

# ON LONGING



*Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic,  
the Souvenir, the Collection*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Preface/Hyperbole ix  
Prologue 1

1. ON DESCRIPTION AND THE BOOK 3

*Still Life* 3  
*The Sadness Without an Object* 14  
*Interior Decorations* 24  
*Space of Language* 31

2. THE MINIATURE 37

*Micrographia* 37  
*Tableau: The Miniature Described* 44  
*The Secret Life of Things* 54  
*The Dollhouse* 61  
*Miniature Time* 65

3. THE GIGANTIC 70

*Skywriting: Exteriority and Nature* 70  
*Exteriority: The City* 78  
*The Gigantic Described* 86  
*The Lie: Gigantism in Language* 93

4. THE IMAGINARY BODY 104

*The Grotesque Body* 104  
*The Body Made Miniature* 111

*The Tom Thumb Wedding* 117  
*Reading the Body* 125

5. OBJECTS OF DESIRE 132

Part I. The Souvenir 132  
*The Selfish* 132  
*Distance and Intimacy* 139  
*Separation and Restoration* 145

Part II. The Collection, Paradise of Consumption 151  
*Context Destroyed* 151  
*Inside and Outside* 154  
*Metaconsumption: The Female Impersonator* 166

Conclusion/Litotes 171  
Notes 174  
Selected Bibliography 193  
Index 205

## 2. THE MINIATURE

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### *Micrographia*

**T**he book sits before me, closed and unread; it is an object, a set of surfaces. But opened, it seems revealed; its physical aspects give way to abstraction and a nexus of new temporalities. This is the distinction between book and text which Derrida has described in *Of Grammatology*:

The idea of the book is the idea of a totality, finite or infinite, of the signifier; this totality of the signifier cannot be a totality, unless a totality constituted by the signified preexists it, supervises its

inscriptions and its signs, and is independent of it in its ideality. The idea of the book, which always refers to a natural totality, is profoundly alien to the sense of writing. It is the encyclopedic protection of theology and of logocentrism against the disruption of writing, against its aphoristic energy, and, as I shall specify later, against differences in general. If I distinguish the text from the book, I shall say that the destruction of the book, as it is now under way in all domains, denudes the surface of the text. That necessary violence responds to a violence that was no less necessary.<sup>1</sup>

The metaphors of the book are metaphors of containment, of exteriority and interiority, of surface and depth, of covering and exposure, of taking apart and putting together. To be “between covers”—the titillation of intellectual or sexual reproduction. To be outside the cover, to be godlike in one’s transcendence, a transcendence of beginning collapsed into closure, and, at the same time, to be “closed out.”

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The closure of the book is an illusion largely created by its materiality, its cover. Once the book is considered on the plane of its significance, it threatens infinity. This contrast is particularly apparent in the transformations worked by means of the miniature book and minute writing, or micrographia. Minute writing experiments with the limits of bodily skill in writing: the remarkableness of minute writing depends upon the contrast between the physical and abstract features of the mark. Nearly invisible, the mark continues to signify; it is a signification which is increased rather than diminished by its minuteness. In those examples of micrographia which form a picture we see an emphasis upon healing the skewed relation between meaning and materiality. The miniature book delights in tormenting the wound of this relation, but the micrographic drawing says that, in fact, there is not an *arbitrary* relation between sign and signified but a *necessary* one. In a set of prints published recently in *The Georgia Review*, for example, the minute configurations of an author's words "spelled out" or depicted the author's portrait.<sup>2</sup> Such works transform the map into the globe; they say that writing, if approached from a sufficiently transcendent viewpoint, can become multidimensional.

Reading the book of nature became a *topos* of the Renaissance, but placing the book in nature may antecede it. D'Israeli, in *Curiosities of Literature*, equivocally describes "the Iliad of Homer in a nutshell, which Pliny says that Cicero once saw, it is pretended might have been a fact, however to some it may appear impossible. Ælian notices an artist who wrote a distich in letters of gold, which he enclosed in the rind of a grain of corn." He also mentions the English Bible that Peter Bales, an Elizabethan writing master, enclosed "in an English walnut no bigger than a hen's egg. The nut holdeth the book; there are as many leaves in his little book as the great Bible, and he hath written as much in one of his little leaves as a great leaf of the Bible."<sup>3</sup> Minute writing is emblematic of craft and discipline; while the materiality of the product is diminished, the labor involved multiplies, and so does the significance of the total object. Curtius writes:

Now to reading conceived as the form of reception and study, corresponds writing conceived as the form of production and creation. The two concepts belong together. In the intellectual world of the Middle Ages, they represent as it were the two halves of a sphere. The unity of this world was shattered by the invention of printing. The immense and revolutionary change which it brought about can be summarized in one statement: Until that time, every book was a manuscript. Merely materially then, as well as artistically, the written book had a value which we can no longer feel. Every book produced by

copying represented diligence and skilled craftsmanship, long hours of intellectual concentration, loving and sedulous work.<sup>4</sup>

The labor was the labor of the hand, of the body, and the product, in its uniqueness, was a stay against repetition and inauthenticity. The appearance of minute writing at the end of the manuscript era characterizes the transformation of writing to print: the end of writing's particular discursive movement; its errors made by the body; its mimesis of memory, fading and, thus, in micrographia, diminishing through time as well as in space.

On the interface between the manuscript and printing, the miniature book is a celebration of a new technology, yet a nostalgic creation endowed with the significance the manuscript formerly possessed. McMurtie gives an account of the rise of miniature-book printing during the fifteenth century:

In the nature of things, books of small size will be found rarely among the incunabula of the earliest days of printing—say from 1450 [to] 1470. Type at first was cast in relatively large sizes, and the books printed with them, if not folios, were almost always quartos of fairly generous dimensions. But by the last decade of the century, books in smaller sizes, though still relatively few, made their appearance more frequently. Refinements in the art of punch cutting and type casting made it possible to produce with remarkable ease types in the smaller sizes which were prerequisite to the printing of books of really small format.<sup>5</sup>

While convenience of handling was the first reason given for printing small books, printers gradually came to vie with each other to print the smallest book as a demonstration of craftsmanship for its own sake. And the small book required greater skill on the part of the binder as well as on the part of the printer. The leather had to be skived very thinly, the corners sharply defined, and the tooling done with minute care.<sup>6</sup>

The earliest small book was the *Diurnale Moguntinum*, printed by Peter Schoeffer in Mainz in 1468. From the beginning, the miniature book speaks of infinite time, of the time of labor, lost in its multiplicity, and of the time of the world, collapsed within a minimum of physical space. In the fifteenth century, small books of hours (measuring two square inches, set in gold, and worn suspended from the belt by a charm or rings) were made for the merchant princes of Florence and Venice.<sup>7</sup> Calendars and almanacs were and are favorite subjects for the printer of miniature books. The microcosmic aspects of the almanac make it particularly suited for miniaturization. For example, *A Miniature Almanack*, printed in Boston in the early nine-

teenth century, has a frontispiece which reads "Multum in parvo"; it includes the days of the month, days of the week, a calendar, the sun's rising and setting times, the moon's rising and setting times, the full sea at Boston, advice on "Right Marriage," "Qualities of a Friend," and "Popularity," a "List of Courts in the New England States," the "Rates of Postage," "The times of holding the Yearly Meetings of Friends in the Continent of America," a "Money Table," "A Table Shewing the number of days from any day of one month to the same day in any other month," a "Table of interest, per day, at 6% on any number of dollars from one to Twelve Thousand," and "A List of the Post Towns, on the main road from Brewster, Maine to St. Mary's, Georgia."<sup>8</sup> Thus the book encapsulates the details of everyday life, fitting life inside the book rather than the book inside the expansive temporality of life. Similarly, the Bible as the book of greatest significance, the book holding the world both past and future, is a volume often chosen for miniaturization.

It is the hand that has produced these volumes and the hand that has consumed them—they are an affront to reason and its principal sense: the eye. The miniature book speaks from the convention of print, but, just as importantly, from the invention of the microscope, the mechanical eye that can detect significance in a world the human eye is blind to. In Robert Hooke's journal, *Micrographia; or, Some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies Made by Magnifying Glasses, with Observations and Inquiries There Upon* (1665), we sense this discovery:

April 22 1663, Leeches in Vinegar. Bluish Mold on Leather; April 29th. A Mine of Diamonds in Flint. Spider with Six Eyes; May 6th, Female and Male Gnats; May 20th, Head of Ant. Fly like a Gnat. Point of a Needle; May 27th, Pores in petrified wood. Male Gnat; June 10th, Sage-Leaves appearing not to have cavities; July 8th, Edge of a Razor. Five Taffeta Ribbons. Millepede; July 16th, Fine Lawn. Gilt edge of Venice Paper; August 5th, Honeycomb Sea-weed. Teeth of a Snail. Plant growing on Rose-Leaves.

In the conclusion to his preface Hooke wrote: "And it is my hope, as well as belief, that these my Labours will be no more comparable to the productions of many other Natural Philosophers, who are now everywhere busie about greater things; then my little Objects are to be compar'd to the greater and more beautiful Works of Nature, a Flea, A Mite, a Gnat, to an Horse, an Elephant, or a Lyon."<sup>9</sup> The modesty of Hooke's remark can hardly help but strike us as ironic: the almost playful subject of his new instrument and its scope; the toy had not yet been put to work. It is significant that Hooke called his journal *Micrographia*, that somehow it was the *writing* of the natural, the previously unreadable, which now stood revealed. While the



miniature book reduces the world to the microcosm within its covers, the microscope opens up significance to the point at which all the material world shelters a microcosm. For a modern corollary, picture the project undertaken by W. E. Rudge of Mt. Vernon, New York, in 1928: Rudge made a miniature New York phone book, the pages  $4\frac{3}{4}$  by  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches and the entire book  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch thick. It could be read with the aid of a glass designed by a retired rear admiral. In that glass the eight million stories of the Naked City opened into an accordion of significance.<sup>10</sup>

The social space of the miniature book might be seen as the social space, in miniature, of all books: the book as talisman to the body and emblem of the self; the book as microcosm and macrocosm; the book as commodity and knowledge, fact and fiction. The early artisanal concern with the display of skill emphasizes the place of the miniature book as object, and more specifically as an object of person, a talisman or amulet. The fact that the miniature book could be easily held and worn attaches a specific function to it. Its gemlike properties were often reflected in its adornment by real gems. Occasionally miniature books were made with metal pages. James Dougald Henderson writes: "The most beautiful example of this type of book which has come to my notice is of silver gilt, three quarters of an inch high, with a narrow panel on the front cover in which is enameled in natural colors a pansy with stem and leaves. On the remaining portion of the front cover is an engraved cobweb from which hangs a spider. The body is a pearl and the head is a wee ruby."<sup>11</sup> Henderson doesn't bother to mention the title of the book—that is obviously not the point. However, we might find significance in the choice of flower and insect here. The pansy is the flower with a human face and thereby always a kind of portrait miniature. And the spider is perhaps the most domestic of insects, making her own home within a home. This book/jewel, carried by the body, multiplies significance by virtue of the tension it creates between inside and outside, container and contained, surface and depth. Similarly, Charles H. Meigs of Cleveland made a "Rubáiyát  $\frac{7}{16}$ th of an inch by  $\frac{5}{16}$ th of an inch at the turn of the last century. Three copies do not cover a postage stamp and one was set in a ring worn by the author for safe-keeping."<sup>12</sup> The first American miniature book, measuring  $3\frac{3}{8}$  by  $2\frac{1}{8}$  inches, could in fact, be worn metaphorically:

