

COLLECTING

By Matthew Schneiderman



FIGURE 2. My first antique firearm: an English, Tower-marked, flintlock cavalry pistol, New Land Pattern, Paget model, circa 1830. (PHOTO BY DAN RETTING.)

BY APPOINTMENT TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF THE HELLENES BY APPOINTMENT TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN BY APPOINTMENT TO THE LATE QUEEN MARY

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					£ 27	15 10

With compliments.

MEMBER SINCE 1919 THE SEAL OF CONFIDENCE

FIGURE 3. The Parker Gallery, London, receipt for my Tower flintlock pistol. Note delivery to my parents sailing on the Queen Mary.

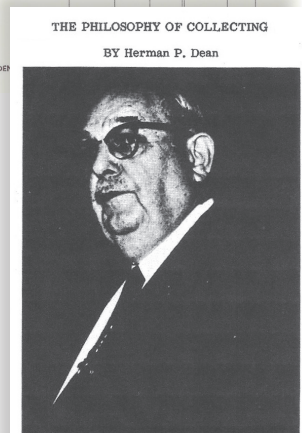


FIGURE 4. Herman P. Dean (1897-1978) in 1965.

FIGURE 1. Matthew captured by the Davy Crockett craze, circa 1955. (PHOTO BY BOB ACCIARO.)

I was fascinated by firearms as a child (Fig. 1), and I was the neighborhood armorer in grade-school. Why firearms? I don't know. My parents had no interest in guns, but they recognized and supported mine, and they gave me the first piece in my collection when I was eleven. (Fig. 2,3)

My interest in collecting itself came later. Why do some people collect and others don't? Why do collectors almost never stop collecting and non-collectors never start? What exactly IS collecting? I feel as if I've barely started to figure this out, but it's time for an interim report. The annotated bibliography at the end shares the literature I've discovered so far in my research. I hope you'll all join in the discussion.

WHY PEOPLE COLLECT.

Several years ago, Heritage Auctions snuck a bunch of advertising booklets into our meeting Display Room.¹ The Forward, "Why We Collect Things", lists the top ten reasons reported in a survey of Heritage clients, "in no particular order". Here's that list, expanded by my reading and thinking. Also, I've borrowed some ideas from Herman P. Dean², who talked about "The Philosophy of Collecting" at the American Society meeting in the spring of 1965. He gave a good, traditional discussion of the basic reasons people collect, and added some folksy stories.

1. KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING.

The exploration of history, culture, technology, decorative arts, and many other areas.

Modern collecting dates back to “Cabinets of Curiosities”, beginning in the 16th century, whose purpose was the display of “wonders”. The task of such extra-ordinary objects, many of which we’d now label “natural history”, was to provoke delight, astonishment, curiosity, and ultimately a desire for more information, in both the viewer and the collector. True collecting has always been linked to study, research, and the discovery and sharing of new knowledge. One way to decide whether a person is a collector, instead of something else, is to look at their library.

2. RELAXATION, STRESS REDUCTION, and...

“A way to use our leisure intelligently.”²

“An escape from the dull and sordid realities of life.”²

“Collecting is filling the void.”³

“An attempt to make sense of the multiplicity and chaos of the world.”⁴

“Order is nothing but a state of [suspension] above the abyss.”⁵

3. PLEASURE, fun, and happiness.

4. SOCIAL INTERACTION.

Friendships, fellowship, social support, a place within a group. This is important for many collectors, but there are some who are not social, who do not join clubs or attend shows.

5. COMPETITIVE CHALLENGE.

We certainly strive to fulfill our vision of what our collection should be. Although we take pleasure in our friends’ successes (vicarious collecting), we definitely enjoy competing with each other.

“Competitive challenge” is really a euphemism for “the thrill of the hunt”: the reconnoiter, the sighting, the chase, the leap, the capture (or the failure), and the return home with the prize (and, in some cases, the hiding of the prize from the spouse). The hunting metaphor appears frequently in both the collecting literature and our own conversations. It implies “cunning, stealth, patience, prowess, and competition”⁶, all of which appeal to us.

6. RECOGNITION.

Only the rare collector attains major fame. Much more commonly there’s some status, and a chance to be briefly remembered in the collecting community. My friend Jas van Driel tells this story:

“On that same trip, I met a guy who collected Schuco battery cars. He enthusiastically talked about a very rare one he’d just bought in the original box, including the little traffic signs. I reacted, also being a collector, as enthusiastically as he did. His wife looked from him to me and finally said, ‘Wow, Philip, recognition at last.’”

7. ALTRUISM.

This involves charity before and after death, public display, and sharing of knowledge. A good example is the private Burns

Archive, founded in 1977 by Dr. Stanley B. Burns, and now including over 1 million 19th century medical and historical photographs.⁷ It has published over forty books in forty years, and consults for, advises, and loans to documentary and fiction filmmakers and TV productions.

