

Dolls & Clowns & Things

Dolls & Clowns & Things:
Essays for a Symbolic Self

By

Lisa Pavlik-Malone

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P U B L I S H I N G

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To my husband, Peter, and my parents, Gloria and Robert,
with love and gratitude

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The idea for this book came out of my academic background in cognition, my intellectual interest in imagination and learning, and my personal appreciation for the beauty and mystique of dolls. Over the years, I have managed to accumulate a small circle of “friends” in the usual porcelain, as well as in more unusual crystal and jewelry forms. Lately, I have become interested in the *art doll* specifically, which is not necessarily “beautiful” in the conventional sense (consult *Art Doll Quarterly* for numerous examples), and is often singularly produced. Also, I am interested in the ways in which people imaginatively use dolls and other objects to promote self-conceptions and personal understandings, sometimes even creating these “objects” out of “subjects”, as well as the other way around.

My hope is that this book is a theoretical contribution to the psychological study of “things” in general (and dolls and clowns in particular), in that it provides detailed accounts of how the mind might produce such personal and symbolic objects. Hopefully, it also provides some illuminating examples of the “cognitive unconscious” as being integral to imaginative and creative thought.

I want to thank many individuals for their help and support in writing and preparing this book. Dr. Daniel Meyer-Dinkgrafe and the editors of the interdisciplinary journal *Consciousness, Literature and the Arts* for their tremendous and continued support, encouragement, and interest in my work; The editors at Cambridge Scholars Publishing for their interest in my work and all of their help in preparing this book; Quarry books for “Ysanne”, “Rosella”, and “Lagoon Girl”; Schiffer Publishing for the Louis Icart etching ‘New Hat’; my husband, Peter, for his technical guidance in preparing the four “doll” visuals just mentioned; Dr. Ray Gibbs for his insightful advice on metaphor, in writing the essay that is chapter 6 of this book; my close friend and colleague Dr. Sarah Markgraf, for her help in choosing appropriate stories and poems for this same essay; Gloria and Bill Kiprais for their continued and ardent support for this project.

INTRODUCTION

On subjectivity

Within each of us, a distinction can be made between *the subjective* and *the objective*. The former part broadly refers to the dimension of the mind typically described as “private”, “emotional”, and “intuitive”. Through the subjective part, the individual has a personal need or desire to understand people, places and things in the world. Psychiatrist Julius Heuscher states,

Our subjectivity collects, values, preserves, and integrates all the numerous insights, all the deep feelings...which our relationships to others...evoke. These insights, feelings...refined and improved by ever new experiences, are not evanescent; they become and remain an essential part of us. They have a temporal quality and they reveal us as...meaningful...subjects. Indeed, if there were not such an enduring, essential subjectivity, we would be indifferent objects, parts...without a meaningful origin... (2003: 335)

Psychiatrist Arthur Modell also states,

In emphasizing the vital significance of the private self, I am striving to correct a current bias that views the self nearly exclusively as a social self. Many contemporary authors have exaggerated the significance of this social aspect of the self, minimizing or neglecting the self's capacity to “bootstrap” itself from within. As many life experiences attest, there are individuals who have been able to “create” themselves and maintain a sense of continuity and coherence... (1993: 4)

The subjective dimension can seem special to us, in part, because it exists in contrast to the objective dimension. This latter part of ourselves may also be valued, because it encompasses our logic, rationality, and empirical discernment. Indeed, one of the hallmark features of this dimension is the idea that “things” or “objects” existing “out there” in the world can come to be understood through rational thought and systemic inquiry. Thus, through either dimension, or perhaps even through both simultaneously, information can flow to and from the thing or object in order to understand or, personally as well as empirically, “connect” with

