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《特稿》¹

在儀式及病理之間：亨利·柯戴與蒐藏²

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Between Ritual and Pathology: Henri Codet and Collecting

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摘要

由法籍醫生亨利·柯戴所撰寫，並於1921年出版的《論蒐藏》是對蒐藏分析研究有著重要貢獻之一部作品。這部柯戴為成為精神病學家而寫成的博士論文，迄今仍是希望理解蒐藏家行為之早期研究參考。本文首先呈現並描述柯戴對於西方蒐藏觀的貢獻的文獻脈絡。其中許多觀點仍應用至今，如歷史學家所謂的「古典」論以及社會學與精神分析的研究路徑。而後，文章分析此部作品的特殊觀點；最後，本文試圖分析柯戴在當代學術之顯著地位，尤其是與當代精神病學以及與博物館界的關連。

Abstract

One of the major contributions to the analysis of collecting was published in 1921 by a French doctor: Henri Codet. His *Essai sur le collectionnisme* (Essay on Collecting) was written as a PhD dissertation to become a psychiatrist (Codet, 1921). It remains a reference for those interested in the early efforts to understand the collector's behaviour. In this article I would like first to present and describe Codet's essay in the context of the literatures devoted to collecting in the West. Several perspectives were adopted in these literatures, such as the "classical" point of view of the historian, but also the sociological and psychoanalytical approaches. I will then analyze the particular content of this essay. Lastly, I will attempt to analyze Codet's position in the light of contemporary literatures, especially the one linked to modern psychiatrics, but also its relations to the museum world.

Preface

Collecting and collectors generally appear to be particularly appreciated in Western societies. Museums regularly pay them tribute - in most cases museum's collections could not have been put together without the help of collectors and many books are published to glorify them (Benhamou-Huet et al., 2008; Fugier, 2012; Alseberg et al., 2004; Pagé, 1995; Cabanne, 2002, 2004). This general appreciation for the collectors, however, is a relatively recent phenomenon and has not always existed. Collectors, in the description of Honoré de Balzac, appear more complex (Mozet, 2001; Biasi, 1980); two centuries before Balzac, La Bruyère castigated the obsessions of the print amateur:

“I have everything [of Jacques] Callot, except one [engraving], which is not truly among his best works, on the contrary it is a lesser one, but that would complete my collection of Callot: I have worked for twenty years to find this print, and I despair of succeeding...” (La Bruyère, 1688).

In the nineteenth century, the situation changed: *“Formerly society ridiculed eminent people like Sommerard and Sauvageot [two famous French collectors]; then they became recognized and fashionable,”* wrote Bonnaffé in 1881. As a person, the collector is not always popular: he is praised when he decides to donate his research and collection to the community by offering it to a museum; however, people now and then also criticize collector's strange habits that sometimes appear burdensome for those who live with him.

The history of collecting and collectors cannot be separated from that of museums, nor can it from the history of art and sciences. Very quickly, collections of objects come to be regarded as a valuable tool for both art historians and naturalists to advance their knowledge. Could Vasari write his *Vite* without his collection of drawings, which was the result of decades of collecting?

(Caliandro, 1999) And we know how important repositories and collections were first for the learned societies, such as the British Royal Society in London, or the Académie des Sciences in Paris (Mairesse, 2012).

One of the major contributions to the analysis of the behaviour of collecting was published in 1921 by Henri Codet, a French doctor. His *Essai sur le collectionnisme* (Essay on Collecting) was written as a PhD dissertation for the psychiatrist credential (Codet, 1921). The author was born in 1889 and died in a car accident at the age of fifty. He did not devote further research to collecting, which appeared to him as the manifestation of a healthy mind. A student of Professor Henri Claude, he became interested in psychoanalysis and then worked with Edouard Pichon and Adrien Borel (who analyzed him). He became a founding member of the Paris Psychoanalytic Society in 1927, but he seemed not to have been too close to Freud, and was closer to the “French” (or nationalist) position of Edouard Pichon and René Laforgue. Later, Codet was involved in the journal *Psychiatric evolution* (Codet, 1926; Bourgeron, 1997; Mijolla, 2010).

