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## Anatomy of Permutational Desire: Perversion in Hans Bellmer and Oshii Mamoru

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# Anatomy of Permutational Desire: Perversion in Hans Bellmer and Oshii Mamoru

## BELLMER'S ANAGRAMMAR OF PERVERSION

Oshii Mamoru's *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* (2004, *Inosensu*) traces a murder investigation conducted by two Public Security Section 9 detectives, Batou and Togusa. Hadaly 2052 gynoids—sophisticated robot dolls produced by the Locus Solus company—have murdered a series of men. Batou and Togusa eventually learn that a Locus Solus inspector tampered with the dolls' inbuilt ethics code (i.e. the Three Laws of Robotics forbidding robots to harm humans, to disobey the latter's commands, and to do violence to themselves). The gynoids embarked on their killing spree, hoping to call attention to the tragic fate of scores of young girls who had been kidnapped and handed over to Locus Solus for the purpose of “ghost dubbing”—the copying of a human being's “ghost” (consciousness, mind, soul) onto a gynoid's memory hard disk in order to render her more human-like and thus more desirable.<sup>1</sup>

*Inosensu* affords an animated museum of technological and artificial life forms—dolls, robots, automata, and cyborgs. But the Hadaly 2052 gynoids play the central role. Oshii drew inspiration for the gynoids' design from the Doll photographs of surrealist artist Hans Bellmer and from the exquisite

prepubescent girl dolls of Yoshida Ryō. He also curated the exhibition “Dolls of Innocence” for the Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art (February–March 2004), which focused on Bellmer’s art and the Japanese art of ball-jointed dolls (*kyūtai kansetsu ningyō*).<sup>2</sup>

This essay has two main objectives. On the one hand, I will look at the writings of Hans Bellmer (1902–1975) to show how he offers not only a theoretical articulation specific to his work but also a general theory of perversion. On the other hand, I will show how *Inosensu* offers both an homage to, and a subversion of the German artist’s vision of modern perversion. In this first part, I will examine the *anagrammar of perversion* that Bellmer articulated in *The Doll* (1963, *Die Puppe*) and other essays.<sup>3</sup> In subsequent parts, I will consider *Inosensu*’s remediation of Bellmer’s conception of perversion, which allows the anime to produce an aesthetically and conceptually distinctive approach to perversion.

## THE DOLLS

Between 1933 and 1935, in Berlin, Bellmer created two life-size mannequins of young girls that he called Dolls or “artificial girls.” The first Doll consisted of an armature of wood and metal; a torso, a head and a hand made of flax fiber coated with plaster; and of a pair of legs joined to the pelvis by wooden ball joints. The second Doll was mounted around a large, round wooden ball representing the stomach, which in turn was topped by a double pelvis whose curved base allowed for the insertion of ball joints for the legs. Called the Center of the Doll or the Torso, this piece permitted greater freedom of combination, permutation, or reconfiguration of body parts than did the first Doll. These body parts included two identical pairs of legs, two arms, a torso endowed with several breasts, and the head of the first Doll. Round wooden ball joints joined the various segments of the second Doll’s body.

Bellmer produced two series of photographs of the two Dolls. Comprising about thirty photographs, the first series documented various scenarios, in which the first Doll is captured in poses evoking seduction, deprivation, violation, or sadistic punishment. The second series of photographs consisted of roughly one hundred negatives showing variations or rearrangements of the body of the second Doll. The second series developed a sense of narrative potential, with a melodramatic aura reminiscent of cheap crime movies. The sinister, enigmatic, or uncanny atmosphere of the pictures was greatly enhanced by aniline coloring evoking hand-colored postcards from the beginning of the

century and by the severely truncated, multiplied, or doubled body of the Doll.

A selection of ten photographs from the series documenting Bellmer's first Doll appeared in 1934 in a little book entitled *Die Puppe (The Doll)*. Bellmer wrote a short poetic text to accompany the pictures, "Erinnerungen zum Thema Puppe" (Memories of the doll theme), and provided a diagram of the miniature panorama to be inserted into the Doll's belly. A French translation of *Die Puppe, La Poupée*, was published in Paris by GLM in 1936. Bellmer also supervised and designed the French edition, including a two-page spread with eighteen pictures of the first Doll, which had appeared in the surrealist journal *Minotaure* (no. 6, December 1935). These publications paved the way for the French surrealists' fascinated reception of Bellmer's work.

The photos of the second Doll aroused greater enthusiasm among Bellmer's surrealist friends. The poet Paul Éluard wrote a series of prose poems based on Bellmer's second Doll, published in *Messages* in June 1939. Bellmer proposed twenty-four photographs to go with his friend's poems, with the title *Les jeux de la poupée* (The games of the doll) for their projected book. France's declaration of war on Nazi Germany on September 3, 1939, interrupted the publication of *The Games of the Doll*, but Edition Premières (Heinz Berggruen) finally published it in 1949. This edition of *The Games of the Doll* included fourteen poems by Éluard, fifteen hand-colored photographs of the second Doll, and a preface by Bellmer entitled "La jointure à boule" (The ball joint).

In the 1930s, Bellmer also produced a substantial body of drawings, watercolors, gouaches, and collages, as well as object-sculptures such as *La mitrailleuse en état de grâce* (Machine gunneress in a state of grace, 1937/1961). The motifs of the articulated doll, of the mannequin, of the double, and of young girls at play are equally prominent in these works. *Rose ouverte la nuit* (Rose open at night, 1934) shows a young girl tearing the skin from her torso to examine her ribcage and entrails.

In the 1940s and 1950s, Bellmer experimented with surrealist techniques such as *décalcomanie*, and with pornographic pictures of his lover Nora Mitrani. His art lingered on the "cephalopod"—monstrous female creatures consisting of a pair of legs topped by a head, or of two or more heads fitted on or within a serpentine body. He played with variations of *déshabillage* (disrobing, unclothing) in which a female figure peeled back her skin to reveal the innards (sometimes inhabited by another figure, sometimes penetrated by a huge, erect penis in a savage act of rape). Bellmer also created a series of "bondage photographs" of his lover and collaborator Unica Zürn, herself a remarkable writer, poet, and visual artist.

Another project that begins to materialize in the late 1940s would absorb Bellmer's creative energy until the end of his life: illustrations of, and graphic works inspired by, notorious texts of modern erotic literature, including the Marquis de Sade's *La Philosophie dans le boudoir* (1795, *Philosophy in the bedroom*), *Les cent vingt journées de Sodome* (1785, *One Hundred Twenty Days of Sodom*, published 1904, 1931–35), and *Justine ou Les malheurs de la vertu* (1791, *Justine or Good Conduct Well Chastised*); Georges Bataille's *Histoire de l'oeil* (1928, *Story of the Eye*) and *Madame Edwarda* (1937/1941); and Pauline Réage's *Histoire d'O* (1954, *Story of O*).<sup>4</sup>

Among Bellmer's obsessive explorations of sexual desire—the disturbing truncation and mutilation of the female body; the reductive and clichéd envisioning of the female figure as prostitute, as emasculating monster, or as sexually precocious and depraved young girl (especially in his photos and graphic works); the infantile, intrauterine fantasies and the explicitly pornographic images proliferating in the artist's late work, there is no doubt that his two articulated Dolls are highly significant. The Dolls were the point of departure for a life-long journey into erotic art. To understand Bellmer's vision, we need first to consider his theories of eroticism, the unconscious, and the body, which he formulated in particular in the three texts compiled in *The Doll*.

## LITTLE ANATOMY OF BELLMERIAN DESIRE

The essays included in *The Doll* aim to uncover the unconscious principle of sexual desire. They also seek to elucidate the mechanisms, forms, and transformations of the human capacity for expression, above all of imagination and artistic creation. Bellmer describes the former endeavor in terms of making visible the “anatomy of desire,” and the latter in terms of investigating the “anatomy of the image.” These two types of “anatomy” are not rigorous: they are nearly identical, because both reveal the effects of what Bellmer calls the “physical unconscious.” The physical unconscious represents the totality of the continual unconscious transformations of physical sensations aiming at countering or circumventing repression and taboo.