8. DESIRE TO CONTROL, POSSESS, BRING ORDER.

The Literature speculates about (“documents” would certainly not be the correct word) the deep psychological reasons for collecting. One claim: collectors collect because they have to. On one book page alone, I found “deep emotional needs”, “a desire for permanence”, “a desire for control”, and “exhibitionism and preening”.⁸ I’ll leave it to you to judge. I acknowledge the Desire to Bring Order part, but I deny preening.

9. CONNECTION TO HISTORY.

This includes #1, but I think goes further, allowing us to dive into the historical stories our book knowledge leads us to. Re-enacting is an obvious example, but I have 18th century day-dreams even without putting on a costume.

10. INVESTMENT/WEALTH ACCUMULATION.

Sneaky Heritage Auctions put this one last, but we know they think it’s number 1. Some true collectors may make money buying and selling, in whatever area, but I think that “collecting” solely or even mostly for investment isn’t really collecting.⁹ Society’s idea of a ‘great’ or “distinguished” collector usually involves a very wealthy person with very expensive pieces, but I think this misses the mark. We don’t want the price and the “value” to become more important than the object itself. In fact, a great collector is a person who has put together a great collection, and you can create a great collection from other people’s trash.¹⁰

I’ll end this section with an inspirational quote from Herman Dean:

“I know of no therapy that is more desirable than a wholesome hobby”.¹¹

WHY SOME PEOPLE DON’T COLLECT.

I’m very thankful that my wife Janet has been willing to spend forty years with me and a bunch of antique firearms. She was going to give this part of the talk, but she couldn’t make it to the meeting. She was also going to enthusiastically present the section on “Collecting as Psychopathology”, but I’ll have to handle that one as well.

Lots of adults collect, as we’ll see, but the Literature states that a much higher percentage of children do.¹² (However, discussions I’ve heard among collectors express concern about a falling off of the collecting impulse and activity among children and young adults, in the midst of our current tech-focused world.) In any case, why do some people never collect and why do some collecting children stop? Lack of parental or societal influence and reinforcement? Particular early childhood experiences, or lack of them?



FIGURE 5. Janet with Eve, one of our twin granddaughters.

Brain connections in non-collectors favoring disorder? Plain old genetics? My conclusion: I have no idea why some people don't collect.

WHAT DO PEOPLE COLLECT?

Long ago, after learning I was a collector, a non-collecting friend sent me a website for air sickness bags. He implied that a hobby including such disgusting things was questionable at best. However, it was a great site. It showed a vast collection, carefully classified and organized in multiple ways: historically, chronologically, commercially by airline, and aesthetically by design. It discussed rarity, demand, condition, value, provenance, the bag-collecting world itself, and how to communicate with other bag collectors. (see www.airsicknessbags.com) In all respects, this site showed a terrific collection composed of objects made to hold vomit.



FIGURE 6. South African Airways (SAA) air sickness bag, 2017. SAA is resisting the industry trend toward plain white (and hence virtually uncollectable) bags.



FIGURE 7. The back of the SAA bag—very rare to find instructions.



FIGURE 8. An occlupanid. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE HOLOTYPIC OCCLUPANID RESEARCH GROUP (HORG).



FIGURE 9. An occlupanid collection in a binder. (IMAGE COURTESY OF HORG)

More recently I found a website devoted to the classification and collecting of something we use every day, variously called a bread-clip, -tag, -climp, -tab, -ribbon, or simply “occlupanid”. This site is largely satirical, with its main target the sometime absurdity of scientific classification, but for me, too dense and too classification-loving to get the joke, it's very instructive. Here's a large occlupanid collection (Fig. 9), easily contained in a binder. Here's an occlupanid phylogeny. (Fig. 10), Finally, here's the occlupanid's place in a larger collecting scheme (Fig. 11). (see www.horg.com/horg/?page_id=921)

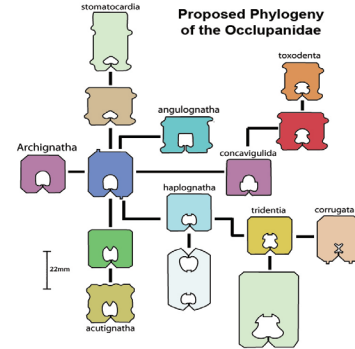


FIGURE 10. The phylogeny of the occlupanidae. (IMAGE COURTESY OF HORG)

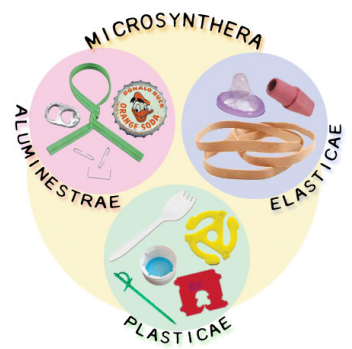


FIGURE 11. Sub-classifications of the microsynthia. (IMAGE COURTESY OF HORG)

