Tattooed Fairies and Seductive Ankles

Abstract

The exhibition catalogue Guys and Dolls Art, Science, Fashion and Relationships 2005 Brighton Museum and Art Gallery [UK] suggested that dolls should be considered as an adjunct medium to fashion along with better-recognised examples of film and popular music. Dolls with fashionable personae provide both a documentary mirror of fashion and a forum for the development of popular commentaries and discourse around fashion. Dolls offer information that can be read in direct terms of dress studies as empirical investigations of surviving items and in terms of the many conceptual and discursive visions of the body that are now prevalent in cultural discussions of fashion.

This paper will look at some of the messages that can be read about fashion and popular cultural perceptions of beauty through dolls' bodies. The paper will present a general visual survey on the impact of fashionable style of the material design of the doll's body format over the past 200 years. Fashion in clothing and beauty image down the generations dictates the industrial design decisions aimed at developing doll products, thus the doll provides insight into the presence of fashion in design history beyond the history of garments, as well as the influence of fashion per se on representing the body. Attention will be paid to the last forty years and Mattel's output in particular, as well as some of the strange and unheimlich visions of the body offered by dolls and contemporary culture.

This paper seeks to use empirical scholarship and analysis of material cultural objects to indicate how dolls' bodies may offer evidence and narratives about fashion and images of the body. It is exploratory rather than finite. There is a danger in writing about the vast – but from an academic perspective relatively unanalysed - material culture of dolls, yet making seemingly authoritative conclusions on limited evidence. Whilst Miriam Formanek-Brunell's 1993 text *Made to Play House*, was for a decade the only academic text on dolls, apart from the still growing oeuvre of scholarship around Mattel's Barbie, the key assertions of her arguments can be problematicised and shifted by primary sources other than those that she cites. (Peers 2004: 34-36) The compromised nature of her arguments, however, have not registered in the professional arena of women's studies and cultural and social histories, where the book may be regarded as a viable source due to the unfamiliarity of the material history of dolls to an academic audience.

I undertake this exploration in light of the substantial explosion in fashion-related studies over the last two decades, particularly the scholarly legitimacy of invoking fashion as a vehicle for conveying ideas, as part of the so-called "new art histories", rather than as an analysis of technical and/or industrial processes. We are familiar with such linkages as fashion and art, (Ribeiro 1995, 1999, Peers: 2005b) fashion and film, (Bruzzi 1997) fashion and cities (Breward and Gilbert 2006) and even fashion and the body: thus too fashion and the doll. (Peers 2004, Peers 2005a) The linkages of the doll to fashion offer a productive arena of analysis. This paper traces an empirical overview of different readings of the doll's body in light of the recent upswing of studies in fashion. I have previously published a monograph on cross-overs between dolls, fashion design, production and retailing, as well as the images of women and femininity produced and disseminated by both dolls and fashion in a popular marketplace (Peers 2004) and an essay on the cultural relationships of dolls and fashion, (Peers 2005a) part of a catalogue to an exhibition by the Brighton (UK) Museum and Art Galleries exploring the role of the doll in twentieth century visual culture, from the perspective of fashion, "high" art and science – the latter including legal practice, psychiatry and medicine. These larger publications stand behind and inform the following series of outlines of interrelated themes presented in the course of this paper. These interrelated themes are the placement of dolls in recent academic scholarship, the doll's place within the compass of fashion research, particularly as a recorder and documenter of information about fashion, a historical overview of the formats of the doll's physical body, the *unheimlich* bodies of Mattel dolls and finally the dolls' body in relation to conceptual and creative discussions of the body.

Before the main content of the paper, I will note some issues that problematicise the doll's placement within a scholarly framework, as I believe that the *Made to Play House* model of a clearly scholarly format and seeming tone of authority, but actually somewhat arbitrary reading of a narrow evidential range of sources is not an effective means of consolidating dolls' position in the academy. Rather I seek to mediate between the still slightly "outsider" knowledge around dolls and the expected tropes of scholarly usage and ritual. The cultural history of the doll as artefact or industrial design object, rather than as accessory to childhood and concomitant interest from fields of education and psychology, is a broad subject and the specific material evidence is little known beyond hobbyist and collector circles. The complete backstory to make up for lacks in professional knowledges can not be supplied in the compass of a single paper. Mediating examples into the narrative as evidence for arguments becomes complex, as unlike fine artworks that can be located via a specific gallery, catalogue or monographs, there is a multiplicity of examples, but generally

they are scattered in diverse locations, mostly private rather than public holdings. Moreover relevant examples may appear briefly in an auction viewing or on a dealer's internet shop and then disappear into inaccessibility. In Australia relatively few public museums and art galleries, professionally funded, managed and curated, have a representative and authoritative collection of dolls that could form a basis of study. Moreover when Australian public collections hold dolls, these items have generally not been discussed in detail via institutional publications.[1] Generalising from observation of actual items in a manner that matches scholarly protocol is difficult, as this activity covers many informal sightings in a number of countries in private hands, at collectors clubs, at auctions as well as more formal research in museum storerooms.

The doll's place within the museum and gallery world is not so assured in the early twenty-first century as it was in the mid twentieth century. Two authoritative museums of dolls with international reputations have closed in the last few years, the Mary Merritt Museum in Douglasville Philadelphia (Friedman 2006) and the Legoland Museum in Bielund Denmark (Anon 2006) Concurrently the Victoria and Albert Museum's "Childhood" division in Bethnal Green, London, from 1974 onwards, when the dolls were moved from the costume collection by Sir Roy Strong, the site of a very large antique doll display, underwent a redevelopment in 2005-2006 and was closed to the public during this period. The project included not only building renovations and restoration, but also rethinking the previous format and content of display to respond to the new directions of the Museum's "strong commitment to cultural diversity and social inclusion". (Museum of Childhood 2008) Scientific and optical toys and exhibits designed to facilitate and augment learning and skillbase enhancement amongst the inner-city and multicultural communities in the neighborhood around the museum were highlighted.

Given the difficulty of referring to a secure oeuvre of crossreferences beyond the paper, to give some indication of the material that I am discussing, I have included reference to the one doll reference held widely in academic and specialist libraries, the Coleman family's doll encyclopedia of 1970, and also to its less widely held adjunct volume of 1986, and also to dolls collectors' texts by Faith Eaton (1975) Mary Gorham Krombholz and Cynthia Erfurt Muser (2001) the latter offers more sumptuous colour plates of dolls' bodies than the Coleman publications. Generally I am referencing pictorial rather than written material. Whilst actual dolls of pre 1880 date are relatively infrequently found in Australia, I have included some photographs of major representative doll body types over a century from the 1840s to the 1950s to clarify the type of imagery being discussed. Images of some later dolls

can not be included for copyright issues. The name and approximate dates of later dolls should serve as sufficient evidence of their existence.