The physical unconscious's ceaseless production of virtual images and projections corresponding to repressed or forbidden desires and fantasies has two main consequences: on the one hand, the ego splits into opposed aspects, “an ego that experiences arousal and an ego that produces arousal”; on the other hand, the individual's body image is constantly altered, and new body images are created. A bodily center of arousal eventually merges with its

virtual double to produce a new body image, and likewise the ego that experiences arousal and the ego that produces arousal are synthesized into a new, superior form of consciousness, a third ego that will be responsible for “its self-maintenance and its (new) reality.”<sup>5</sup>

The above reflections are developed mainly in “Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious,” the most ambitious chapter in *The Doll*. “The Ball-Joint” speculates mainly on the “principle of the universal joint,” also called the “principle of the focal point.” For Bellmer, the Cardan joint best demonstrates this principle whereby an “arrangement of rings which, swiveling crossways, supports an object at their centre in a constant state of equilibrium, undisturbed by outside oscillations” serves to “couple two shafts that both transmit a force, and that are set at an obtuse and variable angle to one another in space.”<sup>6</sup> The Cardan joint (which Bellmer equates with the universal joint and the ball joint) belongs to the realm of the marvelous because it allows two opposed principles—concentricity and eccentricity—to coexist simultaneously, the one implicated within the other. In other words, the artist claims, the inside-out perspective and the outside-in perspective are reversible. The same type of interchangeability or reversibility applies to the individual and the nonindividual, the ego/self and the universe.

“The Ball-Joint” goes on to suggest that the (second) articulated Doll (also based on the “principle of the universal joint”) is a “poetic stimulator” that not only allows concentric and eccentric motion, individual perspective and cosmic-universal perspective to coexist, reinforce, and merge in one another, but also participates in the creation of a third, “higher reality”—an “amalgam of subjective reality and objective reality.”<sup>7</sup>

In “Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious,” Bellmer takes to speculative extremes the principles of doubling of the body image, of reversibility of the doubles, and of the interaction and fusion of opposite laws/realities/notions as premises for the emergence of a third, “higher” (i.e., marvelous, irrational, nonsensical, poetic) reality, which makes the “theoretically scandalous” object into a “poetic stimulator.” The notion of *extroversion*, or the fantasy of the body’s turning inside out, is thus defined as the “wish to see and scandalously expose the inside.” Moreover, for Bellmer, extroversion expresses the reversibility of the sexes. In his desire to identify completely with the beloved woman and to possess her utterly both in the flesh and in the imagination, the loving male subject becomes obsessed with her image to the point of “exchang(ing) the male Self with the female Other in order to sodomise the Self in the Other.” Bellmer thus adds an axiom on the interchangeability of the masculine and feminine body images (or masculine and feminine

principles), and on their potential fusion in the perfect image of the hermaphrodite: “Masculine and feminine images are interchangeable, and both the one and the other tend towards their amalgam, the hermaphrodite.”<sup>8</sup>

This often-quoted axiom seems to anticipate Lacan’s notion of the interchangeability of the subject’s masculine and feminine positions with respect to the phallus as dominant signifier, and Bellmer’s insistence on an analogy between the language of the body (as seen in the body image) and language in general seems to prefigure Lacan’s famous dictum “the unconscious is structured like a language.” Anagrams, palindromes, puns, jokes, reversed writing, and other language games, Bellmer asserts confidently, are the outcome of the same unconscious desires and mechanisms (repression, condensation, displacement of the libido). They are created through much the same rules and principles—permutation, transference, multiplication, division, reversibility, analogy, disassembly, and reassembly—as the body image and other types of bodily expression. To the extent that human language and the human body are produced and undone by desire, and to the extent that each is metamorphic, never identical to itself, language and the body are equivalent and function as doubles or mirror reflections of one another. For Bellmer, the specular relation between language and body results in poetic anagrams; language and body are anagrammatic (de)constructions, each one the flipside of the other.

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The body is comparable to a sentence that appears to invite you to disarticulate it, so that its true contents may be recomposed through an endless series of anagrams.<sup>9</sup>

The anagram is the most productive and unpredictable figure (as method or process) for rendering the “true contents” or unconscious of language, the body, art, and thus for rendering the (image of) woman. The image of woman is thus apt to be “disarticulated and recomposed.” Not only can the woman-image be subjected to continual permutations and transformations “through an endless series of anagrams,” but also she herself becomes an *anagrammatic construction*. As such, the woman not only fulfills her destiny, or “experimental calling,” as the infinitely pliant, manipulable, and recomposable object of male desire but also appears as the living anagram, the magical formula capable of revealing the marvelous, irrational, “true contents” of art or the unconscious.

Only once woman has reached the peak of her experimental calling, is amenable to permutations and algebraic promises, and is willing to submit to transsubstantial whims, only once she is ductile, shrinkable and equipped with an epidermis and joints that are equal to the obvious inconvenience involved in *post-hoc* assembly or disassembly, only then will we finally be able to clarify the anatomy of desire.<sup>10</sup>

The essays included in *The Doll*, then, provide both a theory of and a critical commentary on Bellmer's work. The relevance of these essays for reading of the Doll photographs is evident: the two Dolls are "poetic stimulators," provocative objects that stimulate the imagination and arouse the senses, evoking unexpected, shocking, or scandalous associations. They are also uncanny objects hovering uncertainly "between the poles of the animate and the inanimate," quite literally "mobile, passive, and incomplete thing(s) that can be personified," assemblages of wood, plaster, and compacted tissue paper that do not have a life and mind of their own but "live solely through the thoughts projected onto" them, and whose "dollishness contain[s] the desire and intensity sought in it by the imagination."<sup>11</sup> Bellmer's writings offer an accurate description and theorizing of the articulated Doll's double function, on the one hand as powerful fetish enabling the gratification of the viewer's secret desires and fantasies, and on the other hand as magical poetic object that seems at once to embody the marvelous, the surreal, and the uncanny, and to stimulate the production of artworks that probe these dimensions.

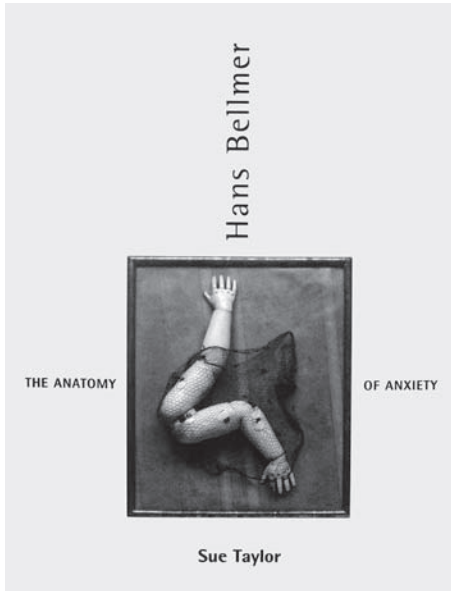
Bellmer's Doll photographs testify to the articulated Doll's function as *plastic anagram*, as an experimental object by means of which one can test *the anagrammatic nature of the body and language alike*: the intrinsic combinatorial materiality of both the bodily unconscious and the linguistic unconscious allows them to reinvent themselves through constant dislocations, permutations, and recombinations, and to produce new poetic images, unexpected new meanings. The many photographs of the second Doll show rearrangements or variations of its centerpiece (a round belly ball joint with two attached pelvises): a red-tinted Doll consisting of two opposing, identical pairs of legs wearing a school girl's white socks and black shiny shoes, leaning

