

The purpose of this literature review is to critique and analyse specific texts that discuss the topic of sexual or erotic fetishism and fantasies. This can be defined as the arousal obtained physically or mentally by an object or situation. The aim of this review is to understand where our fantasies and fetishes derive from as this is my chosen theme within my own practise. The chosen literature will be discussed in relation to specific art works and will be categorized throughout the review, leading to a fair understanding and a balanced discussion of fetishism and fantasies.

The first category will consist of artistic reference books that critically analyse and evaluate the influences and ideas of Joel-Peter Witkin (b. New York, 1939-) and Hans Bellmer (b. Germany, 1902 – 1975) whose work often reflects themes of sexuality, death, and dismembered portions of the human body. In the book titled, *'Joel Peter Witkin'*, by Germano Celant (b. Genoa, 1940) explores Witkin's powerful dark imagery, which appears to be depictions of his sexual fantasies from a perverse perspective. Germano Celant's book, *'Joel Peter Witkin'* will be reviewed alongside Sue Taylor's (b. New York, 1949-), *'Hans Bellmer, The Anatomy of Anxiety'*, which draws on the psychoanalytical theory that Bellmer's sinister artworks derive from his repressed childhood memories.

The second category of texts will outline the discourse of fetishism and fantasies with the use of academic resources, written by artists and psychoanalytical writers. The text on Sigmund Freud (b. Austria, 1856-1939) is essential to this review as it provides a base layer to the explanation of human sexuality. The text edited by Angela Richards titled, *'Sigmund Freud 7 on Sexuality'* starts with Freud's innovative Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905), which later leads on to theories of normal and abnormal relationships. Angela Richards refers to the text as a full range and development of Freud's thoughts, covering topics within the realm of sexual behaviour (Richards, 1977, p.434). Furthermore, Amelia Jones' texts titled, *'Self Image Technology, Representation and the Contemporary Subject'* discusses ways in which contemporary artists have utilised new technologies of representation in a range of artistic mediums. In addition to this, *'The Feminism and visual culture reader'* edited by Amelia Jones analyses the role of gender including aspects of sexual orientation and identification (Jones, 2005, p.1). Additionally, Marsha Meskimmon explores themes of gender and sexuality to provide an insight into the art world from the perspective of the female in the text titled, *'The Art of Reflection: Women Artists' Self-portraiture in the Twentieth Century'*. Furthermore, the text on, *'Surrealism: Desire Unbound'* edited by Jennifer Mundy provides essays addressing issues within the Surrealist movement, which are closely related to Freud's concept of Fetish as he believed we project our sexual desire upon an object for pleasure.

The third category of texts is non- art based factual texts that discuss fetishism and fantasies and apply them to day to day occurrences such as psychosexual proclivities which are apparent in Richard Von Krafft- Ebings text, *'Psychopathia Sexuals'*. The text discusses the improvement of medical and psychiatric diagnosis of sexual derangement and provides an insight into the sinister side of sexual activity using case studies together with Brett Kahrs, *'Sex and The Psyche, Revealing the true nature of our secret fantasies from the largest ever survey of its kind'*

which is a large collection of societies innermost sexual fantasies from fetishism, necrophilia, bestiality and extreme sexual violence to the ordinary sexual fantasies.

To gain an understanding of the topic of fetishism, the first text to be reviewed is edited by Jennifer Mundy titled, 'Surrealism: Desire Unbound'. This text defines desire as an, '...authentic voice of the inner self...an expression of the sexual instinct, and, in sublimated form, the impulse behind love.' (Mundy, p.11) The text gives an insight into the creation of Surrealism as a movement in art and in civilisation, through the writings of Sigmund Freud and the creation of the sexual fantasy. The text introduces artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray and Hans Bellmer situated in eleven chapters by a range of writers discussing several topics within the realm of Surrealism. Chapter eight proved to be of great interest to my own practise, Hal Fosters psychoanalytical essay titled, 'Violation and veiling in surrealist Photography: Woman as Fetish, as Shattered Object, as Phallus' where Foster discusses the tension of woman as castrative and woman as fetish, with the oscillation between castrive and fetishistic visions of women. This is most intense in the photographs of female dolls by Hans Bellmer, when he attempts to arrest it through a near impossible conflation of the two types, it becomes all the more volatile (Foster, p.209). This text gives a very in-depth discussion on fetishism, Surrealism, voyeurism and Freudian Theory. It's a great text to use for an essay, as its well structured, clear and concise and easy to understand with images to break up the large amounts of text making it visually interesting.