The placement of dolls in recent academic scholarship

However this close and obvious thematic relationship is often obscured in scholarly paradigms, particularly due to the inhibitions displayed by scholars around the doll and the infrequency of those occasions – remarkable by the twenty-first century when subjects for postgraduate theses are at premium – when serious scholarship has touched upon dolls. The doll has sustained relatively little serious analysis from academics, as opposed to the large literature for collectors and hobbyists. A.F. Robertson in his study of contemporary doll collectors suggests that anxiety keeps scholars from looking at her. “Scholars have been particularly stand-offish about dolls”. (Robertson 2004: 4) Particularly her status between the living and the dead, the stylised and the mimetic makes her an unusual and uncanny subject for discussion. (Robertson 2004: 2-12, 76, 87, 187, 189, 217-220) However one notes that his own study, whilst detailed, is replete with somewhat disdainfully drawn images of the strangeness of dolls, and also by extension the strangeness of those people – particularly older women - who interact with dolls, suggesting still the power of the *unheimlich*. In *On Longing* Susan Stewart also charts the anxieties around the small, and her poetic text has particularly placed the small and the overtly-feminised and concentrated as lacking intellectual significance and impressiveness. (Stewart 1993: 48, 60) Like Robertson, she is anxious, as well as analytical, in her engagement with the subject. She interrogates and yet simultaneously upholds modernism’s size anxieties (and perhaps also the masculinist, imperial trajectory of modernism). (Peers 2006) Stewart’s monograph, like that of Formanek-Brunell has been a stand-alone text, one of the few academic sources to discuss her subject and has not been subject to further modification or deconstruction, particularly around its value judgements.

Miriam Formanek-Brunell’s *Made to Play House* (1993) impresses by its dense construction of intellectual textual arguments, which succeed in terms of the expected formats of academic practice. Yet the author’s key assertions can be problematicised and shifted by other primary sources. She seeks to theoreticise a gender divide within dollmaking, suggesting that certain formats, materials and characterisations indicate a gendered outlook in dollmakers and designers. Women’s dolls are “soft”, indicating a “preference for individual craftsmanship” and a consideration of the players rather than the product. Males’ doll production inclined towards mechanisation, “realism” and “scientific management”. In dollmaking the male viewpoint also dismembered the woman and focussed on parts rather than the whole, with an inferred sexualising vision. (Formanek-Brunell 1993: 2–3) Yet the

development of the fashion conscious, outwards orientated, non domestic luxury doll was not a masculine overwriting of the holistic emotional comfort of the doll made for play and embrace, but the trade was established in the early 1850s by doll companies run by women in Paris and London. (Peers 2004: 35-36) Formanek-Brunell's text is also interesting as it again indicates the unsettling and interstitial place of the doll in academic discussion. She offers an insightful post-modernist cultural studies reading of dolls and yet concurrently upholds second wave, 1970s, feminist anxieties around the doll as confining and delimiting the "natural" woman, thus touching upon a persistent trope in scholarship around the doll in the last three decades: the unease with the feminine vision often (but not always!) presented by the doll and the *a priori* implicit reading of her as "white", bourgeois and over feminised.

The doll's links to childhood also frequently places her within the specialist discipline of early childhood studies and psychology. The practices of this discipline tend to ignore the material culture of the doll and concentrate on moral issue of bodies and representation. (Peers 2004: 3) Thus too in debates around dolls, certain types of dolls and their bodies are seen as more appropriate than other types, and the fashionable doll, such as Barbie, is seen as representing both whiteness and capitalism. (Peers 2004: 99-102, 107-108) However these early childhood and child psychological approaches to the doll actually reinforce her relationship to wellworn debates around fashion. Valerie Steele identifies how major feminist thinkers in the mid-twentieth century, such as De Beauvoir and Friedan, objected to high fashion. (1991: 119) Stella Bruzzi outlines this history of second wave feminist anxieties around fashion in further detail. (1997: 121–124, 126–127) One can identify a certain parallelism in discourses of both the past and the present, which pit the fashionable body, and the formats of spectacularly fashionable dress against concepts of "health" and "wellbeing". These debates can extrapolate often crudely from body image to indices of mental and personal well-being, and thus claim a crude cause and effect relationship between supposedly "inappropriate" fashions and negative feelings about the self or the assimilation of negative cultural images by the individual. Fashion and dolls are frequently both seen as strange and unnatural and therefore both can be denounced as providing an unacceptable image of womanhood.

These issues predate recent debates on the prevalence of body image and eating disorders in society by more than a century. (Peers 2007 n.p) British journalist and close colleague of Charles Dickens, George Augustus Sala wrote about dolls on display at the Paris 1867 international exhibition in terms of their mature personae and inappropriate sexuality for objects that are intended to be in the hands of young of young girls. (Sala 1868: 140-147) "They have nothing to do with the happy, innocent time of childhood. They look like dolls

who know the time of day, and whom no young man from the country – or any other man - can get over." (Sala 1868: 147) The essay, as well as describing the doll display at the Paris exhibition and discussing about what a child's toy should be, was also a satiric discussion on visible high class prostitution in the Second Empire. Sala moved constantly between child and adult cultures and references, using the visibly extravagant folly of French dolls, which were luxuriously appointed with dresses and homewares, but not "ladies" in their personae. His basic concepts in the discussion of dolls and toys of the necessity of presenting girls with a bland, neutral doll which is asexual and clearly suitable for "play" and household training are extremely similar to debate about the Bratz dolls in recent years as unsuitable for children due to their tawdry sexuality. (George 200: 40, Gibbs 2006: 72) Both debates also reference issues such as changing female roles and behaviour norms and publicly acceptable images of women under the cover of moral and behavioural issues. The Bratz dolls also have become a focus for widespread and often paradigmatic anxieties about fashion in the last decade: the emerging `tween phenomenon, the downwards age creep of "glamour", the erasure of specific formats of dress for specific times of the day. Amongst these issues is the wearing of décolletage in day wear (as in the eighteenth century) witnessed by the sumptuary laws against chemise tops in North American schools and other sumptuary laws enacted in North America in the last decade.[2] Thus these anxieties about the Bratz again reinforce the close imbrication of the doll with debates around fashion, even as these linkages are denied, through the application of scholarly boundaries of debate. In recent years this discussion of the disturbing body images supposedly prompted by dolls in children is now extending to considering the effect on male children. Again not the central subject of discussion, it is enough to note that these concepts are so widespread as to be referenced even in overviewing and anthologising viewpoints such as the editorial of the *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics* where Professor Miguel *A.*Martínez-González indicates that action figures and dolls intended for boys circulate impossible visions of musculature that lead to anxieties around and dissatisfaction with the "normal" body in growing males (Martinez-Gonzales 2001: i-ii) as too dolls and female children. The exact partnering of Barbie and G.I.Joe as both offering children unnatural and potentially damaging body images was discursively set forth in the *Adonis Complex*, (Pope, Phillips and Olivar 2000: 98) an early text discussing this issue of male body image disorders.[3] Yet are these negative viewpoints entirely productive or do they capture the full picture of the interaction with fashion and/or dolls? There is another textual thread of interpretation. In fashion, Elizabeth Wilson, particularly through her monograph *Adorned in Dreams*, has established more positive paradigms and identified the enjoyment rather than the oppression that fashion offers women. (Taylor 2004: 280) For dolls a similar approach is seen in the work of M.G. Lord. Her *Forever Barbie*, (1994) a cultural history of Barbie, not only places

the doll in her rightful context of fashion and social history, but also questions the second wave feminist suspicion of fashion and indicates how the fashionable woman was a driver of modern life and experiences in the mid twentieth century. This crossover again indicates how the doll is close to well known debates around fashion.