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against a tree in an ambiguous posture (Figure 1); a monstrous assemblage consisting of the same two pairs of legs topped by a torso with multiple breasts, a head, and an arm; the same aberrant torso with four breasts and a sightless young girl's half-bald head, sitting precariously on the margin of a sink; the arrangement of two pairs of girl's legs lying in a twisted position on a bare wooden floor, with one pair of legs pressed akimbo against a wall and

a mirror. Such images can surely be interpreted, as Thérèse Lichtenstein, Malcolm Green, and others have noted, as records of anagrammatic permutations in which the Doll is presented as the result of a process of taking apart, shuffling, and recomposing the mannequin to produce a new entity. The pictures of the first and second Doll clearly corroborate Bellmer's assertion that the body and the sentence/language are interchangeable anagrammatic constructions, each appearing "to invite you to disarticulate it so that its true contents may be recomposed through an endless series of anagrams."<sup>12</sup>

If I linger on the continuity between Bellmer's art and writings, it is to highlight the challenge it poses to the tendency of scholarship on Bellmer to psychoanalyze the artist and his art. It is certainly legitimate to see Bellmer's Doll photographs as dramatic *mises-en-scène* of sadism, masochism, castration anxiety, fetishism, or of a "negative" Oedipal complex manifesting itself as a desire for revenge against the father, or of a penchant for transvestism, or womb envy. One can also discern a critique of official Nazi art and of Nazi mass culture that reinscribes, however unwittingly, the authoritarian patriarchal values it abhors. Nevertheless, I wish to signal the importance of Bellmer's essays for an informed, carefully contextualized reading of his works.<sup>13</sup> I have two goals in doing so: First, I propose to show that Bellmer's theory of the physical unconscious may also be regarded as a theory of the anagram and of the anagrammar of the unconscious, which both responds to and rewrites the Freudian theory of the anagrammatic nature of the unconscious. Second, I shall argue that Bellmer's theory of the



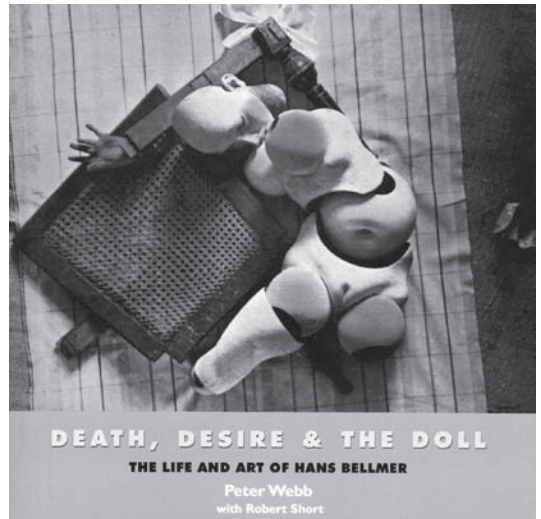
**FIGURE 1.** Cover of Sue Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000). Details of the cover image: Hans Bellmer, "Jointure à boule (Ball Joint)," 1936, mixed media (52×45.5×7cm).

anagrammatic unconscious is doubled by—or is the flipside of—a metaphysics of perversion that ground a poetics and aesthetics of perversion.

## FREUD'S ANAGRAMMARS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS AND BELLMER'S METAPHYSICS OF PERVERSION

In “The Ball-Joint,” Bellmer writes that the Doll is a “poetic stimulator” whose “subjective reality” may enter into various combinations with the “objective reality” of the world—a tree, a chair, the steps in the house, a forest—in order to form an amalgam “of a far higher reality because it is simultaneously subjective and objective.”<sup>14</sup> This amalgam can itself function as a “poetic stimulator” by generating poetic images—the basic material of art. This is precisely Bellmer’s method in his photographs of the second Doll, which appears propped up against a tree, seated on a chair, strewn in bits and pieces along a flight of steps, or barely holding together as an assemblage of body parts that seems to have grown uncannily out of broken chair (Figure 2).

The “Ball-Joint” essay mentions other methods to induce the Doll to transcend its condition as a “mobile, passive, and incomplete thing” and to assume its function as poetic stimulator: “dismantlement, permutation, fusion, the cross-section . . . coloring, substitution.”<sup>15</sup> In his experiments with the second Doll, Bellmer gives precedence to permutation—the operation of exchanging or substituting one object (or set of objects) for another object (or set), producing new combinations. Through permutation the Doll becomes a living, mutable thing, an object capable of generating an enormous number of combinations that seem to promise exponential growth and proliferation of desire, creativity, and the imagination, an overproduction of alternative fantasies. This surplus of possible Dolls, of new



**FIGURE 2.** Cover of Peter Webb with Robert Short, *Death, Desire, and the Doll: The Life and Art of Hans Bellmer* (London: Solar Books, 2006). Originally published under the title *Hans Bellmer* (London: Quartet Books, 1985). Details of the cover image: “The Second Doll” (Paris: Editions Filipacchi, 1983).

ways of manipulating and reinventing the fetish or the other, also implies an indefinite deferral of gratification, a suspension of desire in a limbo of constant arousal and expectations. “Throughout my combinations of doll parts or combinations of more or less complete sections of the ‘Doll,’” writes Bellmer, “I have found some that had no meaning, which do not provoke the feeling of the ‘probable’ or the ‘desired’—and that communicated absolutely nothing. On the other hand I have found some that arouse me in an incomparable way.”<sup>16</sup> Such pleasurable-painful deferral of fulfillment is the very condition for and structure of perversion.

By the mid-1950s, the concept of permutation had become for Bellmer synonymous with the anagram, and the body itself seemed to have metamorphosed into—or rather to have finally revealed its nature as—linguistic material, a language or arrangement of sentences allowing for indefinite disassembly and reassembly, a curious anagrammatic invention allowing for rebus-like play: “The body is comparable to a sentence that appears to invite you to disarticulate it, so that its true contents may be recomposed through an endless series of anagrams.”

By 1967, the permutational drive in Bellmer’s works seems to have taken the next step: now completely reversible, language and the body seem to have divested themselves of everything but their combinatorial libido, shining forth as pure anagrams—indeed as *pure anagrammars*: “The sentence is comparable to a body that appears to invite you to disarticulate it, so that its true contents may be recomposed through an endless series of anagrams.” In other words, it took Bellmer some thirty years to fully articulate a theory—the theory of the anagrammar of the unconscious—that he had already made manifest in his experiments with the second Doll. It took the artist three decades to realize the possibilities opened in his experiments with the first and second Doll. What is particularly intriguing about Bellmer’s psychoanalytic theory of the anagrammar of the (physical) unconscious is not only that it completes (and rewrites) the anagrammatic theory implicit in Freud, but also that it takes the form of a poetics, aesthetics and metaphysics of perversion. What is Freud’s contribution to a psychoanalytic theory of the anagram, and what is Bellmer’s interpretation of this contribution?

In a recent stimulating article, Andrea Bachner contends that a consistent, systematic engagement with the concepts, theories, and poetics of the anagram in psychoanalysis—what she calls “anagrammatizing psychoanalysis”—opens up fascinating new perspectives on psychoanalysis. Starting from a more inclusive notion of the anagram—one that designates simultaneously “a process (consisting) in a disassembling and reassembling of parts

of the same basic material,” and “a meeting place of different sign systems . . . (which) does not have to consist of only one of these systems . . . (and) which makes the combinatorial character of sign systems visible”—Bachner traces the (re)articulations, displacements, and implicit theorizations of this process and figure in Freud, Lacan, and Lyotard.<sup>17</sup> Of particular interest for my purposes here is Bachner’s discussion of the “anagrammatics of the unconscious” in Freud.

