phylum of connection between micro and macro scales of evolution, where an individual species is always traversed by micro levels of variations, which are sources of its own potential mutation. Here difference does not only entail collective differentiation but processes of continual transmutation, i.e. mutations emerging in the middle zone of connection, the phase space of transition between one order of difference to another. In this sense, classifications can become rhizomatic mappings of self-organizing structures open to their own potential mutation on a contagious plane of transition across evolutionary scales.

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The Collection

Couze Venn

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In the novel *The Collector*, John Fowles tells the story of a man who moves from collecting and preserving butterflies to 'capturing' and 'preserving' women. In this slippage from the 'normal' to the pathological, the man adapts techniques and knowledges that follow the same logic underlying the process of constitution of the collection generally speaking. In associating collecting with power, domination, the erotic, excess, and, at the extreme, with pathological compulsion and repetition, the tale takes us away from the comforting picture of the collector as the devoted and patient searcher for expert knowledge to reveal the intimate connection between cognition and affective economy.

In a different vein, Benjamin's reflections on the collector bring out another side of this connection, specifically when be makes visible the fact that the rehabilitation of the obsolete object for pleasure that motivates the collector rescues the object from the flight into the oblivion of the past to which it is condemned by the proliferation of objects in modern consumer culture. The collector thus amasses the past, her own and the community's, gathering it for a rebirth to the present that at the same time renews a subjective link with the past and rescues, or wishes to rescue, a loss.

Underneath the search for knowledge we find the territory of the unknown: secret knowledges, unavowed pleasures, and their mysterious affinities. The thirst for knowledge, after all, constantly threatens to engulf those who cannot be satisfied with the incomplete and the mundane, those who recognize the abyss of ignorance that lies under every display of certainty, and who must therefore go in search for the lost object of a (usually disavowed) desire. Such longings betray the relation to identity and belonging, and thus, to being, so that knowing, being and desiring are seen to form a triptych repeating at another level the co-relations of truth, goodness and beauty. They are driven by impulses and yearnings that have conditioned the assembling of most of the collections that today establish a monument to past efforts to gather together knowledge of the world and its treasury of objects and deeds. We are drawn to them today to learn and to be amazed. But they each have a tale to tell that reveals much more about modern culture and subjectivities than meets the eye: tales that enable one to rewrite the history of the concept in such a way as to bring to light the relation of knowledge and power, of reason and passion; at the same time, these accounts bring into view the relation of culture to what Heidegger called the ordering of the orderable.

It is this question of the relation of order and culture that I will principally address, on the grounds that every order assumes a view of a whole world, and a way of life, whether that be the picture of species as related to each other according to the metaphor of a tree – as in one of Darwin's early models of speciation – or of human 'races' related in terms of a linear model of development that places Europeans at the forefront and grades others according to the European idealization of itself which is intrinsic to this imaginary.

Perhaps the first question to address is that of what makes a collection a collection. We know there exist innumerable collections about every manner of object, from bus tickets to stamps, from paintings to animal species; they ubiquitously appear in museums, libraries, art galleries, archives, zoos, scientific laboratories as well as in private homes. One may even loosely refer to the books in one's own library as a collection, especially if they have been gathered in terms of specific categories or topics. The immediate problem concerns the approach that would enable one to speak in general terms about the collection as a category. The broader context here is of course that of locating the collection as a meta-category in the mechanisms and processes whereby the knowledge that we take to be authoritative has been produced in the modern period. However, if the term is to have any usefulness beyond reference to a heap of objects brought together in one place, it must at the very least indicate the attempt to classify according to a rule of sameness or similitude, for instance, a butterfly collection, and a rule of difference, for example, which insect does not count as a butterfly, but is a moth or a fly.

So, are we to assume that rules already exist that enable one to select amongst objects to be included in a collection those that show a similarity according to more or less clearly defined categories? Yet, when one considers a collection like that of Darwin's barnacles, or his beetles, one finds that the labour of establishing the collection itself involved developing tools and concepts for determining which item belonged to the category. A dynamic relationship existed therefore in this case between the process of collecting and the process of classification; new knowledge emerged out of that processual dynamic, the one operating as condition of possibility for the other.

