

Human!

‘LET’S BE HUMAN!’ – ON THE POLITICS OF THE INANIMATE

[ABSTRACT]

To Romantics the principle of life, its mystery and power, propelled a desire to ‘see into the life of things’ as William Wordsworth articulated it. This article examines how the relationship between life and non-life, the animate and the inanimate, humans and things, took on a new inflection in Romanticism, which differed in radical ways from the pragmatic and economic relationship between persons and things in the 18th century. In Romanticism, the threshold between living and dead matter came to linger between divinity and monstrosity. In Denmark, Hans Christian Andersen had few rivals when it came to articulating associations between humans and things. This article narrows the scope of Andersen’s vivifications to one specific subset: marionettes, dolls and automatons, asking how his surrogates operated vis-à-vis Heinrich von Kleist’s, E. T. A. Hoffman’s and Mary Shelley’s. Each of these authors drew on the hyper-mimetic relationship that dolls, marionettes and automatons have to humans: Kleist used marionettes to examine consciousness through unconsciousness; Hoffmann used automatons to articulate the uncanny; and Shelley used a golem-like monster to ponder the ethics of man’s quests for generative powers. Andersen, in contrast, used dolls, marionettes and automatons in order to speak about *social* beings.¹

KARIN SANDERS

.....
KEYWORDS *Hans Christian Andersen, humans and things, animate-inanimate, conscious-unconscious, the uncanny, monstrosity.*

‘The result of aesthetic concentration is the animation of the soul,
the part of us that rises from corporeal slumber to penetrate the *life* of things.’

Denise Gigante, *Life: Organic Form and Romanticism 2*

‘Nej, lad os nu være Mennesker!’ [Now, let’s be human!], a caged parrot repeatedly cries out in Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale ‘Lykkens Kalosher’ [The Magic Galoshes 481] from 1838.² A tiny lark repeats the command, ‘Let’s be human!’ in a mimicry that would be innocuous were it not for the fact that the reader recognizes that the lark is *already* human; namely a copyist who had wished to be a poet, and who in turn had wished to be a bird in order to escape the misery of the human condition. Repeating the wish to be human brings the bird/poet back to his former shape as copyist. Although the narrator remarks that the lark

repeated the words 'uden selv at tænke paa hvad han sagde' [without reflecting on what he said] ('Lykkens Kalosher' 482) when it repeated what the parrot said (and thus presumably did not wish himself back in the human shape from which he had escaped), the copyist is returned to his wretched humanness precisely because he, in the form of a lark, must act like a lark. That is, it must act like its species, 'parrot' the parrot, and hence repeat the fateful words: 'Now, let's be human!' ('Lykkens Kalosher' 482).

The instructive irony at play here speaks not only to Andersen's clever use of copying and repetition but also to his constant examinations of humans (their customs and characteristics) by way of that which is not human.³ In 'Pengegrisen' [The Piggy Bank], from 1855, we find a slightly different combination of the inanimate and the human. The story is set in a nursery full of toys. It is night, the moon is shining and an old doll with a patched-up neck peeks out of a chest and calls out to her fellow toys, 'Skal vi nu lege Mennesker, det er jo altid Noget!' [Let's play humans, that's always something] ('Pengegrisen' 114). The change from the existential 'to *be* human' to the performative 'to *play* human' is tied to the detail that the doll (unlike the lark) already looks like a human and therefore simply needs to play out this mimicry. Yet to look human is not to *be* human; and to *play* at being human may not be much, but as the doll acknowledges, it is 'always something' ('Pengegrisen' 114).

These instances of escaping the human condition (wishing to be an innocent lark) and playing at being a human (the toy doll's desire for movement) should be seen as part of Andersen's overall investigation of the mores and distinctiveness of humanity. His use of non-humans (things, animals) is important precisely because they allow him freedom to articulate the follies of human vanity and expose humankind's fraught social behaviors. When Andersen focuses our attention on naïve desires, as is the case in 'Lykkens Kalosher' and 'Pengegrisen', he also offers his readers a way to consider what it means to be human in a broader sense of the word, as a social and psychological being.

The banalities of the everyday are observed by Andersen via the lure of material objects: pencils and paper and ink, bottle necks, a wooden spoon, matchsticks, peas, shoes, coins, and many other material things are used as tropes that play out some kind of relation with humans. Yet he never conflates humans and things. That is to say, when Andersen parses specific properties of given material objects and assigns human attributes to them, he rarely violates their unique form or functionality (the pen-ness of a pen, the ink-ness of an inkwell, the bottle-ness of a bottle, the steadfastness of a toy soldier and so on).⁴ Likewise, he personifies animals according to their perceived characteristics: talkativeness (parrots), aloofness (cats), loyalty (dogs), dignity (swans) and so forth. This sensitivity to the specificity of physical objects or animals resonates far beyond his fairy tales and can be seen in his many travel descriptions, novels and poems. Yet it is in the fairy tales that Andersen's relationship to non-human forms (things, animals) comes into its own; in fairy tales the humanized actions of non-humans seem 'natural'.⁵

The threshold between the 18th and 19th centuries had yielded a plethora of ‘things’ for cultural and literary theorists.⁶ In the 18th century, as Barbara M. Benedicts writes, things were seen as ‘the devils of the empirical age’. She continues:

Especially in their mutability and fungibility, they possess supernatural power over individual meanings and identities; they can make and unmake themselves; they can even take over conscience and consciousness. Because of their replicability and fundamental indifference to human possession or loss, things embody the terrible hazards of living in a world of soulless material powers. They are absolute material: bodies without souls. (39)

To Romantics, however, the principle of life, its mystery and power, propelled a desire to ‘see into the life of things’ as William Wordsworth articulated it. Indeed, since the beginning of Romanticism, as Larry H. Peer notes, ‘we have been “thing-ing” in Western culture: taking a word, concept, or object out of its natural setting and projecting human values, meanings, or explanations on it’ (5). Things-as-humans can have distinctive moral inflections that force humans (the readers) to see their own self-centered anthropocentrism. That is, readers are made to see themselves *as* humans *by way of* things. But because they are excluded from a human code of ethics, anthropomorphic objects can act out more freely, and enunciate more clearly (and sometimes devastatingly), their critiques of the anthropocentric.

In Romanticism, the vitality associated with life was implicitly related to the authenticity of the aesthetic. Art and life shared in a dynamism of essential energy, and therefore, as Denise Gigante has recently argued in her study *Life: Organic Form and Romanticism*, ‘sparked a preoccupation with self-generating and self-maintaining form’ – one that served to cross-pollinate between aesthetics and life sciences (5). The relationship between life and non-life, the animate and the inanimate, humans and things, took on a new inflection, which differed in radical ways from the pragmatic and economic relationship between persons and things that had been articulated in the 18th century (for example in the form of so-called ‘it-narratives’, also known as circulation novels, in which an inanimate object serves as narrator).⁷ In Romanticism, the threshold between living and dead matter came to linger between divinity and monstrosity.