Bachner argues that, in important Freudian texts such as *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900, *Die Traumdeutung*), *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905, *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten*), *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*), and *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1917, *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*), we find conceptualizations of the processes underlying dreamwork, jokes, and slips of the tongue—displacement, condensation, and secondary revision—in terms of permutational, combinatorial operations displaying strong anagrammatic traits. The two main processes at work in the unconscious, namely, displacement (*Verschiebung*) and condensation (*Verdichtung*), as well as the process of transposing signs from one system into another, are also conceived in terms of anagrammatic permutation and recombination. The implication, in Bachner’s opinion, is that the Freudian grammar of the unconscious is actually an *anagrammar*. This insight allows a two-fold rearticulation of Freudian theory: First, the psyche should be seen as an agon between the destructive, dissipating forces of Thanatos and the binding, combinatorial forces of Eros, or as what Freud described as “a battlefield for the struggle of opposite tendencies” (*ein Kampf- und Tummelplatz entgegengesetzter Tendenzen*). Second, the psychic topography theorized by Freud would have to be reframed in terms of different constraints put upon the processes of disassembling and reassembling that take place in each of the three systems of the mind—the unconscious, the preconscious, and the conscious.

Bachner’s first point above invites us to rethink the dynamics of pleasure and repression. While pleasure is inherent in both Thanatos and Eros, the two forces cannot exist independently; each is fully implicated in the other. As such, the libido and the death drive are “both fulfilled and cancelled out in their mutual game.” Her second point suggests that the boundaries between the unconscious, the preconscious, and the conscious are very fluid, yet reinforces the importance of language in each of these zones.<sup>18</sup>

Bellmer was aware that his thinking on the anagram was indebted to an anagrammatic theory that had remained a latent possibility in Freud. He refers to Freud in “The Ball-Joint,” in “Little Anatomy of the Physical

Unconscious,” and in his letters. His axiomatic enunciation of various theoretical propositions in “Little Anatomy” recalls Freud. And finally, in his correspondence and recorded conversations, he makes clear that his theory of the anagrammatic unconscious constituted a contribution to psychoanalysis, and in particular to Freudian theory.<sup>19</sup>

Bellmer’s theory of the anagrammatic (physical) unconscious, then, uncovers and realizes the underlying anagrammar in Freud’s thinking about the unconscious, the libido, and the death drive. He deploys a series of strategies. For instance, he uses Freud’s reflections on the capacity of dreamwork to unite opposite elements, and on the tendency in certain primitive languages to use only one word or term for designating opposite qualities or activities, in the service of what he calls the principle of the synthesis of opposites in a “third, higher reality.” Moreover, he deploys the concept of the body image—borrowed from Freudian psychologists Paul Schilder and Jean Lhermitte—reading it in terms of symbolic, combinatorial image production that also illuminates the anagrammatic nature of the unconscious. He also resorts to citations, illustrations, and demonstrations culled from such disparate fields as mechanics, topology, astronomy, hysteria, and mediumship, which he masterfully condenses in the figure of the Doll as living anagram of male desire.<sup>20</sup> What distinguishes Bellmer’s theory of the anagram(mar) of the physical unconscious from Freud’s implicit anagrammar of the psyche is Bellmer’s insistence on the anagram as figure, expression, and constitutive process of the unconscious, body, language, and art. Bellmer envisions this anagrammar as poetics or aesthetics—as his ample use of photographs, drawings, and anagram poems attests.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the Bellmerian theory of the anagram(matic unconscious) is doubled by a metaphysics of perversion whose formulation is as blatant and explicit as it is deftly camouflaged.

Many commentators have discussed the photographs of the first and second Doll found in *The Doll* in terms of perversions such as sadism, masochism, and fetishism. They have called attention to the stereotyped, sensationalist representation of victimized, depraved, or criminal female characters in German popular culture from the late nineteenth century to the Weimar Republic (e.g., cheap serial novels and *Schundfilme* or “junk films”); and to the aesthetics of the doll, the automaton, and the marionette both in avant-garde art and in interwar European mass culture. It is easy to see, in the closing paragraphs of “Memories of the Doll Theme,” a dramatization of sadistic fantasies of revenge against young girls whom the artist had secretly admired and desired in his childhood and adolescence.<sup>22</sup> But rather than read Bellmer’s art as an expression of his perversion or that of German culture,

I would like to call attention to his highly original theory of an *anagrammar of perversion*, which begins with an emphasis on the splitting of the ego in “The Images of the Self,” the first chapter of “Little Anatomy.”

Bellmer refers to a “spirit of contradiction in the organism that entertains fairly irrational intentions and (that) has a penchant for the absurd, if not exactly the scandalous,”<sup>23</sup> which is also a

fine description of the disavowals characteristic of perversion. And his ideas about the splitting of the ego resonate with Sartre’s theorization of “a new synthesis of the Other,” and with Joan Copjec’s conceptualization of “the splitting of consciousness” found in perversion. Such splitting results from the subject’s attempt to unite or reconcile opposite, incompatible tendencies such as “an ego that experiences arousal and an ego that produces arousal” in a “new form of the ego,” a “third reality,” or a new body image.

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre assesses the disavowal at work in sadism: the pervert/sadist attempts to conjoin or unite opposite notions of desire and the law, gaze and vision, conscious and unconscious within a new synthesis of the Other. He attempts to force the Other to be both “an actual person and a transcendent condition of possibility.” What arouses the sadist’s desire is not so much the scene of torture he stages or the sight of his victim’s pain and suffering but rather the victim’s free decision “to identify with the tortured flesh.”<sup>24</sup> For the pervert/sadist there is no contradiction, no conflict between his desire, the law as absolute authority, and the representative of the law: for instance, for Sade there was no gap, no antinomy whatsoever between his mother-in-law, Madame de Montreuil, and the law as state institution. To Sade, Madame de Montreuil represented the law itself: infallible and contingent, endowed with absolute authority, and grotesque. Forged in the furnace of disavowal, the Other of the pervert is thus “arbitrary, relative, and yet absolute in its power.”<sup>25</sup>

In her illuminating discussion of perversion in *Imagine There Is No Woman*, Joan Copjec argues that the pervert’s splitting of consciousness occurs as a result of his inability to subjectivize his perverse, transgressive acts, which he perceives as the absolute command or injunction of the Other or of the law. Another factor in the pervert’s splitting of consciousness is his renunciation or disavowal of pleasure in order to assume it as a duty that he has been

WHAT DISTINGUISHES BELLMER’S THEORY OF THE ANAGRAM(MAR) OF THE PHYSICAL UNCONSCIOUS FROM FREUD’S IMPLICIT ANAGRAMMAR OF THE PSYCHE IS BELLMER’S INSISTENCE ON THE ANAGRAM AS FIGURE, EXPRESSION, AND CONSTITUTIVE PROCESS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS, BODY, LANGUAGE, AND ART.

contracted to fulfill. *Jouissance* becomes a service performed by the pervert on behalf of the Other. Freud's comments on fetishism suggest that there is considerable hostility in the fetishist's worship of the fetish: the Chinese male's reverence for the woman whose feet were bound and mutilated for his pleasure seems to disguise a special kind of gratitude, as if he were thanking the woman for having submitted to torture. Copjec turns to Lacan's intervention in the debate on perversion in "Kant with Sade." She concludes that in sadism it may be the other way round: the victim thanks or is expected to thank the torturer for torturing her. Or perhaps "the pervert reveres the Other precisely by torturing him/(her)."<sup>26</sup>

Copjec cautions us that acts of transgression in perversion cannot be confused with the ethical action of the Kantian moral subject. The pervert can afford to be indifferent toward the laws and institutions of his society because his hatred has been transposed onto (or has materialized in) the social ideological apparatus, or the big Other, which appears (as Freud noted) to hate on his behalf. If the Kantian subject's indifference stems from a structural "out-of-jointness" with or revolt against his or her world, the categorical moral imperative that forces him or her to abandon this stance and take radical ethical action on behalf of his suffering fellow men and women has nothing to do with the pervert's (fantasized) ineluctable law. Ultimately then, to understand perversion, one has to stop thinking of sexuality as "a relation between a subject and an other, or object-choice deemed to be either correct or incorrect, normal or deviant." Perversion, like neurosis and psychosis, should be conceived in terms of a psychic structure encompassing various types of relations, including one's relation to the big Other or the totality of laws and institutions governing the social world. As psychical structures, the notions of neurosis, psychosis, and perversion reveal more affinities with Heidegger's notion of *Existentialen*, or formal conditions for the possibility of being-in-the-world, than with late-nineteenth-century psychology's concept of clinical "pathologies," which Freudian theory inherited. Copjec stresses that the philosophical significance of perversion lies less in the superficial similarities that can be detected between its structural defiance and the disjunction between the modern subject and its world than in the way it illuminates a peculiarly rigid, obsessional type of being-in-the-world, a specific kind of fantasmatic social and libidinal relations.<sup>27</sup>

