Asian Dolls and the Westernized Gaze:
Notes on the Female Dollification in South Korea

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Abstract

This article offers a strictly qualitative approach to the range of historical and contemporary cultural practices and images, as well as literary histories, regarding dolls and dollification in East Asian context. The phenomenon of people, and especially women, considered and/or fashioned into "living dolls" is confirmed ethnographically and discussed theoretically. Direct ethnographic voices and the author's own autoethnographic and theoretical observations regarding South Korean everydayness and/or popular culture are included, covering dollification in its narrower, subcultural and/or fetishistic sense, but also, more importantly, in its broader sense as the loose yet visible entanglement of already normalized and mainstreamed gendered procedures, narratives, and events. Dollification is analyzed in conjunction with the problematic aspect of Westernized gaze and the ongoing need for both feminist and post-colonial critiques of limited agency and social mobility of undollified women.

Key words

South Korea, dolls, dollification, cuteness, Westernized gaze

Prologue: Methodologizing Dollification

Dollification could be defined as having an obsession with dolls and acting like one, at times engaging in sexual fetishistic desires and practices regarding dolls, or even as the imaginary or actual power of changing people into dolls. The main concern of this paper, nonetheless, is something we could think of as "dollification in the broader sense" in-

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sofar as it pertains to contemporary East-Asian gendered subjectivity and gendered practices. Our aim is to try to describe it in its South Korean milieu. We acknowledge the various valuable scholarly work on doll-related practices, some of it localized in the East-Asian context, such as the anthropological research about dolls in Japanese culture by Ellen Schattschneider (2001, 2005); contributions on various doll-related *obsessions*, such as the research on doll collectors by Alexander F. Robertson (2003); as well as the general theoretical literature about performativity of gender (Butler, 1990) and about technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988). However, none of these broadly related sources or theoretical discussions could be considered as a direct influence or contribution to this research.

Dollification in the broader sense described here is the complex and highly contingent articulation of objects, subjects, images, narratives, practices, and affects encompassing both tangible and intangible dimensions of social life. That is why dollification must be approached here using the flexible cultural studies methodology of our day, in part built upon the qualitative methodological principles of the past, but largely exploring new ways to understand both data collection and management and the validation of findings.

As it is broadly discussed in contemporary relevant methodological literature based on the changed epistemology of the social sciences and humanities and on the influential theories of complexity, the old qualitative tools, or the usual rigidness of quantitative designs, are seldom useful in understanding the nuances and fluidity of the lived culture. Instead, "the trademark of the cultural studies approach to empirical research has been an interest in the interplay between lived experience, texts or discourses, and the social context" (Saukko, 2003, p. 11). The complexity of such interplay, though, is never to be confused with randomness:

> Though complexity theory may be seen by some as providing a way of talking about random, intuitive, even 'spiritual' phenomena, this is not what has been argued here. The causalities involved in the interactions may be untrackable, but what emerges from them is not 'mysterious', in this sense: it is consistent with the nature and histories of the interactions involved (Haggis, 2008, p. 165).

The ethnography of the newly acknowledged complexity of the "relational social" is performed not following the usual axes of individualization and generalization, but by engaging in performativity of research and of scholarly writing which can, fractally scaled, match the dynamic situation in the field, both academically and politically (Denzin, 2003). The best available examples of Korean feminist writing, quoted in the continuation of this paper, have already appropriated a partially performative approach in qualitative analysis that includes a strong self-reflexivity and free observations in appropriate combination with contextual data. The precise theoretical and ethical foundations of this research are described elsewhere and are publicly available, so they will not be reported here due to space limitations (see Puzar, 2011).

Four years of research on gendered agency in South Korea, from 2007-2011, produced a personal database comprising over 200 unstructured interviews with 56 Korean women and 7 men, taken at various times and occasions, always under confidentiality agreement (only initials will be used), several dozen field notes, and a growing selection of publicly available historical, literary and *pop* narratives used for the supportive discourse analysis. A small selection of those materials is presented here, with personal voices always contextualized by basic information such as month of the ethnographic encounter and place, age, and occupation of the female interlocutors.

The manuscript combines the personal voices of Korean women, mostly adolescents, with the author's self-reflective reasoning, either directly autoethnographic or indirectly audible in the critique of the Westernized gaze. That combination is supported by the range of historical, literary, and pop narratives and field observations that serve to assure the contextual validity but also to correct possible tacit methodological problems such as the unwanted research inclination towards the population of English-speaking urban youth that would leave the larger percentage of undollified girls beyond our analytical reach. By combining the direct voices of the Korean women, and, occasionally, the author's own voice, with the analysis of literary texts, films, and pop-narratives and the appropriate social and historical context, this text is replacing obsolete forms of triangulation with the newly proposed methodology entailing three forms of validity: dialogic, deconstructive, and contextual (Saukko, 2003).

Into the Story: Dolls of the World

When an American provincial teacher and didactic writer, Mary Hazelton Blanchard Wade (1860-1936), wrote in 1913 about the dolls of the world (including Japanese and Korean), giving them personalized and culturally specific voices and letting them speak *for themselves*, she was just reiterating the old narrative trope of giving life to non-living anthropomorphic and zoomorphic objects – the wooden or ceramic copies of living creatures. Aside from the usual psychoanalytic theories of fetish and transfer, the boundaries between the anthropomorphic artifact and the biological human always tend to be thin, not just in sheer symbolism, but also in the fully lived affective interchange within the human-animal-object continuum, along with directly hybrid and liminal forms.

The idea of cyborg, which was favored by the cultural theory, including feminist branches, of the 1990s (Haraway, 1991, pp. 149-183) and in the meantime expanded within broader and at times quite futile theoretical discussion on post-human condition of the human kind (Toffoletti, 2007), was clearly preceded by the millennia of cultural notions and beliefs openly engaging, and engaged with, mixed forms and liminal experiences, including a host of East Asian cultural practices. Dolls and humans have been merging in complex patterns, adding the intensity of their affective interchanges to the various histories before and throughout East Asian modernity and up to our time, before and after the relatively recent Western-bound boom of the techno-utopias.

> In ancient China, the famous shaman, or Wu, Yen She, animated dolls for the amusement of the Imperial Court. The Emperor became jealous of one of the dolls ogling a Court Lady and ordered it cut open. It was only made of wood and leather (Bush, 2001, p. 39).

