

PILGRIMAGE AND ITS PARATEXTS

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A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of DOCTOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY

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September 2015

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BIRMINGHAM

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## Dedication

For Jeremy – my book for you.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank very warmly my PhD supervisors at the University of Birmingham, Michael Toolan and Deborah Longworth, who, in their very different ways, helped me focus my thinking. Their time, dedication and expertise have been much appreciated.

I would like to say a particular thank you to Gill Hanscombe who responded generously to my enquiries and whose interest and encouragement was so helpful. Also I would like to express my gratitude to Scott McCracken and Becky Bowler at the University of Keele for their welcome on my research visits. Their support, advice and willingness to share their knowledge have been invaluable.

Thanks go to the members of the Dorothy Richardson Society whose work I have listened to and read and whose conversations and company I have enjoyed. A special thank you goes to Stephen Rogers who shared his knowledge about Walter Allen.

Helen Trollope at the University of South Wales must also get a special thank you for dealing so efficiently with all my inter-library loan requests.

And a personal thank you goes to Bob and Hils for their gift which enabled me to visit the Beinecke Book and Manuscript Library at Yale.

And lastly my thanks must go to Jeremy for his love, understanding and unfailing support and to my children, Ursi and Theo.

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## PREAMBLE

‘What one paratextual element gives, another paratextual element, later or simultaneous, may also take away; and here as elsewhere, the reader must put it all together and try (it’s not always so simple) to figure out what the whole adds up to’ (Genette, 1997, p.183).

G rard Genette’s theory of the paratext describes how any text is framed by its paratext, material appended to a text or more loosely associated with it once it is published, read and circulated in book form. The paratext is conceptualised as a spatial field, like a ‘threshold’ which the reader can either step across or turn away from, ‘a zone between text and off text’. Its key function is to convey a ‘commentary’ that shapes how a text is interpreted and perceived. Genette explains how the liminal zone of the paratext has the power to achieve a ‘better reception’ or a ‘more pertinent reading’ of a text (1997, p.2). But a paratextual commentary does not always straightforwardly serve the needs of the text to which it is anchored; it can be complex and mutable. As the Genettian epigraph suggests, the paratext is a transitional zone that can ‘give’ and ‘take away’ meanings at different points over time. I would go further and suggest that the paratext can be a zone where ideas about a text can also be in states of collision or collusion.

I am interested in examining the paratextual space framing Dorothy Richardson’s long modernist novel *Pilgrimage* (1915-67), a text published in thirteen chapter-volumes over the unusually protracted time period of fifty-two years. In Genettian terms ‘figuring out’ what the whole of any text ‘adds up to’ can be difficult but, in the case of *Pilgrimage*, there are a cluster of complicating factors to contend with: unusual length, difficult style, slow evolution, and a ‘false’ omnibus edition of 1938.



Today's reader is, perhaps, in a privileged position, able to read *Pilgrimage's* multiple volumes back-to-back in a bid to grasp the text as a whole, whereas its first readers had to wait years to read most chapter-volumes. I would guess that some might, but most would not, reacquaint themselves with earlier chapter-volumes before reading the latest, whereas others might read chapter-volumes out of sequence or be even unaware that the one they were reading formed part of a larger whole. Potential uncertainty for the reader with regard to start and end point or the long passages of time between chapter-volumes did not, in theory, cause Richardson any concern. In an article entitled 'Novels' for *Life and Letters* (1948), she reflects on the way in which experimental novels of the modernist type demand a different kind of vertical reading from the conventional linear or horizontal model associated with the realist novel. Indeed she celebrates and finds pleasure in a new kind of reading, one that is indirect and uncertain but nevertheless substantial, sensitive and autonomous:

The interest of any single part is no longer dependent for the reader upon exact knowledge of what has gone before or upon a frothy excitement (...) as to what next will happen. Such novels may be entered at any point, read backwards, or from the centre to either extremity and will yet reveal, like a mosaic, the interdependence of the several parts, each one bearing the stamp of the author's consciousness' (reproduced in Scott, 1990, p.435).

Richardson's statements about 'such novels' apply, of course, to her own work *Pilgrimage*, a novel so long that the chapters had become chapter-volumes, published separately. By the time Richardson had written this article, however, the chapter-volumes or interdependent parts of *Pilgrimage* had been gathered together and published as a (false) omnibus edition. Richardson's theorising about reading novels has to be understood in context. Fifteen years earlier when *Pilgrimage* was in a scattered rather than contained state, Richardson had felt very differently about how her experimental novel, *Pilgrimage*, might be read, deeply concerned about the very likely possibility that the reader's point of entry would be arbitrary.

In a letter to her friend, Samuel Solomonovich Koteliansky, (dated December 11<sup>th</sup> 1933), she expresses frustration with the way in which her work is being disseminated by distributors who, keen to sell or loan, ‘offer as the first, or latest, any odd volume they happen to have’ (Fromm, 1995, p.254).

Lack of knowledge, in those who should know better, and its consequence, confused readers – who read *Pilgrimage* out of sequence – or without a sense that what they are reading is part of a greater whole, angers Richardson. This seeming collision or contradiction between what she complains about bitterly in a letter in 1933 and then celebrates in an article in 1948 can be explained with the help of Genette’s paratextual framework. The two epitextual documents (outside the body of the anchoring text, *Pilgrimage*) – one confidential and private, the other public – provide a useful example of the ‘giving and taking away’ of meaning that Genette describes as a typical feature of paratextual space. Here the obvious contrasts in temporality (before and after the publication of the omnibus edition), audience (Richardson’s friend versus a notional sense of her readership), and function (complaining versus theorising) help to explain the contradiction (1997, p.10).

Through examining *Pilgrimage*’s paratexts it is possible to see more than just the ‘give and take’ of meaning. A fuller understanding of the text can be gained as well as an appreciation of just how problematic the notion of *Pilgrimage* is as a coherent unified text. In the same letter to Koteliansky cited above, Richardson complains about the mixed and shoddy material form of the separate chapter-volumes. She is of the opinion that *Pilgrimage*, (used here by Richardson to mean the text in its totality at this stage), has not really been published at all:

Ten chapter-volumes have found their way into print; into an execrable lay-out and disfigured by hosts of undiscovered printer’s errors and a punctuation that is the result of corrections, also intermittent, by the author (...) I believe, all told, that a decent corrected edition – in the form of two, or three of the short volumes bound

together – would pay its way. Duckworth agrees, but is prevented from venturing, by having (mysteriously) set the books in varying types (Fromm, 1995, p.254).

The desultory nature of *Pilgrimage*'s publication was Richardson's responsibility but the unprofessional typesetting was Duckworth's. An omnibus edition produced by a new publisher, Dent, was therefore an attractive prospect, providing uniformity, to a text that was, so far, lacking this quality on two counts.

Nevertheless the idea of an omnibus edition was a difficult compromise for Richardson as it entailed a misrepresentation. The idea that *Pilgrimage* was a complete text would have been 'given' or communicated in a two-fold way, not just by the publication of this 1938 omnibus edition, but also by the appearance of two paratextual prefaces, one of which, written by Richardson herself, would have conveyed a certain authority about *Pilgrimage*'s 'complete' status. Readers at the time would have had no reason at all to suspect that the omnibus edition was anything other than what it purported to be, even if they bothered to read Richardson's Foreword and detected its tonal strain. There was, however, one chapter-volume left to add to *Pilgrimage*'s mosaic-like structure. The publication of the second omnibus edition of 1967, with a new thirteenth chapter-volume and a new allographic preface meant that the idea of a *Pilgrimage* as a complete text had then to be revised.

The give and take of meanings, the collisions and contradictions can be intraparatextual as well as interparatextual. An extract from a letter from Richardson to her friend and patron Annie Winifred Ellerman, commonly known by her penname Bryher, (dated May 21<sup>st</sup> 1950), provides an interesting glimpse into the writer's life and the ambiguous status of *Pilgrimage* as, simultaneously, finished text *and* work in progress. The dual nature of Bryher's role in

Richardson's life, as a personal friend *as well as* provider of financial support, is an interesting complicating factor strongly affecting the letter's content and tone:

My 77<sup>th</sup> birthday finds me busier than ever. Yet another student, this time in a Welsh university is heading for a degree on the strength of a thesis on Pilgrimage & sends me elaborate questionnaires. Someone else is launching, if any publisher will venture, an anthology of my work as a whole, including articles & poems, asking me for suggestions & approval of all she is choosing, besides material for her proposed preface. In addition to my life-long list of correspondents – several in their eighties & still ravenous for interchange - & all those who have since joined the list, some in their mere twenties, there are those letters from strangers, readers, that can hardly be left unanswered. Add housework & cookery – to-be-greatly reduced this summer now that the restaurants are open, & you will agree that I am busy. Whenever possible, my morning includes the putting together of a few lines of a new vol (Fromm, 1995, p.639).

This extract could be understood as merely typifying the issues faced by any writer needing to cultivate a relationship with those who have an artistic, scholarly or commercial interest in their work, whilst continuing themselves to write daily, even if only for a short period and a small quantity of words. But the paragraph resonates for the knowing reader who understands the fuller picture and hears something beyond the breezy tone. Richardson, alone now, having lost her husband, Alan Odle two years earlier, is in the final phase of life. She is, as ever, fully occupied, engaging with people professionally and personally, letters playing an important role in this regard, and continuing, not just to write, but to write more of *Pilgrimage*. Twelve years earlier she had to write an authorial Foreword to the 'false' omnibus edition that left her feeling, at best, embarrassed and uncomfortable, knowing, as she did, that *Pilgrimage*, her life's work, was incomplete. The letter makes reference to *Pilgrimage* as product and process without drawing attention to the incongruity. The external reader has to assume that the original addressee, Bryher, fully understands Richardson's writing situation.

This thesis will attempt to explore Pilgrimage through its paratexts, some of which have escaped close critical scrutiny. I will attempt to ‘figure out’ what the whole of Pilgrimage ‘adds up to’ by exploring the rich source of its paratextual material. In order to do this, I will be adopting an interdisciplinary approach and drawing on three theoretical perspectives that shed light on how a text is transformed into a book as well as how it is disseminated and received.

## INTRODUCTION

*Pilgrimage*'s material form has been a dominant paratextual theme since John Beresford's 1915 peritextual preface to the first chapter-volume, *Pointed Roofs*, where he reflects on the process of reading it in three different formats, handwritten manuscript, typescript and printed book, and notes how his opinion of what he read was profoundly influenced by its materiality. Variation in the handwritten manuscript enabled him to interpret the 'clothing' of the syntax and imagine how Richardson's mind was working at the time of writing, giving the thoughts recorded a strong, visual signifying presence. A 'ragged' quality to the handwriting suggested an urgent need for Richardson to record the thought quickly before it was lost, whereas a 'delicate' neatness suggested its opposite, as if the thought had been captured and each word 'caressed' (p.v). The handwriting provided visual cues indicating how ideas were held in the writer's mind and how long it took for syntax to realise their shape, whereas the typescript and printed book did not. The printed versions therefore enabled Beresford to concentrate on narrative method and technique rather than the writer's mind and his interpretation of *Pointed Roofs* underwent a radical change. In the handwritten version he thought he could detect objectivity. The typescript, presenting itself like an 'applicant', was 'the most subjective thing' he had ever read (ibid, p.vi). The printed book, however, freed him from the 'guise' of the prototypes and offered comparison with other novels (ibid).

*Pilgrimage*'s materiality, in its most basic form, emerges as a key idea in this first preface. The next section outlines the methodology of the thesis and the way in which materiality has become an interdisciplinary interest that can be approached and analysed in different ways.

## Methodology

Some of the innovative and outward-looking directions recently taken by the evolving disciplines of narratology, modernist studies and stylistics intersect in an area that might be called 'the materiality of texts', understood here to mean the physical substance of a text and the contextual processes of its dissemination and reception. The reconfiguration of these three disciplines has led inevitably to a degree of convergence. My particular interest in materiality is rooted in Genette's narratological concept of the paratext (1997) but is also substantially informed by the two disciplines of stylistics and modernist studies, whose perspectives on materiality are different from each other and from narratology. These differences are nuanced rather than contradictory and there is a salient commonality, current at the time of writing and particularly productive for my purpose; all are contextualist in their outlook.

These disciplines will be used to support a thesis that Dorothy Richardson's novel sequence *Pilgrimage* is better understood if read in relation to its marginal paratexts, those surrounding, circumambient texts by Richardson and others, which constitute an informative, lively and reflective discourse on their anchoring text and on the material processes of its production, dissemination and reception. My examination of these contextualising paratexts will, I hope, add to the critical understanding of *Pilgrimage*, a text that has acquired a rather mixed reputation. Its admirers position it as a central modernist text; ground breaking, original and stylistically innovative. Its detractors push it to the modernist periphery, concede its influence but question its readability. *Pilgrimage's* difference in style, genre, content and narrative has never been easily accommodated, but the interdisciplinary critical climate of contextualism that now exists is potentially more 'open' to exploring its peculiar qualities.

Genette's theory of the 'paratext' will be used to analyse the complex mediation between *Pilgrimage*, the author, Dorothy Richardson, the publisher(s) and readers (1997). The paratext is a spatial concept, likened to a threshold (ibid, p.2). Genette divides paratexts into two spatial categories, using the term 'peritext' for those elements within the text, 'inserted into the interstices' and 'epitext' for those other more 'distanced' elements, such as interviews or conversations with the author and private communications such as letters and diaries located outside the core text (ibid, p.5). My analysis will reveal the charged nature of several peritexts and epitexts and the different ways in which they reveal doubts and uncertainties about *Pilgrimage*.