HERE ARE ALL the varieties of tuna fish for which I have labels

Albertson's Solid White Tuna
 Budgens Shippich Tuna Chunks
 Bumble Bee Chunk Light Tuna—Touch of Lemon
 Bumble Bee Solid White Albacore in Water (blue label)
 Bumble Bee Solid White Albacore in Water (green label)
 Bumble Bee Solid White Tuna in Vegetable Oil
 Bumble Bee Prime Fillet Solid White Albacore in Water
 Genco Solid Puck Light Tuna
 Chicken of the Sea Albacore in Water
 Chicken of the Sea Chunk Light Tuna
 Chicken of the Sea Chunk Light Tuna in Spring Water
 Chicken of the Sea Lite Chunk Light Tuna in Spring Water
 Crown Prince Natural Chunk Light No Salt Added Tongol Tuna
 Dolores Chunk Light Yellowfin Tuna
 Geisha Albacore Solid White Tuna in Water
 Geisha Light Tuna in Water
 Genova Tonno Solid Light Tuna in Olive Oil
 Genova Tonno Solid Light Tuna in Olive Oil Seasoned with Salt
 King of the Sea Fancy Solid White Tuna in Spring Water
 Kirkland Signature Solid White Albacore
 Lady Lee Albacore Solid White Tuna in Water
 Polar All Natural Tuna Chunk Light in Water
 Polar All Natural Tuna Solid White Albacore in Water
 Ralph's Private Selection Albacore Solid White Tuna Packed in Water
 Ralph's Solid White Tuna in Water
 Royal Reef Albacore Solid White Tuna in Water
 Sea Trader Chunk Light Tuna
 Sea Trader Chunk Light Tuna in Water
 Skogg's Alpha Beta Chunk Light Tuna
 StarKist Chunk Light Tuna in Spring Water
 StarKist Chunk Light Tuna in Spring Water (with measuring tape motif)
 StarKist Chunk Light Tuna in Vegetable Oil
 StarKist Chunk White Albacore Tuna in Water
 StarKist Charlie's Chunk White
 StarKist Solid White Tuna in Pure Vegetable Oil
 Truher Joe's Albacore Solid White Tuna (red label)
 Truher Joe's Albacore Solid White Tuna (red label with clipper ship print)
 Truher Joe's Albacore Solid White Tuna (blue label)
 Truher Joe's Albacore Solid White Tuna in Olive Oil
 Truher Joe's Ship Kach Tuna Packed in Water
 Truher Joe's Tongol Chunk Light in Water Salt Added
 Truher Joe's Wild Solid White Tuna in Water
 Tunny Atun al Chipotle en Trozos Aline Amarilla
 Tuna Chunk Light Tuna

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FIGURE 12. Advertisement for the sale of a match safe collection. (IMAGE COURTESY OF COWAN'S AUCTIONS)

FIGURE 13. A listing of William Davies King's tuna fish can label collection. FROM BIBLIOGRAPHY #4.

For every collector of surprisingly attractive things I hadn't been aware of (Fig. 12), there's a collector of tuna can labels (Fig. 13) or mold (Fig. 14 - 16). A sample of penicillium mold gifted by Alexander Fleming and accompanied by his note and signature sold for \$14,751 at Bonham's London in March of 2017 -- yes, there is a historical mold market! Serious people collect stuff like this with passion, knowledge, organizational skills, and joy equal to ours.

I didn't place the occlupanid center-stage, or show pictures of mold, just to indulge my odd sense of humor. The set of everything collected spans a large continuum. At one end, we find the most

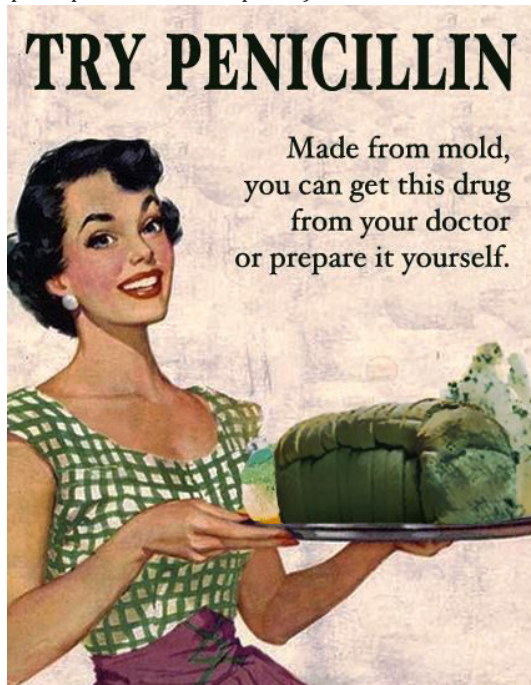


FIGURE 14. *Penicillium notatum*, the mold from which Alexander Fleming created penicillin. (Image via Wikipedia.)



FIGURE 15. *Penicillium notatum* captured and enshrined for a mold collector. (Image via Wikipedia.)

FIGURE 16. ...or perhaps not.



sublime, gorgeous objects. We then pass through the extensive, bright realm of the beautiful, to the standard objects of daily life, to things almost everyone throws out, to the unpleasant, and finally to the totally disgusting. How do we deal with collections of nail clippings obtained from each of one's high-school classmates, or the underwear (or worse) of famous people? I find this one of the most difficult problems in thinking about collecting. One approach is rejection. However, I believe that even when the objects involved are of no interest, or repulsive, the details of the particular hunt, the collection's organization or scaffolding, and the collector's enthusiastic discussion and self-report, can often be worth paying attention to and learning from.