Hans Christian Andersen had few if any rivals when it came to articulating associations between humans and things. For the purpose of this essay, however, I want to narrow the scope from the plethora of anthropomorphisms, personifications and vivifications of material things or animals in his oeuvre to one specific subset: marionettes, dolls and automatons. I do so, first, because Andersen ties these surrogates to a larger vision shared by several other Romantics, most notably Heinrich von Kleist, E. T. A. Hoffman and Mary Shelley; and, second, because marionettes, dolls and automatons already *look the part* of humans and therefore bring the distinction between human/non-human and human/ahuman to the fore in remarkable ways. *When the something* that is brought to life already resembles a human, we are afforded a particularly clear view into the relation

between living bodies and inanimate ones that is contingent on similitude. A few exceptions, an anthropomorphized book and a vivification of a machine, will be used along the way to underscore Andersen's engagement with the dynamics of humans and non-humans.

Hoffman had a direct influence on Andersen; this was not the case with Kleist and Shelley. But Kleist and Shelley were part of the Romantic *Zeitgeist* and they helped form the cultural conversation that shaped Andersen's aesthetics. Each of these authors, albeit in fundamentally different ways, drew on the hyper-mimetic relationship that dolls, marionettes and automatons have to humans: Kleist used marionettes to examine consciousness through unconsciousness; Hoffmann used automatons as a way to articulate the uncanny; and Shelley used a golem-like monster in order to ponder the ethics of man's quests for creative powers. Andersen, in contrast, used dolls, marionettes and automatons in order to speak about *social* beings.

Conscious Unconsciousness

Playing with puppet theaters was a formative childhood experience for many Romantics and pre-Romantics, Andersen amongst them: 'Min største Glæde var at sye Dukkeklæder' as he writes in his autobiography *Mit Eget Eventyr uden Digtning* (183).⁸ Goethe, who famously drew inspiration from his puppet theater, expressed a more sinister fascination in one of his *Withheld Venetian Epigrams*:

In ein Puppenspiel hatt ich mich Knabe verliebet,
Lange zog es mich an, bis ich es endlich zerschlug.
So griff Lavater jung nach der gekreuzigten Puppe:
Herz' er betrogen sie noch, wenn ihm der Atem antgeht!⁹
(136-7)

His childhood puppets are here implicitly conflated with the 'puppet' of the crucified Christ that Goethe's former friend, the physiognomist and poet Johann Kaspar Lavater (whom Goethe came to see as being too superstitious), grabs at. It is unsurprising perhaps that these profanely demolished puppets did not make it past the censor into the original rendering of Goethe's Venetian epigrams.

While puppet theaters enjoyed great popularity in the 18th century, in the 19th century they were seen mostly as second-order entertainment. As Victoria Nelson explains in *The Secret Life of Puppets*:

The simulacrum has always travelled both a high road and a low road in human culture – as highest form of worship and as lowest form of entertainment – but it is the peculiarity of Western culture of the last three hundred years that the two have joined into one that runs, as it were, below sea level. Once the human likeness was no longer worshipped, it became an idea, not an idol, partaking of the insensible territory 'imaginary' instead of the insensible territory 'holy'. (60)

This shift from the holy to the imaginary can be found in Kleist's enigmatic treatise 'Über das Marionettentheater' from 1810. Here a ballet dancer finds ultimate grace in wooden marionettes, contingent upon the loss of self-consciousness. As is illustrated by two side-stories on un-self-consciousness (the story of a young man losing his grace by looking in a mirror) and animal-like intuitiveness (the story of a fencing duel with a bear), primal innocence is lost to humans. To Kleist's dancer, whose manner of argument has an eccentric mathematical-demiurgic inflection, grace appears only in puppets that lack consciousness or in gods who possess infinite consciousness. Being neither puppets nor gods, human bodies are virtually excluded from the art of graceful aesthetics.

Some forty years after Kleist, in 1851, Andersen published an allegory called 'Marionettespilleren' [The Puppeteer]. The story is as follows. On a steamer, sailing through the canals of Sweden, our narrator meets an older gentleman, a traveling puppeteer and a fellow Dane, who carries his entire troupe of actors on his back – in a wooden box. His facial expression of exuberance suggests to our narrator that this man must be the happiest human on earth. Indeed, as the two travelers strike up a conversation, the puppeteer not only confirms that he was born with a joyful disposition but that his positive outlook had been strengthened after a meeting with an unusual spectator, a student of science. The puppeteer tells the story of their meeting: one day a man dressed in black, from the Polytechnic Institute, sits down amidst an audience of children. He responds to the performance in ways that are fully appropriate; he 'leer aldeles paa de rigtige Steder, klapper aldeles rigtigt, det var en usædvanlig Tilskuer!' ('Marionettespilleren' 190).¹⁰

Whether the new spectator's response is 'unusual' because it mimics that of children (a naïve response) or because he comprehends the show at a level beyond that of the usual audience, is left unsaid. In either case, the puppeteer decides to attend the student's scientific demonstration: 'nu var jeg hans Tilhører' [now I became his spectator] ('Marionettespilleren' 191). They strike up a friendship. But unlike the science student's implicit understanding of the nature of puppeteering, our puppeteer seems unable to comprehend fully the scientific experiments of his new friend. Enthralled nevertheless by the perceived magic of electromagnetism (a favorite theme of Andersen's) the puppeteer persuades the scientist to help him complete his happiness by making him a real theater director with living actors: 'at blive Theaterdirecteur for en levende Trup, et rigtigt Menneskeselskab' ('Marionettespilleren' 191).¹¹ Inspired by a night of drinking, the student hurls the puppeteer (along with his box of marionettes strapped on his back) through an electromagnetic spiral and the marionettes stumble out of the box, as alive as real humans. Predictably this transformation of dumb lifeless things into real speaking humans turns nightmarish:

Det var ligesom Fluer i en Flaske, og jeg var midt i Flasken, jeg var Directeur. Veiret gik fra mig, Hovedet gik fra mig, jeg var saa elendig, som et Menneske kan blive, det var en ny Menneskeslægt jeg var kommen imellem, jeg ønskede, at jeg havde dem Allesammen i Kassen igjen, og at jeg aldrig var bleven Directeur.¹² ('Marionettespilleren' 192)

The marionettes-as-real-actors unleash a plethora of unattractive characteristics in the form of self-promotion and overblown egos. Each ‘actor’ now insists on special treatment and full attention from their director: The ballerina claims that the success of the entire performance stands or falls with her ability to balance on pointed toes, the hero wants new lines that guarantee the greatest exit applause, the actress playing an empress demands to be treated like one both on and off the stage, and so forth. Thus the transformation from marionette to human constitutes a fall from grace on two fronts: The marionettes turn from gentle dummies to maliciously self-centered avatars; and the puppeteer loses his much-professed happiness. Alive, the marionettes are neither demonic nor divine, but hideously pedestrian and all too human – plain, greedy, attention-seeking and nitpicky. Succumbing to misery over this precipitous fall into utter triviality, the puppeteer finally informs his actors straight to their faces that ‘de igrun den dog alle vare Marionetter og saa sloge de mig ihjel!’ (‘Marionettespilleren’ 192).¹³ At this very moment, the puppeteer wakes up from the ‘electromagnetic dream’ to find the science student gone and the marionettes scattered on the floor, once again lifeless.