*A Wedding Ring* (Boston, 1695)

A WEDDING RING

Fit for the finger

Or, the Salve of Divinity

On the Sore of Humanity

.....  
Laid open in a Sermon, at a  
Wedding in Edmonton  
By William Secker, preacher of the Gospel.<sup>13</sup>

Henderson writes that "in the period from 1830 [to] 1850 no stylishly gowned lady in England was complete unless her handbag carried one of the dainty little jeweled *Schloss Bijou* almanacs, about half the size of a postage stamp, enclosed in a small solander case and this in turn reposing in a tiny silk or plush lined and leather bound case in which was also a diminutive magnifying glass shaped like a hand mirror."<sup>14</sup>

Just as speech is structured by its context, so is there an effort here to join the content and form of writing. The mirror that is also a microscope, that both reflects and reveals, reappears in the other face of the miniature book, its pedagogic uses, for such books "serve not only as an adornment of some dusty trinket cabinet, but have served as the primary basis of education and interest for many a tot in centuries gone by."<sup>15</sup> Fourteenth- and fifteenth-century hornbooks, 3 to 4 inches long, with a handle, were shaped like hand mirrors and made of square pieces of wood. Paper was applied to the wood, and on this surface was inscribed a cross, followed by the alphabet, and concluding with the Lord's Prayer. Cow's horn was placed over the paper to protect it. To make the lesson even more appealing, hornbooks were sometimes made from gingerbread that had been shaped in molds.<sup>16</sup> If the lesson was well done, the child could eat the book, thus consuming the lesson both metaphorically and literally.

Early-seventeenth-century miniature Bibles, like John Taylor's rhyming "Thumb Bible," published in London by Hamman in 1614, were designed especially for use by children.<sup>17</sup> The preface to the Reverend Edmund S. Janes's miniature Bible, published in Philadelphia by W. N. Wiatt in the 1850's, explains:

It therefore becomes a matter of immense importance, that their attention should be profitably directed, and their feelings morally and religiously influenced: that thus their minds may be properly occupied, and their hearts rightly exercised. And certainly nothing is more admirably calculated to accomplish this desirable object than those bible stories, or narratives, which are level to their capacities. . . . It was this conviction that induced the author to compile (at the request of the publisher) this little volume. He hopes it may take the place of foolish little picture books that afford no useful instruction, and exert no happy virtuous influence. This little volume has an excellence which similar publications have not had; the language is entirely scriptural.<sup>18</sup>

And the author of *Wisdom in Miniature; or, The Youth's Pleasing Instructor*, "a pocket companion for the youth of both sexes in America," printed in New York by Mahlon Day in 1822, had a similar goal: "It was my aim to crowd as many select sentences as I could into a small compass, to make this book a convenient portable pocket companion for the use of Young People."<sup>19</sup> This work concludes with "Short Miscellaneous Sentences: Alphabetically Digested; which may be easily retained in the memories of youth." We see an effort to connect the book to the body; indeed, to make a "digestible" book and at the same time a linking of the aphoristic thinking of religious didacticism with the miniature book's materially compressed mode of presentation.

The invention of printing coincided with the invention of childhood,<sup>20</sup> and the two faces of children's literature, the fantastic and the didactic, developed at the same time in the miniature book. The foolish little picture books that the Reverend Janes objected to were the chapbooks of fairy and folk tales, the inheritance of the *Bibliothèque Bleue*, the translation of the oral folk forms of the fantastic into the printed fantastic. Instead of offering nuggets of wisdom for the child to consume, these books presented an infinite and fabulous world which had the capacity to absorb the child's sense of reality. The miniature here became the realm not of fact but of reverie. After the advent of romanticism, the miniature book frequently served as a realm of the cultural other. The smallest printed book in the world, Eben Francis Thompson's edition of *The Rose Garden of Omar Khayyám* (3/16 by 5/16 of an inch), followed Meig's attempt to collapse the significance of the Orient into the exotica of a miniaturized volume. And in the twentieth century the miniature became the servant of advertising. Books with metal pages were put out to advertise hotels and local attractions for tourists in the 1920's, for example, and *Life* and *Saturday Evening Post* in 1916 and 1925, respectively, published miniature editions for advertising purposes.<sup>21</sup>

Such experiments with the scale of writing as we find in micrographia and the miniature book exaggerate the divergent relation between the abstract and the material nature of the sign. A reduction in dimensions does not produce a corresponding reduction in significance; indeed, the gemlike properties of the miniature book and the feats of micrographia make these forms especially suitable "containers" of aphoristic and didactic thought. Furthermore, on the interface between the manuscript and printing, as modes of production they are linked to the souvenir, the amulet, and the diminutive world of childhood. In describing these forms, my text has become embroi-

dered with details, ornaments, and figurations. Thus these forms bring us to a further aspect of this divergent relation between meaning and materiality: the problem of describing the miniature. For the miniature, in its exaggeration of interiority and its relation to the space and time of the individual perceiving subject, threatens the infinity of description without hierarchization, a world whose anteriority is always absolute, and whose profound interiority is therefore always unrecoverable. Hence for us the miniature appears as a metaphor for all books and all bodies.

***Tableau: The Miniature Described***

We have looked at the ways in which the miniature book illustrates the conjunction of the material and abstract nature of the sign, emphasizing that the reduced physical dimensions of the book will have only peripheral bearing upon the meaning of the text. Thus the miniature book always calls attention to the book as total object. But we must also consider the *depiction*, or description, of miniatures within the text, the capacity for all writing, and especially fictive writing, to be like Hooke's *Micrographia*—that is, to be a display of a world not necessarily known through the senses, or lived experience. The child continually enters here as a metaphor, perhaps not simply because the child is in some physical sense a miniature of the adult, but also because the world of childhood, limited in physical scope yet fantastic in its content, presents in some ways a miniature and fictive chapter in each life history; it is a world that is part of history, at least the history of the individual subject, but remote from the presentness of adult life. We imagine childhood as if it were at the other end of a tunnel—distanced, diminutive, and clearly framed. From the fifteenth century on, miniature books were mainly books for children, and in the development of children's literature the depiction of the miniature is a recurring device.

In writing, description must serve the function of context. The locus of speech and action must be "filled in" for the reader, who suffers from the exteriority of print; the distance between the situation of reading and the situation of the depiction is bridged by description, the use of a field of familiar signs. What disappears in writing is the body and what the body knows—the visual, tactile, and aural knowledge of lived experience. Thus, whenever we speak of the context of reading, we see at work a doubling which undermines the authority of both the reading situation and the situation or locus of the depiction: the reader is not in either world, but rather moves between them, and thereby moves between varieties of partial and

transcendent vision. Situation within situation, world within world—there is a vacillation between the text as microcosm and the situation of the reader as microcosm. Which contains which is unresolved until closure.

This mutual exteriority of “real” and textual worlds results in part from the problem that language can imitate only language: depiction and representation of the physical world in language are matters of concealed suture, matters of a mutuality of procedures by which the community maintains the fiction of linguistic representation. Thus, to speak of miniaturization in narrative is to engage in this fiction, for the ways in which the physical world can be miniaturized are not carried over into devices for the linguistic depiction of the miniature. The depiction of the miniature works by establishing a referential field, a field where signs are displayed in relation to one another and in relation to concrete objects in the sensual world.

Solomon Grildrig’s introduction to *The Miniature: A Periodical Paper* might serve as an introduction to this literary method:

I consider myself as one who takes a picture from real life, who attempts to catch the resemblance, or pourtray the feature of existing objects, so that the representation may impartially, and exactly describe the perfections or defects, beauties or deformities of the original. It is not for me to attempt the bolder strokes, and nervous outlines which the pencil of *Raphael* exhibit, nor can I expect that *my* portraits should glow with the vivid coloring which a *Titian* might express. My attempts will follow the style of a *MINIATURE*, and while the touches are less daring, while less force, and richness of imagination may be conspicuous in the following sketches, they may perhaps derive some merit in a humbler scale, from correctness of design, and accuracy of representation. This style indeed will be more appropriate, as it is in the lesser theatre of life that it will be employed, and as juvenile folly, or merit will often be the subjects of my lucubrations.<sup>22</sup>

The writing of miniaturization does not want to call attention to itself or to its author; rather, it continually refers to the physical world. It resists the interiority of reflexive language in order to interiorize an outside; it is the closest thing we have to a three-dimensional language, for it continually points outside itself, creating a shell-like, or enclosed, exteriority. “Correctness of design” and “accuracy of representation” are devices of distance, of “proper perspective,” the perspective of the bourgeois subject. If they are especially appropriate to the “lesser theatre of life,” it is because they allow the reader to disengage himself or herself from the field of representation as a transcendent subject.

The field of representation in the depiction of the miniature is set

up by means of a method of using either implicit or explicit simile. Each fictive sign is aligned to a sign from the physical world in a gesture which makes the fictive sign both remarkable and realistic. The narrative of Tom Thumb, first mentioned in print in Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), affords a good example of this technique.<sup>23</sup> Consider this passage from Charlotte Yonge's children's work, *The History of Sir Thomas Thumb* (1856):

A son was born in the cottage by the wood side, but had ever man such a son? He was no larger than the green top of the twayblade blossom, and though perfect in all his limbs, it was not possible to feel that a thing so light and soft rested on the hand; and his mother, as she laid him gently on the thistle-down with which she had filled an acorn cup, knew not whether she were glad or grieved that she had the wish fulfilled which she had spoken. Owen gently sighed, and thereby almost blew his son away. . . .

No mis-shapen limbs, no contorted features were there, but all was sweet and beautiful, the bright eyes like blue speed well buds, and the delicate little frame fresh and fair as the young blossom on the sweet-briar bough.

