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Cabinets of Transgression: Collecting and Arranging Hollywood Images

Abstract

Media scholarship has recently exploded with analyses of fans and fan behavior. In terms of starting to come to some understanding of actual media effects as well as grappling with potentials for individual and social change through media use, this upsurge in research is great. What I wish to do in this essay is to use the cases of three collectors to complicate an initially sketchy picture of one aspect of fan behavior. The places of cinema within the everyday lives of individuals are vast; consequently, explanations for the meaning and uses of cinema need to respond to that diversity. The three collectors whom I will examine (and only in brief terms at that) all collected cinema star materials: Carl Van Vechten, Joseph Cornell, and Jane Smoot. However, their practices of collecting and their methods of preserving those materials vary greatly and exemplify three diverse ways of asserting themselves in relation to their objects of fandom. To begin to comprehend the significance of these residues of cinema in the everyday lives of people requires respect for potential differences and will aid scholarship in moving to general conclusions about the functions of fandom for individuals and within social formations.

Key Words: Collecting Theories and Practices; Film Fandom and Everyday Life; The Consumption of Star Images; Archival Research.

Collecting as a Field of Study

As a part of cultural studies, the study of collecting has recently generated much attention. In media studies, for example, John Fiske writes, 'collecting is also important in fan culture, but it tends to be inclusive rather than exclusive.'^[1] In other words, the collector's goal is 'as many as possible' rather than the quality of the item. Fiske's observation is incisive, but I would argue that it is too sweeping as a description to cover the actual variety of practices of collecting that exist. Moreover, Fiske envisions the act as a specific social practice -- the accumulation of 'cultural capital' that may yield eventually

some economic gains; however, his focus on one type of consumption overshadows the productive aspect of collecting that most scholars now see. I prefer the definition of collecting to be one offered by Michael Camille who views collecting less as a pathology and more as “a socially creative and recuperative act.”^[2]

Research on collecting now traces the act back to the pre-historical ritual of creating ‘hoards, graves and shrines.’ The ritual of including items at these sites may be viewed as social and political gestures involving statements of lateral kinship relations as well as hierarchies stating the creator’s relation to the gods (an adequate accumulation offered to the gods indicated the giver’s closeness to the deities). Museums as physical sites of accumulated goods available to viewing by at least portions of the populace exist from the third century B.C.; churches also became the community location of relics, with access controlled by religious authorities.^[3]

A more secular educational function augments the social and political functions of early collections. Susan Pearce and Ken Arnold locate the ‘memory theatre’ of Guilio Camillo Delminio in the 1500s as a significant cultural item. Camillo’s “theatre” was a wooden structure, stuffed full of meaningful images and words, which was shown first in Venice and then copied in Paris.^[4] The theater’s function was educational; it was a propaedeutical instrument for efficient learning and memorization. As well, Pearce and Arnold note that, like modern museums, the theater was supposed to be experienced in a particular order. This box structure reoccurs through the Renaissance practice of putting collections into cabinets, described by Anthony Alan Shelton as ‘cabinets of transgression’ for their potential oddity in terms of the act of collecting as well as for what was saved.^[5] In fact, early modern collections echo that practice in the first of their names for these containers: in German, ‘Kammer’ (room or chamber); in Italian, ‘studio,’ ‘galleria,’ ‘museo’; in England, ‘cabinet’ (often ‘cabinet of curiosities’ or ‘of rarities’).^[6]

While the church and political authorities might be collectors of high prestige items such as art and statues, from the mid 1600s on in England, wealthy but less politically well situated individuals collected for their cabinets of curiosities ‘coins, scientific instruments, minerals, medals, . . . plants,’ and so on.^[7] These cupboards grew into rooms and then larger series of spaces. Additionally, as the collections grew, collectors attached texts to their objects,

creating catalogues. Marjorie Swann points out that these catalogues became a method to make the collections public: they were not merely inventories (although they were certainly that) but 'self-conscious interpretation' which promoted the collector, fashioning the collector as an actual author.^[8]

Collections of private individuals formed the basis of major public museums. For instance, a donation by an individual established the British Museum in 1753.^[9] In the mid 1800s, an outburst of activity around public exhibitions and cultural expressions of nation-state formations occurred. The 1851 Great Exhibition became the foundation of the South Kensington Museum, now known as the Victoria and Albert Museum; in 1856 the British Parliament voted for a National Portrait Gallery. The Germanische National Museum opened in 1853 in Nuremberg, so-called 'Germanische' since Germany had not yet unified. Vienna's Natural History Museum opened in 1889 although collections in the Hofburg and Belvedere predate that. In the United States citizens founded the New York City Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1870; the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 1870; and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, also 1870.^[10]

While these official museums flourished, collecting had evident tiers of prestige and decorum. As Pearce notes, art and natural history were 'morally respectable and intellectually acclaimed' while 'historical and exotic material' might develop a 'demonic turn.'^[11] Although I have noted the social and political sources of collecting coming from grave offerings and religious relics (remember that these are body parts), some nineteenth-century collections concentrated not on those high on the social register but on the remains of criminals or the monstrous and occult. This is the time of the establishment of wax museums and other popular commercial entertainments of the macabre or even just the unusual: the P. T. Barnum collections, the circus sideshows, the displays of captured natives brought into Europe and the United States. This 'underside' of collecting was present all along. Barbara Benedict has studied the notion of 'curiosities' and concludes 'that English culture portrays curiosity as the mark of a threatening ambition, an ambition that takes the form of a perceptible violation of species and categories: an ontological transgression that is registered empirically.' In the period of her examination, 1660-1820, those individuals who displayed curiosity were conservatively marked as 'monsters,

“queers,” and curiosities.’ [\[12\]](#) This conservative side generally loses out to the legitimation of exploration, gathering, and display, but it has rough moments. For example, Walter Kendrick’s history of *The Secret Museum* shows just how exotica brought back to colonial powers in Europe could disrupt cultural assumptions. Kendrick discusses the problem of the excavation at Pompeii. Cataloguing and detailing the city required mentioning the ‘unmentionable’ such as statues of satyrs having intercourse with goats, frescoes of sexual congress, and numerous brothels. Colored engraved books might not include the most scandalous items, but they could not avoid all of this, especially the innumerable instances of disproportionately large erect phalluses on statues of gods on many street corners and doorways to homes. Since the material was information about ancient Greece, it had to be saved. ‘Pornography’ as a term appears in the 1850s through 1870s in connection with the saving of the artifacts in the sites preserved for scholars. [\[13\]](#) By the late twentieth century, the significance of the act of collecting as well as the collections themselves is the focus of curious individuals.