it. Certainly, a hallmark characteristic of any thing or object, is its ability, if not tendency, to be subjectively molded and shaped by the particulars of the mind that does the emoting, intuiting, and discerning. Indeed, at times a lot of internal “stuff” seems to happen without the physical nature of the thing or object changing at all. In fact, this very “stuff” can even bring about the creation of the object itself in the first place. What internal mechanisms might be at work (and play) here? There seems to be a “subset” of mental processes, structures, and abilities that exists within the subjective realm. This “subset” can be referred to as *the intra-subjective*. They are at times more present than at other times, and enable the individual to create very personal understandings of objects from deep within. Intra-subjectivity is special because it enables the mind to weave, more as well as less consciously, strategically tangled webs of semantic and semiotic complexity, as well as precisely shaded groves of subtle or nuanced meaning. And, even though this subset may be both less meta-cognitively controllable and not as easily relied upon for understanding the object as are either of the two dimensions, its nature as “the personal within the personal” has the power, perhaps even more so than each of the two dimensions does, to produce understandings of things or objects which are nothing less than transformative for the self.

Intra-subjective processes between the self and the object can be understood to function or operate within at least three domains of intuitive experience: one, as *my physical object*, in which the “thing” becomes one’s “own” meaningful possession while retaining all the aspects of its physical nature; two, as *my objectified being*, in which the original physical nature of the “thing” included its being alive, but has since lost this phenomenological quality in a sense, as one’s “own” personal meaning has come to imbue it; and three, as *my personified idea*, in which the individual mind conjures up the object itself, while ascribing to it human qualities in various aspects that, in the mind of the creator at least, emanate from the object as fundamental to what it is. In this collection of essays, the author is interested in exploring the particulars of each of these domains, as this book is essentially about the creative cognitive processes involved in bringing each kind of profoundly personalized object to concrete fruition.

The embodied self and its “object”

The study of the mind, brain, and environment as intricately intertwined is becoming increasingly fashionable, even favorable among scholars, academics and researchers who study cognition. In his timely

article *Relating Psychology and Neuroscience*, psychologist Peter Marshall states,

...the notion that detailed, discrete central representations of the external world are formed and processed by a cognitively reasoning engine that then guides action has faced challenges from embodied approaches in which perception and action are seen as overlapping, tightly linked systems...As Clark (2000) puts it, "Perception is often tangled up with possibilities for action, and is continuously influenced by cognitive, contextual, and motor factors" (p.95) ...Anderson (2003)...stresses that although the "central" argument of embodied cognition...strikes at the nature and foundation (p. 100) of representation, the key to progress is not the elimination of representations from cognitive science, but a renewed emphasis on their linkage to "moving and acting in a dynamic environment (p.100)" (2009: 119).

Furthermore, to add to this, the idea that "detailed, discrete central representations" of the *internal* world "are formed and processed by a cognitively reasoning engine" may not be the most paradigmatically accurate either. Presumably, one can speak of "internal context" or "internal action" in which elemental cognitive processes such as memory, metaphor, imagination, semiotic processes, and meta-cognition take hold to produce *imagery and symbolic patterns* of various kinds, e.g. an *inner* image of a purple sky or of one's name spelled a new way, adding still other ingredients to the human experience embodied. As Modell states, "What is uniquely human is a generative imagination from which the individual can create an internal unseen world" (2003: 33). This ability may work while the mind engages in either an artistic endeavor to create an external product such as a painting, poem or doll, or during the crafting of a daydream, image or reverie that remains internal to the individual. In either of these cases, the mind creates its own experience so to speak, a process that Modell characterizes as "the brain's 'turning around upon its own schemata,' ...analogous to what has been described by Edelman as a 'higher order' consciousness that incorporates a capacity for self-reflection" (2003: 34).