The doll's place within the compass of fashion scholarship and relevance to researching fashion

In recent years fashion has attained an unprecedented level of philosophic and symbolic credibility in academic and cultural circles. Despite dolls' relative invisibility in academic texts, they merit inclusion in this rapidly expanding post modernist artistic and intellectual discourse around fashion. The doll can sustain analysis alongside other elements of the material culture of fashion as a physical representation of gender imagery and fashionable dress. She also provides vivid evidence for such areas of academic discourse now developed out of fashion from identity paradigms of ethnicities, genders and sexualities to abstract issues raised by retailing, branding and merchandising. As a representation of gender the doll is as eloquent as better recognised catchments of imagery such as film, photography, fine arts, the music industry and fashion journalism for example. She particularly presents an idealisation of an essentialised gender identity. As such she relates to the illustrations in the fashion magazine that more or less supplanted her in the function of providing documentary information about fashion. Both fashion illustrations and dolls present a supremely idealised vision of the feminine.

Concurrently the doll can also offer much tangible information to a material or object based research on fashion. Yet this step has been relatively infrequently taken in professional practice. The doll's value in documenting fashion is not a truism or obvious beginning step to reading fashion history, but regarded with a surprising ambiguity by historians of the material culture of dress. Particularly in the United Kingdom, and most specifically in the wake of the British pop-art movement's revival of interest in "Victoriana", dolls have been collected as an adjunct to scholarly-based, publicly funded collections of historic costume. However, despite this expansion of collections in the mid to late twentieth century, the information that the doll offers, particularly to an-object and material culture based study of past fashions has not been greatly taken up by historians and curators, who are possibly working under too strong a shadow of the doll's unstable cultural position. Kaye Staniland writing in a booklet about dolls in the Gallery of English Costume, Manchester demonstrates a certain unease, indicating that dolls' fashions often represent a very specific hybrid state unmatched in actual surviving adult fashion, an interstitial format between adult fashion and child fashion. (Staniland 1970: 3) Janet Arnold, another major advocate/practitioner of the British "dress

studies" methodology, writing a few years after Staniland, is more openly positive about the doll's merit in documenting fashion, but she also surrounds the doll's potential value with clear caveats. They are not simple reductions of adult wear and it is misleading to read them as such. As dolls were children's playthings, fastenings were generally represented on a much larger scale than they would be on the same garment in adult sizes. Moreover those reading the doll's dress need to have prior knowledge as to whether a baby, child or adult and whether the taxonomy of fabrics and construction techniques really belong to the era that the doll appears to represent. (Arnold 1973: 99-100)

Yet what can the doll offer given these reservations demonstrated by such recognised experts? If in original condition the doll presents an ensemble in three dimensions, with accessorising as understood by fashionable practice at the time of the garment's creation, as well as typical underwear beneath the garment. Sometimes dolls preserve fabrics and styles that were not considered important enough to be kept for their own sake. They wear the wools and printed cottons of Victorian daywear, especially morning wear, worn by ladies at home when they were not on public show, as well as by their female servants. They sometimes wear garments such as hand knitted and crocheted cardigans and "polka jackets" for women from the 1840s and 1850s. (Coleman 1970: 263, Eaton 1975:98) that infrequently have survived in human sizes, despite being produced on a commercial scale (Maguire 1853: 254) and also featuring in some of the earliest knitting books for middle class women in the 1840s.[4] Janet Arnold notes that relatively few surviving full scale dresses show the early "princess line" of the 1860s, in the earliest appearance of this form of pattern drafting but it can be observed in doll-scale garments. (Arnold 1973: 98) Dolls can tell us things that are not found in any single garment, communicating a stronger feeling of the ensemble and bricolage elements of fashion, particularly now the importance of "styling" in creating a "look" is recognised. Although inanimate, the concerted aspect of a doll in totally original presentation comes to closer to the "lived" element of fashion which eludes the most meticulous costume curators (Taylor 2002:24, 26-27, 42-49) when presenting garments alone. This ensemble effect is particularly important in fashion eras where much of the presentation of a garment was left to the individual wearing it. For example dolls surviving intact from the eighteenth century particularly indicate personal styling practices and may preserve particularly ephemeral aspects of dress, such as moulded paper hats or neck and wrist chokers in ribbon or lace. (Peers 2004: 16) Given the fact male dress survives in a less cohesive and consolidated oeuvre in museums generally, not perhaps appealing to the sentimental urge to preserve and then later to the sentimental and fantasy urge to display female costume, dolls dressed fully and authentically as males, with such items as

underwear, linen and neckwear intact may be even more informative as documents than the many female dolls. (Peers 2004: 16)

Ironically in some ways the doll upholds the material or object based approach to dress studies, for the doll's value as an information source to be most effective, the ensemble must be assessed by someone already literate in the language and possibility of fashion at a given period, as well as aware of histories of doll dressing practice and the shifting image of the doll at any given era. These latter histories would form a paper in themselves; it is enough to note that the dominant and popular image/format of the doll may be a baby at one era such as the 1920s, or a mature woman such as the mid to late 1950s. Thus too interpretation must factor in the periodic appearance of dress practices that are doll-specific. One could mention the early Victorian British practices of putting a child's short skirts onto an adult woman's bodice that Staniland noted (1970: 3) or in more recent years the strange fashion limbo of certain expensive dolls such as Mattel's Barbie "Fashion Model" collection and the Alexander Company's Cissy, both still in production. Purporting to represent current fashion, the dolls actually reference a strange segue of fashion from 1950 to 1990, reflecting the taste of the 40-70 year old customer base.[5] With such knowledges the degree that the doll is undisturbed, and thus relatively authentic, in her dressing and therefore informative in a context of reading her as a document of fashion history can be determined.