Although my very brief synopsis of the history of collections has hinted at some of the functions of collecting, scholars have several theories about why individuals and cultures select, assemble, sort, and classify objects. An obvious explanation is psychological, with collecting deemed ‘normal’ to ‘pathological.’ Pearce notes that Freudians have considered collecting ‘as a process of significance in its own right.’ She points to classic Freudians who connect it to anal-erotic origins. Things collected are loved objects/feces; collecting proves control over these objects. [\[14\]](#) Swann refers to Werner Muensterberger as arguing that individuals collect because of a childhood trauma. The objects become ‘surrogates for human love and reassurance.’ [\[15\]](#) This proposition also appears in Jean Baudrillard’s ‘The System of Collecting’ which adds a semiotic analysis to the psychoanalytical thesis. Baudrillard notes that something collected has its meaning changed from its normal place in a functional world to that of being possessed and, moreover, possessed as part of a new series of items. This is a parsing out of the loved object into a ‘perverse auto-erotic [and private] system.’ [\[16\]](#)

Social theories also exist. Indeed, just as psychological explanations run the gamut from normal to pathological, social theories view collections as within social norms or

transgressing them. Collecting has an aspect near that of wanting to be like God or in absolute control; collecting also involves matters of 'taste': John Elsner and Roger Cardinal believe that a cultural analysis of collecting requires 'honoring the extremist as much as the conformist, by assessing the eccentric alongside the typical, and by juxtaposing the pathological with the normative.'^[17] Although, of course, who categories which under what label matters!

Traditional sociologists and anthropologists tend to view collecting as functional, particularly as part of the reflection or transmission of cultural knowledge. For example, Elsner and Cardinal quote Stephen Jay Gould who writes that classification is a 'mirror of our thoughts.' From this, they describe collecting as 'the narrative of how human beings have striven to accommodate, to appropriate and to extend the taxonomies and systems of knowledge they have inherited.'^[18] Such a position has also benefited from application of the Foucauldian notion of 'epistemes' to attempt a description of a series of methods of collecting.^[19] This narrative of knowledge can also become a declaration about social relations. As Shelton notes, collections are attempts by their makers to 'rationalize' the social world, 'to demonstrate personal worth and to legitimate their social positions.'^[20]

Critical social theorists such as Marxists see collecting equally as political but also as a form of consumption relating to the struggles of dominant and subordinated groups asserting self-definitions. For example, Swann discusses the significant contributions of Tony Bennett, Carol Duncan, and Alan Wallach in describing how collections are 'a medium of representing and legitimizing different political systems.'^[21] Swann notes that their accounts work well for explaining national museums but do not handle other sorts of collections. Indeed, one of the earlier self-reflective analyses of collecting comes from Walter Benjamin in his 1931 essay, 'Unpacking My Library.' Benjamin expresses such a consumer thesis about his books: his subject is 'the relationship of a book collector to his possessions.'^[22] Benjamin describes that relationship as one built upon memories of acquisitions or missed opportunities to purchase, and he concludes, 'Ownership is the most intimate relationship one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them.'^[23] This is an assertion of self via consumption, but one caught in

romantic assumptions about this relation rather than seeing that such an act of self-definition fits well into capitalism.

Most recently, an attempt to integrate psychological and social theories derives from Foucauldian theory about self-fashioning. In this approach, scholars theorize collecting as an act of identity formation that is a 'politically charged cultural form' and both 'social practice and subjective experience.'^[24] In other words, the act needs to be considered as productive (in its consumption), for it creates the individual as a subject within the social world. This approach permits some place for agency in the act while still recognizing that the agency is meaningful only because it exists within a system that makes it expressive.

Although such a proposition about collecting has general applicability, the variety of ways one might assert one's self is equally important. The social world positions individuals differently based on their sex, gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, and sexual preferences, and attention to diversity matters. Within this broader theory, Pearce articulated in 1992 a tripartite distinction of styles of collectors, which she has more recently asserted should not be understood to be an exclusive typology. Individuals might operate in various styles simultaneously. Despite cautions about this distinction, the typology has some value in starting to mark out, or at least consider, how to think about the differences among collecting behaviors. Pearce's schema is as follows:

Systematic collecting: 'an ostensibly intellectual rationale is followed, and the intention is to collect complete sets which will demonstrate understanding achieved.'

Fetish collecting: 'the objects are dominant'; this is an 'obsessive gathering [of] as many items as possible . . . to create the self.'

Souvenir collecting: 'the individual creates a romantic life-history by selecting and arranging personal memorial material to create what . . . might be called an object autobiography, where the objects are at the service of the autobiographer.'^[25]

John Windsor expands on this system and describes it: 'Systematics is the construction of a collection of objects in order to represent an ideology Fetishism is the removal of the object from its historical and cultural context and its redefinition in terms of the collector. In souvenir collecting, the object is prized for its power to carry the past into the future.'^[26]

The collectors that I shall consider display preferences for self-definition that fit each of these categories at least well enough to use the typology to point out how variable collecting practices may be. Most historians have run into collections such as these while researching film, especially if they are delving into archives about stars. My choices of Van Vechten, Cornell, and Smoot are somewhat arbitrary; they each attracted me for specific reasons, primarily having to do with my initial sense of the collection's potential transgressive nature within a broader social context. In order simply to open up this field of research, I wish to provide succinct introductory descriptions of these materials rather than an extended analysis of each collection and collector. However, I hope that the introduction of this research on practices of collecting will alert scholars in media studies that passing by these scrapbooks and boxes of souvenirs on the way to other research objectives might be short-sighted.

Carl Van Vechten and Systematic Collecting

Carl Van Vechten was an influential critic and promoter of modernist music, dance, and theater, including the Harlem Renaissance writers of the 1920s. His biographer, Bruce Kellner, remarks that Van Vechten enjoyed collecting as a child, and he pursued this practice throughout his life.^[27] As he neared his death, he gave massive collections of various sorts to numerous libraries, including Yale University. These collections are a culmination of an extensive career as an art critic and social celebrity. Born in 1880 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Van Vechten did a degree at the University of Chicago, worked as a reporter on local papers, and moved to New York City in 1906. There he began his music criticism, including essays on the premiere of *Salome* and the fashions around opera and opera luminaries. By 1909, Van Vechten moved into dance criticism, starting with Isadora Duncan. In 1913 he became a confidant of Mabel Dodge as she was producing the Armory Show. Following her to Europe, he met Gertrude Stein and established a long-term relationship with her that resulted in his promotion of her work in the United States. During the 1920s, Van Vechten was a major advocate of the Harlem writers and artists. Although his turn to novels was only somewhat successful, an inheritance permitted Van Vechten to devote himself to writing and circulating in the New York modernist scene.