## **Narratology**

An interest in materiality, either in the physical aspects of texts or their contextual material processes or both, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Narratology, initially, was solely concerned with its referent 'narrative' and had no interest in materiality whatsoever. It developed from a relatively small set of homogenous ideas, with a linguistic paradigm to uncover the 'grammar' of narrative, to a diverse collection of theories and sub-disciplines which continue to grow and modify. Gerald Prince outlines narratology's evolution from a 'relatively unified discipline' to one with different emphases and interdisciplinary collaborations such as 'feminist narratology, natural narratology, socionarratology [and] psychonarratology' (2003a, p.66). Despite narratology's proliferation, the key question, 'what constitutes narrative?' on which the discipline depends, is still being asked and answered in different ways, as Prince outlines in his essay 'Surveying Narratology' (2003b, p.1). The term 'narratology,' denoting 'the science of narrative' within a sub-field of Structuralism, was coined by Tzvetan Todorov in 1969 in his *Grammaire du Décaméron*



but the heterogenous nature of its recent developments has resulted in the adoption of its plural form 'narratologies' (Nünning, 2003, pp. 239-64; Herman, 1999). Its early singular form has a specialised meaning, denoting the semiotic study of the signs and codes of narratives, to construct a universal grammar of narrative through the use of typologies (abstract frameworks). 'Narratologies' denotes a diverse set of ideas about narrative that can be applied in a range of literary and cultural fields, but the merging of disciplines, such as those listed by Prince above, does raise some complex issues of intellectual compromise. Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller show how narratology's evolving 'contextualist orientation' is incongruous for those theorists who associate narratological enquiry with a decontextualised, universal grammar of narrative (2003, p.vi). Nünning comments in a similar vein: 'It is arguably an open question whether all or even most of the new approaches have all that much in common with the systematic study of narrative known as 'narratology' (2003, p.240).

Narratology is seen as having two or three main developmental stages, depending on critic and schema. David Herman (1999) identifies two, the 'classical' (Formalist-Structuralist tradition) and the 'postclassical' (new approaches from the 1990s onwards), whereas Kindt and Müller prefer to divide the 'classical' into two, differentiate the narratological field pre- and post- Todorov and refer to three phases in narratology's history (2003, pp.v-vi). Kindt and Müller argue that pre-Todorov, novelists, literary critics and theorists were working in their different ways on narrative but that there was 'a degree of continuity in the basic definition of the field and the methods of description used' (ibid, p.v). In terms of its post-classical phase, there is a critical consensus that changes within narratology map those of other related disciplines of a literary or cultural nature. Nünning suggests that they are all adapting to a new 'theoretical and critical climate' where attention to context is a key trend or 'turn' (2003, p.240).

The work of the narratologist, Mieke Bal, straddles both the 'classical' and the 'post classical' phases and in the preface to the second edition of *Narratology* (1997), she reflects on her evolving understanding of narratology's role 'as a heuristic tool, not an objective grid providing certainty' (ibid, p.xiii). In the 'Afterword' she explains her 'increasing awareness of the cultural embeddedness of narrative'. She argues that cultural objects have a 'narrative aspect' to them, and that beyond the obvious domain of literature there are plenty of other discourse contexts where narrative 'occurs' (ibid, p.220). She concludes that narratology 'is a perspective on culture' (ibid, p.222). The idea that narrative can be found in all sorts of domains beyond literature will inform this thesis. *Pilgrimage's* prefaces, letters and reviews all tell different stories about their anchoring text. Also Bal's aim, to work towards a narratology that is academically accessible and useful 'in conjunction with other concerns and theories,' is one with which I align myself as a researcher (ibid, p.xiv).

Bal was not the first narratologist to consider the wider cultural context worthy of attention. Suzanne Lanser's 1986 essay 'Towards a Feminist Narratology' proposes a new language of narrative to fuse two apparently incompatible methodological approaches, the mimetic and the semiotic (p.676). She concludes that narrative theory, on which narratology is based, needs to be context- and gender-sensitive as well as sufficiently expansive and flexible to encompass the 'linguistic, literary, historical, biographical, social and political' (ibid). Lanser's voice surfaces strongly, making a feminist-inflected narratology sound appealing. I have chosen to make a paratextual analysis of a female-authored text seen by several critics as both 'feminist', (subject matter and perspective), and 'feminine' (style). Although these labels can be problematized and contested, I will endeavour to make my analysis gender-sensitive in the way Lanser suggests. Clear vocalisation of a narratological theory in pragmatic terms can also be identified in the work of the structuralist Gérard Genette whose theory of the paratext, first published as *Seuils* (1987) and translated into English as

*Paratexts* (1997) informs the thinking behind this thesis. Genette provides a detailed framework for understanding the verbal and nonverbal conventions (titles, prefaces, dedications, illustrations and chapter breaks) that frame and transform texts into books for a variety of audiences (publishers, readers and the general public). Genette's work, like Bal's, sits uncomfortably within Herman's classifications. Genette's theory is schematic, based on typologies, *and* contextually aware in that he carefully considers function and readership. Kindt and Müller refer to Genette's work as 'low structuralism', one that strays from a 'high' classical narratological focus on linguistic structures/narrative grammar, lending itself to adaptation and translation (2003, p.vi). When collocating with 'structuralism', I consider the modifier 'low' to have a positive meaning, suggesting creative and functional uses of narratology.

Although this thesis is primarily concerned with the concepts of paratextual space and materiality, the relevance of narratology to *Pilgrimage* is, I hope, also clear. Its material length, thirteen chapter-volumes, is far in excess of the novelistic norm and this poses reading difficulties, in terms of what is remembered and carried over from the narrative of one chapter-volume to the next, as well as how the text, as a whole, is understood. Although all thirteen chapter-volumes are narratively linked by their focus on Miriam's life, seen through her consciousness, and are therefore interdependent, sharing certain aspectual and thematic similarities, they also *feel* very different and pose problems for those who want to fix *Pilgrimage* within the parameters of a single literary genre. Richardson set out to tell a story, based on her life, in a new way that had not been done before. To what extent her way of telling that story is new, and whether that story is readable and narratable (Prince, 2003a, p.56) is much debated in *Pilgrimage*'s paratextual space.

## **Modernist and New Modernist Studies**

Modernist studies, like narratology, has grown from a relatively narrow discipline with little interest in materiality to something diverse and diffuse that pays close attention to the material and the cultural in a much broader sense than the high art, avant-garde modernist aesthetic of the past. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker refer to this shift in focus as a ‘materialist turn,’ seen ‘in the increased attention to questions of the text and historicity’ (2009, p.5). Such questions might include how the appearance of a text changes over time bearing, or indeed wearing, the influence of different cultural handlers or where, and in what format, a text was originally produced.

Lawrence Rainey expresses a view about the relationship between culture and its aesthetic artefacts that assigns equal worth to the two elements rather than privileging the critical study of the latter. He robustly attacks the cultural snobbery underpinning a critique that gives value to the abstract and dismisses the concrete. He argues for a new, contextual way of looking at the ‘social reality’ of modernism, one that looks beyond texts as embodiments of ideas to consider their material form, how they were produced and marketed and where they were read (1998, pp.4 and 5). Rainey counters anticipated negativity from those text-centred literary critics who consider context to be of peripheral interest only:

Some readers (...) will find far too little of the detailed examination of actual works that is sometimes held to be the only important or worthwhile form of critical activity. I reject the idea that history or theory are acceptable only if they take on the role of humble handmaiden to the aesthetic artefact. Further, juxtaposing the analysis of specific works with discussion of institutional networks would encourage, however inadvertently, a vulgar materialism that I also disclaim’ (ibid, pp.6-7).

Rainey not only justifies this new contextualist approach, he also suggests that the aesthetic of modernism has a less rarefied social reality than commonly thought. The received view,

that the premise of modernism is author-centred and ‘art for art’s sake’ with no sense of the text as commodity, is challenged by Rainey’s argument that the aesthetic artefacts of modernism *are* commodities, albeit of a specialist type, of interest to a powerful minority of patrons who possess the financial means to collect, speculate or invest (ibid, p.3). The extent to which *Pilgrimage* can be seen as commodified or ‘author-centred’ will be considered in relation to *Pilgrimage*’s peritextual variation as well as Richardson’s epitextual letters. The former provides material evidence of the diverse and imaginative ways in which the text has been commodified to appeal to very different audiences. The latter not only reveals much about Richardson’s lifestyle – her unrefined domestic reality, straitened circumstances and the nature of the relationship she had with her patron Bryher over an extensive period of time – but also her aesthetic practice, her thoughts on writing a preface to her work, her ideas about *Pilgrimage*’s readership as well as how her work should look and be distributed.

In exploring the paratextual space, I will be applying a contextualist approach to consider the institutional structures that have shaped *Pilgrimage* (who published it, how, when and why) but this will be done in conjunction with, and not at the expense of, close textual scrutiny. Rainey’s ironic formulation of a ‘modernist principle of reading,’ based on the editorial practice of James Sibley Watson and Scofield Thayer at the *Dial*, (an American journal of literature, philosophy and politics with a progressive bent), who published T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* without having read it, will *not* be adopted: ‘The best reading of a work, may, on some occasions, be one that does not read it at all’ (ibid, p.106). *Pilgrimage* is, however, an example of a modernist text more referred to than read, or indeed, ‘more revered than read’ (Sage, 1989, p.44) and those who have read it in its totality, are perhaps not equally familiar with each and every chapter-volume. This is, I think, more to do with the intrinsic aspects of the text that make it a difficult read rather than a modernist-principled methodology. Rainey, I believe, is hardly suggesting ‘not-reading’ as a way forward, but

reflecting on how our understanding of the process of reading can be extended. He is, however, unhelpfully dismissive of a type of intrinsic reading based on close attention to language, suggesting that ‘to indulge in a scholastic scrutiny of linguistic minutiae’ is a waste of time, but this is, perhaps, an inevitable consequence of championing the broader outlook. He argues that the privileged position of ‘close reading’, a methodology in literary studies, is only one type of reading that emerged at a particular time and place and that many other types of reading are possible and useful. He is not suggesting that one should replace the other, but makes a strong argument for an extrinsic approach, that a text is a cultural work that can only be properly understood within its constitutive network.

My approach will be different from Rainey’s in that I will be working on the premise that an appreciation of the two approaches as equally valid is not only possible but also the mixing and synthesising of the two can be both desirable and productive. I do not share his view that to have an interest in the ‘linguistic’ is to somehow become uselessly immersed in ‘minutiae’. There is a widespread misconception about linguistics that it concerns itself solely with the micro-level of language, which, for the non-linguist, sometimes communicates as the small and trivial rather than the precise. Linguistics, just like any other discipline, has an interest in the bigger more comprehensive picture, and language at the macro-level of discourse is one such example (Nørgaard et al, 2010, p.19).

Since the late 1990s, the label ‘new modernist studies’ has been used to refer to a specific trend to probe beyond the fictional world of texts and rethink the time, place and cultural activity of modernism. New emphases are on plurality, inclusivity and variety as demonstrated in the title of the recently published [*The*] *Oxford Handbook of Modernisms* (Brooker, Gasorick, Longworth, Thacker, 2011). Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz reflect that modernism, like all ‘period-centred literary scholarship,’ has undergone ‘expansion’ in several directions: ‘temporal’, ‘spatial’ and ‘vertical’ (2008, p.737). Thus

new modernist studies is not bound by rigid, period-centred notions of modernist literary history (1900-30), neither is it solely focussed on Europe or North America, nor is it concerned with isolating the aesthetics of the cultural artefact from the material processes that produced it (ibid, p.738). Rainey's idea, that the material conditions of modernism need to be scrutinised as closely as the aesthetic artefacts produced, has become firmly embedded. There is now great interest in 'the material conditions of literary modernism' and the mechanisms by which modernist works moved from the hands of the author to the hands of the reader, how they were distinguished from other literary works and given to 'the right cultural handlers' to promote (Jaffe, 2011, p.318). The periodicals and magazines, in which many modernist texts first appeared, are now carefully considered as well as the 'movements and agendas' underpinning them (Mao and Walkowitz, 2008, p.744). Brooker et al reinforce this idea, arguing that modernism needs to be properly situated in its cultural and material context in order to consider:

where modernisms emerged; how they developed, by what means they were produced, disseminated and publicized' (...) 'the work of literary agents, publishing houses, advertisers and reviewers; to systems of patronage, group dynamics, private and public networking, book contracts; to the public spaces in which writers forged alliances and fought cultural battles; to the ways in which writers and artists fashioned careers for themselves by engaging with specific markets; and to the history of 'little magazines', by means of which so much modernist work was initially disseminated' (2011, p.2).

Another important line of new modernist thinking proposed by Mao and Walkowitz, relates to the temporal and spatial axes of expansion, and informs some of the thinking underpinning this thesis. They show how a literary work can transcend its time and place of origin so that it belongs, 'to more than one moment and more than one place' (2008, p.738). I will be applying this idea to *Pilgrimage* itself and its paratexts. *Pilgrimage* is usually classified as a modernist text but its expansive form, slow evolution and piecemeal

publication history certainly challenge conventional temporal delimitations of literary period. Moreover the different prefaces, translations, popular and scholarly editions help to situate the text for new audiences, whose experiences, attitudes and values have little in common with Richardson's original readership. Rainey puts it this way: 'All works in the course of time, must move from some specific sociohistorical matrix into others that are structured by different sets of values and concepts, different backgrounds of practice and knowledge in which those are integrated' (1998, p.166).

## **Stylistics**

The discipline of stylistics, a systematic, rigorous, linguistic approach to style in language, has also diversified and expanded over time. Geoffrey Leech summarises its development from 'a fledgling offshoot of linguistics and literary studies to being quite an established discipline – or perhaps we should call it an 'interdiscipline' – in its own right' (2008, p.1). Lesley Jeffries and Daniel McIntyre (2010, pp.9-11) reinforce this view and describe stylistics as a 'hybrid discipline,' 'eclectic' in terms of its theoretical and methodological practice. Its current state of flux and fusion belies that its roots are much more narrowly set in early twentieth century Russian Formalism, a school of literary criticism with a particular interest in the linguistic features of literary language (ibid, pp.1-2). Stylistics has therefore, since its inception, been closely associated with the study of style within literary texts but its scope has broadened considerably, in line with developments in key concepts in linguistics, to include an interest in function and context as well as language in all its forms. Leech provides an explanation for this broadening:

Placing linguistics in a broad humanistic and social science perspective, it no longer seems controversial that when we describe the characteristics of a piece of language, we can (and should) also study its interrelations with those things that lie beyond it



but nevertheless give it meaning in the broadest sense. These include the shared knowledge of the writer and reader, the social background, and the placing of the text in its cultural and historical context (2008, p.3).

