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# C

## Sofia Brazzola Francesca Pigni

CURIOSITY /ˌkjʊərəˈtɪsɪti/  
(noun, singular) –ties

1) an eager desire to know; inquisitiveness;<sup>1</sup>  
a. desire to investigate: interest leading to inquiry;<sup>2</sup> b.(archaic) a blameable tendency or desire to inquire into or seek knowledge (as of sacred matters) or to inquire too minutely into any subject;

«But by this may more evidently be discerned, wherein pleasure and wherein curiosity is the object of the senses; for pleasure seeketh objects beautiful, melodious, fragrant, savoury, soft; but curiosity, for trial's sake, the contrary as well, not for the sake of suffering annoyance, but out of the lust of making trial and knowing them. For what pleasure hath it, to see in a mangled carcase what will make you shudder? And yet if it be lying near, they flock thither, to be made sad, and to turn pale.» (*Saint Augustine, The Confessions, X, 35-55.*)

2) something strange or fascinating;

«Thus curiosity is characterized by a specific not-staying with what is nearest. Consequently, it also does not seek the leisure of reflective staying, but rather restlessness and excitement from continuous novelty and changing encounters. In not-staying, curios-

ity makes sure of the constant possibility of distraction. [...] Curiosity is everywhere and nowhere.» (*Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, p. 161*)

COLLECTION /kəˈlɛkˈʃən/  
(noun, singular) -s

1) The act or process of collecting.  
2) A group of objects or works to be seen, studied, or kept together.  
3) several things considered as a whole  
«Study hard what interests you the most in the most undisciplined, irreverent and original manner possible.» (*Richard P. Feynman to J.M.Szabados, 1965*)

«The developing interest in human as well as natural history in the 16th century led to the creation of specialized collections. [...] A collection such as these was normally known as a cabinet in 16th-century England and France, while in German-speaking Europe the equivalents Kammer or Kabinett were used. Greater precision was sometimes applied, the terms Kunstkammer and Rüstammer, for example, referring respectively to a collection of art and a collection of historical objects or armour. Natural specimens were to be found in a Wunderkammer or Naturalienkabinett.» (*British Library, Timelines: sources from history, <http://www.bl.uk/learning>*)

CABINET OF CURIOSITIES /ˈkæbɪnɪt ɒv ˌkjʊərəˈtɪsɪti/  
(idiom, 16th c., from cabinet <cupboard> and curiosity <a rare or strange object>)

1) encyclopaedic collections of disparate objects belonging to natural history alongside works of art; also known as Wunderkammer.<sup>3</sup>

«[The «learned gentleman» should make] a goodly, huge cabinet, wherein what so ever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine has made rare in stuff, form or motion; what so ever singularity, chance and the shuffle of things hath produced; whatsoever nature has wrought in things that want life and may be kept; shall be sorted and included.» (*Francis Bacon, Gesta Grayorum, p. 76*)

«Today, the tensions between chaos and organization, between standard norms and individuality, between curator and viewer is apparent the second you get on the main page of a site like Pinterest. Anyone and everyone can become their own digital «curator» now. [...] At face value, sites like Pinterest seem like curiosity cabinets coming into the 21st century.»

(*Collecting New Media, <https://blogs.ischool.utexas.edu>*)

«The jealously guarded privacy of the cabinet of curiosities finds its *raison d'être* in a multi-

1 Although it is common to all living things, curiosity is a thirst for knowledge that can find different drivers among individuals. The unpredictability of this innate emotion presents no fixed pattern among humans, distinguishing itself from an instinct.

2 Since the scientific revolution or enlightenment, curiosity as inquisitive thinking became a necessary attitude for exploration, discovery and knowledge deepening.

3 Besides the most famous, best-documented cabinets of rulers and aristocrats, members of the merchant class and early practitioners of science in Europe formed collections that were precursors to museums. They mirror the need of selection as a

filter to force uncountable stimulus into a human scale, which is still present. Curiosity cabinets were used as mechanisms for establishing social prestige, and this is still true among the digital collections on the Web.

