ann Sharp's life quoted earlier in the chapter is the part where King describes her life simply and laconically as 'uneventful.' Just as the doll's house signifies a nostalgia for an imagined past, so it signifies unhappiness or an unfulfilled life. With the description of Ann Sharp's life as uneventful, her tagging and labelling the doll's house characters and items of furniture gains an air of solitude and even sadness. A doll's house comes to signify surrogate life, a fantasy of activity and fullness of life where there is none. This is especially powerfully present in Ibsen's play where, as Stewart noted, a doll's house becomes a metaphor for interiority which is understood both as a fantasy (interior to one's being, nothing external supports it) and a prison (as long as fantasy remains interior, it is imprisoned). A doll's house allows the play of fantasy, but it is also a prison of that fantasy.

The first time we encounter dolls in *A Doll's House* is when Nora wants to show her husband Torvald the presents she has bought, which include a doll for her daughter: 'But come here, I want to show you all the things I've bought. ... And a doll and a doll's cot for Emmy. They are not very grand, but she'll have them broken before long anyway' (Ibsen, 3). The idea that dolls will be broken gestures towards the end of the play, when Nora's doll existence, so to speak, is finally broken. The notion of the doll in this sense represents a kind of social and mental mould in which women, in particular, are imprisoned: a hard and unyielding cast, which will be broken.

Ibsen's play popularised the metaphor of the doll as a 'trapped' 'decorative' middle-class woman, whereas *Our Mutual Friend* can be said to satirize a certain doll-

domesticity in a more general sense. An excellent example of this is at the beginning of Book the First, chapter 2:

Mr and Mrs Veneering were bran-new people in a bran-new house in a bran-new quarter of London. Everything about the Veneerings was spick and span new. All their furniture was new, all their friends were new, all their servants were new, their plate was new, their carriage was new, their harness was new, their horses were new, their pictures were new, they themselves were new, they were as newly married as was lawfully compatible with their having a bran-new baby, and if they had set up a great-grandfather, he would have come home in matting from the Pantechnicon, without a scratch upon him, French polished to the crown of his head. (Dickens, 17)

What makes the Veneerings' place a doll-domicile is that no conventional difference appears to be made between people and furniture, they are both objects (just as 'doll's house miniature' includes not only the furnishings but also dolls), still smelling 'a little too much of the workshop' (Dickens, 17). This paragraph also portrays a house where everybody and everything are, so to speak, born into display value (signified by newness), where their use is their display. At the same time, since this is the first time we meet the Veneerings in the novel, for the reader as well they are 'bran-new people in a bran-new house'.

Nora is snared in a world that forces her into the powerless, and childish, position of a doll. In a passionate speech towards the end of the play Nora describes her relation to the men in her life as follows:

NORA: But our house has never been anything but a play-room. I have been your doll wife, just as home I was Daddy's doll child. And the children in turn have been my dolls. I thought it was fun when you came and played with me, just as they thought it was fun when I went and played with them. That's been our marriage, Torvald. (Ibsen, 80-1)

Even more than who plays with what dolls, *A Doll's House* is about the price of dolls. Nora has been passed on from father to husband in something resembling a business transaction. Nora's father's and Torvald's relationship was first of all a business relationship, and Nora seems to suggest that it was through this relationship that Torvald first came into contact with Nora's family:

NORA: ... You [Torvald] remember all the nasty insinuations those wicked people put in the papers about Daddy? I honestly think they would have had him dismissed if the Ministry hadn't sent you down to investigate, and you hadn't been so kind and helpful. (Ibsen, 42)

Torvald comes to look into Nora's father's accounts, which are not entirely in order (Ibsen, 42), and in this business investigation Nora is implicitly turned into an asset which guarantees that Torvald fixes Nora's father's accounts and covers the irregularities. Nora is a valuable object of exchange, used to settle the balance for the services rendered: she is a valuable doll passed from one man to another.

It is fun to play at being a doll, but it is not fun to be a doll. Throughout the play Nora's laughter is troubling: she hums, laughs, yelps, talks to herself, is disturbingly merry. Nora is in that sense a character who dramatises the 'unconscious' and its effects in the play: repressed desires bubble under everyday behaviour, and the symptoms of these desires become visible in the exaggerated or slightly out-of-place everyday behaviour. In a more dramatic sense we could say that in the play *everyday behaviour* is a symptom. It is premised on *play*; there is always play (non-intended performance, recital of some unconscious script) in so-called normal behaviour, and the fact that *A Doll's House* is a play makes it impossible for the characters, and the audience, to

escape a sense of play. Curiously, Torvald as an insensitive, even stupidly unperceiving character functions as an analyst who brings about Nora's silent self-analysis in the course of the play.

The apparent reason for Nora's troubles in the play is the signature--her father's signature--which she has forged. She did it to secure a loan which allowed Torvald and her to go to Italy; a trip which, we are led to understand, cured Torvald of his illness. The forged signature is Nora's secret. The trip may have cured Torvald, but the cure becomes Nora's secret, her illness. This secret at once individualises Nora and divides her within herself. It individualises Nora, because the burden of the secret is hers and hers only; it constitutes the one thing where she under pressure acts secretly. At the same time the signature is a secret which Nora inherits from her father. In this unwitting repetition of her father's obscurely illegal business Nora is created as a social individual. The secret creates Nora as a social being (as opposed to a domestic doll), and it creates Nora in opposition to the society which her father and Torvald represent. However, Nora's 'realisation' of her (earlier) dollness, and the concurrent realisation of her emerging social individuality and identifiability, comes at the price of repetition and non-individuality: her secret is her father's secret; her individuality depends on this transmission of a secret from the father. The various business transactions that determine the relationships between characters in the play also come to characterise the ending of play, where the price of Nora's 'freedom' from dollhood is her children. Just as the price of Nora's father's social position (he is saved from disgrace by Torvald) comes at the cost of his child, Nora's social freedom comes at the price of her children, who are thus passed from Nora to Torvald.

Considering that the play is called *A Doll's House*, it would seem to cast all the

characters in the play as dolls. The translation of *Et Dukkehjem* in English in the singular possessive suggests perhaps too strongly that there will be a principal 'doll character' in the play. In the end, Nora can be seen to break a certain kind of the doll-mould when she leaves the doll's house. But what can be said of Torvald who stays in the house? The conservative, patronizing, insensitive Torvald is as much as anyone else in the play the product of a particular social mould, which has given him the rigidity to remain upright in the face of financial and what he perceives as moral difficulties. Furthermore, the house is not Nora's, but Torvald's: 'He [Daddy] used to call me his baby doll, and he played with me as I used to play with my dolls. Then I came to live in your house....' (Ibsen, 80). Just as the English title of the play does not specify *who* the doll of the play is (who does the genitive 'doll's' refer to?) so, too, the Norwegian *Et Dukkehjem* suggests that all characters 'at home' in the house are dolls. Torvald, too, is both a doll in his house as well as one playing with a doll, like Nora, like Nora's children; all these dolls.

In the play the doll's house is not only a metaphor of a woman trapped in traditional domesticity. Ibsen's play makes surprising use of the proscenium stage by magnifying the doll's house, and transferring a play from the play-room (and the drawing room) into theatre. The proscenium stage is essentially a magnified doll's house, with the absent front wall allowing audience visual access to the stage: the play casts the audience in the position of playing with dolls in a doll's house. In this sense, also, all the characters in the play are dolls. Appropriately, a recognition that a doll's house is also a miniature theatre seems to be present already in Ann Sharp's house, since it 'has its own miniature toy theatre with a play in progress' and it also includes 'a miniature dolls' house' (Bristol and Geddes-Brown, 39). The miniature doubling of

both a toy theatre and a doll's house suggests a certain theatrical self-reflexivity in Ann Sharp's conception of her doll's house. Furthermore, the miniature doubling of a doll's house within a dolls' house points towards a non-consummated interiority.

*A Doll's House* is about the homesickness for interiority; it is nostalgia for the interiority of home (invaded and created by various outside economic and social pressures), and for the possibility of psychic interiority. Unlike Stewart, I do not see Ibsen's play representing so much a particular interiority (trapped fantasy), but rather *being nostalgic about interiority as such* (fantasy of interiority)—an impossible interiority that never existed, but towards which Ibsen's play no doubt contributed. As mentioned earlier, dolls are often felt to be helpless, because their human form, coupled with their silence, is perceived as containing inner mental activity which just has no way of manifesting itself (a recurrent theme in children's doll-literature): hence the 'giving-dolls-their-voice' motif in doll literature. A doll is surface, and the figure of the doll displays a conventional social and sexual role, but 'inside' the doll-roles lurks the doll's 'own voice'. Ibsen's play is nostalgic about interiority, because it presents interiority as something more 'originary' than the arbitrary, manufactured doll-surface; hence the reason for Nora leaving is her 'duty to herself' (Ibsen, 82). The suggestion behind all this is that under the doll surface is something else than a doll, Nora 'herself' is not a doll. This nostalgic suggestion is undermined by the fact that Nora's leaving constitutes just another repetition of using one's doll-children as payment for 'freedom'.

Both Mansfield's and Ibsen's dolls' houses are homesick houses. Mansfield's doll's house (the house in the story, the story as a doll's house) is about the doll's house as a sickly sweet monstrosity, a vehicle of violence and discipline. Ibsen's doll's house (the play) is about the nostalgia of interiority; how interiority as such is the fantasy.

Another story that portrays a similar interiority-fantasy, and one that neatly illustrates what I have been talking about, is Peter Carey's short story 'Peeling' (1974).<sup>115</sup> Carey's interiority is more claustrophobically inescapable than Ibsen's, is devoid of the 'emancipatory' problematic of Ibsen's play. The unnamed narrator of the story lives in a house with a woman who collects dolls:

The dolls arrive in all conditions, crammed into a large cardboard suitcase which she takes out on her expeditions. Those which still have hair she plucks bald, and those with eyes lose them, and those with teeth have them removed and she paints them, slowly, white. She uses a flat plastic paint. ... She arranges the dolls in unexpected places. So that, walking up the stairs a little drunk, one might be confronted with a collection of bald white dolls huddled together in a swarm. (Carey, 34-5)

The 'purification' of dolls of all extraneous human characteristics (hair, teeth, skin tone) and painting them white is linked to a somewhat desperate attempt on the woman's part to rid the dolls of their significance in her life: 'White ... has no appeal to her, it is simply that it says nothing, being less melodramatic than black' (Carey, 35). During the course of the story it becomes apparent that the white dolls have something to do with the woman's anxieties about her job, which is to 'help do abortions' (Carey, 39). The dolls are little abortion effigies, an outside reflection of what worries the woman 'inside'. As the story's title indicates, the story is partly about 'peeling' off layers to uncover what worries the woman. He slowly undresses her (takes off layers of clothing) until she is quite naked and she is only wearing one earring:

I grasp the earring [on her ear] and pull it away. It is not, it would appear, an earring at all, but a zip or catch of some sort. As I pull, her

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<sup>115</sup> Peter Carey, 'Peeling', *The Fat Man in History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990 [orig. 1974]), 34-43. Hereafter Carey. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.



face, then her breasts, peel away. Horrified, I continue to pull, unable to stop until I have stripped her of this unexpected layer.

Standing before me is a male of some twenty odd years.  
(Carey, 42).

Suddenly the play between the literal and metaphorical 'peeling' (taking off layers of clothing, revealing what weighs on her mind) becomes more complicated when the otherwise realistic story reveals a fantastic layer. He keeps on peeling her, and inside the young male is a young woman wearing stockings. He unrolls a stocking, and the leg disappears as he unrolls. He takes her by the hand, and an arm comes off:

I am talking to her. Touching her, wishing that she should answer me. But with each touch she is dismembered, slowly, limb by limb. Until, headless, armless, legless, I carelessly lose my grip and she falls to the floor. There is a sharp noise, rather like breaking glass.

