

James D. Campbell fonds

Compiled by Christopher Hives (2000)

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Table of Contents

- **Fonds Description**
 - Title / Dates of Creation / Physical Description
 - Biographical Sketch
 - Scope and Content
 - Notes
- **File List**
- **Catalogue entry** (UBC Library catalogue)

Fonds Description

James D. Campbell fonds. - 1977-1979.

1 cm of textual records.

Biographical Sketch

James D. Campbell is a Canadian art writer. During his university days at McGill University, he and Zsolt Alapi established a little avant-garde literary magazine called *Atropos*. Founded in the fall of 1977, the publication appeared only four times before ceasing operations in 1981.

Scope and Content

The fonds consists exclusively of incoming correspondence from writer George Woodcock to Campbell in his role as co-editor of *Atropos*. With his letters, Woodcock also included four typescript poems and an essay on Simone Weil that were published in *Atropos*. Woodcock also sent Campbell a typescript copy of his unpublished play "The Floor of the Night".

Notes

File list available.

File List

BOX 1

Incoming correspondence from George Woodcock

- 1-1 Typed letter signed, 7 February 1977
This letter responds to Mr. Campbell's letter inviting Professor Woodcock to contribute some poems to "Atropos" by saying among other things "The sad fact is that over the last few months I have been engaged in rather exacting prose [], and I find that prose and verse never go well together, so that just now my drawer [shades of Emily Dickinson] is empty of material that I would be happy to send you." He then goes on to say that he will let "Atropos" see whatever he next writes. Then he offers two unpublished "verse plays for radio". Finally he reacts to an invitation to read his works by stating he may be in Austria in the Fall "and, to be honest, I am not sure that the poet is really the best person to read his own poems. I always find that other voices discover the hidden connotations."
- 1-2 Typed letter signed, 28th February, 1977.
Typescript poem – "Taurus to Pieces" (n.d.)
The letter notes his promise to send Atropos his first new poem and presents it – "Taurus to Pisces". "I hope you will find it interesting enough to publish."
- 1-3 Typed letter signed, 4th April, 1977.
Play script – "The Floor of the Night" (32 pp.)
The letter opens by thanking Mr. Campbell for his praise of "Taurus to Pisces" and comments that "It is true that I write relatively few poems-though more than I was doing a decade ago- and I still have nothing else to offer, perhaps because I am going through a rather preoccupied prose period." He then goes on to comment on the verse play [next item] he encloses and alludes to John Glassco. Pope, Dylan Thomas, Flecker, and Gide in relation to the characters and the play. He does note, however, that the two central characters "were both taken from life." In his handwritten insertion to the letter he comments on the influence of his childhood experience of touring pantomimes and Welsh doggerel " more than fifty years ago!".
- 1-4 Typed letter signed, n. d. [Envelope postmarked May 24, 1977]
Three typescript poems:
"Dog and Hare" - n.d. (2 pp.)
"Bonnets on Human Beauty" – n.d. (1 pp.)
"To M.L.B., Twentyeight Years Dead" – n.d. (2 pp.)

- Letter comments on having written "some poems of a meditative kind during my weeks in Europe" three of which he encloses.
- 1-5 Typed letter signed with holograph PS, 7th June, 1977.
Typescript essay – "On Simone Weil" – n.d. (9 pp.)
Letter comments on James Campbell's reaction to the three poems, encloses the Simone Weil script- "the revision is very slight indeed, since normally I write as I speak and vice versa." The holograph PS -- deals with his talk on Eliot [T.S. presumably].
- 1-6 Typed letter signed, 17 August 1977
Asking about the receipt and status of Weil essay.
- 1-7 Typed letter signed, 8 Jan 1978
Short note inquiring if Campbell is going to publish "Atropos".
- 1-8 Typed letter signed , 13 March 1978.
A slightly longer note of enquiry.
- 1-9 Typed letter signed, 23 March 1978.
Thanking Campbell for the first issue of "Atropos", and commenting how the poems and the Weil essay complemented one another.
- 1-10 Typed letter signed, 10 May 1979.
Inquiring if another issue of "Atropos" is appearing and the status of "Floor of the Night" mss.
- 1-11 Typed letter signed, 3 July 1979.
Comments on second issue of Atropos, possibility of Canada Council funding, tells Campbell to keep "Floor of the Night" mss. for the time-being.