
Bobby Fong Collection on Oscar WildeMS.2015.005

William Andrews Clark Memorial Library
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Language of Material: English

Contributing Institution: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library

Title: Bobby Fong Collection on Oscar Wilde

Identifier/Call Number: MS.2015.005

Physical Description: 3 boxes

Date (inclusive): 1977-2014

Language of Material: English

Abstract: The Bobby Fong collection contains notes, correspondence, reference materials, and typescripts concerning the writing of Fong's doctoral thesis in 1978 and a critical edition of Oscar Wilde's poetry that he published with his colleague Karl Beckson in 2000. Most of the collection consists of correspondence regarding the publication of the 2000 critical edition, the first ever compilation of every existing piece of Oscar Wilde's Poetry.

William Andrews Clark Memorial Library

Physical Description: 3 boxes, 3 linear ft.

Custodial History

Gift of Suzanne Fong, 2015.

Processing Information

Some duplicate materials were identified and removed as appropriate, such as empty mailing envelopes with no contextual information and .

This collection was processed and described in 2018 by Joyce Wang.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Bobby Fong Collection on Oscar Wilde, MS.2015.005, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

Biographical Note

Bobby Fong was born on January 28, 1950 in Oakland, California. His parents were Chinese immigrants, and Fong lived in Oakland's Chinatown neighborhood for most of his childhood. From 1969-1973, he attended Harvard on a scholarship where he obtained a bachelor's degree in English and was elected to the honor society Phi Beta Kappa. He started his PhD program at UCLA in 1975 with a specialization in 19th-20th century English and American literature, poetry, and intellectual and religious history. Between 1977 and 1978, he was a dissertation fellow at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, where he completed his dissertation establishing the texts of Wilde's poetry, including those for poems that had hitherto been unpublished. His thesis would be further expanded in a critical edition that he co-published with Karl Beckson (Brooklyn College) in 2000 that was titled *Poems and Poems in Prose*.

His academic career included various professorships at the English department of Berea College, Hope College, and Hamilton College. He rose to deanship at both Hope College and Hamilton College, spending the latter portion of his career in largely administrative roles. Prior to his unexpected passing, he was the president of Ursinus College and had gained renown for spearheading an initiative to reinvigorate the campus' liberal arts curricula, believing in its capacity to not only offer critical thinking skills, but to also transform an individual's soul. He assumed a number of leadership positions, such as being the chair of the Board of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Him and his wife Suzanne Fong had two children named Colin and Jonathan.

Scope and Contents

This collection almost exclusively consists primarily of notes, correspondence, invoices, proofs, typescripts, and manuscript facsimiles/scans related to Fong's research on the poetry of Oscar Wilde. A portion of his reference materials date from the time of his PhD studies, with the collection being added to in the early 90s as he refined his dissertation. These materials culminated in his co-production of the 4th volume of the Oxford English Texts Complete Works of Oscar Wilde: *Poems and Poems in Prose* with Karl Beckson.

Arrangement

The collection has been split into four series. Despite this, some of the subject matter - including the actual materials themselves - may overlap or be repeated across series. Reference files are arranged in their original file numbering order, which was based on the order in which the poems appeared in the critical edition. The other series are arranged by approximate date. The four series are named as followed:

Series 1 Reference Files on OW's Poetry Series 2: Dissertation Materials Series 3: Oxford English Texts (OET) Series 4: Correspondence

Related Materials

The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library also holds a facsimile of Bobby Fong's dissertation and a copy of his 2000 publication *Poems and Poems in Prose*, along with a number of other scholarly works regarding Oscar Wilde's poetry. Please consult the UCLA catalog to learn more about these collections.

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright has not been assigned to the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, UCLA. All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Clark Librarian. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, UCLA as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained.

Reference Files on Oscar Wilde's Poetry 1976-2005**Scope and Contents**

Reference materials collected throughout Fong's years of studying the life and work of Oscar Wilde - his poetry in particular. Individual folders had been generated each of Wilde's known poems. Most of these folders contain a mix of the following materials: a copy of the poem's textual apparatus, the copy-text, occasional correspondence between Fong and other Wilde scholars, contextual research materials, and commentaries from either Fong (and sometimes Beckson) regarding the poems. While most of the materials are undated, they can be assumed to have been produced during the time of Fong's PhD education (1975-1977) or while during the production of the OET (1993-1999). The materials here are not the entirety of the reference materials within the collection, some of which may be found scattered across the other three series.

