

Possessed by Possessions?



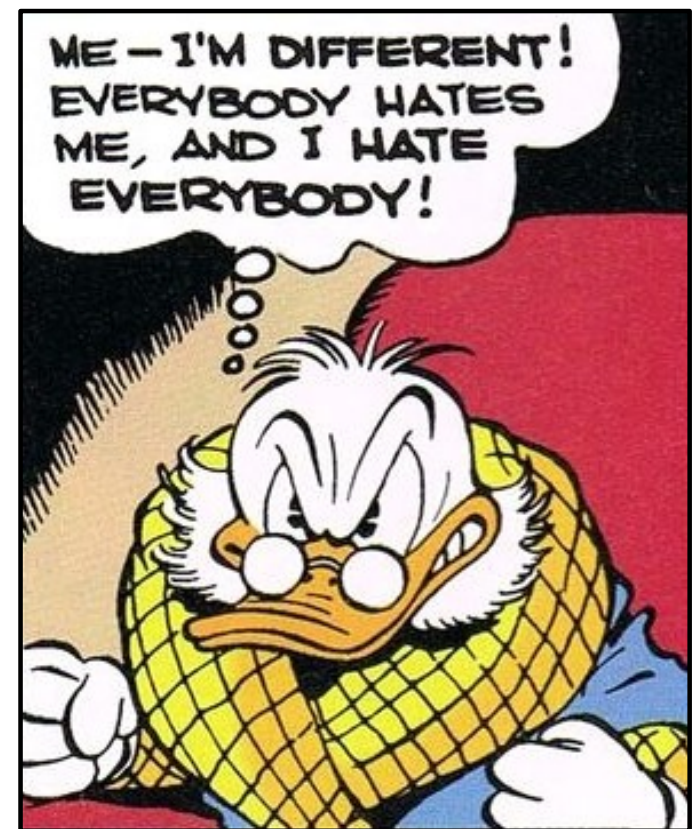
fighting against the Uncle Scrooge syndrome

«The power of objects regulates our lives in this faltering era, they become the consolation capable of absorbing all our anxieties about time and death».

This was the thinking of the French sociologist Baudrillard, who continues the argument on *homosocial rivalry*:

«The passion for objects climaxes in pure jealousy. Here possession derives its fullest satisfaction from the prestige the object has for other people, and the fact that they cannot have it».

For Baudrillard collecting is basically a longing to prohibit any sharing of one's objects.



But, of course, not everybody acts in the same manner and many do not think that objects are the narcissistic equivalent of oneself: Freud was an avid collector, but his collecting aspired to achieve a public and social function. His collection was not a sequestered treasure, but was viewable by others.

Freud's impulse to treat his collection as "public" was perhaps inspired by the attitudes of mid-19th century scientific collectors.

At the time many researchers exchanged specimens and ideas with other collectors; in order to acquire, one first had to give.

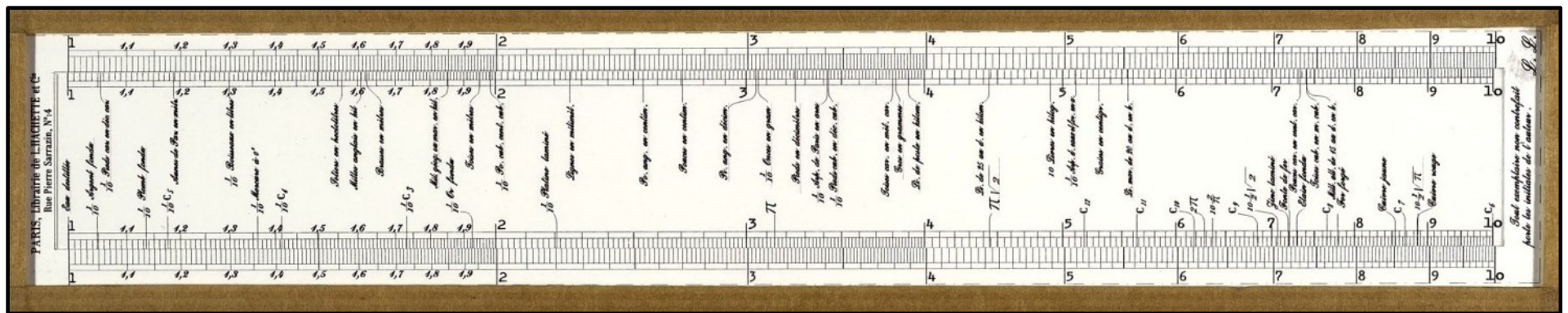


A collector who only collects to satisfy a thirst for possession, without sharing his or her treasures, is socially useless. I know the problem; I started exhibiting just to fight my attitude of being selfish and jealous of my toys. At the beginning seeing people touching my collection was terrible, but later I found this experience a great occasion of personal growth.



Luckily, many collectors give excellent examples of this healthy mentality, presenting their collections on-line with documentation often otherwise unedited, but now available to all. This is a job that goes beyond the mere egoistic collecting, but rather true scientific research.

All artifacts, before being old and precious, became just obsolete and are thrown away. By preserving them, the collector becomes the curator of the material culture: this is the reconstruction project of a 1852 slide rule.



Operating in this way, the joy of providing a collection gives us not only the whim of a moment, but also leaves something solid and valuable to the whole community.

A museum of history would not be complete without a display of dinosaur bones.

It would also be incomplete without a display of old calculating devices, for these are the fossils of today!



Then donate, to ensure the future of your calculators: a dispersed collection is a sad end for your life's passion.