Finally, there's www.collecting.org, the site of The Association of Collecting Clubs. I counted their list of things people collect, and it's infinite. The USA is said to have over 50,000 collecting clubs and over 200 million collectors. Even though the latter is unlikely ("collector" isn't defined), there are still a lot of us around.

A FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH ABOUT COLLECTING: there are collectors of absolutely anything and everything we know of or can imagine. It doesn't matter what people collect, and it's not our job to judge. It's the collecting, the framework that matters.

HOW MANY ITEMS ARE REQUIRED TO QUALIFY AS A COLLECTION?

A much-debated question! ASAC's own Stuart Mowbray has clearly stated his answer: at least three objects "...acquired because of their relationship to each other and because they are interesting [in themselves] as opposed to being tools for some primarily practical use. The bottom line? One is a curiosity, two is a coincidence, and three is a collection."¹³

However, the photography collector and dealer Gerard Levy says, "...a collection begins when you have two things; when you have one thing, you are not a collector."¹⁴

I take a different view. I was a collector after my parents' single, collection-founding gift. Twelve years later, after my entire eight-piece collection was stolen from my parents' apartment, I remained a collector, even though (temporarily) without objects. The core nature of collecting resides in the collector.

IS COLLECTING A PSYCHOPATHOLOGY?

"The Western typewriter has become a cult object.... People collect and fetishize them."¹⁵

LUNATIQUES (an antique store Janet and I saw in Sydney, Australia, December 2015).

"The Obsessive Art of Collecting: Monomania L.A." (An exhibit organized by the University of Southern California Libraries, 2014.)

From friends' emails, newspaper/magazine articles, and books (all quoting collectors): "affliction"; "addiction"; "disease"; "drug habit"; "fix" "a mad business"; "fixation"; "obsession"; "compulsion"; "obsessive-compulsive disorder"; "neurotic"; "manic"; "we're all crazy"; "packrats"; "a little loony"; "a genetic defect".

What's up with this? Certainly these comments by collectors are mostly in jest, but we do face a certain amount of chatter from society¹⁶ and even within our own ranks¹⁷ that labels what we do a mental illness. And, to top it off, there's COLLECTING: AN UNRULY PASSION. PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES, by Werner Muensterberger.¹⁸ This irritating book claims that collecting is always pathological, and, since Werner was a psychoanalyst, that we all have oral-anal personalities and that it's ALWAYS MOM'S FAULT.

However, to the rescue comes COLLECTING IN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE by the English Museum Studies academic Susan Pearce.¹⁹ This report of the very large Contemporary Collecting in Britain Survey agrees with previous and later survey work: a quarter to a third of adults identify themselves as collectors, and they are statistically classifiable as totally normal. The psychology literature agrees: "Collecting ...is a widely observed human behavior that is ...benign, [socially constructive], and normal."²⁰ Multiple studies find collectors feeling positive about their collecting. The word "passionate" often appears in the collecting literature. And our own experience confirms all of this. Collectors are bright, clever, functional, productive, at least as happy as noncollectors, successful, handsome (Fig. 17) or beautiful, entertaining, and lots of fun. Collecting is so hugely common that it can't be a pathology.



FIGURE 17. A part of ASAC's early English firearms group (sitting, rear), plus a shotgun-collecting guest (kneeling, front).

WHAT ABOUT HOARDING?

Some people mistakenly lump collecting and hoarding together, but they are very different. In fact, by being so different, hoarding can help us understand collecting better.

Big news! Hoarding Disorder is now an official mental illness, included in the most recent Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5, 2013). Previously considered a variant of obsessive-compulsive disorder, it has similarities to impulse control disorder (e.g. gambling, or drug and alcohol disorders) in the acquiring phase and anxiety disorder in the blocking of the disposal phase, but now, at last, has its very own diagnosis code.

Like collecting, hoarding occurs everywhere, and has been described for centuries. Fortunately, it's much less common than collecting.

HOARDING:

1. is strongly familial, and twin studies suggest a genetic component.
2. usually starts in adolescence, and is chronic and progressive.
3. involves a relationship to things that interferes with the health, happiness, and safety of self or others, the latter via clutter and unsafe environments.
4. causes distress and dysfunction: disrupted finances; poor social interactions, driving away friends and family; negative impact on basic activities of daily living.
5. features impaired, paralyzed decision making; lack of control; lives that are chaotic and disorganized.
6. Acquisition gives intense pleasure, but the mere thought of discarding gives intense psychic pain. The inability to discard is the key to hoarding.
7. Hoarding shares with collecting an attachment to objects and the imbuing of objects with stories. However,

there is no selectivity, and an overabundance of information paired with an inability to organize it.