Of course there are another series of knowledges that can be read through supposedly "aberrant" or "inauthentic" doll dressing. National costume dolls, now fairly low on the scale of collectors' fancies, but once highly regarded in the mid twentieth century when they were brought back from holidays, not only are a sign of the mass expansion of tourism, but also offer information on Othering, and economic imperialism. (Taylor 2002: 224) Dolls in modern reconstructions/ interpretations of historic dress, used widely as ornaments in the interior design of the 1920s and 1930s, in both middle class and avant garde contexts, but still produced as decorator objects even today, link into the visual culture of cinema and popular culture - costume dramas and musical comedies – as well as popular other sites of remaking the past such as romance novels. These skewed histories and interpretations provide valuable information on popular culture and also the evaluation of knowledge insofar as the signs of calibration can be observed in action. Yet when one can be reasonably certain that a doll has survived undisturbed, the context and complexity of the information it presents is valuable for dress history. Due to the easy vulnerability of a doll's outfit, styling and overall appearance to malign, unsystematic intervention, especially by the pragmatic antique trade, ironically the doll must be assessed using the techniques of a fairly conservative, hierarchical empirical connoisseurship, but the messages that she delivers can be more

postmodern and lateral. (Peers 2004: 7) In terms of assessing the validity of knowledges presented by a dressed doll, Lou Taylor's warning (Taylor 2002: 232, 234) about how the art market and the antiquities trade extracts the ethnographic object from its social and cultural context and erases the people who made and used the object, is relevant here. Janet Arnold, when discussing doll's use in empirical studies of historic fashion, also warned that a doll may have been redressed "by the owner of an antique shop". (Arnold 1973: 99)

One may note a final context in which dolls provided evidence for fashion research in earlier methodologies of practice. Janet Arnold suggested that dressing small fashion dolls was of great practical use in technical education, particularly domestic science courses. She devotes a long discussion to the making and dressing of small figures in authentic reduction of historic dress as a means of gaining a detailed and accurate knowledge of historic dress. (Arnold 1973: 180-186) Such practices were clearly an accepted part of the British technical education curriculum in the early 1970s. These practices may have been fairly widespread within girls' technical education because evidence can be found for similar activities happening half a century ago in an Australian technical college. A doll historian, Margery Fainges, documents that students at the Brisbane Technical College from the "1940s to the 1960s" were given the assignment of dressing fashion dolls with plaster heads made by Australian store mannequin company Mei and Picci and purchased from the college (at some expense – legs and hands were costly extra options to the cloth bodies constructed by the students during their coursework), as part of their fashion studies. These dolls were dressed in period clothes of the students' own choice and research. Surviving examples include both male and female dress and range from Elizabethan to Victorian styles. (Fainges 1994:133-134)

A historical overview of the formats of the doll's physical body

It is not only in their clothes that dolls provide evidence for a material cultural history of fashion. Without clothes dolls also offer documentation of how a body may be envisioned in different times and cultures. Dolls carry the template of fashionable and desirable body proportions on their torsos, without foundation garments, as a predetermined display of the currently fashionable line. (Peers 2005: 23) Patrizia Calefato notes that Barbie's "face and size have been imperceptively altered to reflect current trends on how the collective imagination has shaped the female body". (Calefato 2004:79) Fashions have a far wider representation and influence than the outer garments. There are changes in the popular images of the body and these changes harmonise with, or even follow, the changes in fashionable styling. Anne Hollander has identified the crucial influence exerted by the fashionable body as popularly accepted at a given era or as shaped by foundation garments,

upon high art (and thus supposedly neutral, independent) representation of the human torso. (Hollander 1978: 90, 96-135) Dolls also provide a remarkable lexicon of design choices in the construction of physical objects and they highlight the role played by the formats of garments in informing and guiding such design choices. The example of dolls' bodies suggests that the multiplicities of choices made by individual professionals and users/consumers across the fashion industry that contribute to an accepted "look", impact upon objects other than garments. From the era of the earliest play dolls made in quantities that permit sustain analysis we can see a direct relation to the image of the paradigmatically fashionable body and the doll. The material culture of surviving dolls prior to the eighteenth century is scattered (Croizat 2007: 98-102) however we can generalise about dolls from the eighteenth century onwards when enough samples survive to display consistent construction styles and techniques.

Eighteenth-century wooden dolls' carved and painted décolletages are shaped to display the square neckline of fashionable dress. Their turned wood ribcages match the smooth tubular silhouette created by the corsets of the period. (Coleman 1986, 1212-1213, Krombholz and Muser 2001: 19, 22) Their lowcut necklines are tinted to resemble flesh but their torsos, hidden by layers of clothes are often unpainted. As dolls are relatively cheap, these design choices are pragmatic, based upon economy and speedy, efficient manufacture. From these early wooden dolls onwards we notice the strong tendencies towards pragmatism in designing dolls as a cheaply produced commodity. Parts of the doll that were generally seen were finished in great deal, other body parts which were by convention covered by clothes were often moulded or finished in a more summary fashion. Wooden dolls of the early-1800s often have high bosoms above elongated, but naturally shaped, bodies, trunks and legs that perfectly display the empire line. (Coleman 1970: 660-661, Coleman 1986: 1215) Krombholz and Muser 2001: 23) This body is the same as that observed by Hollander in the art of the same period, "a cylinder reaching from just under a raised bust to well down on the thigh". (Hollander 1978: 121) Wooden dolls resemble store mannequins in so far as they provide perhaps the most direct and solid stand in for the materiality of the fashion body, as space displacing mass *per se*. Unlike the human body, ever changing, the store mannequin and the doll both offer a sampling of the ideal body, permanently fixed in time as long as the material components remain stable and in good condition.

Figure 1. Glazed china headed doll with cloth body c. 1880, this type of dolls were made from the 1840s to the 1930s. Note the darts at the side of the waist, leading up to the bust

Whilst James Laver's theory of the shifting erogenous zones of fashion – particularly the idea of erotic interest shifting in cycles of fixation on different sections of the body (Laver 1967: 119) – may be an awkward piece of neo Freudianism from an earlier era of dress study, (Taylor 2004: 279-280) the doll's body ironically seems to partly breathe a new life into his old theory. Her body is always paradigmatic of that which is expected to be on show for presentation, for the purposes of the gaze. Thus a Victorian doll had shapely lower limbs of porcelain, often small and delicately formed to suggest a quality of ladylikeness, which showed from beneath her skirt or beyond her sleeves, but a plain cloth body. (Coleman 1970: 136, 137, Krombholz and Muser 2001: 92) (**1**.) This type of body flourished from the 1840s onwards and still continued into production after World War One and into the 1930s. Especially in the mid nineteenth century, these bodies could be sometime crude and sacklike and were anomalous to the finely modelled head and limbs. (e.g. Coleman 1970: 127) However this body was generally not seen as a fault, it was hidden by layers of clothes and its clumsiness was invisible, despite its disjunction to the graceful extremities. This body, when made in cloth, also looks curiously "dressed", as if it were a set of rather plain long

underwear. Conversely modern Barbie type dolls have legs with a smooth, long line, which presumes/expects that female legs can be visible from ankle to hip. The contrast between the finely modelled lifelike limbs and head and the more abstract body is seen even more emphatically in the image of the 1880s Kestner doll, where the tinted bisque porcelain adds a strongly mimetic quality. (**2**.) Nineteenth century papier mache, porcelain and wax dolls often have very detailed moulded-on boots and garters with added gilt highlights and painted in many and varied colours. (Coleman 1970: 228, Coleman 1986: 1193) Their calves are often very shapely but above the knee the leg can be thick and lumpy or straight as a rod. The upper leg was not generally visible and the look of these parts did not matter. When dressed, if the doll was upturned she generally displayed layers of lingerie. Though usually hidden the boot was clearly a focus of attraction more so than the leg above the knee.

