

# Zofia Kolbuszewska

---

## The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death, Doll-house Homicides, Foster Families, and the Subversion of Domesticity in "CSI: Las Vegas"

---

Kultura Popularna nr 4 (54), 50-59

---

2017

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Zofia Kolbuszewska

**The Nutshell  
Studies  
*of Unexplained  
Death, Doll-house  
Homicides,  
Foster Families,  
and the Subversion  
of Domesticity  
in CSI: Las Vegas***

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.<sup>1</sup>

[T]he spatial and visual categories of domesticity become most compelling when they are transgressed.<sup>2</sup>  
Every death has at least two stories<sup>3</sup>

Uncanny meticulous scale models recreating would-be scenes of murder are the signature of the Miniature Killer to whose exploits several episodes of the season 7 of *CSI: Las Vegas* are devoted. Usually the killer has the miniatures delivered to the investigators before the actual crimes take place. Naren Shankar, Executive Producer of *CSI: Las Vegas* reveals in an interview with John K. Dehn and Susan Marks, the makers of the film *Of Dolls & Murder*, that the modus operandi of the killer, a young psychotic woman called Natalie has been inspired by *The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death* (27:37), a collection of eighteen doll-house style dioramas designed and built by Frances Glessner Lee (1878–1962) in the 1930s and 1940s in order to train homicide detectives. Glessner Lee's dioramas and the models of crime scenes built by Natalie, the Miniature Killer, reveal similarity in that they draw our attention to the importance of materiality and touch in crafting miniatures and bring out the dialectic of the haptic and optical cognition, staged by all doll-houses, thus complicating a gender tension at the very core of the concept of forensic investigation. Visual and haptic have been traditionally associated with the feminine gender, while the verbal was associated with masculinity. The scrutiny of materiality of traces and visual documentation of crime scenes were carried out by men in the times of Glassner Lee, while in the beginning of the twenty first century the affectionate treatment of diorama's tactile quality by Natalie is juxtaposed with the scientific objectivity of the laboratory team's investigation. Thus, in both cases miniature models serve as manifestations of a frustration connected with the traditional shape of a family, the structure of society, and the miniature makers' place in them.

Yet, even as the dioramas noted above reveal and simultaneously contain the foundational darkness, boundlessness and violence which, as Mark Wigley emphasizes in *Derrida's Haunt*, underlie and make possible the concept of domesticity, they diametrically differ in the way they problematize the concept and functioning of domesticity, family, and a foster family. Frances Glessner Lee's miniature crime scenes are to a greater degree corrosive to the traditional notion of domesticity and subversive in view of gender politics than those painstakingly crafted by Natalie, even as Glessner Lee was active in the first half of the twentieth century and the *CSI: Las Vegas* features the crimes committed in the beginning of the twenty first century. Through the act of constructing *The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death* she subverts power relations, gender constructions, and stereotypical professional competence and incompetence attributions. Glessner Lee's miniature models of crime scenes

**Zofia Kolbuszewska** is Associate Professor in the Department of English, University of Wrocław. She published *The Poetics of Chronotope in the Novels of Thomas Pynchon* (2000) and *The Purloined Child: American Identity and Representations of Childhood in American Literature 1851–2000* (2007). She edited a volume on *Thomas Pynchon and the (De)VICES of Global (Post)modernity* (2012).

- 1 Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke UP, 1993), 55.
- 2 Laura J. Miller, "Denatured Domesticity: An Account of Femininity and Physiognomy in the Interiors of Frances Glessner Lee," *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture*, ed. Hilde Heynen and Gülsüm Bydar (London: Routledge, 2005), 208.
- 3 A remark made by the head of the Forensic Lab, Gil Grissom in *CSI: Las Vegas* S7 e08).

also demonstrate the fuzziness of the boundaries separating home from the micro-politics of mundane reality of the country and macro-politics of the country's war on crime, whereas owing to the double coding of her artefacts, Natalie directs us back to the drama of emotional domestic violence represented in the TV series as disconnected from social and political circumstances. Apparently, it is to be blamed on perennial evil.

In this essay I discuss the vision of inherently violent domesticity manifested in the miniatures made by the killer featured throughout the season 7 of the *CSI: Las Vegas* show, as well as domesticity threatened and compromised by violence invading it from the external world, a threat that contemporary American war on crime posits as lurking closer to home than it is usually imagined. First, I juxtapose the idea of domesticity seemingly isolated from the threats of the external world with the sense of domesticity arising from the relationships within the foster family of professional crime-investigators Frances Glessner Lee aspired to be a member of the foster family by constructing her miniature crime scenes. Secondly, I pit the domesticity riddled with internal violence and besieged by external crime against the space of the crime laboratory interpreted as a paradoxical simulacrum of domesticity, where the team of forensic technicians and investigators constitute a family-like community, coalescing around the father figure, the director of the laboratory.