How might this cognitive complexity relate to subjectivity in general, and intra-subjectivity in particular? First, as was stated before, the subjective dimension is "private" "emotional" and "intuitive". These qualities seem to suggest a feedback dynamic of a subtle and malleable kind, whereby mental representations en route to and from the conscious level, can be continuously molded, shaped and changed. As Marshall states, "Edelman...has proposed that all brain networks are characterized by complex bidirectional connections between outputs and inputs, as well

as a lack of specialization of individual pathways. These notions lead to dynamic models of the brain..." (2009: 119). This lack of specialization also taps into the essence of subjectivity since neural pathways can be made to initially encode and perhaps re-code many times over, significant portions of internal experience, e.g., Mary was usually sad in her twenties, but now, in her fifties, is usually happy. Generally speaking, the subjective dimension involves the forming of "internal to internal" associations in which any conscious idea, e.g. I hate sunsets, can become associated with any other conscious idea, e.g., when Batman flies through them. Taken a step further, certain other cognitive processes as well are relatable to intra-subjectivity. These involve the forming of mental connections of "surface" ideas that are already accessible to consciousness or close to it, with ideas at increasingly deeper, less easily accessible levels. Put in a way similar to before, intra-subjectivity refers to "the personal within the personal", whereby the number of iterations contributes to the complexity and "deepness" and, therefore, to the uniqueness and personal nature of the mental representations. Thus, Mary's (internal) feelings in her twenties *and* in her fifties, influenced each of her perception-cognition-action patterns, e.g., "sad Mary" would often view new potential actions to be taken as "futile", whereas "happy Mary" currently tends to view new potential actions as "opportunities". The intra-subjective component for either condition would include the many "inter"-associations, in the forms of thoughts, feelings, perceptions and sensations made between the meta-feeling of happiness or sadness that continues to exist within Mary and the perception closest to the instance of performing or not performing, any particular "futile" or "opportunistic" action. This action can seem as simple and routine as writing out a check or as complex and deeply emotionally satisfying as making a doll.

Why is art important to the study of intra-subjectivity as it relates to the self and the object? In her essay "Dolls in Contemporary Art", Noel Carroll writes,

One of the best candidates for what distinguishes humans from the rest of the creatures on earth is our negotiation of reality through representations pictures, statues, through language, of course, and through external symbols of all sorts. No other species creates and manipulates representations to the degree that humans do. Nor...do other species understand, and, thereby, gain the leverage with which to change the world to the extent that humans do in virtue of our representations. Perhaps it is our ability to manipulate our representations of reality that encourages us to alter it so imaginatively (1993: 27).

Of course, this ability to “change the world” includes not only the “world without” but presumably also the “world within”. The concept of *the symbol* is fundamental here. In his introductory book on semiotic theory, Marcel Danesi includes its definition as “A sign that represents a referent through cultural convention” (2007: 181). This definition suggests that the creating of a symbol is an “inter”-subjective process, that involves the melding together of two or more individual minds, brains, and intuitions. While this is certainly so, it not the only possible understanding. Instead, a symbol can come primarily from “intra”-subjective processes. When this happens, the symbol becomes a signifier that is deeply personal, even idiosyncratic, and may be valued only, or predominately, by the “individual mind” who created it whether it be one person or many persons acting as one. Under these conditions, a certain “object” is a re-created or first-created entity. This object can be an inanimate stimulus that already exists, an animate stimulus or subject that already exists, or an idea that becomes a physical incarnation that is personified, and either animate or inanimate. In any of the three cases, the object has become a vehicle through which the self can create its own, perhaps better, understanding of itself. This understanding can be explored and maintained or explored and transformed. In the former case, the person creates a symbolic object that has a certain private *established* meaning attached to it, and that functions as a “new” image or concrete incarnation for the expression of that meaning, This is when the object is meant to maintain a certain, perhaps even desired, understanding of self. In the latter case, however, the creating of the symbolic object is the embodied change process in motion, whereby the mind creates a personal meaning that is new at least to some degree. Presumably, the psychologically healthy individual is continuously motivated to expand her or his understanding of self, at times even without realizing it. According to Baars “Constant stimulation leads to habituation, and the same is true of repeated abstractions, such as one’s social standing, personal relationships, routine features of oneself, and so on. All these sources tend to fade from consciousness—we take them for granted” (1999: 60). Thus, when one becomes too complacent with one’s understanding of whom she or he is, this can lead to an embodied experience being created between the self and an object that results in a meager or profound alteration of this understanding.