Truly, for the first few days he grew so fast, he soon exchanged his acorn cup for a walnut shell, and outgrowing that again, had to sleep in the warm nest of the long-tailed tit mouse.<sup>24</sup>

The description here is not only directed toward the visual—it evokes the sensual as well, the hand being the measure of the miniature. The miniature has the capacity to make its context remarkable; its fantastic qualities are related to what lies outside it in such a way as to transform the total context. Thistledown becomes mattress; acorn cup becomes cradle; the father's breath becomes a cyclone. Amid such transformations of scale, the exaggeration of the miniature must continually assert a principle of balance and equivalence, or the narrative will become grotesque. Hence the "all was sweet and beautiful." The model here is nature and her harmony of detail. This space is managed by simile and by the principles of equivalence existing between the body and nature. Scale is established by means of a set of correspondences to the familiar. And time is managed by means of a miniaturization of its significance; the miniature is the notation of the moment and the moment's consequences. The delight and irony with which Yonge writes "Truly, for the first few days he grew so fast" establishes the pace of the miniature; it is not necessary to tell us that at some point Tom will stop growing; it is clear that that point is where description ends and action begins.

Because of the correspondences it must establish, writing about the miniature achieves a delirium of description. The arrested life of the

miniature object places it within a still context of infinite detail. Gulliver's outline of "the inhabitants of Lilliput" might serve as an example:

Although I intend to leave the Description of this Empire to a particular Treatise, yet in the mean time I am content to gratify the curious Reader with some general Ideas. As the common Size of the Natives is somewhat under six Inches, so there is an exact Proportion in all other Animals, as well as Plants and Trees: For Instance, the tallest Horses and Oxen are between four and five Inches in Height, the Sheep an Inch and a half, more or less; their Geese about the Bigness of a Sparrow; and so the several Gradations downwards, till you come to the smallest, which, to my Sight, were almost invisible; but Nature hath adapted the Eyes of the *Lilliputians* to all Objects proper for their View: They see with great Exactness, but at no great Distance. And to show the Sharpness of their Sight towards Objects that are near, I have been much pleased with observing a Cook pulling a Lark, which was not so large as a common Fly; and a young Girl threading an invisible Needle with invisible Silk. Their tallest trees are about seven Foot high; I mean some of those in the great Royal Park, the Tops whereof I could but just reach with my Fist clenched. The other Vegetables are in the same Proportion: But this I leave to the Reader's Imagination.<sup>25</sup>

Here we see not only a set of correspondences to the familiar but also the way in which that set of correspondences generates a metonymic extension of what has been described. Gulliver is able to leave the rest to the reader's imagination because he has established the proper principles of proportion. Indeed, he has left little to imagine! The progression of gestures in this passage marks a movement from the most visible to the least visible. At the point at which the invisible thread enters the invisible needle, we return to trees, and the sequence invites another round—from naked eye to microscope, from exterior to interior.

In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard writes that "because these descriptions tell things in tiny detail, they are automatically verbose."<sup>26</sup> We might add that this verbosity is also a matter of multiplying significance. The procedure by which description multiplies in detail is analogous to and mimetic of the process whereby space becomes significance, whereby everything is made to "count." The depiction of the miniature moves away from hierarchy and narrative in that it is caught in an infinity of descriptive gestures. It is difficult for much to *happen* in such depiction, since each scene of action multiplies in spatial significance in such a way as to fill the page with contextual information. Minute description reduces the object to its signifying properties, and this reduction of physical dimensions results in a

multiplication of ideological properties. The minute depiction of the object in painting, as Lévi-Strauss has showed us in his analysis of the lace collar of François Clouet's *Portrait of Elizabeth of Austria*,<sup>27</sup> reduces the tactile and olfactory dimensions of the object and at the same time increases the significance of the object within the system of signs. When verbal description attempts to approximate visual depiction, we find a further reduction of sensory dimensions and, because of the history of the word as utterance in lived social practices, an even greater ideological significance.

This tendency of the description and depiction of the miniature to move toward contextual information and away from narrative also transforms our sense of narrative closure, for in the miniature we see spatial closure posited over temporal closure. The miniature offers a world clearly limited in space but frozen and thereby both particularized and generalized in time—particularized in that the miniature concentrates upon the single instance and not upon the abstract rule, but generalized in that that instance comes to transcend, to stand for, a spectrum of other instances. The miniature offers the closure of the tableau, a spatial closure which opens up the vocalicity of the signs it displays. In his classic article "Epic Laws of Folk Narrative," Axel Olrik discusses the tableau as follows:

In these scenes, the actors draw near to each other: the hero and his horse; the hero and the monster: Thor pulls the World Serpent up to the edge of the boat; the valiant warriors die so near to their king that even in death they protect him; Siegmund carries his dead son himself. . . . One notices how the tableaux scenes frequently convey not a sense of the ephemeral but rather a certain quality of persistence through time: Samson among the columns in the hall of the Philistines; Thor with the World Serpent transfixed on a fishhook; Vidarr confronting the vengeance of the Fenris Wolf; Perseus holding out the head of Medusa. These lingering actions—which also play a large role in sculpture—possess the singular power of being able to etch themselves in one's memory.<sup>28</sup>

Thus there are two major features of the tableau: first, the drawing together of significant, even if contradictory, elements, and thereby the complete filling out of "point of view"; and second, the simultaneous particularization and generalization of the moment. The tableau offers a type of contextual closure which would be inappropriate to genres rooted in the context of their utterance; the tableau effectively speaks to the distance between the context at hand and the narrated context; it is possible only through representation, since it offers a complete closure of a text framed off from the ongoing reality that surrounds it. Here we might think not only of sculpture but also



of the photograph, which has made possible the dramatization and classicization of the individual life history. Such "still shots," say, before the family car or the Christmas tree, are always profoundly ideological, for they eternalize a moment or instance of the typical in the same way that a proverb or emblem captions a moment as an illustration of the moral working of the universe. Thus, while these photographs articulate the individual, they do so according to a well-defined set of generic conventions. It is not simply that the family album records an individual's rites of passage; it does so in such a conventionalized way that all family albums are alike.

The French surrealist Raymond Roussel used the tableau as the basis for a lifelong experiment with problems of description. In his poems "La Vue" and "Le Concert" (1904), the narrator concentrates on the depiction of representation itself: a tiny picture set in a pen-holder in "La Vue," an engraving on the letterhead of a piece of hotel stationery in "Le Concert." In both cases Roussel has chosen an already defined space of representation—the picture and the engraving—and he has chosen to "rewrite" it in the necessarily incomplete medium of language. The exteriority of the interpretive field, the exteriority of the narrator's speech in relation to what he sees, is even more strongly realized in "La Source" (also in the 1904 volume), which begins with the narrator watching a young couple having lunch:

Tout est tranquille dans la salle où je dejeune  
Occupant une place en angle, un couple jeune  
Chuchote avec finesse et gaieté; l'entre tien  
Plein de sous-entendus, de rires, marche bien.

The narrator then describes for fifty pages the spa pictured on the label of his bottle of mineral water before returning to the young couple, "chuchote toujours des choses qu'on n'entend pas."<sup>29</sup> The double removal of a representation of a representation is also present in the numerous tableaux of *Impressions of Africa*. In the following scene we see the device at work:

Standing upright behind the funeral slab was a hoarding covered in black material, which presented to the viewer a series of twelve water colours, arranged symmetrically, in four rows of three. The resemblance between the characters suggested that the pictures were concerned with some dramatic narrative. Above each image, by way of a title, one could read certain words, traced with a brush.

In the first painting a non-commissioned officer and a fair-haired woman in flashy clothes were lounging in the back of a luxurious victoria; the words *Flora and the Sergeant-Major Lécuro* summarily identified the couple.

Next came *The Performance of Daedalus*, represented by a large stage on which a singer in Grecian draperies appeared to be singing at the top of his voice; in the front of a box the sergeant-major could be seen, sitting beside Flora, who was gazing through her opera glasses at the performer.<sup>30</sup>

The narrator goes on to describe the remaining ten watercolors. These tableaux may be seen as illustrations for a text which does not exist. The attempt to recoup their meaning through a narrative miming visual description marks a double falling away from the continuity of an original textual closure. Roussel ambiguously explains in *How I Write Certain of My Books* that "the *tableaux vivants* were suggested by lines from Victor Hugo's Napoleon II (from *Les Chants du Crépuscule*). But here there are so many lacunae in my memory that I will be obliged to leave several gaps."<sup>31</sup> Two lines that he does explain are:

1. [Hugo:] Eut reçu pour hochet la couronne de Rome
2. [Roussel:] Ursule brochet lac Huronne drome  
(Ursula pike Lake Huron 'drome)
1. [Hugo:] Un vase tout rempli du vin de l'espérance
2. [Roussel:] . . . sept houx rampe lit . . . Vesper  
(seven hollies balustrade read . . . Vesper).<sup>32</sup>

Via punning Roussel has transposed Hugo's lines and then depicted them. His deliberate mis-hearing (misreading) sets off a chain of visual-into-verbal signifieds. Every sign bears a capacity to allude not only in a "correct" fashion but also by a process of misallusion. In Roussel's universe every utterance bears the infinity of its meaning and the infinity of what it might not mean. Thus the tableaux work as rebuses, pictures that "spell out a message." But Roussel's ironic device of presenting us with the *writing* of a rebus, not with a rebus itself, further distances the reader from the final decoding of the message. If a picture is worth a thousand words, it is through Roussel that we know that the picture bears the weight of a thousand words on all sides of its history: at its creation, at its reading, and at every scene of misapprehension. To be read in words, any tableau must be given a form of rhetorical organization, must acquire the shape of the language that will represent it. Thus we see in the depiction of the tableau the choice of a point of origin and the subsequent *delineation* of significant aspects in relation to that point. To the right of, to the left of, next to, behind, before—the language of the tableau moves continually from center to periphery. What remains ambiguous is the closed field of the *edges*, for language must remain exterior to this spatial closure.<sup>33</sup> The irony of language's infinite possibilities in describing a finite spatial field is displayed in Roussel's continual choice

of the minute scene. He writes that his long, final poem, "Nouvelle Impressions d'Afrique" (1932), "was to have contained a descriptive section. It concerned a miniature pair of opera glasses worn as a pendant whose two lenses, two millimetres in diameter and meant to be held up to the eye, contained photographs on glass depicting Cairo bazaars on one side and a bank of the Nile at Luxor on the other."<sup>34</sup> The restricted field (a miniature pair) and the depicted cultural scene (the opera) are further transformed by the still view of the bazaars and the river, nature into culture, into culture, and into culture again by description. Furthermore, the hierarchization of language disappears. Everything seen is equally describable; the point of origin is simply a point of origin, a place to begin in this gliding across the unruffled surface of things.