Bending down I discover among the fragments a small doll, hairless, eyeless, and white from head to toe. (Carey, 43)

Like Ibsen's play, Carey's story revolves around the nostalgic, homesick idea that dolls 'hide' interiority that can be uncovered if the economic, social, sexual, cultural layers are peeled off. In Carey's story the analysis of the woman reveals eventually, however, not a 'deeper' layer, no interiority, but something that is 'extraneous' to woman: a doll like the ones that the woman was collecting.

The doll's house is a little home at home. But once it is removed from the ideality of interiority (home within a home), it shows itself in the light of a portal of exteriority. As a miniature at home, it exteriorises home from itself, makes home foreign. This is why nostalgia and homesickness converge on the doll's house and it becomes a theatre of homesickness, the fantasy of interiority, of a home that would not be affected by our having always been indefinitely abroad, living with monsters, pigs that can fly.

Next I shall move on to look how Wittgenstein analyses dolls. Dolls are not allowed to stay home when Wittgenstein philosophises about them and with them. Instead, he constantly keeps them at an arm's length, keeps them strangers, and emphasizes that something very strange is taking place when we, for example, talk to dolls. Earlier, In Chapter Three, 'Freud's Doll Collection', I argued that dolls remain silent in Freud's psychoanalysis. In the next chapter, 'Wittgenstein's Dolls of Stone', I argue that dolls are an unfamiliar part of Wittgenstein's philosophy; that a certain doll-stupidity, an acknowledgement of non-relationality with dolls and an endorsement of doll-silence perforates his thinking in *Philosophical Investigations*.

## Chapter Five: Wittgenstein's Dolls of Stone

In this chapter I shall look at how the concept of the doll complicates arguments and overflows contexts in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953).<sup>116</sup> In *Philosophical Investigations* dolls effectively disorder concepts which are 'primarily' meaningful only in a human context. Wittgenstein uses dolls as one of the tests to reveal the limits of what he calls 'language games', and to show that even though the concepts stay the same, the contexts of their uses change and that changes of contexts bring about changes in the language games. According to Wittgenstein, we must not be fooled by the apparent sameness of the concept into seeing some mystical connection or correlation between all the ways in which the concept is used, but rather we must be aware of the necessary contextualization of concepts, and try to bear in mind the ways in which changes in the context alter the way we use that concept. Dolls are invoked, for example, as limit cases in the context of naming (Wittgenstein 1996, §27), thinking (Wittgenstein 1996, §360) and most significantly, in the context of feelings and sensations (Wittgenstein 1996, §§281-88), which is where I shall begin.

Wittgenstein first mentions pain in a discussion of private knowledge versus public knowledge, or what we might call private pain versus public pain (do others mean by 'pain' the same thing as I do? how do I know that we mean the same 'pain?'):

'But doesn't what you say come to this: that there is no pain, for example, without *pain-behaviour*'? –It comes to this: only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being can one say [*man könne nur vom lebenden Menschen, und was ihm*

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<sup>116</sup> *Philosophical Investigations* consists of two parts; the first part consists of numbered sections, the second part has more traditional 'chapters'. Where possible, I will refer to sections, denoted by the symbol §, rather than to page numbers.

*ähnlich ist (sich ähnlich benimmt) sagen*]: it has sensations; it sees; is blind; hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious. (Wittgenstein 1996, §281)<sup>117</sup>

This is one of the crucial statements in *Philosophical Investigations*, and one which starts behaving oddly in the context of Wittgenstein's encounter with dolls. One of the hypothetical philosophical interlocutors (there seem to be many) of whom Wittgenstein makes use throughout his writings moves the discussion first to fiction (fairy tales, nonsense-poems) and, as if to continue with the strand of 'childish fictions', later to dolls. In the discussion on dolls Wittgenstein seems to be of the opinion that dolls 'resemble' a human being more closely than the literary examples above, probably due to dolls' similarity to human form:

'But in a fairy tale the pot too can see and hear!' (Certainly; but it *can* also talk.)

'But the fairy tale only invents what is not the case: it does not talk *nonsense*.' --It is not as simple as that. Is it false or nonsensical to say that a pot talks? Have we got a clear picture of the circumstances in which we should say of a pot that it talked? (Even a nonsense-poem is not nonsense in the same way as the babbling of a child.) (Wittgenstein 1996, §282)

Wittgenstein complicates the discussion by adding another philosopher interlocutor, which is in itself not at all untypical in *Philosophical Investigations*. Reading the above quotation, it is difficult to see how the philosophical interlocutors communicate, or how much they communicate, and with what sentences, especially when the second sentence (beginning with 'But the fairy tale...') does not seem to bear direct relevance to the comment immediately preceding it. In between these sentences we get an aside in

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<sup>117</sup> The German text is from Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967). Further German clarifications are from this edition, followed by a page number if the reference is not to a section.

parenthesis, the focus of which is slightly odd: why is the emphasis on 'can' important? The relevance of the emphasis is not explicitly developed at all, but perhaps we can surmise that what pots and pans can do in fairy tales is unlimited; a seeing, hearing, speaking pot in a fairy tale should not without qualifications be compared to seeing, hearing, speaking human beings. These sentences are followed by a passage beginning with '--' in another voice again. Marie McGinn, in her lucid introduction to Wittgenstein, entitled *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations* (1997), comments on Wittgenstein's 'complex and distinctive' punctuation, and writes further that:

it is not always clear whether we are to take the words on the page as an assertion of Wittgenstein's, or of his interlocutor, or simply as an expression of a thought to be considered. Remarks often include questions for which Wittgenstein appears to provide no answer, or analogies whose point we cannot immediately see. Many more remarks include descriptions of concrete examples, both real and imaginary, which are quite unlike the examples in other works of philosophy, and which Wittgenstein never seems to use as the basis of a generalization.<sup>118</sup>

Considering the attention to fragmentation, levels of commentary, unexpected emphases, derailed trains of thought, etc. in *Philosophical Investigations*, it is somewhat surprising to see Wittgenstein continue the discussion of pain in pots and pans in children's fiction in the following manner:

We do indeed say of an inanimate thing that it is in pain: when playing with dolls [*Puppen*] for example. But this use of the concept of pain is a secondary one. Imagine a case in which people ascribed pain *only* to inanimate things; pitied *only* dolls! (Wittgenstein 1996, §282)

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<sup>118</sup> Marie McGinn, *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 9-10. Hereafter McGinn. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

What is perhaps most interesting here (and in some ways very unWittgensteinian) is the idea that the use of the concept of pain would be 'secondary' in connection with dolls.<sup>119</sup> Treating a particular use of words as 'secondary' is rare in *Philosophical Investigations*, so the distinction between living and non-living, animate and inanimate is unusually important. Transporting the use of a concept from the context of the animate into that of the inanimate, and vice versa, involves a transition "from quantity to quality" (Wittgenstein 1996, §284). Wittgenstein ascribes a 'secondary' use to concepts when they move from animate to inanimate context, from non-living to living context, and pass through a 'qualitative' change associated with this particular limit. However, in this transition Wittgenstein's dolls get caught up in a strange no-man's-land, in an unexpected no-doll's-context.

After the section about pain which takes its example from fiction (Wittgenstein 1996, §282) Wittgenstein goes on to write about the concept of pain in stones, and imagines himself turning into stone while in pain: 'Couldn't I imagine having frightful pains and turning to stone while they lasted?' (Wittgenstein 1996, §283), and again later: 'I turn to stone and my pain goes on' (Wittgenstein 1996, §288). What I would like to suggest is that it is dolls which bring about this philosophical fairy tale in

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<sup>119</sup> For a different reading of these passages see, for example, P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind, Volume 3 of an Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations, Part 1: Essays* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993). Hereafter Hacker. Hacker's reading of Wittgenstein crucially depends on the distinction between primary and secondary use of concepts. He puts forward the idea that the grammar of body as a whole and body parts is completely separate and he writes:

We say that someone has a good brain (i.e. is intelligent), urge someone to use his brain (i.e. to think), and wonder what is going on in his head (i.e. what he is thinking). In extra-theoretical contexts such turns of phrase are harmless. But unless taken figuratively, metonymically, or as secondary uses, as they often are not in psychology or cognitive science, they are typically nonsense. ... For the criteria justifying the literal application of psychological verbs are characteristic forms of behaviour of a person. (Hacker, 62)

Hacker has nothing to say about dolls in his book. Further page references to this edition will take place in the main body of the text.

Wittgenstein (turning into stone), which is one of the most fascinating features of *Philosophical Investigations*. Turning into stone is a laughable scenario and a conceptual limit, but at the same time, something that has to be entertained as a possibility because we play with dolls as we do (talk to them, give them names, say that they are in pain and treat them when they hurt, etc.). Perhaps one of the most problematic and unanalysed expressions in *Philosophical Investigations* is the use of 'we', 'our', 'us', etc. Sometimes these pronouns seem to imply an assumed 'philosopher' interested in reading Wittgenstein's work, sometimes they evoke ideas of some non-specified language-user. Who/where/when are 'we' supposed to be? In the case of fiction, for example, 'we' appear to be nothing less than the open possibilities ('can'), suggestions and mutations of language-contexts ('we' as language). Yet, the very specificity and idiosyncrasy of the philosopher partners suggests that no such simple generalization is possible: 'we' is also the thinking that takes place and appears in *Philosophical Investigation*, and 'we' is a sign of this idiosyncrasy of multiplicity.

What connects the discussion of pain as it moves from literary examples through dolls to stones is the notion of fiction which is where odd, unexpected things emphatically 'can' be said; where limits of contexts can be so easily crossed. What appears to bring up dolls in this context in the first place is fairy tales, nonsense poems, 'childish' fictions in general; where things happen and are said against everyday rules, where pots see, hear and talk. So in a way dolls are contiguous with fiction in Wittgenstein's use of them; and, in the context of pain, dolls would appear to be somehow a stronger form of fiction than fairy tales or nonsense poems, a form of fiction that exceeds the limits of literary fictions and instills itself more clandestinely in our everyday language behaviour. Dolls are a particularly poignant example of fiction in

everyday life (language situations); they exhibit an exemplary case where we (or at least children) actually act in a way that we only thought would be possible in the most fantastic forms of literary invention. Fiction here might be ascribed the status not simply of language 'on holiday', but rather of language 'indefinitely abroad', imaginative play for its own sake, not only separate from 'objects' in the world, but also without any relevant contribution to how the language-game of ascribing pain to inanimate objects 'actually' works.<sup>120</sup> At the same time, Wittgenstein's own use of language, with its emphasis on disruptions, jokes, hysterically funny fantasy-examples, suggests that the holiday destination is closer than the one might have thought (and it is closer than one realised precisely because one focused on thought); the waves were already lapping at our toes. Playing with dolls, ascribing pain to dolls, is a form of everyday fairy tale which involves a more actively behavioural aspect which has to be accounted for. It is almost a moment of 'madness', except that in Wittgenstein all use of language involves this kind of figurativity, changes of context, different applicability of concepts, and hence a dimension of 'madness'. Ascribing pain to dolls is common, which is why Wittgenstein mentions it and begins to develop it, and yet for him the use of the concept of pain should be only a secondary usage; this is the problem. Wittgenstein 'distills'

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<sup>120</sup> 'For philosophical problems arise when language *goes on holiday*' (Wittgenstein 1996, §38). Wittgenstein uses this expression to show how, despite philosophy's traditional obsession with 'ostensive definitions', the mere need for ostensive definitions shows how language floats free from objects, and cannot be made to match them. If language had a straightforward relationship with objects in the world, there would be no philosophical problems, or at least they could be easily solved. It is when language appears to dip its toes into the ocean of figurativity that, from philosophy's point of view, even naming turns into an 'occult process', and the word has at best a 'queer connexion' with an object:

--And you really get such a queer connexion when the philosopher tries to bring out *the* relation between name and thing by staring at an object in front of him and repeating a name or even the word 'this' innumerable times. (Wittgenstein 1996, §38)

Wittgenstein does not simply try to purge this kind of 'philosopher's stupidity' from his thinking, but is on the contrary engaged in elaborating on the 'positive' dynamics of this typical philosophical anxiety.



from the doll the quality that most appears to jar in the idea of dolls having pains. This quality is inanimacy like that of a stone. Wittgenstein then proceeds to test how the use of the concept of pain might work in the context of stones, and he puts forward his own fairy tale; that of the philosopher turning into stone. Childish literary fiction is followed by childish play fiction is followed by (childish) philosophical fiction. Wittgenstein's philosophical fairy tale is, however, a perverse fairy tale, the reverse of the animating--and perhaps more comforting--fairy tales, where pots hear and speak. Even though Wittgenstein in some sense approaches the inanimate object having sensations from a childish point of view, taking seriously the child's ascribing feelings and sensations to dolls, at the same time he gives the childish angle a twist. In his turning-into-stone scenario, it is not any more the child who ascribes sensations to dolls, but rather the doll (or its distilled quality) which begins to ascribe non-sensations to the philosopher. Wittgenstein transforms the question: it is not a problem of why we speak of dolls as if they have sensations, but why we speak of ourselves as if we have sensations. Why should having sensations make sense with human beings, and make at least different sense with dolls?