Weber (2000) discusses, in detail, how self-concepts and understandings can be created and re-created. His thesis includes the notion that the self expands *and* contracts, and describes this dualistic mechanism as “the internalization and broad elaboration of natural tendencies to approach and

avoid". (2000: 152). By the *expansive self*, he means the "stretching" of one's conscious (and, presumably unconscious) understanding of whom one is. By the *contractive self*, he means, among other things, the *simplification* of this understanding. In this sense, the self "stifles" or "restricts" itself from change and growth. This relates to the associative workings of memory at all levels of consciousness. According to Modell, "The web of associations may be enlarged or constricted by metaphor or metonymy, so that perception comes to interpret sensation...we think of sensations as internal signs that can be cognitively transformed by interpretation..." (2003: 148). Hence, the richness of interpretation would include emotions and memories becoming "attached" to sensations, and may be directly related to the number of iterations that takes place en route to and from consciousness; an expanding process would include more, while a contracting process would include less. Indeed, Modell mentions the need to conceptualize the *cognitive unconscious* as "encompassing not only the 'somatic demands on the mind' but also the potential expression of unconscious emotional memory and unconscious fantasy" (2003: 48).

Ideally, expansion and contraction processes may, in fact, work best when they complement each other at both the conscious and unconscious levels, making for a well-crafted, uniquely rich and satisfying interpretation of and for the self. In such cases, an object can be an effective tool for the expansion and simultaneous constriction of the self at any or all of its internal levels. Through an expansion/contraction process, the self can create various concrete representations that symbolically convey a newly discovered self-understanding. In other words, any "thing" that serves in any way and at any level of consciousness, to signify "the self", can be personally valuable for creating emotionally and semantically rich future interpretations. Here, one molds, shapes, and changes one's own schemata, through creative thought processes that include, along others, self-reflective ones. Thus, simultaneously, the self simplifies itself for itself, such that concrete patterns of thought, feeling, emotion, memory, and understanding are "sifted" through the complex and dynamic flows of energy through all levels of the brain.

Three categories (of self and object)

The essays which comprise the next five chapters, include concepts, ideas, and examples from several intellectual areas and disciplines--cognition, metaphor, memory, literature, visual art, philosophy, neuroscience, and semiotic theory. Before presenting these essays, a detailed description of each of the three categories is provided.

My physical object. Realistically, the most salient thing about “things” is their physical properties—size, shape, color and texture, respectively. These characteristics are algorithmically coded in the nervous system, and so, are generally processed immediately and rather uniformly from one brain to another. The next obvious thing are the concrete qualities that these properties exude. These qualities are processed by perceptual neural networks, which include essentially two groups of pathways, those for organization and those for interpretation. Organizational processes enable the mind to see “elements” and “patterns” in generic senses or forms, while interpretive processes simultaneously allow for various emotional and conceptual kinds of knowledge to contribute to recognition and understanding. Thus, upon looking at the color blue, one may feel “calmed” and think of “water” and “Van Gogh’s *Starry Night*”. Some interpretive reactions like “calmness” may also have genetic roots in the nervous system (Hardin, 2000). The memory of “water” is environmental in the general sense, since all human beings are potentially exposed to the “blueness” of water.

However, the memory of “*Starry Night*” relates to an experience more particular to the culture in which the individual lives that has afforded the individual the opportunity to view Van Gogh’s art. Or, the exposure to his art may have come about principally through this individual’s love of visual art and desire to “know” Van Gogh. Or, could have come about through some combination of these two conditions. Chances are, this latter condition is true, since it would exemplify the idea of embodied experience more than each one would individually.