Inquiring into Derrida's reflection on architecture and the architecture of the philosopher's thought, Mark Wigley shows how "[t]he house of metaphysics is deconstructed by locating the 'traces of an alterity which refuses to be totally domesticated'" (Derrida 117 qtd in Wigley 108). The critic notes that Derrida "repeatedly, one might almost say compulsively, identifies the undecidables that uncannily intimate the violence within the familiar domain, which is to say, the domain of the family, the homestead, the house" (109). Because the uncanny "exposes the covert operations of the house," its "constitutional violation of the ostensible order of the house is itself repressed, domesticated by the very domestic violence it makes possible" (109). Wigley is particularly interested in the violence of most banal of spaces, "spaces that are violent in their very banality" (121). He further emphasizes that

the violence is always domestic, but not because it goes on within an interior; Rather, it is the violence of the interior as such, a violence that is at once enacted and dissimulated by familiar representations of space, representations that are so familiar that they are not even understood to be representations. (120–121)

The doll-house is such a violently familiar space. Susan Stewart points out that "[t]he 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)" (65). Yet, the doll-house is the epitome of miniatures (61). Discussing the cultural and ideological aspects of miniature, Stewart notes that the world of the miniature is metaphoric thus making the mundane life "absolutely anterior and exterior to itself" (65). Miniature invokes the time that negates "change and the flux of lived reality" (65), a kind of transcendent time which tends toward "tableau rather than toward narrative, toward silence and spatial boundaries rather than toward expository closure" (66). As long as the absolute

boundaries of the miniature world are maintained it remains perfect and uncontaminated (68). The critic notes that as a model of enclosed space the doll-house is traditionally expected to “present domesticated space as a model of order, proportion, and balance” (68). Yet, the very act of enclosing creates “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” (68). The enclosed world is constantly threatened by “[t]respass, contamination, and the erasure of materiality” (68).

Historically, such harmonious, safe and secure space was represented in miniature doll-houses fabricated by middle- and upper-class women who practiced it as a hobby or as a covert pursuit of a modicum of control within a patriarchal world in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. By the late 1940s the displays of adult miniaturists’ works were very popular in American museums (Bird 33). Doll-house makers were strongly emotionally attached to “tiniest scraps and shards of their work” (33). One of the most popular exhibits at the Smithsonian Institute is a dollhouse fitted with miniatures that fill its twenty three rooms, painstakingly crafted by Faith Bradford (1880–1970), a Washington, D.C. librarian. Bradford wrote the biography of the Doll family inhabiting the doll-house in the Smithsonian, in which she “idealized the domestic life of ‘an American family of the type that is passing, a large family of comfortable means but not great wealth’” (Gill Jacobs 236–237 qtd in Bird 40). She set her narrative “somewhere” in the United States between 1900 and 1914 (Bird 40).

While Glessner Lee’s *Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death* inscribe themselves in this tradition of female doll-house making, they simultaneously transgress it. Virtually forgotten by all but a narrow circle of professionals in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Frances Glessner Lee’s crime scene miniatures project was brought to the public attention due to the surge of interest in criminal investigation at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, also manifest in the exponentially growing popularity of such forensic procedurals as the TV show *CSI: Las Vegas*, which started in 2000, along with its spin offs *CSI: NY* and *CSI: Miami*.

These shows have emerged in part from a frustration caused by the fact that, as the head of the crime investigation laboratory in *CSI: Las Vegas*, Gil Grissom puts it, “all the vices are closer to home” (S7 e16). This situation elicits either a denial or a paranoid reaction, and leads to the “disownment of what lies beyond the domestic realm’s visible boundaries” (Miller 198). Miller observes that “[o]f all the fictions fabricated and exhibited in the construction of domestic space, the conceptual opposition of public and private is domesticity’s greatest and most cherished conceit” (198). On the one hand the domestic interior is “underpinned not only by its own fictions, but also by its occupants’ need for external acknowledgment” (197). On the other hand, the unsanctioned gaze within domestic space is to be contained and controlled by means of such instruments as housework, etiquette, propriety and daily routines. However, “the threat of covert witnesses to the domestic drama being staged is mediated, rather than eradicated, by these tools” (197).