Our self-imposed task is to see how the image and the spirit of doll or puppet *re-installs*, the previous generation may have preferred to say "re-inscribes", itself and its almost-anthropomorphic features into embodied subjectivity and self-stylizations of contemporary East-Asian women and, to a certain extent, new androgynous males.

Two separate interpretive approaches are proposed and interwoven here along the ethnographic descriptions and observations of South Korean dollification. The first one could be considered strictly feminist and regards dollification as the partial reproduction of social immobility or the pre-programmed limited mobility of Korean women within weakened but still maintained patriarchal order. The second pertains to the discussion on the possible role of the external and/or interiorized Westernized gaze in shaping local cultural practices of dollification.

In order to understand why certain phenomena survive and thrive in our postindustrial and sometimes post-feminist conjuncture, one also needs to acknowledge ways in which older social formations and cultural forms still co-influence the materiality of the contemporary gendered everydayness. The gradual commodification and fetishizing of static femininity, including adjacent elaborated embodiments and fashions, did not wait for mature industrial modernity and capitalism or for the spectacular capitalism of the postindustrial era, having been entrenched throughout the history of patriarchy in the West and in the East alike. It produced material techniques or technologies of gendered *stasis* ranging from the Chinese foot crushing and binding, or the narrow corsets of the European nineteenth century ballroom, all the way to the high heels on tired female commuters standing in the local Gyeonggi-do bus or Seoul subway, and must always be properly historicized, including the re-visiting of the historiographical and literary narratives of the past.

The proper description of South Korean dollification, even if it entails different feminist and postcolonial theoretical aspects and includes the proper historicization, could never be isolated from other important aspects of performing gender in East Asian context. The interesting fact of women being called dolls, being perceived as dolls, acting as dolls, or even being fashioned and self-fashioned into living dolls must therefore be assessed in its dynamic relationship to the evermore accentuated zones of melodramatic and infantilistic femininity (Abelmann, 2003, pp. 22-25) and, up to a point, with respect to the broadly marketed androgynous metrosexual and "versatile" masculinity (Jung, 2011, p. 163).

Daughter(s) of Wang

When Mary Hazelton Blanchard Wade inserted the chapter about a Korean doll in her collection of doll stories, she evoked in the Korean doll's voice a good amount of her own colonial misunderstanding and *charitable* arrogance in regard to other cultures, but also a certain interesting and almost commonsensical proto-feminist drive. For her, the Korean doll is a product of poverty, fashioned by the girl herself out of a wooden stick and a piece of paper; it is mouthless, eyeless, handless, and earless. The girl who made it is also nameless. Devoid of a personal name, she is called "Daughter of Wang", Her friend: "Daughter of Kim" (Wade, 1913, p. 105).

The neo-Confucian patriarchy of the late Joseon reached Wade's gaze and she tried to describe the specific subaltern girl-doll continuum – girl and doll are bound together in what appears to be the clear misfortune of their own gender. Still, along with describing the father's and brother's ignoring of the girl, she also, almost ironically, described daughter of Wang as "dark-faced" and even claimed her face to be less beautiful if compared with other Asian faces. Moreover, she depicted the girl's dreams as particularly naïve, even for a child. The basic game Daughter of Wang can think of, Wade is happy to inform us, is the game of marriage – a doll's wedding. And the silent and silenced bride is mentioned as the central but passive figure of such a ritual. In one of the last scenes of the story of the Korean doll, the girls - bored by play-visit a monkey caged in a courtyard, a metaphor for what Wade had, in a way, expressed earlier: the caged powers of the entire gender. Caged natural forces, at the other hand, are not described neutrally, or even with the implied patronizing dimension of "feeling sorry", but openly silenced and described by Wade and other Western authors as basically monkey-like, i.e. mindless. The final line of the Korean doll story is indicative: "Well! Well! It is certainly more comfortable to be a Korean doll than a monkey, anyway." (Wade, 1913, p. 119)

One can easily see that all the ingredients of our early 21st century dollification story, and accompanying methodological dilemmas, were already there in this peculiar example from 1913: aspects of economic development and labor relations, education, gender relations entailing clear roles and limitations, and the closely related question of "satisfactory" or less than satisfactory body-image. Two frames of reference, two discursive environments, are interestingly met and merged. The horizon of the stereotypical late Joseon *Agassi*, i.e. the young lady of the Joseon dynasty era, raised and *caged* in the Neo-Confucian affective network based on filial piety and the double subjugation of the female and of the younger, is exposed to the patronizing Western, almost-liberal and almost-feminist gaze, ethically problematic in itself and often supporting the objectification of cute and fashionable femininity or bringing violent interventions into religious and other realms of Korean life.

It comes as no surprise that the early modern literary work and proto-feminist discussion in Korea exploited the women-doll motif, partially following the Ibsen fad, spread among Japanese and Korean cultural elites, i.e. literary examples that in a way confirmed the paradoxical position of *sinyeosung*, i.e. “new woman”.

In the famous poem “A Doll’s House” from 1921, Korean intellectual, painter, and feminist writer Na Hyae Seok (1896-1946) related her Ibsenian inclinations with the culturally specific experience of Korean gender relations. The poem describes the hardship of being a doll forced to “please” her father and husband, and it invites Korean women to join the author’s quest for freedom. Interestingly, there is a revelation of the female mind that cannot be controlled which is also juxtaposed to the realization that her body is worthless (Seo, 2001; Hyun, 2004; Kim, 2002). The personal drama of the poet herself, who experimented with the modernist concept of “free love” only to finish misunderstood and criticized, is, nonetheless, conducive to our understanding of the aporetic freedoms of “new women”. Na Hyae Seok, after abandoning her marriage, lived in poverty and died in a hospital, forgotten and alone – a destiny she shared with several of her literary companions (Lee, Y., 2002, p. 139). Not many mothers and daughters of the era wanted to confront a similar level of exposure to androcentric critique and social retaliation.

Let us consider another example that in many ways stands in close proximity to the lived experience of Na Hyae Seok and her generation of “new women”. One of the oldest surviving Korean films of the colonial era, a 1936 motion picture *Mimong*, i.e. “Sweet dream”, co-directed by Yang Joo-Nam and Kim So-Bong, told the story of the transgressive housewife named Ae-Soon that dreams of freedom which she finally gains and frivolously misuses by engaging in an extramarital affair with a laundry man. Marital enclosure preceding the transgression is symbolically depicted by the visual metaphor of the caged bird. The motif of the cage that we previously encountered in Mary Hazelton Wade's story is apparent: a broad reproduction of the restrictions on female social mobility is almost always materialized into and reduplicated through limitations of speech, but also of the physical movement, involving fashions and stylizations and even more direct interventions on female bodies. Even more interesting for our dollification story is how the directors visually underpin the very moment of Ae-Soon's transgression and her "Westernized" agency and freedom by the sudden close-up shot of the retail store mannequins with Western facial features (Puzar, 2011, p. 30).

