

Peter Quennell:

An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Quennell, Peter, 1905-1993
Title:	Peter Quennell Collection
Dates:	1925-1973
Extent:	10 boxes (4.2 linear feet), 1 galley folder (gf)
Abstract:	The collection of British writer and editor Peter Quennell consists primarily of manuscripts of 16 of his works.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-03361
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research. Researchers must create an online Research Account and agree to the Materials Use Policy before using archival materials.
Use Policies:	Ransom Center collections may contain material with sensitive or confidential information that is protected under federal or state right to privacy laws and regulations. Researchers are advised that the disclosure of certain information pertaining to identifiable living individuals represented in the collections without the consent of those individuals may have legal ramifications (e.g., a cause of action under common law for invasion of privacy may arise if facts concerning an individual's private life are published that would be deemed highly offensive to a reasonable person) for which the Ransom Center and The University of Texas at Austin assume no responsibility.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation	Peter Quennell Collection (Manuscript Collection MS-03361). Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.
Acquisition:	Purchases, 1967 (R3533, R3795); 1969 (R4786); 1973 (R5195); and 1977 (R7575, R7749)

Processed by: Jonathan Reynolds, 2006; Joan Sibley and Richard Workman, 2018
Note: Part of this finding aid replicates and replaces information previously available only in a card catalog. Please see the explanatory note at the end of this finding aid for information regarding the arrangement of the manuscripts as well as the abbreviations commonly used in descriptions.

Repository: [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

Biographical Sketch

Peter Quennell was an English biographer, critic, and literary historian born in Bickley, South East Greater London, England in March of 1905. Son of social historians and authors Marjorie and Charles Henry Bourne Quennell, Peter was introduced to the world of scholarship early in his life. He was educated at Balliol College, Oxford and taught English in Japan for a year at the Tokyo University of Science and Literature. Married five times, Quennell had two children: Sarah with his third wife and Alexander with his fifth.

Quennell published his first book, *Masques & Poems*, in 1922. He went on to publish several more volumes of poetry. Later, he distinguished himself as a biographer of 18th and 19th century authors including Alexander Pope, William Hogarth, and Samuel Johnson, and was considered an authority on Lord Byron. As a journalist, Quennell was editor of *Cornhill Magazine* from 1944 to 1951 and was the founder and editor of *History Today* from 1951 to 1979.

A prolific author, Peter Quennell edited and contributed to numerous literary histories in his final years, including his works *The Last Edwardians* and *An Illustrated Companion to World Literature*. He also published a two-volume autobiography: *The Marble Foot* covers his life up to 1938, and *Wanton Chase* picks up from 1939. He was knighted in 1992 at the age of eighty-seven, shortly before his death in 1993.

Sources:

“Peter Quennell.” *Contemporary Authors Online* <http://galenet.galegroup.com> (accessed 7 September 2006).

Scope and Contents

This collection is composed of manuscripts for 17 published and unpublished works by Peter Quennell, along with 3 letters and a small number of miscellaneous items. The first seven boxes contain materials previously described only in the Ransom Center's card catalog. The final three boxes contain materials for four additional works, acquired and described separately at a later date.

Related Material

Sir Peter Quennell appears elsewhere in the Ransom Center in the collections of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., Richard Church, Nancy Cunard, Constantine FitzGibbon, Graham Greene, John Haffenden, Gerald Hamilton, Allanah Harper, Kenneth Hopkins, John Lehmann, Philip Lindsay, *London Magazine*, Marie Adelaide Belloc Lowndes, Compton Mackenzie, Lady Ottoline Morrell, Derek Patmore, PEN, and John Symonds.

Works:

Alexander Pope: The education of genius, 1688-1728:

Signed Ams with handwritten revisions, 411 pages in 5 notebooks, 1965-1968 **Container**
1.1-5

Tms with handwritten revisions and with proofreader's and printer's handwritten notes and markings, 457 pages, 1968 **Container**
1.6-7,
2.1-2

Page proofs on galleys with handwritten revisions and printer's handwritten note, 145 galleys, 1-9 July 1968 **Container**
gf 1

Alexander the Great, signed Ams / incomplete with handwritten revisions, 90 pages in notebook, 1925-1926 **Container**
2.3

Baudelaire and the symbolists, signed Ams / draft / incomplete with handwritten revisions, approximately 175 pages in 3 notebooks, 1926-1927. Contains also translation of The two pigeons by Laforgue, notes and drafts of miscellaneous items, and pasted-in galley proofs of section on Laforgue. **Container**
2.4-5

Baudelaire and the symbolists, printed book with heavy handwritten revisions for second edition, 221 pages, undated **Container**
2.6

Byron: The years of fame, Ams / draft / incomplete with handwritten revisions, approximately 210 pages in notebook, 9 March 1934 **Container**
3.1

Byron: The years of fame, printed book with extensive handwritten revisions for second edition, 305 pages, undated **Container**
3.2

Four portraits, printed book with handwritten revisions for second edition, 236 pages, undated **Container**
3.3