The *Essay on Collecting*, written before Codet’s research on psychoanalysis, is relatively short (102 pages) but remains a reference for those interested in the early efforts to understand the collector’s behaviour. It is indeed from a psychiatric point of view that Codet proposes to analyze the collector, thus Codet did not hesitate to evoke the pathological aspects of this specific activity. In this article I would like first to present Codet’s essay in the context of the literatures devoted to collecting in the West. Then I will analyze the particular content of this essay, and finally I will attempt to analyze Codet’s position in the light of contemporary literatures.

Approach to collecting

For a long time, the study of collecting occupied an ancillary position in the biographies of famous persons of antiquity (*Caesar, Verres, Cicero*) or of eminent people in more modern times (*Lorenzo de Medici, Richelieu, Pierre or Catherine the Great*). This long-standing tradition, however, led during the nineteenth century to a specific literature presenting the great figureheads of collecting. For example, Edmond Bonnaffé wrote books about the great collectors of ancient Rome and Old France (*ancien régime*) (Bonnaffe, 1867, 1873). This tradition has continued to the present, putting more emphasis on objects or works collected than on the character of the collectors (however, some writers already enjoyed pointing out the bizarre aspects of some of the collectors' behaviour) (Cabanne, 2002, 2004; Winspeare, 2001; Alsop, 1982).

Meanwhile, the story or description of collecting and collections went along hand in hand with the development of the museum phenomenon itself. Samuel Quiccheberg, author of the first treatise on museology (1565) presented in his book, after Hendrik Goltzius, the very first list of cabinets of curiosities he knew, while describing the merits of their authors (Roth, 2000). The activity of collecting is at the heart of the development of museums: until the late nineteenth century, museography, while focusing on the content of the collections, is defined as the description of museums or of private collections (Neickel, 1727; Reinach, 1897). Collecting, in this perspective, is considered as part of the development of arts and sciences, and their history is thus intertwined with the history of those institutions that have gradually led to the emergence of these various disciplines (Klemm, 1838).

It is especially from the second half of the twentieth century that we see the emergence of studies which try to understand more precisely the particular nature of the collection phenomenon. Alma Wittlin, who prepared her PhD on the

history of museums, recognized five different reasons for people building collections: economic hoarding (collecting to protect against the hazards of life), social prestige (collecting to show wealth and consolidate social status), magic power (collecting amulets or miraculous objects - relics of saints, unicorn horns, bezoars - to protect oneself against fate or poisons), expression of group loyalty (collecting *militaria* or relics from a football club), and stimulation of curiosity and inquiry (collecting stamps for children, or documents while preparing a research) (Wittlin, 1949).

From a more theoretical point of view, historian Krzysztof Pomian analyzes the principle of collection as the willingness to seek and present special channels leading to the invisible (what cannot be seen because it is beyond people's perception: death, for example, but also distant and unfamiliar lands). These objects are essentially symbolic goods, and if they may have a use or an exchange value, the reason why they are acquired and preserved lies essentially on what they mean (Pomian defines them as *sémiophores*) (Pomian, 1987). The history of collections and collectors has largely continued to the present, particularly through monographs of collections or of their collectors. Different authors also present synthetic studies by combining several approaches and reprints of sources (Pearce & Martin, 2002; Pearce, 1997, 1999).

If the approaches to collecting that are focused on the collections or on the achievements of the collector still dominate the academic or literary studies, other routes have gradually emerged, especially since the appearance of "new" disciplines (in the beginning of the 20th century), such as psychology and sociology. Psychology and, more generally, the behaviour of collectors, have never failed to elicit comments and sometimes sarcastic analyses. During the nineteenth century, the world of bibliophiles gave rise to several studies on possible abuses of book collecting, coined as *bibliomania* (Asselineau, 1875;

