

OUT OF THE ARCHIVE: ENTRIES FROM GLORIA GLIKIN FROMM'S RESEARCH DIARY

In 1961 Gloria Glikin (later Gloria Glikin Fromm) was one of very few scholars interested in Richardson. She was still completing her doctoral thesis, Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage: A Critical Study, at New York University under Leon Edel. She hadn't yet begun her first teaching job at Brooklyn College and the publication of her biography of Richardson was still sixteen years off, but she was already at work gathering material, some of which contributed to an article she published in PMLA a couple of years later.¹ Many of the people who had known Richardson were still alive in the early sixties and Glikin was adept at seeking them out. Several became friends and she continued to correspond with them long after she had discovered everything they knew about Richardson. She recorded two of these early meetings in diary form, written in a sharp, acerbic tone, quite unlike the careful prose of her scholarly work.

'BOOBIE': JESSIE HALE

The first interview was in San Antonio Texas with Dorothy Richardson's favourite sister, Jessie Hale (1874-1962), on whom the character of Harriett is based in Pilgrimage. The sisters shared a sense of humour and addressed each other by their nicknames, Goobie (Dorothy) and Boobie (Jessie) for the whole of their lives. In Pointed Roofs and Backwater, Miriam and Harriett address each other as 'Gooby' and 'Booby', giggle in front of the vicar, perform an 'uproarious toilet', and delight in slang, music hall jokes, and songs. The few letters that survive from their correspondence suggest that even though Jessie emigrated around 1900, this sense of fun persisted over more than fifty years of separation.² Gloria Glikin had a remarkable eye for detail

¹ Gloria Glikin, 'Dorothy Richardson: The Personal Pilgrimage', *PMLA*, 78 (Dec. 1963): 586-600.

² Their surviving correspondence is published in Gloria G. Fromm (ed.), *Windows on Modernism: Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1995); and in George H. Thomson, 'Dorothy Richardson: Letters to a Sister in America', *English Literature in Transition*, 43, 4 (2000): 410-413; George H. Thomson, 'Dorothy Richardson and Her Sister: More Letters and Biography', *English Literature in Transition*, 45, 1 (2002): 46-49.

and a comic turn of phrase. In her rendition, Jessie Hale leaps off the page, illuminating both the character of Harriett and Dorothy Richardson's early life. There is no doubt that Gloria Glikin would have met Richardson's sister again, but Jessie died the following year.

Scott McCracken

Mrs. Jessie Abbott Hale
San Antonio, Texas
January 1961

Arrived at St. Anthony Hotel 10:00 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 5. Waited till 10:40 to call Jessie, in case she slept late. Her daughter³ answered, knew who I was, & regretted to inform me that her mother had a previous engagement, had already left, & she didn't know when she would return. Fright. Jessie backing out? But – her daughter said that Jessie had left instructions: she would call in to learn if I had arrived & get in touch with me. Gloom. Exhaustion. So long as the 86 yr.old was gallivanting about town, I would take a nap. Awoke 1 p.m. no message at the desk. Finger biting till 3 p.m. and ring of phone. A strong, low-toned slightly English voice – precise pronunciation but warm and vibrant. She is 4 blocks away, “Shall I come right over now?” Eager, friendly, deploring the weather: “why did it have to clobber up like this? It was beautiful till Tuesday!” She would meet me downstairs, on the side – near Jefferson – because there the doors opened. She was all in black, with a lavender pink scarf & a “funny little umbrella”.

Scramble to dress. Stepped out of elevator to see a little woman asking someone – “Are you Miss Glikin?” Introduced myself – & she said, Oh! I thought you'd be a big old intellectual-looking thing.”