Due to their accessibility to inspection, doll-houses and miniature models of domestic interiors both perform and embody the tension between the external gaze and internal insulation. Appositely, Susan Stewart stresses “the essential *theatricality* of all miniatures. [...] the miniature becomes a stage on which we project, by means of associations or intertextuality, a deliberately framed series of *actions*” (54). Both Glessner Lee’s and the Miniature Killer’s models of crime scenes seem to represent the resolution of the tension

between the outside and inside in favor of the irruption of the exteriority and the incursion of unsanctioned gaze into the domestic space. The intrusion of external violence depicted in these miniatures only brings out the violence inherent in the generational, social and gender divisions characteristic of the particular historical moments, which underlie the premises of domesticity. Yet, even as testifying to the eruption of the politicized outside into the domestic sanctuary, Natalie's dioramas turn back to the violence inherent in the emotional and psychological ties within a family and code it as depoliticized and ahistorical evil. The coded message for the investigators is conveyed by means of partial images of broken doll inserted in otherwise faithful imitations of actual crime scenes.

The popularity of forensic TV shows has contributed to the rise of the so called *CSI* effect. The *CSI* TV franchise has depicted the forensic science as glamorous and presented jobs in forensic laboratory as exciting and desirable. "The information portrayed on the show not only appears to influence the general public, but perhaps also juries and judges. Today's viewer is tomorrow's jury member. [...] some jurors now expect to see forensic evidence in the case they participate in, just as they see it provided on *CSI*" (VanLaerhoven and Anderson 30). Kurt Hohenstein suggests that "Americans have embraced the scientific model for criminal justice widely popularized by *CSI* because it appears to offer easy answers to complicated conflicts among legal ideas and institutions, the law, and the perceived dichotomy between the rights of the accused and victims" (67). This desire for unambiguous and easy answers can be traced to the perception of modern life as saturated with crime. Crime and disorder have been considered "inevitable features of modern life" by "politicians and polemicists alike" (Wilson 6). They have "repeatedly counseled the public to accept limits on the state's authority and to understand that enduring solutions to crime's expansion [are] unlikely" (Wilson 6).

David Garland further advises that "the threat of crime has become a routine part of modern consciousness, an everyday risk to be assessed and managed in much the same way that we deal with road traffic" (Garland 2, qtd in Wilson 10) – a risk that has infiltrated domesticity which so far has been construed as safe, secure, peaceful and uncontaminated. Mark Seltzer discusses the entanglement of the public worlds of the professional experts and private spaces of lay persons in the risk society. Following Stuart Hall, he points out that criminal series, criminology reality shows and documentaries reveal the structure of contemporary public sphere: "events and issues only become *public* in the full sense when the means exist whereby the separate worlds of professional and lay person, of controller and controlled, are brought into relation with one another and appear, for a time at least, to occupy the same space" (Hall 145 qtd in Seltzer 40). *CSI* shows are premised on the work-centered life, observes Seltzer, and further remarks that:

*CSI* is, of course, *crime scene investigation*—the acronym, as with PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder), ADHD (attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder), or OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder) in the *DSM* (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*) indicating that expert, professional work is going on, that it has located its "object"—and black-boxed it. The black box here is the crime scene itself, the ritualized demarcation of physical space as information zone and the technical processing of physical evidence, which is nothing but that which can be technically processed. The technical media determine the situation, allowing the moral neutrality of the media technician itself to be moralized. (14)

The space of a crime laboratory functions like a paradoxical simulacrum of domesticity. The team of forensic technicians and investigators constitute a family-like community, coalescing around a father figure, the director of the laboratory. In *CSI: Las Vegas* Gil Grissom is the father figure. He is “a white and distinctly unethnic man” in contrast to the team which “contain[s] a diversity of racial, ethnic and gender identities” (West 123). Admittedly, “[w]hite hegemony presides over a cosmopolitan coalition (123),” yet, rather than being modeled on the white middle class family, the laboratory team is conceived of as a community bound together by professional commitment to inquire into and fend off encroachments on the security of individuals at home and in the streets of the city. The team is more reminiscent of a foster family, where foster children may have been victims of abuse and survivors of traumatic events with criminal records of juvenile delinquency. Indeed, impeccable professionals as they are at present, all crime investigators employed in the laboratory had their own brush with trauma, violence, death, lawlessness, abuse and addiction in the past.