Van Vechten's association with movies was one of an attracted but distant observer. As early as 1915, he published essays such as 'Music for the Movies' and 'The Importance of Electrical Picture Concerts' that display a modernist aesthetics.^[28] In 1927 he visited Los

Angeles, writing a series of essays for *Vanity Fair* with episodes entitled 'Fabulous Hollywood,' 'Hollywood Parties,' 'Hollywood Royalty,' and 'Understanding Hollywood.'^[29] This experience became background for *Spider Boy* (1928), his satire of a dramatist brought to the town to write a screenplay, and he populates his novels with figures of stars and actresses such as Midnight Blue in *Parties* (1930).

Yet Van Vechten seems less in awe of Hollywood than might be expected. His descriptions of life there emphasize film people's excessive work ethic, crassness, and surface propriety but fundamental hypocrisy and extravagance. Important to him within the overall experience was a feature that I would associate with his collecting behavior: he kept a checklist of the women stars (and others) whom he wanted to meet and ticked them off as he encountered them.^[30] Descriptions of lost chances are included in the *Vanity Fair* essays.

Indeed, however, while the Hollywood social life per se held no personal reward for Van Vechten, individuals -- especially specific individuals -- did. In the early 1930s, Van Vechten ceased writing novels and at about the same time (1932) began serious photography, a diversion that he pursued the rest of his life. The first person to sit officially for him was film actress Anna May Wong. Many others would over the years, including Lillian Gish and Tallulah Bankhead.^[31] Jonathan Weinberg notes that Van Vechten's photography was a sort of material accumulation: 'He spoke of his practice of photographing celebrities not as a creative act but as collecting people.'^[32]

While Van Vechten's photographs have been prized as glimpses into the vast array of people circulating through his household, another set of images has engaged the attention of scholars. Included in his contributions to Yale University are twenty scrapbooks filled with photographs (some obviously his but many also given to him).^[33] As Weinberg notes, these scrapbooks have a 'variety of materials, photographs, stories, captions, and comic strips'.^[34] Significantly, they express Van Vechten's semi-private commentary on homophobia. Although married to actress Fania Marinoff from 1914, Van Vechten had a closeted gay male's arrangement with her, for the scrapbooks are clearly prepared to be shared with other gay men for enjoyment. His photographs include lovely shots of male nudes (Anglo, African American, and Asian) with some subjects engaged in sexual

congress. The imagery ranges from the serious to the bizarre, such as a contortionist who could suck his own penis. Additionally, newspaper pictures of local sports heroes or college lads whom reporters announce are about to put on a play requiring cross-dressing are included as well. Throughout these scrapbooks, Van Vechten montages his own comments about the images by adding cut-lines or other printed remarks that turn the newspaper headlines into revealing a homoerotic content. In a sort of campy John Dos Passos approach, Van Vechten creates modernist, gay family albums.



Thumbnailed Image: Carl Van Vechten

As Weinberg notes, Van Vechten's practice of collecting exceeds that of merely including images to count toward some phantom full series of items: 'In the scrapbooks the dominant culture's language, the stuff of its crime reports and its advertising copy, is made to speak sexual transgress'.^[35] Weinberg also observes that Van Vechten is not producing a *high* modernism but the look of 'advertising' or 'tabloid newspapers such as the *National Enquirer*'.^[36] which would place him within what is now distinguished as a pop (or queer) modernism. James Small supplements Weinberg's discussion by pointing out the racial features of Van Vechten's collection. Small sees in the imagery both 'a racial agenda' and 'a modernist primitivism'.^[37]

From my perspective, Van Vechten's scrapbook collection shows attributes of systematic collecting in terms of both its movement toward complete sets but also its 'collection of objects in order to represent an ideology'.^[38] Several features of these scrapbooks that have not been discussed by others include (1) that Van Vechten uses the same image in multiple places but to different expressive effect and (2) that his scrapbooks are not all the same either within the scrapbook or among them. Part of this variation may be due to the ambiguity about how Van Vechten created them. Materials from 1918 through at least 1956 are included, but the arrangement is definitely not one of a temporal succession. For instance, in volume 10 one page has stories from 1929, 1935, 1939, and 1957. Rather

some notion of 'belonging together' exists. It is as if Van Vechten worked on all of these at once, and had them going for quite a few years before their completion. This will be more obvious as I discuss some of their diverse features.

For the 'nudes' scrapbooks, he often starts out a volume with a series of high art nude males, and, as the book continues, 'lesser' examples increase. At times it is as though he plans to sucker his viewer into the book on some pretense of aesthetic distance then to be taken into more raunchy material. However, he also starts these volumes with full frontal male nudity so clearly his viewer is already complicit with the project of looking at transgressive imagery. Additionally, each volume seems to have sections of 'all of this kind' although no volume is the exclusive site for any of these groupings. For instance, the end of volume 4 has a series of female butches. Volume 6 has lots of original drawings of male nudes and includes patches of 'types' such as native Americans and Asian Americans. One volume is a set of photographs labeled as taken from 1932 through 1933, but these images -- which have no commentary -- seem to be art photographs of New York City market items, landscapes, and building facades.^[39] Volumes 14 through 16 are a fabulous collection of original drawings, photos, and cards by different artists such as Thomas Handiforth [sic], Tamis, Man Ray, and Peter Tchelitchev. Again, no paste-up commentary accompanies these.

Another group of scrapbooks (volumes 8 through 13) includes nudes, but these are more devoted to newspaper clippings about events in which Van Vechten had special interest. Volume 9 has an extensive section on Christine Jorgensen (around 1953), a small portion about Roy Cohn, and articles about the murder of Elmer Schroeder, a lawyer and soccer official who was likely gay. In these volumes, Van Vechten included the titillating possibilities of other closeted gays such as King Farouk of Egypt and Bill Tilden. He liked to include newspaper photos of European sports events in which men kissed men in the moments of victory.

He also reveled in stories of cross-dressing. For example, he has a delightful newspaper article from 1947 in which the boys at a high school wore dresses to school in protest against the girls wearing jeans and shirts. His collections present both the frivolous and the pathetic. One two-page spread on transvestites contains stories headlined: 'Man Found Hanged Dressed as a Woman' and 'Man Who Wears Women's Dress State Witness' (volume 10). Another page has a story of a cop who dressed as a woman to catch thieves.