Bellmer's initial description of the formation of a new body image through the ego's simultaneous division into and reunification of opposite responses to desire and other external stimuli seems to anticipate Sartre's and Copjec's conceptualization of the pervert's splitting of consciousness

as a characteristic form of disavowal. And, in subsequent chapters of “Little Anatomy,” Bellmer presents a more ambitious articulation of these issues, which culminates in a full-fledged theory of perversion. His description of the woman, quoted below, as living fetish, as a permutational, pliant, and submissive body that seems endlessly de- and recomposable in accordance with the male lover’s/pervert’s desires and fantasies, appears as a shorthand for—indeed, as a miniature dictionary of—perversion’s odd behaviors and being-in-the-world as envisioned by Copjec and other theorists. The woman here is posited both as a victim and as an absolute, merciless Other commanding the lover to mistreat her. While the perverse male lover seems, in this instance at least, to disavow “the physical act of love” in favor of the imagination’s unbearable suspense and deferrals, he clearly sees the woman as what Copjec (in the wake of Sartre’s theorization of the Sadean libertine / the Sadist) has described as both “an actual person and a transcendent condition of possibility.”

Only once woman has reached the peak of her experimental calling, is amenable to permutations and algebraic promises, and is willing to submit to transsubstantial whims, only once she is ductile, shrinkable and equipped with an epidermis and joints that are equal to the obvious inconveniences involved in post-hoc assembly and disassembly, only then will we finally be able to clarify the anatomy of desire. And far more precisely than permitted by the physical act of love—a practice by which everyone deciphers the reality of the imagined, but whose documentation persists in being restricted to subjective evidence. The living, three-dimensional object suggests its possible metamorphoses, though without actually undergoing them; they would in any case remain beyond the powers of photography.<sup>28</sup>

In Bellmer’s subsequent elaboration of the male pervert’s desire in “Little Anatomy,” the woman is no longer a mere “living, three-dimensional (fetish) object” but the living material for actual bondage with iron wire, various torments, and even (a possible) murder. Still obeying the woman’s / the law’s / the absolute Other’s (imagined) commands, the pervert-criminal’s transgression now openly and unabashedly attempts to force a convergence between “his elementary certainties, the geometrical and algebraic habits of his thoughts” (note the implacable, obsessive certainty and mathematical regularity of the pervert’s desire) and “the image of the woman,” while at the same time endeavoring to effectuate an equally forced fusion of the natural and the artificial, desire and the law, reality and fantasy in his very transgressive act

(or through the tortured flesh of the woman). Once again the woman is envisioned as suffering body, as “transcendent condition of possibility,” as well as immanent presence (the woman is compared to Diana of Ephesus, the very signifier for the fertility of nature and/or the female).

In order to establish objective proofs we shall have to resort to the craftsman, turned criminal by his most humanly sensitive and beautiful passion: the wall between woman and her image must be demolished.

According to a certain photographic image that has remained an unfading memory, a man had haphazardly bound his victim’s thighs, shoulders, chest, back, and belly with strong iron wire in order to deform her. Tightly crisscrossed, it produced swollen cushions of flesh, irregular . . . triangles . . . creating hitherto unseen multiplications of breasts in indescribable places.

*Notes:* the statue of Diana of Ephesus was a black cone bristling with breasts. Le Nötre, the practical fusion of the natural with the imagined: just as the gardener forces the box tree to exist as a cone, sphere, or cube, so will man force his elementary certainties, the geometrical and algebraic habits of his thoughts, upon the image of a woman.<sup>29</sup>

The “arbitrary, relative, and yet absolutely powerful Other” that causes a splitting of consciousness in the pervert in the sense that the latter perceives his/her transgressive activity as the Other’s will or command is conceived in “Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious or the Anatomy of the Image” in at least three ways: as a You (or Thou), a rather ambiguous notion that may designate the Other *tout court*, the external world or the environment, as well as a sense of transcendence; as woman in general, as well as the male subject’s/pervert’s ideal victim-partner; and finally as the universe itself. The You (*das Du* in the original German text) is described in the third chapter of “Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious” as “a feature of the outside world, an already existing image that is ready to assume the role of a virtual focus of arousal,” and which can be anything: a tree, a stone, any object in which a perceptual image and a memory image can merge, producing the phenomenon of perception. The image resulting from “this marriage of perception and imagination,” argues Bellmer, has two major characteristics: a special intensity, “which probably ensues from the . . . *violence involved in establishing the equivalence of two merely similar, perhaps dissimilar, or even extremely different images,*” and the fact that it assumes the role of a “*doppelgänger . . . that saves me from contorting my own self, for it does so in my stead.*”<sup>30</sup> This account of perversion presents an almost literal description of the violence involved in the

transgressive act, which forces two “dissimilar, or even extremely different” (read “opposite”) notions to coalesce, and which projects onto the outside world or its representative the pervert’s hatred or *ressentiment*, or an external Other, this Other being the one that “does the contorting . . . in (my)/his stead,” or “hates on (my)/his behalf.” As if this description were not explicit enough, the text adds that the experience of adhering simultaneously to two conflicting (or “very dissimilar”) ideas, of forcing them to merge, and of transferring one’s hatred onto an external Other who “hates on our behalf” is very similar to dreamwork insofar as both the processes of dreamwork and the transgressions of perversion are triggered by “prohibition” and also because both dreams and perversion may involve “sadism, or at the very least aggressiveness!”<sup>31</sup>

THE BELLMERIAN WOMAN IS THUS ACCORDED A DOUBLE “PRIVILEGE.” ON THE ONE HAND SHE EMBODIES THE ACT AND PRINCIPLE OF SODOMY AS THE VERY ESSENCE OF PERVERSION. ON THE OTHER HAND SHE IS DESTINED TO INTRODUCE THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REVERSIBILITY OF THE SEXES, AND OF THEIR POTENTIAL FUSION IN THE CONCEPT OF THE HERMAPHRODITE, INTO THE SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATION.

As for the woman as (the pervert’s) Other, she is conceived, as we saw above, as an experimental object, a substitute for the anagrammatic Doll, who like the Doll is “born of division, subtraction and multiplication, but also of the interchangeability that mathematicians call ‘permutation’” and thus may be reduced to the “impossible formula . . . of a synthetic Eve . . . (or) the woman with no heart.” She is also the one who inexorably forces the man to “exchange (his) male Self with the female Other in order to sodomise his Self in the Other.”<sup>32</sup> As an absolute Other who has no existence, no *raison d’être* outside the realm of the male pervert’s sadistic, obscene fantasies, the Bellmerian woman is thus accorded a double “privilege.” On the one hand she embodies the act and principle of sodomy as the very essence of perversion—that infamous principle of non(re)production, of total lack of exchange or market value, which Klossowski regarded as the epitome of the Sadean ideal of transgression, and which he described as a “*geste spécifique de contre-généralité*” (a specific gesture of countergenerality or counterproductivity), and as an “act of useless jouissance.”<sup>33</sup> On the other hand she is destined to introduce the principle of the reversibility of the sexes, and of their potential fusion in the concept of the hermaphrodite, into the system of representation: “Masculine and feminine images are interchangeable, and both the one and the other tend towards their amalgam, the hermaphrodite.”