Dolls can connote madness, but the puppeteer’s marionettes perform only one mad act, which is one of anger (‘and then they killed me’). With this act the order of things is restored: The puppeteer wakes up, alive, and his marionettes are once again dead. Humans are humans – things are things. But with this reinstated order the ability to reason is also gone: ‘mit Personale raisonnerer ikke – og heller ikke publikum’ (‘Marionettespilleren’ 192).¹⁴ ‘Lutret’ [purified] by the quasi-scientific experiment, Andersen’s puppeteer has regained complete sovereignty, but appears strangely nonsensical as he repeatedly professes to a bliss so complete (the word ‘lykkelig’, ‘happy’, is mentioned no less than nine times) that it forces the reader to be suspicious. Has the puppeteer gone mad?

In ‘Über das Marionettentheater’, as Karl Heinz Bohrer has suggested, the ‘quasi-phenomenological precision’ that grows from marionettes illustrates how ‘happiness (charm, grace) is ... retained or achieved precisely through an act of the unconscious conscious’ (208). But does Andersen’s tale reflect such a state of the unconscious consciousness? Will his puppeteer’s almost delirious happiness lead to unreflective bliss? The answer is no. Instead, I would argue, Andersen offers a corrective to the aesthetic and philosophical questions parsed in ‘Über das Marionettentheater’.

Unlike Kleist, whose puppeteer embodies a divine principle (in the form of the hand that guides), Andersen lacks sympathy for his self-proclaimed ‘happiest’ puppeteer; *his* puppeteer is a buffoon. And unlike Kleist’s utopia, Andersen’s marionettes cannot elevate art to the highest potency; rather, as soon as they are given agency they plunge into mediocrity. And when they return to thingness (as wooden shapes), they are merely dull ‘dolls’. Their inability to reflect and reason – the very thing that is celebrated by Kleist – is transformed by Andersen from an aesthetic possibility to a critique of human behavior. He effectively breaks down the Kleistian model of unconscious consciousness in favor of a social model that speaks to human characteristics in a more pessimistic manner than the philo-

sophical and aesthetic optimism and utopian vision we find in Kleist. What these authors do agree on, however, is that if marionettes present second-order theater (they are not the *real* thing), as *things* (inanimate, speechless, emotionless) they offer the possibility of absolute freedom. Andersen's puppeteer uses this freedom and power over his once again inanimate minions to maintain the status quo and to stage performances from the vault of forgotten plays. The stabs at real-life theater life are palpable:

Jeg er en lykkelig Directeur, mit Personale raisonerer ikke, Publicum ikke heller, det fornøier sig af Hjertens Grund; frit kan jeg selv lave alle mine Stykker sammen. Jeg tager af alle Comedier det Bedste jeg vil, og Ingen ærgrer sig derover. Stykker, som nu ere foragtede paa de store Theatre, men som Publicum for tredivte Aar siden løb efter og tvinede over, dem tager jeg nu til mig, nu giver jeg dem til de Smaa, og de Smaa de tvine ligesom Fader og Moder tvinede; jeg giver »Johanna Montfaucon« og »Dyveke,« men i Forkortning, for de Smaa holde ikke af langt Kjærligheds-Vrøvl, de ville: ulykkeligt, men gesvindt. Nu har jeg bereist Danmark paa Retten og paa Vrangen, kjender alle Mennesker og kjendes igjen¹⁵ ('Marionettespilleren' 192-193)

Andersen's allegory, it should be mentioned, was originally published in the travel book *I Sverrig* [In Sweden] and later slightly revised as a freestanding tale in *Samlede Skrifter*, 1868. This provenance is important because *I Sverrig*, a rich and complicated engagement with modernity, introduces us to another breed of 'puppet', one that is infinitely larger than those in 'The Puppeteer' story, and that redefines in radical ways the threshold between the inanimate and the animate. Its name is 'Master Bloodless'.¹⁶ But before I turn to this remarkable incarnation of puppetry there is more to be said about Andersen's early puppeteer stories, and in particular how they engage with the uncanny and, consequently, with E. T. A. Hoffmann.

Circumscribing the Uncanny

If we look back at Andersen's first attempt writing a fairy tale, in a variation of the folktale on the grateful dead called 'Dødningen' [The Dead] published in 1830, we find an inserted marionette scenario.¹⁷ Here a puppeteer is giving a performance from the Old Testament (Queen Esther's story) when an audience member's bulldog flies up on the stage and breaks the Queen: 'Knik, knak! hvor gik hun i Stykker, og den arme Marionetspiller jamrede sig gyseligt, thi det var jo hans første Prima-Donna, Hunden havde bidt Hovedet af' ('Dødningen' 61).¹⁸ The sharp clatter of the decapitation ('[k]nik knak') mimics the sound of wood breaking. We cannot doubt that the doll is a thing made out of hard and stiff material. Andersen may have taken inspiration here from Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, in which Quixote, in full accordance with his inability to distinguish between illusion and reality, throws himself on the puppets when an army of other puppets endangers the show's hero. In Andersen's version, however, a stranger (the grateful dead man) rubs salve on the cracked marionette and not only heals and

repairs its broken shape but also gives it the ability to move its limbs. Alive, the only thing ‘she’ lacks is ‘Mælet’ – a voice. Ironically, while ‘she’ remains soundless, the other, inanimate marionettes can sigh, very audibly in fact:

Alle Trædukkerne laae imellem hinanden, Kongen og alle Drabanterne, og det var dem, som sukkede saa ynkeligt og stirrede med deres store Glas-Øine, for de vilde saa gjerne blive smurt lidt ligesom Dronningen, at de ogsaa kunde komme til at røre sig af sig selv.¹⁹ (‘Dødningen’ 61)

The large glass eyes of the wooden dolls, capable of eloquence far beyond their assumed deadness, are positively eerie, and the collective sigh from the wooden box creates uneasiness about the textual logic: How can the dead marionettes utter sounds when the living doll cannot? The question, Sigmund Freud might answer, is moot. There may be nothing uncannier than hearing sounds from something dead, yet because fairy tales, as Freud maintains in ‘Das Unheimliche’, defy logic, they are exempt from uncanniness. Freud is in fact specific on this point and insists that while fairy tales (and he singles out Andersen as an example) make striking uses of animation, they are ‘not in the least uncanny’:

