### John Collier:
An Inventory of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

#### Descriptive Summary

**Creator** Collier, John, 1901-

**Title** John Collier Papers

**Dates:** 1920-1976

**Extent** 5 boxes, 1 galley folder (2.10 linear feet)

**Abstract** The papers of John Collier represent his transition from a poet to writer of novels, short stories, and screenplays. The bulk of the papers are manuscripts covering several genres, although a substantial amount of correspondence is also included.

**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection MS-00872

**Language:** English.

**Access** Open for research

---

#### Administrative Information

**Acquisition** Purchases, 1967-1976, (R3732, R4786, R7297)

**Processed by** Dale Sauter, 1999

**Repository:** [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](http://example.com/)

---
Biographical Sketch

John Collier, a writer of various genres, was born in London on May 3, 1901. He obtained a private education, and began writing poetry at age nineteen, and was first published in 1920. During the early 1930s he concentrated on writing novels and short stories. One of Collier's most popular works from this period was *His Monkey Wife*, first published in 1930. In this short novel, Collier covers the controversial topic of conjugal love between a man and a chimpanzee. Collier became best known as a writer of fantasy, and though largely unpopular in his native country, gained significant popularity in the United States.


Collier died of a stroke in Pacific Palisades, California on April 6, 1980. For the most part, his work has been ignored by scholars, but still holds wide appeal among readers of fantasy.

Sources


Scope and Contents
The papers of John Collier, ca. 1920-1976, represent Collier's transition from a poet to writer of novels, short stories, and screenplays. The bulk of the papers are manuscripts covering several genres. A substantial amount of correspondence is also included in the papers. The papers are divided into two series: I. Works, ca. 1920-1975, n.d. (4.8 boxes), and II. Personal Papers, ca. 1930-1976, n.d. (0.2 boxes).

The Works Series is subdivided by genre: Novels, Poems, Reviews, Screenplays, and Short Stories, the majority of which fall into the latter two categories. Of specific interest within the Screenplays subseries is an original screenplay for The African Queen, on which Collier was a collaborator, which was not used for the final film. However, the bulk of the Screenplays subseries deals with Collier's adaptation of John Milton's Paradise Lost. Some correspondence documenting Collier's ongoing negotiations with agents and collaborators concerning the adaptation are also included in the Paradise Lost group. A large percentage of this correspondence is with Howard Hausman, Martin Poll, and Jan Stussy, ca. 1967-1970. In addition to the correspondence, there are multiple holograph and typescript drafts of the adaptation. Manuscripts for fifteen short stories, most of which date from 1955-1958 are also present. Among the short stories best represented is Asking For It, of which there are multiple drafts. The Novel subseries contains holograph manuscripts by Collier, including an original of His Monkey Wife, probably his best known novel. The Poems subseries includes both holograph manuscripts and typescripts of what became the published book Gemini. The small Reviews subseries contains reviews by Collier of other novels, as well as a scrapbook of newspaper reviews of his own work, Presenting Moonshine.

The Personal Papers Series is minuscule compared to the Works series. Contained in this series are an announcement of a poetry award given to Collier, a contract concerning the publication of Defy the Foul Fiend, and a very small amount of outgoing correspondence to John Beevers, Louis Golding, and Alannah Harper. Of particular note within this series is a notebook kept by Collier that records short story titles, information regarding dates of composition, length of writing time, payment received, and the publisher of the story. This record book also contains listed groupings of possible stories to be released as collections, notes for short stories, and some sketches.

The order of the collection appears to have been somewhat influenced by Bertram Rota Ltd., the dealer from which it was obtained. On the whole, this order has been maintained, though the Paradise Lost correspondence was put in chronological order during processing. Additionally, many of the items seem to have been labeled by the author and/or the dealer, and these were assumed largely reliable for the task of identification and description.

Index Terms

Correspondents
Barker, Lee

Subjects
Milton, John, 1608-1674 -- Paradise Lost
English literature -- 20th century

**Document Types**

Screenplays

Subseries A. Novels, 1937?, n.d.

Easy Go Grange, holograph original manuscript of first chapter of an unfinished novel with corrections, 1937?, 35p

His Monkey Wife, holograph manuscript, n.d., 285p


Gemini

Typescript original of two poems, ca. 1925-1926, 3p

"Three Men in One Room," composite holograph and typescript, much amended, with later revisions for print, n.d., 13p

"The Apology," introduction, holograph manuscript, n.d., 5p

Subseries C. Reviews, 1941?, n.d.

Reviews of Presenting Moonshine, scrapbook, 1941?

Review of The Search by C. P. Snow and four other novels, n.d., 5p

Subseries D. Screenplays, ca. 1937-1975, n.d.