Visual descriptions have the capacity to portray depth of field, a capacity presented by the invention of perspective. Verbal description must depend upon conventions of subordination in order to portray a sense of perspective, and these conventions rely upon the social process by which significance is simultaneously assigned and denied. In this sense, perspective in narrative is always dependent upon the intrinsically ideological stance of point of view. However, there is a further device which language uses in order to produce an analogous sense of depth of field and that is ambiguity. Here profundity arises through the multivocal aspects of the sign, aspects that speak of the resonance of the sign's history. The word in the word, utterance in the utterance, sentence in the sentence, allusion in the allusion, work in the work, lend depth and the significance of a multiple set of contexts to the functions of language. We see this process at work in Roussel's biletal inventions:

Taking the word *palmier* I decided to consider it in two senses: as a *pastry* and as a *tree*. Considering it as a *pastry*, I searched for another word, itself having two meanings which could be linked to it by the preposition *à*; thus I obtained (and it was, I repeat, a long and arduous task) *palmier* (a kind of pastry) *à restauration* (restaurant which serves pastries); the other part gave me *palmier* (palmtree) *à restauration* (restoration of a dynasty). Which yielded the palmtree in Trophies Square commemorating the restoration of the Talou dynasty.<sup>35</sup>

Rayner Heppenstall, following Jean Ferry's analysis of the second canto of "Nouvelle Impressions d'Afrique," says that these typical lexical images confound the great with the small: the confusion of an adjustable spanner with a semiquaver rest, a photographer's tripod with the rejected stalks of a bunch of three cherries, a chamois horn with an eyelash, a stalactite in a cave with the uvula in a throat

opened wide for inspection.<sup>36</sup> To this impulse of the representation in the representation should be added Roussel's verse technique of parenthetical sentences, sentences that sometimes involve as many as five parenthetical expressions ((((((!)))))). These parentheses require the reader to move from the temporal edges of the book (beginning to end) toward its center, and once the reader finds himself or herself at that center, there is the intolerable burden of returning to the beginning again in order to capture the original unfolding of the progression of thought.<sup>37</sup>

If Roussel reminds us that the task of describing inevitably leads to exhaustion, Jorge Luis Borges, in "The Aleph," reminds us that such a task—that is, the transportation of vision into temporality and of simultaneity into narrative—inevitably leads to boredom. Following their description of Carlos Argentino Daneri's microcosmic poem, *The Earth*, Borges the character and Borges the author conclude:

Only once in my life have I had occasion to look into the fifteen thousand alexandrines of the *Polyolbion*, that topographical epic in which Michael Drayton recorded the flora, fauna, hydrography, orography, military and monastic history of England. I am sure, however, that this limited but bulky production is less boring than Carlos Argentino's similar vast undertaking. Daneri had in mind to set to verse the entire face of the planet, and, by 1941, had already dispatched a number of acres of the State of Queensland, nearly a mile of the course run by the River Ob, a gasworks to the north of Veracruz, the leading shops in the Buenos Aires parish of Concepción, the villa of Mariana Cambaceres de Alvear in the Belgrano section of the Argentine capital, and a Turkish baths establishment not far from the well-known Brighton Aquarium.

Like Roussel, Daneri relies upon the "profundity" of allusion in order to accomplish his impossible task of accounting for the planet, and Borges concludes that "Daneri's real work lay not in the poetry but in his invention of reasons why the poetry should be admired."<sup>38</sup>

Despite Daneri's confidence, we find that when language attempts to describe the concrete, it is caught in an infinitely self-effacing gesture of inadequacy, a gesture which speaks to the gaps between our modes of cognition—those gaps between the sensual, the visual, and the linguistic. Thus these attempts to describe the miniature threaten an infinity of detail that becomes translated into an infinity of verbiage. Language describing the miniature always displays the inadequacy of the verbal. In contrast, however, *multum in parvo*, the miniaturization of language itself, displays the ability of language to "sum up" the diversity of the sensual, or physical, world of lived experi-

ence. In his book on the place of *multum in parvo* in the poetic imagination, Carl Zigrosser writes:

Where are prime examples of *multum in parvo* to be found? Not generally in the realm of sound or music, for the sequence of time is an integral ingredient in our perception of music, one note after another producing the pattern of form. Compression is possible only where perception is immediate or nearly so. The appreciation of form through touch likewise involves a time factor. As far as other senses are concerned, those of taste and smell have never been sufficiently developed in man to admit of pointed brevity. At best, the emotive stimulus of taste and smell is gained by association. No, the happy hunting ground for *multum in parvo* is through the eye and mind, among mathematical formulae and symbols, in the concise and epigrammatic forms of poetry, and in the miniature forms of visual art. Furthermore, from a purist's point of view, neither a fragment of a longer poem nor a detail of a picture can be accepted strictly as *multum in parvo*.<sup>39</sup>

The *multum in parvo* quality of the quotation, the epigram, and the proverb arises as they each take their place as free-floating pieces of discourse, pieces of discourse which have been abstracted from the context at hand in such a way as to seem to transcend lived experience and speak to all times and places. The *multum in parvo* is clearly rooted in the ideological; its closure is the closure of all ideological discourse, a discourse which speaks to the human and cultural but not to the natural except to frame it. Zigrosser articulates this problem when he writes: "Realistic portraits of people and landscapes (which are essentially portraits of Nature) do not, as a general rule, provide apt material for much in little. The basic purpose of both is likeness, and true likeness precludes imaginative variation. Specific detail is documentary, referring to the one and not to the many."<sup>40</sup> But one might add that the *multum in parvo* must offer a kind of univocality, a form of absolute closure; its function is to close down discourse and not to open the wounds of its inadequacies. We should remember that the word *aphorism* comes from the Greek "to set bounds" and "boundaries." Zigrosser's own predominant choices of pastoral and religious works speak to the ideological systems, the closed and clear systems of cultural meaning, from which *multum in parvo* is constructed. Like visual *multum in parvo*, linguistic *multum in parvo* is best shown in a display mode; hence its place upon home samplers has now been taken over by posters, cards, bumper stickers, and T-shirts. Within the frame and without a physical form, the *multum in parvo* becomes monumental, transcending any limited context of origin and at the same time neatly containing a universe.

*The Secret Life of Things*

Let us return to the last lines of the series of tableaux in *Impressions of Africa*. The watercolors give way to this dramatic series and then, "when the usual smooth mechanism which closed the curtains hid this antithetical oddity from view, Carmichael left his post, thus marking the end of the series of scenes without action."<sup>41</sup> In describing the tableau, the writer must address a world of things defined in spatial relation to one another. But with the introduction of action, the task of writing changes toward the description of narrative, the description of events within sequence, and the description of the world of things becomes "mere" context, is supplemental to the description of narrative events. We find this problem over and over again in pastoral and ethnographic writing and in those works of children's literature which create a toy world. In this aspect of the tableau we see the essential *theatricality* of all miniatures. Our transcendent viewpoint makes us perceive the miniature as object and this has a double effect. First, the object in its perfect stasis nevertheless suggests use, implementation, and contextualization. And second, the representative quality of the miniature makes that contextualization an allusive one; the miniature becomes a stage on which we project, by means of association or intertextuality, a deliberately framed series of *actions*.

Foucault writes that in Roussel's "Le Concert," "la petite vignette de papier à en-tête comme la lentille du porte-plume souvenir, comme l'étiquette de la bouteille d'eau d'Evian est un prodigieux labyrinthe—mais vu d'en haut: si bien qu'au lieu de cacher, il met naïvement sous les yeux le lacs des allées, les buis, les longs murs de pierre, les mâts, l'eau, ces hommes minuscules et précis qui vont dans tous les sens d'un même pas immobile. Et le langage n'a plus qu'à se pencher vers toutes ces figures muettes pour tenter par d'innombrables accumulations d'en rejoindre la visibilité sans lacune. Celle-ci, à vrai dire, n'a pas à être mise au jour: elle est comme l'offrande d'une ouverture profonde des choses elles-mêmes."<sup>42</sup> That the world of things can open itself to reveal a secret life—indeed, to reveal a set of actions and hence a narrativity and history outside the given field of perception—is a constant daydream that the miniature presents.<sup>43</sup> This is the daydream of the microscope: the daydream of life inside life, of significance multiplied infinitely *within* significance. Thus the state of arrested life that we see in the tableau and in the fixity and exteriority of writing and print always bears the hesitation of a beginning, a hesitation that speaks the movement which is its contrary in the same way that the raised and hesitating baton speaks the bursting

action that will result from its fall. It is significant that in manuscript illumination the first letter has borne the ornament.

In children's literature this transition from hesitation to action, from the inanimate to the animate, continually appears in the theme of the toy come to life. The nutcracker theme can be found even on the boundary between didactic and fantastic children's literature. In *The Adventures of a Pincushion*, published in the late 1780's, Mary Jane Kilner felt it necessary to point out that inanimate objects "cannot be sensible of anything which happens, as they can neither hear, see, nor understand; and as I would not willingly mislead your judgement I would, previous to your reading this work, inform you that it is to be understood as an imaginary tale."<sup>44</sup> Pauline Clarke's *Return of the Twelves*, the story of a boy named Max who discovers the Brontë children's toy soldiers and finds that they are alive, presents a good contemporary example of this thematic device. In the beginning of the work, when Max is waiting for the soldiers to show him that they are alive, Clarke slows the action, measuring it to the progressive disappearance of a jawbreaker that Max is sucking: "All the same, he did not give up hope. He had seen them move twice now, and what you saw you believed. (Max also believed many things he did not see, like everyone else.) The jawbreaker was becoming more manageable now, and as he knelt there, Max turned it over and over in his mouth. Suddenly he crunched it all up with determination and impatience. He decided to go in."<sup>45</sup> In the depiction of the still life, attention is devoted to objects, but once the inanimate is animated, the parallel problem of description of action must be placed against the depiction of objects. Max's sister, Jane, sets the table for "the Twelves": "And she began quickly to lay upon the table the set of tiny brass plates she had kept from her dolls' house days. At either end, she put a brass candlestick, and between these, small piled plates, gleaming at the edge, filled with bread crumbs, cake crumbs, biscuit crumbs, dessicated coconut, currants, and silver pills. The plates were milk bottle tops. By each man's own plate she put a tiny wineglass."<sup>46</sup> ". . . The Twelves were not long in accepting the invitation. They fixed a balsawood gangplank, and scrambled or slid down it, according to taste."<sup>47</sup> The problem of scale appears only in relation to the physical world. In the depiction of action there is no need for the constant measurement-by-comparison that we find in the first part of the passage. The profundity of things here arises from those dimensions which come about only through scrutiny.

There are no miniatures in nature; the miniature is a cultural product, the product of an eye performing certain operations, manipulating, and attending in certain ways to, the physical world. Even Max

draws the parallel between divine and human creativity and manipulation here: "He thought of all the other small creatures, mice, toads, beetles, some much tinier than Stumps, ants and spiders and furry caterpillars. No doubt to God, he, Max, seemed quite as small and needing help."<sup>48</sup> The miniature assumes an anthropocentric universe for its absolute sense of scale. We see perhaps no better demonstration of this desire to juxtapose the nonhuman and the human than the spectacle of the fleacircus. The flea circus presents a seemingly pure animation, a life-from-death in which the apparatuses of the circus appear to move of their own accord. At the same time, the flea circus provides an explanation of movement; we know that the fleas are there, even though we cannot see them, just as the microscope confirmed the daydream of microcosmic life. Furthermore, the flea circus completes the taming and manipulation of nature which the circus represents. The flea-tamer is the inverse and twin of the lion-tamer: he feeds his animals with his own blood voluntarily, while we marvel that the lion-tamer has evaded the spilling of blood; and the flea-tamer takes control of an invisible nature whose infinity is just as threatening as the jaws of the great beasts.