In the context of pain the doll is an example of how we sometimes treat an inanimate object (and not only 'in fiction') as if it were a living human being. In §282 of *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein then seems rather suddenly to set in place and explain away our ascribing pain to dolls while playing with them: by asserting that the use of the concept of pain in relation to dolls is only a 'secondary one'. He seems to say that children ascribe pain to dolls because they do not know better, because they have grasped insufficiently the difference between people and dolls. He also seems to suggest that children have perhaps 'inherited' the ways in which they play with dolls;

simply repeat what they have been taught to do, or copy what they have seen others do:

(When children play at trains their game is connected with their knowledge of trains. It would nevertheless be possible for the children of a tribe unacquainted with trains to learn this game from others, and to play it without knowing that it was copied from anything. One might say that the game did not make the same *sense* to them as to us.) (Wittgenstein 1996, §282)

Although Wittgenstein is here hypothesising about children of a different tribe, we could say that, in his discussion, children themselves appear in the guise of some kind of 'tribe', not fully acquainted with our game of making crucial distinctions between the living and the non-living.<sup>121</sup> Children almost belong to a different 'tribe', Wittgenstein seems to say, they learn the 'game' of living/non-living from us, but its contours are different, it does not make the same sense to them as it does to adults, because our contexts change differently. When adults recognise a change from quality to quantity, children may not; and sometimes adults, too, fail to recognise the change. Even though dolls are no longer explicitly mentioned in connection with pain after §282 of *Philosophical Investigations*, their importance can clearly be felt in the following discussion, which focuses on feelings in living beings: 'What gives us *so much as the idea* that living beings, things, can feel? [*Woher kommt uns auch nur der Gedanke: Wesen, Gegenstände, könnten etwas fühlen?*]' (Wittgenstein 1996, §283). This question is directly linked to the distinction between private/public which initiated the whole

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<sup>121</sup> The idea of children as more 'primitive' 'thinkers' is something that Wittgenstein to an extent shares with Freud, although their respective analyses of childish primitivity are different. Freud couples children and 'primitive people' and sees them as a way to explain our puzzling behaviour and ways of thinking by interpreting our behaviour either as repressed infantile thinking or as surmounted primitive thinking (for example, in 'The "Uncanny"'). Wittgenstein tends to see children more as primitive questioners, and sees their 'thinking' as, to an extent, a reproducible philosophising strategy which can scrape and erode hardened, sedimented 'civilised' philosophy. Within both Freud and Wittgenstein, there is perhaps some unanalysed trust in the primacy of the infantile, some valorisation of the hypothesized non-archived thinking.

discussion of pain.

Wittgenstein is concerned with the idea that even though I seem to have these feelings, where do I get the notion that others (and certain others in particular) should have feelings at all? How do my private feelings translate into a conviction that others share this quality of having feelings (if not exactly the same feelings)? And what makes me call these feelings that I seem to have *my* feelings? The doll-example came about to illustrate an earlier assertion that only of a living human being or beings resembling living human beings can we say that they have feelings: because of some resemblance to living human beings sometimes we also say of inanimate things that they have pains. There is an abundance of ways of 'resembling' human beings, but in Wittgenstein's discussion the one where the border between living and non-living is most flagrantly and commonly crossed is that of the doll. When Wittgenstein is fantasizing about turning into stone, in this context it serves to isolate the inanimate quality of a doll. Dolls supply Wittgenstein with an existing (everyday) language game in which we say that inanimate things have feelings; then stones supply him with a philosophically purified form of a case of an inanimate thing having feelings. For Wittgenstein, the stone represents a kind of heightened experience of what takes place when we say of a doll that it is in pain. A stone is somehow more easily imaginable as thoroughly inanimate; it is more densely inanimate than a doll. It is also a better example of inanimacy because a stone does not necessarily even resemble the human form (which might, to a degree at least, deceive us of its real state of being inanimate), but also perhaps because it is no longer troubled by a fracture between children's (tribal) language-games and 'our' adult language-games. In Wittgenstein's philosophico-conceptual distillery (or even alchemy), dolls turns to stone. Wittgenstein does not put

together any kind of argument here in support of why we are so sure that inanimate things do not have feelings, or why it does not make sense to try to talk about us as inanimate. That kind of theorising would go against the grain of Wittgenstein's thinking: he is not interested in arguments or theories. Instead, he presents a series of questions, after which he again states what he had already stated earlier; that only of what behaves like living people can we say that they have feelings:

Couldn't I imagine having frightful pains and turning to stone while they lasted? Well, how do I know, if I shut my eyes, whether I have not turned into a stone? And if that has happened, in what sense will *the stone* have the pains? In what sense will they be ascribable to the stone? And why need the pain have a bearer at all here?!

And can one say of the stone that it has a soul and *that* is what has the pain? What has a soul, or pain, to do with a stone?

Only of what behaves like a human being [*sich benimmt wie ein Mensch*] can one say that it *has* pains. (Wittgenstein 1996, §283)

Henry Staten describes in his *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (1984) how Wittgenstein 'will repeatedly present the philosopher as acting out an absurd or comical scene in his most intense moments of philosophical travail'.<sup>122</sup> The more intense the questions become, the more 'absurd' are the scenes presented to us. Here the intensity of questions is also matched by their density, both in material and conceptual terms, which is unusually high even for *Philosophical Investigations*. In a way, the problem itself, its sense, turns to stone, solidifies to an impenetrable hardness, which is exactly what is involved in a change "from quantity to quality." The change from "quantity to quality" is a phrase which in Wittgenstein appears in quotation marks. As I read it, it suggests a radical change that operates within our sense-making like a foreign body, like a quotation from

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<sup>122</sup> Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (Lincoln and Nebraska: Univ. Of Nebraska Press, 1984), 67. Hereafter Staten. Further page references to this edition will take place in the main body of the text.

some previous unknown language. 'Pain' in what resemble human beings makes sense because we share the non-meaning of pain in non-living, non-human-resembling objects.

It is not the body that is in pain (similarly, when I cut my hand it is not the hand that is in pain, but 'I'): our reactions to what is alive and not alive are quite different (Wittgenstein 1996, §284). 'A hand' is not alive, hence it does not feel pain. I am alive, so even though my hand is cut, I feel the pain, not the hand. Consequently, we have no problems in ascribing sensations to animals:

Look at the stone and imagine it having sensations.--One says to oneself: How could one so much as get the idea of ascribing a *sensation* to a *thing*? [*Schau einen Stein an und denk dir, er hat Empfindungen! --Man sagt sich: Wie konnte man auch nur auf die Idee kommen, einem Ding eine Empfindung zuzuschreiben?*] One might as well ascribe it to a number!--And now look at a wriggling fly and at once these difficulties vanish and pain seems able to get a foothold here [*angreifen*; emphasized in German], where before everything was, so to speak, too smooth [*glatt*] for it. (Wittgenstein 1996, §284)

As I suggested earlier, it is the introduction of a doll which brings this specific troubling of the border between the living and the non-living about. 'Resembling' a human (*ähnlich ist*) and 'behaving like' a human (*sich ähnlich benimmt*) include animals, but dolls are left hovering in a more difficult terrain, criss-crossed by the example of stones. In Wittgenstein 'stone' seems to refer to a stone as unshaped, natural, inanimate material, rather than, say, dolls made of stone (such as, for example, the Paleolithic Venuses). In other words, dolls made of stone would be dolls, not stone in the sense the word is used in *Philosophical Investigations*. At this point, it might be worth considering the implications had Wittgenstein focused on 'doll' instead of 'stone'

in the previous example? (--Look at a doll and imagine it going to sleep as it is put down on its back....) Suddenly, pain seems to be able to get a foothold on a doll, whereas it just slips away from a stone. The doll is a border-case where these radically heterogeneous areas living/inanimate or human/stone share a common border, where the change from quantity to quality is all but guaranteed, and cannot be settled. So Wittgenstein lets go of the doll and resorts to a laughable and bizarre image of the philosopher turning into stone while in pain. But because the doll is no longer present in this image, the connection between sensations and dolls is completely lost, and Wittgenstein can only put forward questions, which do not lead anywhere, except to the end of the questioning: he asks us to think of a stone having sensations and a wriggling fly having sensations and says 'there you have it': 'sensation' slips off from a 'stone', but finds enough friction to stay with a 'fly'.

At the same time, it should be noted that Wittgenstein is not very interested in variants or border cases (where the 'doll' could be seen to share a border with the 'human'). Rather, he is interested in the particular philosophical *attention* that this way of seeing borders and variants implies: 'Seeing a living human being as an automaton is analogous to seeing one figure as a limiting case or variant of another; the cross-pieces of a window as a swastika, for example' (Wittgenstein 1996, §419). Of course, his own example repeats the attention to analogies, but he also consistently moves analogies onto unfamiliar terrain to suggest that the border is not in the objects themselves, so to speak, but in the way of seeing/speaking about them. Thus, even though we may feel that there is a radical difference between an automaton and a human being, or a doll and a human being (although it may be very difficult to say what/where it is), by choosing the analogy of cross-pieces of a window and a swastika,

Wittgenstein suggests that there is an imposition at work. The swastika and the pieces in a window-frame are not identical, but at the same time the swastika fits over the window-pieces, with some bits left over. The break is a 'perceptionary' border, it is not located in the window-pieces or in the swastika. It is an attention-border, or attention-variant:

Here we have a case of introspection, not unlike that from which William James got the idea that the 'self' consisted mainly of 'peculiar motions in the head and between the head and throat'. And James' introspection shewed, not the meaning of the word 'self' (so far as it means something like 'person', 'human being', 'he himself', 'I myself'), nor any analysis of such a thing, but the state of a philosopher's attention when he says the word 'self' to himself and tries to analyse its meaning. (And a good deal could be learned from this.) (Wittgenstein 1996, §413)

The same attention-problematic also applies to conceptual borders; we, to literalise slightly James's idea, always speak with our heads tilted this way or that way, and the way in which concepts border and overlap each other does not depend on the work or relationship of concepts themselves, but on the particular attention they get, from the contexts of attention.

Wittgenstein's reinterpretation of our (and his) analogous attention again comes up a little later in relation to dolls, again, this time with a doll as way of seeing the human form:

--It is as if we had imagined that the essential thing about a living man was the outward form. Then we made a lump of wood in that form [*einen Holzblock von dieser Gestalt*], and were abashed to see the stupid block [*sähen mit Beschämung den toten Klotz*: also, 'the dead/nonliving stupid block'], which hadn't even any similarity to a living being. (Wittgenstein, §430).