Figure 2. Doll with bisque head and arms and kid body by Kestner, Germany c. 1880s. Note the relationship of the long body and low hipline to pattern drafting and dress cutting, as well as the fashionable long silhouette in women's fashion in the early 1880s. The shoes and socks are actual garments and the knees have been reinforced with extra strips of kid when the doll was made.

The most consistent aspect of the Victorian lady doll, not matter of what her body was constructed from, was the shape of her body. Even the crudest homemade Victorian dolls' bodies in calico had curving hourglass waists. Two matching pieces with the outline of a corseted silhouette were seamed at each side. These dolls were in effect their own corsets maintaining their own artificial and graceful body contour. The interstitial state between representing the body and the drafting and construction of dresses is apparent in the example illustrated here. As well as being cut from curved pattern pieces, her body also includes darts leading up to her waist. More elaborately constructed commercial dolls had intricately pieced leather bodies. However for a Victorian audience the profile of a corset was not enough. Inanimate dolls actually wore corsets (**3**.) to train their already shaped and moulded bodies. Many doll-sized corsets survive from the Victorian era. From observing a number of such corsets, fixtures and supplies for doll sized corsetry were produced on industrial rather than a hobbyist scale, including small grommets, bones and steels and even metal busk closures with hooks, as in late Victorian corsets. These tiny foundation garments kept pace with adult scale technologies. Doll corsets were produced in straight sided juvenile models and in more shapely adult versions with defined breasts, hips and waist. Jumeau of Paris was one firm that produced corsets in order to dress their doll production. Commercial fabric printers also made dolls bodies that had corsets already printed on them. One of the famous examples is by Goldsmith of Philadelphia in the 1870s to 1890s. (Coleman 1970: 256) Leigh Summers suggested that one of the reasons that dolls wore corsets was to acclimatise young girls into the naturalness of corsetry and "insinuate in female children their future role as sex objects". (Summers 2001: 73) Children's corsetry *per se* had the same end. (Summers 2001: 75) Similarly strange and *unheimlich* as the tiny commercially produced corsets are the split drawers worn by Victorian dolls. None of the gynaecological or hygiene reasons that justified them for women can be justified for the inanimate doll.

Figure 3. Bisque headed Parisienne doll French c. early 1860s with kid body wearing a corset and split drawers of the same date

Many nineteenth century dolls were more flexibly jointed than later dolls as their joints could be hidden by their skirts. The most popular doll body from the 1870s to the 1930s was that in ball jointed papier mache or composition. (**4**., **5**.) It was extremely flexible and when undressed the balljoints offered a comforting disjunction to the potential nudity of its mimetic modelling, with body parts such as the buttocks indicated yet euphemised. However fashion in the 1920s created a major headache for doll designers, when even little girls' skirts rose and began to show the ugly knee joints. Dolls from the 1920s are often identified by a body design in which the ball-joints were raised above the knees to be hidden under the shorter skirts, whilst a pretty moulded knee cap was visible. (Coleman 1970: 296) Collectors often name these dolls "flapper dolls". Dolls of sewn and moulded cloth, especially felt became suddenly popular in the 1920s, possibly because rag dolls could represent the new body with shorter skirts without any disruptive joints. Lenci of Italy, Venus and Reynel of France (Peers 2004: 130) and Nora Wellings and Dean's Rag Book of England were favourite brands at this period. Interest in modernism meant that dolls were no longer expected to be mimetic and dolls began to cross over into early cartoon formats, portraying characters such

as Auntie Blossom from *Gasoline Alley* and Little Annie Rooney of both cartoon and film (1925) narratives. Betty Boop survives today as an early cartoon figure from the Fleischer studio, who still has a following. She is a strange rendition of the human body from the 1930s, who first appeared as a little dog in a dress, but was soon redrawn as a woman (Kanfer 1997: 70) and exemplified the curvy, more feminine body of the 1930s rather than the androgynous body of the 1920s. (Kanfer 1997: 74) This character appears often as a figurine or a doll and frequently in mass market fashion and branded merchandise as a garment print. Betty Boop shows the extreme stylisation of body seen in the popular arts of the 1920s and 1930s and is clearly related to carnival dolls and kewpies with her large round eyes and marcel waved hair.

Figure 4. Balljointed composition dolls' body, the most commonly produced dolls body from the late 1870s to the Second World War, this example c. 1885 by Jumeau of Paris

Figure 5. Rear view of the same doll

By the 1930s a five piece doll body with long one piece arms and legs that only moved at shoulder and hip and so displayed sleeveless dresses as well as short skirts without any joints was increasingly the norm. This body was particularly promoted by the Patsy dolls, first marketed by North American doll company Effanbee in 1928 (Coleman 1986: 919-920) and popular until the second world war. This five piece doll body has remained a staple into the present day. Joints have often been seen as disruptive and ugly. When more of the body was exposed by fashions, so too were joints avoided in doll design. Many dolls follow the Patsy model even today. The popular “half dolls” of the 1920s and 1930s, used to decorate milk jug covers, powder puffs, pincushions, lampshades and etc, (Peers 2004: 129) usually have a flat and elongated torso that resembled the garconne look. Even those dolls intended to represent eighteenth century dress have a body contour that suits current fashion rather than the period they are meant to portrait.

In the 1950s, there was a renewed interest in dolls that resembled fashionable women. (Peers 2004: 135-167) It must be remembered that the key identity of the doll has changed down the generations from woman to child to baby and this identity often too dictates body

format. The new material of the 1950s was plastic and that offered – as did the wooden dolls of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – a firm, correctly-profiled surface upon which to base a small-sized wardrobe. Dolls' bodies were designed clearly with the essential lines of the current fashion in mind. Torsos were moulded to wear the wasp waisted dresses and feet were moulded to fit high heels. On some dolls the shoes were already modelled on the feet, again presupposing her adult and fashionable identity. (**6**.)The continuance of plastic into the twenty-first century as the major substance for dollmakers has ensured that the needs of fashion, both in terms of physical profile of the body, and in terms of those parts of the body that contribute to the overall look of a given era, is always reflected in the format of the doll. The long shapely legs of adult and teenage dolls such as Barbie and the later Hasbro version of Sindy indicate how legs have been since the miniskirts of the 1960s an important focus in determining a Eurocentric concept of beauty in women.

Figure 6. "Linda" (named as such on original box – not pictured) late 1950s hard plastic doll by Beehler Arts, USA. Whilst this doll can not be fully undressed as she wears a glued-on black felt leotard, the mature inflection of moulding and styling of 1950s North American dolls is clearly visible, in the high heeled moulded shoes and shapely legs can be seen

Figure 7. Another view of Linda. Whilst she was a small cheap doll, the idiom of the mature presentation of glamour in the 1950s is clearly captured in the controlled formality of styling. American dolls of the 1950s are a vernacular unauthorised tribute to the universal presence of French couture in the vision of dress of the period. Elsa Schiaparelli worked as a designer for doll fashions for a subsidiary of Beehler Arts in the mid 1950s. Considering her cheapness, smallness and ephemeral nature, this doll is a remarkable survivor of five decades and probably was never played with.