Van Vechten's scrapbooks provide an important proof of the history of gay culture for the period. For one thing, he seems to have read and saved stories that detail much of the gay underground scholars are working to uncover. The scrapbooks include the sorts of stories that George Chauncey references in *Gay New York* about drag balls in Harlem and Greenwich Village in the late 1920s and early 1930s.^[40] Additionally, the scrapbooks have images of many of the movie stars who have become icons for gay culture. Among the males are Roman Novarro, Lionel Barrymore (in drag), Cary Grant, Tab Hunter, Jack Lemmon (in drag from *Some Like It Hot*), lots of Johnny Weissmuller, Van Johnson, Montgomery Clift, and an article on Sir John Gielgud arrested for soliciting males in 1953. Females include Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich, and, shown dragged at the 1936 odd fellows ball, Jean Harlow, Mae West, Joan Crawford, and Kay Francis.

Van Vechten's collecting, then, seems systematic in that the scrapbooks are the material site of a closeted gay man's life who wishes to retain these images for the present (something to pass around to friends) and for the future (a record of the submerged but very existent mid-twentieth-century life of homoerotica and homosexuality in New York City). This is authorship in which Van Vechten is expressing the richness of a life that could not officially be public but which was vividly present nonetheless; his scrapbooks stand as a personal and social testimony to training their viewers how to read the submerged within the everyday.

Joseph Cornell and Fetish Collecting

'Precious' is my term for the collecting activities of Joseph Cornell. The most well known of the three collectors whom I am studying, Cornell actually made a living and an artistic reputation from his saving and rearranging of materials amassed from his various 'wanderlusts' (his term) through New York City. I am characterizing his approach as an example of fetish collecting, defined by Pearce as 'an obsessive gathering [of] as many items as possible . . . to create the self.' But more so on the terms that Windsor employs whereby this style is 'the removal of the object from its historical and cultural context and its redefinition in terms of the collector.'

As I shall describe below, Cornell's strategy for his boxes -- and he literally does produce miniature cabinets -- is to pluck images and objects from their home territory, rearranging them in his private associational manner, as Baudrillard would put it, his own auto-erotic system. One of Cornell's favorite authors was Novalis whose quotation graces a section of

Cornell's diary. Cornell quotes Novalis as writing, 'Why content ourselves with a mere inventory of our treasures? Let us look at them ourselves, use them and work upon them in manifold ways.'^[41]

Given the broader purpose of this essay, I am able only to touch on the biography and work of Cornell, but a few character and work traits are helpful for distinguishing his collections from those of Van Vechten and Smoot. A nearly life-long resident of Utopia Parkway in Queens, New York, Cornell was a typically eccentric American artist. In the very early 1930s, he encountered the work of Max Ernst, especially Ernst's novel, *La Femme 100 têtes*, in which Ernst used cut-up Victorian engravings to tell a story.

According to Hilton Kramer, Cornell's first artistic productions followed this technique.^[42] Although a surrealist influenced him, most art historians accept Cornell's self-declaration that he was not part of that artistic movement. Indeed, scholars distinguish Cornell's work from Ernst's. For example, Dore Ashton points out that Ernst's work evokes horror while Cornell's is nostalgic.^[43] The idea of the chance encounter -- such as an umbrella on a sewing machine -- is the meeting point for the two men, but Cornell veers off into a different world, one populated by certain kinds of women, children, toys, stars and moons, seashells, parrots, and magic that seem to be a private symbolism or language.

Thus, Cornell constructs his boxes as constellations or, perhaps, as nodal points of private associations which are in 'infinite combination' and rearrangement. Ashton indicates that Cornell did have an interest in dreams, and his diaries record recurring ones about his invalid brother Robert as well as women with whom he became obsessed.^[44] Trailing out a set of associations is partially possible because Cornell's practice was to maintain a daily recording of his wanderings, feelings, and observations (and all of the sweets he ate) as well as extensive folders and containers of materials that served as his base for a project. So, for instance, photos of his basement workshop show stacks of boxes labeled seashell, plastic shells, glasses, woolen balls and so on. Additionally, he maintained folders into which he dropped items. For instance, in his clipping file on Patty Duke are a note from her thanking him for a box he sent her, various diary notes, a flattened Jell-O box, and scribbles about 'miracle worker,' 'Isle of Children' (a play in which she appeared), and 'for young celestials.' Or for Jeanne Engels, he includes comments from

Proust, two advertisements (one stating 'Discover the New Shape of Beauty' and the other about five new Lux colors), and an image of Maude Adams on a postcard, with the reverse noting that she starred in many of Sir James Barrie's plays including *Peter Pan*.^[45] In fact, one of his early pieces, 'Portrait of Ondine' (1940), literally is an album of ephemera.^[46]

Cornell's fascinations with women and certain scenes of magic do not result in the same sort of collecting and arranging as occurred in Van Vechten's absorptions. While Cornell seems to have wanted to keep every example of those sorts of objects he collected, he did not put all of the collected objects into public display. Additionally, his organizational arrangement -- while topical -- is more totemic. A retouched photo of Greta Garbo in *Anna Karenina* serves as central point for a theme from which radiates other items associated in his private schema -- the reason to call this a constellation or nodal point approach to arranging a collection. This approach is much closer to a fetish where the treasured item stands in for the lack of the original object and takes central stage in the theater of his box.

Despite this isolation and propping up of objects as fetishes, like ordinary sexual fetishes a certain indexical quality does control his productions. He encountered the women or men whom he would then memorialize in a box or collage either through the printed page or on the movie screen that he visited daily.^[47] The women included movie stars Hedy Lamarr, Deanna Durbin, Margaret O'Brien, Marilyn Monroe, Sheree North, Yvette Minieux, and Duke. However, his adoration would move to direct contact if it were possible. Cornell would send a box to someone he admired as an 'offering.'^[48]