Problems of the inanimate and the animate here bring us to a consideration of the toy. The toy is the physical embodiment of the fiction: it is a device for fantasy, a point of beginning for narrative. The toy opens an interior world, lending itself to fantasy and privacy in a way that the abstract space, the playground, of social play does not. To toy with something is to manipulate it, to try it out within sets of contexts, none of which is determinative. Henri Allegagne writes in his *Histoire des jouets*: "La différence que l'on peut établir entre le jouet et le jeu, c'est que le premier est plus particulièrement destiné à divertir l'enfant, tandis que le second peut servir à son instruction et à son développement physique."<sup>49</sup> To toy is "to dally with and caress, to compose a fantastic tale, to play a trick or satisfy a whim, to manipulate, and to take fright at," according to the *OED*. Plato, in the *Meno*, writes of the self-moving statues made by Daedalus, small statues of the gods which "if they are not fastened will run away." Socrates explains that "it is not much use possessing one of them if they are at liberty, for they will walk off like runaway slaves: but when fastened, they are of great value, for they are really beautiful works of art. Now this is an illustration of the nature of true opinions: while they abide with us they are beautiful and fruitful, but they run away out of the human soul, and do not remain long, and therefore they are not of much value unless they are fastened by the tie of the cause; and this fastening of them, friend Meno, is recollection, as has been already agreed by us."<sup>50</sup> In these remarks we see the relation between ar-



rested life and absolute, "completed," knowledge which is so important to the notion of the collection. Although the transcendence of such objects allows them to endure beyond flux and history, that very transcendence also links such objects to the world of the dead, the end of organic growth and the beginning of inaccessibility to the living. The desire to animate the toy is the desire not simply to know everything but also to experience everything simultaneously.

The inanimate toy repeats the still life's theme of arrested life, the life of the tableau. But once the toy becomes animated, it initiates another world, the world of the daydream. The beginning of narrative time here is not an extension of the time of everyday life; it is the beginning of an entirely new temporal world, a fantasy world parallel to (and hence never intersecting) the world of everyday reality. On the one hand, we have the mechanical toy speaking a repetition and closure that the everyday world finds impossible. The mechanical toy threatens an infinite pleasure; it does not tire or feel, it simply works or doesn't work. On the other hand, we have the actual place of toys in the world of the dead. As part of the general inversions which that world presents, the inanimate comes to life. But more than this, just as the world of objects is always a kind of "dead among us," the toy ensures the continuation, in miniature, of the world of life "on the other side." It must be remembered that the toy moved late to the nursery, that from the beginning it was adults who made toys, and not only with regard to their other invention, the child. The fashion doll, for example, was the plaything of adult women before it was the plaything of the child. After the death of Catharine de' Medici's husband, eight fashion dolls were found in the inventory of her belongings—all were dressed in elaborate mourning garb and their cost appeared as an entry in her accounting book.<sup>51</sup> Today's catalogs of miniatures often recommend their products as suitable to both the dollhouse and the knickknack shelf.

The toy world presents a projection of the world of everyday life; this real world is miniaturized or giganticized in such a way as to test the relation between materiality and meaning. We are thrilled and frightened by the mechanical toy because it presents the possibility of a self-invoking fiction, a fiction which exists independent of human signifying processes. Here is the dream of the impeccable robot that has haunted the West at least since the advent of the industrial revolution. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries mark the heyday of the automaton, just as they mark the mechanization of labor: jiggling Irishmen, whistling birds, clocks with bleating sheep, and growling dogs guarding baskets of fruit.<sup>52</sup> The theme of death and reversibility reappears in the ambivalent status of toys like the little guillotines

that were sold in France during the time of the Revolution. In 1793 Goethe wrote to his mother in Frankfurt requesting that she buy a toy guillotine for his son, August. This was a request she refused, saying that the toy's maker should be put in stocks.

Such automated toys find their strongest modern successors in "models" of ships, trains, airplanes, and automobiles, models of the products of mechanized labor. These toys are nostalgic in a fundamental sense, for they completely transform the mode of production of the original as they miniaturize it: they produce a representation of a product of alienated labor, a representation which itself is constructed by artisanal labor. The triumph of the model-maker is that he or she has produced the object completely by hand, from the beginning assembly to the "finishing touches." As private forms, these models must be contrasted to the public forms of display and recreation which have from the beginning marked the advertisement of industrial products.

Historically, the miniature railway has served both private and public aesthetic functions. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, the utilitarian possibilities of miniature railways were abandoned and such railways came to be used as demonstration or display models. In England in 1874, Arthur Heywood tried to promote a miniature gauge railway for use on country estates and farms, but without success. Later, however, as a pleasure attraction, with its dining and sleeping cars, his railway gained popularity.<sup>53</sup> Early miniature railways found their function in the aesthetic or play sphere whether they were part of private estates or public displays. By the turn of the century, they had been totally given over to amusement. In 1894 four Irish-American brothers, the Cagneys, opened an office in New York City and sold miniature locomotives to amusement parks all over the world. The engines they sold were replicas of standard-gauge locomotives, originally based on the famous No. 999 of the New York Central Railroad, which in 1893 had reached the unprecedented speed of 112 1/2 miles per hour.<sup>54</sup> The names of these early-twentieth-century engines celebrate the distinction between scale and might, materiality and meaning: the Little Giant (Eaton Railway, 1905), the Mighty Atom (Sutton Park Railway, 1907), the Little Elephant (Halifax Zoo Railway, 1910).

The industrial miniature results in amusement. The park here is not just the taming of the natural but the double stamp of culture brought about by introducing the mechanical to the natural and by traversing the natural with the mechanical at the same time that a reduction of scale is effected. Whereas the railroad itself had brought

about a new traversal of the landscape, the vision it offered was a partial one, the vision of an observer moving through, not above, the landscape. In the miniature railroad we have a reduction of scale and a corresponding increase in detail and significance, and we are able to transcend the mechanical as well as the natural that forms its context. In the further miniaturization of the table-top train set, we have an access to simultaneity and transcendence completed. Correspondingly, the natural has moved from the forest to the individual trees of the park to the synthetic trees, barns, cows, and farmers of the train set's landscape. For a written account of such a transcendent and transformed view of the natural, we might turn to one of H. G. Wells's books of "floor games," *Little Wars*. Here the frontispiece shows "A Country Prepared for the War Games—the houses are made of wall-paper with painted doors and windows, the roofs are cut out of packing paper, and the houses are filled with wooden toy bricks to make them solid. The castle and the church are made from brown cardboard. There is a river chalked across the centre of the battlefield, which widens to flow past the great rocks in the centre." Comparing his game to the *kriegspiel* played by the British army, Wells writes: "My game is just as good as their game, and saner by reason of its size. Here is War, done down to rational proportions, and yet out of the way of mankind, even as our fathers turned human sacrifices into the eating of little images and symbolic mouthfuls. . . . Great War is at present, I am convinced, not only the most expensive game in the universe, but it is a game out of all proportion. Not only are the masses of men and material and suffering and inconvenience too monstrously big for reason, but—the available heads we have for it are too small."<sup>55</sup> The movement here is correspondingly one from work to play, from utility to aesthetics, from ends to means. A miniature railway built by a Captain Harvey and Count Louis Zborowski was christened along the Kent coast in the summer of 1927 by Earl Beauchamp, K. G., Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, who referred to the line as "the most sporting railway in the world, built by sportsmen."<sup>56</sup> What is this erasure of labor, this celebration of the mechanism for its own sake, if not a promise of immortality, the immortal leisure promised by surplus value?

Here it might be useful to contrast the independent meanings of the terms *journey* and *excursion*. The journey belongs to the moral universe of preindustrialism. It marks the passage of the sun through the sky, the concomitant passage of the body's labor through the day, and the pilgrimage or passage of life. It is an allegorical notion, one that suggests a linearity and series of correspondences which link

lived experience to the natural world. In contrast, the excursion is an abstract and fictive notion; it emerges from the world of mechanized labor and mechanical reproduction. The excursion is a holiday from that labor, a deviation and superfluity of signification. While the journey encompasses lived experience, the excursion evades it, steps outside and escapes it. The excursion is a carnival mode, but an alienated one; its sense of return is manufactured out of resignation and necessity. Today in America the uses of miniaturized landscapes continue to emphasize this sporting, or play, function. Miniature golf, the fantasy land, the children's zoos, and storybook countries realize the exotic and the fantastic on a miniaturized scale. The image that is produced not only bears the tangible qualities of material reality but also serves as a representation, an image, of a reality which does not exist. The referent here is most often the fantastic, yet the fantastic is in fact given "life" by its miniaturization. Although we cannot miniaturize what has not had material being in the first place, we can align the fantastic to the real and thereby miniaturize it by displacement. For example, the miniature unicorn is a popular gift-shop item, and we must assume that we are expected to read the scale as "miniature unicorn: unicorn :: miniature horse: horse." In these fantastic landscapes, the transformation of the miniature is effected by magic, not by labor. The automaton repeats and thereby displaces the position of its author. And the miniaturized landscape of the amusement park is domesticated by fantasy rather than by lumberjacks, carpenters, architects, and cleaning ladies, those workers who have "really" been its causality.

