

Questions for Dr. Isenberg:

Do you have clippings of the Life spread on Tennessee Williams, to which ~~you~~ Carson responded in a letter to the editor? (regarding Streetcar)? Carson's letter to yours, in which you expressed interest in her book?

Can you date your first meeting, and characterize Carson as you knew her then? Did you visit her at 131 S. Broadway, Nyack?

Carson was approximately 31 then. How was her health? She had suffered, allegedly, two strokes by this time--both in 1947, in Paris. Did she have any noticeable impairments? Walk with aid of a cane? Slur of speech or other impediment?

How much do you know of Carson's life before she met you? Did she undergo professional analysis with you, as your patient? Had she ever had analysis before her treatment by Dr. Mary Mercer? I know that she stayed in Dr. Cleckley's home for several days in 1953, in November, upon hearing of Reeves' death, but I believe Dr. Cleckley said that that was as her friend.

Was Carson living with Reeves at the time you met her? They were married, of course, but probably none too compatible.

Did she ever tell you about what precipitated their divorce in 1941? Do you know when their troubles began? Was Reeves' forging of checks only a symptom of a problem, their sexual incompatibility, at that time, rather than the cause of their separation?

Did Carson tell you of her homosexual experiences in New York in 1940, and perhaps earlier? Surely they were latent in Columbus, Georgia, but they came to the surface with people like Gypsy Rose Lee, Erika Mann, Annemarie Clark-Swarchenbach (sp), and others who were already active in their ambivalence.

Did she speak to you of Annemarie, tell you about her death? Of these others? A friend of Reeves has told me that Reeves knew of her homosexuality, but put up with it. They were not sleeping together in 1941, though they saw each other some that spring and summer. The divorce apparently came late in 1941; do you know when, where?

Why do you think they remarried in 1945? Do you know if she continued to be overt in her homosexuality after the remarriage? Do you think her mother knew of her ambivalence? Surely Rita must have known. (And that is probably what she fears I may bring out in a depth-biography.)

Please help me understand Carson's and Reeves' feelings for each other. I believe they always loved each other, but most of the time in a brotherly-sisterly way. Someone told me that she sometimes called him Brother, and he, Sister, to her. She had denied sex with him in 1941, before the divorce. Did they become sexually compatible later? After the remarriage?

Could they have been having sex in 1950, when she reportedly became pregnant just prior to the opening of Member of the Wedding? Do you know if she attempted suicide by slashing her left wrist (knife? razor blade)? Was her wrist scarred that you ever noticed?

had had

Someone has told me that he/a kind of marriage with Carson in the mid 1950's--which was a sexual relationship as well as a spiritual and professional one, for they spent 16 hours a day together for most of three years. He described that as a most perverted kind of sexual relationship, but beautiful. Please ~~do~~ tell me (though this would not go in the book, surely) what kind of "sex" this might have been? If not normal intercourse, because of a possible homosexuality in both of them, would they

have found some kind of sexuality compatible with themselves? Is this possible or would this be a most extreme inversion?

Carson once wrote that she had just read Haverlock Ellis' work This Is My Life, and that his wife also ~~were~~ ^{was} an invert. But apparently, from Carson's letter, he had accepted this ~~and had found happiness with her~~. Carson evidently had longed for Reeves to reconcile himself to this, but evidently could not.

Did his wife go mad?

Did Carson ever suggest to you that Reeves had had a meaningful homosexual love at one time? (This I know to be true, but he also found it necessary to have hetero-sex (not a love relationship--just sex)--and did, at the same time.

Carson went to France in 1952, where she spent most of a year, coming home in late summer, and Reeves killed himself shortly thereafter. Did you see Carson after her return? When? Do you know just when she returned? Reeves' death was Nov. 18, 1953. Did she accept his death as a suicide? Do she ever tell you just how he died?

A friend of Carson's in Paris--during 1952-53--told me of Carson's coming to him during the night, slipping into bed with him, patting his face, giving him a few slobbery kisses, and telling him how nice he felt. Reeves was in bed elsewhere in the house. They had no sex--her friend and she. He never suggested it--and usually was on the defensive when she would come to him--which she did more than once. How do you explain that action on Carson's part? Would she be more inclined to such an act if her friend were homosexual himself? Again, because of being no real threat to his sexuality? Could this account for her ability to get along with Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote (for a while), Edward Albee (again, for a while)? (A friend of Tennessee has told me how Tenn. tired of Carson's slobbery kisses.)

You mentioned that you last saw her in 1958 or 59. Did she ever speak to you of Dr. Mercer, her psychiatrist and new friend? Did she tell you how she had "saved her soul"--given her her will to write again? Did you and she ever discuss her fear of having lost her creative powers?
I don't know yet exactly when Dr. Mercer came into her life. Do you?

How do you suggest I treat Carson's strokes--since I can not prove that her strokes were a kind of hysterical paralysis. You, and many others, have told me that you thought her paralysis was not induced by damage from a stroke. Others also have noted how she could relax her hand and fingers occasionally. You do believe her final stroke, resulting in 47 days of a coma, ~~were~~ was a real one, don't you?

Please analyze Carson for me in psychological terms. Would you not be willing to make a statement for me, using your name, as "one way of viewing her,"?

Would you also analyze Reeves in psychological terms, please.

You saw last November when we talked that there were some things you felt you could not tell me about Carson. Have you told me now as much as you feel you can? Are there still things you know but cannot feel at liberty to share? Would it be harmful to probe further, elsewhere?

Did you ever know George Davis? Willard Maas? Max Steele, Jack Fullilove?

What does Dr. Isenberg think Rita is afraid of in a biography of her sister? Involving

Rita in some way? Or just exposing too much of her sister? Their mother?

Speaking of Carson's mother: How do you see the attachment between Carson and her mother? An ambivalent love-hate relationship? Carson told someone in Paris in the early 50's that she hated her mother--that she felt her family were simply parasites, waiting for her to die. In what way were Tennessee and Carson alike in their mother-relationships?

Do you and Carson share any mutual friends? ^(living today) Do you know Tennessee Williams, for example?

Would you please look at our chronology and see if you can supply any data for the "lean" years or correct any misinformation?

(This chronology I had hoped to have typed up to share with you, but it is not in adequate form to share with you.)

Virginia S. Carr, Ph.D
Columbus College
Columbus, Georgia
phone: office: 561-5134, ext. 263
home: 322-2872 (area code 404)