The *Unheimlich* Bodies of Mattel Dolls

Mattel's Barbie has been a very fertile source of strange and new bodies for dolls, reflecting a larger concurrent narrative in the last few decades of strange and new human bodies. Mattel remains central to any discussion of the later twentieth century doll, partly because the company's mastery of modern, mid-century techniques of marketing, branding, advertising and product development made dolls and toys as essential to narratives of North American capitalism as were cars and processed and packaged foods. Furthermore Mattel offers fertile source material as there is a large academic literature on Barbie and the issue of bodies of Mattel dolls feature highly in this literature. The conflicting design issues that

arose in the development of the Ken doll in the early 1960s are particularly renowned. (Lord 1994: 49, Rand 1995: 44, Peers 2004: 105-106) If Ken were to perform his duty as Freudian signifier of gender hierarchies, especially in a context of middle class North America, he would simultaneously transgress moral codes and even possibly scare curious little girls out of their expected destiny of heterosexual matrimony. This is an issue of dress as well as industrial design. Since the 1980s, Ken dolls, rather than go naked with a euphemised, generalised bulge between their legs, have been provided with permanently moulded y-fronts. This solution is seen in the design of many modern male dolls intended for children by companies other than Mattel. Since the 2000's the so called "Asian balljointed dolls" from Japan, Korea and Hong Kong for collectors, (the Super Dollfie by the Volks brand from Japan is a representative example), popular also in the Goth subcult, have widely circulated genetically complete male dolls for non-play doll markets. "Gay" dolls, such as Billy and Gay Bob marketed as a novelty for both gay men and straight and gay collectors also have full genitals, (Peers 2004: 106) but again these dolls are not intended for the play market. However they have a smaller profile in the collector market than the Asian balljointed dolls.

Barbie's body became increasingly important to the image of the doll about ten to twelve years after the doll was first produced. A major change in the relationship of Barbie to her garments also occurred in the early-1970s. This change shifted her original identity as high fashion mannequin. Rather than one basic doll being sold over a number of years, to be augmented by a wide range of seasonally changing clothes, now the changes would be rung on Barbie's body. Different dolls were sold with novelty bodies that performed certain specific functions. Representative examples include the Quickcurl dolls, 1973, whose hair contained fine wires threads to assist in maintaining a set, which finally 'degenerated' into an unmanageable Afro as the wire refused to be straightened, and the Walk Lively dolls, 1972, whose heads turned as their legs moved. These walking dolls were in fact an updated version of dolls produced by Jumeau, Bru and other French companies in the 1890s, where the head turned as the legs moved. Busy Barbie, 1972, had that rare element of doll anatomy: a hinged opposed thumb which meant that she could hold various objects including a phone handset and a television set. Ballerina Barbie of 1976 could perform certain dance-like movements. Therefore until the thorough development of the adult collector market in the 1980s, novelty in Barbie was not so much carried by her dresses — usually the quintessential register of fashionable change — but by the body and thus the function of each Barbie. Rather than marketing a series of clothes, Mattel would market a series of different Barbies, each with different capacities and identities.

During the 1990s the insatiable search for novelty in the Mattel toy line bordered upon the surreal, with Barbies having facetted rhinestones for eyes, (Sparkle Eyes Barbie 1991) or wearing crinoline gowns decorated with sparkly fibre optic light filaments that glittered when a battery powered lamp in her dress was turned on, (Twinkle Lights Barbie 1993) or tiaras that sprout water jets, (Fountain Mermaid Barbie 1993) or even the “Flying Butterfly” Barbie (2000) who, dressed in a fairy tutu, trundled like a military ‘flying fox’ along a cable strung by her owner in the house or the garden. As well as the hook that connected her to the cable, the Barbie Flying Butterfly had a further *unheimlich* feature in her body as her back contained a mechanism that activated an oversize pair of wings and made them flutter. Even when her wings fall off these fixtures still remain in her back and tremble on cue. Such examples demonstrate how Barbie’s toy function cuts across her credibility as fashion copy. So far not even the eyecatching spectacles of late-twentieth early-twenty-first century Paris showings have entertained the often grotesque ideas put forwards by Mattel product developers. Whilst one could claim a surface kinship between Mattel novelties and the new fin de siècle theatrics of presenting fashion, the opportunistic vacuity of the toy company’s concepts, when put alongside the spectacular, but intellectually plausible, achievements of British designers such as Galliano and Chalayan in pressing fashion to a conceptual/performative boundary, is sadly apparent. The most surreal of all doll bodies may well have belonged to Barbie’s sister Skipper who in the “Grow Up” version, 1975, boasted a flat latex chest that sprouted breasts when her arm was turned. Simultaneously the doll grew taller as the latex was stretched lengthwise as well as outwards with the twist of the arm. Maturity as a woman was defined by acquiring a bustline! A similar doll has come back into production in 2007 as part of the “My Scene” anime, edgy Barbie line marketed against the Bratz, entitled “Growing Up Glam”.

However Mattel’s shifting of interest, from the changing of the garment to changing the format of the doll herself, does prefigure and reference the late-twentieth-century fascination with the constructed, perfected, artificial body, enhanced, modified and prosthesised. Barbie exemplifies recent concepts of the body, as not fixed or essentialised, but as the product of progressive modification and subject to discursive, cultural refiguring. Mattel’s constant rearrangement of Barbie and the function and possibilities of her body is but a more direct expression of an ongoing process to which many adults submit their bodies by deploying transformative strictures ranging from exercise regimes to cosmetic surgery. The primary impetus of Mattel’s stratagem is commerce rather than fashion theory. This changing focus of innovation from the dress to the body/function of the doll encourages both children and older collectors to buy many Barbies instead of one Barbie and many clothes.

Barbie is a vivid index of the range of bodies now permitted in popular culture. Certain playline pinkbox Barbies of the late-1990s early-2000 period emphasise a more feral, wild femininity, supplied with removable tattoos or beads for 'African' braiding, (e.g Bead Blast Barbie, 1998), bodies for hipster jeans without the traditional waist joint associated with Barbie since the mid 1960s, and even discreet options for multiple piercings, suggesting a greater community acceptance of such embellishment when framing a concept of 'beauty'. This alternative construct of beauty references a vernacular interest in 'wild' femininity, such as the 'women who run with the wolves', a reclaiming of the archetypes of woman as natural and beyond control of civil society and male rationality. Playline Barbie dolls, when not exaggerated by the fantasy requirements of a juvenile play audience, reference contemporary fashion far closer than many of the expensive collector lines. Possibly future fashion historians will cherish the so-called "pinkbox" i.e. playline Barbies as more accurate documentations of dress in the early twenty-first century than the nostalgic 'Silkstone' dolls, the expensive Barbies in showy theatrical outfits designed by Bob Mackie or the annual end of year release of the Happy Holidays Barbies in seasonal-themed crinolines — a nightmarish meeting of Dickens and *Dallas*, now so loved by collectors. (Peers 2004: 188-189)