'*Fetishism and the First Doll*', Chapter one, '*The Self-Proclaimed Oedipal Son*' cited in, '*Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety*' author Sue Taylor's psychoanalyst methodology allows for a great depth of information on the themes and theories of fetishism and fantasies, the navigation of the book is simple to follow and the large sections of text are broken up by relevant imagery, making the pages visually pleasurable. This text would be suitable as a key text as it delves into key themes within my interest with accessible language for my level. The text gives the reader an understanding of the possible reasons for Bellmer's sadistic works by discussing his abnormal childhood behaviour and the persistent repudiations of this father by stating, '[Bellmer's] expressions of father hatred formed part of a mythology that [he] advertised widely over the course of almost forty years.' (Taylor p. 19). Taylor then suggests that Bellmer provoked a physical crisis in his father which he later drew his artistic creativity from with the memories of his childhood and the resentment towards a 'severe and humourless paternal authority.' (p.20). By discussing Bellmer's background the reader is allowed into his mind, gaining understanding of why he creates the sadistic works and what he may be trying to say. Bellmer plays a large part within my own practise, his dark and disturbing imagery plays on my mind forcing me to dig deeper into my inner myself.

In Chapter four, '*Doll Games: Pleasure in Pain*', Bellmer's Black and white photograph, *The Doll*, 1935, are depictions of punished children for unspecified bad behaviour, which can be related to the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud, who examined a type of cruel fantasy that involved the mistreatment of children. (p.85). The photographs depicts a pair of

legs in unbuckled galoshes and sagging hose who is being made to stand in a corner like a naughty school girl (p.86). Taylor explains Freudian theory allows the reader to understand where the fantasy originated from, childhood, where it later developed in adulthood becoming clear that the abusive person punishing, was a father figure (p.86). This then reverts back to Bellmer's relationship with his father. In turn, looking at Angela Richards text on Sigmund Freud, Essay one, *'The Sexual Aberrations'* (1905) states, 'The history of human civilization shows beyond any doubt that there is a connection between cruelty and the sexual instinct.' This corresponds with the theories of Taylor as it suggests that the upbringing we have can impact on our sexual activity as we reach adulthood, those who feel pleasure in producing pain on to someone else in a sexual way may be capable of enjoying pain in other situations (Richards, p.73). This again can be applied to Bellmer and Witkin in terms of them projecting their corrupt memories of childhood onto their subjects. I find the text quite interesting in subject matter, but it can be very confusing and hard to pin point the information you are looking for in terms of the psychoanalytical language used as well as the overly large amount of footnotes that muddy the bottom of each page. However it would be crucial in an essay as it provides a great understanding of the theories underlying fetishism and the sexual activity from the prepubescent through to adulthood.

In relation to this Laura Mulvey's essay on, *'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema: The Pleasure in looking'*, introduces the topic of scopophilia, defined as the pleasure in looking (Mulvey, p.46). Freud originally, in his three essays on sexuality, isolated scopophilia as one of the component instincts of sexuality; he associated scopophilia with taking other people as objects, and subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze. (Mulvey, p.46) Mulvey's feminist theories create a sadistic perverted ego on Freudian theory by suggesting the pleasure in looking can become fixated into a perversion, creating obsessive voyeurs and peeping toms, whose only sexual gratification can come from the watching and controlling of an objectified other (p.46). Mulvey's clear views on the themes of scopophilia become apparent, she is certain in her thoughts and presents them to the reader in a well thought out order. The sectioning of her findings and understanding flow from one to the next with relevant information, keeping the level of interest high. Mulvey's take on the avenue of fetishistic scopophilia suggests by taking an interest into an object we mentally build up its beauty then transform it into something personally satisfying, leading into a more voyeuristic or sadistic approach, where the pleasure lies in the control or punishment of another. (Mulvey, p.49). Personally I find Mulvey's take on the subject enlightening, she is specific in her wording, the use of subheadings break up the amount of text making it easier to read and understand. Mulvey covers a large amount of themes under my interest, such as Fetishism, Sadism and Scopophilia, ending in me finding this book very inspiring, its feminist viewpoints and theories suggest it would be a key text for future essays on this subject.