Fittingly, in contrast to traditionally understood white, middle-class domesticity carefully separated and guarded from perils and chaos of the world outside, the simulacrum of laboratory domesticity is founded precisely on constantly crossing the boundaries between the inside and outside, the pure and the tainted, security and threat, as well as crossing the lines of social political, racial and gender divisions due to the nature of scientific protocols and procedures of evidence collecting. Yet, crossing the lines does not necessarily entail transgression. Crime scene investigators return from their excursions into the wilderness and chaos of the life in Las Vegas, a city founded by gangsters, back to the routine, order and predictability of the laboratory, where, however, “liberal difference” is tolerated “so long as it is framed [...] by the hegemony of white, patriarchal identity” (West 123). Here, the Derridean uncanniness of domestic violence is transformed into familiarity. Violence is familiar from work at crime scenes or personal history of the team members, and appears to be reckoned with in the functioning of the foster family of professionals, rather than resulting from the return of the repressed.

Yet, in the end of the day, as in Glassner Lee’s *Nutshells*, it is the uncanniness of different cultural suppressions, such as the truth about a class, gender and racial structure of the society, that transpires in the *CSI: Las Vegas* crime laboratory. Again, the violence of the intruding outside matches the inherent violence of domesticity. While “living with crime” has been assimilated by both the public and domestic sphere, the uncanny violence of the repressed awareness of class, gender, and race constructions seeks expression in the flashes of the return of the repressed – also in the home space of the crime laboratory. Yet, because the interiority of domesticity has been replaced by the exteriority of the professional management of hazard, in no circumstances will class, gender, and race constructions undergo transformation. The national war on crime and profiling will actually enhance them.

Frances Glessner Lee was an heiress of the fortune amassed by founders of the International Harvester Company, a U.S. manufacturer of agricultural machinery, construction equipment, trucks, and household and commercial products from 1902 to 1985. Married at the age of 19 to Blewett Lee, she left her husband and children “to pursue her talent for building and visualization, and her interest in criminal investigation” (Miller 199). Her friendship with her brother’s classmate, George Burgess Magrath, later the Chief Medical Examiner of Suffolk county, Boston, led to her involvement in criminology.

In 1931 she endowed Harvard University's Department of Legal Medicine and was instrumental in organizing Harvard Associates in Police Science seminars (1945-)<sup>4</sup>. However, as Laura J. Miller points out, *The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death* facilitated an escape from the confinements of her identity initially shaped by her genteel origin, financial comfort, and Victorian upbringing because "[a] crime scene or the morgue were hardly spaces for ladies of good breeding and fine manners to discuss, not to mention appear" (202). Ironically, in creating miniature interiors, she "evidently never [left] the very space she hoped to transcend" (202). It might thus seem that "leaving behind" domestic space for the public sphere only reinforces the very boundaries that serve to make the interior a space of confinement. Instead, Glessner-Lee forged her own brand of forensic analysis which emphasized the porosity of boundaries between interiority and exteriority and pursued her own version of a career, simultaneously questioning gender stereotypes in the profession of forensic investigation (202).

*The Nutshells Studies of Unexplained Death* have been used for the instruction in forensic techniques ever since, even if the miniature interiors crafted by her "exhibit moral assumptions embedded in the act of seeing space, absorbed from many contemporary discourses" (Miller 202). The dioramas simultaneously question those moral assumptions by re-interpreting the domestic space as a crime scene. They open domesticity to the external gaze of inspection by professionals rather than a housewife and thus provide an interstitial, liminal space "located between the seemingly rigid, proprietary spheres of public and private, inside and outside, and masculine and feminine" (199) as these categories were defined and—Miller emphasizes—also challenged in Glessner Lee's lifetime (199). Yet, Miller finally admits that attempts to "resolve the *Nutshells'* evidence in light of the circumstances of Glessner Lee's life" (208) reveal a contemporary myth, on which *CSI* shows thrive: that our visuality can be penetrating and objective and that eventually it will expose the truth (208). Aptly, Natalie, the Miniature Killer, challenges patriarchal and epistemological hegemony of the laboratory chief by meeting him on his own turf—that of crime scene investigation. However, she replaces the rationality of scientific analysis—which is a domain of crime scene investigators—with manual skills, dexterity and fondness for touch associated with the feminine occupation of doll-house making.