Nodier, 1893). The term “collector psychology” appears at the end of the nineteenth century in an attempt to describe - often quite positively - the collector’s feelings about his collection and towards other collectors (Hubbard, 1897). One of the most successful books edited about that topic, at the beginning of the century, *psychologie des kunstsammelns*, was written by Adolph Donath (Donath, 1917). The author, who trained with Wilhelm von Bode, wanted to explore the relationship between man and art, especially among artists and collectors. This essay is not written by a psychologist but by a passionate art lover, and Donath tried to grasp the specific attraction felt by the collector to the art object and the awakening of the “*will to possess*” (Bensimon, 2000). Several books continued to be written and published in the same spirit, trying to present a “*psychology of collectors*”; but the main focus of these publications is rather on the anecdotes about their habits - their weird and strange collections. Some of these publications - such as the one written by Maurice Rheims - quoted Codet (Bearn, 1945; Rheims, 1959).

The tradition and academic field to which Codet belongs is that of psychiatry, which is based on medical references and upholds medical points of view. From the beginning, Codet considers collecting from a pathological perspective. Codet is not the first to be interested in this subject; since its early development in the late nineteenth century, Italian psychiatrists (Sancte De Sanctis or Giovanni Mingazzini) were interested in the pathological behaviour of collecting. However, this type of literature mostly insists on the difference between “classic” and “pathological” collecting, without mentioning the issue of possible overlapping between the two worlds. I will discuss this issue at length after presenting the work of Codet, which falls at the cross roads of several specific trends relating to psychology and to psychoanalysis. We know the formula for psychoanalysis is initiated by Freud. Codet would be deeply interested in Freud’s views after he wrote his thesis, but did not really address the

subject of collecting furthermore.

Curiously, Freud, who was himself an avid collector, wrote very little about collecting (Moreau Ricaud, 2011). Some of his followers, however, did not hesitate to examine the activity of the master and, more generally, the principle of collections, especially from the angle of the pleasures of possession and anal retention (Van Gijseghem, 1985; Bourgeron, 1981). The psychologist Werner Muensterberger, however, whose book was translated into several languages, follows another path to try to understand the phenomenon of collecting. Muensterberger, who describes the activities of world famous collectors (Cosimo de 'Medici, Jean de Berry, Rudolf II, Thomas Phillipps, Balzac) based his analysis on the theory of the transitional or comfort object, developed in the 1940s by Winnicott (the transitional object, the blanket, allows babies to compensate for the absence and the lack of their mother) (Muensterberger, 1996; Winnicott, 2010).

Others prefer to understand the personality of the collector as a social phenomenon, either by a sociological survey or by a broader analysis integrating collecting within the consumer society. The first alternative was particularly taken by Raymonde Moulin, author of several books on the French art market; Moulin's study was one of the first sociological surveys into the world of collectors (Moulin, 1967, 1992). This approach would be followed by several other studies, some of which resulted in exhibitions such as the one held by the Museum of Ethnography of Neuchâtel (Hainard and Kaer, 1982; Mercier, 2012). Several authors have also stressed more generally on the function of the collector in contemporary (consumer) society. Jean Baudrillard, in his famous essay, explains the symbolic function of the collection, while Russell Belk, after an international survey, discusses the links between the collection, conspicuous consumption and problems (but also profits) generated by collections

(Baudrillard, 1968; Belk, 1995).

Henry Codet's essay

Codet does not analyze collecting as a sociologist or a historian but as a physician. He tries to determine whether the psychological foundations of collecting are the same as those that define illnesses - with collecting symptoms - that could be observed at the asylum. According to his study, the doctor believed that he discovered "*real differences between the essence of a taste for collections and what is known as the collecting of the insane*" (Codet, 1921: 7). Nevertheless, if Codet's survey distinguishes between collecting and the pathologies linked to collection activities, he does not hesitate to present a very tough view of the vagaries of collecting.