Still, even the most simple situational freedoms often entail a heavy price tag for "betrayal": similar to the lived destiny of Na Hyae Seok, Ae-Soon, as an anti-heroine who disrupts the patriarchal moral order, must also find shameful death, and be punished in the end of the movie by suicide. She drinks poison in a hospital bed, after hurting her own daughter, the melodramatically "angelic" *agassi*, in a car accident while trying to leave the city, thus allowing her gun-armed ex-husband who angrily rushes to the hospital to remain the rightful and respectful patriarch ― the untainted tragic hero.

Along with direct images of dolls, dollification, and female immobility, of particular interest for this discussion is the positioning of "love," or better "romantic love", seen in this early-modernist setting as a realm of possible female liberation, or at least as an occasional free choice. To "follow one's heart", as opposed to the prescribed rationality of Neo-Confucian social relations, culturally echoed a foreign literary sentimentalism but also renewed the same old struggles of Joseon women expressed through centuries of the Korean *Écriture féminine* (Lee, Y., 2002). Despite the obvious dilemmas that such heteronormative sentimentalism brings to the feminist debate, it is clear that the last seven decades of South Korean social life brought many tangible changes, including a partial redistribution of powers and affects, with external signs and fashions following. According to the sociological accounts of the early seventies, 86% of the female students at Yonsei University in the year 1970 always wore Western-style dress, a sign of the overall modernization process that preceded democracy (Anspach & Yoon, 1976). The prevalent spirit and impetus changed from generation to generation of Korean women, though. The central role of respected matriarchs as being crucial supports of family life, but also of social harmony and its slightly fading patriarchal aspects throughout hard times, contributing to the industrial transformation of the peninsula and various social movements, changed in the generation of educated yet largely unemployed middleclass wives enjoying relative wealth and the adjacent ideologies of "lifestyle". Those wives and mothers invested considerable time and energy in the education and other "chance-improving" activities of their increasingly emasculated sons and their ever more *cutified* daughters. Transformations continued with dreams pertaining to the so-called generation of "sexy woman" (Cho, 2002).

The next sections will try to concisely expose a range of histories, ethnographic and autoethnographic findings, observations in the field, and popular narratives, all regarding dollification in both the narrower and broader sense. Powerful doll-images are spread all around the realm of renewed Korean melodramatic femininity (Abelmann, 2003), where they act as the important discursive and material knots binding together infantile cuteness and melodrama with the reality of the objectified femininity and the maintained impairment of the female movement, both physical and sociopolitical.

Dolls and "Dolls"

Could we speculate, without the unintentional fallacy typical of anthropologists mesmerized by the tangible findings in "their" field, that the omnipresent doll image is in some way particularly attached to the East Asian female, and, increasingly, East Asian young-male subjects? A simple YouTube and Google sampling seems to confirm the recurrent usage of the doll metaphor in regard to East Asian, and to a lesser extent, Asian girls, especially idols, and "eoljjangs", romanized more frequently as uljjang, ulzzang and eulzzang, the "best face" idols. A search of "European dolls" or "American dolls", on the other hand, never seems to harvest as many YouTube videos depicting female humans, their faces and bodies. Searching for "African dolls" even less so, returning anthropological and folkloristic material about wooden masks and puppets, another fruit of the Westernized gaze or the post-colonial search for "authenticity". A simple search of "Asian dolls" or of specific East Asian dolls (including searches for Korean dolls, Japanese dolls, Thai dolls, Chinese dolls, etc.) demonstrates the broader usage of doll-related imagery and metaphors in regard to Asian femininities. This common usage in the English speaking world is indicative of the preserved Western employment of centuries-old orientalist motifs: dollified Asian femininity is the old co-product of Western gaze acting together with various local patriarchal circumstances based on the image of docile and malleable yet exotic and eroticized femininity. Clearly, that image, from the start, also involved aspects of discursive and material violence, abuse, and exploitation.

In her discussion of typical "China doll" and "Madame Butterfly" types of orientalist narratives, Sandra Lyne wrote on the Japanese experiences of Pierre Loti (real name: Julien Viaud, 1850-1923), the literary forefather of the "Madame Butterfly" motif, who during his stay in Japan not only engaged in the practice of acquiring a so called temporary wife, but also produced narratives describing Japanese women as dolls. Lyne foregrounds key aspects of the Westernized gaze, which produces petrifaction and commodification of Asian femininity:

> Loti (and subsequently other writers of the Butterfly story) is able to create a construct that can be comfortably exploited, without the complications involved with European female/male relationships. Asian females become replicas, simulacra. Proper relationships are not possible with such an item; a commodity indistinguishable from the trinkets and fripperies of Japan's exotic merchandise (Lyne, 2002, p. 1).

Western man, partially taking up the indigenous patriarchal practices, partially misusing them, posed himself as the puppet-master:

> By rendering the women 'dolls', he positions himself as the controller of the playroom, the subject to whom the 'dolls' must give diversion and pleasure. The 'dolls' of course, do not cry 'real' tears, their culture permits play: thus the 'owner' is freed from the complications of emotional entanglement and questions of ethics (Lyne, 2002, p. 1).

Spectral formation of that same orientalism is revived yet again, exactly when the post-colonial self-fashioning and self-empowerment through irony and play enacted by, let's say, Tokyo Harajuku "gothic Lolita" or "decora" girls gets exposed to the greedy Westernized gaze of global audiences, producing desire for increasingly weak versions of "convenient Asians".

Yet the phenomenon of dollification is not just about the insulting set of metaphors that white male viewers or other commentators use to describe sexually appealing or cutified girls, or about the dreams of fashioning oneself into a Barbie-like creature, as dozens of on-line make-up tutorials made by and for Asian adolescents and younger adults would suggest. Rather, it is an ingredient of the already normalized enactment of gendered subjectivities and relations that reflects both the old orientalist gaze, partly interiorized among the local audiences, and new pop-obsessions.