The amusement park and the historical reconstruction often promise to bring history to life, and it is here that we must pay particular attention once more to the relation between miniature and narrative. For the function of the miniature here is to bring historical events "to life," to immediacy, and thereby to erase their history, to lose us within their presentness. The transcendence presented by the miniature is a spatial transcendence, a transcendence which erases the productive possibilities of understanding through time. Its locus is thereby the nostalgic. The miniature here erases not only labor but causality and effect. Understanding is sacrificed to being in context. Hence the miniature is often a material allusion to a text which is no longer available to us, or which, because of its fictiveness, never *was* available to us except through a second-order fictive world. These "parks" mark the landscape as nostalgic allusions to interiority and fictiveness the way Beatrix Potter figurines mark the nursery or the Toby jug stands on the English mantelpiece, symbol of the interior fire at the heart of the domestic.<sup>57</sup>

### *The Dollhouse*

Transcendence and the interiority of history and narrative are the dominant characteristics of the most consummate of miniatures—the dollhouse. A house within a house, the dollhouse not only presents the house's articulation of the tension between inner and outer spheres, of exteriority and interiority—it also represents the tension between two modes of interiority. Occupying a space within an enclosed space, the dollhouse's aptest analogy is the locket or the secret recesses of the heart: center within center, within within within. The dollhouse is a materialized secret; what we look for is the dollhouse within the dollhouse and its promise of an infinitely profound interiority. In fact, we can see the dollhouse-maker's relative inattention to the exterior of his or her structure as further evidence of this movement inward. Like the fashion doll, the dollhouse was originally (and perhaps still is) an adult amusement. We can see its origins in the crèche, which we find from the Middle Ages on, particularly in Naples and Marseilles. The Neapolitan crèches displayed figures made of wood or terra cotta, with finely finished faces and hands, silk clothing, and silver and pearl ornaments. Surrounding the figures were miniature objects and animals, which, Allemagne writes, "l'on faisait figurer dans ces petites reconstitutions des crèches pour leur donner un plus grand cachet de vérité."<sup>58</sup> In the Sicilian crèche tradition, for example, there seems to be an important movement toward locating the sacred within the secular landscape. At the heart of such crèches are the abstract mythologized figures of the Nativity, but as one moves out from that location, the landscape becomes more familiar: the snail- and herb-gatherers of the Palmeritan hills; the shepherds as Sicilian shepherds. In contrast, the art cabinets of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe focused upon the secular domestic interior as they displayed small objects made of silver, china, glass, and pewter as well as miniature furniture. Dutch miniatures of the time were often exact reproductions of the owner's household furnishings.<sup>59</sup> In 1637 the town of Augsburg bought for presentation to the Swedish king, Gustavus Adolphus, a cabinet from the University of Upsala which contained real toys: a pair of mechanical dolls, a peepshow, and a little falconry after the style of a doll's room.<sup>60</sup>

The dollhouse has two dominant motifs: wealth and nostalgia. It presents a myriad of perfect objects that are, as signifiers, often affordable, whereas the signified is not. Consider the miniature Orkney Island chairs that can be found in the china cupboards of many Island homes. The full-size chairs, handmade of local straw, were once a major furnishing of the peasant house, but because their manufacture

is so labor-intensive and because their mode of production has become so esoteric, only the very wealthy can now afford them. Hence the descendants of the peasants who once owned such pieces can afford only the miniature, or "toy," version. Use value is transformed into display value here. Even the most basic use of the toy object—to be "played with"—is not often found in the world of the dollhouse. The dollhouse is consumed by the eye. The most famous dollhouses, such as the Duchess Augusta Dorothea of Schwarzburg-Gotha's reproduction of court life and the dollhouse built for Queen Mary of England in 1920,<sup>61</sup> have been extravagant displays of upper-class ways of life that were meant to stop time and thus present the illusion of a perfectly complete and hermetic world. In his introduction to *The Book of the Queen's Dolls' House* Arthur Benson writes: "The scale of one inch to one foot being precisely maintained throughout, . . . thus there is nothing of the grotesque absurdity of a scene that does not resemble life and has only the interest of caricature. And then there is the *completeness* of the whole. Her majesty [Queen Mary], through all her public life, has realised the extraordinary importance of the small details of life. . . . The Queen's House is a symbol of this."<sup>62</sup> We might suspect that this monument against instability, randomness, and vulgarity speaks all the class relations that are absent from its boundaries. But we need not turn to the most celebrated examples to find these motifs of wealth and nostalgia. In the advertisements for, and catalogs of, miniature articles issued by firms such as the Franklin Mint, the Concord Miniature Collection, and Federal Smallwares Corporation, "period furnishings," "storybook figures," the "charming," the "picturesque," and the "old-fashioned" are presented to a bourgeois public immersed in the discourse of the "petite feminine." The dollhouse is a version of property which is metonymic to the larger set of property relations outside its boundaries. As private property marked by the differentiations of privacy and privatizing functions (bathrooms, maids' rooms, dining rooms, halls, parlors, and chambers) and characterized by attention to ornaments and detail to the point of excruciation (the hand of the artisan, the eye of the beholder), the dollhouse erases all but *the frontal view*; its appearance is the realization of the self as property, the body as container of objects, perpetual and uncontaminable.

Here we might briefly link the dollhouse to the house-poem tradition, which also functioned to display and hypostatize the status of the interior world of the ascending and upper classes. For example, Jonson's "To Penshurst" presents a description of lush natural images and their consumption by the eye and the ear. The poem moves from distance to interiority—from "thy walkes and thy Mount" to

"thy coppes," to "the lower land," "thy ponds," to the espaliered fruit trees, to the scenes within the garden walls (where farmers and peasants bring their goods), to the table, bed, and hearth, and finally to the children of Penshurst, who "may, every day,/Reade, in their vertuous parents noble parts,/The mysteries of manners, armes, and arts." The lyric ramblingness of the poem perhaps belies the parallel that can be seen between the unfolding of the poem in the eye and ear of the reader or audience and the depiction of objects to be consumed in the same manner. And the impulse to describe variety and fecundity can be seen as the same impulse that inspired the Duchess of Schwarzburg-Gotha to include in her dollhouse scenes of a princess at her toilet, a curio closet, a fair with booths, clowns and a quack doctor, and the town crier and a marketplace with the Imperial posting house. Worlds of inversion, of contamination and crudeness, are controlled within the dollhouse by an absolute manipulation and control of the boundaries of time and space.

The house is meant to be viewed from a distance, with attention focused upon one scene and then another, just as it is in Jonson's poem, and, we might add, just as it is in the landscaping tradition that places the house at a remove from the life of the street in proportion to the degree of wealth displayed. Hence what might be seen as a microcosmic tendency is macrocosmic as well: "Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show, of touch, or marble." Perfection can be appreciated only through attention to detail and incident; significance bursts the bounds of the physical structure here. Unlike the single miniature object, the miniature universe of the dollhouse cannot be known sensually; it is inaccessible to the languages of the body and thus is the most abstract of all miniature forms. Yet cognitively the dollhouse is gigantic. As Jonson moves from the remote to the domestic, his images become increasingly imbued with refinement. The landscape becomes increasingly detailed and attended to; from rustic humor (where fish and fowl offer themselves to be killed and the fruit clings to walls, just as the ripe country maidens, like "plum, or peare," "add to thye free provisions" as objects to be consumed) we move to the elevated seriousness of the scenes depicting the hospitality extended to King James and the passage on the education of the children. That education enables the children to discern discriminately the separate parts of their parents, their separate features representing the refinement of their behavior.

In contrast, "Upon Appleton House" moves eclectically outward from the structure and history of the house to the garden to the meadow to the forest, where the narrator places himself, and, in conclusion, to a meditation on the merits of Maria Fairfax and an

account of how she is responsible for the beauty of the other scenes. But Marvell's poem similarly exhibits a resistance to time, an attention to nature as a panoply of objects for consumption, and a juxtaposition of microcosmic and macrocosmic images. We might draw an analogy between the relative inattention to exterior structure of the poem here and the inattention of the dollhouse-maker to exterior form. Marvell, like Jonson, directs our attention to one location at a time, yet here each scene is marked by a conceit: the battle of Fairfax and the nuns, the garden-fort, the meadow-sea, and the peasantry depicted in a fantastic or toylike manner:

Where every Mowers wholesome Heat  
Smells like an *Alexanders sweat*.  
Their Females fragrant as the Mead  
Which they in *Fairy Circles* tread:  
When at their Dances End they kiss,  
Their new-made Hay not sweeter is.

We see a similar giganticization of the master of the house—

Yet thus the laden House does sweat,  
And scarce induces the *Master* great:  
But where he comes the Swelling Hall  
Stirs, and the *Square* grows *Spherical*;  
More by his *Magnitude* distrest,  
Then he is by its straitness prest:—

and a corresponding miniaturization of the villagers:

They seem within the polisht Grass  
A Landskip drawn in Looking-Glass  
And shrunk in the huge Pasture show  
As spots, so shap'd, on Faces do.  
Such Fleas, ere they approach the Eye  
In Multiplying Glasses lye.  
They feed so wide, so slowly move,  
As *Constellations* do above.

Time and history exist for Fairfax; later generations will wonder at the relation between his physical size and the physical scale of Appleton House, just as the descendants of Penshurst will correlate the expansiveness of the house with that of their ancestors. But the miniature peasant world, the toylike worlds of the farmers and the clowns, takes place in a timelessness that is tableaulike, an arrangement defined by the "picturesque" rather than by history. This mode of description is that of the pastoral up until the late eighteenth century and the advent of the romantics. As Pope wrote in *A Discourse on*



*Pastoral Poetry*, the author would be most successful if he chose to "expose" only the best side of a shepherd's life and conceal its miseries. The pastoral figures of Pope and his predecessors are more like wind-up toys than the shepherds of romantic pastorals, who sweat and become lonely. They live in fantasy worlds, the literary worlds of a Golden Age or Arcadia, and their stories are imbued with a happy precision that makes them more lyric than narrative.<sup>63</sup> More precisely, they are more dead than alive; for again we find the motif of mechanization with its concomitant immortality as a gesture against organicism and the apparent disorganization of history. The doll-house, as we know from the political economy as well as from Ibsen, represents a particular form of interiority, an interiority which the subject experiences as its sanctuary (fantasy) and prison (the boundaries or limits of otherness, the inaccessibility of what cannot be lived experience).<sup>64</sup>

### *Miniature Time*

The miniature does not attach itself to lived historical time. Unlike the metonymic world of realism, which attempts to erase the break between the time of everyday life and the time of narrative by mapping one perfectly upon the other, the metaphoric world of the miniature makes everyday life absolutely anterior and exterior to itself. The reduction in scale which the miniature presents skews the time and space relations of the everyday lifeworld, and as an object consumed, the miniature finds its "use value" transformed into the infinite time of reverie. This capacity of the miniature to create an "other" time, a type of transcendent time which negates change and the flux of lived reality, might be seen at work in such projects as the *Museum of Art in Miniature*, which was distributed by the Book-of-the-Month Club in 1948. Here the Metropolitan Museum, that most insistent denial of history and context, is reduced to a series of pictures on stamps that can be pasted into a book. The stamps are presented in a seemingly random arrangement of categories and individual places—Michelangelo, Robert, Homer, Carnevale, Goya, Rembrandt, Fragonard; Italian, Roman, French, Etruscan, Egyptian, and Chinese works. Albums G and J contain, respectively, "the Old Testament in Art" and "the New Testament in Art"—and their detachability presents even more possibilities for manipulation. In this rather remarkable phenomenon we thus find the object at least three degrees of removal from everyday life: the distance between the work of art and what it signifies (itself not necessarily "representational"), the decontextualization of the work of art within the museum context, and the re-

moval of the museum from the constraints of its physical setting into an almost infinite set of possible arrangements and recontextualizations. Like the miniature world of the encyclopedia, where the "arbitrary" order of alphabetization replaces the seemingly determined disorder of history, this "museum of art in miniature" exists in a time particular to its own boundaries.