'...the body of women is defined through social representations which privilege a very limited range of bodies considered 'beautiful' and 'desirable', quoted from Marsha Meskimmons text, *'The Art of Reflection'* suggesting that the masculine desire has a

standard and not every female holds the power to be looked at in a certain way (Meskimmon, p.171). In contradiction to this, artist Joel-Peter Witkin subjects are not the typical beautiful women of the world, 'he looks for human subjects whose delirium of pain and suffering could be revealed photographically' (Celant, p.18), they are societies outcasts, not deemed beautiful in the 'right' way. This is true within both Witkin and Bellmer's works as they exude a sense of fetishism and fantasy which could be misinterpreted as an overly obsessive affection of their subject, which may not be inviting to the eye, leading to in a tense engagement for the viewer in terms of the not so beautiful subject. I find Meskimmon's text quite limiting on the fact that it doesn't discuss the specific type of looking and using a subject. It has a lot of reference to other artists and writers but I have found them irrelevant towards themes of fetishism and fantasy. I feel if this information was available within a larger area it would be more insightful towards my chosen subject area, as the focus of this text is women looking at themselves and only briefly refers to the male viewpoint. Celant states that Witkin's Photographs live in a world of perversity and sacrilege, touching upon taboo, forbidden and hallowed subjects (p.9) Looking at the photograph titled, Madame X, 1981, the viewer is delivered into an unnerving situation of a female body with the loss of her arms and the gain of a penis. The female holds a similar stance to that of Aphrodite of Milos (130-100 BC) by Alexandros of Antioch, a famous Greek sculpture with missing limbs (arms) although Witkin may not have intended any similarities. Due to Witkin's subjects missing limbs, it could be seen that her 'lacking' in certain areas has been replaced in others, creating a fetishistic view, from the top to bottom. I feel the sheer amount of imagery in this book far more interesting than the actual text, as it over powers and out numbers the amount. I found the book quite hard to navigate around as the descriptions are separate from the related photograph. I feel this book would be more successful if the text was located by its relevant imagery making it simpler to understand the reasoning of Witkin's works.

Looking at Krafft-Ebing's text, '*Psychopathia Sexualis*' its divided into subsections, with a brief introduction, a General Pathology and Case History Studies making the text simple to find relevant information on your chosen topic. Krafft-Ebing states that, 'Paraesthesia is the perversion of the sexual instinct, with a sub-division titled Sadism consisting of the association of lust and cruelty, which generates a force of fantasy (p.19). The text then goes on to discuss what a sadist act contains such as impulse, preparation, and abuse of an object/ subject. This then leads into the cases of interviews on their fantasies and fetishes. I feel the text is well structured but overall lacks interest and the font is too small to read comfortably, the pages are cramped with an overload of information.

This leads onto the next text by Amelia Jones, '*Self/Image*' that states that fetishization relies on the shocked recognition and then on the disavowal, implying that without a disapproved or disgusted reaction it may not be fetishism the viewer is indulging in, but more a played out fantasy. This would be down to the individual looking at their response to that specific object or situation. I feel this text was very limiting in the information I was looking for, as it discusses the technologies of representation within contemporary artists within the medium of film and performance. However I did find the set out of the text visually stimulating as the text was broke up with art works reflecting

the topic. The language used was clear and consistent throughout. If the book had a wider range of topics such as scopophilia it would be a great read for an essay under my topic.

The last text to review is *'Sex and the Psyche'* written by psychotherapist Brett Kahr which contains extremely sexually explicit material of over 1,000 sexual fantasies that derive from the inner recesses of the minds of normal, ordinary British adults, men and women, aged 18 to 90 onwards from all walks of life (Kahr, p.xi). The text discusses why we have sexual fantasies, 'Sexual fantasies – our secret inner thoughts – can provide us with immense pleasure, but they can also gnaw at our minds, causing anxiety, shame, guilt, disgust or confusion'. Suggesting that we cannot always control our sexual urges when temptation takes over, depending on the situation and the subjects involved. The text then leads on to a range of cases that described their innermost sexual fantasies from the ordinary to the extreme. The themes that apply to my own practise were part three, Fetishism and other forms of object love, alongside humiliation, extreme sexual violence and teenagers and children. However some of the cases are quite graphic, I found some of them hard to read as they were quite grotesque and disturbing, especially the cases involving children. However, these related back to the writings of Sue Taylor and her theories on how individuals see no harm in projecting these voyeuristic fantasies on to innocent subjects, who may be unaware of the happenings. I find the text well-structured and easy to navigate around to the specific subject of interest to the reader. Although it is not an academic book, it gives a large range of information from a large source, allowing a balanced scale of information.

To conclude this literature review, I have gained insight into the importance of the types of books that should be discussed and used within essay writing. Every author/ editor has a different perspective and style of replaying information to the reader, so taking care in choosing books should be done with careful consideration. I feel I have learnt a great deal as to where sexual fetishism and fantasies derive from throughout the different categories of texts. I feel I had a good balance of information within my categories as they were written by different types of people within society, all coming from a different life style and background leading to a fairer base layer of knowledge.