Das Märchen stellt sich überhaupt ganz offen auf den animistischen Standpunkt der Allmacht von Gedanken und Wünschen, und ich wüßte doch kein echtes Märchen zu nennen, in dem irgendetwas Unheimliches vorkäme. Wir haben gehört, daß es in hohem Grade unheimlich wirkt, wenn leblose Dinge, Bilder, Puppen, sich beleben, aber in den Andersenschen Märchen leben die Hausgeräte, die Möbel, der Zinnsoldat, und nichts ist vielleicht vom Unheimlichen entfernter. Auch die Belebung der schönen Statue des Pygmalion wird man kaum als unheimlich empfinden.²⁰ (‘Das Unheimliche’ 268)

Even so we instinctively expect an experience of the uncanny when confronted with scenes in which the dead return. In ‘Dødningen’ the magic life-giving salve comes from an ‘undead’ man. The tale’s hero, Johannes, had secured the man’s grave-peace and the ‘grateful dead man’ now returns as a traveling companion, paying back his debt by securing Johannes’ fortune in wondrous ways (Johannes will ultimately marry a princess and gain a kingdom). Yet, as Freud reiterates, re-animation of the dead ‘ist aber wiederum im Märchen sehr gewöhnlich; wer wagte es unheimlich zu nennen, wenn z. B. Schneewittchen die Augen wieder aufschlägt? Auch die Erweckung von Toten in den Wundergeschichten, z. B. des Neuen Testaments, ruft Gefühle hervor, die nichts mit dem Unheimlichen zu tun haben’ (‘Das Unheimliche’ 269).²¹

Freud’s remarks are perhaps too perfunctory. But unlike Hoffman’s fantastic tales (and we might remember that Freud used Hoffmann’s ‘Der Sandmann’ as a prime example of the uncanny), Andersen’s fairy tales rarely if ever ask his readers to imagine or experience the uncanny feeling that inanimate objects can produce if mistaken for humans. Andersen may be a student of Hoffmann, but he is not a follower. Hoffmann’s famous automata Olympia in ‘Der Sandmann’, mute and elusive but deceptively close to being human and thus decidedly uncanny, is of

a type that is not to be found anywhere in Andersen's oeuvre. A speaking doll or pen or jackhammer in Andersen's world is never uncanny in this overt way. Even his use of marionettes navigates free of the bewilderment (is it real, or is it not?) of the uncanny – the reader is never in doubt.

In the fictional travelogue *Fodreise fra Holmens Canal til Østpynten af Amager i Aarene 1828 og 1829* [*Journey on foot from Holmens Canal to the East Point of Amager*], in which Andersen first sharpened his pen on the concept of unnatural life, a scene with automatons (a key Hoffmann trope) will help clarify this. Here we find a futuristic vision of aristocrats inhabiting a castle in the year 2129 (three hundred years after the publication of *Fodreise*). The narrator finds himself in the company of a host of mechanical beings:

En Mængde pyntede Herrer bevægede sig mekanisk op og ned ad Gulvet. De saae ud, som de vare dreiede. Enhver Fold i Klæderne syntes udstuderet. Jeg tiltalte den som kom mig nærmest, men han svarede ikke et Ord, vendte mig Ryggen, og gik med stolte Miner sin sædvanlige Gang. Jeg tiltalte en Anden, men han var ikke mere høflig end den Første. - Da nu den Tredie ogsaa vilde vende mig Ryggen, tabte jeg Taalmodigheden og holdt ham fast ved Armen. Han var slem at holde og gjorde uhyre mange Bevægelser med alle Lemmer, i det han tillige snerrede ganske underligt ad mig. Tilsidst mærkede jeg da, at hele Selskabet bestod af lutter Træmænd, fyldte med Damp; et Slags kunstige Automater, Aarhundredet havde opfundet til at udpynte Forgemakkerne med²² (*Fodreise* 180)

The automatons in this passage are wooden, but, once again, not uncanny. Andersen uses them to expose the social characteristics of the castle inhabitants (the aristocracy): boorishness, artificiality and deceitfulness. They are stiff wooden automatons: 'affected' [udstuderet], 'arrogant' [stolte], 'sneering' [snerrende] and 'impolite' [ikke ... høflig(e)] (*Fodreise* 180), all of which is far from the uncanniness brought on by a Hoffmannesque ambiguity and liminality. In *Fodreise*, then, the work in which Andersen most clearly demonstrated his mastery of Romantic irony, using a plethora of tropes and genres favored by Romanticism's darker modalities, he remains implicitly critical of the Romantic project. His brand of Romanticism, even his use of Romantic irony, is more overtly political than Hoffmann's. Let us, for example, observe how Andersen appropriates a Hoffmann text and demolishes its content.

Fodreise's perambulating narrator happens to walk around with a copy of *Elixiere des Teufels* [The Devil's Elixir] in his pocket, and at the stroke of midnight the novel unsurprisingly starts to 'spøge' and 'fortælle' [spook and speak]. Unable to read, because of the darkness of the night, the narrator decides to 'høre' [listen] to its story:

Mine første Erindringer – begyndte den – strække sig fra Bogtrykkeriet, hvor jeg først saae Lyset Som en Drøm husker jeg endnu fra denne Tid, en lille Mand med et underligt Katte-Ansigt, der en Dag traadte ind i Stuen, hvor jeg hang i al Uskyldighed paa en Snoer for at tørres. Min Moder, – saaledes tør jeg vel nok benævne det Manuscript, jeg skylder min Tilværelse – fortalte os Børn om Natten, at det var vor Fader, Hofraad *Hoffmann*, uden

hvem hun endnu havde været et reent ubeskrevet Papiir, og vi aldrig seet Lyset – Nysgjær-
rigt hørte vi Alt hvad hun fortalte os om ham, hvorledes de Syner, der bevægede sig i vort
Indre, viste sig lyslevende for ham, naar han i de lange Vinter-Nætter sad og arbeidede, og
at han da ofte maatte kalde sin Kone op af Sengen, der satte sig hos ham med sin Strik-
kestrømpe, og nikkede venligt over til den underlige Mand, naar Phantasien tog sig altfor
meget Herredømme.²³ (*Fodreise* 195)