Codet recognizes four characteristics among collectors that he considers as necessary (and sufficient) conditions for collecting: the spirit of ownership, the need for spontaneous or disinterested activities, a sense of competition and a propensity to classify. Firstly, the spirit of ownership or possessiveness looks like a very old trend - accumulation in times of scarcity - but in this case, it looks as a luxury activity (rather than necessities). It appears to the collector as an expansion of his personality, or as Baudrillard puts it, "*you always collect yourself*" (1968: 125). If the need for possessions can be lessened, the desire for possession is never fully satisfied, forever urging collectors to continue their conquests. Secondly, the collector, going about his activity, encounters another need inherent to human nature: the need for a spontaneous activity. Whether he is idle or busy, the collector's mental activity is always solicited, and his doings are often like a sport, sometimes by daily walks in his favourite places: flea markets, auction houses, shops, etc. A necessary but pleasant passion: "*To sum up, this is a true gaming activity, which has no other purpose than to express itself*" (Codet,

1921: 12). Collecting is like a game that also - and unlike many other hobbies - can be done almost indefinitely; the collector never finishes his collection, which is excellent for stimulating intellectual faculties. Thirdly, emulation, or the need to compare oneself to others, encourages the collector to excel. His self-esteem conditions the search for the most remarkable objects, which will enhance the value of the collection (and the collector's fame). Finally, the fourth feature of collecting is the tendency for classifications, a necessary condition for a cluster of objects to be transformed into collection. It is this specific feature, namely the ability to insert the object into a series, that determines the value of the object and that of the collection. These four traits led Codet to identify the characteristics required to develop the activity of collecting.

As a habit, collecting is most often developed during childhood and is usually followed by a period of latency, which can emerge again in adulthood, becoming more or less extensive.

“Firstly, it is an elective interest, more or less intense, and rather intellectual. Habits, exterior and personal suggestions, will give it increasing importance and we will see the development of an idea and a form of quite simply an important activity. It can remain this way indefinitely, which is not uncommon. But often it turns into a predominant extension, it becomes necessary for the mind, enriches emotional responses and directs the acts” (Codet, 1921: 33).

It is in this context that collecting can become a deep addiction as strong as alcoholism, but it also brings about the same state as a lover. According to Codet, we can find similarities to the same emotional reactions and the same pleasure of contemplation of the beloved (object or person). In this state the lover experiences a succession of moments of euphoria and disappointments (an object that could not be acquired). The collection gradually personifies in the beloved

object. The closer the collector comes to the desired objects, the more he socially moves away from his fellows. The psychiatrist assumes that rather than considering that passion grows at the expense of others, it is built on grounds focused only on egocentrism. Codet analyzes the collecting of museum curators in the same perspective, as we will see it later.

Codet carefully separates the collector from other similar personality types: the miser, the speculator, the parvenu, the amateur (who pursues intellectual satisfaction) and the curious (who collects the strange and the rare). However, he develops interesting parallels of personality types he considers in the neighbourhood of collectors, such as Don Juan (the collector of women), and also in sports (collector of medals and performances), or with tourists who “*see all while recording*” and “*share the same quick and careful gaze at all performances provided by their displacement and retain, without selection, material or immaterial evidence of their wanderings*” (Codet, 1921: 59). Codet was not yet aware of the current behaviour of tourists, cameras in front of their nose, whose actions further strengthen the relevance of his analysis. Scholarship and scientific activities are also, for Codet, a similar form of collecting: we can observe the same emulation practices and the importance of classifications, etc. Creating databases is actually one of the basic practices of modern science (as Francis Bacon already demonstrated in the late sixteenth century).

Codet stresses the emotional character that collecting can take. To his mind, this behaviour differs from mental diseases with similar features - which he calls monomaniac collecting or *collectionnomania*. As a conclusion for the first part of his essay, the collector’s activity is presented as developing in healthy bodies and is adjacent to the intellectual momentum for the scientist or muscular exercises for the sportsman. “*As a result, collecting, far from necessarily representing a mental defect, is a form of activity which in some cases, may become a particular*

symptom in the middle of a more general disharmony” (Codet, 1927: 6). *Collectionnomania*, on the other hand, is similar for the psychiatrist to defective mental state. Very close to the collection practices are found in *oniomania* and compulsive shoppers (or shopaholic), who buy compulsively and indiscriminately. The kleptomaniac steals and accumulates, but without classification. Fetishism can sometimes be extremely close to collecting. Similarly, the miser and the collector - at a very advanced stage of their passion - have similar behaviours. In the same perspective, Codet questioned the alienated behaviour from his time, studied in asylums, of alienated persons who collect various objects lying around and stuff their pockets. Such cases for Codet do not fall in collecting habits but of a pseudo-collecting activity.