The essay (Chapter 5) that belongs to this category incorporates the assumption that the cognition of “human” literary beings is characterized in ways that are similar, if not identical, to the actual human writers who invent them. Thus, these characterizations also incorporate the basic need or desire of humans to symbolize, expand and contract their understandings of self through objects. Along with this need or desire, is the human mental tendency to connect both conscious and subconscious experience through symbolic means such as by metaphor and metonymy (Modell, 2003). In chapter 5, a theoretical model is introduced, that provides an understanding of the symbolic relationship between the self and the physical properties and/or concrete qualities of the object. This model is based on the idea that metaphoric (and metonymic) thought incorporates time and space in the embodied experience. This enables consciousness to “play itself out”, in terms of establishing personal, intra-subjective relationships between the self and the particular object which, among other things, includes a bowl, a design on some hanging wall paper, and a shelf

full of antique dolls.

My objectified being. The imaginative process of *personification* plays an essential role here. Merriam Webster's definitions for this process are "the attribution of a human nature or character to inanimate objects or abstract notions, esp. as a rhetorical figure", "the representation of a thing or abstraction in the form of a person, as in art" and "an embodiment as of a quality: *He is the personification of tact.* These definitions suggest that *objects become subjects* when the self gives needed, desired or descriptive human qualities and characteristics to them. The definition of *dollification* (Ellis and Hall, 1896), sounds basically the same, and involves "ascribing more or less psychic qualities to the object and treating it as if it was an animate sentient thing." So, what is the difference in meaning here? Personification encompasses both objects and ideas or abstractions such as "the sad curtain went down" or "Sadness sat alone in the world". In contrast, dollification here refers to the personified experience through an intermediary object--*a doll*--of which the subject *symbolically* becomes; in other words, through the eyes of the self, the subject is *dollified*. Thus, this "doll" gives opportunities that "playing with dolls" potentially affords--to "try on" or explore various personas, identities and ideas, as well as aspects of physical appearance via clothing, hairdos, jewelry, etc.. Thus, any subject, e.g., a female or male dancer or doctor, or any object, e.g., a stick or flower, for that matter, can become dollified by anyone in any of these potential ways. In addition, the cognitive mechanisms involved in this particular embodied experience may include neural pathways in mirror networks of the brain. These networks are known to be involved in empathy while retaining a distinction between "self" and "other". Here, the self projects thoughts, feelings and emotions into the dollified object, making her or him "a subject" in a certain sense, while, at the same time, retaining the ability to know the difference between the "real" self (whom may also be playing a role opposite the doll) and the made-up, projected one.

The essays (Chapters 1 & 3) that belong to this category introduce and exemplify this imaginative process. In Chapter 1, dancers and wives are dollified by writers who act as their admirers, and who project these "dolls" into their own literary scenarios. In Chapter 3, wives literally become "robotic dolls" or synthetic clones of themselves, through the collective desire and scientific/engineering skill of their husbands. In these cases, the consciousness of both the *individual self* (Chapter 1) and the *collective self* (Chapter 3) expands and contracts. In the former instance, the dancers and wives become "dolls" through each individual admirer portraying his own particular fantasy of her in the role or with the persona

or identity that satisfies his current emotional and intellectual needs or desires. Through this imaginative scenario, the admirer can expand his consciousness in terms of “stretching” his general range and/or intensity of emotional responsiveness to life. At the same time, this concept may become simplified, as the emotional aftereffect of the particular scene may contribute to a restricting of their general ability to view women in their lives in more flexible, dimensional, and emotionally adaptable ways. In the latter instance, the collective consciousness of the husbands expands, since they not only succeed in getting the wives they truly want, but manage to achieve this through their own highly developed scientific and technical skills and expertise. At the same time, this achievement may restrict the ability of the men to view women, in general, as goal-oriented, multidimensional human beings like themselves. This could have negative repercussions for how the men relate to say their daughters, for example, thus impeding their opportunity to emotionally benefit through having mutually respectful, genuinely affectionate relationships with “human” females.

My personified idea. This category involves the actual creating of the object, rather than the use of an already existing something or someone as the vehicle for imaginary exploration and representation. Naturally, personification is at work here, as can be dollification as well. The potential mental processing mechanisms include those that transform abstract thoughts, feeling, and emotions into a specific concrete entity that conveys emotional subtly and semiotic complexity. How might this be achieved? Presumably, a primary way is through the bringing together of several unlikely elements in the developing image or object that are then included as parts of the completed entity. These unique and, at times, seemly awkward configurations, have a deep personal significance, resonance, and harmony for the particular self who has created them.