For anybody closely following the mainstream K-pop production, doll images and objects, including dollified female bodies and the language of dollification, seem to be everywhere. Illustrative here is the case of the South Korean singer G.NA who was born in 1987, and whose bodily measurements and curves are not only matter of fan discussion, media speculations, or blogging as it is usual in the world of pop-idols, but also have been made part of the promotional campaigns, with G.NA regularly compared to a mannequin doll, and on several occasions publicly, and in front of cameras, posed next to plastic mannequins. Her body, with official numbers of 168 cm and 47 kg, that includes a small face, natural D-cup breasts and a pronounced waistline, is called "the mannequin body", an image promoted by her own production house.

Dollification images are broadly used in live performances and in music videos, sometimes in a truly excessive manner, such as in the music video for the 2010 song *Gyauddung*, i.e. "Tilt My Head", by the female pop group "Girl's Day". Members of the group act as androids working at the factory line producing plastic dolls with rubber hairdos cast in their own image. The dolls become "alive", while presumably remaining "plastic", a minute later, when touched by the colorful makeup: mascara and blush.

A leading female K-pop group of the moment, "Girl's Generation", also known as SoShi or SNSD, openly used images of utter dollification and related styling in several music videos and commercial campaigns. Some products, such as the video for the song "Gee" (2009), showed members of the group as a petrified shopping window mannequins carried around by the male salesman played by Min Ho, a member of the popular boy-band "SHINee", and included the trope of "coming alive", but only within the framework of Girl's Generation's infantile cuteness merged with budding sexuality, a mixture recognized by their audiences and passionately discussed as problematic and damaging among the ranks of the most faithful fans.

When the 2009 tourist campaign *Infinitely yours, Seoul* produced videos depicting Seoul city attractions intended for foreign tourist markets, three different versions caught our attention: the Chinese language video, the Japanese language video, and the English language one. The distribution of motifs and K-pop icons in those videos, as well as gender-related allusions and innuendos, are interesting. The Chinese video concentrates on local food and shopping in traditional markets. The Japanese version depicts more mature women tagging shopping facilities and objects, but also putting tags on the living Korean boy idol performing on the scene, thus invoking specific Japanese localization of the Korean wave with women flying to Korea to shop, to undergo convenient aesthetic and medical procedures, but also to test media-spurred dreams of Korean virility.

The English version, nonetheless, was produced as the celebration of melodramatic "romance", with different boy-bands, all managed and produced by the company SM Entertainment, constantly on the move, actively setting the scene for a couple in love walking around town, while Girl's Generation members stood passively in shopping windows petrified and acting, once again, as mannequins. That specific distribution of gender roles and affects seems conducive to our hypothesis that the more direct forms of Korean female dollification are seldom created or perceived as completely immune to the penetrative Westernized gaze, be it external or interiorized, and is problematic in terms of both postcolonial emancipation and feminist politics of gender.

Motifs and moments of "coming alive", acting as sisterhood of dolls, playing with confused male figures, or physically attacking male dolls on the scene − all of this is already normalized as part of the K-pop dollification narratives. Specifically feminine tactical powers are promoted along with a certain type of political correctness that never amounts to the level of strategic intervention into the actual language and materiality of gender relations. Some girl groups, such as the 2NE1, are pre-fashioned to bring stronger messages, including those related to intra-couple abuse, and the group Piggy Dolls, comprised of three girls who are considerably overweight, delivers some peculiarly conceived vision of "fat but still cute and hot" femininity. Nonetheless, the infantile playfulness, body modifications and re-fashioning, melodramatic obsessions with romantic love, and celebrating of the idealized soft and sexy man as the final "prize" — all that is usually posed as the necessary and powerful dulcification and pacification of the newly gained "girl power".

K-pop producers and media are still relatively careful not to eroticize the pre-teen and early-teen characters in the way that Japanese creative industries have already done, but that is, unfortunately, about to change, due to the constant merging of children interests and activities, such as dance performances, with the idol system and with increasingly sexualized pop production which often relies on high-school-aged entertainers. In fact, this is already reflected in public debates, court hearings regarding public morality, and in popular narratives.

A good example of these dynamics is a short scene from the presently ongoing weekend soap opera or "TV drama" *Banjjak banjjak binnaneun*, i.e. "Twinkle twinkle shiny" on MBC in which a nine year old daughter character called Park Ji Won, performed by child actress Sin Su Yon, unexpectedly uses the term "sexy" and relates that concept to K-pop idols:

> Ji Won [touching aunt's hair]: Aunt, how did you become so pretty? So pretty, aunt. Hair is pretty, dress is pretty, you are sexy just like the sister Yuri from "Girl's Generation". Mother [upset]: Hey, you little one, what, sexy? You'll be in trouble. Are you saying that, knowing what is sexy? Ji Won: I Know! [stands up, dancing and singing] Chiki chiki chaka chaka choko choko cho, if you behave badly, chiki chiki chaka chaka choko choko cho, we will find out!

The girl is singing part of the originally up-tempo children song from the popular South Korean cartoon *Nalara Syupeobodeu*, i.e. "Flying

Super-board", aired in 1990 on KBS, in a distorted, slowed-down manner, with softened pronunciation and prolonged vowels, while dancing alluringly, using typical eroticized moves of hips and shoulders as seen in the line of K-pop musical videos. The scene ends with grandfather and father laughing at the girl's performance, her grandmother and aunt puzzled by the whole scene, and the girl's mother acting worried. In the next episode, father requests the performance to be repeated, this time for another guest.

When scholar and documentarist Katrien Jacobs interviewed people in Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China about the appropriation of Japanese dolls or doll-like alter egos, she based her research upon a very different premise than ours: "I wanted to analyse the experience of 'owning a doll' or 'identifying with a doll' by looking at several kinds of doll fantasies and how dolls assist people in recovering innocence and gender-fluidity" (Jacobs, 2009, p. 1).

Innocence that might be pretended, endangered, or even turned into a fetish aside, some fluidity is undeniably in action here: being an Asian doll is often more a choice of specific surgical and cosmetic procedures and a matter of fashion and self-fashioning that includes gesturality and voice alterations, rather than of "being Asian" or "being female" in the first place, or directly engaging with doll images *sensu stricto*. That is how the YouTube celebrity Magibon, a Caucasian girl from rural Pennsylvania, made herself one of the internationally most recognizable *Japanese* dolls: static, staring into the camera lens silently, posing, oozing blind affectivity and cuteness. After her first video, entitled "Me, doing nothing" that spurred the interest of Japanese male audiences, she exploited the Japanese connection that made her famous in the Japanese and international media sphere, delivering *kawaii*. Finally, there are Magibon imitators, mostly Caucasians too, posting videos on "how to be an Asian girl" where they emulate Magibon's dollified image, her immobility and reduced gesturality. A question that remains unanswered, though, is how all this aporetic "fluidity in petrifaction" of Caucasian girls acting as Asian dolls and, furthermore, of men of different races and nationalities dressed as Japanese cartoon characters or even fornicating with silicon-made "real dolls" (Whitney, 2010), contributes to the free agency and social mobility of real Asian women?