Arrangement

Folders that were created for a specific Wilde poem were originally numbered according to their appearance in the critical edition that Fong created for his PhD dissertation and which he and Beckson later refined into the OET edition.

Box 1, folder 1

Call slips & notes c. 1970s**Scope and Contents**

Index cards carrying notes on different versions of Wilde's poems, as well as call slips from the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library.

Box 1, Folder 118
Box 1, Folder 119

Clark Library manuscripts & scans 1993**Handwritten transcriptions from Wilde MS & scans of original MS undated****Scope and Contents**

Includes notes from Fong regarding the provenance and context of some of Wilde's poems, as well as some scans and written transcriptions of original MSS.

Box 1, Folder 120
Box 1, Folder 3
Box 1, Folder 121
Box 1, Folder 2

Manuscript directory/listings 1993-1997**Microform prints of The Boston, 1877 & 1881 undated****Misc. articles & notes 1992-1993****Notes undated****Scope and Contents**

Index cards containing either lines from or titles of Wilde's poems. Undated, but likely from Fong's time as a PhD student.

Box 1, folder 122

Notes and lists of Wilde Manuscripts c. 1977**Scope and Contents**

Folder includes notes and lists of extant Wilde manuscripts and the collections/institutions that they belong to.

Box 1, folder 123

The Poet, the Actress, Jezebel, and Simon of Cyrene 1993-1994, 2000

Scope and Contents

Includes some scans of unpublished Wilde poems in prose (short stories) of dubious authority - especially in reference to the works "Jezebel", "Simon of Cyrene", and "The Actress". The latter three poems were privately printed in a pamphlet titled *Echoes* along with a version of Wilde's "The Poet", but Fong and Beckson concluded that there was not enough evidence to support the claim that these three poems had been written by Wilde as well.

Box 1,
Folder 4-117

Reference materials for individual poems 1976-2000

Scope and Contents

The collection contains a group of roughly ~115 folders created by Fong throughout the course of his research on Oscar Wilde's poetry. Folders may contain an assortment of the following: notes about the provenance of the poem and its variants, a copy of some version of the poem (generally, though not always the copy-text), some commentary from Fong and Beckson, occasional correspondence between Fong and different Wilde scholars, contextual information on Oscar Wilde's poetry, and the poem's textual apparatus. The folder may contain a mixture of materials from the days of Fong's dissertation as well as those from his time during the creation of the OET edition with Karl Beckson. There are files for all 119 poems with the exception of "The Missing Shepherd". Some folders include scans of notes written on the original folder within which the materials were originally contained in, or the original folders themselves.

Arrangement

The folders have been kept in their original order with them being numbered according to the order in which the poems appeared in Fong's dissertation and OET.

Dissertation Materials 1976-1978

Scope and Contents

This series is an assemblage of notes, essays, correspondence, library invoices/receipts, and drafts of Fong's dissertation.

Processing Information

The materials in this collection are predominantly undated, with most of the date labels being an estimate of the likely time period within which the material was produced.

Arrangement

Materials are arranged in a rough chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 124
Box 1,
Folder 125-126

Essays, notes, & manuscript requests 1976-1978

Edited commentary & notes 1977-1978

Scope and Contents

Files contains both typed and handwritten notes regarding the provenance and history of specific Wilde poems, as well as the copy-text for a number of the poems and the listings of Wilde manuscripts in the collections of various institutions.

The first of the files contains Fong's prospectus for a critical edition.

Box 1, folder 127

Typed manuscript of commentary & notes 1977-1978

Scope and Contents

Folder contains an early, typed draft of Fong's commentary on Oscar Wilde's poetry as part of his PhD dissertation, including edits in his hand written in pen.