Interestingly, there may be an actual phenomenological correlation between the experience of scale and the experience of duration. In a recent experiment conducted by the School of Architecture at the University of Tennessee, researchers had adult subjects observe scale-model environments 1/6, 1/12, and 1/24 of full size. The environments represented lounges and included chipboard furniture as well as scale figures. The subjects were asked to move the scale figures through the environment, to imagine humans to be that scale, and to identify activities appropriate for that space. Then they were asked to imagine themselves to be of "lounge scale" and picture themselves engaging in activities in the lounge. Finally, they were asked to tell the researchers when they felt that they had been engaged in such activities for 30 minutes. The experiment showed that "the experience of temporal duration is compressed relative to the clock in the same proportion as scale-model environments being observed are compressed relative to the full-sized environment." In other words, 30 minutes would be experienced in 5 minutes at 1/12 scale and in 2.5 minutes at 1/24 scale.<sup>65</sup> This compressed time of interiority tends to hypostatize the interiority of the subject that consumes it in that it marks the invention of "private time." In other words, miniature time transcends the duration of everyday life in such a way as to create an interior temporality of the subject.

Such a transformation of time, which serves to skew the experience of the social by literally *deferring* it, parallels the miniature's transformation of language. This relation to language is an ironic one at every point. The problem of the miniature described, as we noted above, emphasizes the noniconic nature of language as sign. The miniature always tends toward tableau rather than toward narrative, toward silence and spatial boundaries rather than toward expository closure. Whereas speech unfolds in time, the miniature unfolds in space. The observer is offered a transcendent and simultaneous view of the miniature, yet is trapped outside the possibility of a lived reality of the miniature. Hence the nostalgic desire to present the lower classes, peasant life, or the cultural other within a timeless and uncontaminable miniature form. The miniature is against speech, particularly as speech reveals an inner dialectical, or dialogic, nature. The miniature's fixed form is manipulated by individual fantasy rather than by

physical circumstance. Its possible linguistic correlations are the *multum in parvo* of the epigram and the proverb, forms whose function is to put an end to speech and the idiosyncrasies of immediate context. In its tableau-like form, the miniature is a world of arrested time; its stillness emphasizes the activity that is outside its borders. And this effect is reciprocal, for once we attend to the miniature world, the outside world stops and is lost to us. In this it resembles other fantasy structures: the return from Oz, or Narnia, or even sleep.

In Lilliput, Gulliver becomes his body: eating, drinking, defecating, sleeping, and using his muscles are the sum of his social existence within the miniature world. For the Lilliputians, even Gulliver's death has an apparently organic, rather than a cultural or social, meaning: the problem would be how to dispose of his enormous body and the correspondingly enormous stench it would create. The clumsiness of Gulliver, the ways in which new surfaces of his body erupt as he approaches the Lilliputian world, is the clumsiness of the dreamer who approaches the dollhouse. All senses must be reduced to the visual, a sense which in its transcendence remains ironically and tragically remote. Thus, throughout the sojourn among the Lilliputians it is Gulliver's eyes which are continually threatened, from the early arrows that narrowly miss his eyes, to the Blefuscan fleet's attack on them, to the final punishment, which is modified by his friend Reldresal to a request that his eyes, not his life, be put out.

Because Gulliver knows the Lilliputians only through a transcendent visual sense, the narrative voice works within the convention of travel writing and, by *déjà vu*, within the voice of early anthropology. For what is important here, what is chosen to be *related* and attended to, is detail in juxtaposition with pattern, the broad cliché illustrated by selected example. The very features of the model or automaton become the features of the Lilliputians themselves, a people characterized by a perfect physicality and by values which are mathematical and technocratic. Lilliput is a completely cultural world in Gulliver's description of it; it is marked by a clockwork set of laws and customs and by a language inflated beyond the significance of its referents. Nature is continually transformed into art: "The country round appeared like a continued Garden; and the inclosed Fields, which were generally Forty Foot square, resembled so many Beds of Flowers. These Fields were intermingled with Woods of half a Stang, and the tallest Trees, as I could judge, appeared to be seven Foot high. I viewed the Town on my left Hand, which looked like the painted Scene of a City in a Theatre."<sup>66</sup> What is remarkable about Lilliput, just as what is remarkable about the mechanical toy, is that it works, that it presents movement and change without necessitating a difference

of scale. Hence the souvenirs that Gulliver chooses to return with are natural; these cows and sheep exemplify the skewed relation between quality and quantity, significance and amount, presented by the Lilliputian world as a whole.

As is the case with all models, it is absolutely necessary that Lilliput be an island. The miniature world remains perfect and uncontaminated by the grotesque so long as its absolute boundaries are maintained. Consider, for example, the Victorian taste for art (usually transformed relics of nature) under glass or Joseph Cornell's glass bells. The glass eliminates the possibility of contagion, indeed of lived experience, at the same time that it maximizes the possibilities of transcendent vision. Thus the miniature world may always be seen as being overcoded as the cultural. The hearth at Penshurst, the Nuremberg kitchens, the dollhouse, even the interior sky of baroque architecture—all tend to present domesticated space as a model of order, proportion, and balance. Yet, of course, the major function of the enclosed space is always to create a tension or dialectic between inside and outside, between private and public property, between the space of the subject and the space of the social. Trespass, contamination, and the erasure of materiality are the threats presented to the enclosed world. And because the interiority of the enclosed world tends to reify the interiority of the viewer, repetition also presents a threat. It is important to remember that the miniature object, in its absolute (i.e., conventional) representativeness, is "unique" as well. We cannot separate the function of the miniature from a nostalgia for preindustrial labor, a nostalgia for craft. We see a rise in the production of miniature furniture at the same time that the plans of Adam, Chippendale, and Sheraton are becoming reproduced in mass and readily available form.<sup>67</sup> Contemporary dollhouses are distinctly not contemporary; it is probably not accidental that it is the Victorian period which is presently so popular for reproduction in miniature, not only because that period's obsession with detail and materiality is so analogous to the miniature's general functions, but also because Victorian modes of production presented the height of a transformation of nature into culture. Whereas industrial labor is marked by the prevalence of repetition over skill and part over whole, the miniature object represents an antithetical mode of production: production by the hand, a production that is unique and authentic. Today we find the miniature located at a place of origin (the childhood of the self, or even the advertising scheme whereby a miniature of a company's first plant or a miniature of a company's earliest product is put on display in a window or lobby)<sup>68</sup> and at a place of ending (the productions of the hobbyist: knickknacks of the domestic collected by elderly wom-

en, or the model trains built by the retired engineer); and both locations are viewed from a transcendent position, a position which is always within the standpoint of present lived reality and which thereby always nostalgically distances its object.

In this chapter I have discussed the miniature in its role as both an experience of interiority and the process by which that interior is constructed. The abstract experiences of fantasy and fictiveness in general, experiences known through representation, have been considered thus far as a dialogue between outside and inside, between partiality and transcendence with regard to authority and authorial knowledge. The miniature, linked to nostalgic versions of childhood and history, presents a diminutive, and thereby manipulatable, version of experience, a version which is domesticated and protected from contamination. It marks the pure body, the inorganic body of the machine and its *repetition* of a death that is thereby not a death. In the next chapter we will move from transcendence to partiality, from the inside to the outside. No longer alone, we will find ourselves within the crowded space below the giant.

42. Similarly, in his essay on Proust, Deleuze writes:

*What is the superiority of the signs of art over all the others? It is [for Proust] that the others are material. Material, first of all, by their emission: they are half sheathed in the object bearing them. Sensuous qualities, loved faces, are still matter. (It is no accident that the significant sensuous qualities are above all odors and flavors: the most material of qualities.) Only the signs of art are immaterial. . . . The other signs are material not only by their origin and by the way they remain half sheathed in the object, but also by their development or their "explication". . . . Proust often speaks of the necessity which weighs upon him: that something always reminds him of or makes him imagine something else. But whatever the importance of this process of analogy in art, art does not find its profoundest formula here. As long as we discover a sign's meaning in something else, matter still subsists, refractory to spirit. On the contrary, art gives us the true unity: unity of an immaterial sign and of an entirely spiritual meaning.*

Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, pp. 39–40.

43. Butor, *Inventory*, p. 42.

44. D'Israeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, 1:1.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

47. Valéry, *Aesthetics*, pp. 218–219.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

49. Bombaugh, *Gleanings for the Curious*, p. 722.

## Chapter 2. The Miniature

1. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 18.

2. See Sokol, "Portraits of Modern Masters." These portraits were originally shown at the Gotham Book Mart Gallery from February 20 to March 10, 1978. For more Sokol portraits, see the Summer 1982 issue of *Antaeus*.

3. D'Israeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, 1:231–232.

4. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, p. 328.

5. McMurtie, *Miniature Incunabula*, pp. 5–6.

6. Stone, *An Unusual Collection of Miniature Books*, foreword.

7. Avery, *A Short List of Microscopic Books*, p. 121.

8. *A Miniature Almanack*, 1820/1821.

9. Hooke, *Micrographia*. See also Nicholson's studies: *The Microscope and English Imagination*; *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory*; and *Science and Imagination*.

10. See Henderson, *Newsletter*, February 1, 1928.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Avery, *A Short List of Microscopic Books*, no. 129.

13. Henderson, *Newsletter*, July 15, 1928.

14. The 1841 edition of "Schloss's English Bijou Almanac" is "poetically illustrated by the Hon. Mrs. Norton." It measures 13/16 by 9/16 of an inch, with beautifully engraved portraits and views. In its 62 pages it includes "6 poems, the almanac, the Royal Family, Sovereigns of Europe, the Queen's Ministers, Ladies of the Court, and H. R. H. Prince Albert's Household." (See Avery, *A Short List of Microscopic Books*, no. 127.) Holy books, of course, become the other side of the miniature as amulet. In 1900 David Bryce, a Glasgow publisher, printed 100,000 New Testaments measuring 3/4 of an inch by 1/2 an inch, and at the advent of World War I he printed several hundred thousand copies of the Koran the size of postage stamps. These were enclosed in small metal cases with magnifying glass

covers and were given by the British government to its Moslem soldiers, who suspended them about their necks as talismans. (See Henderson, *Miniature Books*, p. 21.)

15. *Miniature Books*, p. 13.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

17. Stone, *A Snuff-boxful of Bibles*, p. 12.

18. Janes, *Miniature Bible*, pp. 7–10.

19. *Wisdom in Miniature*, p. iv.