Often regarded as a monstrous aberration of or contradiction in the laws of nature, the figure of the hermaphrodite also epitomizes, in the Bellmerian system, the disavowal of sexual difference characteristic of perversion.<sup>34</sup>

The third important figuration of the absolute Other of perversion in “Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious” is none other than the universe itself. In a striking passage at the end of the essay, Bellmer describes a kind of epiphany during which the ego and the universe, or the individual and the nonindividual, become interchangeable and merge into one another. The notion of the “super-rational” articulated in this passage is paradoxical: at once thoroughly materialistic, ironic, and grounded, and at the same time aspiring for transcendence. It presupposes an ego or self that is simultaneously indistinguishable from the universe, and that can function as an autonomous singularity. Never identical to itself, this self is an anagram, a process of constant fragmentation, displacement, and recombination. What is perverse in the Bellmerian conception of the anagrammatic body or experimental being is precisely the simultaneous acknowledgment and disavowal of the voracious, infinite metamorphosis of desire, which not only mocks the ego’s claim to integrity but at the same time imagines itself as the origin and the very law of creation itself.

For a brief instant the individual and non-individual become interchangeable and the terror of the ego’s mortal limitations in time and space is extinguished. The void ceases to be when everything a person is not is added to him; only then does he appear to be “himself.” He appears to exist in the universe with all of his most singular data yet simultaneously be independent of himself. It is in such heightened moments of resolution that a thrill of fearless horror is transformed into an intensified feeling for life, into an illusion: the sense that one is participating, beyond the span between birth and death, in the existence of a tree, in the YOU, in the fate of inevitable chance, yet remains Self, as an echo—on the other side.

It may be hoped that such considerations will free the question of the “super-rational” from speculative confusion. This unknown can now be placed at the focal point of human behavior for the purpose of passionate and unceasing elucidation; it has become experimental.<sup>35</sup>

The Bellmerian desire to control, not only the woman and the ego but also the (un)making of the world or of the universe itself, is clearly enabled by perversion. In all the essays we have examined, and in particular in “Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious,” Bellmer strives to articulate a theory, or

anagrammar, of perversion that can function simultaneously as a metaphysics, an aesthetics, or poetics, and even as a “science” of the latter.<sup>36</sup> (“Science” refers here to the artist’s mobilizing of mathematics, psychology, alchemy, physics, psychoanalysis, and criminal anthropology to conceptualize the anagrammatic theory he envisioned.<sup>37</sup>) The “metaphysical” bent is especially apparent in passages such as the one quoted above on the merger of the self/ego and the universe. What we see in such passages is an unequivocal expression of the pervert’s *world without others*, which Deleuze has conceptualized as a vision in which the structure-Other, or the primary structure of the a priori Other that makes the world possible, is missing. In this perverse world, argues Deleuze in *The Logic of Sense*, the category of the necessary has replaced that of the possible, and the “others” inhabiting it are no longer perceived by the pervert as real others or as concrete terms actualizing the structure-Other, but as bodies-victims, as accomplices-doubles, and as accomplices-elements. It is a world in which the cause of desire is separated from its objects, sexual difference is disavowed, and the pervert feels free to direct his desire at the sun, the sky, the sea, or the entire universe. The perverse structure ruling the pervert’s world is one in which an “Other-cide” or an “altrucide”—the murder of the Other and the possible—is inherent.<sup>38</sup>

**WHAT IS PERVERSE IN THE BELLMERIAN CONCEPTION OF THE ANAGRAMMATIC BODY OR EXPERIMENTAL BEING IS PRECISELY THE SIMULTANEOUS ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND DISAVOWAL OF THE VORACIOUS, INFINITE METAMORPHOSIS OF DESIRE, WHICH NOT ONLY MOCKS THE EGO’S CLAIM TO INTEGRITY BUT AT THE SAME TIME IMAGINES ITSELF AS THE ORIGIN AND THE VERY LAW OF CREATION ITSELF.**

The subject or self that becomes indistinguishable from the universe in the conclusion of “Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious” is that of a pervert living in a world without others: the figures of the doll, of the woman-as-living-anagram, of the willing victim whose body was tightly bound with iron wire by the “craftsman turned criminal by his beautiful passion,” or of the female cephalopod, consisting merely of a head and a pair of legs, function as accomplices-doubles, or as bodies-victims, rather than as real others. The pervert’s merger with the universe is conceived as an “illusion” in which the world’s elements—“a tree, the YOU, the fate of inevitable chance”—appear as shadow doubles or as what Deleuze calls “liberated accomplices-elements,” and in which the (pervert’s) self also seems doubled “as an echo—on the other side.” The “super-rational unknown” animating the Bellmerian

pervert's world-without-others is a perverse structure—what Bellmer called the “*principe de perversion*” (principle or law of perversion).

Bellmer's theory or anagrammar of perversion, then, is consistent with his career-long experiment with transgressive eroticism, perverse fantasies, pornography, and visions of death. The artist appears to have succeeded, as he stated late in his life, in engineering a “direct contact” between his work and the “principle of perversion.”<sup>39</sup> The creativity and imagination that were liberated by this privileged “contact,” however, ultimately proved very limited, producing an often inspired, yet violently misogynistic, pornographic, and oppressive art of “illusion” and “useless jouissance,” rather than producing the radical “revolution” envisioned by Bretonian surrealism.<sup>40</sup>

*Inosensu's* stylish, postcyberpunk-noirish aesthetic is considerably broader in scope and more radical in its politics and effects than the Bellmerian “experimental” paradigm of the *principe de perversion*. Yet it owes a great deal to Bellmer.

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## Notes

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1. A Production I. G. film, *Inosensu* was released in Japan in March 2004 and in the United States in September of the same year. It was a finalist for the Palme d'Or at the 2004 Cannes Festival. *Inosensu* was awarded the Japan SF Grand Prix (Nihon SF Taishō) in 2004. It has generated spin-offs such as Yamada Masaki's prequel novel, *After the Long Goodbye*. Isaac Asimov's famous Three Laws of Robotics were first introduced in a 1942 short story entitled “Runaround.” Batou's name, which appears in katakana, could also be romanized “Batō.”

2. While the design of the Hadaly gynoids is indebted to Bellmer and to the work of Yoshida Ryō, the hacker Kim was modeled on *Otoko* (Man), a life-size mannequin by Yotsuya Shimon (also known as Yotsuya Simon). Yoshida and Yotsuya are well-known doll artists who have acknowledged their indebtedness to Bellmer. On *Inosensu's* engagement with the art of Bellmer, Yoshida Ryō, and Yotsuya Shimon, see *Roman Album: Inosensu/Innocence* (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 2004), 3, 27; Oshii Mamoru and Sakakiyama Yūko, “Keishiki toshite no Nihon, ningyō, anime” (Japan, dolls, and anime as landscape), *Yuriika* 37, no. 5 (May 2005): 106–15; Oshii Mamoru, *Inosensu sōsaku nōto: Ningyō, kenchiku,shintai no tabi purasu taidan* (Production notes on *Inosensu: Dolls, architecture, the body, and interviews*), (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 2004), 19–55; Ogawa Chieko, “Tasha toshite no ningyōsei to Nihonjin” (Dollhood as alterity and the Japanese), *Yuriika* 37, no. 5 (May 2005): 55–57; and Oshii Mamoru and Yotsuya Shimon, “Hito wa naze ningyō wo tsukuru no ka” (Why do we make dolls?), in Oshii, *Inosensu sōsaku nōto*, 244–62. The *Dolls of Innocence* exhibition

was held at the Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art from February 7 to March 21, 2004. It featured works by doll makers such as Yotsuya Shimon, Yoshida Ryō, Koitsuki Hime, Akiyama Mahoko, and Amano Katan, as well as a selection of Bellmer's famous Doll pictures. A stimulating recent study of *Inosensu's* remediation of Bellmer's work is Steven T. Brown, "Machinic Desires: Hans Bellmer's Dolls and the Technological Uncanny in *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*," in *Mechademia* 3 (2008): 222–53. Brown argues that *Inosensu's* exploration of the trope of the uncanny is a by-product of the movie's remediation of Hans Bellmer's Dolls, where I am concerned with the theory and aesthetic of perversion in both Bellmer's work and Oshii's anime.

