

William Cooper:

An Inventory of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

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| Creator | Cooper, William, 1910- |
| Title | William Cooper Papers |
| Dates: | 1937-1991 |
| Extent | 6 document boxes, 1 oversize folder (osf), and 3 scrapbooks (bv) (2.5 linear feet) |
| Abstract | The William Cooper (pseudonym of Harry Summerfield Hoff) papers consist of holograph and typescript drafts, notebooks, page proofs, clippings, and a few items of correspondence. The collection consists primarily of drafts of works published 1982-1991. Among these are <i>Scenes from Metropolitan Life</i> , <i>Scenes from Later Life</i> , <i>From Early Life</i> , and <i>Immortality at Any Price</i> . |
| Call Number: | Manuscript Collection MS-00500 |
| Language: | English. |
| Access | Open for research |

Administrative Information

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| Acquisition | Purchase, 1991 (R12423, R14294) |
| Processed by | Robert Kendrick, 1996 |
| Repository: | Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin |

Biographical Sketch

William Cooper is a British writer of novels, plays, and non-fiction, who was born Harry Summerfield Hoff on August 4, 1910, in Crewe, England. Cooper earned his M. A. degree from Christ's College at Cambridge University in 1933. The son of two teachers, Cooper taught in Leicester, England from 1933 to 1940. After serving in the Royal Air Force during World War II, Cooper held a variety of civil service positions, including assistant commissioner of the Civil Service Commission (1945-1958), part-time personnel consultant for the Atomic Energy Authority (1958-1971) and the Central Electricity Generating Board (1960-1971), and assistant director of the Civil Service Selection Board (1971-1975). From 1977 to 1988, Cooper held the position of adjunct professor at the London Center of Syracuse University. Cooper married Joyce Barbara Harris in 1951. They have two daughters, Louisa and Catherine.

The majority of Cooper's published work has been fiction. Early in his career as H. S. Hoff, he published *Trina* (1934; published in the U. S. as *It Happened in PRK*), *Rhea* (1935), *Lisa* (1937), and *Three Marriages* (1946). Among the novels published under the pseudonym William Cooper are *The Struggles of Albert Woods* (1953), *The Ever-Interesting Topic* (1954), *Disquiet and Peace* (1956), *Young People* (1958), *You're Not Alone* (1976), *From Early Life* (1990), and *Immortality at Any Price* (1991). Forming the series "Scenes from Life" are the novels *Scenes from Provincial Life* (1950), *Scenes from Married Life* (1961), *Scenes from Metropolitan Life* (1982), and *Scenes from Later Life* (1983). Interestingly, *Scenes from Metropolitan Life*, the second novel in the series, languished unpublished in a bank vault for over thirty years because of threatened legal action for libel. Cooper has also written a play, *Prince Genji* (1950), the non-fiction *Shall We Ever Know? The Trial of the Hosein Brothers for the Murder of Mrs. McKay* (1971), and a pamphlet on his friend C. P. Snow for the series "Writers and Their Work."

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of holograph and typescript drafts, notebooks, page proofs, clippings, and a few items of correspondence. The collection is arranged in two series: I. Works, 1977-1989 (5.5 boxes, 1 oversize folder); II. Reviews and Articles re Cooper, 1937-1991 (0.5 boxes, 3 bound volumes). Both series are arranged chronologically.

The collection consists primarily of holograph and typescript drafts of works published 1982-1991. Among these are *Scenes from Metropolitan Life*, *Scenes from Later Life*, *From Early Life*, and *Immortality at Any Price*. *Scenes from Metropolitan Life* is represented only by a typescript printer's copy. *Scenes from Later Life* includes a holograph draft in four notebooks, notes, three typescript drafts with copious holograph revisions and revised sheets, and a typescript printer's copy. *From Early Life* includes a holograph draft in two notebooks and loose sheets, two typescripts with revisions and multiple revised sheets, and a typescript printer's copy. For *Immortality at Any Price*,

there are eight notebooks containing a holograph draft with revisions and three typescript drafts with revisions and multiple revised sheets, including a final draft. In addition, there are corrected typescripts for the biographical essay, "A History," revised page proofs, and correspondence from Bill Buford concerning the essay's revision for publication in *Granta*. There are also revised typescripts of other essays.

Cooper's intense process of revision led him to retype and revise by hand multiple copies of single sheets. Each of the early drafts in this collection may have multiple copies of various pages. These materials were received without any apparent logical arrangement of revised sheets within each title; that is, revisions of a single sheet were not necessarily filed together. As this is apparently the author's original working order, no attempt has been made to collocate multiple revised sheets.

There are also four notebooks, containing clippings of book reviews of Cooper's work, articles on Cooper, and interviews, 1946-1991. The notebooks also contain two pieces of correspondence and an adaptation of the book *Shall We Ever Know?* published in the *Liverpool Daily Post*. In addition, there is a folder of early clippings (1937, nd) concerning the work of H. S. Hoff, which are mounted on sheets.

Related Material

The material described in this inventory is complemented by an earlier and larger acquisition of Cooper manuscripts at the Ransom Center. For access to these other manuscripts, consult the finding aid for the William Cooper Collection.

Index Terms

Subjects

English fiction -- 20th century

Document Types

First drafts

Series I. Works, 1977-1989

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Essays. Typescripts with revisions, undated | box 1 folder 1 |
| <i>Scenes from Metropolitan Life</i> [novel, 1982]. Typescript, printer's copy, undated | folder 2-3 |
| <i>Scenes from Later Life</i> [novel, 1983] | |
| Four notebooks containing holograph draft, 1977-1979, undated | box 1 folder 4-5 |
| Notes and typescript with holograph revisions and typed revised sheets, undated | folder 6 |
| Notes and typescript with holograph revisions and typed revised sheets, undated | box 2 folder 1-4 |
| Typescript 2, with typed revised sheets, Dec. 1982 | folder 5-6 |
| Typescript 3, with revisions, Dec. 1982 | folder 7 |
| Typescript 3, with revisions, Dec. 1982 | box 3 folder 1 |
| Typescript, printer's copy, undated | folder 2-4 |
| "A History" [biographical essay, 1989] | |
| Typescripts with revisions, and correspondence, 1989 | box 3 folder 5 |
| Two sets of page proofs with revisions, 1989 | box osf |
| <i>From Early Life</i> [autobiographical novel, 1990] | |
| Two notebooks and single sheets containing holograph draft, March 1987, undated | box 3 folder 6 |

Typescripts, with revisions, undated **folder**
7-8

Typescript, printer's copy, undated **box 4 folder 1**

Typescript, called "Top copy," with revisions, undated **folder 2**

Immortality at Any Price [novel, 1991]

Eight notebooks containing holograph draft with revisions, undated **box 4**
folder
3-7

Typescript, with revised sheets, 1983-1989 **box 5**
folder 1-3

Typescript, with revised sheets, 1988-1989 **folder 4-6**

Typescript final draft, undated **box 6 folder 1-2**

Series II. Reviews and Articles re Cooper, 1937-1991

Clippings mounted on sheets, 1937, undated

**box 6
folder 3**

Scrapbooks

1946-1953

box bv

1953-1964

1961-1989

1990-1991

box 6 folder 4

William Cooper--Index of Correspondents

- Allen, Mary (BBC)--Scrapbook, 1946-1953
- Buford, Bill (*Granta*)--6.1
- Herbert, Roy (*New Scientist*)--Scrapbook, 1961-1989