Four of his most extended engagements were with Lauren Bacall, Garbo, Jennifer Jones, and Rose Hobart, as examined by Jodi Hauptman in her recent book on Cornell's 'stargazing.' Hauptman argues that Cornell saw himself as a 'caretaker' of these female stars, particularly 'their well-being, reputation, history, dignity, or innocence.'^[49] Indeed, in one of his rare essays, 'Enchanted Wanderer,' published in 1941, Cornell speaks of Lamarr as able to 'evoke an ideal world of beauty.' Her 'visage' indicated a 'gracious humility and spirituality'; he notes approvingly (as others have observed) that she has a 'masculine name' in one film and wore 'masculine garb' in another.^[50] He accompanied the essay with an image of Lamarr dressed as a Renaissance boy. This 'boyish girl' figures throughout Cornell's work, according to Marjorie Keller, who notes that Cornell's favorite

writers included Nerval and Goethe who constructed romantic scenes in which ‘the protagonist is in love with a young woman who is sometimes elusive, sometimes unapproachable. The desired woman is often an actress. She is boyish. Sometimes she is dressed as a man.’^[51] The boyish woman is also associated with other themes or objects -- ‘travel, Europe (particularly France), hotels, the theater, birds, and stars.’^[52]

Using psychoanalytical theory, Keller hypothesizes that Cornell associates these girls with ‘phalluses’ and argues for an underpinning of homosexuality to Cornell’s preferences. Cornell’s personal life seems quite contained sexually, and while he certainly was friends with many gay men (he knew Van Vechten), biographers note that his diaries consistently discuss fantasies about women and surmise that his first intimate encounter was quite late in his life and with a woman.^[53] Of course, Keller is only talking about a psychoanalytical dynamic that derives from a complex underpinning of everyone’s sexual life and subtends any fetish theory. I make this digression merely to underline that what I consider relevant is the normal dynamics of the use of objects as a fetish and not any claims about Cornell’s enacted sexuality.^[54]

This fetish approach to his collecting and arranging is very clear in the development of *Penny Arcade Portrait of Lauren Bacall*. Hauptman writes that Cornell disliked the ‘sexual hoopla’ around Bacall but was taken by the photograph of Bacall in publicity for *To Have and Have Not*. He decided to do a box, collecting and continuing to rearrange that box via associations until his death. ‘Cornell called these “paths ever opening up,” “extensions,” chains of associations made visual in the work’s box structure.’^[55]



Thumbnails Image: Joseph Cornell: *'Penny Arcade Portrait of Lauren Bacall'* Source:

<http://www.artchive.com/artchive/C/cornell/bacall.jpg.html>

The fetish approach is also apparent in his moving boxes -- those few films that Cornell produced either by re-editing a found movie or by directing the shooting of new footage.

The most famous example is *Rose Hobart*, dated as 1939, created out of a 1931 Universal picture *East of Borneo*, starring Rose Hobart.^[56] Pulling out many of the shots of Hobart, and only shots with her in it, Cornell produces another collection -- here the best (from his point of view) images of Hobart in the film, casting a blue filter over the black and white film (much as he retouches the Garbo photo). What he does not include is important. For one thing, he eliminates the film's dialogue and adds an evocative musical soundtrack. For another, he does not include scenes he must have felt were distasteful or distressing, such as the death of a monkey that the heroine frees or the scene in which the local Borneo ruler pulls the heroine down onto a couch and she shoots him.

Moreover, by using the frame as a container, created in part by images of the heroine glancing off-screen but not always following up on those glances to see what she sees, Cornell creates a non-chronological accumulation of moments into an enigmatic and orientalized atmosphere. 'Othering' Hobart by decontextualizing her from the film and yet locating her in the jungles in which everything else is 'other,' Cornell's arrangement produces a withdrawal of meaning while investing Hobart's image with new sense and sensuality. This film is certainly an early example of the sorts of film and video re-editing that contemporary fans now do aided by video recorders.^[57]

Cornell's productive collection and arrangement of materials around stars met standards of artistic practice within mid-twentieth-century America. While Van Vechten's and Smoot's collecting likely engrossed them equally and for which they took as much care, Cornell's activities earned him international esteem.

Jane Smoot and Souvenir Collecting

'In souvenir collecting, the object is prized for its power to carry the past into the future.'^[58] For Jane Smoot, this was the function of her collection of materials related to Jeanette MacDonald. Of the three individuals studied in this essay, Smoot most obviously typifies what is generally thought of as the film star fan.^[59]

Smoot was an Austin, Texas schoolteacher who began her collection of MacDonald materials, 'gathered with care and enthusiasm since *Naughty Marietta* [1935] first crossed [her] path.'^[60] Donated to the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the

University of Texas at Austin, her MacDonald collection includes fifteen boxes of scrapbooks, souvenirs, and MacDonald vinyl sound recordings. When Smoot joined her first MacDonald fan club is unclear, but the collection has the first issues of the Jeanette MacDonald International Fan Club journal, 'The Golden Comet,' and Smoot is a founding club member in 1937. Smoot's collection contains club issues through spring 1977.

Additionally, Smoot includes a four-page typescript essay, apparently prepared in 1949 for a bulletin for one of the three MacDonald fan clubs to which she belonged at that time. Entitled 'Collectionitis -- MacDonald Species,' the essay expresses much about her sense of her own activities. Her most obvious purpose is associated with what Pearce and Windsor describe as the souvenir style of collecting, using the collected items to recall her past encounters with MacDonald and supporting her memories until the next convergence of their lives. Smoot begins her essay:

With abject apologies to Sir Walter Scott:

Breathes there the fan [MacDonald, that is] with soul so lead[en]

Who never to himself hath said,

She is my own, my fav'rite lass,

And I certainly intend to hold on to every picture, clipping,

and other souvenir of her special sparkle and tender

loveliness!!!^[61]

This might appear to be like the fetish collection, and, indeed, Pearce and Windsor state that overlaps in types appear in actual gathering of materials. However, note that while Smoot expresses an intent to 'hold on to every picture, clipping, and other souvenir,' elsewhere in her essay she declares the function of this holding is not to redefine it in terms of the collector's fascinations but to recreate MacDonald's 'presence.' She concludes the essay by writing that:

Every person who admires Jeanette MacDonald deeply

knows a certain unhappy period of --- well, longing, which

descends upon him [sic] when he has seen and heard

her in the last showing of a movie (until it comes back weeks hence) or in the last glorious moments following a concert. To speak of UNhappiness [sic] in this connection is not the rank heresy it may at first seem, for it is occasioned by the fact that we are faced with a routine existence, suddenly drab without Jeanette's loveliness. That's where our collections of photographs, clippings, records, and other MacDonald treasures enter. We hold these mementoes in trust until we can come close to the real Jeanette MacDonald again.^[62]

Thus, as in André Bazin's remarks about the power of photographs to serve as a means of embalming the past,^[63] Smoot's collecting is about substitutions for the loved object's presence but not about remaking those objectified treasures into the right kind of phallus, which is what Cornell tends to attempt. At one point in the essay, Smoot even shifts vocabulary so as to make MacDonald the agent. Smoot has been describing how her wardrobe in one of the spare rooms is filled with MacDonald mementos and how her father made her a record cabinet for all of the MacDonald sound recordings. She then writes, 'Miss MacDonald also owns an old-fashioned cut-glass glove case on a what-not cabinet in my room.' This shift in subjectivity is, as it were, a telling slip -- for Smoot cedes possession of the items to MacDonald. Also telling is that the cut-glass glove case contains the most prized and personal items of Smoot's collection, each having actually been touched by MacDonald: 'one pair of dark brown suede gloves, authentically identified as her own by a personally signed card sent by the agency from which I bought the gloves, a delicately-sceneted [sic] handkerchief which was hers . . . , and a dried red rose which she offered me from her bouquet while she was here in Austin some years ago.'