The Asian doll metaphor and open exploitation, in fact, happen to be interrelated in various painful ways, especially in the underprivileged classes. Let us quote here an on-line conversation with a 22-year-old South Korean boy, a high-school dropout working as a doorman in a Seoul nightclub. His dream is to take his grandmother to Hawaii before she dies. His sister can join them; in his dreams, she is there with him and grandmother. Still, he admits, they have not been talking for years due to the fact that she works as a prostitute, or, in his terms, has a "doll slavelife".

> SJ, age 20, born in Incheon, living in Seoul (language and spelling unaltered). SJ: So many dirty peoples have a doll (korean girl my sister too) they give money to doll and doll slavelife is begin. ... SJ: I hate her, I hate her. ... SJ: Actually I haven't see my sister I was seventeen, since seventeen. AP: I see. ... So she is not living with you any more. ... SJ: But I know she working area. ... SJ: She is cute You know, I understand, why many guys want her, she have good thing like humannism thing. AP: Soft-hearted? SJ: Yes, she is. She more looks like my mother than father. AP: I see. ... So mother has a soft heart, and father no? SJ: Well, don't deny, father like drunken pig (SJ, personal communication, November, 2009).

Western realms of sex-industry and exploitation seem to confirm SJ's specific usage of doll-related terminology: in different parts of the English-speaking world, Asian prostitution is directly marketed under the aegis of the doll. A simple Google search shows "Asian doll Escorts" (Sidney), "Asiandolls Directory of Independent Asian Escorts and Asian and Oriental Escort Agencies" (London), "Asian China Dolls" (London), "Oriental dolls" (Melbourne), "Hot Asian Doll" (Seattle), "Oriental doll-Exotic Chynah" (Los Angeles), and dozens of similar examples. However, in the next section of this paper we shall engage with somewhat more normalized examples pertaining to South Korean dollification in the broader sense: the mundane domain of everyday dollification.

Corps sans Deleuze: Becoming dolls

It was neither the obvious *subcultural* fashion-doll and lacy-ribbony-pinky stylizations from Tokyo Harajuku, possibly Shibuya, that was spread all around the continent and the world, nor the flourishing Korean doll industry that made us think about dollification in the Korean and East-Asian context. Rather, it was the particular problem of social and physical immobility of undollified girls and their feeling of being left behind.

> CYH, age 25, unemployed, Taepyeong, Seongnam-si: People are dieting, making surgery, it’s like that. A friend of mine put Botox here, here and here [showing spots on the face] to search job and husband. People are cruel to ugly ones ... some, when I go around, blame me for the round shape and size of my face, I can feel their energy. If they see me with my lover they think ‘she is not good enough for that one’. It’s like that (CYH, personal communication, December, 2010).

Let us further exemplify this problem with an autoethnographic narrative (a field-note of a sort) about our own observations regarding reception nurses in the Seoul metropolitan area:

> When I started to use private dental and other medical clinics in Bundang area of the Seongnam city and in the Gangnam and Apgujeong areas in Seoul, South Korea, I was surprised to see all the reception nurses and other female staff members being not only young and healthy-looking, but also very thin and, openly speaking, adhering to highest standards of female beauty of the moment. Their voices were usually modulated to the almost childish whisper and they were constantly smiling. Only much later I was able to re-connect some of those observed facts with the impossibility of employment for the overweight or in other ways “aesthetically challenged” women and with those aspects that we call “ageism” and “sexism”, and with regimentation and isolation of female labor (Puzar, 2009, p. 7).

While seriousness and classical beauty could still be largely desirable in corporate environments, and are seldom unimportant, in some places, such as the media, dollified cuteness is already mainstreamed. Men, except for those active in the fashion industry or media, seem still largely exempt from these harsh rules, other than being spurred to follow dress codes pertaining to this or that line of work, the same as elsewhere, or, in the case of young *metrosexuals*, voluntarily sharing the *burden* (Shiau & Chen, 2009).

The whole aesthetic geography needs to be researched here, i.e. the physical placement of people, especially women, along clear class-bound and aesthetic lines. In short, and horrible enough: Due to different nutrition patterns, ancestral genetic pools, and life options, including approach to medical or dental care and cosmetic interventions, poor people could be relegated to being permanently uglier and there is a system in operation, both within the labor market and in the media sphere, ready to reinforce such a division, installing expensive desires and spreading the call for dollification. The broadly discussed and mediatized concept of Chungdam ward daughter-in-law look that depicts a specific sophisticated style of woman longing to find her "catch" in Cheongdam-dong, the most exclusive neighborhood of the Seoul Metropolitan Area and thus ensure her social mobility through appearance, is an interesting example of such divisions and desires.

Along with this spatiality of dollification, there is a specific temporal dimension — a timeline of dollification, not only in terms of gender histories of different Korean generations, but also of individual life-spans. Ethnographical findings suggest the specific timeframe for the enforced fashioning, prevalently in relation to transitional periods and rituals of "coming of age", such as entering the university, beginning of dating, period after high-school finals, or those of "preparing to find job", or in some cases "preparing for marriage", that occur just before and after graduation from university. Doll is seldom mentioned in those rituals, but being dollified is usually desirable.

Let us consider an insightful autoethnographic note written for us by a future Seoul National University freshman who was taken unexpectedly one evening by her mother (in the period after her big exam and subsequent acceptance by the SNU) to visit a shop that specializes in tattooing eyebrows:

> SL, age 20, Seoul (language and spelling unaltered): About eyebrow tattoo: It was in some officetel (korean version of office hotel): Quite small place, but I had to wait for about 1 hour tho I had already made a reservation for it, because 2 more people were waiting too. It is hot season for them ... Thanks to senior high school students like me, haha only one ajumma (in her 30's... maybe 40's?) was working there ... after she found out I got into SNU, she talked about how important it is to be 'pretty' for a smart lady. ... aaah, plus: she studied physiognomy, and she told me what my face is like. to be specific, about my forehead. she said it tells that either I or my husband will be greatly successful ... on the way home, mom said 'she works for aesthetic industry, so it is quite natural that she talks about everything in the context of beauty, and things like that. don't take it seriously what she said (SL, personal communication, January, 2011).