8. Hoarding also shares with collecting the thrill of the hunt and the pleasure of acquisition, but thereafter the good feeling fades, regrets take over, there is no plan for use, and the objects can't be disposed of.

“Think about the one thing you own that you would grab first in a fire. Now imagine feeling that strongly about every single possession, including old gum wrappers”.... “Hoarding is what happens when our stuff starts to own and control us.”²¹

This image comes up online with a web search for “hoarding shoes”. However, this is an online error. Although taking up the floor of a room (probably The Shoe Room in a mansion) and in large numbers, the shoes are totally organized. Here's a quote from and about Robin Zaslo, clinical psychologist and star of the TV show “Hoarders”: “Dr. Zaslo admits to owning 175 pairs of shoes, but she said, ‘They're neatly arranged, and I have access to them all.’”²²



FIGURE 18. Many pairs of shoes, but neatly arranged.

Here's a classic hoarding image. It's not a subtle condition.



FIGURE 19. A typical hoarding scene.

REMEMBERING AN ACCUMULATOR, AND SOME BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF COLLECTING.

I spent the summer after first-year medical school in Mariposa, California, doing repertory theater with some of my college friends. One of the locals befriended us, and played a couple of small parts in our shows. His wife was a hippopotamus accumulator (Fig. 20, 21). She was not a hoarder. Although the hippos covered every free table and all shelf space, and the edges of most floors, they had enforced borders; did



FIGURE 20. An accumulatable hippo. FIGURE 21. And another.

not control central floor space, walkways, or kitchen counters; and had not taken over the beds. Like a collection, they were lovingly displayed and fit a simple theme (hippos!). They were easily recognizable to a visitor (me) as a group of related objects. There was clearly a rudimentary plan (buy or receive as a gift, in vast numbers, anything that looked like a hippo).

However, this woman was not a hippo collector. Each object did not have a unique aspect, a special meaning, or a special place in the group. She had an infantile acquiring-strategy: all hippos all the time. She was not discriminating, and she wasn't introspective. Hippos only entered the house, never exited—there was no deaccessioning, no shaping of the group to conform to a vision. There was no hippopotamus library, and no associated objects to support and display specialized hippo knowledge.

COLLECTORS AND COLLECTING: VOICES.

"An unshakable sense of what belongs and what doesn't."
Amanda Petrusich²³

"Collections are ...shrines for rules."
"Woe to the collector with a complete collection."
Tibor Fischer²⁴

"The flip side of collecting is rejecting."
Jeremy Treglown²⁵

"The collector has to make his own mark, leave his signature."

"I believe that collecting is a personal expression—the deepest part of yourself you show to others. Even if you don't know why you're collecting, someone else could tell you. The collection is a revelation of yourself."
Gerard Levy²⁶

"In the figure of the great collector the urge to conserve fuses with exhibitionism and vanity and with the fixation on one goal to the exclusion of all distracting influences."
Walter Benjamin²⁷

"A collection might be conceived as a personal world in which every object played its part. Taken together, the assembled objects could be considered a kind of portrait that reflected the collector's taste and sense of self."

"The Chamber of Wonders" display, The Walters Museum, Baltimore.

THE MAGIC OF OBJECTS

1. A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP TO OBJECTS

FREUD: "The collector... directs his surplus libido into an inanimate object: a love of things."

WALTER BENJAMIN: "A relationship to objects which does not emphasize their functional, utilitarian value."

WALTER BENJAMIN: "...the...tide of memories which surges toward any collector as he contemplates his possessions."

ORHAN PAMUK: "The power of things inheres in the memories they gather up inside them and [which they trigger in us]."²⁸

ORHAN PAMUK: "[The daily] objects, even the trash, of one age become the revered objects, collectables, museum displays of a later age."

2. A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG OBJECTS.

ORHAM PAMUK: "...the feeling of objects communicating with one another."

ORHAM PAMUK: "What I found most enthralling [in some small museums] was the way in which objects removed from the kitchens, bedrooms, and dinner tables where they had once been utilized would come together to form a new texture, a ...striking web of relationships."

"...when arranged with love and care, objects...could attain a much greater significance than they had before."²⁹

ORHAN PAMUK, ON PROVENANCE: "When a collection dissolves, the structure and relationships of its component objects dissolve as well."

[This is part of the sadness of breaking up a collection, but also gives the satisfaction of knowing that new relationships and hence new insights will form. Provenance can't slow the physical breakup of a collection, but can keep alive (for awhile) a record of its relationships.]

3. THE SPECIAL NATURE OF OBJECTS

ORHAN PAMUK: "The shamans knew that not just fire, wind, water, and forests have spirits, but objects too. The Tatars of Kazan conducted rituals on the shores of the Volga River in honor of the souls of hunting weapons, trains, and clocks."³⁰

LUIS A. MIRANDA Jr., owner of hundreds of Broadway cast recordings, about his large group of Playbill Broadway theater programs: "I don't collect them, but I find it disrespectful to throw them out."³¹

4. BEYOND OBJECTS

JEFFREY DEITCH, New York art dealer, collector, and former director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, interviewed:³²

Q: [In your own collection], is there a piece you won't sell?