Dolls are stupid. Wittgenstein is stunned by dolls, and, to an extent, dolls make him stupid. This is also where Wittgenstein's openness and willingness to engage with dolls is marvellously original. To try to articulate the difference between our attitudes to the living and non-living, although of crucial importance in relation to dolls, not to mention to thinking in general, risks saying something hugely insignificant and redundant: stones are not living, human beings are living, dolls resemble human beings but are not living. Why would saying this be important and relevant? What's new? What is the point, really?<sup>123</sup>

In general, Wittgenstein is not interested in having a point or argument of that kind: his philosophy is, in a positive sense, dull philosophy. By dull philosophy I mean a form of inquiry rather than philosophy that aims at an argument, explanation, or making a point. *Philosophical Investigations* is dull in the sense of being blunt thinking, and this is another case where Wittgenstein's dolls and stones are brought together. They are both connected to a certain inertia and stupidity. The 'most intense moments of philosophical travail' that Staten mentioned are also moments where the philosophical travail becomes unpenetrating, stupid, blunt, where the analysis grows tired, the progression halts. As Ronell describes stupidity, it is: '...irreducible obstination, tenacity, compactedness, the infissurable, it is at once dense and empty, cracked...' (Ronell, 2).

Dolls are dull also in a slightly different sense in which Wittgenstein appears to

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<sup>123</sup> There is a curious, but not quite appropriate silence about stupidity in philosophy, critical theory, psychoanalysis, etc. For an intriguing introduction to various cultural and theoretical modalities of stupidity, see Avital Ronell, 'The Uninterrogated Question of Stupidity', *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, No. 8.2, 1996, 1-22. Hereafter Ronell. Ronell's essay does not mention Wittgenstein, and is in general not interested in the 'performative thinking' aspect of stupidity, which is what concerns me here. Further page references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text.



treat them; dull as meaning 'wanting sensibility or keenness of perception in the bodily senses and feelings; insensible, obtuse, senseless, inanimate' (*OED*). Dolls as stone (the shapeless materiality of stone) lack life, senses and feelings, and sensibility, and in that sense they are dull. So it is perhaps no surprise to see the *OED* speculates that *doll* and *dull* may have the same etymology, or at least in Middle English *doll* occurs as a variant form of *dull*. In another sense, dull is 'not quick in intelligence or mental perception, stupid' (*OED*), and, almost by extension, a doll also means a pretty, but silly and empty person, especially a young woman (*Chambers*); a dull doll, so to speak. And to extend this dull/doll-etymologised line of inquiry, *stupid* comes from L. *stupidus*, to be stunned or benumbed, and one of the old meanings of *stupid* is: 'A characteristic of inanimate things: destitute of sensation, consciousness, thought, or feeling' (*OED*).<sup>124</sup>

Wittgenstein uses the German word *Puppe* which is translated in English as 'doll'. *Puppe* in the meaning of 'doll' is stone-like, as I have tried to argue. But *Puppe* also has the meaning of 'puppet' and in this respect is less dense, perhaps more mobile: it is perhaps the suspected mobility of 'puppet' which, Wittgenstein seems to feel, is more prone to thinking. When Wittgenstein mentions dolls in connection to thinking, or rather in connection to not-thinking, he seems to be more concerned with robots and automata (Wittgenstein 1996, §§359-61). It is *Puppe* in the meaning of 'puppet' that can be felt to shift towards the activity of movement and thinking. In *Philosophical Investigations* 'machines' are linked to movement (for example, Wittgenstein 1996, §§193-94), and we could say that there is some kind of activity of thinking that here characterises machines, puppets and spirits: something moves within thinking machines (levers,

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<sup>124</sup> It is also perhaps worth noting that the etymology of 'dull' and 'doll' include OE *dol*; 'foolish'; and Dutch *dol* and German *toll* both mean 'mad' (*Chambers*).

switches, electrical currents, etc.), something moves the puppets (if only strings are pulled), spirits come and go:

Could a machine think?--Could it be in pain?--Well, is the human body to be called such a machine? It surely comes as close as possible to being such a machine. (Wittgenstein 1996, §359)

But a machine surely cannot think!--Is that an empirical statement? No. We only say of a human being and what is like one that it thinks. We also say it of dolls [*Puppen*] and no doubt of spirits too. (Wittgenstein 1996, §360)

Just as the idea of a doll in pain is contrasted to a stone in pain, Wittgenstein puts men, machines, puppets and spirits on one side, and contrasts them to a more inanimately 'dense' object, the chair:

The chair is thinking to itself: . . . . .  
 WHERE? In one of its parts? Or outside its body; in the air around it? Or not *anywhere* at all? But then what is the difference between this chair's saying something to itself and another one's doing so, next to it? --But then how is it with man: where does *he* say things to himself? How does it come about that this question seems senseless; and that no specification of a place is necessary except just that this man is saying something to himself? Whereas the question *where* the chair talks to itself seems to demand an answer. --The reason is: we want to know *how* the chair is supposed to be like a human being; whether, for instance, the head is at the top of the back and so on. (Wittgenstein, §361)

Again, the result is a chain of questions, where the movement of thinking comes as close to stopping as possible, and this thinking chair becomes a rest for the philosopher overwhelmed by questions, at least for a while, letting this particular language game come to pause. The questions are resolved in the same way as before: it is part of the grammar of 'thinking' that living human beings do this, and nonliving things do not. But the chair is in some ways more doll-like than the stone. The chair, for example, has a

different relation to the human form than the stone, and hence leads Wittgenstein to ask questions about the *location* of thinking, whereas previously he did not ask questions about the location of pain in the stone. The general inanimacy of the stone is so dense that its shape is irrelevant. Although Wittgenstein asks a range of questions about chairs, he did not ask questions about differently shaped stones, or about comparing differently shaped stones, for example. He seems to find a lot more particularities to be considered in the chair (its parts, *this* particular chair, this and the one next to it, almost a community of chairs, etc.). We could say that the non-living, immobile chair is grammatically more structured, there is more play in its grammar, much more 'friction' and 'grip' than in the stone, and I would argue that in this sense it occupies a middle ground between the living and the non-living (a doll-ground), where the change from "quantity to quality" is again less certain.

Wittgenstein sets chairs apart from puppets, machines, computers and spirits; presumably because chairs do not resemble human beings in the same way as puppets, machines, computers and spirits. Also dolls and stones bring up different problems than puppets, machines, computers and spirits. I would argue that there is a strange grammar of mobilities at work here, almost to the extent that the important distinction between living and non-living often imputed to Wittgenstein could be replaced by a distinction between mobility and non-mobility. What would appear to be important in Wittgenstein's thinking is not whether something sufficiently resembles a human being or not: instead what is important is what kind of mobility that something allows. This can further be linked to what I earlier referred to as doll-philosophy, to Wittgenstein's particular dullness or stupidity as meaning 'not quick in intelligence or mental perception'. For Wittgenstein's philosophy, slow intelligence, slow thinking, slow not-

thinking is important. As he observes:

In philosophizing we may not *terminate* a disease of thought. It must run its natural course, and *slow* cure is all important [*das Wichtigste*; 'the most important thing']. (Wittgenstein 1980a, §641)

Perhaps in this connection I could suggest that the 'cure' is so slow that it is all but immobile, it is doll-stupid. Thought is never fully cured of speed; it remains diseased, but diseased by that which is also its chance of health. Wittgenstein's philosophy is sick thinking which proceeds by a slow vaccination of healthy non-thought into thinking. Here we can diagnose Derrida's 'logic of the pharmakon'; the cure of thinking is also its poison. Wittgenstein also puts the importance of non-thought in thinking in more performative terms:

In philosophy it is significant [*ist in der Philosophie von Bedeutung*; also, 'has meaning'] that such-and-such a sentence makes no sense [*keinen Sinn hat*]; but also that it sounds funny [*komisch klingt*] [the German '*komisch klingt*' just sounds funnier to me than the English 'sounds funny']' (Wittgenstein 1980a, §720).

Now how should we go about making 'meaning' in this sentence, which screams for analysis, calls for a painstaking, slow thinking work, yet yields little other than comical sounds, the death-knell of 'sense' and 'signification'? It is quite revealing, I think, that Wittgenstein's thinking is repeatedly drawn towards non-mobility, towards the dullness and stupidity of non-mobility. To translate this quality of his thinking into another (psychoanalytic/post-structuralist) language, we could say that Wittgenstein is a doll-philosopher on a very meticulous, repetitious, increasingly decelerating death drive.

When dolls lead Wittgenstein to a discussion of the difference between the living and non-living, we could also say that at that point his discussion becomes dull in the

sense of 'blunt': it 'lacks sharpness.' This is another way of figuring Wittgenstein's attempt not to duplicate what he sees as the traditionally philosophical inquiry which seeks to 'penetrat[e] phenomena' (Wittgenstein 1996, §90), to find a hidden 'essence' that needs to be uncovered (Wittgenstein 1996, §92). Wittgenstein is concerned with thinking about that which 'already lie[s] open to view' (Wittgenstein 1996, §126) without developing anything that would have the consistency of a method (Wittgenstein 1996, §133), nor the structure of a thesis (Wittgenstein 1996, §128): '[T]here is nothing to explain' (Wittgenstein 1996, §126), and the work of a philosopher (in this case: a philosopher like Wittgenstein) consists in 'assembling reminders for a particular purpose' (Wittgenstein 1996, §127). This kind of sustained laterality in *Philosophical Investigations* is 'blunt', and we could well describe Wittgenstein's thinking as a blunt instrument, designed to add denseness to thinking, to pressure the connections which appear to hold things together:

A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not *command a clear view* of the use of our words [*daß wir den Gebrauch unserer Wörter nicht übersehen*: also; we do not have *command* over the use of our words] --Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous representation produces just that sort of understanding which consists in 'seeing connexions' [*Zusammenhänge sehen*': also; seeing how things 'hang together']. Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate cases* [*Zwischengliedern*: those that slide in-between]. (Wittgenstein 1996, §122)

The English translation makes this section more readable as an incitement to try to command a clearer view of language, whereas the German suggests more that the yearning for clarity is at the source of misunderstanding in the first place, and that language has no vantage point of a clear view on offer. In the previous section Wittgenstein criticises the fantasy of having a clear vantage point as a fantasy for a

'second-order philosophy': for him language offers no meta-positions (Wittgenstein 1996, §121). Similarly, the English 'seeing connexions' is less 'concrete' than the German *zusammenhängen*; and by talking of the importance of 'intermediate cases', Wittgenstein emphasises how things that seem to hang together (from structured conceptualities, theses) do so in the blind ignorance of differences within themselves, and come apart as soon as the un-perspicuous language is let to slide in between things, making things denser, adding so much 'weight' to the hanging structure that it collapses (more, shortly, about collapsing, in the context of rubble buildings).<sup>125</sup> Wittgenstein's thinking is, in all its non-penetrating laterality and gliding denseness, blunt in its multiple points of connection. This is slow, 'stupid', insensible, doll philosophy.