However in recent years Mattel has retreated. In 1999 they produced dolls with tattoos such as the Butterfly Art Barbies, however these dolls invoked rage from parents, and protests were sent to Mattel and appeared in some media, which contrary to urban myth did not get the dolls recalled, but a major doll website/blog reported that plans for dolls with piercing in the radical Generation Girl series were aborted. At the same time, a Mattel Tarzan doll was the subject of complaint for his supposedly sexually explicit gestures. (Van Patten 1999, cf Bek c 2008) By the mid 2000s Barbies with highly embellished bodies, decorated, painted, tattooed, distorted, still can be seen, but are now firmly marketed as "fairy" Barbies. The Fairytopia dolls, a range of various Barbies from 2006, include models with striking brightly coloured and adorned bodies, featuring large, indiscreet graphic flourishes of body decoration like sideshow "tattooed ladies", or yakuza-style tattoo "garments". The range of dolls include bodies that light up with small flashing LED's inside transparent limbs. As "fairy" bodies they are firmly placed within the realm of fantasy and other-worldly and are oppositional to the straight and bourgeois body. In face of the Bratz challenge from popular "raunch culture", one response of Mattel in the last couple of years is to distance the Barbie doll from the Bratz and emphasise Barbie as "targeting middle class girls" and emphasising "the innocence of childhood". (Kilby 2007: 4)[6]

The dolls' body in relation to conceptual and creative discussions of the body

Dolls have always presented an idealised body image that at once denies sexuality in its lack of orifices (with the exception of the functional sex doll or perhaps the artist Han's Bellmer's *Poupée*, (Peers 2004: 89) heroine/victim in a series of much-admired surrealist photographs of the 1930s, who bears the representational burden for her supposedly asexual sisters) and simultaneously restates sexuality constantly through a fetishised focus on the perfected closed body without orifices. The doll is both asexual and deeply sexual in her freedom from the abjection of fluids and discharges, unless they are those acceptable doll discharges of couth motherhood: bottle feeding and subsequent nappy wetting. The doll is not just a story of fear of the liminal and abject. Her body reiterates a widespread fascination with youth, smoothness and suppleness in visual representations of the female and hints at this perfection's link to desirability. Images of smooth perfected youthfulness are widely distributed through fashion media, photographs, magazines and billboards and the doll can be aligned to such perfected representations in fashion media, not only because she was the fashion medium of international exchange before print magazines. (Peers 2004: 17-19) Dolls and fashion images both share a tension about openness and closure. They are fixed, closed in their overt perfection as paradigm, yet open in their malleability, their overt appeal to others' desires and their state of readiness to serve other's emotions. M.G.Lord argues that Barbie is a lightening rod to focus a wide range of anxieties and inconsistencies around the female image in current society and the doll is not responsible for generating these anxieties herself. (1994:17, 298) This stands true for other dolls, colouring the extremes of language that is directed against them and the intensity of the debates around them. However the metaphorical nature of these debates in both scholarly and popular arenas is often not acknowledged. Therefore critiques of dolls and the image they circulate are framed as beneficent concerns about the educational development of female children or capitalism's inroad into childhood's (essentialised, timeless) "innocence".

In an insightful essay, Heather Hendershot links the sickly sweet Strawberry Shortcake doll, a best seller of the early 1980s, released by the Those Characters From Cleveland Company in 1980 and made from heavily perfumed vynal, to anxieties around waste, seepage and odour from the female body and the expectation that women should mediate and manage these discharges. Strawberry Shortcake performed "the fine line between 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate'" in female identity, defining the acceptable female body as "properly contained, properly scented". (Hendershot 1996: 90) She joined a legion of products that still place responsibility on women to disguise the odours that may emanate from their bodies – "breath, genitals and armpits" or their general environment - "toilets, carpets and the very air that they breathe". (Hendershot 1996: 92)

As well as masking, euphemising the disturbing female body, Strawberry Shortcake invoked an essentialised sensuality that was “seductive-yet innocent”. (Hendershot 1996: 92) This analogous stereotype emerged in the post war era when domestic women were expected to be asexual mothers and daughters whilst simultaneously performing as sexually-responsive wives and the newly discovered teenage “Lolita”. These contradictory imperatives still held good in the 1980s when Strawberry Shortcake was first produced and even today. Yet blame is laid at the feet of the doll/woman rather than the society that demands products that express/enforce its stereotypes. Strawberry Shortcake was as indicative of the return to conservative gender polarities in the Reagan era as the contemporary hard muscled body of Rambo. (Jeffords 1994: 13, 24, 25)

Barbies with perfume impregnated plastic bodies such as Tropical Splash 1994 Fruit Style 2002 are regularly included in the annual playline or pinkbox line and Strawberry Shortcake herself has been reissued. Like the Fruit Style Barbie, whose body recalls sweet edible fruit in its scent, the 2005 Chocolate Lovers Barbie conforms to the crossover read by Hendershot between sweetly scented dolls and the lotions and oils of the acceptably consumerist and domestic end of the sex aids industry, where certain flavours are shared with “children’s snacks”. (Hendershot 1996: 92) A “Chocolate” Barbie, whose body smells of chocolate, stands upon a nexus of the widespread public acceptance of female desire in a domestic context (at least as profit booster), the post-feminist search for sensual pleasure and the ironic, self-depreciating trope of chocolate as the lonely modern woman’s comfort and consolation. She is again a reminder of the multiple crossovers between the doll’s body and the real living woman and her body. The interchange of scents and tastes between the vast international commercial concerns of the modern toy and sex industries suggests that the inappropriate imbrication of child and adult worlds, for which Barbies and other fashion dolls are criticised, exists in a far wider range of products. Like Hello Kitty[7] and Barbie in recent times, Strawberry Shortcake decorated products that were not necessarily intended for a juvenile market or play activities of children homewares, office and school products back in the 1980s. Thus the crossover of image (and also the associated responsibilities of the couthly scented Shortcake doll) between girl and woman is sanctioned in marketing practices. The relationship of dolls with scented bodies to the fragrance and cosmetic industries, a key – even up to seventy percent of their total earnings (Morris 1984: 212-213, 278-282) - source of income for couture brands also must not be overlooked.

