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Richard Poirier Collection 8720686

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Description is written in: English.

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

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535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027
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Fax Number: (212) 854-1365
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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Poirier, Richard
Title:	Richard Poirier Collection
ID:	8720686
ID:	MS#1572
Date [inclusive]:	1945-2007
Date [bulk]:	1986-2007
Physical Description:	4 linear feet 3 record storage cartons and 1 document box; also 473 books (shelved)
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Correspondence and writings of American professor, editor, and scholar of literature and popular culture, Richard Poirier.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Richard Poirier Collection; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical Note

Richard Poirier, an American literary and cultural critic, professor of literature, and founder of *Raritan: A Quarterly Review*, was born September 9, 1925 in Gloucester Massachusetts. Poirier served in the Army during World War II, and upon returning from combat enrolled in Amherst College where he earned his B.A. He continued his studies in literature first at Yale where he earned his MA, and later at Harvard where he received a PhD in 1960.

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Biographical Note

Poirier taught at Harvard from 1958-1963, but he spent the majority academic career at Rutgers University where he was a prominent member and sometimes Chair of the English Department from 1963-2002.

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Biographical Note

Richard Poirier was not only a highly regarded scholar and teacher, but a well-respected editor and publisher as well. He co-founded the Library of America publishing venture in 1979. The Library of America is a non-profit publisher focused on publishing and preserving American poetry, fiction, and essays, often producing volumes of collected works that published pieces that would otherwise be out of print. He also co-founded *Raritan: A Quarterly Review*, out of what he perceived to be a dearth of serious criticism on American literature and culture that engaged both academics and non-academics.

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Biographical Note

Poirier regularly contributed essays and reviews to publications such as *The Partisan Review* (which he edited from 1963-1973), *The New York Review of Books*, and *The London Review of Books*. He authored a number of books, including works on Henry James, Robert Frost, and Ralph Waldo Emerson and collections of criticism such as *The Performing Self: Compositions and Decompositions in the Languages of Contemporary Life*.

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Biographical Note

Richard Poirier died in his Manhattan home on August 15, 2009.

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Summary

Papers contain material related to the personal and professional life of literary and cultural critic Richard Poirier. The bulk of the papers contain files related to Poirier's scholarly writing, but there is also correspondence related to his role as a professor, literary critic, and editor of the *Raritan: A Quarterly Review*. The papers comprise only a small part of the Poirier collection; the majority of the collection contains books from Poirier's library, most annotated (some heavily) and many inscribed by their authors. The books reflect both Poirier's interest in the American literary tradition and his network of friends and admirers within the literary community.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in 4 series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

xml document instance created by Carrie Hintz EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2011-06-17 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room. Books (series IV) are located onsite.

Restrictions on Access

Box 3, Folder 13 contains student papers and is restricted until 2056.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Reproductions may be made for research purposes. The RBML maintains ownership of the physical material only. Copyright remains with the creator and his/her heirs. The responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

2009.2010.M112: Source of acquisition--G. Thomas Tanselle. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--05/05/2010. Betsy Sargent, gift, 2023.

Processing Information

Papers processed Carrie Hintz 06/--/2011. Finding aid written Carrie Hintz 06/--/2011.

2023 addition found in box 4.

Accrual

No additional material expected

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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Controlled Access Headings

- American literature -- History and criticism
- Criticism -- United States
- Scholarly periodicals
- Articles
- Correspondence
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 1803-1882
- Frost, Robert, 1874-1963
- Hellman, Lillian, 1905-1984
- Poirier, Richard
- Vidal, Gore, 1925-2012
- Mailer, Norman
- Howe, Irving
- Bromwich, David, 1951-
- Watson, Garry, 1944-

Collection Inventory

Series I: Correspondence, 1971-2007

Scope and Contents

Series I is comprised of personal and professional correspondence received by Poirier, as well as some copies of his outgoing correspondence. The letters relate to his work as a literature professor at Rutgers, his role as editor of *Raritan* and personal correspondence between Poirier and his friends.