20. See Ariés, *Centuries of Childhood*.

21. Henderson, *Newsletter*, February 1, 1928.

22. Solomon Gildrig [pseud.], *The Miniature*, pp. 3–4. Although we are particularly interested here in the problems of describing the miniature, we cannot separate these problems from the notion of “standard scale” more generally. Here we might follow Gombrich’s argument in *Art and Illusion*, p. 303:

*If we still assign a size in our mind to images of pennies or houses this is due to the same habit, as Professor Osgood has suggested, of thinking of things in some standard situation in which we usually inspect them. We compare the penny in the hand with the house across the road. It is this imaginary standard distance which will influence the scale at which a child draws such objects and which will also determine our descriptions of ants and men. The notorious question whether the moon looks as large as a dime or a dollar, to which I have alluded before, may not allow of a clear-cut answer, but most of us would protest if anyone suggested that it looks like a pinhead or an ocean steamer, easy though it would be to devise a situation where these statements would be true.*

23. Halliwell, *The Metrical History of Tom Thumb the Little*, preface. Wood, in *Giants and Dwarfs*, pp. 242–243, adds:

*Tom Hearne, in his appendix to Benedictus Abbas, states that the fiction of Tom Thumb was founded upon an authentic account of King Edgar’s dwarf. Some lines written in 1630, and entitled Tom Thumbe, his Life and Death, say:*

*In Arthur’s court Tom Thumbe did live,  
A man of mickle might  
The best of all the table round,  
And eke a doughty knight:  
His stature but an inch in height,  
Or quarter of a span;  
Then think you not this little knight  
Was prov’d a valiant man?*

*An almanack for 1697 tells us that, one hundred and four years before that date, Tom Thumb and Gargantua fought a duel on Salisbury Plain.*

24. Yonge, *The History of Sir Thomas Thumb*, pp. 21, 23.

25. Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, pp. 38–39.

26. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 160.

27. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, pp. 24–25.

28. Olrik, “Epic Laws of Folk Narrative,” pp. 129–141 (p. 138).

29. Roussel, *How I Write Certain of My Books*, p. 50.

30. Roussel, *Impressions of Africa*, pp. 12–13.

31. Roussel, *How I Write Certain of My Books*, p. 10.

32. *Ibid.*

33. In his book on Roussel, Foucault has written: “Il n’y a pas de point pri-

vilégié autour duquel le paysage s'organiserait, puis en s'éloignant s'effacerait peu à peu; mais toute une série de petites cellules spatiales de dimensions à peu près semblables qui sont posées les unes à côté des autres, sans proportions réciproques (telles étaient à peu près les loges à résurrection de *Locus Solus*). Leur position n'est jamais définie par rapport à l'ensemble, mais selon un repère de voisinage qui permet de passer de l'une à l'autre comme on suit les maillons d'une chaîne." Foucault, *Raymond Roussel*, pp. 138–139.

34. Roussel, *How I Write Certain of My Books*, p. 18.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

36. Heppenstall, *Raymond Roussel*, p. 69. Similarly, Joyce's use of multivocal signs opens the text of *Finnegans Wake* into a series of layered and interconnecting thematic systems that ultimately speak the world.

37. See Heppenstall, *Raymond Roussel*, pp. 64–65:

J. B. Brunius devised "a machine for reading Roussel" which was exhibited at the big surréaliste exhibition in 1938. This was a table on a tripod, about which the reader was required to walk. Others since, have constructed things with handles. The idea was in all cases to make it possible quickly to by-pass brackets. Roussel himself had apparently toyed with the idea not of multiplied brackets but of differently coloured printer's inks. . . . The important thing was not to cut the pages. . . . For Roussel had decided, in the first place, that the volume would be too slim. He almost quadrupled its thickness by, first, commissioning a fixed number of whole page illustrations and second, by having nothing printed on left-hand pages, so that, with the *Nouvelle Impressions* proper . . . the text appears on only one page in four. . . . The book was so printed that you could read the whole text without cutting the pages and need not then see the illustrations at all. The precise instructions sent to the illustrator result at one point in the drawing of a man peering curiously between uncut pages.

This conjunction of stasis, tableau, and voyeurism is one we will meet again in our discussion of "The Imaginary Body" (Chapter 4).

38. Borges, "The Aleph" and *Other Stories*, pp. 19–20. In his commentary on "The Aleph," Borges writes: "My chief problem in writing the story lay in what Walt Whitman had very successfully achieved—the setting down of a limited catalog of endless things. The task, as is evident, is impossible, for such chaotic enumeration can only be simulated, and every apparently haphazard element has to be linked to its neighbor either by secret association or by contrast" (p. 264).

39. Zigrosser, *Multum in parvo*, pp. 11–12. An exception to the impossibility of miniaturization in music might be works such as Powell's "Miniatures for Baroque Ensemble" (Opus 8) for flute, one violin, viola, violoncello, and harpsichord. Composed of several 10-minute pieces, it compresses the ornamentation of the baroque mode into a comparatively limited temporal frame.

40. Zigrosser, *Multum in parvo*, p. 52. See also the section on *multum in parvo* in Bombaugh's *Gleanings for the Curious*, pp. 823–826. That Bombaugh's examples ("The boxes which govern the world are the cartridge-box, the ballot-box, the jury-box, and the band-box") seem strangely dated to us speaks to the fact that *multum in parvo* is effective only within a particular ideological matrix.

41. Roussel, *Impressions of Africa*, p. 81.

42. Foucault, *Raymond Roussel*, p. 135.

43. Riffaterre, in a passage in his *Semiotics of Poetry* on the capacity of this metaphor for text production, has remarked: "The rule of polarization applies: the moment it is stylistically emphasized, any statement of motionlessness will gener-



ate a statement of motion. The more natural and permanent the movelessness, the more striking the mobilization, and the more suggestive of fantasy. Consequently, the very immobility of furniture or of the knickknacks sitting on this furniture, or of the deck of cards, can be the proof of their unseen mobility, and unseen mobility equals secret life" (p. 69).

44. Quoted in Townsend, *Written for Children*, p. 47.

45. Clarke, *The Return of the Twelves*, pp. 19–20. The Brontë children's own "Young Men's Play," which invented four kingdoms known as "The Glasstown Confederation," we might note, is recorded in micrographia. See Ratchford, *The Brontës' Web of Childhood*, p. xiii: "I have studied in originals or in copies more than a hundred manuscripts by Charlotte and her brother Bramwell, equaling in mass the published works of the Brontë family. Nearly all of them are in the minute hand printing described by Mrs. Gaskell. The earlier manuscripts have the appearance of printed books varying in size from miniatures of 1 1/2–1 1/4" to small octaves, with elaborate title pages, prefaces and colophons containing signatures and dates." See also Ratchford's edition of Emily Brontë's *Gondal's Queen*. Perhaps beside these remarkable childhood writings of the Brontës is the place to mention the remarkable artistic productions of the contemporary artist Donald Evans, who died in 1977 at the age of thirty-one. From the age of ten until his death Evans painted, and catalogued in what he called "The Catalogue of the World," over 4,000 stamps. These were miniature watercolors in which "he commemorated everything that was special to him, disguised in a code of stamps from his own imaginary countries—each detailed with its own history, geography, climate, currency and customs." Souvenirs of his life and of the life of his imagination, the stamps depict landscapes, fruits, vegetables, plants, animals, windmills, the work of Gertrude Stein, Chinese ceramics, airplanes, his friends, and much more. Each stamp was linked to an imaginary place and registered in "The Catalogue of the World," a 330-page volume in three languages listing all issues with their dates, denominations, and colors, as well as prices in the appropriate imaginary currency for mint-condition and canceled stamps. See Eisenhart, *The World of Donald Evans*, pp. 10–12.

46. Clarke, *The Return of the Twelves*, p. 123.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

49. Allemagne, *Histoire des jouets*, p. 17.

50. Plato, "Meno: The Immortality of the Soul," in *Works*, 3:3–55 (52).

51. Jackson, *Toys of Other Days*, p. 19. For further discussion of toys in relation to adults, see Ariés, *Centuries of Childhood*, pp. 67–71. In *Las miniaturas en el arte popular Mexicano*, p. 9, Mauricio Charpenal briefly outlines ritual and ornamental functions of miniatures in Mexican folk art.

52. See Daiken, *Children's Toys Throughout the Ages*, p. 58.

53. Clayton, *Miniature Railways*, p. 6.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

55. Wells, *Little Wars*, pp. 105–106.

56. Clayton, *Miniature Railways*, p. 94.

57. See "The Toby Jug."

58. Allemagne, *Histoire des jouets*, pp. 145–147. For examples of Sicilian crèches, see the holdings of the Museo Etnografico Pitre, Palermo, and, on a smaller scale, the extensive crèche made by the monk who is the tour guide at the Basilica and Catacombe di San Giovanni, Siracusa. This microcosmic pattern of comparing the sacred to the secular also appears to be typical of (at least nineteenth-century examples of) Sicilian herders' carvings:

The figures and decorations appearing on all these sculptures and carvings run within a restricted circle of subjects, and never or rarely appear outside it. The Saints, protectors of herds and single animals dear and useful to man, are in the first row: St. Pascal, St. George, St. Eloi, St. Anthony Abbot, St. Vitus, etc. In second place come the Saints that enjoy universal adoration and devotion: the Crucifix, Mary of Sorrows, Mary Immaculate, St. Joseph, St. Francis of Paola, etc., and the Saints who are special patrons of the town in which the herder was born or lives. There are often added animals that surround the herder and are important to him: the dog, the ox, the sheep, etc., then the sun and moon and stars, and not rarely some fine bird, or even a soldier whose uniform and pose have struck the fancy of the solitary and simple artist.

Salomone-Marino, *Customs and Habits of the Sicilian Peasants*, p. 232.

59. McClinton, *Antiques in Miniature*, p. 5.

60. Gröber, *Children's Toys of Bygone Ages*, p. 20.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

62. Benson, *The Book of the Queen's Dolls' House*, p. 5.

63. See Price's discussion of the work of Pope in relation to problems of scale in *To the Palace of Wisdom*, pp. 143–163.

64. Here, of course, we are reminded of *Hamlet* II, 2:

Ham.: Denmark's a prison.

Ros.: Then is the world one.

Ham.: A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

Ros.: We think not so, my lord.

Ham.: Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

Ros.: Why then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham.: O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

65. DeLong, "Phenomenological Space-Time." The Tennessee experiment is described in detail, and various constraints on its conclusions, such as investigator bias and auditory interference, are discussed. The relationship of experience to scale and time, the researchers conclude, can be stated as  $E = X(T)$ , where  $X$  is the reciprocal of the scale of the environment being used. "It should be equally obvious, however, that spatial scale is relative to the size of the observer," they add (p. 682). One factor that is not discussed is the obvious choice of the lounge, a leisure area which would as an environment tend to "elongate" the notion of everyday duration. For another example of the way in which the "standards" of scale cannot be discussed independently of our experience of scale, see the discussion of geographers' conventions of depiction in Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, p. 311: "There is one type of scientific illustration in which this effect of scale on impression is acknowledged officially, as it were. Geographers who draw sections of mountain ranges will exaggerate the relation of height to width according to a stated proportion. They have found that a true rendering of vertical relationship looks false. Our mind refuses to accept the fact that the distance of 28,000 feet to which Mount Everest soars from sea level is no more than the distance of just over 5 miles which a car traverses in a matter of minutes."

66. Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 12.

67. McClinton, *Antiques in Miniature*, p. 8.

68. See Henderson, *Lilliputian Newspapers*.