Hogarth's progress, Ams with handwritten revisions, approximately 305 pages in 3 notebooks, undated **Container**
3.4-6

Hostile transaction, signed Ams / unfinished with handwritten emendations, 14 pages, 28 October 1945 **Container**
4.1

Legendary moralities by Jules Laforgue, signed Ams with handwritten revisions, 46 pages, November 1926. Partial translation; contains only The miracle of the roses and Lohengrin, son of Parsifal. **Container**
4.2

The marble foot, Ams, 344 pages in 3 notebooks, undated **Container**
4.3-5

The marble foot, Tms with handwritten corrections, 331 pages, undated	Container 4.6-8
Notebook miscellany, Ams / drafts with handwritten revisions, 85 pages, undated. Contains drafts of translations, reviews, etc., and draft of Baudelaire to Laforgue, early version of Baudelaire and the symbolists.	Container 5.1
Shakespeare: The poet and his background, signed Ams with handwritten revisions, approximately 415 pages in 7 notebooks, 1960	Container 5.2-8
Shakespeare: The poet and his background, signed T and Tccms with handwritten revisions and printer's markings, 457 pages, 1963	Container 6.1-4
The sign of the fish, Ams with handwritten revisions, approximately 250 pages in 3 notebooks, undated	Container 6.5-7
Sympathy and other stories, signed Ams / incomplete with handwritten revisions, 392 pages in 3 notebooks, undated. Written in one notebook: Part of A superficial journey.	Container 6.8, 7.1-2
Trans-Siberian, Ams / unfinished with handwritten revisions, 44 pages in notebook, 26 November no year. Written with this: Marcel Proust; The bird cage; Review of The house in Paris by Elizabeth Bowen; several short drafts of miscellaneous nature.	Container 7.3

Letters:

ALS to Barrow, _____, undated

Container 7.4

ALS to Harper, Allannah, undated

ALS, APCS to Massey, Arthur E., 9 March 1927, 14 February 1930

Miscellaneous:

Albatross Limited. Memorandum of agreement with Peter Quennell re Byron, the years of fame, signed printed document, 2 pages, 4 March 1947. **Container**
7.5

Albatross Limited. Memorandum of agreement with Peter Quennell re Caroline of England, signed printed document, 2 pages, 28 August 1947.

Quennell, Peter, 1905-1993. Notes for Shakespeare and The sign of the fish, Ams / notes, 57 pages in notebook, undated. Pasted in this: TLS Harold Nicolson to Quennell, 24 April 1956. **Container**
7.6

Additional Works:

Byron in Italy (Penguin Books edition, 1955), proof pages with handwritten corrections	Box 8 Folder 1
Casanova in London and Other Essays (1971)	Folder
Typescript draft with handwritten corrections	Folder 2
Proof copy with handwritten corrections	Folder 3
The Colosseum (1971)	Folder
"Notebook 1," contains I, II, III, V	Folder 4
"Notebook 2," contains IV, V, VII, dated 30 June 1970	Folder 5
"Notebook 3," contains VI	Box 9 Folder 1
Typescript with handwritten corrections	Folder 2
Samuel Johnson (1973)	Folder
"Notebook 4," contains various notes and drafts	Folder 3
"Notebook 5," contains VI, I, II, with Bibliog. at the back	Folder 4
"Notebook 6," contains III	Folder 5
"Notebook 7," contains IV, V	Folder 6
"Notebook 8," contains VII, V cont'd, VIII, Epilogue	Box 10 Folder 1
Typescript draft with handwritten corrections	Folder 2

Explanatory Note Concerning Manuscript Collections Cataloged in the Card Catalog

Prior to 1990 when archival cataloging procedures were adopted at the Ransom Center, all manuscript collections were described in a card catalog.

Organization of Collections:

- Manuscripts for each author collection were organized into four categories:
- **Works:** manuscripts by the author, arranged alphabetically by title;
- **Letters:** the author's outgoing correspondence, arranged alphabetically by recipient name;
- **Recipient:** the author's incoming correspondence, arranged alphabetically by the author of the letter; and
- **Miscellaneous:** all other manuscripts and correspondence, arranged alphabetically by creator.

Materials that did not fit into these categories, such as art, photographs, books, and near-print materials such as newspaper clippings, were dispersed to other Ransom Center collections for cataloging and storage.

Abbreviations Used in Descriptions:

The symbols below were used in combinations. For example **ALS** means autograph letter signed; **Tccms** means typed carbon copy manuscript, etc.

- **A** = autograph (i.e., handwritten)
- **T** = typed
- **S** = signed
- **I** = initialed
- **Ms** = manuscript
- **Mss** = manuscripts
- **L** = letter
- **FL** = form letter
- **N** = note
- **D** = document
- **C** = card
- **PC** = post card
- **cc** = carbon copy
- **p** = page
- **pp** = pages
- **l** = leaf
- **ll** = leaves
- **nd** = no date
- **inc d** = incomplete date