4 Chaos Theory says that if you want to forecast the future you need to know everything about the present. In this case, «Everything» means all knowable characteristics of today, in infinite detail. Even with a great set of formulas in a comprehensive model about how those many variables interrelate, predictions will run afoul with «Chaos»—the ability of an overlooked (and typically small) characteristic of the starting point to have a large effect on the outcome.

5 «Care» has a double meaning: anxiety and solicitude. This duality finds its origin in the Roman period. These two meanings of care represent two conflicting, fundamental possibilities. Anxious, worrisome care (de: Sorge) represents our struggle for survival and for favourable standing among our fellow human beings. Yet care also bears the meaning of solicitude or «caring for» (de: Fürsorge).

6 The term «care» has an existential value and identifies the profound existence of the human beings in «taking care of». In other words, man does happen to establish an accidental relationship with the world. What outlines their existences instead, is precisely that being in relationship with the world, by taking care of it.

plicity of frames, niches, boxes, drawers and cases, in appropriating to itself the chaos of the world and imposing upon it systems—however arbitrary—of symmetries and hierarchies. It is like a shadow cast by the ‘unknown’, an unknown that dissolves into a shower of objects. It offers an inexhaustible supply of fragments and relics painstakingly slotted and fitted into the elected space, heavy with meaning, of a secret room.» (*Patrick Mauriès, ‘Cabinets de curiosités’, p. 12*)

«Chaos was the law of nature; Order was the dream of man.» (*Henry Adams, ‘The Education of Henry Adams’, p. 189*)

CHAOS /ker'ɒs/  
(noun, singular)

1) complete disorder; utter confusion;

«Chaos: When the present determines the future, but the approximate present does not approximately determine the future.» (*Edward Lorenz, summarising the Chaos Theory*)<sup>4</sup>

CATEGORY /'kætɪg(ə)rɪ/  
(noun, singular) –ries

1) a class or division of people or things regarded as having particular shared characteristics.

2) (in Aristotelian philosophy) any of the fundamental modes of existence, such as substance, quality, and quantity, as determined by analysis of the different possible kinds of predication.

3) (in Kantian philosophy) any of the fundamental principles of the understanding, as the principle of causation. Any classification of terms that is ultimate and not susceptible to further analysis.

«An excellent example is the classification of things in the world that occurs in traditional Dyrbal, an aboriginal language of Australia [...]: ‘Bayi’: men, kangaroos, possums, bats, most snakes, most fishes, some birds, most insects, the moon, storms, rainbows, boomerangs, some spears, etc. ‘Balan’: women, anything connected with water or fire, bandicoots, dogs, platypus, echidna, some snakes, some fishes, most birds, fireflies, scorpions, crickets, the stars, shields, some spears, some trees, etc. ‘Balam’: all edible fruit and

the plants that bear them, tubers, ferns, honey, cigarettes, wine, cake. ‘Bala’: parts of the body, meat, bees, wind, yamsticks, some spears, most trees, grass, mud, stones, noises, language, etc.» (*Lakoff, ‘Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind’, p. 92*)

CARE /keər/  
(noun, singular) –s

1) careful or serious attention;  
2) an object of or cause for concern;

«Once when ‘Care’ was crossing a river, she saw some clay; she thoughtfully took a piece and began to shape it. While she was thinking about what she had made, Jupiter came by. ‘Care’ asked him to give it spirit, and this he gladly granted. But when she wanted her name to be bestowed upon it, Jupiter forbade this and demanded that it be given his name instead. While ‘Care’ and Jupiter were arguing, Earth (Tellus) arose and desired that her name be conferred upon the creature, since she had offered it part of her body. They asked Saturn to be the judge. And Saturn gave them the following decision, which seemed to be just: ‘Since you, Jupiter, have given its spirit, you should receive that spirit at death; and since you, Earth, have given its body, you shall receive its body. But since ‘Care’ first shaped this creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives. And because there is a dispute among you as to its name, let it be called ‘homo’, far it is made out of humus (earth).» (*Martin Heidegger, ‘Being and Time’, p. 184*)<sup>5</sup>