Box 1, Folder 128	<p>Correspondence, notes, and pamphlets 1977-1978</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>Includes letters from domestic and international institutions such as the Bodmer Library, New York Public Library, the British Library, and Beinecke Library expressing permission to reproduce quotations from Wilde holographs in their respective collections. Also includes a UCLA pamphlet containing the guidelines for preparing a dissertation manuscript enclosing a copy of Fong's resume.</p>
Box 2, Folder 1-2	<p>Text of Oscar Wilde's Poetry 1977-1978</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>Contains the copy-text established by Fong while writing his dissertation.</p>
Box 2, folder 3-7	<p>Typed copy c. 1978</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>Likely the official typescript of Fong's PhD dissertation, produced on UCLA Thesis Typing Paper with the signatures of approval from his department reviewers.</p>
	<p>OET (Oxford English Texts Edition) 1992-1999</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>This series includes drafts, proofs, correspondence, manuscript scans, and other supplementary materials pertaining to Fong and Beckson's 2000 publication of Wilde's poems as part of the Oxford English Texts series.</p> <p>Arrangement</p> <p>Materials are arranged in a rough chronological order.</p>
Box 2, folder 8-12	<p>Copy of dissertation with some materials for OET c. 1990s</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>A printed copy of the 1978 dissertation with handwritten revisions by Fong and some narrative (i.e. the editorial introduction) content from the OET edition inserted.</p>
Box 2, folder 13	Drafts of introduction c. 1990s
Box 2, folder 14	<p>Notes and drafts for commentary c. 1990s</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>Notes on commentary made by Karl Beckson.</p>
Box 2, folder 15-16	Textual apparatus c. 1990s
Box 2, folder 17	Revised commentary & textual apparatus 1993
Box 2, Folder 18	Drafts of commentary 1993-1994
Box 2, Folder 19-21	Wilde poems & drafts of textual apparatus c. 1994
Box 2, folder 22, Box 3, Folder 1-2	<p>Drafts of annotations with comments c. 1996</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>Files contain a draft of a section of the poem annotations for the OET edition with Karl Beckson responding to comments made by scholar Ian Small (?????)</p>
Box 3, Folder 3-4	Karl Beckson's Introduction & Edits to the Editorial Introduction 1996
Box 3, folder 5-6	Final version of commentary c. 1997
Box 3, Folder 7-8	Proofs of Poems & Poems in Prose 1999

Correspondence & Miscellaneous 1976-2014

Scope and Contents

Includes letters to other Wilde scholars, publishing groups, libraries, and other individuals with personal relations to Wilde. This series also includes items enclosed with a piece of correspondence, which could include things such as drafts materials and pamphlets. Miscellaneous items include magazine articles and other materials with little pertinence to research of Wilde.

Arrangement

Items arranged in rough chronological order.

Box 3, folder 9-12

Correspondence 1976-1978, 1984

Scope and Contents

Correspondence for this period consists primarily of Fong's enquiries regarding the availability of Oscar Wilde materials/manuscripts and relevant catalogs from numerous libraries, museums, and Wilde affiliates such as Merlin Vyvyan Holland (Wilde's grandson).

Box 3,
Folder 13-20

Correspondence 1992-1995

Scope and Contents

Materials in the 1992 folder concern the origin of Fong and Beckson's work on a critical edition of Oscar Wilde's poetry to be published by the Oxford University Press. Work for the edition was officially approved in 1993. Prominent figures in these files include book collector Viscountess Mary Hyde Eccles, the editors of the Oxford English Texts Ian Small and Russell Jackson, and the editor of Oxford University Press Frances Whistler.

Box 3,
Folder 21-26

Correspondence 1996-2000

Scope and Contents

Includes correspondence and attending enclosures - such as drafts and reference materials - regarding the critical edition of Wilde's poetry. The recipients of the letters narrow down to individuals directly involved with the project.

Box 3, Folder 27

Readings on Oliver Cromwell undated

Scope and Contents

Readings on Oliver Cromwell sent from Karl Beckson to Bobby Fong.

Box 3, Folder 28

Poems from Priscilla Atkins 1995

Scope and Contents

Materials unrelated to Oscar Wilde sent by Priscilla Atkins, then a teacher and librarian at Hope College.

Box 3, Folder 29

Liberal Education Vol. 100, No. 3 2014

Scope and Contents

Issue features an op-ed by Bobby Fong regarding the state of liberal arts education in America.

Box 3, Folder 30

Ursinus Magazine, Fall 2014 2014

Scope and Contents

This issue of the Ursinus College magazine includes a memorial written by Colin Fong on his father's legacy in education.