One of the most arresting scenes in Wittgenstein's writing about dolls is the way in which he starts imagining himself turning to stone, in his own way, imagining himself as a 'thick' doll. At this moment he is barely making sense, and sounds funny and bizarre; it is a point where he lets his argument lose its grip ('stone is too smooth for it'). But it is also an important strategic moment in *Philosophical Investigations*. It is the moment of naming himself as stone, where he calls himself by name: Wittgenstein's name contains the word 'stone' (the German *Stein* means 'stone'). When Wittgenstein conjures up the scene of turning to stone, it is both more and less laughable than might at first appear, because he is responding to his name, but also responding to it in his singular manner of turning philosophy into stone and encountering the stupidity of

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<sup>125</sup> In *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol. II*, for example, *zusammenhängen* is often translated as 'hanging together' (see, Wittgenstein 1980a, §§135, 153, 283). Terry Eagleton, in 'Wittgenstein's Friends', in his *Against the Grain: Essays 1975-1985* (London: Verso, 1986), 99-130, records that '[s]earching for an epigraph to his *Philosophical Investigations*, Ludwig Wittgenstein considered using a quotation from *King Lear*: "I'll teach you differences"' (99). Differences 'themselves', of course, are unteachable.

questions opened up by dolls.<sup>126</sup> In §27 of *Philosophical Investigations* he refers to dolls in connection with naming, and there, in parenthesis, evokes the difference between naming a doll and naming a person:

And there is also a language-game of inventing a name for something, and hence of saying, 'This is ....' and then using the new name. (Thus, for example, children give names to their dolls and then talk about them and to them. Think in this connexion how singular is the use of a person's name to *call* him!) (Wittgenstein 1996, §27)

Children give names to dolls, and refer to them by their names, but cannot call them in the sense in which we might call another person, and expect a response. A name does not as much single out an individual as it opens a channel of response: a name calls you, dials your number and makes you pick up the receiver. Dolls, in Wittgenstein's schema, do not appear to answer to the call of their names. Through a discussion of dolls, naming, thinking and pain, 'stone' suddenly calls Wittgenstein, and he responds, whether he explicitly acknowledges it or not.

In *Culture and Value* (1980) Wittgenstein compares his own activity with stones to a more 'scientific' activity in terms of a different employment of stones:

One movement [*Bewegung*; in this context it refers to *Denkbewegung*: way of thinking, that of our progressive civilization] links thought with another in a series, the other keeps aiming at the same spot. (7e)

One is constructive and picks up one stone after another [*baut und nimmt Stein auf Stein in die Hand*], the other keeps hold of the same

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<sup>126</sup> For a fascinating analysis and elaboration of 'signing' with one's name 'in language', across the corpus of one's work, see Jacques Derrida, *Signéponge/Signsponge*, trans Richard Rand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984 [orig. 1976]). Hereafter Derrida 1984. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

thing [*greift immer wieder nach demselben*]. (7e)<sup>127</sup>

The image of this philosopher, obstinately clinging to one stone, refusing to let go of it and use it for building, is in stark contrast to the depiction criticised at the beginning on *Philosophical Investigations*: the book begins with an analysis of a scene of language (concept) building using stone-language, language made entirely of names of 'building-stones' (Wittgenstein 1996, §§1-21). Throughout *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein turns stones to rubble, and this 'unwork' functions as analyses of different kinds of hardnesses.

*Philosophical Investigations* consists of investigations of hardness as that which appears to be unquestionable and indisputable, hardnesses apparently 'too smooth' for thought to get a foothold. As Staten concisely puts it in his *Wittgenstein and Derrida*, 'the hardest thing' would seem to appear: '[w]herever philosophy speaks of necessity, whether essential or logical, or of the universality or the *a priori* or the *in principle*--in general, wherever the impulse to safeguard identities leads to "philosophical superlatives"' (Staten, 12).<sup>128</sup> A kind of culmination of the revealed 'obscurity' of hardness in *Philosophical Investigations* is §97, which critiques the notion of essence or logic of thought as an 'utterly simple' order of possibilities common to both world and thought, running through all experience, untainted by anything empirical. Here the Wittgenstein of *Philosophical Investigations* looks back at the Wittgenstein of *Tractatus*

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<sup>127</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. G. H. von Wright, in collaboration with Heikki Nyman, trans. Peter Winch (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), 7. Bilingual edition, with German and English on facing pages. Hereafter Wittgenstein 1980b. Further references to this edition will appear in the body of the text. The letter 'e' after the page number refers to the page in English.

<sup>128</sup> The historical ramifications of the unity of thought and world are very clearly glossed in Staten's *Wittgenstein and Derrida*, Chapter One, 'Introduction: From Form to *Differance*', pp. 1-27.



*Logico-Philosophicus* (1921), the hard-core philosopher-Wittgenstein at his most 'obscene', fantasizing about the solid basis of philosophy, trying to find the 'hardest thing':

But this order ['the *a priori* order of the world', 'the order of possibilities'], it seems, must be *utterly simple*. It is *prior* to all experience, must run through all experience; no empirical cloudiness or uncertainty can be allowed to affect it. --It must rather be of the purest crystal. But this crystal does not appear as an abstraction; but as something concrete, indeed, as the most concrete, as it were the *hardest* thing [*Härteste*] there is (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* No. 5.5563). (Wittgenstein 1996, §97)

By explicitly referring to his earlier hardness in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* Wittgenstein is also explicitly writing against his earlier work, and thus against his own hardness, or hardness that he himself had set up, supported and propagated earlier.<sup>129</sup> The name 'Wittgenstein', then, becomes inserted in the text as a form of signature, as a monumental, stony object, but it is also scattered around as part of the text, becomes a 'thing' (name, signature, text, topic, sounds, letters): 'the thing itself already remarks itself, is perceived under the form of a monumental, colossal signature, his very *colossos*, the double of the dead man in erection, a rigid cadaver, still standing, stable: the table and the statue of the remarker' (Derrida 1984, 6). The name 'Wittgenstein' sets

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<sup>129</sup> Dolls are also curiously present in the founding stories of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. For example, Garth Hallett writes in *A Companion to Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977) that the contrasting comparison between language and pictures, which is central to the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*:

goes back to Wittgenstein's reading an 'article which recounted that, in a Paris court case concerning a traffic accident, the accident was reenacted by means of dolls and tiny buses'. Illumined by this paradigm, he sketched a pair of fencing figures, and declared: 'It must be possible to demonstrate everything essential by considering this case'. (68)

More or less the same story is also recounted in Georg Henrik von Wright's 'A Biographical Sketch', in Norman Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), 3-20, esp. 8.

itself up as the colossal statue in erection, but it also rubbles that statue, scatters it across the work, remarks it with a different order of hardness. This other hardness, also exemplified by stones, crumbles and turns into rubble. It is also a way in which Wittgenstein can be seen to be writing against himself (turning himself, so to speak, to rubble; rubbishing the Wittgenstein-building, the Wittgenstein-statue work). In Wittgenstein 'the hardest thing' is closely connected with the idea of logic, and more precisely with logic as an exemplary case of unswaying rule-drivenness. Later in *Philosophical Investigations* he mentions, for example, the 'crystalline purity of logic' (Wittgenstein 1996, §107). In *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* (1970) he writes in a rebuking tone of the 'super-rigidity' and 'super-hardness' of logical necessity:

The idea of a super-hardness. 'The geometrical lever is harder than any lever can be. It can't bend.' Here you have the case of logical necessity. 'Logic is a mechanism made of an infinitely hard material. Logic cannot bend'. (Well, no more it can.)<sup>130</sup>

The prerequisite super-hardness of logic versus more ordinary ways of thinking compares to the two orders of hardness in a machine: the machine and the machine as symbolizing its own action (Wittgenstein 1996, §193). While the 'ideally rigid machine' performs certain movements (the *possibilities* of movement rather than any actual movements) smoothly and unfailingly, the machine, however well-built, suffers from metal fatigue, corrosion, play between socket and pin, etc. (Wittgenstein 1996, §194). *Philosophical Investigations* performs thinking-fatigue, thinking-corrosion and erosion

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<sup>130</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, compiled from notes taken by Yorick Smythies, Rush Rhees and James Taylor, ed. Cyril Barrett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), 16. Hereafter Wittgenstein 1970. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

of thinking-hardness rather than ideality of thinking.

Wittgenstein is stone, once erected on stone (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*), but now putting itself forward as rubble; fragmented and self-eroding. This can be seen, for example, in the way *Philosophical Investigations* is put together. It is written in sections, which seem to invite re-ordering, and which, as Wittgenstein confesses in the preface, is only one of many possibilities he had, and even as such incomplete.<sup>131</sup> The numbering of the sections is thus a critical and ironical reflection on the numbering system adopted in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, which was employed ostensibly to enforce the logically irrefutable progression of the work (1, 1.1, 1.1.1, 1.1.2, etc.). The numbered sections in *Philosophical Investigations* do not 'cohere' beyond that of a convention, and the interest of the numbering comes from the play between the 'onward track' of numbers and the fragmentation of progress of the text itself, in the way the conventionally numbered sections become emptied of 'rules' about how to continue. Thus, for example, while I have been referring to these sections by number, the number identifies a section beautifully, but contains no 'rule' or pointer as to how and where to continue next. Each reading of the text builds a new 'rule' of how the sequence reached at any point is to be continued.

*Philosophical Investigations*, as McGinn argued, also repeatedly falls back on everyday language-situations which, in a philosophical context, has the effect of being almost maddening, sometimes to the point of excluding any possibility of philosophical

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<sup>131</sup> 'After several unsuccessful attempts to weld my results together into such a whole [a book where 'thoughts' would follow one another 'in a natural order and without breaks'], I realized that I should never succeed. The best that I could write would never be more than philosophical remarks; my thoughts were soon crippled if I tried to force them on in any single direction against their natural inclination. --And this was, of course, connected with the very nature of the investigation. For this compels us to travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction' (Wittgenstein 1996, Preface, p. vii).

generality from the remarks (McGinn, 10). This is further accentuated by the the use of fictional, imaginary philosopher interlocutors, indicated by quotation marks, who sometimes seem to take the dicussion completely off the point, but nevetheless require responses to their apparently accidental choices of words. So Wittgenstein's philosophy also takes place on a fictive level or scene, where the philosopher opponent is taken up not only on account of his arguments, but also on the (apparently accidental) formulation of his/her meaning:

If someone whispers 'It'll go off now', instead of saying 'I expect the explosion any moment', still his words do not describe a feeling; although they and their tone may be a manifestation of his feeling. (Wittgenstein 1996, §582)

'But you talk as if I weren't really expecting, hoping, *now*--as I thought I was. As if what were happening *now* had no deep significance.'--What does it mean to say 'What is happening now has significance' or 'has deep significance'? What is a *deep* feeling? Could someone have a feeling of ardent love or hope for the space of one second--*no matter what* preceeded or followed this second? --What is happening now has significance--in these surroundings. The surroundings give it its importance. And the word 'hope' refers to a phenomenon of human life. (A smiling mouth *smiles* only in a human face.) (Wittgenstein 1996, §583)

Philosophising gets caught up in the fictive opponent's choice of words. Is this discussion about the immediate instance, a future event, or about 'expectation', or about 'deep feeling', or about 'hope'? Staten refers to this quality of Wittgenstein's writing as 'extreme literalness' (Staten, 73). One of the important effects of 'extreme literalness' is that it makes the reader of Wittgenstein feel stupid, not getting the point, not seeing the point of what is being said: in this sense the extreme literalness turns out to be no literalness at all. Rather, the point (if we can call it that) is equally importantly the 'force' of doll-philosophy; a decelerating heavy tiredness of philosophy.

At the end of the previous quotation Wittgenstein again resorts to a 'phenomenon of human life' as an anchor-context for thinking about certain concepts. But despite repeated analyses in *Philosophical Investigations* and elsewhere of how some concepts are 'embedded in human life' (Wittgenstein 1980a, §16), his philosophical focus is not anthropocentric. Even though the 'bustle of life' (Wittgenstein 1980a, §§624-6) is often evoked as a background, he is more concerned with supplements, or annexes to this bustle, the non-essential additions, where concepts begin to lose their friction, where they begin to glide and slide in-between, add unknowable stony weight to structured conceptualities. If we think Wittgenstein's philosophy as one such background bustle, I have here focused on one supplement, which is the supplement of stony dolls to Wittgenstein's thinking. The connection of dolls and stones, stones and the name of Wittgenstein, I have argued, could be described as Wittgenstein's dolly thinking, doll philosophy; dull, stupid, rubble supplements to thought.

Since I have already mentioned the death-drive, it is perhaps only appropriate that the next chapter, the last chapter, should be about dolls and death. I will put forward no argument about death, about dolls and death. I do not know how such a thing could even be possible. Instead, the last chapter is a form of traffic spotting on the jammed roundabout of dolls and death.