Natalie learned her skill in crafting miniature models from her foster father, devoted to building models of trains and the landscapes they traverse. He protects Natalie, the only foster child he was emotionally close to, by admitting to committing the murders she was guilty of, and when communicating it to the investigators on Skype, commits suicide. Deprived of emotional ties to the only person she loved, Natalie plans to avenge her foster father by striking at Sarah, the person the fatherly figure of the laboratory foster family is attached to, thus inflicting pain both on the director of the laboratory and on the woman. Natalie crafts a miniature model of a car crash in which Sarah is to be merely wounded but will be left to die in the desert. Ironically, The Miniature Killer's mimetic obsession and meticulousness, perfectionism in rendering her dioramas exactly like the would-be models, i. e. future crime scenes, help to apprehend her by scrutinizing her contacts with the arts and

4 2015 Frances Glessner-Lee Seminar in Homicide Investigation The last to date Frances Glessner Lee Homicide Investigation Seminar was held at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, 900 West Baltimore Street in Baltimore, Maryland, October 26–30, 2015.



crafts community and businesses providing miniature makers with tools, raw materials and prefabricated parts.

Mark Morris emphasizes the material excess of crafted models. Due to their materiality they exceed their referential function and express “something more and something else than what might be identified with the referent” (65). Morris further observes that: “Miniatures play to a fantasy of distance,” yet, the distance implied by the small scale of the miniature “signals both a spatial and temporal gap” (125). Indeed, the miniature re-creation of would-be murder scenes as well as murders committed subsequently by Natalie are triggered by a memory of the experience of strangely distanced—miniature—perspective on a body of her four-year-old sister pushed by Natalie to death from a tree-house. This led to the rejection of the girl by her father and placing her in foster care. He then replaced the dead daughter with a clay-biscuit doll-puppet and pursues the career of a ventriloquist. In each miniature built by Natalie there is a fragment of a picture of a bleeding clay-biscuit doll. Natalie’s double coded models allegorize the inherent violence of domesticity by paradoxically telling a story of violence and crime destroying domesticity from the outside.

Susan Stewart observes that “[t]he 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” (69). Conversely, Natalie’s miniatures thrive on contamination—they preserve a loss that has already taken place (murdering of the sister) and the losses to come (not yet committed murders). These scale models of homicide scenes rehearse and repeat the non-domesticability of loss and the impossibility of protecting home from corruption.

However, while on account of their composite nature—they present elements of various crimes and do not imitate entire factual crime scenes—Glessner Lee’s miniatures are artifices<sup>5</sup>, i. e. iconic signs whose similarity to the referent is imputed, the Miniature Killer in a melancholy gesture conflates the sign (miniatures of future crime scenes) and its referent (actual crime scenes) by committing thus announced murders. Stewart points out that miniatures offer spatial transcendence by erasing “productive possibilities of understanding through time. Its locus is thereby the nostalgic” (60). Yet, Natalie mocks the ideal home as a locus of nostalgia (from Greek: sickness caused by longing for home) by staging posteriority of the future (depiction of the murders to be committed) and anteriority of the past (the murder of the sister each time resurfaces as a puzzle fragment inserted in crime scene models announcing homicides to be committed) thus creating an apocalyptic tableau which of course fits well the timelessness of the miniature, but destroys the nostalgic harmony of the past.

Stewart notes that “the interiority of the enclosed world tends to reify the interiority of the viewer” (68). It might as well be observed that the reified interior of the miniature maker is reflected in the arrested tableau-like inanimateness of the miniature. Indeed, Natalie’s models of crime scenes

5 The artifice has been introduced by Roman Jakobson by extending the tripartite system of signs proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce (index, symbol, icon) to embrace a sign designated as „artifice.” Studying the relationships determining Peirce’s typology Jakobson employed Greimas’s semiotic square to show that logically there should exist a class of signs whose similarity to the referent is imputed rather than factual: *“contiguity/similarity/factual/INDEXICON/Imputed/SYMBOL/ARTIFICE* Jakobson worked on his proposition over years; he discussed it in detail with the art historian and theoretician Donald Preziosi in the 1980s. See Donald Preziosi, *Brain of the Earth’s Body: Art, Museums and the Phantasms of Modernity\** (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003), 143–144.

arrest the external world in replicating it thus reflecting the inanimate world of her melancholy interiority—she was turned emotionally dead by an original trauma experienced at home in a fit of domestic violence that revealed the inherent violence of domesticity.

