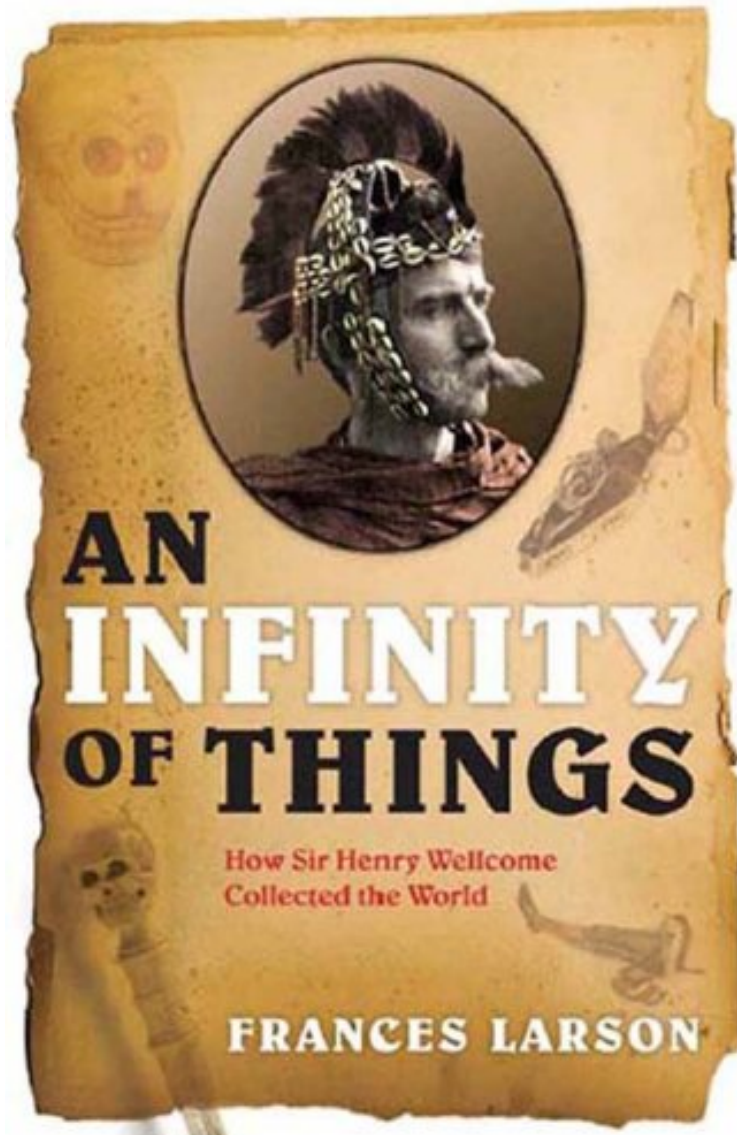


(Library ebook) An Infinity of Things: How Sir Henry Wellcome Collected the World

An Infinity of Things: How Sir Henry Wellcome Collected the World

Frances Larson

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Frances Larson : An Infinity of Things: How Sir Henry Wellcome Collected the World before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Infinity of Things: How Sir Henry Wellcome Collected the World:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A very well written history of the Wellcome collection- without ...By Michael E. MoranA very well written history of the Wellcome collection- without some of the specifics. It

details Wellcome's many collectors and does not focus on Henry Wellcome with as much detail. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Sir Henry Wellcome By Anne Russell There was a wealth of information in this book, but it could have been covered with about half the text - too many ways of saying the same thing throughout 1 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Incredible. Add to yr collection of bks on hoarding ;) By P. Ilou With all the TV programs on Hoarding, this book is very timely. Are collectors hoarders? Are hoarders mentally ill? In my humble medical opinion anything in excess is abnormal (by definition). The book illustrates that problem. For hoarders, to acknowledge that they have a problem and need some help is (only) the necessary beginning towards a solution. Collecting, would it be booklets of matches, or coins or stamps, dead insects, African daggers etc, makes sense if it provides pleasure to the collector. Expert status is based often on a collection of infos accrued around a collection of similar objects plus scientific, mercantile, market systematic analysis. When the 'safety valve' of good judgment fails and the collection is too wide, too numerous, too costly, unkept, or not helping one's health, social life or environment, there is a problem of accumulation. Wikipedia has interesting texts on famous hoarders. Unfortunately medias focus on the hoarders without emphasizing enough in my opinion on the psychology of events leading to the problematic hoarding. Sensationalism for the TV ratings. Ostracizing of hoarders. Hoarders lack a social network and isolate themselves in their environment of material things up to sometimes a point of dying by accident, buried under belongings. Friends and relatives can help hoarders but the problem is 2-sided. Limit input (buys/collect trash/attending auctions/impulsive web shopping when alone) and increase output (discard/give/sell). I would also suggest that a 3rd facet exists: support periodically the hoarder into not falling back in the same faulty judgment mechanisms. If the hoarder can find a person whose judgment he trusts and who he admires/respects very much or even love, then clearing the house with the help of that person is easier. Doing it with a TV crew filming and outsiders like social workers and so-called organization experts cleaning in the back without approval (discarding in the trash) is ludicrous and cruel, because for the hoarder each object has a story and represents an investment, a loss/mourning to be of the hoarder's self if discarded in any way. Listening to some extent to each story from the hoarder and then discarding with hoarder's permission is better than hard discards in the hoarder's back, like shown on TV. Author is very respectful possibly because sponsored by the Wellcome Foundation.

An Infinity of Things tells the story of one of the largest private collections ever created, and the life of the man behind it. Wellcome planned a great museum filled with treasures from all corners of the globe, charting the history of human health from prehistory to the present day. The breadth of his vision was matched only by the depth of his pockets. During the opening decades of the twentieth century he acquired a collection so large that later generations of staff took to describing its contents by the ton. But Wellcome's museum was never finished, and his collection was still stored in vast warehouses when he died, unseen and incomplete. Today, after decades of work by his successors, artefacts from the collection can be seen in museums and libraries throughout the world. Demonstrating what can happen when a collector's aspirations are left unconstrained by wealth, Frances Larson explores Wellcome's life through his possessions, revealing the many tensions in his character: between his talents as a businessman and his desire for scholarly recognition; his curiosity and his perfectionism; and his philanthropic aspirations and his drive for personal glory.

"An incredibly detailed history...Larson's account of Wellcome's ambitious collection amounts to a deftly-researched and poignant tale of an energetic collector and the social network that not only shaped his affinity for things but also shaped the contents of his immense collection." --Museum Anthropology "Absorbing...Ms. Larson's story of Wellcome's truly odd and amazing mania shows how it was rooted in his business and intellectual interests but came to control his existence." --Wall Street Journal "[Wellcome's] quest for obsessional collecting also overtook any possibility of continuing commercial innovation. Yet this biography of a collection memorializes something splendid as well - an amazing energy, a continuing fascination with probing the past. And then of course, the man, that force of nature behind it all. There's a great deal in this book to enthrall the reader." --Washington Times "Fleashes out the man behind the collection." --The Explorers Journal "Larson's book is too good to fall into glib psychological speculation, but the astounding story she presents by itself invites us to think about the relationship between collectors, their objects, and their friends and family, and also to situate this relationship historically...Meticulously researched and beautifully written." --The Journal of Modern History About the Author Frances Larson is Honorary Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology, at Durham University.