Ronald Firbank:

An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Firbank, Ronald, 1886-1926
Title:	Ronald Firbank Collection
Dates:	1902-1924
Extent:	2 boxes (.84 linear feet)
Abstract:	Includes manuscripts and letters by British novelist Ronald Firbank, as well as printed copies of some of his works with his handwritten corrections, and 7 notebooks with drawings and dialogue for *Valmouth*.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-1389
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	All *Lincoln Portrait* items were purchased in 1964 (R 2282).
Processed by:	Joan Sibley and Jamie Hawkins-Kirkham, 2011 **Note:** 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:	The University of Texas at Austin, Harry Ransom Center

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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 small collection is composed entirely of works by Peter Quennell arranged alphabetically in a single series. Comprised of four works, most of which were published in the early 1970s, the majority of the collection consists of materials for *The Colosseum* and *Samuel Johnson* contained within eight handwritten notebooks. Typescripts for *Casanova in London*, *The Colosseum*, and *Samuel Johnson* are included, as well as proof copies of *Casanova in London* and the 1955 edition of *Byron in Italy*.

Related Material

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An additional eight boxes of Peter Quennell works at the Ransom Center include *Alexander Pope: the Education of Genius* (1968); an unpublished novel entitled Alexander the Great; *Baudelaire and the Symbolists* (1929); *Byron: the Years of Fame* (1943); *Four Portraits* (1945); *Hogarth's Progress* (1955); "Hostile Transaction"; *Legendary Moralities* by Jules Laforgue (a partial translation); *The Marble Foot* (1977); *Shakespeare: the Poet and His Background* (1963); *The Sign of the Fish* (1960); *Sympathy and Other Stories* (1938); and an unpublished work, Trans-Siberian. Further descriptions of these manuscripts are available in a card catalogue.

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.

Index Terms

People

Rasdall, Ernest.

Document Types

Galley proofs.

Tear sheets.

Typescripts.

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Works:

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