She is priceless. Her face a bit squarish, but rounded & pinkish cheeks. Nose broad & snubbish. Hair gray, bangy as in news photo, pinned up in back, carefully waved. She has it done in a

³ Natalie Bushee (1896-1974), Jessie Hale's only child.

salon once a week. Face of a woman in 60's – but eyes misty & watery blue. After an hour or two, a red streak across left eyeball, & drop of moisture on skin just below the eye. Neck wrinkled loosely but not terribly. The sign of age is in her hands. They are big and purplish, almost artificial looking. The skin looks unreal. Nails manicured & healthy looking – but hands & fingers strange. Quick-witted, alert, voluble. Her most charming mannerism: The deep throaty “I wouldn't say that” expression. Slangy. Brimming with capacity for enjoyment, youthful. Trim figure, neat clothes, stylish. Remarkable recall of her young days in England. Very difficult life with Hale.⁴ She says they were unsuited, shouldn't have married. Most realistic attitude towards their incompatibility, and towards her own daughter who could do so much & won't. Natalie. 65 yrs. old. “Always something wrong with her.” Jessie hates to be home. Her son-in-law always there.⁵ A tubercular with one lung – a very sick man who doesn't complain but he has an awful temper. Plays patience, & flips the cards. Natalie can't stand it. Queer situation. He's a W.W.II veteran, with a pension. Natalie got some money from her father's sister who was the only one of 4 children (2 boys, 2 girls) who didn't squander inheritance. Hale (“Jack” or “Bertie” – tho his name Robert Thomas) an Englishman who couldn't do anything. Jessie became pregnant immediately – Natalie born 10 mo[nth]:s after marriage. They had a beautiful home in Grove Park, Chiswick – & he wasted their money in poor investments – didn't tell her until it was all gone & they were practically penniless. Lived in Hastings for a while. Then went out to Canada for 2 winters & froze, to Cuba (“I don't know why!) & roasted, then to San Antonio. They had a nice house here, & he was off to find work (“grass always greener”) – promised to send her money, never did. She says he left her. Is now dead – but vague about whether he ever came back. She had to move – bought duplex in 1945 at Pershing address. Rents out other half. Probably arrived here 1913. Went to work for Stower's Furniture Stores. Rose to buyer. Retired at 69. Did some work for Lig[h]thouse – selling blind-made products. A natural saleswoman, she says. Loves it. Now volunteer work at Alamo Library, relieving

⁴ Jessie's husband, Robert Thomas Hale, known as 'Jack'. He corresponds to the character of Gerald in *Pilgrimage*.

⁵ Natalie Bushee's husband, Elmer M. Bushee (1892-1966).

regulars for lunch on Mondays & Saturdays. A fervent church-goer, Episcopalian. A woman with definite opinions, Republican to the core & narrow, yet also in some ways elastic where individuals are concerned. At bottom, however, without her charm and verve and lovability, she would be a fearful snob. Inbred gentility. Sensitive nose, can't bear smells. Avid for variety & movement & people & pretty things. Miserable when at home. Will not cook for herself – prepares anything that is quick & untroublesome. A real fighter. Fought to live decently & won. Fighting now to keep her hand in life. Will not tolerate dictation. Her mouth is Dorothy's. Insatiable, too. Sat in the lobby with me 3 hours, & kept insisting I ask her more questions. Absolutely refused to be taken anywhere or paid for. At my suggestion (she would have sat on), we had dinner. She wanted to go Luby's Cafeteria, where she eats when downtown. Afterwards, waited with her for the Broadway bus. She would come to my room the next morning about 10:30 with the letters she had at home which I offered to read to her. When the bus came, she kissed me goodbye.

Friday Jan. 6.

Fearful that Jessie was tired, or that the day before had been too much for her. Would she come, and what would she bring?

I waited outside the door of Rm.566 – & at 10:20 there she was striding down the hall, in a trim navy suit, navy hat, print blouse, & fur piece around her neck – with a little bag. She dumped out a pile of letters, some in envelopes, some just folded, and a picture of Dorothy in a small faded-looking leather frame – the posed photo of the head & neck, that familiar sober pose.

