

Guide to the Silvia Dobson Papers

GEN MSS 409



by Beinecke staff

2014

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	4
Immediate Source of Acquisition	4
Conditions Governing Access	4
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Processing Information	4
Silvia Dobson(1908-)	4
Scope and Contents	4
Arrangement	5
Collection Contents	6
Series I: Correspondence, 1945-1977	6
Series II: Writings, 1959-1992, undated	7
Series III: Other Papers, undated	8
Series IV: "Mirror for a Star, Star for a Mirror: H. D.'s Letters to Silvia Dobson"material, 1935-1961	9
Selected Search Terms	10

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 409

CREATOR: Dobson, Silvia, 1908-

TITLE: Silvia Dobson papers

DATES: 1945-1992

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.12 linear feet (6 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Collection contains letters from American poet H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) to Silvia Dobson, letters from the British author Bryher to Silvia Dobson and her siblings Mervyn and Norah Dobson, as well as copies of several letters from Silvia to Bryher and letters from Kenneth Macpherson. Letters from H.D. document her life in Switzerland and London for nearly thirty years and include information about H.D.'s analysis with Sigmund Freud. Letters from Bryher document Bryher's life in Switzerland in the 1960's and 1970's, the Dobsons' lives in America, and Dobson's efforts to publish her work. Included among the correspondence are letters to H.D. from Norah, Mollie, and Mervyn Dobson, and Frances Gregg; and notes by Silvia H. Dobson. Included in the collection are typescripts of seven novels by Dobson: Feathers of Lead, Guests of Existence, Honor Bound or Shattering Mirror Images, The Hut of Laurel, The Kindhart Trap, Somebody and Nobody, and Spring Begins in Autumn. Also included is an untitled autobiography which describes her life as part of H. D.'s literary circle, her relief work during World War II, her relationship with H.D., her identity as a lesbian, and her later life living in America; and her untitled manuscript "Mirror for a Star, Star for a Mirror. H. D.'s letters to Silvia Dobson."

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.dobsons>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.dobsons>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box

f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Elizabeth Shoemaker through Ralph Sipper on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 1995 and 1997. Purchased from Silvia Dobson on the American Literature Fund, 1989.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Silvia Dobson Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

The Silvia Dobson Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

Series IV. "Mirror for a Star, Star for a Mirror: H. D.'s Letters to Silvia Dobson" material was formerly Uncat ZA MS 112. In April 2014, Series IV was merged with the Silvia Dobson Papers and a finding aid was created.

Silvia Dobson(1908-)

Silvia Dobson, English-born author and friend of the poet H.D.

Scope and Contents

The papers contain letters from American poet H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) to Silvia Dobson, letters from the British author Bryher to Silvia Dobson and her siblings Mervyn and Norah Dobson, as well as copies of several letters from Silvia to Bryher and letters from Kenneth Macpherson. Letters from H.D. document her life in Switzerland and London for nearly thirty years and include information about H.D.'s analysis with Sigmund Freud. Letters from Bryher document Bryher's life in Switzerland in the 1960's and 1970's, the Dobsons' lives in America, and Dobson's efforts to publish her work. Included among the correspondence are letters to H.D. from Norah, Mollie, and Mervyn Dobson, and Frances Gregg; and notes by Silvia H. Dobson. Included in the collection are typescripts of seven novels by Dobson: *Feathers of Lead*, *Guests of Existence*, *Honor Bound or Shattering Mirror Images*, *The Hut of Laurel*, *The Kindhart Trap*, *Somebody*

and Nobody, and *Spring Begins in Autumn*. Also included is an untitled autobiography which describes her life as part of H. D.'s literary circle, her relief work during World War II, her relationship with H.D., her identity as a lesbian, and her later life living in America; and her unpublished manuscript "Mirror for a Star, Star for a Mirror. H.D.'s letters to Silvia Dobson."

Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Correspondence, 1945-1977. II. Writings, 1959-1992. III. Other Papers, undated. IV. "Mirror for a Star, Star for a Mirror: H. D.'s Letters to Silvia Dobson" material, 1935-1961.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1945-1977

0.21 linear feet (1 box)

Letters from Bryher		
b. 1, f. 1	To MervynDobson	1971-1977
b. 1, f. 2-5	To NorahDobson	1945-1977
b. 1, f. 6-9	To SilviaDobson	1947-1977
Letters from Silvia Dobson		
b. 1, f. 10	Copies of letters to Bryher	1964-1966

Series II: Writings, 1959-1992, undated*1.47 linear feet (4 boxes)*

b. 2, f. 11-20	Autobiography, typescript, corrected (pp. 290-291 are missing)	1992 April 1
b. 2, f. 21-27	<i>Feathers of Lead</i> , typescript, corrected	undated
b. 3, f. 28-41	<i>Guests of Existence</i> , typescript, corrected	circa 1965-1967
b. 3, f. 42-50	<i>Honor Bound or Shattering Mirror Images</i> , typescript, corrected, undated	undated
b. 4, f. 51-58	<i>The Hut of Laurel</i> , typescript, corrected	1959 June 24
b. 4, f. 59-67	<i>The Kindhart Trap</i> , typescript, corrected	undated
b. 4, f. 68-72	<i>Somebody and Nobody</i> , typescript, corrected	undated
b. 5, f. 73-80	<i>Spring Begins in April</i> , typescript, corrected (pp. 72-80 are missing)	undated

Series III: Other Papers, undated

1 Folder

b. 5, f. 81

Empty folder inscribed with holograph notes

undated

Series IV: "Mirror for a Star, Star for a Mirror: H. D.'s Letters to Silvia Dobson"material, 1935-1961

0.42 linear feet (1 box)

This series contains original and copies of letters from H.D. to Silvia Dobson. Also included in the correspondence are letters to H.D. from Norah, Mollie, and Mervyn Dobson, and Frances Gregg; letters from Kenneth Macpherson to Dobson; and notes by Silvia H. Dobson. The material was compiled by Dobson and entitled "Mirror for a Star, Star for a Mirror: H.D.'s Letters to Silvia Dobson."

b. 6, f. 82	Copies of letters from HD to Dobson, letters 1-42, File I, pages 1-125, 1934-May 1935	undated
b. 6, f. 83	Original letters from HD to SHD, letters 43-77, File II, pages 125-259	Spring 1935– Winter 1937
b. 6, f. 84	Original letters from HD to SHD, letters 78-120, File III, pages 259-388	1939-September 1944
b. 6, f. 85	Copies of letters from HD to SHD, letters 121-152, File IV, pages 289-490; and letters from Bryher, Autumn 1944-1947	undated
b. 6, f. 86	Copies of letters from HD to SHD, letters 154-201, File V, pages 491-598, including letters from Bryher, pages 491-598, Spring 1947-Winter 1951	undated
b. 6, f. 87	Original letters from HD to SHD, letters 203-255, File VI, "the last nine magic years," pages 599-700(some from Brhyer)	1952-1961

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Authors
Authors, English -- 20th Century
Lesbian authors
Lesbians
Lesbians' writings
LGBTQ resource

Names

Bryher, 1894-1983
Dobson, Mervyn
Dobson, Norah
Dobson, Silvia, 1908-
H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), 1886-1961
Macpherson, Kenneth