The following brain--mind--environment patterns may be part and parcel of this imaginative process. One is the ability of the brain to generate *nuance* (Pavlik-Malone, 2010; Briggs, 1990). A nuance is a subtlety of feeling or perception that often is not readily accessible to consciousness and so, cannot be easily expressed to the outside world. For this reason, intra-subjective processes may be substantially at work here. Pavlik-Malone explains how the “mental spotlight” initially described by Evans (2001) may contribute to producing a nuance-based thought or thought-complex. When the “light” is relatively unfocused, thoughts and feelings from increasingly deeper levels of the mind can more readily make their way towards and into consciousness. When this happens, content at these various levels is free to intermingle, thus

enabling more unusual, creative, and highly personal associations to be made. In addition, the psychologist John Briggs describes “nuance cycles”, which include patterns of neuronal energy flow to and from presumed conscious and unconscious areas in the brain. Another ability is the cognitive process of extending the mind into the world (Clark and Chalmers, 1998). Here, a physical object (out in the world) is incorporated into the mental process or mental representation as an integral part of thought, such that without it, a wanted goal would not be achieved nor an anticipated behavior performed. (For instance, using a piece of paper with an address on it, when one does not remember how to get to the destination but still needs to get there.) Interestingly, at times, one can imaginatively create the very object that becomes an integral part of one’s thought. Under these conditions, one may or may not have initially intended to learn what one does about oneself in achieving a finished product that is a more personally ideal or *hyper-real* (Robertson, 2003) version of herself or himself. And thirdly, the ways in which nature (the biosphere) and culture (the semiosphere) can be consciously and unconsciously brought together to create unique and personal mental representations that become objects, is also explored.

The essays (Chapters 2, 3, 4 & 5) that belong to this category illustrate and explore these various psychological dynamics. In essays 2, 3 and 5, the self is one individual who creates an object. In Chapter 2 the object is an adorned doll, created through the intricate dynamics of nuance, The Extended Mind, and hyper-reality, among other mental processes. Here, the doll provides an opportunity for the self to be physically presented to itself in a way that is both similar to and different from the act of looking in a mirror. This process is similar to the bootstrapping described by Modell, except that here, elements of the mind exist both inside the person and outside in the world, establishing a certain kind of embodied experience of thought and action. This can also be characterized as an expansion process, whereby the self has an opportunity to form richer more complete understandings of itself. This process can be achieved through the noticing and contemplating of adornment details that one would not necessarily put on one’s actual person in the first place, or those that one would self-consciously remove from one’s body when looking in a mirror. In Chapter 3, the objects include a visual artist’s etched image, as well as a literary character’s creation of an awesome monster, through the intertwining of nature and culture. In these instances, expansion and contraction processes, like those essentially coming from the *biosphere* (nature) and the *semiosphere* (culture), may work in complementary ways to enable the individual to create new self-understandings, and even halt

her or him from doing so. In Chapter 5, this object is an internal experience that is portrayed as an image of human heads on a shelf, chattering frantically at the character who created it. Here, the mind of this character extends into the world as a *metonymic* relationship between the self and object (the talking heads), enabling her to achieve an insight into the current troubling situation she is in; in this respect, her consciousness expands. Lastly, in chapter 4, the self is collective, in that, presumably, many minds have come together over the course of time to produce a certain highly symbolic image of the clown. Here, expansion and contraction processes seem to work together in a such a way as to successfully hone in on the optimal qualities or characteristics of the overall image desired, both consciously and unconsciously, by the group. This may be the result of many individual minds coming together, so to speak, at all levels of consciousness, to provide certain “embodied parameters” if you will, for both “stretching” and “constricting” the image. The result is a timeless image that is simultaneously flexible and durable.