One of the consequences of this process is that materiality has found a place within stylistics. In a similar way to narratology and ‘narrative’, stylistics’ kernel concept ‘linguistic’ has been redefined, in this case, to include all aspects of textual communication beyond the word, including the physical substance of a text, such as typography, visual images and paper quality that make up a book’s ‘material realisation’ (Nørgaard et al 2010, p.30). A new stylistic ‘grammar’ is being formed that aims to describe, as systematically as spoken and written language, semiotic modes such as layout, font size and margins. Multimodal stylistics is a relatively new branch of stylistics that considers any text to be multimodal, creating meaning from an integration of the verbal and semiotic modes (ibid, pp.30-4). Another sub branch of stylistics, pragmatic stylistics, has developed to explore the relationship between language and context, including the ‘social, cultural and authorial contexts’ of textual production and reception (ibid, p.3).

I will be using the discipline of stylistics in the positive and open way that Leech describes, as a ‘bridge’ between linguistic and literary studies in order to, ‘facilitate and anticipate an interpretative synthesis’ (2008, pp.2-3). Stylistics provides a broad range of analytic frameworks to support the close reading of texts, both literary and non-literary, and to consider in detail the dynamic relationship between author, text and reader. Stylistics will be used to examine the prose style of *Pilgrimage*, its peritextual and epitextual prefaces, as well as Richardson’s letters and her publishers’ documents and letters. The stylistic approach adopted will be qualitative in the main, but quantitative methods will also be applied, albeit with a light touch, in chapters 1 and 3. In cases where the paratexts are written by Richardson, it will be interesting to explore stylistic similarities and differences

between *Pilgrimage* and those paratexts. In the way that Leech describes (ibid, p.7), I will be treating the paratexts of *Pilgrimage* 'as literature', making the assumption that it is as worthwhile to make a stylistic study of paratexts as it is to make a stylistic study of their anchoring text.

### **Introduction to *Pilgrimage*'s material form and early publishing history**

Nothing about *Pilgrimage* is straightforward except its title, a metaphoric designation of its theme – a spiritual journey through life. Length, alone, places several demands on the reader: those of time, attention, memory, patience and stamina. The novel sequence comprises thirteen books, coined 'chapter-volumes' by Richardson, and is more than two thousand pages long. Its subject matter is based on Richardson's own life from the age of seventeen to forty. Each chapter-volume has a title and is divided into numbered chapters. The titles are mostly indirect and evocative rather than summative or descriptive. Endings of chapters and chapter-volumes often feel arbitrary and there is a deliberate avoidance of climactic points or resolutions. Recurring themes and motifs provide a narrative pattern of sorts for the reader, whose continued relationship with the text is tested by its length, its lack of organisational cues and demanding style.

The form of *Pilgrimage* that exists today is a four volume collected edition of thirteen chapter-volumes. The publishing dates for the first editions of the individual chapter-volumes are as follows: I *Pointed Roofs* (1915), *Backwater* (1916), *Honeycomb* (1917); II *The Tunnel* (1919), *Interim* (1919); III *Deadlock* (1921); *Revolving Lights* (1923), *The Trap* (1925); IV *Oberland* (1927), *Dawn's Left Hand* (1931), *Clear Horizon* (1935). The last two chapter-volumes, *Dimple Hill* and *March Moonlight*, were not published separately, being first published in the omnibus editions of 1938 and 1967. *March Moonlight*, unfinished and

unrevised, was published posthumously. *Pilgrimage*, since 1967, is thereby understood to be one work comprising thirteen units, packaged in four volumes and designed to be read sequentially. Its length has had a significant effect on how it has been read and criticised. For those early readers, *Pilgrimage* took shape organically and relatively quickly with the first five chapter-volumes being published in as many years. Then the pace of writing and publication slowed down with two year gaps between those chapter-volumes published in the 1920s and then, more slowly still, in the 1930s with gaps of four years between chapter-volumes. To conceive of the text as a whole has only really been possible since 1967 and, even then, its unevenness does not lend itself to being seen in this way.

**CHAPTER ONE:**  
**“THE CHILL WATERS OF AUTHORSHIP”**

(Letter to Edward Garnett, Spring 1915, Fromm, 1995, p.8)

**Doubts and uncertainties about *Pilgrimage* expressed in Richardson’s private letters (1915-33)**

**Introduction**

The private letters of writers, later collected, published or archived, have an obvious appeal for the researcher wanting to find out more about an individual’s life and work. Genette, however, raises some questions about their worth and problematizes the usual distinction made between a public and a private letter. He argues that it is wrong to assume that the private letters of authors are *not* aimed at the public as many are written with the possibility of publication in mind (1997, p.371). Given the problems experienced with the publication of her life’s work, *Pilgrimage*, I think it unlikely that Richardson’s private letters fall into this category but it is impossible to know for certain. Genette’s observation on this matter is useful to bear in mind, as is his more conventional demarcation between public and private letters:

In the public epitext, the author addresses the public, possibly through an intermediary; in the private epitext, the author first addresses a confidant who is real, who is perceived as such, and whose personality is important to the communication at hand, even influencing its form and content’ (ibid).

Genette describes how public access to this kind of private letter is affected by two factors, delay in time and interposition of the first addressee: ‘When the public – eventually admitted to this confidential or intimate exchange – learns, always after the fact, about a message that is not addressed essentially to it, it does so “over the shoulder” of a third party who is

genuinely treated as an individual person' (ibid). This so-called 'over the shoulder' reading catches something of the surreptitious situational intimacy another reader might feel when accessing a letter not designed for their personal perusal. Awareness of the presence of the named addressee does not, I think, lessen with subsequent re-reading, but the breach between private and public begins to feel 'normal'. Genette also differentiates the specific message of a letter to a named individual, its paratextual 'function' and the more diffuse message to another reader based on an awareness of the initial addressee, its paratextual 'effect' (ibid). Liz Stanley expresses the same idea rather differently describing letters as '*perspectival*', their meaning changing according to addressee and the passing of time (2004, pp.202-3).

The extent to which Richardson's private letters can be seen to illuminate her life and work varies according to several factors: addressee, trigger or purpose, focus (degree of self-reflexivity), as well as Richardson's mood or frame of mind at the time of writing. Some of her letters clearly fall into a category which might be called 'business-like' or 'professional' such as those to her American agent, Curtis Brown and her American publisher, Alfred Knopf. These letters tend to be tightly focussed, sometimes quite curt and legalistic, concerned with financial and contractual issues and Richardson is mostly, and quite sensibly, guarded about her life and work and any doubts and uncertainties that she might have. To her male friends, Robert Nichols and P. Beaumont Wadsworth, however, she can be candid, whereas to her patron/friend Bryher the tone fluctuates, veering between gratitude, reassurance and frank admission of the difficulties she is experiencing, but habitually modified by a clear message that she is trying to write as her circumstances allow. Contradictory or inconsistent opinions about *Pilgrimage* can be partially explained by Richardson's acute awareness of her addressee. Anybody with an official or semi-official role to play in the publication of her work has an ameliorated version of the doubts and

uncertainties she can more openly share with her close friends. A trend, I suspect, that is typical of many writers' letters.

Richardson's letters provide a plethora of detail about the circumstances of her own life but have to be read with some caution as to their factuality, although the recurrence of certain topics (her having too much to do and not enough time) give them the ring of truth. Metatextual comment about *Pilgrimage* is also plentiful. Genette is generally doubtful about the relevance or interest of such letters and, indeed, the wisdom of even reading them, if readers want to keep the writer concerned in high regard. He quotes the novelist, Émile Zola, on the letters of Honoré de Balzac, whose opinion on the matter is similar to Genette's, although Balzac's letters, according to Zola, are the exception that proves the rule: 'Ordinarily, one does not do illustrious men a favour by publishing their correspondence. In letters they almost always appear egotistic and cold, calculating and vain' (1997, p.373).

Traces of all these qualities, arguably, are present in Richardson's letters but, equally, it is possible to see their opposite: empathy, warmth, honesty and modesty. As one instance illustrating the egotism/empathy continuum, there is evidence of Richardson's self-protective caution about establishing new relationships with people who like her work, and want to meet her. In a letter to Peggy Kirkaldy, (dated June 25<sup>th</sup> 1928), responding, it would appear, to such a request, she speaks of authors being, 'boring people, banal beyond belief (see Proust)' and confesses that she is fearful of meeting readers who enjoy her work in case she loses them afterwards: 'In a general way I believe readers should "keep their illusions" with regard to authors they like to read' (Fromm, 1995, p.151). A closer perusal of Richardson's letters reveals that this 'boring author' stance was, in fact, a ruse or avoidance strategy Richardson used with others, including John Cowper Powys (letter dated August 1929, *ibid*, p.171). She quickly warmed to both Kirkaldy and Powys, however, after meeting

them, her subsequent letters to them providing ample evidence of two sustained and highly valued friendships. Indeed Powys was the dedicatee of *Dimple Hill*, the twelfth chapter-volume.

Richardson organised her life around her writing and prioritised work over friends and family, which resulted in a widespread perception that she was diffident, enigmatic and reclusive rather than merely pragmatic. This was partly the result of the prevailing cultural stereotype of the eccentric woman writer and artist, but Richardson's idiosyncratic style, when she was interviewed by Louise Morgan for *Everyman* (1931), would – undoubtedly – have reinforced a sense of her uncompromising strangeness: 'The best conditions in my experience [for writing] are winter solitude and inaccessibility. I mean solitude. Servantless, vistorless and, except for a single agent, tradesmanless' (p.7). Here her diction, characterised by a marked pattern of negative polarity, is unusual and a good example of linguistic playfulness, the suffix *-less* being used with nouns to form adjectives which are not in any dictionary. Unfortunately for Richardson, the only time she enjoyed the type of solitude she celebrates here, was when she wrote *Pointed Roofs*, her first chapter-volume, and was able to stay in a cottage in Cornwall by herself and write (see letter (6)). Richardson's letters, amongst other things, chart her quest for the 'best conditions' for writing and show how compromised she was by her domestic situation.

The picture emerging of Richardson from her letters during the period 1915-33, when most of *Pilgrimage* was written, is a complex one. They reveal, not only how keenly felt were the inadequacies and distractions of her writing contexts, but also how important to her were her friendships, many of them established and maintained through the medium of the letter. In this way she was able to participate in other people's lives without undue social distraction, and exchange ideas and opinions about literature, reading and indeed about her

own work in progress. She also comments at length about the processes of writing and being reviewed, experiencing the two extremes of delight and rage. Information is disclosed about her various roles as wife, friend, fellow-writer, mentor, acceptor of patronage and publisher's client and, over the years, it is possible to see the development of certain attitudinal trends to the significant people in her life.

Gloria Fromm, in her introduction to *Windows on Modernism*, the selected letters of Dorothy Richardson, notes that Richardson, 'comes to life in these letters as one of the mavericks of modern literature' (1995, p.xvii). There are, indeed, many letters that provide 'evidence' of Richardson's unorthodox and independent-minded views, her increasingly cynical attitude to publishers and her astute evaluations of fellow-writers and reviewers. There is no doubt that her letters reveal someone keen to share opinions with friends and acquaintances and that she enjoys expressing thoughts and feelings in letter form, but feels, with a degree of unusual intensity, the pressure of time and the burden of unanswered letters.

George H. Thomson identifies the many, varied and dispersed archival sources of Richardson's letters, (several in the United States), attributing high value to them. He argues that they constitute another 'autobiographical sequence' (the other being *Pilgrimage*), revealing Richardson's 'characteristic insight and judgement, in which acute observation, accompanied by cogent analysis, was tempered by a deep kindness' (2007, p.7). Although I would challenge the idea that private letters provide a kernel truth about a writer's personality, and can be read as straightforwardly autobiographical, there are, I think, occasions when a trace of Richardson's consciousness can be detected in her letters, such as when a sequence of thoughts is expressed loosely, as if newly formed, or a metaphor reveals something profound. Such examples provide a strong sense of Richardson's being, the reader able to share a sense of a moment when something important is being articulated.



This chapter will explore the patterns of theme, mood or tone that predominate with particular correspondents as well as the discrepancies, irregularities and apparent contradictions between letters concerning similar subject matter.

### **A methodological note on data collection**

Richardson's correspondence, in terms of what has been archived and collected, starts in earnest from 1913 onwards, more or less the point at which she begins to write *Pilgrimage*. The fragments in this data collection are taken, almost exclusively, from Gloria Fromm's selected letters of Richardson (1995). The four recently discovered letters in the British Library to Robert Nichols (6), (8), (9) and (15) are the exceptions, included in a partial attempt to close a large gap in the correspondence, there being very few early letters in existence. Thus the extracts are a selection from a selection and as such constitute a mini corpus. I have identified every letter by Richardson in Fromm which had a reference (explicit or implicit) to the title of an individual chapter-volume and reproduced the sentences in which the title occurs and some surrounding contextual sentences, if required. I have listed the quotations manually and have not used text-processing software as an aid. I am not comparing these letters to those written by any other writers, although this could be useful to do for other purposes. Some of the methodology is, however, derived from corpus analysis, in that I have gathered together many letters that would not normally be grouped in this way. An advantage of this approach is that linguistic patterns emerge, that might otherwise be hidden, and the singling out of one letter, as particularly significant, is avoided. Otherwise the approach is that of a more traditional stylistics.