In spite of the sobriety of the last lines, only a week after this note SL was taken by her mother to visit an aesthetic clinic to discuss possibilities for making further improvements on her physical appearance. The first option mentioned was the introduction of the upper eyelid crease, a very common surgical procedure called East Asian blepharoplasty, which usually also includes removal of excess skin and fatty tissue and, at times, is performed together with the removal of the epicanthal folds covering the angle of the eye – epicanthoplasty.

Text message, SL, age 20, Seoul: "It was just a consultation. Not sure if I wanna do it." (SL, personal communication, January, 2011)

A Yonsei University undergraduate, age 23, from Apgujeong (Seoul), interviewed about other issues commented on her dental braces: "I feel sorry for my mother. She wanted to make me beautiful, but I agreed only to wearing braces." (SM, personal communication, December, 2010)

The space of resistance, doubt, and stress related to the everyday dollification is critical here. Transitional periods often include a rise in peer-to-peer pressures, well-intentioned parental pressures, and media-bound pressures exceeding the possible individual wish for self-perfection discursively shaped under broader cultural and material conditions. There is a direct "aesthetic interventionism" to be taken into consideration, with televised stylists performing rituals of makeover that are dramatized in such a way to include old motifs pertaining to exorcism or, in the Korean context, *gut*: blaming, sad tears and resistance, interventions, collective celebration of the newly found beauty, tears of catharsis and happiness. Additionally, and importantly, it comes as no surprise in the feminist context to find women, especially mothers, as the active carriers and promoters of such rituals.

The epitome of such pressure, together with a still-patriarchal job market, is tied to the primacy of romantic relationships and the ideology of South Korean "coupleism" – an unusually strong adolescent and early adult couple ideology following a melodramatic twist in gender relations. South Korean highly organized "couple life", exposed to the public gaze and social pressure, is the most important space of a new and structured emotionality governing gender relations. It includes a specific and relatively strictly followed calendar of love, usually related to the 14th day of the month: White Day, Valentine's Day, Kiss Day, Rose Day, Couple Ring Day, etc., which have, for the most part, been invented or supported by self-interested companies which produce related goods and services.

The complex performance of lovability and cuteness, sometimes in Korean named *aegyo*, pervades the private realm of couple-related behaviors of Korean adolescents and young adults and it is often perceived as attractive and desirable beyond limits of intimate relations. It entails acting charming yet childish, vulnerable and volatile, pretending sudden surprise or unmotivated sadness or anger including pounding of feet, lightly kicking the partner with closed fist, pout, bloated cheeks, distorted child-like voice, petrified and decontextualized linguistic elements implying helplessness or confusion, e.g. *Eoddeokhae, eoddeokhae?*, i.e. "What to do, what to do?," weakly motivated text messages with sad and crying emoticons, along with the highest regard for physical appearances, including cosmetic and surgical interventions, wearing circle eye lenses, etc. Our early ethnographic findings and anecdotal knowledge suggests considerably less frequent usage of child-like voice modulations in female-only educational institutions, when compared with co-educational environments, which is indicative of the androcentric focus of *aegyo,* but the research is ongoing. As for the important visual aspects and gesturality, a similar yet more static set of expressions, moves, and practices is normally used in front of cameras, together with specific photo-related moves such as production of temporary dimples and the visually more narrow face by playfully pushing index fingers or thumbs into cheeks, or showing the widely spread victory sign in a way to cover zones of imperfection. Photos are often digitally airbrushed with blackening of the outer facial contours to make faces appear narrower. Digitally applied ornaments and decorations are used to underline or to cover single traits, especially in the on-the-spot editing of the popular sticker-photos which is a popular way to memorialize dates, love or friendship in early-teen, teen, and adolescent populations is to visit sticker-photo joints strategically posed in dating areas. Digital photos rendered at home and uploaded to social networks, blogs, and "fashion-blogs" are often *smoothed* — a procedure that probably contributes to the contemporary spreading of doll-related comparisons and metaphors. Photoshopped images imbue the skin of the photographed models and private *eoljjangs* alike a certain plastic-like and waxy texture, at times spurring discussions about whether the person in the picture is nothing more than a realistic doll. A regional trend of glossy make-up, in Korea called "water-light", that strongly reflects light became hugely popular around 2007, after years of velvety or mattified skin images, and this can be seen as an indicative aspect of the new women-doll continuum.

The world of melodramatic adolescence, ritual-observing couples, and related enforcement of style is where the K-pop narratives can again come in handy in trying to find the lost personal voice of the dollified girl. The text that follows lists many of the practices confirmed in overflowing quantity by ethnographic accounts that for brevity cannot be quoted or reported in this article.

In the English language introduction to the song "Gasik girl" by the K-pop group "Sistar", a Korean noun "gasik" is translated as "shady". Possible shadiness aside, we would like to concentrate on the aspect of self-conscious pretending or acting, with no value-driven translation. Gasik girl could also be "Pretender girl", with the term "gasik" itself encompassing pretense, act, affectation, posing, sham, shading, faking, and masking. Going deeper into semantics based on Chinese characters one can find "ga" to mean "false" and "sik" to mean "decorate". In general, this term implies false appearances.

Before engaging in the short analysis, let us offer an English translation of a portion of the text.

> Title: Gasik girl/ When I'm watching a movie, I have to be startled./ When I eat with you, I have to leave something aside./ Even if I'm not sad, tears have to flow./ Only one glass of water but I have to pretend I'm drunk./ No matter how hard it is, I always have to smile./ I should tense if my belly is protruding ... / Even if it's always bothersome, I put on make-up every day./ Even if my legs hurt, I wear high heels./ I'm wearing pretty clothes, to catch your eye ... / Even if I see good-looking men, I say you're the best./ Because of you, I always hang up the phone when I'm chatting./ I'm cleaning; maybe you will show up at my home ... RAP: Me, on the outside laughing, but on the inside crying./ Me, waiting endlessly for you to look at me./ I'm angry, whenever I see myself pretending.