3. Bellmer's essays constitute an intriguing body of texts that has until recently been underestimated. The earliest essay, "Memories of the Doll Theme," was published in 1934 at the author's expense. The second important essay, "The Ball-Joint," was included in *The Games of the Doll* (1949). *Petite anatomie de l'inconscient physique ou l'Anatomie de l'image* (Little anatomy of the physical unconscious or the anatomy of the image) was published in 1957. This slim volume expanded on the reflections articulated in "Memories of the Doll Theme" and "The Ball-Joint." Bellmer continued to revise both the earlier essays on the first and second Doll, and the texts included in *Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious* until the early 1960s. A final edition of all these essays was published in Germany in 1963 under the title *Die Puppe* (Berlin: Gerhardt Verlag); translated by Malcolm Green as *The Doll* (London: Atlas Press, 2005). Bellmer's *Petite anatomie de l'inconscient physique* (Paris: Le Terrain vague, 1957) is translated by Jon Graham as *Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious, or the Anatomy of the Image* (Waterbury Center, Vt.: Dominion Press, 2004). My discussion of Bellmer's essays in this article is indebted mainly to the studies of Malcolm Green, Pierre Dourthe, Jon Graham, and Sue Taylor. See Malcolm Green, "Introduction," in Hans Bellmer, *The Doll*, 7–30; Pierre Dourthe, *Bellmer, le principe de perversion* (Bellmer: The principle of perversion) (Paris: Jean-Pierre Faur, 1999), 123–57; Jon Graham, "Bellmer: Desertion and Desire," in Hans Bellmer, *Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious, or The Anatomy of the Image*, xi–xviii; Sue Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety*, 39–54, 99–104, 120–26, 212–18; and Pierre Dourthe, "Transformation et maîtrise du corps" (Transformation and mastery of the body) in *Hans Bellmer: Anatomie du désir*, ed. Agnès de la Beaumelle, 37–45 (Paris: Éditions Gallimard/Centre Pompidou, 2006). Unless otherwise indicated, citations of Bellmer's texts are from Green's translation.

4. For informative, recent studies and exhibition catalogs of Bellmer's work, see Peter Webb with Robert Short, *Death, Desire, and the Doll: The Life and Art of Hans Bellmer* (London: Solar Books, 2008); Michael Semff and Anthony Spira, eds., *Hans Bellmer* (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2006); Agnès de la Beaumelle, ed., *Hans Bellmer: Anatomie du désir* (Hans Bellmer: Anatomy of desire); Therese Lichtenstein, *Behind Closed Doors: The Art of Hans Bellmer* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001); Sue Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000); Pierre Dourthe, *Bellmer: Le principe de perversion*.

5. See Bellmer, *The Doll*, 106–12. Bellmer's notion of the body image relies on Paul Schilder's and Jean Lhermitte's theorization of the latter in *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body* (New York: International Universities Press, 1978 [1935]) and *L'image de notre corps* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998 [1939]), respectively. Schilder defines the body image (which he also calls bodily schema or postural model of the body) as "the tri-dimensional

image everybody has about himself . . . (an image that) is in perpetual self-construction and self-destruction . . . (and that lives) in its continued differentiation and integration” (*The Image and Appearance*, 11, 15–16). Lhermitte’s very similar definition refers to a plastic three-dimensional body schema that allows the subject to perceive the world, and which undergoes constant transformations or alterations (*L’image de notre corps*, 15). On Bellmer’s conceptualization of the body image see Taylor, *Hans Bellmer*, 101–9; and Dourthe, *Bellmer le principe de perversion*, 124–27, 136–45.

6. Bellmer, *The Doll*, 60–61.

7. *Ibid.*, 60.

8. *Ibid.*, 125.

9. Bellmer, “Preface,” in Unica Zürn, *Oracles et spectacles* (Paris: George Visat, 1967), 4; Bellmer, *Die Puppe*, 128; and Bellmer, *Petite anatomie de l’inconscient physique ou l’anatomie de l’image*, 45. Translation mine. See Green’s translation (*The Doll*, 133) as well as Jon Graham’s in the 1957 edition of *Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious*, 37–38.

10. Bellmer, *The Doll*, 127.

11. *Ibid.*, 40, 60.

12. For reproductions of the photographs of the second Doll I am evoking in this passage see Dourthe, *Bellmer: Le principe de perversion*, 69, 73, 74; Agnès de la Beaumelle, ed., *Hans Bellmer: Anatomie du désir*, 100, 102, 104, 106, 108–9; and Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety*, 73, 78. Many works produced by Bellmer in the 1930s and 1940s resonate with or illustrate the “theories” that are expounded in his essays. The object-assemblage *La jointure à boule: La poupée* (1936, Ball joint: The doll), for instance, demonstrates the principle of reversibility of body parts that is caused by desire: the doll’s arms can be also be seen as legs; the central ball joint evokes at once a vagina, an eye, and an anus. The multiplication and constant transformation of the body image is explored in *La toupie* (1938/1968, The top), an object-sculpture consisting of multiple breasts, or in Bellmer’s illustrations for Georges Hugnet’s *Oeillades ciselées en branche* (Paris: Jeanne Bucher, 1939). For reproductions of these works see Dourthe, *Bellmer: le principe de perversion*, 78, 87, 92, 94–95.

13. For discussions of Bellmer’s Doll photographs as visualizations of fantasies found in sadism, masochism, voyeurism, fetishism, and scopophilia, or as a critical commentary on Nazi art and mass culture that is at the same time complicit with the dominant patriarchal order, see Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety*, 70–96; Lichtenstein, *Behind Closed Doors*, 80–103, 127–38.

14. Bellmer, *The Doll*, 60.

15. *Ibid.*, 70.

16. Letter to Herta Hausmann, in *Hans Bellmer*, special issue of *Obliques* (Paris: Editions Borderie, 1975), 118. Cited in Green, “Introduction,” in *The Doll*, 19.

17. Andrea Bachner, “Anagrams in Psychoanalysis: Retroping Concepts by Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and Jean-François Lyotard,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 40, no.1 (2003): 3.

18. *Ibid.*, 5–11.

19. For references to Freud in *The Doll*, see 68–69, 112–13. See also *Petite Anatomie de l’inconscient physique*, 19. For examples of “axiomatic theoretical formulations” in Bellmer’s work, see sentences such as the following: “An object that is simply identical to itself lacks (all) reality . . . Whatever is not confirmed by chance lacks all validity” (*The Doll*, 127, 157).

On Bellmer's engagement with Freud and psychoanalytic theory in general, see Dourthe, *Bellmer: le principe de perversion*, 124–42; Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety*, 70–109; Lichtenstein, *Behind Closed Doors*, 66–120. I have modified the title of the third chapter in Malcolm Green's translation of Bellmer's *Die Puppe* to read "Little Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious" in order to remain faithful to the original German title.

20. For Bellmer's discussion of Freud's argument on the union of opposite concepts, images, and objects in dreamwork and in "primitive" languages see *The Doll*, 112–17. On *The Doll's* approach to the body image, see the preceding section, "Little Anatomy of Bellmerian Desire," and my note 5. Topics such as the anagram, reversed writing, mediumship, and hysteria, and mathematical notions such as topology, multiplication, division, and permutation, are also discussed in *The Doll*, see *ibid.*, 109–10, 113–14, 129–30, 130–33.