As we listen along with our narrator, we are presented with a rather unusual
homage to Hoffmann. *Elixiere des Teufels* has become a tangible artifact: paper,
print, binding. It has morphed into an object-biography emptied of the meaning
it had as a dark Romantic story full of madness and doppelgängers. There are
no signs left of a monk succumbing to the seductive powers of the devil's elixir
and so forth. Instead we are taken on its journey from manuscript to bookbind-
ing and from a life in bookstores to the humiliation of being placed in a lending
library. Hoffraad Hoffmann, as is suggested by the alliteration, the doubling of
'Hoff' and the implicit linking of 'raad' with 'man' (*rådmand* in Danish translates
to alderman), is pulled apart, reassembled and in the process strangely neutered
even as he exhibits his potency and 'impregnates' the blank page into a manu-
script. His fecundity becomes explicit when the anthropomorphic 'words' that
narrate their life story make a paternity claim. Andersen plays knowingly with
the fact that when 'a Hofmann automaton comes to life, it contains the essence
of its creator in a true father-child relation and is often passed off as biological
child', as Victoria Nelson astutely observes (see Nelson 65). The anthropomor-
phized 'words' in Andersen's tale claim precisely such a genetic link to Hoffmann
because their mother, the manuscript, has told them that without him she would
still be 'reent ubeskrevet Papiir' [a pure unwritten page] (*Fodreise* 195). Yet, besides
his paper-mistress, Hoffmann also has a (house)wife, who knits while she brings
her fanciful spouse back to reality from his rampant imagination (and his virile
impregnation of virgin paper).

With this rather humorous if impertinent domestication of his German idol,
Andersen not only flaunts his own literary historical knowledge (in this case of
the circulating stories about Hoffmann's propensity to scare himself during the
writing process) but also offers his readers a remarkably poignant (if indirect)
criticism of the kind of literature that he claims to want to imitate. Clearly, An-
dersen's tribute to Hoffmann is ironically couched and should be seen as a way
in which he could distance himself, in a roundabout manner, from Hoffmann's
brand of the fantastic. On the one hand *Fodreise*, an arabesque with strong strokes
of Romantic irony, is full of Hoffmann pastiches, from the devil taking hold of
the narrator and enticing him to become an author (a devilish enterprise in-
deed), to doppelgänger motifs and talking objects. On the other hand, as can
be seen in the audacious incorporation of *Elixiere des Teufels* within the covers of
Andersen's own book, 'Hoffraad Hofmann' is embraced – only to be kept at arm's
length. Andersen has transcribed Hoffmann's novel into the kind of 'it-narrative'
that, as mentioned above, was favored during the 18th century, in which the lives
of things became narratives about commoditization and circulation. In his own

brand of ingenious puppetry, Andersen essentially rewrites the script and ‘plays’ with Hoffmann’s text (as a master puppeteer with his puppet) to expose the prosaic (and non-Romantic) politics of book markets.

Monstrous Machines

Far more morbid than Hoffmann’s uncanny automatons or Kleist’s aloof marionettes, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) subscribed to a version of Romantic monstrosity that was alien to Andersen. Her avatar is sutured to human beings in an explicitly psychical way, a golem created from dead body parts. Andersen never seems to have commented directly on Shelley’s novel, but we know from his response to his close friend B. S. Ingemann, who had used cadavers in one of his fantastic stories, that morbidity did not appeal to Andersen.²⁴ In *Frankenstein*, Romanticism’s fixation with the power of life is forcefully articulated, and Shelley’s interest in natural philosophy and animation via galvanism (and her suggestion that her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley was portrayed in Victor Frankenstein; a point that is important because it suggests a monstrosity of a particular kind, one associated with the creative forces of poets) is a ‘distinctly Romantic version of monstrosity’, to borrow Gigante’s words. If the sublime object in Romanticism ‘threatened to exceed formal constraints, when it slid from theory into praxis, from imagined into actual, animated power, it could slide out of the sublime and into a distinctly Romantic version of monstrosity’ (5). Science was a source of wonder and astonishment for Andersen and its aesthetic potential was a constant inspiration. But to him, such science-fuelled aesthetics looked less monstrous and more like small miracles.

To illustrate this, let me return briefly to what appeared to be a paradoxical quotidian-Promethean effort in ‘Marionettespilleren’. Here we learned that the science student’s experiments could have brought him glory during the time of Moses, and thus brought him into concord with the gods. It would have burned him on the stake during the Middle Ages, and brought him into concord with devils. Yet in the present (the mid-19th century) these ‘Underværker’ [wonders] are but ‘Hverdagsting’ [everyday occurrences], setting him amongst mere mortal humans. Subsequently, the workings of electromagnetism, even as they ‘blew the mind’ of the puppeteer (‘løftede Hjerneskillen paa mig’ [lifted my skull]), remain exactly that: everyday miracles, never fully explained. Andersen notoriously missed H. C. Ørsted’s lectures at Copenhagen University on electromagnetism only to use the phenomenon for aesthetic purposes later – though he would never fully grasp the science behind it. Nevertheless, his interest in the vitality of electromagnetism, the very force field used to animate the marionettes in ‘Marionettespilleren’, dovetails with a universal Romantic interest in the vitality of creative forces. ‘Neither electricity nor magnetism constituted life exactly’, as Gigante has argued, ‘but they were both considered aspects of a polar, dynamic equilibrium thought to characterize the living world’ (190). These creative forces, as seen in Shelley’s monster, can become uncontainable and hence monstrous, the flipside of the Romantic Promethean dream. To steal fire from the gods or,

as in the case of ‘Marionettespilleren’, from science, and give it to humans, or to ask for life in inanimate objects, is, indeed, playing with fire. This fire, so imaginatively ‘played with’ throughout Romanticism, and with the most devastating consequences in *Frankenstein*, speaks to deep ethical concerns about human/non-human thresholds and responsibilities. To Andersen, being twirled through the experimental electromagnetic spiral did not transform his puppeteer into a god or a devil. Instead, the whole exercise turned out to be edifying: The puppeteer stopped dreaming about vivifications. After all, his avatars turned out to merely mimic ordinary human behavior.