I have chosen to group together those fragments of letters which refer to specific chapter-volumes. I have arranged them in chronological order and in four groups, reflecting how the

chapter-volumes themselves are organised in subsequent omnibus editions. To narrow my focus, I have only included those letters which were written before, during or straight after the publication of the specific chapter-volume concerned. In order to avoid overlap with the opening section of the second chapter, which explores the background to the publication of the 1938 omnibus edition of *Pilgrimage* through a close analysis of Richardson's letters, this first chapter concerns solely the first two chapter-volumes of volume IV, *Oberland* and *Dawn's Left Hand*, which, like all the previous ones, were published separately by Duckworth. *Clear Horizon* and *Dimple Hill*, chapter-volumes eleven and twelve, were published by Dent, the first as a separate chapter-volume and the second as part of the 1938 omnibus edition. Both of these chapter-volumes are therefore linked with a new phase in Richardson's life and their publication is intricately bound up with Richardson's association with Dent. After *Clear Horizon*, which marks the bridge between the two publishers, Richardson becomes ill with nervous exhaustion and, not altogether surprisingly, this is marked by a hiatus in the correspondence.

With regard, then, to the first ten chapter-volumes and the letters that mention them by name, I have chosen to focus on ideas of doubt and uncertainty, identifying those words, phrases and sentences that communicate Richardson's thoughts and feelings about the quality of her work and, indeed, whether it would ever be completed. Verbal expressions of doubt and uncertainty are varied and nuanced but certain linguistic markers recur in the data and can be seen to constitute a significant feature of Richardson's epistolary style: lexical items synonymous with doubt and uncertainty ('fear'- as in the verb 'I fear that'- or 'possibility') or those which denote a negative judgement ('bad', 'suffers'); hedges ('so far'); modal verbs ('should', 'might'); modifiers that express modality ('probable/ly', 'possible/ly') and phrases ('by any chance') are all used, some with high frequency. Contextual understanding of Richardson's writing situation informs the analysis, dominant concerns

including: lack of time, ill-health, distractions (lack of space, housework, moving home from London to Cornwall) and lack of money.

***Pointed Roofs, Backwater and Honeycomb* (later to become Volume I of the 1938 Dent edition)**

1. **May 15<sup>th</sup> 1917:** Duckworth has had the bulk of Honeycomb for upwards of two months' (...) Meantime they have sent me a cheque for twenty pounds odd for royalties on "Backwater" (to Curtis Brown, p.14).
2. **May 20<sup>th</sup> 1917:** Please add the commission on Honeycomb to the sum I already owe you (to Curtis Brown, p.15).
3. **[1917]:** I am struggling up the hill of an additional chapter in "Honeycomb". It must be done and quickly. I hope to break the back of it here (to Alan Odle, p.18).
4. **25<sup>th</sup> July 1917:** Here after many vicissitudes is Honeycomb. (J.D.B. [eresford] & Mr. D.[uckworth] & my own inner conviction made me add a chapter after it was "finished" (to Curtis Brown, p.19)
5. **September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1917:** Nevertheless the most appreciative & discriminating review I have had of Backwater came from America - & it is to be remembered that its appearance almost coincided with their military crisis. I share Mrs Knopf's opinion to some extent though I cannot agree that the volume that so disappoints her adds nothing to the series. But its place in the whole cannot be clearly seen until it is thrown up by subsequent volumes. It suffers technically from incomplete "concentration." But the circumstances of the past year did not allow an untroubled development of that state (to Curtis Brown, p.20).
6. **n.d. late September/early October 1917:** Your letter was more than welcome. It came when I was beginning Volume IV & it gave me just the sort of encouragement I needed. For Volume III coming out, I fear very soon now, is very bad indeed. I agree with Dr Head in preferring P.R. as a work of art. I think it has a beauty that is lacking in Backwater – though there's better stuff in the later Volume. But P.R. was written at a stretch during a solitary winter in Cornwall, before the war. Backwater, in circumstances of great difficulty in an attic in London & Honeycomb in the same place in circumstances of even greater difficulty which last winter's weather did nothing to ameliorate (to Robert Nichols, British Library).
7. **27<sup>th</sup> October 1917:** The English press, so far, seems very far from sharing Mrs Knopf's opinion on Honeycomb & several reviewers, unknown to me personally, have followed up their reviews by letters to the author of a most cheering and gratifying description. Of course I know this does not necessarily mean sales (to Curtis Brown, p.21).
8. **15<sup>th</sup> November 1917:** I have been ill or your letter would not have remained so long unanswered. You cheered me up about Honeycomb. I had read the proofs in rage & tears & hid the book in horror when it came. Since then safe in the dim light of The Tunnel I have read parts of it & found them acceptable. I wish one could learn to take the difference

between the dream and the achievement without shrieking & howling each time (to Robert Nichols, British Library).

9. **n.d.Autumn 1918?** It was horrible of me not to answer your note of September at once. By this time, you have been to America & doubtless returned. But out of the turmoil surrounding me in this quiet place I wished you well in all your farings, not forgetting the lectures on English Literature in which my neglected name was to appear. The Americans, some thousand of them, bought *Pointed Roofs*, then they dropped me & I doubt whether Mr Knopf will risk the Tunnel (to Robert Nichols, British Library).

## Analysis

Unsurprisingly, a semantic field of money recurs when Richardson is writing to her American agent, Curtis Brown: ‘cheque for twenty pounds’, ‘royalties,’ ‘commission’, ‘sum.’ But it is clear that Richardson’s concerns are as much spiritual as material and that a reference to a chapter-volume title generates a wide range of expressive language. When the fragments of letters to Curtis Brown (1,2,4, 5 and 7) are viewed together, an interesting balance of negative and positive lexis can be seen, reflecting Richardson’s mixed feelings about her work and her perception of how others, with a significant role to play in its publication and reception, regard it.

There is more than a hint that Richardson finds the writing process a difficult one in her choice of the abstract noun ‘vicissitudes,’ denoting unwelcome or unpleasant changes in circumstance, but the specific details are prudently withheld from Curtis Brown. The dramatic fronted adverbial ‘here’ emphasises that this letter accompanies the completed manuscript of *Honeycomb* and, given the context, would appear to express tremendous relief (4). The choice of idioms ‘struggling up the hill’ and ‘breaking the back’ in (3) to Alan Odle, the man soon to become her husband, communicate ideas of hardship, psychological or physical or both, associated with Richardson’s completion of *Honeycomb*. The final

chapter records Miriam's mother's suicide and Miriam's guilt at leaving her mother temporarily, which tragically provides Mrs Henderson with the opportunity to take her own life. This mirrors events in Richardson's own life and, as Fromm rightly observes, would have been 'anguish to write' (1977, p.98). Richardson's recognition that her publisher and reader were correct in their view that *Honeycomb* required an extra chapter reveals that, relatively early on in *Pilgrimage's* development, she is wrestling with the notion of completion and, perhaps, instinctively avoiding subject matter of a difficult nature (4). Curtis Brown is also spared the details conveying the effort required to complete, (4) being written after the event, whereas Odle in (3) is given a clearer sense of the personal cost at the time.

Like any writer, Richardson is sensitive to reviews, but seems able to deal with the negative one on *Honeycomb* from the wife of her American publisher, Blanche Knopf, by a mixture of partial agreement, rational explanation and superior overview. The fact that she can contrast Blanche Knopf's negative opinion with another positive American one, 'most appreciative and discriminating,' implies that Blanche Knopf's view is lacking in those same two qualities. Richardson was sensible, though, in according some respect to the wife of her American publisher: 'I share Mrs Knopf's opinion to some extent though I cannot agree that the volume that so disappoints her adds nothing to the series' (5). In his retrospective, identifying the publishing milestones of Alfred A. Knopf, Clifton Fadiman is quick to establish Blanche Knopf's influence: 'for when one says Alfred A. Knopf Inc., one says also Blanche' (1965, p.ix). Richardson is keen to communicate to Curtis Brown a sense of hope and confidence about her work as a 'whole,' and a belief that once *Pilgrimage* fully materialises, the intertextual relationships between its component parts will finally be appreciated and *Honeycomb's* 'place' understood. The final sentence of this extract concedes that *Honeycomb* is flawed, 'suffers technically' and that Richardson requires a

certain state of mind or ‘concentration’ and control over the context in which she writes in order to produce work of a consistent standard. Perhaps this is an attempt to gain some moral support from Curtis Brown, without revealing too much about her personal circumstances.

Richardson is quick to write Curtis Brown a month later with good news about *Honeycomb*, bolstered by letters from *English* critics ‘of a most cheering and gratifying description’, sent to her personally and supplementing their public reviews. The two modifiers ‘cheering’ and ‘gratifying’ communicate a strong sense of pleasure and satisfaction, the more intensely felt, perhaps, because these ‘unknown’ and, by implication, impartial critics reassure her and offset Blanche Knopf’s negative opinion. These positive reflections on the favourable reception of her work in the English press are nevertheless countered by the adverb ‘so far’, sounding a note of caution about critical opinion in the future (7).

The three letters to Robert Nichols (6), (8) and (9) provide an interesting contrast to those so far explored, in that they share similar subject matter but differ in expression and tone. Nichols is a friend, not someone with an official role to play in *Pilgrimage*’s publication, and Richardson can therefore be more frank, openly acknowledging that she requires ‘encouragement’ to write more and providing an unambiguously negative opinion of her most recent chapter-volume, *Honeycomb*: ‘for Volume III coming out, I fear very soon now, is very bad indeed.’ Three linguistic features work together to express this: the choice of cognitive verb ‘fear’, the superlative phrase ‘very bad’ and the emphatic adverb ‘indeed’ (6). Richardson provides an explanation for the negative evaluation, establishing a cause-and-effect relationship between the material contexts of her writing and the quality of her work, an emergent theme in the letter to Curtis Brown (4) and one which recurs in her correspondence with increasing frequency from this point onwards. In this letter to Nichols

she is able to elaborate on what she can only barely hint at to Curtis Brown – that *Pointed Roofs* was written in a context of relative luxury compared to that of the two subsequent volumes, the inherent negative polarity in the phrase ‘great difficulty’ reinforced by the later phrase ‘even greater difficulty’. Deterioration of material context has had, in her estimation, a deleterious impact on the quality of her work, (although her vague reference to ‘better stuff’ in ‘the later Volume’ suggests that she can see beyond this simple cause-and-effect relationship).

This negative stance could be interpreted merely as a desire for reassurance and, indeed, Nichols seems to interpret the letter’s function as such in his response of the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1917: ‘Don’t talk rot – there’s a lot of grand stuff in Honeycomb – it’s only you’re getting more involved – not quite so well written perhaps – but more involved – lots more’ (Dorothy Richardson Collection). Negativity is the dominant emotional coloration in these three letters, given most dramatic expression in (8), where Richardson’s heightened language of emotional excess is reminiscent of an eighteenth century gothic heroine with her ‘rage’, ‘tears’, horror’, ‘shrieks’ and ‘howling’. This list foregrounds the painful emotions experienced when reading work about to be published, and the difference between ‘dream’ and ‘achievement’ most keenly felt at the point of public exposure. She notes that the passage of time facilitates a more measured and positive reading, and by implication, seems to be suggesting that she needs to become more philosophical about what she can achieve stylistically. (To the reader coming later to this letter, its paratextual effect appears to communicate an early awareness of the phenomenon she later calls ‘I.R’ when dissatisfied with linguistic expression. Her first use of this code to mean ‘Imperfectly Realised’ occurs in a letter (dated 19<sup>th</sup> November 1935) to John Cowper Powys (Fromm 1995, p.303)).

The final letter to Nichols raises another emergent issue that acquires more weight over time – her tricky relationship with America, personified by her publisher, Alfred Knopf, the negative attitude of his wife, Blanche Knopf, and Richardson’s audience of readers there. Her American publisher and readership promised much initially but their enthusiasm for *Pilgrimage* appears to be waning. Nichols’ immediate connection with America, namely his lecture tour on ‘English Literature’ and his inclusion within it of Richardson’s ‘neglected name,’ suggest a prior correspondence. Richardson is hardly likely to refer to herself as ‘neglected’ but it is conceivable that Nichols might describe her as such. This letter reveals Richardson’s anxiety about her American market. The verb ‘dropped’ in this context denotes being abandoned, discarded or unwanted and the object pronoun ‘me’ communicates a sense of personal betrayal. *Backwater* and *Honeycomb* have not sold as well as *Pointed Roofs* in America and Richardson feels affronted (9).