Collecting, pathologies and museums

The last part of the book, which Codet devoted to the insane, is clearly distinguishable from others. The cases presented are mainly derived from studies of patients housed in psychiatric institutions (Bicetre Hospital, led by Dr. Vurpas & Dr. Maillard) and not in their original setting (at home). The syndrome of “*pseudo-collecting*”, as described by Codet, who notes that so far they have been just analyzed, appears in attenuated forms. In this context Codet does not examine (but a few cases have been the subject of study) patients with compulsive collecting habits, residing at home and literally buried under their possessions.

It was probably after the Second World War, with the development of the consumer society - and particularly with the rise of the issue of waste management - that compulsive collecting comes to light. A specific news story comes to mind: the discovery, in New York in 1947, of the bodies of the two Collyer brothers, buried in their home on upper 5th Avenue in Harlem, under

more than 130 tons of objects and trash. The case was an uproar in the press and would subsequently be discussed in many books (Lidz, 2003). Initially it was apparently exceptional, but this phenomenon seems to occur more often in the late twentieth century. The latest developments in psychiatry address more specifically this issue of collecting (Rapoport, 1991). On the one hand, this behaviour started to be classified as an obsessive compulsive personality disorder (OCPD) whose characteristics are similar to anal retention, the collecting of objects approaching that of those who are interested in money, since both allow accumulation, reassurance and authority (Ey, Bernard & Brisset, 1989). This analysis is also given by Bernard Deloche to evoke the figure of the curator (Deloche, 1985). But the activity of messy and compulsive collecting, called hoarding disorder or compulsive hoarding, can also be classified as a symptom of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). The study of these patients in this category, the most spectacular - photos of houses of compulsive hoarders are often transformed into vast garbage dumps and filled from floor to ceiling (Mertenat & Girardin, 2009) - has given rise to an abundant literature, especially in order to help those who are affected and their families (Tolin, Frost & Steketee, 2004; Frost & Steketee, 2011; O'Connor, St Pierre-Delorme & Kosezgi, 2012). Most hoarders indeed focus primarily on common objects, old clothes, free newspapers or garbage; a kind of inner imperative is keeping them from throwing anything away. Psychiatrists who have addressed these issues insist on showing the significant differences between these disorders and other socially valued behaviours such as collecting.

The fifth and latest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM -5), the “bible” of American psychiatric diagnosis, was recently published (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). It recognizes compulsive hoarding, or more precisely hoarding disorder (HD), as a specific trouble. The latter, which describes the symptoms of hoarders mentioned above,

is included in the chapter on obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). The symptoms discussed are (1) a difficulty to part with one's possessions, (2) the problem is related to a desire to "save" and the fear of disappearing. (3) What results is the accumulation of a large number of objects filling all parts of the house. (4) These symptoms cause distress to the person and affect social relationships, (5) they are not due to a medical condition, or (6) to another mental disorder (obsession in the case of OCD, etc.). The issue of collecting is indeed not only limited to hoarding: the phenomenon can be associated, as did Codet, with other disorders such as kleptomania, compulsive shopping or fetishism, which belong to the category of disorders of habit and impulse (impulse-control disorders, or ICD) (Hollander & Stein, 2006). Obsessive-compulsive personality disorders (OCPD), which are part of personality disorders, are related to symptoms of control and perfectionism and raise also issues of collecting. But habits of collecting can also sometimes be found in activities related to other conditions, such as bipolar disorder, a "serial-collector" who was recently diagnosed as a bipolar branch wrote his amazing story within the contemporary art world (Albou, 2010).