Surely, not every ostentatious Romantic trope is cut to size in Andersen’s oeuvre. We do, to finally return to the aforementioned ‘Master Bloodless’, find elements of grandiose vitality of a sublime nature and monstrous proportions in this figure. But it is of a rather different sort than those we have so far encountered. ‘Bloodless’ is located within *I Sverrig*’s calculated intermingling of nature and technology, imagination and science. As early as his first stop into Sweden at Trollhättan, by the great manufactory in Motala, our traveling narrator draws us into the sublime life of machinery:

Hvad der dikker i Uhret, slaer her med stærke Hammerslag. Det er »*Blodløs*,« der drak Liv af Mennesketanken, og ved den fik Lemmer af Metaller, af Steen og Træ; det er *Blodløs*, der ved Mennesketanken vandt Kræfter, som ikke Mennesket selv fysisk eier. I Motala sidder *Blodløs* og gennem de store Haller og Stuer strækker han sine haarde Lemmer, hvis Led og Dele ere Hjul ved Hjul, Kjæder, Stænger og tykke Jerntraade. – Træd herind og see hvor de gloende Jernstykker presses til lange Jernstænger, *Blodløs* spinder den gloende Stang. See hvor Saxen klipper i de tunge Metalplader, klipper saa stille og saa blødt, som var det i Papir; hør hvor han hamrer, Gnisterne flyve fra Ambolten! see hvor han knækker de tykke Jernstænger, knækker efter Længde-Maal, det gaaer, som var det en Stang Lak der brødes. Foran dine Fødder rasle de lange Jernstykker, Jernplader høvles i Spaaner; foran dig dreie sig de store Hjul, og hen over dit Hoved løbe levende Jerntraade, svære, tunge Jernsnore, det hamrer, det surrer, og søger du ud i den aabne Gaard, mellem store omkastede Kjædler til Dampskibe og Bane-Vogne, da strækker ogsaa *Blodløs* her ud en af sine favnelange Fingre og haler afsted. Alt er levende, Mennesket staaer kun og stiller af og stopper! Vandet springer En ud af Fingerspidserne ved at see derpaa, man dreier sig, man vender sig, staaer stille, bukker og veed ikke selv hvad man skal sige af bare Ærbødighed for den menneskelige Tanke, der her har Jernlemmer²⁵ (*I Sverrig* 18)

Bloodless has limbs and fingers that spring from ‘human thought’, and the vitality described is so forceful that the single ‘man’ who ‘stands alone’ is positively dwarfed. ‘Everything is living’ – that is, the machine is alive as a giant marionette, directed by the human mind even as it silences ‘man’, who stands confused, dizzy and in awe of ‘his’ own creature. The passage celebrates man-made technology. *Bloodless*, then, is not a monster run rampant and there is no ‘uncontrollable vitality’ here. In fact, this giant machine-marionette’s transition from ‘imagined into actual, animated power’ (Gigante 5) is not *really* monstrous. To Andersen, the puppetry of modernity is enchanted in its own way.²⁶

The Sway of Travesty

Fascination with puppets, as Harold Segel has suggested in *Pinocchio's Progeny: Puppets, Marionettes, Automaton, and Robots in Modernist and Avant-Garde Drama* (1995), can be a response to a deep need to see ourselves as a

projection of the obsession of human beings with their own image, with their own likeness, the obsession that underlies artistic portraiture, the building of statues, and the extraordinary and enduring popularity of photography. More profoundly, it reveals a yearning to play god, to master life. (4)

Humans do in fact see themselves reflected in Andersen's marionettes, but often in the form of travesty. He downplays the element of wonder. Unlike Kleist, and unlike George Bernard Shaw, who generations later would contend that 'there is nothing wonderful in a living actor moving and speaking, but that wooden headed dolls should do so is a marvel that never palls' (qtd. in Segel 4), but also unlike the avant-garde in the early twentieth century that celebrated Kleist (such as Edward Gordon Craig's 'The Actor and the Über-Marionette' or Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadisches Ballett*), Andersen's marionettes become instruments of illusion used to unveil the complicated, yet ultimately mundane, reality that surrounded him.

Less philosophical than Kleist, less daemonic than Hoffmann and less morose than Shelley, Andersen in effect disenchanting the very enchantment we have come to expect from Romanticism. When Andersen bestows personhood on his marionettes, he makes them recognizable as individuals, with all the ordinariness of everyday persons. If readers do not easily recognize themselves in Kleist's abstract ideal (even if they aspire to reach such an ideal in art-making), and if they cannot see themselves in Hoffmann's automaton (even if they fear that such a demonic possibility may be a veiled possibility in their neighbor), and if Shelley's creation (in spite of the very human emotions it articulates) is too monstrous to resonate with readers' real familiarity, they are hard-pressed *not* to see Andersen's avatars as 'something' that behaves and acts out like us. Yet this does not reduce Andersen's use of marionettes to mere mirrors. Things-as-persons also speak about persons-as-things. The terrifying utterance used to silence his unruly actors, 'You are just marionettes', turns out to be a double-sided critique that not only unveils a fall from grace but also shows how people can be treated like things in the real world. This, in turn, is an *unheimlich* [uncanny] prospect, albeit of a different order than the variety we know from Hoffmann; it might even be seen as a corrective to Freud's prescriptive pre-empting of fairy tales as uncanny.

If divine or daemonic potentials seem to evaporate in Andersen's various marionettes and automatons, and if at first sight they become surprisingly ordinary, this ordinariness, as I hope to have shown, is certainly out of the ordinary. In other words, Andersen uses the fantastic to articulate a critique of the mundane. His marionette stories may not have the mathematical sophistication of Kleist's, whose lines and curves and spatial calculations constitute an aesthetic principle, nor the power of Hoffmann's articulation of psychic and material liminality, nor,

for that matter, the impact of Shelley's Frankensteinian, monstrous freakishness. Yet there is a kind of buoyancy in Andersen's use of marionettes and puppets as surrogates for humans that points to an aesthetic that not only bridges Romanticism and modernity (a point that is frequently made about Andersen) but also points back to elements of rationalism.

The early Romantics challenged the empiricism and scientific advances of the 18th century. This challenge, as well as the reactions against 'cold' secularism and consumer culture, is complicated in Andersen's work. In some respects, he picked up a thread from the empiricism of the 18th century that had been overruled by the Romantics in favor of a more metaphysical model. Andersen's ideas about humans and non-humans, and his specific kind of empirical attitude, serve as an important key to our understanding of his negotiation of human versus non-human and also allows us to appreciate how he is positioned on various historical and literary thresholds. We have become accustomed to seeing an inherent disenchantment and suspicion about material objects in modernity, based on the hypothesis that objects that once had a particular meaning in a society with firmly established hierarchal patterns are broken down by the individualism and multiplicity that marks the age. With one foot in Romanticism and the other stretched out (leaping, it seems) into modernity, Andersen saw no threat of disenchantment in this new age – modernity to him was enchanted in its own right. Similarly, as I have suggested, he seems to draw instinctively on a mindset that, to borrow from Barbara M. Benedict's examination of the 18th century, 'reestablish[es] the importance of the very relationship in which things intervene, and urge[s] the role of moral conviction and social responsibility in personal identity' (21).