**Letters that refer to *The Tunnel* and *Interim* (later to become Volume II of the 1938 Dent edition)**

- 10. 25<sup>th</sup> July 1917:** I should like now to arrange about Vol IV of which a considerable slice is already written. “The Tunnel” I think will be its title (to Curtis Brown, p.19).
- 11. 31<sup>st</sup> August 1917:** Vol IV The Tunnel is in progress & I propose to ask Duckworth for a £15 advance on it quite soon (to Curtis Brown, p.19).
- 12. September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1917:** I am glad that Mr Knopf is not giving up in despair - & I venture to think that Mrs Knopf will like “The Tunnel” (to Curtis Brown, p.20).
- 13. 17<sup>th</sup> October 1917:** “The Tunnel” is coming on nicely, but I shall have to ask Duckworth for a further advance in January – so it looks as though I shall be having all I am likely to get before the book is even finished as it will be longer than the previous volumes; & will, I hope – unless the problem of ways & means proves too harassing, be a good volume. Oh for a few months complete security and tranquillity! (to Curtis Brown, p.21).
- 14. 27<sup>th</sup> October 1917:** I have recently been in correspondence with Messrs. Duckworth with regard to an arrangement for the completion of The Tunnel. They have decided to pay me for the present a regular living wage on possible future royalties – a most generous contract I think,



considering present general circumstances. (...) In these circumstances, would you prefer me perhaps to pay off something of the balance standing against me; or do you think that the sale of vol III in America will put that straight with a reasonable time? (to Curtis Brown, p.21)

15. 27<sup>th</sup> August 1918: The Tunnel is just off my hands. I do not like to think of it. It is an abortion, a still-born abortion & the more awful because of a good beautiful thing here & there, a touch of pure colour, a delicately formed feature. Most of it has been done in the intervals of scrubbing cooking & marketing. Fatigued intervals (to Robert Nichols, British Library).
16. 7<sup>th</sup> March 1919: "Betty" tells me you are reviewing The Tunnel. I am so glad you still like your god-child & hope you will not have to administer spanking - Interim is still pursuing but is often very very faint' (to Edward Garnett, p.24).
17. 12<sup>th</sup> March 1919: Thank you for your review [of The Tunnel]. Because you said so many nice things & picked out two of my favourite passages, I forgive [you] for asserting when Miriam told you that the smell of the counterpane & the shape of hands & face etc: must be got rid of before there can be prayer, that to the feminine consciousness prayer is accompanied by the dusty smell of the counterpane. I forgive you completely, absolutely (to Edward Garnett, p.25).
18. June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1919: I understand that on my first four volumes, eg. up to & including The Tunnel I am to have a uniform royalty of 10%. I hope that the results of the venture will be such as to justify it &, incidentally, enable the author to secure better terms for "Interim" (to Curtis Brown, p.27).
19. 28<sup>th</sup> July 1919: I understand that my agreement with Knopf is a £5 advance on the appearance of The Tunnel (he writes me that it should be out in the middle of this month) on a basis of 10% royalties for all four volumes & that Interim is to bring a 15% royalty. (...) I shall have a printed corrected proof of "Interim" ready in the Autumn.  
If at the first possible moment you can get his agreement as to my 10% royalty & the best advance he can manage on the four books now being published, also a 15% contract for Interim with proportional advance it will be a great blessing to me. If he is obdurate, I must approach some one (sic) else for Interim (to Curtis Brown, p.29).
20. September 15<sup>th</sup> 1919: My proofs are pouring in. I correct them lazily on the sofa, where I also scribble letters. There is only one table, & Alan is outspread upon it, beginning work today (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.31).
21. December 1<sup>st</sup> 1919: I am sending you an Interim. Don't judge the poor thing too harshly. It came out of the odd moments of a jolly year containing two moves, a month's sick-nursing, two demented months of Alan's show, & an entire charless household management, whose standards have to be, for reasons of health, Dutch; & not a single day's holiday (to H.G. Wells, p.33).
22. February 7<sup>th</sup> 1920: And now your article in the Nation robs me of the chance of writing to you without an excuse. It has set me in a glow. I grow so weary of the tide of irrelevancies. (...) My joy in your article was partly relief for poor little Interim was written in a perfect gale of

difficulties and disturbances; and though I felt moderately satisfied with the first part, the rest I knew was thin and badly foreshortened. [space in text] I feel furious with the London Mercury. Arnold Bennett's letter tempts me to burst into epistolary vituperation & sue the reviewer for damaging libel. For it is damaging to say that because I have tried to convey the "fragmentary etc" world of an adolescent, therefore my view of life is fragmentary etc: abnormal & so on. It is calculated to head off that large class of readers who dislike the abnormal & would, left to themselves, read my quite sane books with innocent satisfaction' (...) (to Edward Garnett, pp.38-9).

- 23. February 21<sup>st</sup> 1920:** We much enjoyed your voyage – saw Algiers & the big sea & all the other things from the vantage point of luggageless freedom (...) I could see you discoursing to the parson on the Tunnel. How could a parson like the Tunnel with so many disrespectful comments on curates on it? But I hear that the Bishop of Edinburgh's wife & daughter read it aloud to each other with immense satisfaction (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.40)
- 24. April 16<sup>th</sup> 1920:** It surprised & I need not say how it heartened me to discover that you have read some of my books. "Interim" I hope you have not read & beg you in the future not to. The greater part of it can, for a large variety of sufficient reasons, attending its composition, hardly be said to exist. Its successor, now almost finished, keeps me alive & will I hope, when it stands in its place, transmit some measure of strength into the weakest link in my chain (to Compton Mackenzie, p. 42).

## Analysis

The writing of *The Tunnel* coincided with Richardson's marriage to the artist, Alan Odle, fifteen years her junior, whom she met in a London boarding house. Some of the earlier letters referring to *The Tunnel* are written on honeymoon and have a buoyant quality. It is questionable, however, whether the romantic stereotype of the newly-married couple, can be straightforwardly applied in this particular case, their correspondence in the lead up to the marriage revealing scant evidence of love, passion or romantic feeling. There is an undeniable intimacy between them, of a type associated with friendship and understanding, and their various disclosures are honest, if not a little off-putting, one might think, if the other is positioned as a prospective marital partner (Fromm, 1995, pp.10-18). Moreover Odle's outlandish and exotic appearance (evidenced in a photograph taken by E.O. Hoppé

in 1916, ([www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)) and described at length by his niece, Elizabeth Turner, in Gillian Hanscombe's preface to the 1979 Virago edition of *Pilgrimage*), as well as the communicative style of his letters, are uncompromisingly camp. Richardson's first biographer, John Rosenberg, hints at Odle's homosexual orientation and the marital problems this might cause: 'Their future was doubtful in view of his past life and habits. He had never much cared for women' (1973, p.86). Anthony West, son of H.G. Wells and Rebecca West, insinuates that Odle's campness was a persona, that he merely 'enjoyed peacocking around' and that Richardson and Odle 'were two of a kind and might club together without risk' (1984, p.347). It would appear that Richardson and Odle's shared concerns, particularly in relation to health and well-being, as well as their passion for art and literature, drew them together and marriage, however it came about, was a pragmatic choice.

Neither individual would have entered into marriage lightly or with a conventional acceptance of its meaning, but the marriage certificate of August 29<sup>th</sup> 1917, with its significant error and omission, is paradoxically both subversive and compliant with regard to the information supplied (Dorothy Richardson Collection). The error, which can only be interpreted as deliberate in this context when detail is of paramount importance, is that of Richardson's age. The document records that she is thirty-seven (seven years younger than her actual age) whereas Odle's age (twenty-nine) is correct. The reason for this deception can only be speculated upon but can probably be explained by the widespread perception, and one still current, that it is unusual if not wrong, for a younger man to marry a much older woman. The age Richardson recorded narrows the difference so that it appears less extreme. John Rosenberg, Richardson's first biographer, describes the discrepancy as, 'a rather endearing feminine deceit, and unthinkable in the austere girl that she had been in her youth' (1973, p.69). Gloria Fromm, Richardson's second biographer, explains it rather differently, suggesting that Richardson did this, 'more to please herself than for any other reason' but

concur that this deception was Richardson's alone, rather than a shared withholding of the truth (1977, p.99). I consider both explanations to be unlikely and would argue that Richardson is bowing only to social convention, rather than being coy or putting her own wishes above and beyond anyone else's. Moreover Fromm's observation that Richardson managed to keep her real age a secret from Odle throughout their married life also seems to me to be improbable. The other discrepancy in the marriage certificate, an omission, relates to a lack of information in the box recording 'profession'. For Odle there is 'Artist (black and white)' but for Richardson the box is left blank where she might have inserted 'writer' or 'author'. Neither Rosenberg nor Fromm comment on this significant absence which is hardly likely to have been an oversight on Richardson's part in 1917, when her early works had produced so much excitement in the literary community. Why Richardson did not wish to commit herself to an occupational label on this public document, but was happy for Odle to do so, is unclear. The more diffuse message of these anomalies, communicated to the reader who comes to this document with hindsight, is one of sadness at the compromises made.

References to *The Tunnel* are generally more upbeat in tone than those to *Interim*. Letters (10-14) and (18-19), written to Curtis Brown, show how their business relationship is developing, some of the letters now less formal in style than (1, 2, 4, 5 and 7). A month before she is married, Richardson writes that, 'a considerable slice' of work has already been written and that she has thought of a title (10), suggesting active engagement in her work. Two days after her wedding day, Richardson describes *The Tunnel*, now a fixed title, 'in progress' (11). Three weeks later, she mentions that she is hopeful that Mrs Knopf will like *The Tunnel*, reflecting a polite self-confidence, an ability to cope with the previous negative criticism from this influential quarter and communicating a sense that *The Tunnel* is so far advanced that she can imagine someone liking it. Her reference to being 'glad' that Mr

Knopf was not 'giving up' [on *Pilgrimage*] 'in despair' is playful, but suggestive that the possibility of him doing otherwise had been considered (12). The phrasal verb 'give up' also connotes the idea of a loss of belief in her writing and has a quasi-spiritual inflection. It echoes the more informal expression 'dropped me' in her letter to Nichols (9).

Another three weeks on, there is a definite shift in the tone of her letters to Curtis Brown, now less confident. Richardson describes *The Tunnel* as 'coming on nicely,' which sounds positive, but is less specific than a 'considerable slice'. This comment is then qualified by a long-winded explanation about Richardson's financial situation and her fear that money worries might interfere with her ability to write. This suggests that the ambitious serial project of *Pilgrimage* is beginning to take its toll and that she needs to conserve her energies to produce work that is consistent with her overall aim and avoid distractions, either physical or psychological. Her exclamatory signing off, 'Oh for a few months complete security and tranquillity!' seems to me, with hindsight, to have the paratextual effect of communicating a sense of being under some mental strain, although it might be understood by Curtis Brown as wistful or even light-hearted (13).

Ten days later, the tone again changes, now much more business-like. The opening sentence, with its legalistic term of address 'Messrs Duckworth,' sets the tone and the good news that her English publisher, Duckworth, has agreed to pay Richardson 'a living wage'. This last phrase expresses the idea of basic needs met, rather than the current meaning of a legal requirement. Richardson acknowledges that this is a 'most generous contract'. Being now more experienced in publishing practices and, knowing that a publisher can choose their own terms of agreement with an author, Richardson understands that this gesture is a positive sign of faith. The questions posed with regard to her outstanding debt are expressed tentatively (14). In the two later letters to Curtis Brown (18 and 19) there are stretches of

discourse that are referential in function, and monetary terms feature with frequent use of enumeration: ‘uniform royalty of 10%’ and ‘secure better terms’ (18), ‘£5 advance,’ ‘10% royalties’, ‘15% royalty’, ‘10% royalty’ and ‘15% contract’, ‘best advance’, ‘proportional advance’(19). Her lexicon on money matters has been developed through experience, the enumerators and the verbal modifiers expressing specificity and authority. The modality in the final two conditional sentences of (19) reflects Richardson’s desire to negotiate the best possible terms: ‘If at the first possible moment you *can* get his agreement as to my 10% royalty & the best advance he *can* manage on the four books now being published, also a 15% contract for Interim with proportional advance it *will* be a great blessing to me. If he is obdurate, I *must* approach some one (sic) else for Interim’ (my emphases). The noun phrase ‘a great blessing’ softens the indirect requests but the use of the final modal ‘must’ expresses a strong degree of certainty that Richardson will take *Interim* elsewhere if necessary. Given the doubts she has about *Interim*’s quality, expressed in later letters to Wells, Garnett and Mackenzie (21), (22) and (24), which, presumably, she also felt at the point of writing this letter, the setting out of her conditions, and the certainty she implies, disguises the insecurity she is actually feeling about *Interim*.

Extracts (15-17 and 20-24), addressed to a range of recipients are interesting on account of their stylistic variety. The one letter to Robert Nichols (15) stands out on account of its shocking, albeit clever, metaphor: ‘The Tunnel is just off my hands. I do not like to think of it. It is an abortion, a still-born abortion & the more awful because of a good beautiful thing here & there, a touch of pure colour, a delicately formed feature.’ Cognitive linguistics provides a useful framework for understanding metaphor as something beyond linguistic embellishment, showing how metaphorical patterns can reveal something important about how people think (Nørgaard et al, 2010, pp.60-3). (In *Clear Horizon* Miriam expresses something similar about metaphorical function to Hypo Wilson: ‘the metaphor you use will

represent you more accurately than any photograph' (IV, p.331)). Beyond function, a metaphor is a means by which a conceptual domain, in this case, WRITING, is understood in terms of another, CHILD-BIRTH – a well-worn metaphor, perhaps, but Richardson uses it in an unusual way. The idiom 'off my hands' likens *The Tunnel* to a problem or responsibility over which Richardson no longer has any control and is the first linguistic manifestation of the metaphor, helping to establish a correspondence between the two domains. The abortion metaphor develops the idea of writing as giving birth; the book likened to a foetus, out in the world, before properly formed, but showing signs of beauty. 'I do not like to think of it' communicates either pain and sadness for the loss, or a need for self-preservation. The writing context and domesticity take the blame for the 'problem'. The phrase 'fatigued intervals' suggests that she is suffering from more than just simple tiredness. This letter seems intensely private and the fact that it is written to a man is interesting. It communicates intimacy, trust and honesty with no need for politeness or any form of indirectness. Marriage has, it seems, only exacerbated a longstanding problem which we might call today the work/life balance. The need to attend to Odle's needs is draining her creative energies and affecting her ability to nurture her writing. Given that she is newly married and offspring is the conventional association, the semantic encoding in her choice of metaphor might be understood to be psychologically revealing in its merging of the two conceptual domains. The first off-spring/writing produced from the marriage is an induced expulsion (she has been under pressure to complete *The Tunnel*) and its development arrested, resulting in imperfection. Emma Borg's observation that: 'a speaker may succeed in conveying more by her metaphorical utterance than she intended – an apt metaphor can speak to an audience in ways the speaker herself may never have envisaged' has an interesting application in this particular case (2001, p.x). I think it likely that Richardson uses this metaphor knowing that Nichols will understand some of its underlying thinking even if the intention is to

provoke a reassuring response, similar to the one he gave about *Honeycomb*. To the reader who comes to this letter later, has some ‘non-semantic facts’ at their disposal and knows what Nichols perhaps does not, that Richardson miscarried a child in 1907, the metaphor feels unbearably painful (ibid, p.15).