This may not sound like souvenir collecting for the purposes of the autobiography (also how Pearce describes this type of collecting). However, Smoot's arrangements of the objects collected display that. Smoot organizes her print and photographic holdings into four categories, with each group organized chronologically as far as is possible in a record of Smoot's historical encounters with MacDonald. The first print and photographic group is notebook collections of eight-by-ten-inch stills from movies. Once segregated into the

specific films, Smoot then orders the stills 'according to the sequence arrangement in the movies so that one gets the feeling of seeing the movie through the stills as he [sic] turns the pages.' Such a display seems to indicate a desire to replay the experience of seeing MacDonald in the film.^[64]

The second group is 'miscellaneous snapshots and stills.' Some of these were pictures she took on 'clan' trips to witness MacDonald in concert or visit her Los Angeles home (and later to put roses on her crypt) or were duplicates of similar trip photos sent by other club members.^[65] By the 1950s, Smoot includes photos of MacDonald appearing on television, including an episode of 'This is Your Life.'^[66] Smoot even has pictures of her special visit to MacDonald in a Houston hospital when MacDonald fell ill on a concert tour.

^[67] As with the movie stills, 'All of them are arranged as nearly in time order as possible.'

The third group is 'magazine and newspaper clippings' -- which presented Smoot with more problems in maintenance of temporal order since Smoot was industrious in seeking old copies of magazines published prior to the start of her collection as well as ordering runs of newspapers in all of the towns where MacDonald was appearing. The final group is 'concert reviews' in which she also included letters and programs from friends who attended the event, adding a 'real local color to the sometimes impersonal newspaper review!'

Beyond the printed and photographed holdings, the cut-glass glove box, and the sound recordings, Smoot also collected every issue of the journals of her three fan clubs: 'These boxes are labeled and numbered so as to make reference easy.' The fan club journals look like contemporary 'zines: hand-crafted issues are devoted to news of MacDonald, her husband Gene Raymond, and her skye terrier Stormy Weather; creative work by fans such as poems about MacDonald or drawings of her in concert or in a film scene;^[68] pleas for collective action such as talking local exhibitors into showing older MacDonald movies; letters, interviews, and question-and-answer columns with MacDonald; correspondence and reports from other fan clubs; and words to songs MacDonald sang.^[69]

Smoot spent some time describing the layout of the various pages of her scrapbooks in terms of her aesthetic preferences. She liked a 'balanced pattern, avoiding crowding.' She even bought two copies of each magazine so that she could paste down clippings and not

worry about having to turn over articles that continued on the reverse. One thing she did not do was 'decorate the pasges [sic] in any way [because Jeanette is surely enough decoration for any page].'^[70]



Thumbnailed Image: Jane Smoot (1)

The drive to reproduce the original encounters on their own terms also permeates the instances of reproduced versions of the films. At a time prior to videotape, the fans were forced to prose adaptations of the movies, accompanied by hand-drawn reproductions of special moments in the film or whatever publicity stills the studios provided. For the film *Rose-Marie* (1936), Smoot owned a mimeographed rendering of the narrative.^[71] In this case, Smoot did a little decorating. The school ring-binder notebook has a green cover with two roses pasted on it and several of the stenciled pages. For every song, a special page includes the lyrics to the song and a drawing mimicking the camera angle, set, and costuming.



Thumbnailed Image: Smoot (2)

Where Smoot had an actual production still, as in the case of the song 'Indian Love Call,' this 'better' image replaces the drawing.

Smoot's collecting and arranging provides an example of the souvenir approach to engaging with Hollywood stars. Her scrapbooks, memento boxes, and indexically traced objects of MacDonald's once presence, stored in what she considered to be a 'cabinet of transgression' -- 'an old-fashioned walnut wardrobe in one of the spare rooms' -- did create for Smoot a 'romantic life-history,' her chronology of encounters with a star whom Smoot considered the epitome of 'tender loveliness' and for whom life in between those

encounters was 'suddenly drab without Jeanette's loveliness.' The souvenirs she collected helped 'carry the past into the future' until she could once again gaze upon MacDonald.

Conclusions

As I noted, I prefer the definition of collecting offered by Camille who considers collecting to be "a socially creative and recuperative act." While collecting is consumption, it is also self-fashioning and authorship. Identities and authorship can be expressed in quite diverse ways. A more extensive analysis of the biographies of Van Vechten, Cornell, and Smoot would be necessary before leaping to specific conclusions about the places of their collecting behavior within their identity formation. However, even these beginning remarks indicate that for all three their collecting was very much bound up with their self-fashioning. Van Vechten as a closeted gay seems to be saying in these scrapbooks -- there's plenty more men like me! Cornell's livelihood was his collecting and arranging. Smoot's involvement in her clubs and eventual depositing of the collection with a major archive suggest that no matter what else she did this activity was at least one of the attributes by which she wanted to be remembered.

In terms of authorship, beyond my use of Pearce's typology to make some distinctions, other stylistic and formal differences are apparent. Van Vechten's work seems connected to queer modernism and to advertising; Cornell's to his variant of symbolism (and hints of surrealism despite his protestations); and Smoot's to mid-cult. Van Vechten and Cornell did not consider chronology as the key organizing principle but Smoot was obsessive about that. Smoot respected the historical context of her collected items; for some things, Van Vechten did as well; but Cornell had little regard for temporal context, and often fought against straightforward meanings if they disrupted his preferred fantasy. Van Vechten and Cornell had no qualms about writing over an object to make it mean what they wanted it to mean; Smoot specifically declared that such a reworking would violate her rules for her collection.