«‘Care’ has nothing to do with ‘distress’, ‘melancholy’, or ‘the cares of life’ which can be found ontically in every Dasein. These—like their opposites, ‘carefreeness’ and ‘gaiety’—are ontically possible only because Dasein, ontologically understood, is care. Because being-in-the-world belongs essentially to Dasein, its being toward the world is essentially taking care.» (*Martin Heidegger, ‘Being and Time’, p. 53*)<sup>6</sup>

CURATION /kyə' rāshən/  
(noun, singular) –s

1) the act of curing or healing;  
2) the act of selecting, arranging, and presenting material (for an art exhibition, an event or a museum);

«Having a moral lens is [...] the responsibility of curators, but not of aggregators.» (*Maria Popova*)<sup>7</sup>

«Ideas are the most valuable thing. Good ones make all the difference; bad ones can hold us back, maybe even destroy us. If we can focus on finding the right ones, helping distil them, and transfer them as quickly as possible, we can get more of that. Curation is that means to the end.» (*Peter Hopkins*)<sup>8</sup>

«Cultural confinement takes place when a curator imposes his own limits on an art exhibition, rather than asking an artist to set his limits.» (*Robert Smithson*)

«Curation only exists because this is an incredible time for creation. It all starts and ends with a writer, a photographer, a filmmaker, or a publisher who creates or funds that work. The rest of us are just looking for something to inspire us, and when we do, we want to share it with others.» (*Mark Amstrong, <http://markarms.tumblr.com>*)<sup>9</sup>

«Curators, whether in the traditional sense or the online redefinition, are gatekeepers in an age when traditional gates are crumbling all around us. And theirs are gates we seek out because they can take us someplace new and exciting, in welcome contrast to the old type of gatekeeper, whose main priority is keeping out the riffraff.» (*Colin Wright*)<sup>10</sup>

«Protection against stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than reception of stimuli.» (*Sigmund Freud, ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’, p. 21*)

## INFORMATION

**Text curated and footnotes written by the authors.**

*Sofia Brazzola, born in 1991*, has studied Communication Design in Milan and Zurich. Passionate about visual and contemporary arts, she issued in 2014 at ZHdK the thesis ‘Identities of Art’, an editorial project empowering Zurich’s independent art spaces with visual communication tools.

*Francesca Pigni, born 1988*, is a Licensed Architect since 2013. She studied Architecture in Milan and Munich. After completing her MSc. in Architecture in 2013, she took part to the post-graduated program MAS Housing 2014–2015 at ETH Zurich.

<sup>7</sup> The means to unveiling the deeper meaning of a collection, freeing the exhibition from the sense of superficiality connected to the cabinet of curiosity, is care and organization.

<sup>8</sup> It can be said that curation is a form of care that acts upon detachment. On the one hand, just like care, curation is a filter that individuals apply to put themselves subjectively in relationship with the world. On the other hand, like amateur collections, it has the same aspects of catering to a universal audience and being subjective.

<sup>9</sup> The breaking point between a creator and a curator is the estrangement of the last one from self-reference. Curation

adapts a series of pieces to a personal vision, extracting them from their initial context. A curator can put both care and curiosity into the creation of its own vision, nevertheless leaving place to others’ care and curiosity, and encouraging interpretation.

<sup>10</sup> Care feeds curiosity and curiosity feeds care. The more care is put behind a selected or exhibited object the more curiosity is stimulated. As curiosity increases, the object worth increases as well together with the ability to relate with the object itself. It is precisely the off-stage vision of the curator that aids our focused reception and directs highly selected stimuli.