The three extracts to Edward Garnett (16), (17) and (22) reveal how their relationship has developed since their first point of contact, when he, in his role as publisher’s reader for Duckworth, recommended *Pointed Roofs* for publication. The opening paragraph of the first letter contains a diverse range of topics that shift abruptly, their juxtaposition in itself humorous, and all suggesting that their relationship – (friendly professional) – is now well established. The news that Garnett is to review *The Tunnel*, his perceived relationship with his god-child, spiked with some irony, and Richardson’s slow progress with *Interim*, convey an intimacy with the details of each other’s world. The use of the diminutive first name ‘Betty’, the hope expressed that Garnett ‘still’ likes his god-child (with the implication that this might not be the case) the spanking reference, and Richardson’s unusual statement, ‘Interim is still pursuing but is often very very faint,’ are all examples of an open and personal stance, with a high degree of shared knowledge. The choice of subject, verb and aspect in ‘Interim is still pursuing’ is unusual with its suggestion that *Interim* is writing itself. The use of the post-modifying adjective ‘faint’ is of interest. ‘Faint’ has a fairly wide collocational range, meaning ‘barely perceptible’ when collocating with a sight, smell or sound, or ‘slight’ when collocating with the abstractions of chance, possibility or hope. Both of these meanings are possible. Richardson could be referring to the difficulty of representing this phase of her life, as being hard to remember or hard to give expression to, or it could be that she means that *Interim* is, in itself, slight. In letter (21) to H.G. Wells she refers to *Interim* as ‘a poor thing’, produced in ‘odd moments’, and in a later letter to Garnett



(22) she describes it as ‘thin’ and ‘badly foreshortened’ both of which echo the diverse meanings of ‘faint’.

The second letter to Garnett (17), written five days later, starts conventionally enough with a thank you for the review he has written on *The Tunnel* (in *Nation*, March 8<sup>th</sup> 1919) but quickly becomes an extended statement of mock-performative forgiveness. Richardson produces a brief critique, explains something significant about the feminine consciousness and identifies what she particularly liked about Garnett’s review in a way that is poetic, rhetorical and playful. This extract seems to me to contain a very strong sense of the writer’s being, a trace of her consciousness. The structure of the first sentence is cause and effect, foregrounding the theme of forgiveness but also embedded is a clear expression of Richardson’s feminine aesthetic: ‘to the feminine consciousness prayer is accompanied by the dusty smell of the counterpane’. This quirky statement counters Garnett’s view that prayer must involve displacement of the material context, and argues that the feminine mind can open up to several simultaneous possibilities, some of which can be apparently contradictory, such as the juxtaposition of the spiritual experience of prayer and the consciousness of a dusty smell. The length and complexity of this epistolary sentence also closely reflects the sentence style that *Pilgrimage* is now closely associated with, the ‘psychological sentence of the feminine gender’, Virginia Woolf’s label for Richardson’s loose, elastic structures in her review of *Revolving Lights* for the *Times Literary Supplement* (19<sup>th</sup> April 1923, p.266).

The third letter to Garnett (22) written nearly a year later, shares a similar subject matter and function to the second – but this time it is, more straightforwardly, a heart-felt thank you for his review of *Interim*. The letter is, however, full of contrasts. ‘It has set me in a glow’ conveys the transformative effect that one person’s words can have on another and the

statement that follows: ‘I grow so weary with the tide of irrelevancies’ provides the reason for her ‘joy’, her frustration with the general run of reviews which, unlike Garnett’s, fail to address any salient features. Her feelings are very much to the fore as they were in the other two letters. Her negative evaluation of the majority of her reviewers sits side-by-side with a confession of ‘relief’ in Garnett’s positive judgement. The arrogance that might be conveyed by her superior stance is tempered by her admission that *Interim* is of mixed quality. Her point, relating to another review of *Interim* in the *London Mercury*, is emotionally charged and it is clear that she is deeply affronted. This provocative review is not one of ‘the tide of irrelevancies’ that can be wearily dismissed, although by the end of the sentence, once her spleen has been vented, there is some quiet humour in the description of her ‘quite sane books’.

The letters to close friends, P. Beaumont Wadsworth and H.G. Wells respectively, (20) and (21) offer an interesting contrast. Written only three months apart, they provide a glimpse into the rhythms of Richardson’s working life and construct rather different versions of the same reality. ‘My proofs are pouring in. I correct them lazily on the sofa, where I also scribble letters’ provides a visual sketch of the writer at work, busy but happy, dealing with her proof-reading and letter-writing duties in a homely way. This letter to Wadsworth, a man with his own ambitions to be a writer, who sought Richardson’s encouragement and support in this regard, mostly concerns Richardson’s positive evaluations of three books by Compton Mackenzie which Wadsworth loaned to Richardson. The fragment quoted occurs towards the end of the letter. The reference to Alan, her husband, at the table shows how their personal space is allocated in the cottage in Padstow. Odle, as an artist, needs the table more than Richardson, it is assumed, although the constraints of domestic space and the negative impact this has on her writing is by now well understood by the later reader of her letters. The tone of her letter to Wells is more brittle and ironic as she catalogues the issues

over the past year impeding *Interim*'s progress and quality, a copy of which she, nevertheless, sends to him to read with a proviso. The final item on the list of negative events '& not a single holiday' is an indirect way of indicating to Wells that, perhaps, she needs some rest and recreation – he a man of means who can take a holiday whenever he chooses (21).

Richardson feels able to send Wells a copy of *Interim* despite her misgivings, something she does not do with Compton Mackenzie (24), instead warning him away from it. This difference in strategy can be explained by the relationship between the correspondents. Wells is a man she has known well for many years, including a temporary and short-lived period of intimate relations, whereas, apart from respecting his work, she does not know Mackenzie at all. Richardson's correspondence with Mackenzie began the previous year, in November 1919, when she wrote to him to express her appreciation of his 'later work' and offer a 'sympathetic growl' in the direction of *The London Mercury* which had recently reviewed Mackenzie's work in a manner that Richardson considered insolent. Ironically, a year later, Richardson had her own bone of contention with this newspaper (22). In (24) Richardson appears to be flattered by the knowledge that Mackenzie has read her work and politely asks him not to read *Interim*, which she labels 'the weakest link' in the *Pilgrimage* 'chain', another reference to the intertextuality of the novel sequence and her connected sense of the whole.

Richardson is clearly gratified by the news from Wadsworth that has met a parson on his travels to Algiers who liked *The Tunnel* (23). The fact that a clergyman can enjoy her work appears to amuse her greatly and she responds in kind with her own unlikely anecdote on the same theme.

**Letters that refer to *Deadlock*, *Revolving Lights* and *The Trap* (later to become volume III of the 1938 Dent edition)**

25. **February 7<sup>th</sup> 1920:** Deadlock is happy down here in the neighbourhood of the birthplace of Pointed Roofs; and within a stone's throw of the place where I heard that you had prevailed with Duckworth & I was free to go on. My gratitude does not decrease (to Edward Garnett, pp.38-9).
26. **5<sup>th</sup> December 1920:** Perhaps the best testimony I can offer you of the sea of obstructions, delightful & otherwise, through which I have waded, is that Deadlock which ought to have been finished in April, is not yet quite complete (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.45).
27. **March 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> or thereabouts 1921:** I have strained my eyes trying to prepare, for America, a proof of Deadlock relieved of some proportion of the hundred odd printers errors so confoundingly included in the copy I send you herewith (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, pp.47-8).
28. **Fall 1921:** Duckworth has not yet let me know whether I am to have those September royalties. So Pilgrimage is put away & I do small things; and put them away too (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.54).
29. **[1921-22]:** It is quite probable there will be further sales [of drawings from Alan Odle's portfolio] & incidentally a further volume of Pilgrimage (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.56).
30. **March 1922:** Your letter embodying a delightfully substantial amount of the facts & essences of your fresh incarnation, finds me packing up for you a copy of the American edition of "Deadlock." I want you to destroy Duckworth's travesty & substitute for it this almost perfectly corrected version. The preface was slipped in without reference to me. On the whole, I think, it is helpful, though the compiler confounds, in his effort to arrive at the "aim", the means with the end (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.57).
31. **[Summer 1922]:** Adieu. I am struggling, faint, very faint, but pursuing, with the end of *Revolving Lights* (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, *ibid*, p.61).
32. **December 1922:** Vol: viii [*The Trap*] is getting itself down in evenings (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.65).
33. **February 1923:** When am I to have the proofs of "Revolving Lights?" Duckworth's advance notices are out & the book will follow, I assume, in April (to Alfred Knopf, p.66).
34. **April 30<sup>th</sup> 1923:** I sent you vol. vii [*Revolving Lights*] a few days ago. Reviews are a compôte of unguarded appreciation and guarded scorn (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.68).
35. **July 1923:** Is my book now published? A clipping received last week told me that it was appearing in September. But a letter this morning tells me that a friend in New York has just seen fifteen copies of Revolving Lights at Brentano's (to Alfred Knopf, p.70).
36. **July 1923:** Knopf who has written me reams of evasion & says he is too proud to prosecute Wells [], wants me to believe that he cannot afford to set up any longer – so great has been his loss. He has therefore bought from Duckworth, of R.[evolving] L.[ights], an edition of 500 copies. Since it is obvious that there are more than 500 libraries in the States now stocking my work, to say nothing of booksellers, I can only, since he has

no reason to suppose me businesslike, & knows I have no caretaker on the spot, come to the most horrible conclusion. I may wrong him (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.72).

37. **March 31st 1924:** Your cheque saved our souls. I had just a week's living in hand when it came. Since then I've extorted £25 from Duckworth. But he sends a bleak report. Knopf has not taken a single copy of "Revolving Lights" beyond his first miserable 500. And D. himself has sold less than a 1000. But you've given me peace of mind and I've popped inside The Trap again & before we leave here shall have added the last words & done a good bit more of the rewriting' (to Bryher, pp.89-90).
38. **[May 1924]:** Labouring on my last chapter (to Bryher, p.95)
39. **[July 1924]:** I'm slogging at the recopying of The Trap, when I can (to Bryher, p.98).
40. **[Summer 1924]:** I've adapted your idea of payment per vol: & shall get at least £50 – poss. more. That will console me for missing my U.S.A. tax & for getting so little from Duckie. Anyhow I won't take less than £50. Even if the later vols. prove less full of slipshod passages. And I've said I may have to chuck the whole thing. I find it nervy; fiddling & exhausting & unless I can work on other things as I go, it won't pay (to Bryher, p.105)
41. **[Apr? 1925]:** Your blessed telegram, the first sign that The Trap is actually out, has just come in (to Bryher, p.113).
42. **Ap. [10?] 1925:** As you see I have acquired an Underwood Portable on which I am tapping late at night – we are waiting up for our landlady who has gone to the pictures in a distant market town – by a very poor light while Alan reads The Trap which is just out. Will send you a copy in due course (sic) – my six have gone to relatives and I can't get any more till after the shop. I've had next to nothing on this vol. Duckworth very ratty about the long delay (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.116)
43. **[Summer 1925]:** My Trap press: Brickbats & vitriol, & here & there a more understanding appreciation than I've yet had. I understand the bewilderment & - seeing that they lack imagination – the Boredom of most men in a world of which they know nothing. But their Fury is a little puzzling. Duckworth, growing weary, completely losing interest, listed the volume once & once only – no comment. No advance notices. No nothing. No one knows the book is out. For the next he offers - £25. Impasse (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.120)

## Analysis

With each volume, the number of letters pertaining to it gets larger (nine for volume I, fifteen for volume II, and nineteen for volume III). (25), to Edward Garnett, written a few months earlier than the others in this sequence, strikes a much more positive tone about *Deadlock*

than the later letters. The extract occurs at the end of a letter otherwise concerned with reviews of *Interim* (see 22). The letter's final sentence emphasises the significance of Richardson's current location, the village of Trevone in North Cornwall, to her writing: 'Deadlock is happy down here in the neighbourhood of the birthplace of Pointed Roofs; and within a stone's throw of the place where I heard that you had prevailed with Duckworth & I was free to go on. My gratitude does not decrease.' This is a development of the writing/foetus metaphor discussed earlier in relation to *The Tunnel*, although here, with regard to *Deadlock* ('happy') and *Pointed Roofs* ('birthplace') the meaning is wholly positive. Richardson has a strong sense of attachment to Trevone, a place she associates with the birth of her writing project and a more general sense of hope and excitement about its future. Garnett's facilitative role in this is acknowledged, Richardson's heart-felt emotion expressed by the use of litotes ('does not decrease').

Letters 26-32 are addressed to P. Beaumont Wadsworth and the first four in this sequence, making direct or indirect reference to *Deadlock*, do so in ways that suggest that Richardson's progress has been severely impeded. The title *Deadlock* therefore assumes another level of paratextual relevance. In (26) Richardson uses the metaphorical phrase 'sea of obstructions' to express poetically the scale of her difficulties, and although the modifying phrase 'delightful or otherwise' suggests that some obstructions have given her pleasure, her frustration at being unable to meet her deadline is clear. Three months later, the vagueness about the date itself 'March 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> or thereabouts 1921' (27) suggests immersion in work, rather than a lack of care, combined, as it is, with a statement about proof-reading and eye-strain, the latter a chronic problem for Richardson.

Letters (28) and (29), written the following autumn and winter communicate a certain distance about her writing project. Duckworth's failure to pay her what is her due has

resulted in a refusal on her part to continue writing and this, in turn, has had a negative impact on motivation: 'So Pilgrimage is put away & I do small things; and put them away too' (28). There is a seemingly casual reference to a 'further volume' (beyond *Deadlock*), marked by the fronted adverb 'incidentally' but the lack of any supplementary comment adds to the flatness of the experience being communicated. Richardson clearly has no enthusiasm for sharing (29). In the spring of 1922, Richardson sends Wadsworth a copy of the American edition of *Deadlock* in response to her friend's letter, 'embodying a delightfully substantial amount of the facts & essences of your fresh incarnation'. It is as if this letter about Wadsworth's current writing has either jolted Richardson into making a reciprocating gesture, the expression 'finds me packing up for you' suggesting that this is automatic or unconscious, as if she has woken up to find herself doing this, or that she is commenting on the coincidence of receiving some news of his work at the very moment when she is thinking of him. The American edition has a new preface by Wilson Follett, 'slipped in without reference', a detail about Knopf's irritating lack of courtesy. In Genettian terms this preface, written whilst Richardson is alive, has the status of an 'official' peritext (Genette and McIntosh, 1988, p.64) and – as such – should have been seen by the author prior to publication. Richardson implies this with her choice of phrasal verb 'slipped in,' with its meaning of quiet stealth, but chooses not to dwell on it, briefly evaluating the new preface and telling Wadsworth to 'destroy Duckworth's travesty' with its numerous punctuation errors (30). It is clear that both her publishers are disappointing her, Knopf by his lack of communication with regard to the peritextual details of his edition of *Deadlock*, and Duckworth by his tardy payments and poor standards of book manufacture.