Does the same apply to collections involving different kinds of objects, say, stamps, or do most collections arise from already well established categories and practices? And what work of classification occurs in the process of producing a collection? For example, a stamp collection is not simply a large bundle of stamps thrown together, but is made up of separate entries determined by reference to countries and periods or value and so on. Similarly, a zoo, as a collection of animal species, would be arranged according to considerations of place and species and habitat. In other words, an ordering of the objects is involved in all cases. Today, collections for display are increasingly rearranged according to themes that curators and the managers of the culture industry decide will entice the spectator, so that the question of order answers different imperatives than a respect for epistemological protocols, an interest

in historical authenticity or the search for adequacy from the point of view of categorical representation.

Now the question of order connects in a very direct and central way to, on the one hand, the idea of the knowable and orderable, and, on the other hand, to a world view. Collections find a place within this epistemological framing, not in every instance lending support to its logic, but providing enough evidence to enable one to interrogate the collection from the point of view of the meta-categories operating to constitute the modern architecture of knowledge.

To begin with, I will consider a case fairly typical of the process of emergence of collections. It is that of the collection of prints that the British film critic and writer Alexander Walker put together from the 1960s that he bequeathed to the British Museum. Here is an example of the individual connoisseur driven by whatever obsessions and enthusiasms, guided by his own flair and eye for the exceptional or the representative – of style and period, and so on – acquiring what he liked or could, all the while balancing his own acuity with the advice of experts, to produce what is now regarded as an incomparable collection of prints, not least because it gives us a trace of the shifts in style in print since the First World War, a history that interested Walker. It has now joined many other collections to be part of the public treasury and archive of artworks. The correlations of order, classification, authority, knowledge and pleasure in the emergence of collections are played out at different levels in the Walker collection, circumscribing an arena in which are intertwined the private and the public touching on the economy, aesthetics, biography and memory.

To bring out other facets of the processual dynamic I noted earlier, let us turn once more to Darwin's collection of beetles and barnacles. We know that in amassing these collections Darwin corresponded with scientists and amateurs all over the world, his task made possible because of the existence of the British Empire, so that the latter must be regarded as a vital condition of possibility for the theory of evolution (Venn, 1982). It is a (largely ignored) fact that the colonial empires had consciously put in place apparatuses and networks of communication and agencies to make possible the formation of communities of scientists and explorers, inter-connected through a grid of information and exchanges along which knowledge and objects could flow across the globe; they were part of an imperial governance. Such activities were supported by grants, and by an army of functionaries and local workforces facilitating the travels and maintaining the daily existence of scientists and experts of all kinds. Darwin's account of the voyages of the Beagle makes clear his utter dependence on this invisible colonial apparatus for his work as researcher. The emergence of various scientific organizations throughout Europe, such as the Geological, the Zoological and the Linnean societies in England, became the discursive sites where the discoveries and research from around the world could be communicated to an informed public; they operated as nodes for authorizing new knowledge and experts. Thus, by the 19th century, every new discovery, every variation in species, in geology, in culture and peoples could be efficiently disseminated to the scientific community in the West as well as to the furthest reaches of the European empires. Darwin's accounts of his work show how the questions that were at the forefront of his researches – about genera and type, about the set, about completion on a world scale, about difference and variation established globally – were not only central to the testing of universal rules of classification and the articulation of theory in the life sciences, but arose from the store of information and specimens that colonial administrations systematically and assiduously collected and made available. They allowed Darwin to construct a map and a model of dispersion, to examine in minute detail the matter of variation and adaptation to specific environments. The problem of natural selection already framed the whole enterprise, so that it is clear from the accounts which we have that, in establishing his collections, Darwin was driven by a compelling hunch about evolution, a thought over-determined by theories and practices in every other field he had researched: in geology, morphology, botany, natural history (Lyell, Hooker, Henslow, Lamarck, Herder), in the organic world (Hume, Lamarck, Sebright, Chambers), in language (Stewart, Smart), in aesthetics (Reynolds), in morality (Mill, Martineau); they all pointed to change and evolution rather than fixity and permanence as a universal process. Underlying the

work of establishing the collection was his idea of variation and selection occurring universally in nature, an idea arrived at well before the *Origin of Species* (1859), written as rough notes in the *Notebooks* (1837–39), and as a *Sketch* (1842); for him it revealed the fundamental condition for an explanation of the evolution of species through adaptation and inheritance. Thus, behind his obsession with collecting barnacles lay the search for the evidence for evolution and the need to build up a polemical apparatus in view of the assaults he was sure would come from the advocates of Natural Theology and creationism once his discovery was made public.