Each of these people did share one important feature: they had a sense of the extension of their collections beyond their lives. The gestures of Van Vechten's donations of his various collections has been noted; Cornell obviously hoped for post-death admiration of his boxes; Smoot even bothers to write a four-page essay on her practices. She had thought out her aesthetics. All three put their collections into larger collections. Finally, although these collections display self-fashioning and authorship, I would still want to acknowledge the creators' fandom and the function of the collections within their everyday lives. Each collector used the objects to attempt to come closer to their objects of desire. If I follow Camille's definition that collecting is "a socially creative and recuperative act," I have perhaps still slighted the recuperative half of the equation. I can only imagine that the

disappointments of everyday life for each of these people faded when they turned to their collections. Then the pleasures of their collecting and arranging pushed to the background the mundane as they enjoyed their cabinets of transgression.

As media studies participates in social and cultural history, it offers evidence of the functions of popular culture within everyday lives. One way into the arguments about the effects of media within culture is to examine the restructurings of media texts by viewers of film, television, comic books, and so forth. Certainly collections by fans, and nearly all fans will have some sort of cabinet of remembrances, offer a very material site for such investigations. Indeed, moreover, collectors may carefully guard these material sites. I have not at all considered the territorial imperative over materials in collections. Struggles over ownership and claims of cinephilia authority based on access (or denial of access) abound among collectors. Analyses of these social and psychological dynamics merit scholarly attention as well. Certainly, stopping to look at collections and collecting behaviors will provide insights into the places of media in social formations and subject self-fashionings.

Notes

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[1] John Fiske, 'The Cultural Economy of Fandom,' in Lisa A. Lewis (ed.), *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 44. Susan Stewart considers scrapbooks (the medium that I will be examining) to be a 'souvenir,' with a different psychology than collecting. See her *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984, pp. 134-35, 152. I disagree (see below on theories of collecting).

[2] Michael Camille quoted in Peter Monaghan, 'Collected Wisdom,' *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 28 June 2002, p. A18. See Michael Camille and Adrian Rifkin (ed.), *Other Objects of Desire: Collectors and Collecting Queerly*, Oxford, England: Blackwell, 2001.

[3] Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*, London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 58-85. Like Pearce, my comments are confined to the Anglo-European traditions, but her limitation marks out an important area of further research.

[4] Susan Pearce and Ken Arnold (eds.), *The Collector's Voice: Critical Readings in the Practice of Collecting, vol. 2: Early Voices*, Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2000, p. 3.

[5] Anthony Alan Shelton, 'Cabinets of Transgression: Renaissance Collections and the Incorporation of the New World,' in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds.), *The Cultures of Collecting*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994, pp. 177-203.

[6] Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 109.

[7] Marjorie Swann, *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001, p. 2.

[8] Swann, *Curiosities*, pp. 9, 149-93.

[9] Swann, *Curiosities*, pp. 6-8, 194-200.

[10] Susan Pearce, Rosemary Flanders, Mark Hall, and Fiona Morton (eds.), *The Collector's Voice: Critical Readings in the Practice of Collecting, vol. 3: Imperial Voices*, Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2002, pp. 31, 42.

[11] Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 124.

[12] Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry*, Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 2.

[13] Walter M. Kendrick, *The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture*, New York: Viking, 1987.

[14] Pearce, *On Collecting*, pp. 6-7.

[15] Swann, *Curiosities*, p. 7.

[16] Jean Baudrillard, 'The System of Collecting' [1968], trans. Roger Cardinal, in Elsner and Cardinal (eds.), *Cultures of Collecting*, pp. 19-20.

[17] John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, 'Introduction,' in Elsner and Cardinal (eds.), *Cultures of Collecting*, pp. 4-5.

[18] Elsner and Cardinal, 'Introduction,' p. 2.

[19] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill discussed in Swann, *Curiosities*, p. 7.

[20] Shelton, 'Cabinets of Transgression,' pp. 184, 186.

[21] Swann, *Curiosities*, p. 7.

[22] Walter Benjamin, 'Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting' [1931], trans. Harry Zohn, *Illuminations*, New York: Schocken Books, 1968, pp. 59-60.

[23] Benjamin, 'Unpacking My Library', p. 67.

[24] Swann describing Pearce's approach, *Curiosities*, p. 8.

[25] Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 32. This is her version of the schema in 1995; she originally expressed it in 1992, and it is that version that informs John Windsor (see note below).

[26] John Windsor, 'Identity Parades,' in Elsner and Cardinal (eds.), *Cultures of Collecting*, p. 50. Daniel Cavicchi also uses these three categories to discuss the types of collecting of Bruce Springsteen fans; see *Tramps Like Us: Music and Meaning among Springsteen Fans*, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 134-57.

[27] Bruce Kellner, *Carl Van Vechten and the Irreverent Decades*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968.

[28] Edward G. Lueders, *Carl Van Vechten and the Twenties*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1955, pp. 48-9. See 'Music for the Movies' [1915] in *Music and Bad Manners*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1916, pp. 43-54 in which he promotes a 'futurist' rather than sentimental music; 'The Importance of Electrical Picture Concerts' [1916] in *Red: Papers on Musical Subjects*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925, pp. 60-9. Also see 'Movies for Program Notes' [1921] in *Red*, pp. 70-83, in which he urges the setting of famous pieces such as 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' into film with visual accompaniment.

[29] Carl Van Vechten, 'Fabulous Hollywood,' *Vanity Fair*, 28, May 1927, pp. 54, 108; 'Hollywood Parties,' *Vanity Fair*, 28, June 1927, pp. 47, 86, 90; 'Hollywood Royalty,' *Vanity Fair*, 28, July 1927, pp. 38, 86; 'Understanding Hollywood,' *Vanity Fair*, 28, August 1927, pp. 45, 78.

[30] Van Vechten, 'Hollywood Parties,' p. 47.

[31] Kellner, *Carl Van Vechten*, pp. 258-61, 270.

[32] Jonathan Weinberg, "'Boy Crazy": Carl Van Vechten's Queer Collection,' *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 7, no. 2, Fall 1994, p. 27.

[33] Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Collection, Yale Collection of American Literature, Van Vechten Scrapbooks [see Uncat 2a, Mss.]; hereafter VV papers.

[34] Weinberg, "'Boy Crazy,'" p. 28.

[35] Weinberg, "'Boy Crazy,'" p. 31.

[36] Weinberg, "'Boy Crazy,'" p. 44.