The letters mentioning *Revolving Lights* are written either to Wadsworth or Knopf. With the former she can be honest about her writing difficulties: 'struggling, faint, very faint, but pursuing' (31) using a similar expression to that of an earlier letter to Edward Garnett about

*Interim* (16). She also openly gives her opinions on the reviews for *Revolving Lights*, describing them as: ‘a compôte of unguarded appreciation and guarded scorn’ (34). It is clear that neither type of review pleases her. Her tone in (33) and (35) is perfunctory without exactly being rude, as she asks Knopf questions about the timescale for publication. Underlying these questions, though, is resentment about having to ask them in the first place. In (36) the dynamics of these two relationships come together as Richardson confides her worst fears about Knopf to Wadsworth. That she is being cheated financially by Knopf is an opinion held by H.G. Wells, who poses this leading question to Richardson (in a letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> June 1923): ‘Why do you publish with a little swine like Knopf?’ (Wells Papers). Wells’ cynical opinion has, it seems, been communicated to Knopf, whose ‘reams of evasion’ and ‘too proud to prosecute’ position have failed to convince Richardson that he is properly fulfilling his obligations. Clifton Fadiman, in his retrospective on Knopf, speaks of the publisher’s ‘Olympian attitude’ but implies that those authors who felt discontented about their relationship with Knopf are either ‘coarser-grained’ or ‘suffering from some feeling of inferiority’ (1965, p. xxvii). Neither description, however, fits Richardson. Fadiman also states: ‘Mr Knopf respects his authors so much that he lets them alone, on the assumption that they know their business and he his’ (ibid, p. xi). This perhaps is the crux of the problem – that Richardson expected more in the way of communication from Knopf – and also, perhaps, had unrealistic expectations about the financial rewards of her American editions.

Letters (37-41) are all addressed to Bryher, Richardson’s patron in the making. The first letter in the sequence is written from Switzerland, where she and Alan Odle are enjoying an extended stay, courtesy of Bryher but, despite the exotic location, they are suffering financially. The reference to *Revolving Lights* is a negative one, about poor sales figures in England and America. This is an uncomfortable topic, given the nature of the incipient



financial relationship between Bryher and Richardson, and occurs in a letter that has already expressed heart-felt gratitude: 'Your cheque saved our souls. I had just a week's living in hand when it came'. The use of the singular pronoun 'I' rather than the collective 'we' seems significant, as if Richardson bears the marital burden of financial knowledge and responsibility as well as that of domesticity. No direct mention of the amount received is given but it is clearly substantial and has given Richardson 'peace of mind' to continue writing. She describes *The Trap* as a place that she has 'popped inside' of, the phrasal verb suggesting a brief amount of informal time rather than a concerted effort. As if to counter any possible feelings of discontent from Bryher with regard to her own commitment to *Pilgrimage*, she adds: 'before we leave here shall have added the last words & done a good bit of the rewriting' (37).

The other letters to Bryher in this sequence are written once Richardson and Odle have returned to England. A clear semantic pattern emerges in the choice of verb to describe the arduous process of writing *The Trap*: 'labouring' on my last chapter' (38) and 'slogging at the recopying' (39). *The Trap* has, perhaps, been hindered rather than helped by Switzerland's distractions. (40) again reflects Richardson's financial concerns but, more revealing, is its admission that Richardson is close to giving up on *Pilgrimage*, the demands of checking and proof-reading being too great: 'I find it nervy; fiddling & exhausting' and the financial rewards too slim, '& unless I can work on other things as I go, it won't pay'. It could be that Richardson writes to Bryher when she is feeling faint-hearted and overwhelmed, knowing that Bryher might give her more financial support and, at the very least, some practical advice and encouragement. (41) is more upbeat, thanking Bryher for 'the blessed telegram' informing Richardson that *The Trap* has been finally published, although which edition, English or American, is unclear. If the former, it reveals that Duckworth's lack of interest is indeed of an extreme kind and the statement, in a letter to

Wadsworth, 'No one knows the book is out' includes Richardson (43). If the latter, it reinforces the earlier issue raised about Knopf's lack of courtesy with regard to communication.

The final two letters in this group (42) and (43) are addressed to Wadsworth and have a lively tone, despite their serious topics. In (42) Richardson informs him that she has an 'Underwood Portable' and paints a homely picture of her writing context, 'tapping' on the typewriter while her husband, Alan reads *The Trap*, an echo of (20). She promises Wadsworth a copy, her usual practice, and makes a rather flippant comment about Duckworth: 'I've had next to nothing on this vol. Duckworth very ratty about the long delay'. Richardson's slow progress is clearly a problem for Duckworth, who needs to make money from his authors rather than function as benefactor. The second letter is a development of the Duckworth topic, noting that he has merely done only the minimum required with regard to *The Trap*, listing it but not promoting it in any way, and offering very little in the way of financial incentive for Richardson to continue. Richardson summarises the main thrust of the reviews on *The Trap* as 'brickbats & vitriol', a striking phrase, vividly evoking their strength and viciousness. The very fact, though, that she can find such labels suggests that she is able to keep the reviews at a psychological distance. Moreover, she is heartened by a minority: 'Here & there a more understanding appreciation than I've had yet'. She has clearly thought hard about the trend of some male critical responses and the extent to which she understands their hostility to Miriam's centralised consciousness. Finding their 'fury' 'a little puzzling' sounds as if she is more intrigued than upset. She is certainly not unduly disheartened (43).

**Letters that refer to *Oberland and Dawn's Left Hand*, (the first two chapter-volumes of what was to become volume IV of the 1938 omnibus edition)**

**44 [Late 1924]:** I must now get to work on an attempt to make a Christmas cake, write Christmas letters and try to have Christian sentiments towards Duckworth who demands a volume within the year and at the same time refuses me the possibility of achieving it. I can work at Oberland only in the fag-end of evenings (to Bryher, p.110)

**45[Feb? 1925]:** AND if it is at all possible I do very much want to get Oberland done in time for publication next winter. Its, (sic) of course, Swiss – and the winter season might help it. I don't yet quite see how its (sic) to be done. But that is my aim. And it means I shan't do much else. I have things planned out to work on whenever I can, & if by any chance A[lan] sells a few drawings & I can get my book ready for D. by the Autumn & instead of taking a small advance, have the royalties on sales within a short time after publication & meantime another book on the way, we ought, next year, to start fair (to Bryher, p.112)

**46[Apr? 1925]:** Oberland one-third complete. Even allowing for weeks of exhibition dementia, & the time-consuming delights of being in town & seeing people, I ought to get through & revised & typed within the year (to Bryher, p.114)

**47 Jan 7<sup>th</sup> '26:** There is still a part of O.[berland] to write & a lot of typing to do - & I want if poss. to get going on the next bit before I take up again the work on articles which slows my book down almost to a stop (to Bryher, p.124)

**48 [Fall 1926]:** Can't tell you anything about Oberland. Hear nothing from Benn. Am telling Watt it ought to come out (to Bryher, p.129)

**49 [Fall 1926]:** & time must somehow be found for vol: X that really wants all my time (to Bryher, p.131)

**50 [1927]:** Fighting with the beginning of Amabel, [first working title for *Dawn's Left Hand*] praying for Hutchinson [one of the publishers considering *Oberland*] (to Bryher, p.132)

**51 [July 1927]:** And I've seen Duck: he welcomed me with open arms, is ready to take me back and still undertakes to release me if anything is fixed up. I've rescued Oberland from Watt and Duck. will publish it in Oct. and give me a small sum on it. I had to agree to this because the book must come out (to Bryher, p.137)

**52 July [1927]:** Rather a terrible winter. Suspense about publisher, nothing doing & endless waste of time. Every kind of botheration. I fear I grew faint-hearted & despairing. Coming back to town has pulled me together & I've stopped Watt's attempts with Oberland – three publishers only tackled in a whole year. Duckworth will take me back & will I think publish Oberland in October. I've seen him for the first time & find him a kind nice creature (...) get another Miriam written (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.139)

**53 [Nov 1927]:** Glad you liked Oberland. I agree about 'slightness' - & am fully aware. It is due partly to the need to condense that grows with each vol. & partly to M's becoming more out-turned really living, partic. for this year or so, much more on the surface than she did - And the difficulty with Ob. was to keep the balance, that was her balance, between the profundities of the enchanted fortnight & the People. Each episode could have filled a single volume in the old [wudgy] manner - but I should have been in my grave before M's fortnight was at an end & there are things calling ahead (to E.B. C. Jones, p.142)

**54 [Nov-Dec 1927]:** Now I am going to be a perfect nuisance &, busy as you are, I fear you will curse me. About Oberland. Duckworth is being pretty good. Instead of the bare £20 he first offered he now makes an agreement to pay me half royalties i.e. 7 and a half % in all sales until my debt to him is paid off. And of course I want to sell all I can & it seems to me that this particular book has a chance, if it can be displayed during the winter, of selling perhaps better than the others. I feel it might sell at the winter sports centres. Adrian Allinson is taking his copy to Mürren & will do what he can by dangling it about. I want to send a copy to that queer little monthly "The English - something- Abroad." Do you know the rag? (...) Knopf is taking 500 sewn sheets from Duck. & giving me 10%. This, after what D. told me about his growing disinclination to take English books, is more than I hoped. Don't curse me too much! (to Bryher, pp.143-4)

**55 Ap. 5<sup>th</sup> 1928:** Thank you for forwarded letters, all of them personal & intended I imagine for my namesake, the author of The Book of Blanche, whose portrait appears beneath the review of Oberland in the New York Times to whose editor I have therefore forwarded the letters, together with a mild protest. I have no objection to being represented more elderly than I am, but I do confess that it hurts me to appear resigned & woe-begone & terribly fastidious. It may be said that I have earned this horrid catastrophe by failing to supply photographs. Anyway it is a cheering review of my book and I will I hope help you to sell, & if it does I will really have some photographs taken. Meanwhile will you please send me my small share of the 500 copies taken & do your best to get those new readers Miss Ruth Suckow is so right about? I should much like an example of your edition (to Alfred Knopf, p.148)

**56 April 1928:** Duckworth's statement just in. Oberland sales 300 to end of year. Feel its (sic) not much use preparing another vol. for Duck. Knopf has just published & New York Times is ecstatic but joins to its review a photograph of a thin-lipped, woe-begone, contemptuous, grey-haired, utterly brainless & very "refeened" spinster - Miss D.R. (to Bryher, p.149)

**57 [Spring 1928]:** No time for Miriam nor do I know when I shall have. I do short things for three mags. Run by friends neither of which pay a living wage. And just keep alive. A line now & then again of Miriam. Oberland sold 300 copies in its first three months & I've not heard since, but don't anticipate much more (to E.B.C. Jones, p.150)

**58 July 10 1928:** Your friend the Christian Science Monitor has recently borrowed without permission a column & a half from an article I did for the Fortnightly - also a long extract from Oberland (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.152)

**59 Dec 14<sup>th</sup> 1928:** Otherwise no successor to Oberland which, by the way, is one of three books, including “Galleon’s Reach” nominated for the French Femina-Vie-Heureuse prize. “Galleon’s Reach” will probably win, but the fact of nomination may do Ob. A mite of good (to Peggy Kirkaldy, pp.163-4)

**60 Spring 1929:** I am not exactly surprised at the Femina award – but Tomlinson’s book which made a great noise was therefore not an eligible candidate under the regulations. Oberland did not sell even up to the £20 advance Duckworth let me have, £10 of which according to his latest statement now goes to swell my debt. It is true that as I’m now only getting half-royalties, i.e. 7 and a half percent of my £10 represents more sales than it appears to do. But still almost nothing. I can no longer count my books as any sort of asset. Now that there are so many young people on the same tack it doesn’t really matter (to Bryher, p.167)

**61 Mar 15<sup>th</sup> 1930:** Meanwhile I am trying, it is true, line by line & at odd moments, to get vol X together but can’t at present say when it will be finished. Perhaps I’ll write the last pages in freedom at – Jesson? (to John Austen, pp.191-2)

**62 Mar. 1930:** The Jackson firm, who call themselves Export Booksellers & who have just published the first set of a series they are calling the Furnival Books (editions de luxe of long short stories, new, including a T.F. Powys, a Coppard & an H.E. Bates) and for whom I have just done an article on the work of John Austen, have developed a sudden enthusiasm for my work & bought fifty copies of each of the five volumes from Duckworth. Some of them they want me to sign so that they may dispose of them at special rates. (I imagine in America where all up to The Trap are out of print - & I notice it is only pre-trap vols. they’ve chosen [.] On these they propose to pay me a royalty, unspecified. But if they do, & if on the strength of this deal I can get a little money out of Duckworth & the promise of rather more than the £10 he paid me for Oberland, for my m.s. when ready, I may possibly get done within the year (to Bryher, p.193)

**63 Sep 1930:** G.R. [Grant Richards the publisher] nibbled also for my work. Incidentally asked for my sales statements. Saw them. Heart failure. He wrote however a most charming letter, expressing himself as both shocked and miserable, but the publisher that is in him, & consideration of his backers, make it impossible for him to lift a finger to remove the cause of his misery (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.202)

**64 Jan 1931:** Briefly. As you may remember I set forth last spring upon the battered fragments of my perpetually halted book (...) Vol X is half done & should, even together with Lubi [not identified], be finished by the end of April. I see no kind of chance of a further volume & very little reason to suppose that the present one will do any better than its predecessors. It is of course possible that J.C. P’s [John Cowper Powys’] article may help. (...) If I can do my book, I shall suggest their publishing the booklet [by John Cowper Powys] a little in advance. What I propose is to finish Vol X & hope that when it is complete Australian 5%’s may have recovered. And what I would ask of you is whether you can possibly arrange to advance me, on the security of that at present gradually improving third £100 of my depreciated stock, during the coming four months, the sum of £100. That would just see me through our time here (...) Enough would be owing to me, if I get Lubi, (very little from Duckworth who last spring offered £25 for X provided he could have it in the autumn) (...) I hate to ask this of you, Bryher, after all you have done for me. But it is the only chance for one more volume (to Bryher, p.208)