Jessie settled herself in the armchair ready to listen. It was another drizzly day – and there we sat in the room all day, reading those letters. They were from '43 to '49 – some like Dorothy's garrulous late discourses – but others with reminders of the past which she would not write to anyone else. My eyes popped at some, & with Jessie there to annotate, it was a carnival. Jessie has amazing recall

– just touch a spring and it all pops out. But she is not a source for Dorothy’s London days, because her own life began just then to fall apart, & she was too busy flailing her arms about, trying to learn how to swim, to pay attention to Dorothy. We sent down for lunch, and for dinner. Jessie insisted on paying for her own dinner. I saw I could not argue. She will not be pressed in any matter. Then, as she wailed that we’d never get through reading, I suggested that it might go faster the next day, if I were to go through the letters overnight & take my notes (when I wrote anything down, she would beam; that’s what she wanted), then I could read right along without stopping except for her comments. She agreed instantly, as if she had planned to leave them with me anyway instead of carting them home again & back the next day. She took a cab home, not tired but wrat[h]ful, because when she called home about 7 to get the number of a woman she didn’t want to have to meet on Sat., her daughter screamed at her, “Are you crazy, staying out so long? Don’t you remember you had a heart attack last year?” She did, a very mild one. Insists she is fine. Walks with an astounding springiness. Runs up or down a few steps. Incredible.

The minute she left, I sat down with those letters. They are invaluable. Panic that I couldn’t get through them. Konked out at midnight. Woke at 6 – rushed thru breakfast - & finished at 9:45. Before I could even get dressed, I heard Jessie’s voice in the corridor, asking for 566. And there she was at 9:50 – bright & in her black outfit of Thursday, ready to listen until we had to go to the library at 12. We stopped reading at 11:15, so I could dress. She read the morning paper. Walked to the Library. Introduced to Miss Armstrong, an exceedingly unattractive domineering fanatical woman of 64. Has studied religions; for the last 12 years in Rudolph Steiner. Believes Dorothy was on his track. Ugh. She made an effort every 15 minutes, between a false-toothy jumbo-mumbo, to mention Dorothy’s name. Hasn’t even read all of Pilg. But she took me to the Health Food Store where she gets her carrot celery & parsley juice. I had plain carrot juice - but she was determined to get some of hers down me. Just had me taste it with a spoon, & then poured some into my cup when I had finished mine. Lovely personality! Then on a brief tour of the immediate

area, a peek into Foster's Dept. Store, & then to Menger's Hotel, where I must have some mango ice-cream and coffee. No resisting that one, I saw. So I simply let her do what she wanted. And the ice-cream was quite tasty. At the library, too, she was always pushing me into the bathroom. She goes every hour, so I went, too. It got me away from her, anyway.

She had it all figured out, where Jessie should take me. Could see Jessie boiling up. When we got out, J: "Do you want to see all those silly places?" I knew where J. wanted to go, back to the letters, & so did I. But we went through the Alamo, & I was handed more brochures, "junk", as Jessie called it.

She had some coffee and apple-pie at the St. Anthony Coffee Room & upstairs we went. From 3:15 to 6:15, we got through. And J. was tickled. It gave her genuine pleasure, & I was glad. She sat there, way back in the past, answering Dorothy's letter-questions. I wanted to cry – so sometimes I almost laughed hysterically. I wasn't going to stretch her mind any more – & would do whatever gave her the most satisfaction.

Then we walked to Luby's, & Jessie was already feeling her loneliness of tomorrow.

She walked slowly to the bus, wanted to know when the plane left, where I was going, what I would do until it left. We agreed that the 3 days had been a 50-50 affair – and "that was good." Anything I wanted to know, either from the letters or from her, I was to write & ask her. She said she would know me if ever she saw me again.

Bus came, 7:30 p.m.

An advantageous trip.

ANTHONY WEST

*The second interview was with Anthony West (1914-1987) in New York. West was a British author and critic. His mother was the journalist and author Rebecca West and his father the author H. G. Wells, with whom Dorothy Richardson had had an affair between 1905 and 1907. West was the child of a later and longer lasting affair between Wells and his mother and never lived with his father. Rebecca West and Wells remained on good terms until Wells's death in 1946, but West was never reconciled to his unconventional upbringing and had complicated relationships with both his parents. His autobiographical novel, *Heritage* (1955), depicted Rebecca West as a poor mother and she took legal measures to prevent its publication in Britain while she was alive.*