## Chapter Six: Deadly Dolls

Philippe Ariès writes in 'A Modest Contribution to the History of Games and Pastimes', which forms Chapter Four of his *Centuries of Childhood* (1960), how the early history of dolls emerges from graves:

How many times have we been shown 'toys' which were in fact miniature replicas of familiar objects placed in tombs? I am not suggesting that in the past children did not play with dolls or replicas of adult belongings. But they were not the only ones to use these replicas; what in modern times was to become their monopoly, they had to share in ancient times, at least with the dead.<sup>132</sup>

Historically and anthropologically, Ariès suggests, dolls are at best only resurrected for play. Dolls are deathly toys, toys of and for the dead. To play with dolls is to play with the dead, dug-up corpses, lifeless human figures.

'Doll's in graves', the association of dolls with death, is not something that is particularly endorsed nowadays. Thus we may find it somewhat peculiar that in the late 19th century, according to Miriam Formanek-Brunell, in *Made To Play House: Dolls and the Commercialization of American Girlhood, 1830-1930* (1993), 'by far the most common' middle class ritual that the girls were encouraged to imitate in their doll play was the funeral:

Mourning clothes were even packed in the trunks of French dolls in the 1870s and 1880s. Fathers constructed doll-sized coffins for their daughters' dolls instead of what we consider the more usual

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<sup>132</sup> Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962 [orig. 1960]), 69. Hereafter Ariès. Further page references to this edition will take place in the main body of the text.

dollhouses.<sup>133</sup>

The idea of a father lovingly building little coffins for his daughter to play may strike us as somehow unwholesome, even morbid. Where are the funeral clothes for Barbie? In *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* Wittgenstein makes a short reference to Gottfried Keller's novella *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* (1889), which recounts how two fairly small children go into the woods with a doll, play with it, until they start breaking the doll into pieces, catch a fly, place it in the doll's head, bury the disjointed head and then run away from the scene (see Wittgenstein 1970, 25).<sup>134</sup> The idea of burying a doll is odd enough, and the idea of a fly buzzing frantically in the buried head of a doll is even more evocative. Yet, Wittgenstein mentions this incident in the story as something which shows how the (psychoanalytical) idea of an unconscious as an 'underworld', a 'secret cellar' has 'charm': 'A lot of things one is ready to believe because they are uncanny' (Wittgenstein 1970, 25). Wittgenstein seems here to think of the 'uncanny' as almost a rhetorical strategy, a form of persuasion made use of particularly in (Freud's) psychoanalysis. Wittgenstein is here clearly trying to locate that side of the uncanny which Freud does not elaborate at all, but rather attempts to 'cover' with the horror and distress of the uncanny. Freud consistently highlights the gruesome and repulsive 'emotive' impact of uncanniness: the uncanny as that emotional response which makes our hair stand on end. Wittgenstein, on the other hand, places the uncanny at the centre

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<sup>133</sup> Miriam Formanek-Brunell, *Made To Play House: Dolls and the Commercialization of American Girlhood, 1830-1930* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1993), 22.

<sup>134</sup> Gottfried Keller, 'Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe', in *Sämtliche Werke und Ausgewählte Briefe*, 3 Vols., Vol. 2 (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1958) 61-128.

of Freud's psychoanalytic writing work in a different fashion: the charm of the uncanny is what makes Freud's psychoanalysis make sense at all, and it is what gives Freud's writing its peculiar persuasiveness. In Wittgenstein's view, charm (but not necessarily uncanny charm), however, is equally important in the acceptance of, say, biological and mathematical explanations, and no doubt his philosophy, too.

But coming back to the idea of a buried doll, why would we find it uncanny, that is, not only charming, but also repulsive and gruesome? Wittgenstein's comments here are particularly unhelpful: '(Why do we do this sort of thing [that is, bury a doll]? This is the sort of thing we do do [sic].)' (Wittgenstein 1970, 25). In this chapter I shall look not only at buried dolls, but also dolls in relation to death and dead bodies in more general terms. Let us begin with a doll autopsy.

At one point in Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* the narrator, a young black girl called Claudia, receives a doll as a present: 'The big, the special, the loving gift was always a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll'.<sup>135</sup> Claudia does not know what she is supposed to do with the doll, and dislikes the whole idea of mothering or taking care of a doll: to her these are meaningless tasks. Yet, the doll elicits one desire in her, 'a stranger, more frightening thing than hatred for all the Shirley Temples of the world' (Morrison, 13):

I had only one desire: to dismember it. To see of what it was made, to discover the dearness, to find the beauty, the desirability that had escaped me, but apparently only me. (Morrison, 14)

This dissection of the doll is presented as at once a child's naive autopsy of racial discrimination, a child's dismemberment of the society's unquestioned values passed

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<sup>135</sup> Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (London: Picador, 1990 [1970]), 13. Hereafter Morrison. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.



on in educational conventions (little girls should take care of dolls to learn how to be mothers, how to be beautiful, how to be women), and as a cold, unloving, analytic desire to treat the doll as a cadaver. The cold unfeeling dissection, a 'more frightening thing than hatred', is performed to find out what makes the doll lovable, what is the secret of its beautiful existence that is plain for everyone to see, yet seems to elude both observation and explanation. So the narrator proceeds to dissect:

Break off the tiny fingers, bend the flat feet, loosen the hair, twist the head around, and the thing made one sound--a sound they said was the sweet and plaintive cry 'Mama', but which sounded to me like the bleat of a dying lamb, or, more precisely, our icebox door opening on rusty hinges in July. Remove the cold and stupid eyeball, it would bleat still, 'Ahhhhh', take off the head, shake out the sawdust, crack the back against the brass bed rail, it would bleat still. The gauze back would split, and I could see the disk with six holes, the secret of the sound. A mere metal roundness. (Morrison, 14)

'White baby dolls', particularly blonde Shirley Temple dolls are again associated with sheep, with the helpless stupidity of sheep, as I pointed out in my 'Introduction', and with a stupidity of dolls in general, as discussed in the previous chapter. What lends this analytic autopsy (emphasized by the pretentious scholarly expression 'more precisely') its 'frightening' aspect is that it is performed on a 'living' doll; a doll whose cries or bleats turn into a last breath. The autopsy is performed with a complete indifference towards the doll, and it reveals the 'secret' of the doll's endearing sound, a kind of voice-box, which, however, still remains a mystery, a 'mere' metal thing. One of the reasons why Claudia does not understand the doll's 'voice', does not hear 'Mama' in the doll's bleat like everybody else, is that she has not yet learned the conventions of dolls, and by extension, the social conventions of beauty, attractiveness, racial



**Figure 29**  
 Shirley Temple doll. Between 1934 and 1938 the Ideal Novelty and Toy company sold 6 million Shirley Temple dolls. These composition dolls were advertised as 'unbreakable' (Dean, 189).

differences. The other black family members, it implies, have become deaf to these conventions and to their difference from white people. Just by understanding that call as a call with a meaning ('mama') they signal their belonging to a herd of white sheep, without realising that they are the black sheep in the flock, do not really belong in the flock quite in the same way, are not even wanted in it. They mistake that bleating for a real emotional call for origins and caring (mother), which, as Claudia finds out, is only a mechanical manufactured response to a mechanical manufactured call. Doll-play in *The Bluest Eye* (as in so many of the critiques of Barbie) is presented as a form of (almost inevitable) adaptation, learning conventions, accepting values: 'I learned much

later to worship her [Shirley Temple], just as I learned to delight in cleanliness, knowing, even as I learned, that the change was adjustment without improvement' (Morrison, 16). When dolls speak, that is, send cultural messages, we tend to hear 'Mama' and many other more or less elaborate messages, not the rusty hinges of an icebox in July. When Claudia hears rusty hinges instead of 'Mama', in Wittgensteinian terms she has also not yet learned the human resemblance to the white baby doll, 'the thing' (Morrison, 13), and in her reaction shows how the notion of 'human resemblance' is racially determined and constructed.

Claudia's autopsy of the doll reveals the manufactured, mechanical aspect of its voice, which is also associated with death (the sound of a dying lamb) and decay (rusty hinges). Perhaps we can just about hear the association of 'from dust to dust' in the 'sawdust' that she shakes out of the doll; sawdust is also a form of 'dust' that is a result of violent dissection, sawing. And the rusty hinges of the icebox also emphasise the coldness of the doll, its 'bone-cold head' (Morrison, 14), which, through a mention of bones thus becomes associated not only with anatomy, but also with cadaver-coldness. The Shirley Temple doll is a 'bone head', a stupid little thing, again. When Claudia dissects dolls, she does so because she cannot dissect little white girls. Her dolls are cadaver-proxies:

I destroyed white baby dolls.

But the dismembering of dolls was not the true horror. The truly horrifying thing was the transference of the same impulses to little white girls. The indifference with which I could have axed them was shaken only by my desire to do so. To discover what eluded me: the secret of the magic they weaved on others. What made people look at them and say, 'Awwwww', but not for me? (Morrison, 15)

First Claudia dissects dolls because she wants to find out what makes them desirable for

others. Then she wants to dissect little white girls to find what makes them desirable for others. In addition to doll-dissections, she does performs other minor experiments with white girls as she can:

If I pinched them [little white girls], their eyes—unlike the crazed glint of the baby doll’s eyes—would fold in pain, and their cry would not be the sound of an icebox door, but a fascinating cry of pain. (Morrison, 15)

First Claudia treats dolls as anatomical dolls (what in their shape, structure, 'inner being' makes them ooze desirability), and once she learns that the dolls stand for white girls, she treats them as cadaver proxies (by dissecting the 'dead figures' of white girls she hopes to learn what makes white girls ooze desirability). And yet, all her research is (childishly) wrongly focused. Without knowing it, she has been trying to dissect culturally encoded emotional investments: what makes people desire some things and some people rather than others. She (childishly) thinks that this desire comes from the qualities of the desired objects and people themselves, while the reader can recognise that the objects and people are rather identified as desirable for the purpose of teaching desire.

If in *The Bluest Eye* the model of desire for a little girl is the Shirley Temple doll, nowadays that role most clearly belongs to the Barbie doll. Just as Claudia subjects white dolls to violent examinations, so Barbie is subject to a striking cultural examination-violence. A typical case of this would be what is often referred to as 'Barbie subversions', that is, assigning the Barbie doll roles, jobs, sexualities, fantasies, desires that are not stereotypically associated with Barbie, and usually not endorsed by Barbie's manufacturer Mattel. For example, in Sarah Strohmayr's *Barbie Unbound*

(1997), the subversive Barbie scenarios include 'Overweight Outcast Adolescent Barbie', 'Teenage Pregnant Barbie', 'Welfare Queen Barbie', 'Barbie D'Arc', 'Barbie Antoinette at the French Revolution'.<sup>136</sup> In some 'subversions' Barbie ends up in socially and economically underprivileged lifestyles, in others she ends up being an object of violence. The 'goal' of 'Barbie D'Arc' is to '[l]earn about feminist will in the Dark Ages and about the effects of polyvinyl chloride incineration at the same time' (Strohmeyer, 70). 'Groovin' Gravity Galileo Barbie' is used '[t]o study Galileo's law of falling bodies and watch Barbie's chest blow apart after a five-story drop to concrete' (Strohmeyer, 74). 'Barbie Antoinette at the French Revolution' is decapitated, whereas 'It Rhymes with Bitch: Barbie at Salem' shows Barbie representing something magically unattainable and violently enviable:

'Aah, a woman who escapes menstruation, childbirth, wrinkles, hot flashes [sic], cellulite, drooping breasts and osteoporosis,' the old hags mused. 'Let's burn her to a crisp.'