[37] James Smalls, 'Public Face, Private Thoughts: Fetish, Interracialism, and the Homoerotic in Some Photographs by Carl Van Vechten,' *Genders*, no. 25, Spring 1997, p. 146. Also see Beth A. McCoy, 'Inspectin' and Collecting: The Scene of Carl Van Vechten,' *Genders*, no. 28, 1998 [WWW document].

[38] Windsor, 'Identity Parades,' p. 50.

[39] Unlabelled volume in box 2, VV papers.

[40] For example, in volume 10, an article, 'Hectic Harlem,' dated 7 March 1936, describes the 'odd fellows' ball.

[41] Joseph Cornell Papers, Microfilm reel 1066, Smithsonian Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.; hereafter, JC papers.

[42] Hilton Kramer, 'Collages of Joseph Cornell -- The American Surrealist,' *New York Times*, 9 March 1980, Sect. D, p. 27.

[43] Dore Ashton, 'Joseph Cornell,' in Dore Ashton (ed.), *A Joseph Cornell Album*, New York: DeCapo Press, 1974, p. 73.

[44] Ashton, 'Joseph Cornell,' pp. 10-19; Mary Ann Caws (ed.), *Joseph Cornell: Theater of the Mind: Selected Diaries, Letters, and Files*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 1993.

[45] Reel 1066, JC papers. Also see Jodi Hauptman, *Joseph Cornell: Stargazing in the Cinema*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999, p. 17 on the preparation for *Portrait of Ondine*.

[46] Hauptman, *Joseph Cornell*, p. 12.

[47] Hauptman, *Joseph Cornell*, p. 48.

[48] Ashton, 'Joseph Cornell,' p. 35; *Joseph Cornell: Worlds in a Box*, 1991, Mark Stokes/BBC Production.

[49] Hauptman, *Joseph Cornell*, p. 209.

[50] Joseph Cornell, 'Enchanted Wanderer' [1941-42], rpt. in Ashton (ed.), *Joseph Cornell*, p. 150.

[51] Marjorie Keller, *The Untutored Eye: Childhood in the Films of Cocteau, Cornell, and Brakhage*, London: Associated University Presses, 1986, p. 101. Also see Jonas Mekas, 'The Invisible Cathedrals of Joseph Cornell' [1970], rpt. in Ashton (ed.), *Joseph Cornell*, p. 167.

[52] Keller, *Untutored Eye*, p. 105.

[53] Caws, *Joseph Cornell: Theater of the Mind*, pp. 358, 426.

[54] Hauptman, *Joseph Cornell*, p. 50, describes Cornell's boxes as related to 'necrophilia, a tendency to transform objects "into dead possessions.'" Personally, given his consistent rearrangement of boxes, as well as his taking and giving of boxes to people, this is not my sense of logic. The objects are stand-ins for the people who are certainly distant and untouchable, but totally animate. In fact, Cornell's other actions suggest, as I note above, his interest in using his art works as a means of contact with the celebrities.

[55] Hauptman, *Joseph Cornell*, p. 61.

[56] See Annette Michelson's intelligent discussion of Cornell's work in 'Rose Hobart and Monsieur Phot: Early Films from Utopia Parkway,' *Artforum*, 11, no. 10, June 1973, pp. 47-57. Also see Alison Grace Macor, 'The Woman in the Box: Style and Representation in the Collage Films of Joseph Cornell,' Unpublished Master's Thesis: University of Texas at Austin, 1991.

[57] See Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture*, New York: Routledge, 1992.

[58] Windsor, 'Identity Parades,' p. 50 (emphasis mine).

[59] Georganne Scheiner describes the larger scene of film fandom in the 1930s and 1940s in her *Signifying Female Adolescence: Film Representations and Fans, 1920-1950*, Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000, pp. 122-23. According to Scheiner, the earliest fan club was one for Joan Crawford, founded in 1931. By the mid 1930s, the studios and stars supported (even financially) these clubs, and national 'consortiums of fan clubs' met yearly in Los Angeles. Scheiner examines scrapbooks created by Deanna Durbin fans; her descriptions indicate their similarity to those constructed by Smoot. The potential lesbianism involved in women's attraction to female stars has not been addressed. Certainly this is a possible understanding of the fascination (especially insofar as the MacDonald fans actually followed her from concert to concert; see below). However, both heterosexual and lesbian women were fans of female stars. Thus, sorting through the sexual dynamics is work to be done. I have no information regarding Smoot's sexual orientation, and so I am not speculating about this.

[60] Jane Smoot, TS, 'Collectionitis -- MacDonald Species,' Box 11, Envelope 1, Jeanette MacDonald Papers, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; hereafter, JMD papers.

[61] Smoot, 'Collectionitis.'

[62] Smoot, 'Collectionitis.'

[63] Andre Bazin, 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image' [1945], trans. Hugh Gray, *What is Cinema?* Vol. 1, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967, pp. 9-10.

[64] Smoot indicates a very directed ambition. She writes, 'For SMILIN' THROUGH, THREE DARLING DAUGHTERS, and THE SUN COMES UP I have complete collections of all stills in which Miss MacDonald appears; I don't want those without her.' Smoot, 'Collectionitis.'

[65] The use of the term 'clan' here refers to MacDonald's Scottish heritage. Box 3, Envelope 3, JMD papers. The various fan clubs often had overlapping memberships and networks of associations. In *Golden Comet*, 1, no. 1 (for the international club), after names of the club's leadership was a list of other clubs and their presidents. This listing included clubs for male stars as well, including ones for Nelson Eddy and Dick Powell. Presidents were both male and female for each star. Box 4, Envelope 3, JMD papers. For a good example of photos from a trip, see Box 9, Envelope 2, JMD papers.

[66] Box 9, Envelope 2, JMD papers.

[67] Box 9, Envelope 2, JMD papers. Mary Elizabeth Kracklauer describes the special privileges accorded fan club members; 'Jeanette's Girls: Fan Clubs in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s,' Unpublished Masters Thesis: University of Texas at Austin, 2000. Over the years, MacDonald established a relation to them including access to her dressing room after a concert. Part of the thrill of being in the clubs was this honored and intimate status. So when MacDonald was sick, having fan club members visit her -- while a special event -- was not highly unusual.

[68] I did not read many of these journals. Whether any fictional narratives equivalent to contemporary fan activities were published is something worth investigating. See Jenkins, *Textual Poachers*.

[69] I am focusing here on Smoot's collecting behavior. Kracklauer's master's thesis details the general fan club activities.

[70] Smoot, 'Collectionitis,' interpolation hers.

[71] Box 9, Envelope 1, JMD papers.

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