*Anthony West and Richardson were in touch after Wells's death in the 1940s, when he first started to research a biography of his father. After Wells's death, his daughter-in-law, Marjorie returned an 'almighty pile' of Richardson's letters and Richardson told Bryher in 1949 that West had asked for permission to quote from them.⁶ The letters have since disappeared and what happened to them remains a mystery. In the interview West claims he never saw them, but his account may not be reliable. He gives a positive account of Richardson to Gloria Glikin, but in his biography of Wells, *Aspects of a Life*, which wasn't published until 1984, the ambivalent feelings he had for his mother spill over into his views about Richardson. He writes that Richardson was 'an object of his pity' and that Wells believed she had faked the miscarriage to end their affair.⁷*

I had asked my father what the point of Dorothy was. He had considered me for a moment, and then told me that he thought of her as an extreme example of a type. With the possible exception of her husband, she was the most completely de-socialized human being he had ever come across outside of a mad-house [...] The Odles never had the feeling that they owed the community anything, or that they had any reason to take part in its collective life. They existed in the

⁶ Letter to Bryher, 20 June, 1949 in Fromm (ed.), *Windows on Modernism*, p.605.

⁷ Anthony West, *H. G. Wells: Aspects of a Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), pp.318, 321.

*certainty that they had been set apart from all common things by their terrible destiny. They were people of culture, and it was their duty to the sacred cause of art to stay clear of the degrading vulgarities of the market-place, and to have nothing to do with the mind-coarsening stupidities of the world of getting and spending.*⁸

*Some of what West reports of Wells's feelings about Dorothy Richardson and Alan Odle ring true. Wells's letters to Richardson expressed frustration that he was called upon to support her impecunious lifestyle. But West's opinion of Richardson seems also to have been affected by a desire on the one hand to defend his father and on the other to confirm his prejudices against his mother. Nevertheless, he records in *Aspects of A Life* that, when he finally met Richardson in the 1940s, she inspired mixed feelings of irritation and affection:*

*As Dorothy maundered on [...] I spent part of my time marvelling at what there could have been in my father's make-up that had made it possible for him to put up with her patronizing condescensions for so long, and the other part in growing almost fond of her and her unerring instinct for the wrong end of any stick. When I left Cornwall at the end of that summer I fully intended to keep in touch with her, but it was my fate to be out of the country for the next several years. When I returned I was sorry to find that she had died while I was away.*⁹

In 1961, speaking to Glikin – who obviously sympathised with Richardson – West was more generous. Glikin's interview adds another scrap of evidence about the tangled loves and lives that made up the literary scene in the early twentieth century.

Anthony West
186 East 75 St.
N.Y.
Thursday, Feb. 23, 1961, 12 noon.

⁸ Ibid, p.333.

⁹ Ibid, p.340.

Arrived 5 min. early, & no answer to bell ring. West strode up front steps about 2 minutes to 12, saying as he walked into the hall, “Oh, Miss Glikin, you must have been frightened.” I knew him immediately – 1st glimpse showed bigness & darkness & looseness. Climbed up to 3rd floor with him behind me. Small apt. at 1st sight, because of narrow little foyer as you come in the door. Threw his coat over back of chair in Kitchen (?) or Dining area – no sign of cooking material. Told me to throw my coat over another chair - & make myself comfortable in sitting room, cluttered with books & peanuts.

West came in, sat on couch & began talking. Groping to re[m]ember & express what he remembered. Dorothy was so kind to him, sane & wise & helpful about his father. He had gone there (Hillside, Trevone) 1st for tea with wife (#1) & children – after writing Dorothy a little note. If she cared to talk to him, he would like that. Saw her twice after the tea, said she might have sense from the 1st his disturbance. Then involved with research for biography of H.G. Finding out things, meeting hostility & disapproval & fright (his mother most frightened of all). Dorothy talked to him honestly about H.G. – she was fond of him & Anthony was grateful for that. Told him how vulnerable H.G. was, & how she had felt protective toward him. Though he in a sense left her far behind him. Mentioned (Anthony did) Wells at this time in p.d.[?]¹⁰ of Island of Dr. Moreau. His view of life & human nature was not, essentially, hopeful at all. Wells’ background – Dorothy represented higher to him? Perhaps this was one reason he was attracted to her. She? he was so alive & vital & full of ideas & slim & good-looking then. H.G. very much annoyed by The Tunnel – more (if at all) than by the other later ones. See his reproduced sketch in Exp.¹¹

¹⁰ Possibly ‘publication date’.