The Miniature Killer thus tells a double-articulated story. By shattering security, safety and peacefulness of domesticity through committing crime, and by mocking the nostalgic locus she communicates the impossibility of home. Although the miniatures crafted by Natalie seem to function as signifiers for the crimes to be committed, as a matter of fact they express more than just pointing to their referents. By means of inserted partial images depicting a clay-biscuit doll they allegorize in a Derridean vein what the makers of the *CSI: Las Vegas* construe to be an ineluctable and horrifically irrational kernel of evil. Natalie inscribes the uncanniness of Derridean violence right in the very center of domesticity; domesticity shaped by its own destruction from within. Only a foster family structured around scientific rationality is capable of facing and containing this violence because in a foster home the knowledge of this violence has not been repressed. Violence is recognized as crucial part of the porous interstitial space that arises when the boundaries of the domestic and the external, public world have been blurred. However, the laboratory foster family are not invested with the conscious of other repressions which concern the construction of class, gender, and race in the American society.

It perhaps comes as no surprise that the makers of the *CSI: Las Vegas* were inspired by Frances Glessner Lee's *The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death*. It is however compelling to what degree they sanitized the subversive power of her dioramas, by mitigating their challenge to gender stereotypes when presenting Natalie's miniatures. Uncannily, Glessner Lee's models situate themselves in a space between scientific investigation of criminal evidence and awe before rational inexplicability of crime taking place at the center of home, the space which is supposed to be a utopian haven offering a respite and sheltering from the corruption of the external world. By constructing the dioramas of crime scenes Glessner Lee literally crafted her position in what might be designated as a foster family of Police Chiefs and Medical Examiners, a family coalescing around scientific rationality. By making *The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death* she confirmed her "revised nostalgia"<sup>6</sup> for and a distance to domesticity, whose porous boundaries she explored, and corroborated her simultaneous attraction and resistance to the foster family, where white, patriarchal identity determines the degree of tolerance for liberal difference. Glessner Lee's dioramas subtly subvert this hegemonic position by staging a "dialogue between outside and inside, between partiality and transcendence with regard to authority and authorial knowledge" (Stewart 69). Yet, even as sanitized versions of Glessner Lee's miniatures, the Miniature Killer's models of crime scenes also inadvertently transcend the division between the authority of hegemonic scientific objectivity and the subjective affection for materiality, traditionally gendered feminine, harbored by the whole miniature makers' community, regardless of their gender identification.

6 The term "revised nostalgia" was first introduced by James Berger in „Cultural Trauma and the ‚Timeless Burst‘: Pynchon's Revision of Nostalgia in *Vineland*,“ *Postmodern Culture* 5.3 (1995) : 43. In revised nostalgia, it is not so much an impulse to „seek to return to a site of original wholeness; rather, the unrealized possibility of social harmony and justice itself compulsively returns, providing an alternative to existing conditions and a motive for changing them.”

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bird, William L., Jr. *America's Doll House: The Miniature World of Faith Bradford*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution & New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Deconstruction and the Other." *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers*. Ed. Richard Kearney. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984.
- Garland, David. *Culture of Control*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.
- Gill Jacobs, Flora. *A History of Dolls' Houses*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.
- Hall, Stuart et al. *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*. London: Macmillan, 1978.
- Hohenstein, Kurt. "CSI and *Law & Order*: Dueling Representations of Science and Law in the Criminal Justice System." *The CSI Effect: Television, Crime, and Governance*. Ed. Michele Byers and Val Marie Johnson. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009. 61–74.
- Miller, Laura J. "Denatured Domesticity: An Account of Femininity and Physiognomy in the Interiors of Frances Glessner Lee." *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture*. Ed. Hilde Heynen and Gülsüm Baydar. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Morris, Mark. *Models: Architecture and the Miniature*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2006.
- Of Dolls & Murder*. Dir. Susan Marks. Produced by John K. Dehn and Susan Marks. I See Dead Dolls Films, LLC., 2011.
- Preziosi, Donald. *Brain of the Earth's Body: Art, Museums and the Phantasms of Modernity*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003.
- Seltzer, Mark. *True Crime: Observations on Violence and Modernity*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham: Durham UP, 1993.
- VanLaerhoven, Sherah and Gail Anderson. "The Science and Careers of CSI." *The CSI Effect: Television, Crime, and Governance*. Ed. Michele Byers and Val Marie Johnson. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009. 29–59.
- West, Patrick. "The City of Our Times: Space Identity and the Body in CSI: Miami." *The CSI Effect: Television, Crime, and Governance*. Ed. Michele Byers and Val Marie Johnson. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009. 111–131.
- Wigley, Mark. *Derrida's Haunt: The Architecture of Deconstruction*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997.
- Wilson, Christopher P. *Learning to Live with Crime: American Crime Narrative in the Neoconservative Turn*. Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 2010.