Try as they might, though, Goody Barbie would not die. They swung her from a tree, crushed her with stones, threw her to the bottom of a lake and even set her on fire. Still she smiled. (Strohmeyer, 80)

These subversive parodies are ironically heightened versions of Claudia's doll examinations in *The Bluest Eye*. What is problematic about these subversive figurations is that the role and the object of violence is all but unambiguous. Is the violence directed towards a hegemonic cultural representation of a woman, or is at least part of the violence directed (even if unintentionally) towards women who do not share the cultural, social and economic welfare of the successful doll? The problem is the same

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<sup>136</sup> Sarah Strohmeyer, *Barbie Unbound: A Parody of the Barbie Obsession*, photos by Geoff Hansen (Norwich, VT: New Victoria Publishers, 1997). Hereafter Strohmeyer. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text.

as in criticism directed, for example, towards Bellmer's dolls, and was also already present in the Erica Rand's 'subversive' use of Barbie as a sex toy a discussed earlier (in Chapter Two).

Rand recounts in *Barbie's Queer Accessories*--a book focused on Barbie subversions, especially on subversions of Barbie's perceived hetero-normativity--one particularly instructive example. In 1993 an American sensationalist TV program 'Hard Copy' (which Rand calls a 'lurid melodrama') reported that a small town local police officer in Ohio had first found 12 Barbie dolls slashed in the breast and the crotch, and later more 'horribly mutilated' Barbies were reported in from other stores so that altogether 24 slashed Barbies were found (Rand, 167-70). The police were worried that whoever was slashing the Barbies "'could move on to real life Barbies'" (Rand, 167). What Rand finds strange about this incident is that 'if they [the police] were prone to associating plastic women with human ones, why did it take so many dolls and the concept of *repeat offender* to make the case worthy of investigation?' (Rand, 168). However, in Rand's account it is not the doll that is the victim of the slashing at all, it is women, and perhaps particularly 'real life Barbies' (already a sufficiently bizarre expression).<sup>137</sup> So at the same time as real women may be the intended victims, Rand speculates, what is also perhaps a target--and deservedly so--is the ideology that Barbie represents (Rand, 170). And this is where Rand acknowledges that she is uncomfortable with her argument:

I'd never want to censor or prosecute Barbie slashings, but they sometimes disturb me. Even when slashers clearly signal that their

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<sup>137</sup> If some women are described as 'real life Barbies', various spheres designated to Barbie come to mind. Barbie's domain could equally well be said to include 'fake life' and 'surrogate life' perhaps even 'real death'.

intended target is the ideology that Barbie represents, the result is still a representation of violence against women that circulates in a culture in which too many people consider violence against women acceptable partly because of how frequently it circulates in representation. ... I find this a lot with Barbie subversions, that they perpetuate as much as subvert crummy ideologies. Put more simply, they do something that really bugs me. (Rand, 170-1).

What then, according to Rand, is perpetuated in all too many Barbie subversions is, paradoxically, violence against women. One does not simply mutilate dolls, nor the ideologies or values the doll perhaps represents, one also in some sense mutilates real people. In Rand's example Barbie mediates the blows to women. The doll becomes/is a medium, and it mediates, above all, forms of violence and death. The voodoo effigy logic of the argument is both surprisingly bland and culturally powerful: what you do to your representation you do to yourself. This effigy effect, as we might call it, is at its most powerfully uncanny in connection with death.

The word 'effigy' (from Latin *ex* and *figere*, 'to form') means 'a likeness or figure of a person' (*Chambers*). When 'doll' means a figure or likeness of a human being, 'effigy' could be said to be a doll personified, or perhaps more precisely, a doll in the likeness of a person as a corpse, or as an already wished for corpse. *Chambers* also offers the expressions 'burn in effigy' and 'hang in effigy' and adds that they are expressions of hatred or at least strong disapproval (*Chambers*). This is, of course, also the way in which Claudia in Morrison's novel treated the dolls: she was dissecting dolls in the likeness of white girls (not just any human figures) when she could not dismember white girls themselves; she was dismembering them in effigy. But effigies are not always expressions of hatred or disapproval.

At least from the mid-fifteenth century onwards, European royalty were often

represented at death by wax effigies, and arguably the first public museum of wax figures began at Westminster Abbey in the 1440's, where a collection of wax funeral effigies of English Monarchs was known as "The Play of the Dead Folks" (Schwartz, 101-2).<sup>138</sup> Wax museum exhibitions have been popular ever since. Undoubtedly, the most popular and well-known today is Madame Tussaud's in London. Madame Tussaud, born Marie Grosholtz, married Philippe Curtius, who became a court favourite in France because of his wax modelling skill, and he also tutored Marie in his line of work. Marie modelled some of the great public figures of her time; Voltaire and Benjamin Franklin, for example. However, during the French Revolution, she was forced to model the death masks of many of her earlier employers from their severed heads at the guillotine, including Louis XVI's and Marie Antoinette's. Some of the death masks made by Marie Curtius are still central attractions in Madame Tussaud's, as well as Madame Tussaud's 'study' of Jean Paul Marat, stabbed in his bath.<sup>139</sup> These 'death-models' are by far the 'liveliest' exhibits in the museum, whereas the wax figures of royalty and other celebrities tend to be fairly unconvincing and disappointing approximations. This modern 'Play of the Dead Folks' is where the public goes to greet in effigy the people they otherwise know from the media.

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<sup>138</sup> Wax figures of the dead were collected elsewhere as well. In the seventeenth century, six hundred wax figures, some in heavy armour, some on wax-horseback, crashed down in Church of the Santissima Annunziata in Italy, where the figures had hung from the ceiling by chords which had become rotten (Schwartz, 101). See also Mary Hillier's *The History of Wax Dolls* (London: Souvenir Press, 1985), where she writes that:

The art of making fine life-sized wax portraits of notable characters seems to have originated in 15th-century Italy. Real human hair was used for the wigs, beautiful glass eyes were added and the features tinted and tooled to imitate the subject, whose actual clothing, jewellery and accoutrements were used to promote realism. (19)

<sup>139</sup> *Madame Tussaud's: The First Two Hundred Years* (London: Madame Tussaud's, 1996). Hereafter *Tussaud's*. Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. See also Schwartz, 102-3.



The link between dolls and death is equally close with anatomical dolls, which played an important part in the study of anatomy in general. The distinction between anatomical dolls and 'artistic' or 'spectacular' dolls such as Madame Tussaud's is quite fuzzy. For example, Philippe Curtius who taught Madame Tussaud, was a physicist, and we can perhaps speculate that at least part of his fascination with wax modelling had to do with a medical interest in human anatomy (Tussaud's, 3). Anatomical dolls really came into prominence with the technical advancement of wax modelling. One of the largest and most detailed early collections of wax anatomical models was The Royal and Imperial Museum of Physics and Natural History, La Specola, in Florence, set up between 1776-80.<sup>140</sup> These models were cast straight from the cadavers, and initially the idea was to give medical students an easy, safe access to human anatomy without the danger of contamination presented by the putrefied dead bodies (Bronfen 1992, 99). Cadavers were also hard to come by and, for example, in Britain wax models remained a primary anatomical teaching tool well into the latter part of the 19th century, when the law was eventually changed to make dead bodies more available for dissection. The link between medical anatomy and play-dolls is still very much 'alive': dummies are still used to teach human anatomy, and people still regularly practise on dolls how to give

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<sup>140</sup> See Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1992). Hereafter Bronfen. See esp. chapter 6, 'Bodies on Display' 95-109. Bronfen's book also contains some pictures of the dissembling dolls or 'the wax-venuses' in La Specola (Bronfen, 100-101). Further page references to this edition will appear in the main body of the text. Bronfen's discussion of anatomical wax figures in La Specola is heavily indebted to Sander L. Gilman's *Sexuality: An Illustrated History. Representing the Sexual in Medicine and Culture from the Middle Ages to the Age of Aids* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1989). Both Bronfen and Gilman pay special attention to sexual and scopophilic dimensions of the anatomical wax dolls. Schwartz also writes that the '[j]ewel among wax figures was the pregnant woman, her abdomen peeled open, the fetus revealed' and suggests that the anatomical wax figures were both 'sexual objects and biological events': 'her disassembly was no dissembling but foreplay to ensoulment; her reassembly celebrated the act of reanimation' (Schwartz, 106-7). The little foetus-doll might also be seen as being 'buried' in the abdomen of the bigger doll, and the opening of the abdomen as an act of evocation, calling back the dead. In the same act of peeling the abdomen open the little foetus is born for the first time, but born for the first time after being buried.

## First Aid.

Perhaps the most spectacular and famous modern anatomical 'dying' dolls are the crash test dummies.<sup>141</sup> They are not anatomical models in the sense that they would tell us something about the placement of internal organs in the body, but they are rigged to give us information about the effects of external forces on various organs and parts of the body. We have seen the television car-safety commercials, where, often in slow motion, the family of dummies perform their deadly ballet inside the crashing car. The driver dummy lurches against the safety-belt, hitting his face in the expanding air-bag. The front-seat passenger dummy, who has a safety-belt but not an air-bag, hits her forehead in the shattering windshield and breaks her neck. The unbuckled baby dummy in the back seat is flung forward, hits the ceiling and the back rest of the seat in front of it on its way to make a huge dent in the windshield. The crash test dummy was invented to replace both the live human test subjects and the dead human test subjects. Live subjects are limited to what the crash test literature calls a "subjective non-injury (reversible injury) impact level" (Baldwin). This means that live humans subjects are only usable in, and can report back, injuries that are reversible (do not lead to death, and are somewhat strangely called 'non-injuries'). Because of this, tests with live subjects involve an element of subjectivity (subjectively different levels of injury). What the safety researches sometimes want is objective reporting back from non-reversible (deadly) injuries. The corpse is not good for testing these because, in a sense, it has already suffered a 'non-reversible injury', and thus does not really perform well in what

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<sup>141</sup> On crash test dummies, see, for example, Sandy Baldwin's 'It's Smart to be a Dummy: A Note on the Crash Test Dummy', *Ctheory*, 12 September 1996, <[http://www.ctheory.com/e29-its\\_smart.html](http://www.ctheory.com/e29-its_smart.html)>. Accessed 10 December 1999. Hereafter Baldwin. Further references to this essay will appear in the main body of the text.

is called a "dynamic performance" (Baldwin). Neither does it report back well. The crash test dummy can 'die' better than the corpse. It is the best test subject, because it can sustain deadly injuries, and, as a wired-up zombie, it can report back the effects of the injuries. Of course, dummies are not only used in car safety testing. They are our dying stunt doubles, doubling us whenever there is dying to be done: they die in parachute accidents, in nuclear tests, in bullet impact tests, etc.

There may not be a crash test dummy hospital, but when children's dolls get broken they are not repaired but rather cured in a 'doll hospital'. By invoking the idea of a broken doll as physically ill, we can situate the doll hospital half-way towards the doll cemetery. Although, it must be said, the doll cemetery has not really caught on in the same way as the doll hospital has.

In 1836 seventeen little dolls were found buried in little coffins on a hill called Arthur's Seat near the centre of Edinburgh. *The Scotsman* reported on Saturday, July 16 1836 the accidental unearthing of this 'singular fantasy of the human mind', a 'freak' which 'seems rather above insanity, and yet much beneath rationality'.<sup>142</sup> The remaining eight dolls in their coffins were recently (Autumn 1999) on display in The National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. The coffins are about 10 centimetres long, well made of wood with tin decorations, which are especially elaborate on the lids of the coffins. Many of the surviving coffins and dolls are somewhat decomposed: the clothes, especially, are in many cases badly disintegrated. A couple of the dolls, however, are in surprisingly good condition, with their detailed arms and legs and carefully tailored clothes undamaged. Later analysis of the dolls has shown that they were buried in the

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<sup>142</sup> *The Scotsman: or, Edinburgh Political and Literary Journal*, Vol. XX, No. 1724, Saturday, July 16, 1836. Hereafter *The Scotsman*. Further references to this journal will appear in the main body of the text, followed by the number of the issue.