¹¹ H. G. Wells’s *Experiment in Autobiography* was published in 1934. A ‘Postscript’ that went into more detail about his love life, including his relationship with Richardson, was published in 1984 by Wells’s son G. P. Wells as *H. G. Wells in Love: Postscript to an Experiment in Autobiography* (London: Faber). What Wells actually writes in *Experiment* is that Richardson had ‘described our Worcester Park life with astonishing accuracy’ in *The Tunnel* (Wells, *Experiment*, p.557).

“Absolutely accurate” portrayal of H.G. as Hypo. Dorothy is Miriam. How autobiographical? “Oh, very much so.”

Silver-grey hair. Perfectly clear-headed. Never faded – like Shaw would after talking for about an hour & a half.¹² Was she womanly, I asked. Oh, yes. His memory that she was not much smaller than himself! When he was reaching back for memories, & when he talked about his father, closed his eyes. About 1:00 he shifted position on the sofa, & turned to talk directly to me. Much about England – its constrictions – secretiveness of the English. If things are talked about truly, they lose their awfulness. Asked if I couldn’t manage to get over to Cornwall on strength of research duties – I should go in May or June – mild climate there always – he loves it. Used to be a farmer. Distrust Brome always.¹³ He’s thin & superficial. The Valentine woman had absolutely “no authority” for her book.¹⁴ Gordon Ray a “solemn dunderhead”.¹⁵ Produced an inhuman Thackeray. HJ deserted Wells when scandal broke.¹⁶ Yet “went <slipped> off to Venice to misbehave”. In England he was the proper boy.

H.G. “sold himself out” - & realised this at the end. Perhaps had it in him to be an artist. Much talk of “self-indulgence”. Did not think DR self-indulgent. She wanted to get at the truths of life

West has black hair (very slightly streaked with gray), straight. Bushy dark brows. Full face – round – almost snubbish nose. Cheeks. One seemed fatter than the other? Pleasant smile.

¹² George Bernard Shaw.

¹³ Vincent Brome, who consulted Richardson when writing his biography of Wells and wrote about their meetings. See Vincent Brome, ‘A Last Meeting with Dorothy Richardson’, *London Magazine*, 6 (June 1959): 26-32.

¹⁴ Unidentified. Possibly Violet Hunt’s memoir *The Flurried Years* (London: Hearst and Blackett, 1926), misheard or mis-transcribed. Hunt had an affair with Wells and was a friend of Richardson’s.

¹⁵ Gordon N. Ray author of a biography of William Makepeace Thackeray and with Leon Edel, *Henry James and H.G. Wells: A Record of Their Friendship, Their Debate on the Art of Fiction, and Their Quarrel* (London: Hart-Davis, 1958). Leon Edel was Fromm’s PhD supervisor.

¹⁶ Henry James.

Sincerity. Chubby hands. Fat rear end. Slack carriage. Wearing dark (black?) suit – dark red tie. Tan shoes. Ran fingers thru his hair often. Seemed to have obstructed nasal passage. Cold?

At end – apologized for being a “failure” as far as info. went. I protested. Said he had given me much intangible material. A sense of DR - & I needed so many senses to reach her.

Seemed to accept that.

Offered to be of concrete help any time I wished. Shook hands. Said “thank you”.

I: Thank you.

He remembered her as speaking simply, directly.

When asked what class he thought DR was – he said “umm – middle middle” said those of upper middle would not teach under any circumstances.

Homos. & HJ

a great burnings by H.G. – in 1910 & in ‘30’s.

Said he had never seen DR’s letters to H.G. She had some of his which she was asked to burn. She may not have done it – feeling they were too “precious”, but doesn’t know where they might be now.

West considers DR really intelligent – in answer to my question. She displayed it.