African Queen, original screenplay typescript, 11 April 1947, 130p

Ballet Story, typescript, n.d., 21p

Evening Primrose, first draft typescript, 1937?, 85p

Finding Ernie

Holograph manuscript, record of steps and disagreements during development from verbal description of story outline to complete screenplay, with corrections, 1972, 1973?, 7p
Composite holograph and typescript, first draft script, used for working copy, with corrections, n.d., 175p  

Composite holograph and typescript with corrections, n.d., 176p  

Typescript, first material after starting on screen version, 1970, 116p  

Typescript, final fourth [?] material with corrections, 4 July 1971, 119p  

Typescript, third uncut version, July 28, 1971, 148p  

Typescript, final fifth material, October 1971, 122p  

For Elissa, typescript, 1953?, 129p  

The Leaning Tower of East Side Plaza, typescript with corrections, n.d., 38p  

Mary, holograph manuscript, original screenplay, with corrections, n.d., 104p  

Paradise Lost  

Correspondence, ca. 1967-1975, n.d.  

Fragments, n.d.  

1967-1969  

1970, 1975  

First presentation of concept of film, typescript with corrections, 18 January 1967, 15p  

First outline of possible adaptation for motion picture, typescript, June-July 1967, 34p  

Rough outline of principal sequence, typescript with corrections, 1967?, 34p
Layout of first half of screenplay containing arguments pro & con for certain aspects of the work, holograph manuscript with corrections, 1967?, 70p

'A Second Beginning,' holograph manuscript, with corrections, 13 November 1967, 29p

Working copy, typescript with corrections, n.d., 130p

Draft of last scenes, holograph manuscript with corrections, n.d., 58p

Final screenplay, typescript with corrections, 30 September 1968?, 143p

Draft of fall sequence, typescript with corrections, n.d., 11p

Uncut version, typescript, n.d., 164p

Final version prepared for publication, typescript with corrections, May 5, 1972, 142p

Introduction to published version

Typescript with corrections, n.d., 10p

Composite holograph and typescript with corrections, 14 October 1972, 16p

Typescript with corrections, n.d., 10p

Early version, holograph manuscript with corrections, n.d., 2p

Foreword written for use in connection with the screenplay

Typescript with corrections, n.d., 4p

Typescript, n.d., 4p

Notes on certain aspects of the production

Holograph manuscript, with corrections, n.d., 9p
Typescript, n.d., 10p

Notes and comments on the projected screenplay, typescript with corrections, n.d., 89p

Notes and fragments, n.d., 13p


Time Stands Still, outline, typescript with corrections, 10 January 1951, 67p

Wet Saturday, typescript with corrections, n.d., 25p

Subseries E. Short Stories, ca. 1920-1975, n.d.

Alien Corn, typescript with corrections, ca. 1958-1959, 18p

Asking for It (original version titled Characters More Important Than Plot)

Typescript with corrections, 1958-1959, 16p

Holograph manuscript with corrections, 1975?, 13p

The Chaser -- see folder 5.21

Cupid Paid, holograph manuscript, with corrections, ca. 1920-1923, 12p

A Dog's a Dog, with two alternative drafts numbered I & II, holograph manuscript with corrections, February or March 1956?, 13p

Don't Call Me, I'll Call You, holograph manuscript with corrections, n.d., 16p

Eyes and No Nose, typescript with corrections, 4 February 1967, 42p

Great Possibilities -- see folder 5.21
Mademoiselle Kiki, original holograph manuscript with corrections, 1938?, 12p

Man Overboard, original holograph manuscript with corrections, ca. 1957-1958, 30p

The Mask and the Maiden -- see folder 5.13

A Matter of Taste, original holograph manuscript with corrections, December 1955 or January 1956?, 8p


None So Blind, original holograph manuscript with corrections, December 1955?, 15p

Pictures in the Fire -- see folder 5.1

Reindeer on the Way, original holograph manuscript with corrections, 1937?, 42p

Son of Kiki, incomplete holograph manuscript with corrections, n.d., 2p

The Tender Age, original holograph manuscript, with corrections, November 1955?, 6p

Think No Evil, galley proofs with corrections, 21 November 1957 - early summer 1958, 12p (removed to galley folder)
Series II. Personal Papers, ca. 1930-1976, n.d.

Award, pages from *This Quarter*, announcing winner of poetry award, 193?

Contract, memorandum of agreement with Collier re "Defy the Foul Fiend," 21 June 1934, 2p

Outgoing correspondence, 1935, n.d.

Short story record book, holograph entries in bound notebook, ca. 1937-1976; also includes information on account with Matson, lists for collections of short stories, notes for short stories, and some sketches
John Collier Papers--Index of Correspondents

- Barker, Lee (Doubleday & Co., Inc.)--3.6
- Hausman, Howard (William Morris Agency, Inc.)--3.6-7
- Krasner, Jack (J. H. Cohen & Co.)--3.6
- Poll, Martin (Marpol Productions, Inc.)--3.6-7
- Stussy, Jan, 1921- (UCLA)--3.5