In my second example I will deal with the zoo as a collection of animals. The zoo is a European invention, developing from the menageries that the rich amassed as curiosities to impress and entertain. A genealogy of the zoo reveals the correlations between notions of social order inscribed in world views and the classification of species and their disposition in groups for the gaze of the spectator. Animals, according to Hardouin-Fugier and Beratay (2004), were a source equally of delight and terror, on the one hand appearing to show the evidence of a family resemblance in accordance with the doctrine of the 'great chain of being', on the other hand, offering the spectacle of an alien and ferocious 'other'. Both views were compatible with the location of 'man' at the apex of the system and as the unique creation with a claim to legitimate dominion over all species. In Darwinian times, as we know, the doctrine of the 'uniqueness of man', founded in the Scriptures, was fundamental in the debates about the acceptance or rejection of the theory of evolution. The debates in England often relied for evidence on the behaviour of animals kept at the London Zoo, especially the chimpanzes and other simians. Furthermore, a relation to social history is uncovered when we compare the rational disposition and the method of display of the animals in European zoos. The French designed geometric cages for the specimens and ordered them according to their interest in breeding and in the taming of nature (a rationalist logic evident also in Housmann's designs for urban spaces), while in England in the 19th-century zoos were designed within an imaginary that fitted in with the ideal of the landscaped garden – itself, of course, a different approach to the project of the control of nature: more Romantized and pastoral, closer to the affinities of land and wealth and power that a landed gentry was predisposed to sense. It should be noted, furthermore, that the relationship with colonialism, implicit all along, was explicitly recognized in the Paris 'Exposition Coloniale' of 1931, which presented the zoo as a colonial showcase displaying French dominion and expansion.

My examples may appear idiosyncratic, quite removed from the collections of works of art and cultural artefacts that are the usual fare in the typical museum or gallery. Yet when one examines the process of accumulation of such objects one finds, to begin with, the extent to which they were often acquired in the process of conquest and colonization as booty, for instance the Elgin Marbles, or trophy, for example Egyptian antiquities, or objects of curiosity for the cosmopolitan public, or as evidence of domination and superiority. The latter (occidentalist) ideology is clearly at work in the collections of bones and anatomical parts of the colonized kept in a variety of institutions in Europe and the USA, avowedly in the interest of 'science', but classified and displayed as part of establishing the superiority of the West and the 'white man'. One also finds that a large number of collections were put together to demonstrate the idea of an order or a truth in the world, to be established and diffused as knowledge amongst the general public through display. An Enlightenment cosmopolitanism lies invisibly in the background of this thirst for global knowledge, combining the imperial thrust (self-delusionally benevolent, as in Kant) of an expansive modernity with the yearning for a new order (as in Humbolt's appropriately titled *Cosmos* (1846) that Darwin read with interest). From post-Enlightenment, time, knowledge and power became more systematically bound together in the modern worlding of the world. In this way collections participate in the formation of subjects as part of the technologies of the social and through the constitution of a gaze, as I shall discuss below.

For instance, to take a typical case, what makes the Turner Collection at the Tate Gallery in London a collection is that, as opposed to a single painting of Turner, it claims to be a

representative sample of the painter's oeuvre, covering his range of themes, the shifts in style and technique, the forms he explored. The Collection is also accompanied by notes that explain and analyse the paintings by reference to the oeuvre as a whole and to painting as a form; these provide a knowledge to serve as guide, so that the viewer is educated in the 'proper' way to experience aesthetic pleasure and exercise a critical faculty at the same time.

Today, collections are increasingly deployed both as the object for a public gaze, thus, as spectacle for consumption, and to function as a pedagogical device. Although every collection is a source of knowledge, the pedagogical has often been either an incidental or an implicit element rather than an objective implicated in the design and display of the collection. Of course when commercial interest is the determining factor, commodification becomes the dominant value. Even so, a set of rules comes into play that involves expertise, namely in deciding about quality, and about what is worth exhibiting, how to organize the objects, how to market the items or the exhibition, which objects should be protected from deterioration and so on. So, what is seen as a collection is a set of objects already ordered in terms of public and/or scientific interest, or in terms of consumerist appeal to a public, or by reference to what it contributes to an idea of a nation's history or cultural heritage and so on. Clearly, power, whether as political power or as authority, plays an active part in determining what will be the content and shape of collections.

