

THE H.D. PAPERS AT YALE UNIVERSITY

Louis Silverstein

In 1937 the seeds were planted which grew to become the archive now housed in Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. After meeting at a cocktail party in New York City at the home of William Rose Benet, H.D. was handed a sheaf of her poems by Benet's friend, Norman Holmes Pearson, and asked to comment upon them. The comments which H.D. wrote, in the form of a letter to Pearson, were included in *The Oxford Anthology of American Literature* (1938), which Benet and Pearson edited jointly. This initial contact between Pearson and H.D., continuing through sporadic correspondence, was further nourished through regular Sunday evening suppers at H.D.'s flat during World War II while Pearson was stationed in London with the OSS. Thus began the friendship that resulted in Pearson's becoming H.D.'s literary executor and the confidant, literary agent, protector, and advisor to both H.D. and her companion Bryher.

As a result of this remarkable relationship, Pearson was placed in the position of being able to preserve, collect, and store the manuscripts, correspondence, and personal papers of H.D. and Bryher as well as portions of their libraries. By assuring them of safekeeping on "a little shelf at Yale," where Pearson was chairman of the American Studies Department, he was able to assemble these archives which are available for the use of scholars of twentieth century American and British literature.

The H.D. Papers are now fully cataloged except for the creation of the final register. Consisting of 55.91 linear feet of material, this archive contains manuscripts (published and unpublished), correspondence, personal papers, pamphlets and clippings, and photographs.

The manuscripts in the H.D. papers consist primarily of titles which remained unpublished as of 1944 (approximately when Pearson began collecting the archive) or which were written after that point. Prior to this time, H.D. had destroyed the various drafts of her manuscripts as they reached the publication stage. The archive does have a few early manuscripts of poems and stories which Bryher had managed to rescue and have bound in blue cloth. However, beginning with *The Flowering of the Rod*, Pearson

fortunately managed to persuade H.D. to turn over to him all existing drafts of her creative work as she finished with them. As a result, scholars and other interested individuals can examine and study the various drafts of such works as *Helen in Egypt*, *Bid Me to Live*, *End to Torment*, and *Hermetic Definition*. Among the novels which remain unpublished, either in full or in part, are *Asphodel*, *Magic Mirror*, *Majic Ring*, *The Mystery*, *Paint It To-Day*, *Pilate's Wife*, *The Sword Went Out to Sea*, and *White Rose and the Red*.

Two groupings of short stories which have not been published in their entirety are *The Moment* (a collection of seven stories) and *Within the Walls* (a group of thirteen sketches written in the early days of World War II). With the recent publication of Louis Martz's excellent edition of *Collected Poems 1912-1944*, there remains no unpublished poetry in the archives. Several autobiographic writings are yet to be published, including *Compassionate Friendship*, *Hirslanden Notebooks*, *Thorn Thicket (Bosquet)*, and her "Notes" to *The Gift. H.D. by Delia Alton* (or *Notes on Recent Writing*) will appear in a

forthcoming issue of the *Iowa Review*. Among H.D.'s miscellaneous prose writing, the major unpublished title is *Notes on Euripides, Pausanius and Greek Lyric Poets*.

The archive contains a few manuscripts by other writers, which they had sent or given to H.D. Included are poems by Richard Aldington, Robert Duncan, Herman Hesse and Denise Levertov and an early draft of part of *The H.D. Book* by Robert Duncan.

The correspondence files are extensive and include letters to H.D. from Richard Aldington (28 folders), Sylvia Beach, Bryher (125 folders), E. M. Butler (4 folders), Robert Duncan, Sigmund Freud, Robert Herring (9 folders), Denise Levertov, Robert McAlmon, Kenneth Macpherson (5 folders), Marianne Moore, Brigit Patmore, Norman Holmes Pearson (20 folders), George Plank (9 folders), Ezra Pound, Dorothy Richardson, Perdita Schaffner (15 folders), and the Sitwells. Through the efforts of Pearson to obtain files from other individuals, the archive contains letters from H.D. to Richard Aldington, Gretchen Wolle Baker, Robert Duncan, and Eric Walter White, among others.

H.D.'s personal papers include such items as her address books, astrological papers, contracts with publishers, diaries, divorce data, genealogical information, marriage license, passports, royalty statements, and wills. Richard Aldington's commission from World War I and several of her mother's diaries are also included under the category of personal papers.

The pamphlet and clipping section includes materials preserved by H.D. as well as reviews of her books, collected by both H.D. and Pearson. Finally, there are four boxes of personal photographs of H.D., her family, and her friends. One of these boxes con-

tains the fascinating scrapbook made for H.D. by Kenneth Macpherson, which includes many photographs placed in juxtaposition to symbols of H.D.'s world in photomontages.

In addition to the archives of H.D. and of Bryher (as yet uncataloged), the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library also has the archives (or parts of them) of many of their friends and contemporaries, including Norman Douglas, Robert Herring, Viola Baxter Jordan, Robert McAlmon, Kenneth Macpherson, Brigit Patmore, George Plank, Ezra Pound, Dorothy Richardson, Gertrude Stein, and William Carlos Williams.

The papers of Norman Holmes Pearson, which include his personal files relating to H.D., her publishing history (and his own role within it), and her personal affairs, are also a valuable resource for anyone pursuing research at the Beinecke Library on the poet and her world. Pearson, who had intended to write a biography of H.D., corresponded with many individuals who had known her, including Gretchen Wolle Baker, H. P. Collins, Harold Doolittle, Horace Gregory, Robert McAlmon, Margaret Snively Pratt, Eric Walter White, and Francis Wolle. Pearson's accumulations of notes from his conversations with H.D. and Bryher as well as from his own researches are a treasure trove of information, although caution is advised in using them.

In recent years the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library has continued to acquire materials relating to H.D., including her letters to Gemma D'Auria, Havelock Ellis, and the Society of Authors.

NOTE

During the period of the creation of the final register, the H.D. papers may be closed to users for a month or two so that the final series numbering and refolding can be accomplished. Individuals who are planning to come to the Beinecke Library to consult this archive should write or call the Curator of the Yale Collection of American Literature in order to determine the status of their availability.