21. Bellmer, Nora Mitrani, and Joë Bousquet created the anagram poems reproduced in *The Doll*. While Bellmer is widely regarded as the originator of the surrealist anagram poem, his collaborations with Mitrani, Bousquet, and especially with the painter and writer Unica Zürn (who was his companion between 1954 and 1970) greatly contributed to the development of his ideas on the anagram. Zürn's genius as an anagram poet is attested by texts such as *Hexentexte, Zeichnungen und Anagramme* (1954, Witches' texts: Drawings and anagrams) and *Oracles et spectacles* (1967, Oracles and spectacles). On Bellmer's and Zürn's practice of the art of the anagram, see Dourthe, *Bellmer: Le principe de perversion*, 140–50, 210–14; Alain Chévrier, "Sur l'origine des anagrammes d'Unica Zürn," in *Lettres au Docteur Ferdière*, ed. Alain Chévrier (Paris: Séguier, 1994), 125–43; Unica Zürn, "Die Begegnung mit Hans Bellmer," in *Unica Zürn Gesamtaufgabe* (Berlin: Brinkman und Bose, 1989), 5:172–80; Jean-François Rabain, "Sublimation et identifications croisées: les jeux à deux de Hans Bellmer et Unica Zürn," *Revue française de psychanalyse* 4 (1998): 1247–64.

22. On perverse fantasies and the imagination of perversion in Bellmer's work, see my note 13. See also Paul Ardenne, "Bellmer, oui ou non," in *Hans Bellmer: Anatomie du désir*, ed. Agnès de la Beaumelle, 47–61; Céline Masson, *La fabrique de la poupée chez Hans Bellmer: Le "faire oeuvre" perversif, une étude clinique de l'objet* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000); and Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 102–22. For illuminating discussions of the relation between Bellmer's Doll photographs and German popular culture from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s on the one hand, and on the other hand between the artist's experiments with dolls and the fascination with dolls, robots, automata, and the machine aesthetic in avant-garde art and modernist cinema, see Dourthe, *Bellmer: Le principe de perversion*, 33–72; Lichtenstein, *Behind Closed Doors*, 13–40, 49–66. On the various perverse fantasies in "Memories of the Doll Theme," see Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety*, 34–55.

23. *The Doll*, 108.

24. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 523.

25. Johan Copjec, *Imagine There's No Woman: Ethics and Sublimation* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 224.

26. *Ibid.*, 228. Copjec paraphrases here Freud's discussion of the Chinese foot fetishist in his classic essay "Fetishism," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 volumes, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953), 21:157.

27. Copjec, *Imagine There's No Woman*, 206–8, 222–28. Copjec's discussion of perversion is based on the theorization of the latter found in Freud, Lacan, Sartre, Guy Rosolato, Deleuze, and Jacques-Alain Miller. An excellent discussion of the psychoanalytic notion of perversion that expands on the insights of these theorists is James Penney, *The World of Perversion: Psychoanalysis and the Impossible Absolute of Desire* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 1–28. Penney insists on the distinction between the essential perversity of desire and perversion as such, between “desire's generic excess over its own law and a particular response of the subject to this excess—a specific subjective structure” (emphasis Penney). He also argues that the psychoanalytic theory of sexuality (as articulated especially by Freud and Lacan) “not only . . . splits the subject between a norm and a deviation or transgression, but also . . . insists that the effort to suture this split produces the ethically, and indeed politically, problematic perverse structure.” In other words, Penney goes on to comment, what the pervert disavows is not so much sexual difference or the mother's castration, but “*the essential perversity of desire*” (emphasis Penney). See Penney, *The World of Perversion*, 1–2.

28. Bellmer, *The Doll*, 127. This passage was quoted in part in the previous section, “Little Anatomy of Bellmerian Desire.”

29. Bellmer, *The Doll*, 129.

30. *Ibid.*, 143–44, 146. Emphasis mine.

31. *Ibid.*, 148.

32. *Ibid.*, 125, 129.

33. Klossowski, “Sade ou le philosophe scélérat,” special issue *La Pensée de Sade, Tel Quel* 28 (1967): 17–19.

34. *The Doll*, 125. Bellmer was preoccupied with the figure of the hermaphrodite throughout his career. “L'Aigle Mademoiselle,” the young girl flaunting an erect penis that sprouts from her vagina and who appears in Bellmer's illustrations for Bataille's *Histoire de l'Oeil* and for *Petit traité de morale* (1968, Little treatise on morals), and the “phallus-girls” featured in the series of drawings entitled *Déshabillage* (1960–68) are among the most shocking representations of the hermaphrodite in the artist's oeuvre. For reproductions of these figures see Dourthe, *Bellmer: Le principe de perversion*, Figure 222, on page 180; Figures 308, 309, 310, on pages 236–37; Figure 311, on page 239; and Figure 333, on page 252. Critical discussions of hermaphroditism in Bellmer's work are legion. See Malcolm Green, “Introduction,” in *The Doll*, 20–22; Dourthe, *Bellmer: Le principe de perversion*, 136–48, 176–82, 192–200, 230–52; Peter Gorsen, “Das Theorem der Puppe nach Hans Bellmer,” in *Der Körper und seine Sprachen*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Heinrich, 107–35 (Frankfurt: Qumran Verlag, 1989); Peter Webb and Robert Short, *Hans Bellmer* (London: Quartet Book, 1985), 196–204; and Silvia Eiblmayr, “Hans Bellmer's Surrealist Eroticism—The Praying Mantis and the Shock of Mechanization,” trans. Christin Czinglar, in *Real Text: Denken am Rande des Subjekts/Reflexions on the Periphery of the Subject*, ed. Georg Schöllhammer and Christian Kravagna, 233–38 (Klagenfurt: Ritter, 1993).

35. Bellmer, *The Doll*, 157–58.

36. Bellmer's intention that the essays in *The Doll* be read at once as an aesthetics or poetics, and as a “science” (of the marvelous and the unconscious) is also demonstrated by a letter he sent to Peter Gorsen on July 16, 1963, in which he writes: “The thing about my book . . . is that it simultaneously refers in very concise fashion to a great many different

areas of both science and emotions, because from the outset it aims at ‘anti-specialization.’” See Malcolm Green, “Introduction,” in *The Doll*, 8–9.

37. The essays included in *The Doll* cite or paraphrase thinkers such as Freud, Cardano, Copernicus, Philo of Byzantium, Cesare Lombroso, and Jean Lhermitte and frequently refer to discourses in topology, geometry, physics, psychoanalysis, and other sciences. See *The Doll*, 60–67, 112–15, 119.

38. See *The Logic of Sense*, 341–59. Deleuze’s brilliant reading of perversion appears in his discussion of Michel Tournier’s novel *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique* (1967, *Friday*). Note the similarities between *The Logic of Sense*’s reading of perversion, 357–59, and Copjec’s reading of the latter in *Imagine There’s No Woman*, 222–25, 228–29.

39. “C’est ma force de mettre en contact direct le principe de perversion et celui de mon travail” (My strength as an artist lies in the direct contact I have created between the principle of perversion and [that of] my work). Cited in Dourthe, *Bellmer: Le principe de perversion*, 287. While Bellmer’s fascination with perversion and sexual desire (which he shared with many surrealists) has been examined at length in the studies of Dourthe, Taylor, Liechtenstein, Green, Paul Ardenne, Peter Webb, Hal Foster, and other critics, there has been little inclination in these writings to see perversion as the unconscious dynamics or abstract machine powering much of the artist’s oeuvre. On Bellmer’s exploration of perversion see my notes 13 and 22.

40. Bellmer was on friendly terms with Breton, Eluard, Georges Hugnet, Man Ray, Joë Bousquet, Max Ernst, and other surrealists and participated in most of their major exhibitions from 1937 onward. His vision of art as obsessive exploration of transgressive eroticism, perversion, and an experimental, nonnatural body, however, disagreed profoundly with the late romantic idealism found on Breton’s and some of his surrealist friends’ notions of the surrealist revolution. Bellmer found himself attracted to Bataille’s ideas on sex, death, and excess—ideas that Breton rejected. See Dourthe, *Bellmer: Le principe de perversion*, 167–201.