To develop the question of the relation to knowledge and to subjectivity that collections produce and enact, I want to focus on the point of view of the gaze. I mean the gaze to indicate both the sense of a subjective positioning and the sense of a framing, in the strong sense of an ordering that circumscribes a world. In cultural analysis, the idea of the gaze has been developed from Lacanian theory to apply to the spectator, as in Laura Mulvey's (1975) theorization of the positioning of the viewer constructed by the (film) text independently of the viewer. The text itself, because of the way it has been put together, and the assumptions it makes about subject positions – assumptions that themselves have determinate effects for the construction of the text – provides the positions from which it can be 'read', namely, by enabling the viewer to gain access to the 'structure of feelings' inscribed in the text and thus to follow the narration from the point of view of the narrator. There are of course counter-textual strategies for refusing particular subject positions, by bringing critical tools such as those of deconstruction to bear on the reading.

I would like to extend this notion of the gaze to refer more explicitly to the process of identification and to the epistemic subject (Venn, 2002). When applied to the case of Darwin's collections, it is clear that the viewer is meant to locate herself either in the place of 'Darwin' the scientist of universal processes, looking at the specimens from the standpoint of his perspective, inscribed in the way he classified and organized the specimens in his collections, or else in the position of the historian of science/ideas – and the curator and the archivist – informed by narratives about the theory of evolution and its place in the location of human beings in the grand scheme of things, or about what is a 'good' exhibition. Identification is performatively enacted in the process of viewing. The viewer as subject looks at the display either within the frame of reference of the scientist or within a frame that brings into visibility the Darwinian collection and his work in relation to the wider perspective of a historical framing of scientific findings and concepts. In both cases, specific subjectivities are called into play with appropriate attitudes and values.

In the example of the zoo in the 19th century, the public gaze was over-determined by the frame of reference in which Europeans located themselves as masters of the universe, in a privileged place with regard to living organisms and other 'races'. The viewer was interpellated both as the rational observer, willing to share in the great experiment of controlling nature, including the realm of animals, and as the superior, civilized being who has escaped the state of nature depicted by the specimens on display, and now has dominion over the world. Non-white spectators at the zoo would have found it difficult to identify with the gaze it constituted, given their location as inferior beings, closely related to the simians which were part of the display. Today the standpoint of habitat and concern about cruelty to and lack of respect

for animals are supposed, ideally at least, to motivate the framing of the zoo as a particular kind of space (though commercial interests have ways of subverting or by-passing such principles). The guide notes and explanations attempt to position the viewer as this concerned, responsible and democratic subject. It is reasonable to claim then that in diffusing particular kinds of knowledges and in forming subjects for such knowledges, collections operate mainly through the construction of a gaze, though the latter works effectively only in correlation with other apparatuses, for instance that of education, which prepares the subject for the practice of viewing and valuing collections in determinate ways, though clearly the subject positions or identities constituted by the gaze can be refused, provided mechanisms for such dissident disidentifications exist in the culture.

As a category, then, the collection stands at the threshold of a number of domains: it is part of technologies of the social, participating in the formation of identities and of publics, yet at the same time it functions as the visible trace intimating the invisible and haphazard history of knowledge whilst remaining as testimony to yearnings and pleasures that weave biographies into the history of communities and their deeds. Collections are monuments and archives, the repository of a past and the legacy to be preserved. They inscribe the having been of a culture, preserving it for the present and the future, so that the knowledge and the memory that it inscribes can continue to be the object of a reflection on the way of life of the collectivity. Within the context of a global knowledge, such a reflection should trigger the work of memory aligned with working through in the psychoanalytic sense, that is, aligned with a critical hermeneutics.

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Classification and Human Language

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Classification has a prehistory. Long before people were writing about classification, or listing classes, they were *doing* it, whenever they spoke.

The human propensity to classify the world is reflected universally in language, at many levels and in many ways. At its most fundamental, all languages minimally distinguish the pronouns *I* and *you*; many (if not most) languages accord special grammatical privileges to *I* and *you*, opposed to the rest of the world, and yet others put the dividing line somewhere else, maybe including dogs but excluding insects in a privileged 'human and most animate' category. Regardless of where the line between 'privileged' and 'less privileged' lies, the