This new version of the DSM sparked many protests and reactions (Nordsletten & Mataix, 2012). The appearance of the "hoarding disorder" category also led to several responses, not only regarding the relations between the categories mentioned above, but also concerning the boundaries between the traditional activity of collecting and collecting as a pathology. After analyzing the match between the six criteria identified by the DSM to characterize disorders accumulation and the literatures on collecting, Nordsletten and Mataix-Cols (2012) conclude that a number of "extreme" collectors (whose activity is much superior to the norm) could be diagnosed as hoarders, according to the DSM criteria. If, according to these authors, about 30% of the population develops collecting activities and about 2.5% of the population develops symptoms of

accumulation disorders, an undetermined percentage of extreme collectors can probably be found in both categories. A tacit border had been always maintained between “*healthy collectors*” and pathological behaviours. Actually, it could be more porous upon closer examination. According to this logic, the activity of collectors could be rather presented as a *continuum* from healthy and more or less playful behaviour, as evoked by Codet, to a serious mental disorder.

But where is the border? When does the behaviour of a collector present enough characteristics to be considered as a pathological case? The question is not settled, and at first glance, it also challenges the medical community. At this stage, it is necessary to emphasize the link between collecting and museums, in order to better understand the stakes of this debate for the museum community. As a human activity, collecting and the museum sector intersects in two different ways. On the one hand, many collections - pathological or not - are given to or acquired by museums, such as numerous shoe and other weird museums (created by fetishists), or famous collectors, like Sauvageot who inspired the *Cousin Pons* of the French writer Honoré de Balzac, and were presented at the time as socially on the borderline of the society, but whose work was celebrated by entering the collection of the Louvre. The excessive behaviour of Thomas Phillipps, the largest collector of manuscripts in the world, has not prevented many world famous libraries from purchasing books collected by him (Muensterberger, 1996; Blom, 2002). On the other hand, the activities of the museum collection itself need to be examined more closely. If the normal and conventional operation of museums, based on the acquisition of collections, can be compared with the “*healthy*” activity of the collector, it could be also pointed that some “*deviant*” museums exist, crushed by possessions they are no longer able to manage (to maintain the inventory and to preserve adequately). Of course, most classic establishments will never face such problems. But how could we analyze the activity of many small establishments, especially those devoted to rural crafts or

linked to evidence of the consumer society? Moreover, many of the symptoms described by DSM, such as the persistent difficulty of people to be separated from their possessions, are reminiscent of the many debates on the inalienability of collections (Mairesse, 2009).

Conclusion

Henri Codet is among one of the very first psychiatrists to have devoted part of his research to the phenomenon of collecting. If some of his predecessors had already studied pathological behaviours, the French scientist completed a first ever comprehensive study of the phenomenon of collecting, equating the “classic” activity of collecting and the pathological one. Much of the analysis is based on the study of collectors, and Codet did not hesitate to evoke it through the collector’s consuming passion, while noting some interesting similarities between collecting and other types of activities in everyday life, such as tourism, sport or scientific research. However, his research led him to conclude that collecting is different from what he called the “pseudo-collecting” of the insane.

Are such conclusions still valid? In the space of almost a century, medical research, especially the field of psychiatry, have considerably changed, and the categories used before appear very much outdated. Collecting disorders - including (compulsive) hoarding - have been well studied in recent years: many studies appeared and, most recently, a special entry was published in the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. The criteria set for the diagnosis of this disorder (HD or Hoarding disorder) evoke, even more directly than before, the difficulty of establishing boundaries between “healthy” collecting and pathological behaviours.

This question challenges museums, which have become one of the major

institutions of our society today and are also specialized in collecting material objects. Are these pathological features endorsed by some museums when they accept some of the work of hoarders in their collections? Do some museums follow such practices that are closer to pathological collecting than “normal” museum management? The reader will understand how difficult it is to give in this article some examples of such a deviance, which sometimes exists in the museum world.

“Another case, rather special, is made by those who have the same joy of collecting and possessing, but not for themselves. We want to talk of curators and librarians who love their profession. For them, a curious transfer occurred, and the sense of ownership moved. Instead of trying to attach the collection to their personality, they tend instead to assimilate with it. In the end, taste and passion can grow and evolve among the owners” (Codet, 1921: 51).

The analysis of Codet makes us remember that museums are primarily run by human beings, and these humans can sometimes also be subject to curious pathologies, such as hoarding disorders.

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