There is, then, an important and pervasive paradox in Andersen's work. He makes use of tropes favored by the Romantics but for a purpose that extends, or at least complicates, that of any variant of the Romantic program. In an eccentric maneuver he pays homage to Romanticism while simultaneously leaving many of Romanticism's claims behind. Barbara Johnson notes in *Persons and Things* that

It seems that puppets do for some observers resemble divinities in contrast to fallen, self-aggrandizing human beings. The aura of contact with a transcendent dimension, in fact, is what renders puppets eerie. (85)

But Andersen's marionettes, as I have shown, seem to have escaped both uncanny associations and demiurgic control with its latent sacred associations; his marionettes are essentially de-sacralized. Andersen instead found the potential for a decidedly more social agenda than those offered by metaphysical schema. What is more, Andersen offers a counter-story in advance to the tragic-doll concept that Mikhail Bakhtin would later articulate when he noted that

in Romanticism the accent is placed on *the puppet as the victim of alien inhuman force*, which rules over men by turning them into marionettes. This is completely unknown in folk culture. Moreover, only in Romanticism do we find the peculiar grotesque theme of the *tragic doll*.²⁷ (40; my italics)

He also seems to have implicitly countered the gloomy prognosis that occupied Charles Baudelaire in his 1853 essay 'A Philosophy of Toys', in which the child's desire to break open toys is seen as a need to 'to get at and see [its] soul', only to find a sad and empty soullessness. Destruction of dolls, then (recalling Goethe's Venetian epigram) becomes the child's 'first metaphysical tendency' (202-203).

Andersen gives his readers a different kind of epistemological insight. Playing at being human, as the doll proposed to do in 'Pengegrisen', is no trivial matter for Andersen even if it permits him to expose human triviality. His demystification of Romanticism's more fantastic injection of life, vitality, grace, uncanniness or monstrosity into inanimate forms that resemble humans, and his insistence on an almost naïvely pragmatic observation of materiality, comes to sound very much like the sharp '[k]nik, knak!' clatter of broken puppets. But his broken forms are never empty; they are filled with 'sociability' and speak volumes about the (human) 'lives of things'.

Literature

- Andersen, Hans Christian. *Samlede Værker*. [SV]. 18 vols. Ed. Klaus P. Mortensen. Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2003-2007.
- Andersen, Hans Christian. *Fodreise fra Holmens Canal til Østpynten af Amager i Aarene 1828 og 1829*. (1829). SV. Vol. 9. 165-257.
- Andersen, Hans Christian. 'Dødningen'. (1830). SV. Vol. 1. 52-71.
- Andersen, Hans Christian. 'Lykkens Kalosher'. (1838). SV. Vol. 1. 460-485.
- Andersen, Hans Christian. *Mit Eget Eventyr uden Digtning*. (1846) SV. Vol. 16. 177-333.
- Andersen, Hans Christian. *I Sverrig*. (1851). SV. Vol. 15. 11-133.
- Andersen, Hans Christian. 'Marionettespilleren'. (1851/68). SV. Vol 3. 190-193.
- Andersen, Hans Christian. 'Pengegrisen'. (1855) SV. Vol. 2. 114-115.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- Baudelaire, Charles. 'A Philosophy of Toys'. *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. Trans. Jonathan Mayne. London: Phaidon Press, 1964.
- Benedict, Barbara M. 'The Spirit of Things'. *The Secret Life of Things. Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*. Ed. Mark Blackwell. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2007. 19-42.
- Bohrer, Karl Heinz. *Suddenness: On the Moment of Aesthetic Appearance*. (1981) Trans. Ruth Crowley. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Brown, Bill. 'Thing Theory'. *Things*. Ed. Bill Brown. Chicago and London: Chicago UP, 2004. 1-16.
- Flint, Christopher. 'Speaking Objects'. *The Secret Life of Things. Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*. Ed. Mark Blackwell. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2007. 162-186.
- Freud, Sigmund. 'Das Unheimliche'. *Studienausgabe, Band IV*. Frankfurt am Main: S Fischer Verlag, 1970. 241-282.
- Freud, Sigmund. 'The Uncanny'. *The Uncanny*. Trans. David McLintock. London: Penguin Books. 121-162.
- Gigante, Denise. *Life: Organic Form and Romanticism*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2009.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Roman Elegies and Venetian Epigrams. A Bilingual Text*. Trans. L. R. Lind. Manhattan and Wichita: The University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 1974.
- Gross, Kenneth. *Puppets. An Essay on Uncanny Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Hoffmann, E. T. A. 'Der Sandmann'. (1816). *Nachtstücke*. Middlesex: Echo Library, 2006. 4-27.
- Johnson, Barbara. *Persons and Things*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Kleist, Heinrich von. 'Über das Marionettentheater'. (1810). Berlin: Streuben Verlag, 1948.
- Mylius, Johan de. *Forvaldingens pris, H. C. Andersen og hans eventyr*. Copenhagen: Høst og søn, 2005.
- Müller-Wille, Klaus. 'Hans Christian Andersen und die Dinge'. *Hans Christian Andersen und die Heterogenität der Moderne*. Ed. Klaus Müller-Wille. Tübingen and Basel: A Francke Verlag, 2009. 161-178.
- Nelson, Victoria. *The Secret Life of Puppets*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Peer, Larry H. 'Introduction. Romanticizing the Object.' *Romanticism and the Object*. Ed. Larry H. Peer. New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2009. 1-7.
- Sanders, Karin. *Konturer: skulptur og dødsbilleder fra guldalderlitteraturen*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1997.
- Segel, Harold B. *Pinocchio's Progeny: Puppets, Marionettes, Automaton, and Robots in Modernist and Avant-Garde Drama*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*. 3rd ed. (1818). London: Dover Publications, 1994.

Notes

- 1 This essay is part of a book project in which I investigate H. C. Andersen's use of physical reality. The working title of the book is *The Lives of Things in Hans Christian Andersen's Material Imagination*. Projected publication date is 2014.
- 2 Unless otherwise noted translations from Danish to English are mine.
- 3 'The Magic Galoshes' reveals how reckless dreams and desires inevitably trap humans in fantasies that cause misery rather than pleasure: dreams of living in another time (the good old days), flying to the moon, or being someone else.
- 4 Johan de Mylius notes how dead things are animated in accordance with the material from which they are formed. The little tin soldier, for example, is steadfast like the tin of which he is made and so on; see Mylius 73.
- 5 Johan de Mylius, for one, suggests that the reader should interpret Andersen's use of material objects as dictated by genre conventions.
- 6 The nomenclature of 'thing' and 'object' has been discussed in numerous theories in later years, and it has become commonplace to follow Bill Brown's definition that 'we begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us The story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relationship to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relationship' (Brown 4). For an excellent discussion of thing theory as it concerns H. C. Andersen, see Klaus Müller-Wille's article 'Hans Christian Andersen und die Dinge' (2009).
- 7 During the eighteenth century so-called 'it-narratives' were in vogue. As suggested by the pronoun 'it', these stories used inanimate objects as narrators, often letting the objects recount their autobiographies. The speaking object regularly narrates its story to human intermediaries, so that the experience of the object is communicated indirectly. Often the agents involved in manufacturing objects, the commodity culture and the spiritualization of commodity culture was at stake. In his chapter 'Speaking Objects' in *The Secret Life of Things*, Christopher Flint explains: 'As items of clothing, jewelry, furniture, transportation, currency, and so on, narrating objects invariably evoke physicality, grounding their narratives in the experiences of vulnerable human bodies. The speaking objects' effectiveness as a storyteller derives from its proximity to human beings' (167-168). In 1781 the British periodical *The Critical Review* complained: 'this mode ... is grown so fashionable, that few months pass which do not bring one of them under our inspection' (qtd. in Flint 165). In Britain alone, between the early eighteenth century and the late nineteenth century, we find a series of novels that use coins or bank notes as narrators. Many are by anonymous or lesser-known women authors and the genre was not regarded as high literature.
- 8 'My greatest joy was to sew puppet clothes.'
- 9 'I fell in love as a boy with a puppet show; / It attracted me for a long time until I destroyed it. / So Lavater, while young, snatched at the crucified puppet: / May he still hug it, deceived as he draws his last breath.'
- 10 'laughs at all the right places, applauds at the right moment; this was an unusual spectator!'
- 11 'to be theater director of a live troupe, a real human one'
- 12 'They were like flies in a bottle, and I was in the midst of the bottle, I was the theater director. The air went out of me, my head was spinning, and I was as miserable as any human being could ever be. I found myself amongst a new species of humans. I wished they all were back in my box and that I had never become director.'