Now, to the essays.

Part 1:

Dolls

CHAPTER ONE

“THEY’RE ALL OF THEM SO LOVELY”: SEMANTIC EFFECTS OF “DOLLIFICATION” ON FIGURATIVE IMAGES OF WOMEN

“They’re all of them so lovely/ It’s very hard to choose./I like that dark-haired beauty,/ with scarlet coat and shoes./The golden-haired is sweeter,/her eyes are just sky-blue...” (2000: 4). This quote is taken from a poem in a thin, hardcover picture book entitled *Dolls and Why We Love Them*. In these lines, the dolls, and two in particular, are admired by the author for their physical beauty as conveyed through simple poetic verse. Recently, anthropologist A. F. Robertson studied the adjectives used in 247 advertisements for porcelain collector dolls. His analyses showed that *female* dolls are generally described as “beautiful”, “pure”, “dainty”, “hopeful”, and “serene”—adjectives, he says, that suggest a “passive femininity” (2004: 129). Indeed, taken together, these words seem to convey a *lack of power* over another that is unintended, but expected and even desirable. Over a century ago, Ellis and Hall coined the term “dollification” to refer to “...ascribing more or less psychic qualities to the object, and treating it as if it were an animate and sentient thing” (1896: 132). This idea has implications for how a very personal relationship may develop between the self and the object “dollified”.

A study of dolls (1896)

In their pioneering psychological study of dolls, Ellis and Hall issued a detailed questionnaire to 800 teachers and parents. In their own words, “The data desired are juvenile feelings, acts, or thoughts towards any object which represents a baby or a child” (1896: 129). Thus, according to these authors, any object can become “dollified” through the eyes of a child. “...Nothing resists the childish instinct to find or make dolls out of everything, and stones, books, balls, buttons, stove hooks, nails, bricks, wash-boards, flowers, pins, articles of food, objects with no trace of

anything that can be called face, limbs, or head, are made dolls (1896:159). The following is a detailed description of how, specifically, a certain object (flowers) was “dollified” by one correspondent when she/he was a child.

...I often took pansies for dolls because of their human faces; the rose I revered too much to play with, it was my best wax doll, dressed in her prettiest, but always sitting in state in a bid chair in some secluded corner where little visitors would not spy her out. I loved these nature dolls far better than the prettiest store dolls and ascribed special psychic qualities to them. The hepaticas seemed delicate children to be tenderly cared for but which soon drooped and faded. Violets were sturdy little ones which enjoyed a frolic and could be played with. The pansy was a willing, quick, bright flower child, the rose her grown up sister, pretty, always charmingly dressed, but a quiet and sedate spectator. Violets were shy, good natured children, but their pansy cousins were often naughty and would not play (1896: 133).

Although to a child, anything with or without “face, limbs, or head” may easily become a *doll*, the physical presence of any of these features in the object may make it more inclined towards dollification since, as phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty states, “...evidence of the perceived thing lies in its concrete aspect, in the very texture of its qualities...” (1964: 6). So, an object imagined to be like a sentient being may be more inclined to have a certain physical part that *could* resemble a face, a limb, or a head, for instance, in some way, e.g., “I often took pansies for dolls because of their human faces...”. Indeed, one can assert that on some abstract, schematic level of cognition, that can influence the subjective nature of imagination (in a child or an adult), the entity itself and *what it is imagined to be* are inextricably tied together. Thus, whether this entity is initially living or non-living, human or not, the imagination of the self or subject and physical reality of the “object” are schematically, as well as idiosyncratically, intertwined.

Figurative images “dollified”

Lakoff and Johnson have asserted the inseparable nature of the subject and the object. These authors state that “...there are no objects—with—descriptions—and—categorizations existing in themselves...The alternative we propose, embodied realism, relies on the fact that we are coupled to the world through our embodied interactions” (1999: 93). This kind of reality may exist not only in the physical world between subject and object, but also in literary genres such as poetry where imaginary, figurative, and