Dolls not only mask and improve upon the smells of the body; they also overcome its physical shortcomings. This responsibility of the doll to overwrite and improve the body’s

inherent flaws has ambiguous outcomes: as more of the body is expected to be seen, so too must more of the body be rendered smooth and more decent to be seen. Nadine Wills has written of how new underwear formats of the 1920s and 1930s, the short brief, the seamed and closed crotch, facilitated scrutiny of the intimate female body but also rendered it decent and suitable for public viewing. “Fashion theory and discourses on the social construction of the female body make it clear that the female crotch was … [in the 1930s] a relatively newly defined area on women’s bodies.” (Wills 2001: 122) The relationship of the 1928 Patsy doll – who was a bestseller up to the Second World War - to Shirley Temple is interesting. Both are cloyingly juvenile, yet also old beyond their years, particularly Shirley Temple in her early *Baby Burlesk* [Sic] films, 1931-1932, including a performance singing and dancing as a Marlene Dietrich look alike in the *Kid in Hollywood* 1932. Wills suggests that the frequent visual reference to Temple’s bloomer-covered crotch in both film narratives and publicity shots indicates that this new way of viewing and defining the essential nature of woman has such metaphorical importance that it had to be displayed even through a juvenile image. (2001: 129-130) Both Patsy and Shirley are innocent and provocative with particular favoured formats of dress that contribute to their provocative nature. From examination of photographs and other ephemera, Patsy and Shirley both wore short but flowing skirts which revealed matching bloomers, which are both meant to be seen and also to cover. Nadine Wills suggests that Shirley’s skirts were “significantly shorter” than usual girls’ fashions of the period. (2001: 129) The same could be said of Patsy’s skirts. (**10**.) Patsy predated Shirley’s mainstream film debut by five years and she also suggests the doll’s liminal or interstitial positioning re fashion, both not of fashion and yet of it at the same time. Whilst Patsy’s bourgeois little girl identity excludes her from consideration as high fashion, yet she still bears various signs of 1920s fashion, especially the visibility of her legs and arms, and most notably her bobbed hair. Shirley Temple shared aspects of Patsy’s identity. Her image was also marketed as a successful doll in the 1930s, along with myriads of other products and sold in special displays at cinemas as well as in stores. (Kapur 2005: 56) Wills, unlike Staniland, does not see this interstitial state between womanhood and girlhood as unnerving, rather the mixture emphasises “an essentialist position of universal female sameness”. (2001: 130)

Figure 8. Patsy by Effanbee, (Fleischer and Baum) North America sculpted/designed 1927, marketed 1928, this version in bisque porcelain

Figure 9. Patsy's smoothly sculpted body, features clean modern lines, a schematised approach to anatomy and fewer joints than nineteenth century dolls. Patsy's style of five piece body – torso and four separate limbs is still the basis of many plastic child dolls today. Her rouged knees directly reference popular fashions of the 1920s.

The doll not only mediates anxieties around the female body's physicality, but also around female behavioural peculiarities and shortcomings. Amongst the most haunting and memorable of all commercially produced dolls is Jules Nicholas Steiner's Bébé Gigoteur, made in Paris from the 1850s to the 1900s. She presents women as *unheimlich*, disturbed and unnatural. One winds her key and she throws a fit, kicking her legs and feet, flailing her arms, twisting her head and crying, performing an act that would delight – and not surprise - her fellow Parisian Charcot. Bébé Gigoteur's face sculpting incorporates one of Steiner's exclusive facial sculptings: double rows of teeth resembling a closed Venus Flytrap, precursors to the *vagina dentatis*, which obsessed so many avant garde artists of the early twentieth century. Collectors often refer to this format of facial moulding as "shark teeth". The inventions of Steiner, whose doll production originated from a clockmaking skill-base, (McGonagle 1988: 8–11) could not more perfectly reflect postmodernist fascination with images and theories of gender, unless they had been devised as elements of a present-day postgraduate art major or an exhibition project. Steiner launched the widest range of different face sculptings amongst Paris-based dollmakers. He also created an extraordinary doll with a cloth body, but porcelain head hands, feet and a beautifully sculpted abdomen also in porcelain sandwiched between cloth sections. This is certainly the fetishising, sectional view of women that Formanek-Brunell saw as typical of male driven commercial doll production, 1993: 2–3) but it is also a relatively rare and self-contained example that was not copied by any other manufacturer, male or female. With its range of inventions and mechanised figures the Steiner Company matches the celebrated Jumeau label for the detail and vividness of the picture of nineteenth century French society that it evokes and the paradoxes of the female image that it created. (Peers 2004: 81-82) Steiner's elaborately performative dolls also foreground the Promethean qualities of dollmaking and the scientific/alchemical quest for the "secrets" of "life" that is another mythical resonance to the doll. (Wood 2002)

If she can not answer the question "what do women want?" any better than Freud, the doll certainly assists in answering the questions "what are women?" and "how are they made?"

In the compass of a paper, it may be impossible to cover the subject with the depth it demands. However the range of material touched upon here, from the objects themselves to the doll's resonance with discursive images of the body that have featured in much recent art, cinematic, cultural and fashion history writing, should suggest that the doll deserves a more secure place than she has received hitherto within academic writing and particularly in the discipline of fashion theory.

Figure 10. Patsy presented a style of girlhood that pre-empted the styling now associated with Shirley Temple, who would make her debut in first class features with Stand Up and Cheer in 1933, five years after the Patsy doll was launched. There were many copies and clones of Patsy including “Just Me” by Armand Marseille

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Endnotes

[1] The largest public holdings of dolls in Australian is perhaps the Powerhouse Museum, but whilst there are some highly important individual examples this lacks a broad holding of representative types and items from most of the key manufacturers. There are still some anomalies of attribution and description in the online catalogue, which suggests that this collection is not a high priority for the institution The Melbourne Museum collection is focussed more on Australian commercial manufacturing of dolls from the First World War to the 1980s, which is a relatively short period of time, and mostly concentrated on composition dolls and early plastics so only represents a small proportion of dolls.

[2] Although there is some belief that these laws are urban mythologies, the University of West Alabama for example, has in October 2007 banned a number of male and female garments from the campus – including sleeveless t-shirts and visible g-strings. This university is unique as it is it a publicly funded institution, whereas such laws are commonplace in private universities, military colleges and Christian based tertiary education in the United States (Reeves 2007) Such codes, which include chemise style t-shirts and inappropriately revealing female dress are also seen in many North American secondary schools see for example (Henderson 2004) The possibility that the target is not so much exposure of the female or male body, but ethnic subcultures without appearing to be racist is not far fetched

[3] This publication is a crossover publication, whilst intended for a popular audience, it was based on the authors' original research at Harvard and Brown universities (Pope, Phillips and Olivar 2000: 4) The authors offer an appendix with further professional reading , academic data and resources.

[4] In Ireland the making of polka jackets and fancy knitwear was listed as an important industry as documented by the National Exhibition of 1852 in Dublin, which was organised to demonstrate that Ireland could present itself as a modern, industrialising cyclised nation, rather than as a primitive backwater. The term Polka Jacket can be found in various dictionaries of a century or more in age as meaning a knitted jacket and this garment features in the titles as well as the contents of projects in knitting books from the 1840s and 1850s

[5] Robertson (2004: 88-89) also notes the mature age base for collectors dolls

[6] As this campaign is a move by Mattel England, where the Bratz have grabbed the larger proportion of the doll buying market, it also relates to an English preference from the early 1960s with Sindy for dolls that are more demure and middle class than raunchy, transatlantic Barbie. However the extreme popularity of the Bratz in the United Kingdom also suggests that preference is breaking down concurrently as Mattel attempts to revive it

[7] Hello Kitty further complicates the child and adult demarcation. Her image includes many adult related products including both car interior fittings with her design on it and also cars and commercial jetliners