- 13 'in reality they were only marionettes and then they killed me!'
- 14 'my staff does not reason, and neither does the audience'
- 15 'I am a happy director, my staff does not reason, and neither does the audience, it enjoys itself full-heartedly. I can freely make my own plays. I take the best from the comedies, and no one frets about it. Plays that are now despised on the large stages but were a draw some thirty years ago, and then made the audience chortle, I have now taken hold of and now I present them to the little ones, and the little ones chortle like their father and mother chortled; I present 'Johanna Montfaucon' and 'Dyveke', but abbreviated versions, for the little ones do not appreciate lengthy love-nonsense: they want sad, but quickly. Now I have travelled Denmark inside and out, I know all people and I'm known in return.'
- 16 Andersen appears to have borrowed the name 'Bloodless' from the Swedish Romantic Per Daniel Amadeus Atterbom.
- 17 In its later incarnation as 'Rejsekammeraten' [The Travelling Companion], the marionette scene has been altered slightly, but in important ways. The biblical story of Ester and Asheverus is changed to a fairy tale of a princess, for example.
- 18 'Knick, knack! How she broke, and the poor puppeteer moaned so horribly, for it had been his first Prima Donna and the dog had bitten off the head.'
- 19 'All the wooden dolls were scattered in a heap. The king and all the henchmen, they were the ones that sighed so pitifully and stared with their large glass eyes, for they wished so dearly to be anointed a little, just like the queen, so that they too could move.'
- 20 'Indeed, the fairy tale is quite openly committed to the animistic view that thoughts and wishes are all-powerful, but I cannot cite one genuine fairy story in which anything uncanny occurs. We are told that it is highly uncanny when inanimate objects – pictures or dolls – come to life, but in Hans Christian Andersen's stories the household utensils, the furniture and the tin soldiers are alive, and perhaps nothing is further removed from the uncanny. Even when Pygmalion's beautiful statue comes to life, this is hardly felt to be uncanny' (Freud, 153).
- 21 'commonplace in fairy tales. Who would go so far as to call it uncanny when, for instance, Snow White opens her eyes again? And the raising of the dead in miracle stories – those of the New Testament, for example – arouses feelings that have nothing to do with the uncanny' (Freud, 153).
- 22 'A host of adorned Gentlemen moved mechanically up and down the floor. They looked like they were fabricated. Every fold in their clothes seemed calculated. I addressed the one that came closest to me, but he did not answer one word, turned his back on me and went away with his regular stride and an arrogant manner. I addressed another, but he was no more polite than the first. – When presently the third was also about to turn his back on me, I lost patience and grabbed his arm. He was difficult to hold and made an extraordinary amount of movement with all his limbs, while at the same time he sneered rather peculiarly at me. At last I sensed that the entire company consisted of completely wooden men, filled with steam; a kind of artificial automaton that the century had invented to decorate the antechamber'.
- 23 'My first memories – it began – reaches back to the printers' shop, where I first saw the light of day. As if in a dream I still remember a little man with a strange catlike face, who one day stepped into the living room where, in all my innocence, I was hung to dry on a string. My mother – as I dare call the aforementioned manuscript to whom I owe my existence – told us children during the night that he was our father, alderman Hoffmann, without whom she would still be pure unwritten paper and we would never have seen the light of day. We listened

with curiosity to what she told us about him, how the specters that moved inside of us showed themselves to him as if alive when he sat and worked during the long winter's nights. And how he often had to call his wife out of bed so she could sit with him with her knitting sock and nod genially to the peculiar man whose imagination was claiming too much power.'

- 24 For an elaboration on this, see my article 'Left Eye-Right Eye: B. S. Ingemann's Bifocality and Morbid Imagination', forthcoming in *Scandinavian Studies*.
- 25 'What ticks in the clock, here beats with strong strokes of the hammer. It is *Bloodless* who drank life from human thought and thereby grew limbs of metal, of stone and of wood; it is *Bloodless*, who by human thought gained strength that humans do not physically possess. In Motala, *Bloodless* sits and, through the great halls and rooms, he stretches his hard limbs, each joint is wheels on wheels, chains and thick iron threads. -Step inside and see how the glowing iron pieces are presses into long iron rods. *Bloodless* spins the glowing bar. See how the scissors cut into the hard metal plates, so quietly and softly, as if into paper. Listen how he hammers; the sparks fly from the anvil. See how he breaks the thick iron rods, breaks them to fitted pieces; it looks as if a piece of the seal was broken. The long iron pieces are planed into shreds in front of your feet. In front of you, the great wheels are turning and over your head run iron threads, heavy and large. It hammers and buzzes, and if you venture into the open yard, amongst large scattered boilers for steamboats and railways, then here too *Bloodless* stretches one of his fathom-long fingers and hauls off. Everything is alive, man alone stands still and is silenced and stops. The water springs from one's fingertips just looking at it. One turns, stands still, bows and does not know what to say, in awe of the human thought that here has iron limbs.'
- 26 Andersen's complex relationship with machines with regards to nature and humans will be investigated in more detail in *The Lives of Things*.
- 27 In Andersen's statue-stories, on the other hand, such as 'Psychen' [The Psyche], and also in his novel *Improvisatoren* [The Improvisatore], the entire metaphysical apparatus is rolled out in an engagement with concepts of mimesis. For Andersen, statues, unlike puppets, absorb eternity and immortality and resonate with Promethean/Pygmalion powers. This means that the 'tragic doll' is absorbed into the connotations of neoclassical marble. See Sanders.