Alphabetical

Title/Description	Instances
Outgoing, 1949-1955	box 1
A-Z, 1971-2008 <u>Physical Description</u> : 6 folders	box 1
Adams, Alice, 1992-1999	box 1
Brommich, David, 1992-1998	box 1
Burnshaw, Stanley, 1984-1999	box 1
Donoghue, Denis, 1992-2000	box 1
Ferry, David, 1992-2008	box 1
Hellman, Lillian, 1978-1983	box 1

Hollander, John, 1993-2004	box 1
Hyman, Suzanne, 1998-2000	box 1
Jehler, Myra, 1987-1993	box 1
Kermode, Frank, 1992-2007	box 1
Merrell, James, 1992-2002	box 1
Said, Edward, 1991-1999	box 1
Seidel, Frederick and Mae Griswold	box 1
Vidal, Gore, 1974-1995	box 1
<u>Physical Description</u> : 2 folders	
Weiseltier, Leon, 1987-1999	box 1

Topical

Title/Description	Instances
Offers from Other Universities, 1978-1987	box 1
Humanities 6 Course at Harvard	box 1
Harvard Advisory Committee, 1987-1991	box 1
Lecture Invitations, 1990-1995	box 1
Letters of Recommendation, 1990-2004	box 1
Letters Received on the Publication of <i>The Renewal of Literature</i> , , 1987	box 1
Rutgers Univerity-- Amiri Baraka, 1989-1990	box 1
Reader's Catalogue, 1987	box 1
Philip Poirier, 1979	box 1

2023 addition

Title/Description	Instances
Correspondence between Poirier and Garry Watson, 1971-1992	box 4 folder 1-6
Richard Poirier to W. Stauffacher, 23 January 1973	box 4 folder 7
Garry Watson to The Editor, TLS, 9 February 1972	box 4 folder 8
Garry Watson to Norman Mailer, 8 January 1974	box 4 folder 9
Garry Watson to David Bromwich, 21 January 1974	box 4 folder 10
Garry Watson to The Editors of <i>Dissent</i> , 8 January 1974	box 4 folder 11
Garry Watson to Irving Howe, 30 January 1974	box 4 folder 12
Garry Watson to David Bromwich, 30 January 1974	

box 4 folder 13

Irving Howe to Garry Watson, 1 February 1974

box 4 folder 14

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)**Series II: Writings and Notes, Undated, 1986-1996****Scope and Contents**

The Writings and Notes Series includes research notes and manuscript drafts of many of Poirier's scholarly articles, books, and book reviews as well as some copies of published articles. These files are arranged topically by the subject of a work according to Poirier's own organizational and naming schemes. Therefore, researchers seeking material related to the book *The Renewal of Literature*, should look under "Emerson, Ralph Waldo" rather than the title of the book.

Scope and Contents

This series also includes some lecture notes and teaching material, including student essays from a 1986 course Poirier taught at Rutgers. These student papers are restricted until 2056.

Title/Description	Instances
Unpublished or Uncollected Writings, undated, 1988-1996 <u>Physical Description:</u> 4 folders	box 2
Aesthetics of Radicalism	box 2
Balanchine, George	box 2
Bellow, Saul	box 2
Eliot, George	box 2
Eliot, T.S.	box 2
Emerson, Ralph Waldo <u>Physical Description:</u> 5 folders	box 2
Frost, Robert <u>Physical Description:</u> 6 folders	box 2
James, Henry	box 2
Joyce, James	box 3
London Review of Books, 1989	box 3
Midler, Bette	box 3
O'Connor, Flannery	box 3
O'Hara, Frank	box 3
Pynchon, Thomas	box 3

Physical Description: 2 folders

Stein, Gertrude	box 3
Technology and Literary Technique	box 3
Vidal, Gore	box 3
Lecture Notes - General	box 3
Lecture Notes - Shakespeare	box 3
Student Papers, 1986	box 3

Conditions Governing Access:
Conditions Governing Access

[Restricted until 2056]

Reviews of Poirier's Books	box 3	
<u>Physical Description:</u> 2 folders		
Garry Watson "An Open Letter to David Bromwich, Norman Mailer and the Editors of <i>Dissent</i> , 8 January 1974	box 4	folder 15
David Bromwich "Sex in the Head" (review of <i>Last Tango in Paris</i> in <i>Dissent</i> Vol. XX No 4., fall 1973	box 4	folder 16
Garry Watson "The Unbuilding of a Man: Some Notes on Self Expression" (photocopy of essay)	box 4	folder 17

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Series III: Biographical Material, 1945-1992

Scope and Contents

The Biographical Material series is comprised of a small amount of biographical material including, notably, some of Poirier's diaries from the 1970s and early 1980s.

Title/Description	Instances
CV and Resume	box 3
Diaries, 1973-1982	box 3
Philip Poirier's Diaries, 1945	box 3
Modern Language Association Panel on Poirier, 1992	box 3
<i>Salmagundi</i> Interview with Poirier	box 3
<i>Raritan</i> Poirier tribute issue, 2010	box 3

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Series IV: Books

Scope and Contents

This series contains books from Poirier's library, most annotated (some heavily) and many inscribed by their authors. The books reflect both Poirier's interest in the American literary tradition and his network of friends and admirers within the literary community. This series comprises 250 inscribed books, 43 uninscribed 1st editions, and 180 annotated books. Email rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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