A: I'm not that attached to objects. The collection is a project. The totality of it matters.

MARILYNN KARP: "Collecting is not about what you collect as much as it is about who you are."³³

DEFINITIONS OF COLLECTING

There are many, which suggests that none is very good. Here are two:

"A collection is a group of objects brought together by intention and sharing a common identity of some kind, which is re-

garded by its owner as, in some sense, special or set apart.”³⁴

“We take collecting to be the selective, active, and longitudinal acquisition, possession, and disposition of an interrelated set of differentiated objects (material things, ideas, beings, or experiences) that contribute to and derive meaning from the entity (the collection) that this set is perceived to constitute.” [A collection is more than the sum of its parts.]³⁵

THE NATURE OF COLLECTING.

The collection, and collecting, is about the collector and the process that create it. (Hence there’s something distasteful about buying a whole collection from someone else.) Physical objects are required, though sometimes ideas and personal memories are more important.

In trying, and sometimes struggling, to express the nature of collecting, its literature repeats a group of words and themes. Collecting involves systematic goals, plans, and focus; the hunt; active selection, choice, and shaping; insight and introspection; organization; plus orderly display, cataloguing, and storage. It’s a constant behavior over time, not short-term. Discarding (selling, trading) is usually an integral part of the process, though not always.

A collection requires a definable, delineated area, topic, or theme that can be expressed and discussed verbally or in writing. It’s accompanied by a literature, information, and a thought process.

COLLECTING AS A CREATIVE ACT.

In my research, here’s the most exciting idea I found: collecting can be a creative act. That’s what I strive for.

Look at this cover of an antique arms auction catalogue from November 1918. (Fig. 22.) Note that the auction house does not say that Charles Schott owned the collection, but that he “formed” it.

WALTER BOKELBERG: “To be a collector means that you have no choice if you [confront the object] of desire. You have to acquire it, if it fits into the mosaic that you are creating.”³⁶

STANLEY B. BURNS MD: “I can take the stuff [photographs] that other people throw out and make them masterpieces. I have that kind of vision.”³⁷ (Burns does this not only by deeply understanding individual objects, but by placing them into and interpreting them in a web of relationships and a context.)

SUSAN PEARCE: “Collections are sets of objects and ...an act of the imagination, ...intended to create meanings....”³⁸

I will leave you with two quotes.

The first is from the Bohemian-Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke: “Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart, and try to love the questions themselves....”³⁹

The second is from the English poet Geoffrey Hill. He was a collector of Dinky toys, though you can substitute any object. “I am certain that on a back street, in a cathedral town, there stands a shop, its windows coated in dust. Inside there are still shelves of old Dinky toys, pristine in their original boxes, and bearing their original prices.”

Here’s to each of you finding your shop.

Thanks to John Burgoyne, Craig Ross, Matt Sears, Jas van

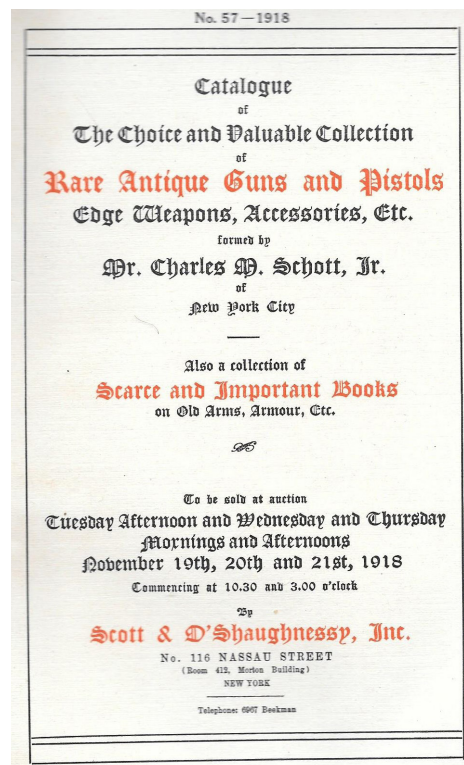


FIGURE 22. The cover of an antique arms auction catalogue from November 1918. (Image courtesy of Peter Bower.)

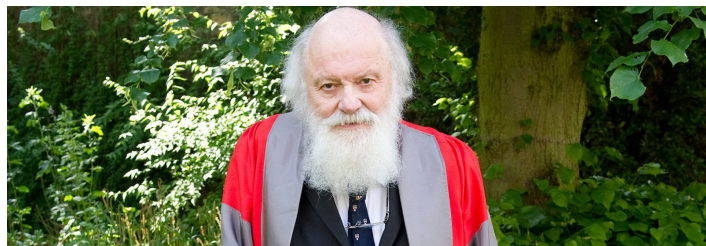


FIGURE 23. Sir Geoffrey William Hill (1932-2016).



FIGURE 24. A dinky-toy sports car.

Driel, and David Weaver for ideas, and for many entertaining discussions about this endless topic.

