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Robert C. Conard  
*University of Dayton*

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## Report on the Böll Archive at the Boston University Library

Robert C. Conard

Upon solicitation of Dr. Howard Gotlieb, director of Special Collections at Boston University, Heinrich Böll in 1968 permitted his published and unpublished manuscripts and literary papers to be housed in the Mugar Memorial Library. At that time the Boston University Library was already in possession of many documents of twentieth century authors, critics, journalists, and public figures in the arts and national affairs. In German literature, besides the Böll Archive, the Mugar Library held papers of Gisela Elsner, Lion Feuchtwanger, Hans Habe, Willi Heinrich, Hans Hellmut Kirst, and Johannes Mario Simmel as well as materials of many international figures from twenty-seven countries. Of all these collections, the Böll holdings are by far the largest, consisting of one hundred and sixty-five manuscript boxes (Each box measuring 18" x 12" x 31½") with additional shipments of materials arriving periodically.

Speculation why Germany's leading writer would deposit his published and unpublished manuscripts and related literary papers in an American library is only natural; therefore, I do not hesitate to suggest a twofold reason for the action. Böll's feeling of gratitude for being released from "German imprisonment" when captured by American troops in 1945<sup>1</sup>, and Dr. Gotlieb's offer to Böll of a repository for his papers in a city internationally known for its universities and cultural interests combined, in my estimation, in a salutary manner to bring the archive to the U.S.

Böll's first shipment of materials arrived in 1968 and while only partly cataloged became available to the public in 1971. Since the opening of the archive no more material was inventoried until the awarding of the Nobel Prize to Heinrich Böll in October of 1972. After the Nobel Prize was announced, cataloging again started on the most recent papers, ten boxes received in the spring of 1972.<sup>1a</sup> While the inventoried materials consist thus far of approximately only the first twenty of the one hundred and fifty-five boxes received in 1968, the systematic organization of the Böll holding should advance rapidly now that funds are available.

A xerox listing of the contents in the first twenty manuscript boxes is available from the Boston University Library (cost—\$6.16, 77 pages at 8¢ per page). This seventy-seven page document is a very accurate description of Böll's major manuscripts prior to 1971; the papers for more recent works including those for *Gruppenbild mit Dame* are in the ten boxes just cataloged. This inventory of the first

twenty boxes fortunately reflects a minimum of error as to the location of the listed materials.

Ideally each item of the collection should be read to discover what it actually is and where it actually should be placed. Up to now only a fragment of the collection has been identified and no discernible order for the archive seems to be emerging. As one who avails himself of the holdings, I suggest an arrangement of the materials by genre: short stories, novels, plays, radio plays, television dramas, film scripts, poems, essays, reviews, interviews, translations (by Annemarie and Heinrich Böll), correspondence (to and from Böll), and secondary literature: criticism, biographical material, photos, etc. The secondary literature should, when it relates to a single work, be cataloged according to the work it concerns, permitting the secondary literature to approximate the order of the primary literature.

As simple as this suggested arrangement may seem, there are difficulties in its application. Two examples may suffice to illustrate the complexity of cataloging the papers. Where does one put a manuscript which seems to be a draft for a short story, may even read like a relatively complete tale, but was never published and eventually became a novel or even a play. The characters may have changed, names and situations may have been altered. Should it be cataloged separately as a short story or with the novel or play it appears to have become? Secondly, should the numerous newspaper articles, reviews of TV productions, plays, films, etc., which treat more than one work be cataloged simply among the sundry secondary literature or with the work to which they most closely relate? Although the suggested order has its drawbacks, I believe it has fewer liabilities than alternative arrangements.

There are two additional points to be mentioned. One very *à propos*, the other premature, but nonetheless to be given some thought. Firstly, all scholars and translators having already worked and henceforth working on Böll should send the results of their efforts to the archive, so this special collection will begin to attain a certain completeness of Böll related literature. Secondly, if the collection is to remain in the U.S., at a future date, after the collection is well ordered, consideration should be given to copying it, in whole or in part for placement in a European depository. Cologne, Germany, where Kiepenheuer and Witsch, Böll's publishers, already have a considerable collection of Böll material, is the obvious choice for this European location.

Summary of the archive's holdings.

### **Primary literature:**

1. Materials by Böll's hand: holographs; manuscripts—typescripts, original and carbons, often with hand written corrections and splicings, including multiple versions of single works as well as fragments, variations, drafts, and plans. (Many items dated and autographed.) These papers are divided into short stories; novellas; novels; dramatic text for theater, TV, radio and screen; essays; reviews; speeches;

translations and adaptations of stories, novels, and plays by Heinrich and Anne-Marie Böll.

2. Works in print: galley and page proofs for various works from sundry publishers East and West (some with corrections in Böll's hand); hectograph copies of dramatic texts: radio, TV, stage, and film works; reprints and clippings of stories from newspapers and magazines (some not available in collected editions); inaccessible newspaper and magazine interviews.

3. Dramatic adaptations of Böll's works by others in hectograph copies for radio, TV, and film.

4. Translations into various languages in manuscript form and in the form of clippings from newspapers and magazines, mostly short stories.

The number of items in the categories of the primary literature cannot now adequately be determined, nor can it be ascertained exactly which material has been published and which remains unpublished.

In my perusal of the collection I discovered no letters by Böll nor any of his poems.

### Secondary literature:

1. Biographical information: The word biographical is used here in the broadest sense. Since Böll has become a public figure, his name has appeared in thousands of newspaper and magazine articles. These items are collected from around the world and sent to Böll by a service called AUSSCHNITT Presse Beobachtung Inland and Ausland, Berlin. Several such articles are sent to Böll weekly in small envelopes, many unopened, are forwarded by him to the archive. These clippings provide valuable biographical information for deducing the activities of Böll's public life and the public effect of his work. AUSSCHNITT attaches to each clipping the source and date, but seldom the page number of the item. Since the service attempts to collect all articles containing Böll's name, along with articles about his work, receipts from AUSSCHNITT are numerous.

2. Articles from periodicals, reviews, essays (in various languages), criticisms of Böll's stance on public issues, and open letters to Böll from newspapers and magazines.

The newspaper and magazine items in these categories provided by AUSSCHNITT number in the thousands.

3. Biographical documents: a few letters to Böll and a few photographs.<sup>2</sup>

University of Dayton

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Böll was captured on April 9, 1945, and after humane treatment by his prisoners could write: "I was released on September 9, 1945, but from German imprisonment." "Stichworte," in *Aufsätze, Kritiken, Reden* (Cologne and Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1967), p. 170.

<sup>1a</sup> In July 1973 cataloging of these ten boxes was completed under supervision of Paul Kurt Ackerman. A typed index to the contents of these boxes is now available from the archive. The

accession number is "Heinrich Böll, addenda 280, March 1972."

- <sup>2</sup> I wish to acknowledge the kind cooperation of Dr. Howard Gotlieb and his staff, especially the assistance of Mr. Charles Niles, and of Prof. Paul Kurt Ackerman of the German Section of the Department of Modern Foreign Languages of the Boston University.