In the context of Korean studies, the comparisons of this pop-narrative with demands expressed historically by Joseon texts such as *Yeogyeseo* (Women Cautionary Texts), *Yeosa sohak* (Minor Learning for Women), and *Naehun* (Instructions for Women) (Lee, Y., 2002, pp. 45-46) are obvious, and not as far-fetched as one might think, but these are beyond the scope of this paper. The Gasik girl's voice is depicted here as the voice of the post-feminist strong girl willing to pretend weakness in order to please *her man*. This moment is integral to understanding the fragile balances of power that dollification entails. Even if consciously opposed to the rules of the game, the girl will play it "in the name of love", her ultimate media-supported desire. It is plausible to think of the position of young and educated women with good insight into global movements and dubious "Sex and the City" and "Cosmopolitan" types of *stiletto feminism* as somehow stretched in-between self-conscious strength or legitimate life aspirations and the utter unwillingness or inability to engage in direct battles intended to change the broader patriarchal setting. Immobilization of movement, general cutifying of the female appearance, controlled gesturality and distorted voices, direct surgical interventions, but also aspects pertaining to development of special communication strategies, such as small manipulative psychological games (not responding to phone calls, pretending sadness, producing jealousy, etc.) known as *milgodangigi*, literally: "push-pull", used among teenagers in the abbreviated form of *mildang,* can be ultimately seen as tactical and situational moves performed in the absence of a viable gender strategy. In the words of PYH, a Yonsei undergraduate: "I can fashion myself into a doll and all that, but then, after getting the guy, I can have it my way, so it is a sort of power." (PYH, personal communication, March, 2011)

Discussion: Cutifying Missy

Normal and globally widespread as they are, complex cultural forms involving large populations in the entanglement of light and heavy body modifications, voice modulations, fashion, a sense of passivity and lower status in the job market with the ancient doll or puppet metaphors and imagery, which has been used to "put women in their place" or to describe them for centuries in various cultures, pose, from the feminist point of view, some serious questions in the Korean context and produce a self-evident need for urgent critical assessment. In that assessment, nevertheless, one will certainly be tempted to again reduce the complexity and fluidity of the observed social relations to the effects of two major overlapping frames of reference that shape the South Korean affective networks of today: a difficult and increasingly unpredictable game of Neo-Confucian social harmony and the new "cosmopolitan" individualism, producing materials, stories and practices exposed to the colonially-flavored intellectual reasoning based on insufficiently localized Western theory (Cho Han, 2007).

The unreflexive and unattended Westernized gaze can at times contribute to soft-patriarchal non-solutions, be it by offering disinterested descriptions of weakness, by imposing utopian imagery standing for real solutions, or by creating misplaced desire. That "double-bound non-solution" for local patriarchy was re-confirmed in the hybrid cultural forms and creative products of Korean modernity flourishing in what Cho Han Hae-joang would call "compressed growth through imitation" (Cho Han, 2007, p. 296). This adopted, but also adapted, new cultural forms in what was both following and creation. For better understanding of the recent dollified ramification (branching) of the "sexy" generation of

Korean women it is clearly of considerable importance to first acknowledge and analyze all those changes that happened already in the late Jeoseon, with "romantic love" pushed towards the mainstream as a motif accepted by the protofeminist literature of the era, operating in the space previously occupied only by the paradoxical quasi-freedoms of the traditional *gisaeng* (female entertainer) class (Byun, 2005, p. 112). Early aspects of what we know today as the widespread melodramatic mode of Korean femininity (Abelmann, 2003) should not be ignored, nor should we ignore the subtle relation of those aspects with the interventionist Westernized gaze which operates locally both intrinsically and extrinsically in the interspaces of coercion, imitation, and creation. The entanglement of interiorized colonial aesthetics and the constructed emotionality of belonging and desire of love, posed along the lines of surviving patriarchal power relations, and "new" female subjectivity formation *leaning* on those lines, is what makes the Korean doll an important motif in both lived culture and feminist scholarship.

Contemporary postindustrial "overfeminization" (in stylizations and appearances, not in the sociological sense of feminization of social roles and realms) of both women and men, based on the perceived phantasm of female softness, plasticity or malleability, and emotionality, has already been described in the West for some other "romantic" periods (Stratton, 1996; Douglas, 1977) and came to the forefront of local gendered histories only after the industrial masculinization of the South Korean female workforce, analogous to the strong American femininity cast in the Second World War military industries. In truth, the "strong women" served industrial and military systems that were inspired and run by men, but the metaphor itself entailed some hope and the reality of social struggle. Still, it was short-lived:

> During World War II, movies and magazines continued to celebrate independent, adventurous women ... But when the fighting men returned, the old Victorian division of labor was revived with a new commercial avidity, and the world became one in which "men act" (read: work) and "women appear" (read: decorate-both themselves and their houses) − with a vengeance (Bordo, 1999, p. 205).

In the United States, the image of the "strong sister" changed into that of the "sweet princess" with relative speed:

> By the late fifties and early sixties, the sexy, wisecracking, independent-minded heroine had morphed into a perky little ingénue. Popular actresses ... were living Barbie dolls, their femininity blatantly advertised on their shirtwaisted bodies (Bordo, 1999, p. 205).

Even if one could engage in rough comparison with the similar processes in East Asia happening in different decades of the 20th and 21st century, highly specific local political and economic circumstances and social conditions should be taken into consideration. In 1994 the term "Missy" was introduced to describe the new South Korean "lifestyle heroines" shaped by the outer gaze: "The essential condition of being a Missy is a preoccupation with being looked at" (Lee, S., 2002, p. 149). Nonetheless, it entailed a professional position and building of sexual identity (Lee, S., 2002, pp. 150-151).

The recent rise in the dollification trend among South Korean women and, partly, young men, must be seen as the somewhat expected turn of the Missy phenomenon reflecting the deeper tectonics of the patriarchal terrain. "Doll" is acting as a metaphor or ideologeme of broad importance and usage, orienting self-image and image, shaping identities and bodies posed on the boundaries of the old patriarchal petrifactions and new betrayed promises of social mobility. Dollification goes far beyond the lives of the subcultural or countercultural groups engaged with fetishistic desires and sexual practices, and beyond social styles that follow Japanese creative industries and subcultural groupings. Its main affective charge in the Korean context is melodramatic, and its underlying aesthetics are the localized and specific versions of East-Asian cuteness.