As always, I welcome comments and questions at mms615@yahoo.com

Note that several outrageous images from the Daytona Beach meeting talk couldn’t be included in this printed version. I’m happy to send them to you on request.

NOTES AND REFERENCES.

1. Heritage Auctions, “*The Collector’s Handbook*”, 7th Edition, 2013.
2. Herman P. Dean, “The Philosophy of Collecting”. *Bulletin of the American Society of Arms Collectors* #11, Spring 1965, pages 10-16. Hereafter, *BIBLIOGRAPHY* #22. Here’s a link to Herman Dean’s firearms collection at the Huntington

- Museum of Art, Huntington, West Virginia. It includes a “meet the collector” sub-link that tells his life story. www.hmoa.org/art/collections/herman-p-dean-firearms-collection
3. Philipp Blom, *To Have And To Hold. An Intimate History Of Collectors And Collecting*. The Overlook Press, New York, 2003 (hereafter, BIBLIOGRAPHY #5), page 233.
 4. Philip Blom, BIBLIOGRAPHY #5, page 45.
 5. Walter Benjamin, “Unpacking My Library” (essay), in *Illuminations Essays and Reflections*. (Translated by Harry Zorn). Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1968. Hereafter, BIBLIOGRAPHY #8.
 6. Susan M. Pierce, *On Collecting An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*. Routledge, London, 1995 (hereafter, BIBLIOGRAPHY #1), page 183.
 7. See www.burnsarchive.com See also the interview with Dr. Burns in *Aperture*, number 124, summer 1991 (hereafter BIBLIOGRAPHY #21), pages 36-45.
 8. Salman Akhtar, *Objects Of Our Desire. Exploring Our Intimate Connections With The Things Around Us*. Harmony Books, New York, 2005, page 40.
 9. Support for this claim comes from W. F. Mc. of South Carolina in a letter to the editor of “*The Gun Report*”, March 1992, page 12. (At that time, the magazine did not print letter writers’ full names.) The writer, a PhD, gives a bracing discussion of the economics of antique arms collecting. I can supply a scan of this entertaining letter on request.
 10. For example, see Nelson Molina’s “Treasures in the Trash Collection”, New York City Department of Sanitation: www.treehugger.com/culture/nycs-best-secret-museum-collection-rescued-trash-video-html
 11. However, you must read “The Beekeeper Joke”—see BIBLIOGRAPHY #12. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/14/magazine/letter-of-recommendation-the-beekeeper-joke.html?_r=0
 12. Check out this 12-year-old vacuum-cleaner savant, a very advanced collector: www.wimp.com/vacuumsavant/
 13. Stuart Mowbray, “Man at Arms” Volume 33 #3 (June 2011), page 8 (“Ricochet” section).
 14. *Aperture*, BIBLIOGRAPHY #21, page 16.
 15. Los Angeles Times, September 3, 2016, Section A, page 1.
 16. From the writer James Michener, found and displayed by ASAC member David Fink: “The typical collector is a male, usually unbalanced in some direction, who, if he were normal, would not need to collect odd bits and pieces. I believe that any collector suffers from some kind of mental or psychological aberration, and that his collecting is a therapy which may run into a great deal of expense but which protects his sanity and allows him to operate in other fields fairly normally.”
 17. Stuart Mowbray, “Man at Arms” Volume 33 #3 (June 2011), page 4 (“From the Editor” section).
 18. Werner Muensterberger, *Collecting: An Unruly Passion Psychological Perspectives*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1994.
 19. Susan M. Pierce, *Collecting In Contemporary Practice*. Sage Publications, London, 1998.
 20. Ashley E. Nordslettin and David Mataix-Cols, “Hoarding versus Collecting: Where Does Pathology Diverge From Play?”. *Clinical Psychology Review* 32 (2012), pages 165-176.
 21. Randy O. Frost and Gail Steketee. *Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, 2010.
 22. “The New York Times”, November 21, 2011.
 23. Amanda Petrusich, *Do Not Sell At Any Price. The Wild, Obsessive Hunt For The World’s Rarest 78 Rpm Records*. Scribner, New York, 2014.
 24. Tibor Fischer, *The Collector Collector*. Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1997, page 57.
 25. Jeremy Treglown, “The Fantastic Mr. Dahl”. “*Smithsonian*”, July-August 2016, page 53.
 26. *Aperture*, BIBLIOGRAPHY #21, page 16 and page 18.
 27. Walter Benjamin, BIBLIOGRAPHY #8.
 28. Orhan Pamuk, *The Innocence Of Objects* (translated by Ekin Oklap), Abrams, New York, 2012 (hereafter BIBLIOGRAPHY #7), page 206.
 29. Orhan Pamuk, BIBLIOGRAPHY #7, pages 51-52.
 30. Orhan Pamuk, BIBLIOGRAPHY #7, page 140.
 31. From an interview with Lin-Manuel Miranda, his son.
 32. From an interview in the Sunday New York Times Magazine, April 22, 2012, page 26.
 33. Marilyn Gelfman Karp, *In Flagrate Collecto* (caught in the act of collecting). Abrams, New York, 2006.
 34. Susan M. Pearce, BIBLIOGRAPHY #1, page 159.
 35. Susan M. Pearce, BIBLIOGRAPHY #1, page 21.
 36. *Aperture*, BIBLIOGRAPHY #21, page 4.
 37. *Aperture*, BIBLIOGRAPHY #21, page 37.
 38. Susan M. Pearce, BIBLIOGRAPHY #1, page 27.
 39. From *Letters to a Young Poet*, written 1903 and published 1929.