1830s.<sup>143</sup> At the time of their discovery the coffined dolls caused much speculation. The first, perhaps somewhat scandal-seeking explanation by *The Scotsman* is that the coffins are part of a 'satanic spell-manufactory' of 'the weird sisters hovering about Mushat's Cairn or the Windy Gowl' casting 'the spells of death by entombing the likenesses of those they wish to destroy' (*The Scotsman*, Vol. XX, No. 1724). In August the same year *The Scotsman* further speculates that the coffins may constitute a miniature effigy burial of friends who have died in a distant land, or, in the same vein, that they may constitute a "'Christian burial in effigy'" of some sailors who have drowned (*The Scotsman*, Vol. XX, No. 1737). Information in the National Museum of Scotland further suggests that the dolls may have formed a substitute burial of the 17 victims which the wayward 'resurrectionists' Burke and Hare killed in Edinburgh between 1827-28 and sold for dissection in the Edinburgh College anatomy classes.<sup>144</sup> At the time there was a widespread belief that dissected bodies could not rise back to life at the Last Judgement, and the information concerning the dolls in the National Museum of Scotland seems to prefer the speculation that the burial of the dolls could be a belated attempt to give the murdered, dissected people at least a symbolic burial, and thus perhaps at least an outside chance at the Last Judgement. However, according to the *The Scotsman*, the coffins were found 'forming two tiers of eight each and one on a third just begun',

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<sup>143</sup> Information from the display of the Arthur's Seat Coffins (as the buried dolls are referred to) in The National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, August 1999.

<sup>144</sup> In the early 19th century Edinburgh medical schools were suffering from a shortage of bodies that could be dissected. An illegal trade of digging up recently buried bodies and selling them to medical schools began to flourish in Edinburgh. These ghoulish entrepreneurs were called 'resurrectionists'. William Burke and William Hare are famous for diversifying their business to selling bodies which they had murdered. Burke was caught and tried in 1828, and executed the following year, largely on the evidence given by Hare. After the execution, Burke's body was publicly dissected. Hare is said to have died in London in 1859, blind and in poverty. Dr. Robert Knox, the man who bought most of the bodies from Burke and Hare, was never prosecuted.

which means that

the depositions [of coffins] must have been made singly, and at considerable intervals—facts indicated by the rotten and decayed state of the first tier of coffins, and their wooden mummies, the wrapping clothes being in some instances entirely mouldered away, while others show various degrees of decomposition, and the coffin last placed, with its shrouded tenant, are as clean and fresh as if only a few days has elapsed since their entombment. (*The Scotsman*, Vol. XX, No. 1724)<sup>145</sup>

It seems to me unlikely that the miniature sepulchre would have been established for the Burke and Hare victims in such a piecemeal fashion, especially since the evidence seemed to suggest that the burial ground was still in active use. However, what is interesting in this case is the uncertainty and speculation that the buried dolls caused; how the coffined dolls hover between 'rationality' and 'insanity', in much the same ways as the anthropological, incidental and superstitious explanations that they invited. What all the explanations share is the desire to link dolls to burial customs, in which case they would be an example of superstition, but nevertheless a harmless, even a charming, caring superstition (taking care of the spiritual well-being of those who did not receive normal burial rites). If that link cannot be established, however, the lilliputian coffins become immediately (or even, before anything else) suspected of involving 'harmful' magic.

There is something marvellously superfluous about burying dolls, an element of overkill. One does not bury a doll any more than one buries a dear old Hoover. One of the reasons for putting dolls in people's graves is that dolls 'survive' death and burial,

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<sup>145</sup> The word 'mummy' derives from the Persian word *mūm* meaning 'wax' (*Chambers*), and takes us back into the area of wax anatomical models, this time not only moulded straight from the corpse, but rather the corpse itself made into wax, preserved in wax.

remain in a crucial sense untouched by death: they never had 'life' that could be touched by it. Dolls are already figures of death, but not figures of death which would have had a past life. They are not transitional figures, just recently dead, but in a sense always already long dead without ever having been alive. To bury a doll falls in between 'rationality' and 'insanity', because burial in some sense gives it that which it never had, a past life, which through that act of burial now comes to haunt the doll. To bury dolls is always to rebury them, and this enhances their ghostly power.

*The Scotsman* talks of the buried dolls as 'tenants' in their graves, thus adding to the suggestion that the dolls will rise from the grave, however unwanted this might be. In the context of dolls and dying I cannot *not* say something about the single most pervasive Western 'dying doll', the crucifix. Here we could compare, for example, two very different Christian doll patterns: the Jesus doll on the cross and the Nativity scene. With these two scenes we have an interesting contrast between the scene of birth and the scene of death. Because the doll is a figure of death, the Nativity scene is made an active scene, it is made alive by the use of many dolls. The Nativity scene does not simply consist of the new-born baby Jesus, because that in itself would not quite sufficiently succeed in representing 'birth'. Instead, the scene is animated as the event of birth, as a 'recognition' of birth: baby Jesus, accompanied by Mary and Joseph, surrounded by domesticated animals, is visited by the wise men. Animating a tableau with dolls requires a narrative with characters, and above all a delicate recognisable interplay between the various dolls in the scene. In contrast to the activity and proliferation of dolls in the Nativity scene, the death of Jesus is represented by the solitary Jesus doll dead or dying on the cross. The symbol could just as easily contain the two thieves, for example, or a couple of Roman soldiers, but they are not only

unnecessary, they are even unwanted. In addition to emphasising the essential 'loneliness' of dying, the single crucifix also reveals how easily the (solitary) doll represents death. It is perhaps more than a coincidence that it is this moment that has become the icon and idol of Christianity.<sup>146</sup> The most powerful icon is the icon representing death. We could, for example, easily imagine that the most important monumentalised moment of Christianity would be the resurrection of Jesus (and of course, this after-life of the Jesus doll is what makes the crucifix such a powerfully uncanny figure). However, it would be more difficult to effectively 'dollify' (represent) resurrection, because dolls represent death, not the compassionate rising from the dead. If the doll comes 'back' to life, it is at best uncanny life. Imagine a 'dollification' of Jesus rising from the dead. Instead of building Nativity scenes or hanging crucifixes on the walls, we would, for example, celebrate that moment by a 'Resurrection scene'. We could wrap the Jesus doll in shrouds and bury him in a little plastic cave on the mantelpiece for a couple of days at Easter. On the third day, perhaps involving some ceremony, the doll would be removed from the cave. This scene, however, would involve two problems. First, the resurrected Jesus doll would have to be animated by a group of other dolls 'witnessing' the resurrection. A solitary 'resurrected' Jesus doll would not work, would not function as a representation of a back-from-the-grave Jesus (and would not have the condensed power of the crucifix). Without the other animating dolls Jesus would remain, as it were, too dead. Secondly, the scene would involve burying a doll, the effect of which would not be simply benevolently divine but also unstopably ghostly, haunting, magical, scary, even evil, as the Coffined Arthur's Seat

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<sup>146</sup> As I have mentioned earlier, there is some speculation that the word 'doll' is etymologically related to the word 'idol', from Greek *eidos*, 'form', and *eikōn*, 'image'.

dolls suggested. The burial of a doll gives it a life that it does not have, because it was never alive, it should never have been buried in the first place, *and* it was always already buried and dead.

As it is, the crucifix dollifies the moment just before death, the moment of death or the moment just after death. The Jesus-doll is a metaphysical crash test dummy, who comes back to report: yes, death is a hell of a crash, but it can be survived, if only we implement the Christian safety-measures. To the expressions 'burning in effigy' and 'hanging in effigy' (and 'crucifying in effigy') we could add at least one more modern expression: 'crash in effigy'. The most important lesson learned from the crash test dummies is that cars are nowadays designed and built to crash: the dummies rehearse our crashes. Car safety research involving dummies also involves killing the passengers in effigy. This means that cars are built with an eye on the necessary possibility of a crash. That which was perhaps supposed to be only an accident of driving, a crash, has become a part of the structure and design of cars, thus troubling the limits between accident and design. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the crime of joy-riding, which consists of borrowing somebody else's vehicle for the purpose of driving around and, often, ending the joy, or bringing it to a climax, with a crash. It may not be the intention of the car-manufacturers, but their products are designed not only for commuting, weekend trips to the country and Sunday cruising, but just as much for the climax of joy-riding. What perhaps gives the joy-rider crashing the car his or her *jouissance* is that the crash should end with death, but it does not. A joy-ride is a death-drive, where the drive is a detour towards a crash, which, nevertheless, always takes one by surprise.



## Conclusion

... and time to crash. Very soon now. The speed I have gathered is unstoppable. The narrator in Peter Carey's wonderful story 'Peeling' tries his best to prevent the woman from telling him her story of abortion babies: 'I do not, definitely not, wish to know, at this stage, why she should have this interest in abortion babies' (Carey, 38). The narrator wants to postpone the telling, which he feels is happening much too fast. By keeping on telling her story, despite the narrator's diversionary tactics, the woman brings things to a crisis: 'Only much later, much later, should be discussed her fears about the souls of aborted babies. But it is all coming too fast, all becoming too much' (Carey, 39). By bringing things into crisis, the woman starts a 'rush' (Carey, 40) of peeling, which leads into a crash when she 'falls to the floor' (Carey, 43). The unstoppable rush of peeling ignores the 'outside layers' it peels in the urgency to 'come to the centre of things' (Carey, 38). This is what the narrator wanted to avoid, but of course cannot, for all the stories crash at the end, the topic must be dropped and break in its way, however trivial the pieces. The narrator in Carey's story drops the woman, and finds 'a small doll, hairless, eyeless, and white from head to toe' (Carey, 43). He finds what was always already around him and plain to see in the (doll's) house where he lives, and where, at any moment, 'one might be confronted with a collection of dolls' (Carey, 35). In his rush to peel the woman's story he does not miss 'the centre of things', on the contrary, he finds exactly that. It was just not hidden at all, but all around him. What he emphatically, and necessarily, misses is the *slow* peeling: 'May it last forever' (Carey, 36). It does not. I wanted to save the conclusion until much later, but already here it comes, this is where I drop this thing, and see what I can find among the

pieces.

In this work I have dressed the dolls in various garbs, some more fashionable, some more home-spun. Barbie, for example, is a fashionable academic topic and changes in her wardrobe and vocational interests are keenly followed and analysed. Surprisingly to me, sex dolls and psychoanalytic dolls, for example, are in a neglected critical underground. During these critical dolls' dress changes I have tried to pay attention to the effect the dresses have on the catwalks, the reception of the dresses. Yet, perhaps a more pervading concern throughout has been the interest in the practice of dressing dolls itself.

When dolls are dressed up they are representations, and partly I have followed the effects of these representations (dolls as representations of women, dolls as representations of the dead, dolls as representations of racial difference, to mention only a few). Dolls as representations are always representations of some (more or less chosen) aspect of human resemblance. When I have focused on the practice of representation, my interest has been in the ignored aspects of dolls, in those aspect of dolls which make them qualify as representations of the human in the first place. This *necessary shared contextual exclusion* of certain aspects of dolls is nevertheless just as an important part of a doll's makeup. Here I have written about silence and stupidity (in psychoanalysis and philosophy respectively), both hugely important aspects of dolls which the general bustle and noisiness of critical discourse so easily drowns. This work is part of that critical noise, of course, but I have also tried to proceed slowly and bluntly enough in the advancement of ideas to allow for the silence and stupidity of dolls to be registered. One crucial strategic choice in this respect was to write about dolls 'in general', so that the figurative latitude of the notion of 'doll' can be allowed to spread

in language and topics without the perhaps more traditionally appreciated academic constraints of, say, period, type, or medium, or a combination of these, in which the doll is analysed. Of course, 'silence' and 'stupidity' are also only contextual, and that is why I have located them in particular discussions and amidst a lot of very relevant and (I hope) articulate noise.

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