The feminine cuteness of many South Korean young females, and of some young males, is usually less dramatic and exaggerated than in internationally popularized forms of Japanese *kawaii*, and also seemingly more directly sexualized, closer to the *ero-kawaii* or *ero-kakkoi* sub-type of J-pop styles, and is already contributing significantly to the articulations of family life, love, intimacy, but also to labor and other realms of life, recreating and limiting spaces of gendered agency. The "silent explosion" of cuteness has become the important fuel of affective and material exchange, including the exchange of commodities and the flow of capital.

Different aspects are at play together in the social production of cuteness, from the resistance to the regimes of adult responsibility reproducing nostalgia of childhood, to the effect of the changed labor conditions in Japan, Korea and elsewhere, with the new and tangible value of commodified images and immateriality of labor, including the labor of cuteness transformed for women into, for example, a nursing job or a marriage. Spectacular capitalism requires spectacularized bodies with adjacent affectivities and gesturalities either to assure personal spaces of increased consumption or to offer the cynical *fata morgana* of micro-revolutionary freedoms.

We would, nonetheless, like to stress the methodologically conservative possibility of seeing female cuteness in feminist terms as the mere ventilation and depressurizing of tensions within a slowly changing patriarchal field. Insisting on cuteness, with uncutified women feeling underprivileged and left-out, could also be a conservative backlash opposing the feminist legacy that longed for equality and strength in the same way that the cutified androgynous boys might be, in a way, a collective answer to the generations of rough patriarchs. This would also "cover" for the still-tabooed manifestations of homosexual culture. Going further, the role of cuteness in public and private dulcification of the authoritarian systems, including corporate realms and State itself, and of the oppressive conditions of labor, should never be underestimated. Even the police forces and various government agencies in East-Asian countries have at times accepted cuteness as the public communication strategy. A typical example would be Podori, the mascot of the Korean National Police Agency.

In terms of the more narrow usage within the realm of adolescent and early adult femininity, cute is a tension point bringing together innocent and sexy, at times tacitly invoking paraphilias (pedophilia and infantilism). In a world obsessed with dreams of eternal youth, adolescent and post-adolescent feminine cuteness largely relies on pretended child-like innocence that triggers deeply-rooted universal affective attachments in *Homo sapiens* when facing his or her own offspring and the offspring of other mammals. Along with those "disarming" qualities, including evolutionary signals of vulnerability, virginity, health and fertility, the language of innocence is also used to mask and to redistribute the unspoken energies: tabooed articulations of power and affectivity, such as sexual desires, or mere inequalities in the field of gender relations.

South Korean female practices of prescribed "sexy cuteness" could be seen as a daily and normalized weak-tactical approach to achieving life goals ― but only with uncertain, uneven, and usually questionable outcomes for overall female agency. South Korean dollification in a broader sense is, consequently, just another articulation pertaining to such a generational structure of feeling. It is mainstreamed and therefore lacking the countercultural powers or visible homologies of style conducive to a possible subcultural position.

Male-centered cutified femininity cast in doll-like images and practices is serving both the masculine gaze and the heteronormative framework of intimacy, taking part in an additional disruption of the traditional homosocial aspects of Korean life, potentially crucial in the struggle for gender equality (Cho, 2002, p. 180). Additionally, the reality and the metaphor of dollified woman unites the objectification of women with external and internalized orientalism pertaining to the Westernized gaze and all that lies within the broad field of cuteness ‒ which, as we saw, in itself already reflects two planes: the plane of vulnerable innocence and the plane of seduction.

While one might be tempted to join the naive celebration of the new fluidity of gender and malleability or flexibility of gendered bodies, the immobility or limited mobility of the dollified but especially of the undollified women is obviously problematic, especially if dollified women are considered to be "normal" among mainstream post-feminist audiences mesmerized by aggressive lifestyle politics.

Conclusion

What brought us first to the study of dollification in South Korea was neither the insulting orientalism spread throughout the Western and Eastern media, nor the oft and heavily occurring usage of the doll metaphor in the sex-related and creative industries, but mostly our own ethnographic research about the concrete and everyday individual agency of Korean adolescent females, especially homosexuals. We found that some of them, in the midst of a still homophobic society that reproduces and protects exclusively heteronormative sexual and marital relations and forms, consider their self-perceived "lack of doll-like cuteness" to be the main source of their static lives and missed opportunities, social and physical immobility, and their feeling of being "left behind", thus confirming the need for continuous feminist analysis and critique. Our first job was, therefore, to try to describe dollification while acknowledging its specific position in the broader context, understanding that "the theoretical shift in social sciences towards an interest in understanding 'things in context' implies the need to investigate difference and particularity" (Haggis, 2008, p. 153).

We have tried to explore the complex relations of contemporary dollification with melodramatic shifts in earlier conjunctures, with the melodramatic mode of the present conjuncture, and with the specific aesthetics and ethics of cuteness. Our findings suggest problematic aspects of sexual objectification and largely maintained limitations in the social mobility of women and, generally, in gendered agency. The role of the Westernized gaze, both external and interiorized, in such articulations was re-confirmed.

Important future research questions, ethnographic angles and actions, nonetheless, will have to necessarily go beyond discussion of the possible suffering of those willing to invest time, energy, money and health in a complicated reinventing of their own "likable femininity" following the lines of extrinsic or intrinsic social and cultural pressure, even if discussion about that *sacrifice* is ongoing and still much needed. Our future critical impetus and research interest should, instead, primarily focus on the lived culture and experience of those unable or unwilling to take part in such a spectacle.

Here, where sometimes only impaired physical mobility and objectification articulated into living dolls can allow for the limited social mobility of the women, some new and brave companions on the journey of criticism, analysis and social action are already actively engaged in the field of counterdollification. These are young women in their twenties, such as the Seoul artist Jeong Song-Woon, who in 2009 produced a subtle and powerful video work showing a plastic doll digitally animated to sing the traditional Korean female "purification song" *Heungtaryeong* bringing catharsis from *han*, a deep-seated sorrow, resentment and regret, and thus allowing for the irony of South Korean dollification to surface in a critical context, or the multitalented young Korean-American writer and performer Francis "Franny" Choi, who in a yet unpublished poem called "China doll" from March of 2008 directly addresses the stereotypical dollification of the Asian femininity, offering suitable and promising closure to our paper:

> China doll kept in a far-East casket/ can only be picked up,/ ceramic arms stiff, but/ even on my back/ my eyes will not eclipse cause/ I am not your comfort woman/ I am not your sushi tray coffee table/ I am not your ornamental oriental/ I am not your china doll (Choi, 2008).

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