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1. Susan M. Pierce, *On Collecting An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*. Routledge, London, 1995.
A detailed exploration of what it means to collect, written by a (now retired) British academic in Museum Studies.
2. Susan M. Pierce, *Collecting In Contemporary Practice*. Sage Publications, London, 1998.
Discussion and conclusions of The Contemporary Collecting in Britain Survey, a large 1990’s study which showed both the widespread occurrence and the normality of collecting.

3. Werner Muensterberger, *Collecting: An Unruly Passion* Psychological Perspectives. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1994.
Written by a psychoanalyst, and exploring the [alleged] psychopathology of all collecting, this is a book I despised and yet found entertaining.
 4. William Davies King, *Collections Of Nothing*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2008.
An exploration of collecting practice, and a meditation on the psychopathology some people believe is found toward the end of its bell-curve.
 5. Philipp Blom, *To Have And To Hold. An Intimate History Of Collectors And Collecting*. The Overlook Press, New York, 2003. A good history, with comments on psychology, and with a good bibliography.
 6. Lawrence Wechsler, MR. *Wilson's Cabinet Of Wonder*. Pantheon, New York, 1995.
A discussion of the genesis and nature of The Museum of Jurassic Technology, in Los Angeles. Masquerading as a museum, this very complex and long-lived piece of performance art explores, among many things, the interface between collecting and art.
 7. Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence* (translated by Maureen Freely). Knopf, New York, 2009.
Orhan Pamuk, *The Innocence Of Objects* (translated by Ekin Oklap). Abrams, New York, 2012.
Together, these two books represent a striking work of art by this Turkish winner of the 2006 Nobel prize for literature. The first is a novel in which both collecting and the specific objects collected play a crucial, central role. The second is the catalogue of the actual, nonfictional museum in Istanbul opened by Pamuk to display the physical objects associated with the novel's characters and stories. The objects were collected and the museum was planned as the novel was written. This work raises many questions about and offers many insights into the nature of collecting.
 8. Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library" (essay), in *Illuminations* Essays and Reflections. (Translated by Harry Zorn). Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1968.
Some insightful comments on collecting.
 9. Amanda Petrusich, *Do Not Sell At Any Price. The Wild, Obsessive Hunt For The World's Rarest 78 Rpm Records*. Scribner, New York, 2014.
Details of one narrow collecting area, but with some useful general comments.
 10. Tibor Fischer, *The Collector Collector*. Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1997.
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 11. Salman Akhtar, *Objects Of Our Desire. Exploring Our Intimate Connections With The Things Around Us*. Harmony Books, New York, 2005.
An idiosyncratic take on our relationship to objects, with some insights about collecting and its psychology.
 12. David Searcy, "Letter of Recommendation: The Beekeeper Joke". The New York Times Magazine, 2/14/16.
A presentation and discussion of "the world's funniest joke", not to be missed. It celebrates the transformative power of collecting and other hobbies, while keeping them in perspective.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/14/magazine/letter-of-recommendation-the-beekeeper-joke.html? r=0>
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Tolin claims that, at the extreme, collecting shares a border with hoarding. Though the two are fundamentally different, the pathology at the edge may shed some light on the nature of the normal range.
 14. Randy O. Frost and Gail Steketee. *Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, 2010.
A more detailed and excellent look at hoarding, including a fine short discussion of collecting.
 15. Robin Zasio, *The Hoarder In You*. Rodale Books, New York, 2011.
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A good medical-journal summary.
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B. Ashley E. Nordsletten, Lorena Fernandex de la Cruz, Danielle Billotti, and David Mataix-Cols, "Finders Keepers: The Features Differentiating Hoarding Disorder From Normative Collecting." *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 54 (2013) pp. 229-237.
These linked articles discuss the clear difference between collecting and hoarding, key aspects of collecting, and the overall normality of collectors.
- ### BOOKS AND MAGAZINES THAT DESCRIBE SELECTIONS OF COLLECTORS, THEIR COLLECTIONS, AND THEIR COLLECTING PRACTICE:
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Includes Stanley Shoop's INSOLT collection ("I've Never Seen One Like That").

20. Marilyn Gelfman Karp, *In Flagrate Collecto* (caught in the act of collecting). Abrams, New York, 2006. By far the best-ever title for a book about collecting, and a wonderful exploration of collections of everyday objects.
21. *Aperture*, number 124, summer 1991.
This issue of *Aperture* (a specialty magazine of photography) describes the photograph collections of six people, and includes interviews. It gave me insight into the creative nature of collecting.

**BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ARMS
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