**65 July 14<sup>th</sup> 1931:** I had your letter & the books & both, amidst a thousand botherations & distractions, (to which must be added the breaking up of my over-

crowded day by foreign visitations of various kinds including those of strenuous young females writing theses for diplomas on the English W. Novelists & a killing effort to finish vol x this month) have been on my conscience (...) (to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, p.214)

**66 Summer 1931:** I'm in the throes of revising typescript of Earthenware while writing the last section scrap by scrap as the day allows. I read with an impersonal joy. At last. After three years of despair over this volume. There are bad bits in it, each of them accountable. But on the whole, joy. (The bad bits are the uncollaborated. Superficial. Ghastly) (to Bryher, p.215)

**67 Sept. 1931:** Dawn's Left Hand is now printing. I called, for the second time in all these years since 1915, at Duckworth's to try & make them see the importance of a swift successor to this truncated starveling & to promise me £100 (since my debt to them is now reduced to little more than that sum) during the coming year, to enable me to produce one, to offer them an Odle wrapper & to persuade them in future to print the early volumes in twos and threes. Charming agreement & much flattery: "This is a red-letter day for me, Miss R.; for Miss Edith Sitwell was here' also this morning." (...) Next morning: a letter from Duckworth. Owing to loss on Oberland, can offer only £25 on the new volume. Since it is now not usual to add decorative jackets to the superior, intellectual (!) type of novel, we shall not need a wrapper by Mr Odle. It is impossible to bind the earlier volumes in groups without re-setting, for, as you know, the type varies from volume to volume. Cat & mouse. Why do they do it? (to Bryher, p.217)

**68 Sep 1931:** Proofs of Dawn's Left Hand going in today. The lay-out is too awful & the book fills me with despair by reason of its "thinness" & brevity; the shadow of a book it is, result of momentum of the unconsciousness, got going a thousand times in these four years, & a thousand times broken off with devastating results to both author & work. I don't know when the book is to appear, not much before the end of next month, or perhaps early in November. Joiner & Steele are bring[ing] out J.C.P.'s essay on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of this month & that may help a little if they distribute it properly (to Bryher, p.219)

**69 Sep. 19<sup>th</sup> 1931:** (discussion of a manuscript of *Pilgrimage* that might be sold in the United States) Incidentally there is now a second ms. available: that of my next chapter-volume, Dawn's Left Hand, to be published ere long by Duckworth. It is possible that the Joiner and Steele booklet, now out, may help to promote a sale (to I. Brussel, p.220)

**70 12.11.1931:** Duckworth is advertising pretty well, but has, I am sorry to see, ventured to raise the price of this volume from 6/- to 7/6. I think it is a mistake not to keep a uniform price (...) Meantime Knopf has refused this last volume. And considering the length of time all the others have been out of print & the long interval, also, since the issue of the last chapter-volume, I can't blame him. It would be futile to send this one small chapter in vacuo. So now I must attack the problem of discovering a publisher who will undertake a fresh edition & bind the volumes in groups (to Bryher, p.229)

**71 Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> 1931:** Also correspondence re Tauchnitz hanging fire. Ditto, two German firms meditating translation. This, Duckworth, having fozzled three previous applications, is leaving to me & I'm trying to persuade a complete ed. In which case they can have the first couple for a song. If that fails & either likes to exper. with D.L.H. (*Dawn's Left Hand*), a mistake, I think, but that's [sic] what they want, they can have it with the proviso of resigning the rights, at cost price, to any

publisher who may later undertake the whole. Also corresp. With American agents. I am refusing the rights of D.L.H. alone, & hoping to find someone for a reprint (...)

The reviews of D.L.H. have been, on the whole, very good. Particularly am I pleased with several by the younger fry who admit they have, so far, read only this one book. Rebecca West has come round, & uses, without a word of recantation of her years of lofty scorn, some of her choicest adjectives. The vitriol-throwers, whipped to fury by Powys, have doubled their dose (...) The fact that D. goes on advertising made me hope sales might be rather better than usual (...) And I shall be very much surprised & more than very much delighted if there is anything to come to me & feed a new volume.

If there is, & if Alan can secure work (we have two agents doing their best to find anything, down to advertisements & even [illegible word] cards. The conditions are indescribable, hordes of ex-artists praying the same prayer & a crust secured by one means starvation for his neighbour) I shall, with your help, so generously promised, in so far as nowadays anything can be promised, in advance, launch out with XI (to Bryher, pp.230-1)

**72 April 1933:** Meantime, Duckworth's March statement shows a distinct increase in sales. On the last six months of last year, he actually owes me £8.00. And my debt to him, originally £300, now stands at about £70. Also a crop of letters has come in, from new readers. These straws make me more than ever desirous of getting the new book ready this year, whatever else has to be done as well. Much depends upon the degree of exactingness of that other work (to Bryher, p.244)

**73 May 31<sup>st</sup> 1933:** Professor Pear (Psychology, Manchester University) has just sent along a portion of the ms. Of his forthcoming book, containing extensive quotations from Oberland & Dawn. I hope the book may incidentally be helpful to Pilgrimage (to Bryher, p.246)

## Analysis

The amount of letters (thirty) and, within them, the length of discourse which refers to the two chapter-volumes, is much greater than any that preceded it and is, perhaps, indicative of another marked shift in Richardson's focus. She seems to be spending more time reflecting on *Pilgrimage* than actually writing it and her energy is diverted by 'pot-boiling,' her term for the short essays and articles she writes, which hardly cater to popular taste, but do, at least, enable her to earn some money from writing (letter to Peggy Kirkaldy, dated New Year's Eve 1930, *ibid*, p.208). Clearly I am analysing data that has been initially selected by Fromm from a larger collection, but I think it likely that she included all the

letters which referred to the writing of the individual chapter-volumes, as they would be considered of academic importance. I therefore attribute some significance to the much higher number of letters and extended metatextual commentary pertaining to these two chapter-volumes of volume IV.

The first nine letters, all addressed to Bryher, concern *Oberland*. The first communicates a sense of Richardson's priorities in rank order: Christmas domestic activities, letter-writing and *Oberland*, *Pilgrimage* very much displaced by seasonal activities. Comments about Duckworth convey that the relationship, soured by Richardson's low productivity, is worsening and that both publisher and author are losing heart. That Richardson can only write in the 'fag-end of evenings,' when tired and probably lacking in inspiration as well as energy, reveals *Pilgrimage* is now very much on the margins. A few weeks later, however, Richardson, in a more positive frame of mind, has thought about a winter marketing strategy for *Oberland* and is quietly hopeful: The negative statement: 'I don't yet quite see how its (sic) to be done' at least implies, through the adverb 'yet,' the possibility of completion and 'but that is my aim' sounds purposeful. The final sentence of this extract is a long list of possible aims or a flurry of hopes for a more stable financial future (44). A similar tone of quiet optimism characterises the series of statements made in (45). 'Oberland one-third complete,' is marked by a precise conception of scale. 'I have things planned out to work on whenever I can' suggests organisation and a desire to make the best use of her time. The sentence continues with a long involved list outlining all the possible conditions that, if satisfied, should lead to the positive expectation of completion:

& if by any chance A[lan] sells a few drawings & I can get my book ready for D. by the Autumn & instead of taking a small advance, have the royalties on sales within a short time after publication & meantime another book on the way, we ought, next year, to start fair.



It has a multiply-qualified structure with a delayed predicate reminiscent of sentence structures that recur throughout *Pilgrimage*. This sentence is expressive of Richardson's thought processes and her keen sense of the odds stacked against her and Odle ('by any chance') but is, nevertheless, expressive of a small, but positive, shift in mind set. Subsequent letters reveal, however, that this was merely wishful thinking and that *Oberland*, was not only not ready for the Christmas book sales (45) but actually took Richardson another year to complete and that, by then, another publisher (Watt) was on the scene (46) and (49). Despite the prolonged delay (49) reveals that 'Duck,' the diminutive communicating a newly-found affection for the man, is still willing to publish *Oberland* and, moreover, is dealing with Richardson more flexibly, even if all he offers is an unspecified 'small sum'. Financial frustrations aside – getting *Oberland* published in whatever way possible – has become Richardson's dominant aim, emphatically expressed through two modal verbs: 'I *had* to agree to this because the book *must* come out.'

In this sequence of letters Bryher hears about all Richardson's *Oberland* struggles as and when they occur. The letter to Wadsworth feels much calmer as Richardson reflects on 'rather a terrible winter'. Interestingly she discloses something surprising, that she had recently met Duckworth, 'for the first time' and found him a 'kind, nice creature' with its implication that she was expecting the opposite. Whether she had put off meeting Duckworth face-to-face before is unclear, but it does seem to be odd that in all her years spent in London, during the four summer months, when she had ample social opportunity, she had not met him (50). Perhaps the vulnerability she felt in her authorial role, communicated in a letter to Peggy Kirkaldy, (dated June 25<sup>th</sup> 1928), was, indeed, painfully real (ibid, p.151).

(51-53) all refer to *Oberland* post-publication in some way. The first is a response to a fellow-writer Emily Beatrix Coursolles Jones' critique of *Oberland*, explaining a particular problem that might be termed narratological, the need to manage narrative tempo to reflect Miriam's new 'out-turned' aspect. Richardson's light-hearted comment, that she can no longer write *Pilgrimage* 'in the old [wudgy] manner,' (if the obscure word is 'wudgy'), suggests, I think, a meaning of heaviness, phonologically similar to the words 'sludge' 'fudge' and 'pudge' which share broad denotations of thickness, softness and fatness. *Oberland* has, unusually for *Pilgrimage*, a short time span of two weeks and Richardson is clearly having to use techniques of summary rather than stretch (Prince, 2003a, pp.94-6).

Richardson's frantic engagement in *Oberland*'s commodification is very much at odds with the sluggish nature of its production but possibly heralds her subsequent depression. (52) with a mock-apologetic pre-sequence, anticipates Bryher's irritated response to Richardson's ideas about a sales strategy first mentioned in (43): 'Now I am going to be a perfect nuisance.' The minor sentence 'About Oberland' signals the topic with business-like brevity, markedly contrasting with the convoluted comments and questions that follow. It is unclear whether the tone is enthusiastic or veering on the desperate, with its details of places and people and literary magazines that might or might not be interested. Whatever the tone, it is clear that Richardson is taking more than a usual interest in distribution, trying to be pro-active in order to maximise sales.

The letter to Knopf is as frosty as the letter that preceded it is warm, although not without touches of dry humour and mock-politeness. Its careful reigned-in anger expresses a quiet contempt that her American publisher can send on 'fan' mail to her that is, in fact, meant for another (American) writer of the same name. The issue of mistaken identity is revealed to be of a far greater public significance than this oversight, a photograph of the American

Dorothy Richardson featuring in a *New York Times* review of *Oberland*. Richardson's acknowledgement, that she herself could be considered partially responsible, being so reticent about publicity, and the wry humour underlying the photograph's mocking description, 'I have no objection to being represented more elderly than I am (...)' softens her indirect criticism. The brisk requests made at the end of the letter, to send on money owed, 'my small share', and a complimentary copy of the American edition of *Oberland*, are more evidence, however, that Knopf, in Richardson's estimation, is failing in his obligations (53).

The letters that chart *Pilgrimage* post *Oberland* in 1928-29 (54-58) share a similar flatness of tone and are characterised by linguistic markers of negativity: the particle 'not' or the contracted 'n't', the determiner 'no', the adverb 'no longer', the conjunction 'nor' and the indefinite pronoun 'nothing'. Enthusiasm and hope that *Oberland* would have broader appeal because of its Swiss setting have been replaced by bleak disappointment. Richardson writes to Bryher that, 'it's *not* much use preparing another vol. for Duck' (54) and states to E.B.C. Jones that she has '*no* time for Miriam *nor* do I know when I shall have' (two negative facts linked together) (...) *Oberland* sold 300 copies in its first three months & I've *not* heard since, but *don't* anticipate much more.' The reality of poor sales and flagging interest has been depressing and demotivating (55). She complains to Wadsworth that the *Christian Science Monitor* has borrowed an article (written by Richardson) and an extract from *Oberland* without permission, or payment, one assumes, providing more evidence of low self-esteem (56). Even being nominated for the prestigious French literary prize, the 'Femina-Vie-Heureuse', does not lift her spirits, conceding to Peggy Kirkaldy that it might do 'a mite of good' after baldly stating, 'otherwise *no* successor to *Oberland* (57). To Bryher, however, she reveals the full extent of her self-doubt: *Oberland* did *not* sell even up to the £20 advance Duckworth let me have (...) 'almost *nothing*' (...) 'I can *no longer* count

my books as any sort of asset. Now that there are so many young people on the same tack it *doesn't* really matter' (58) (my emphases). These negative statements are expressed with a mournful certainty. Richardson is facing a hard truth about *Pilgrimage* and its slow evolution; as her work grows in size it has less appeal and fewer distinctive qualities.

Given Richardson's low state of mind post-*Oberland*, (1926 onwards) it is no surprise that its successor is not referred to by its title for some time. In (59), (62) and (63) it is called 'vol X', in (48) 'Amabel,' in (55) 'another Miriam' (58) and in (64) 'Earthenware,' the variety of labels indicative of a lack of focus or indecisiveness. Nevertheless by summer 1931 Richardson shares a significant achievement with Bryher, that she can now read her own work: 'With an impersonal joy. At last. After three years of despair over this volume. There are bad bits in it, each of them accountable. But on the whole, joy. (The bad bits are the uncollaborated. Superficial. Ghastly)' (63). The fact that she inserts the negative evaluation in a parenthetical chatty aside and describes the 'bad bits' as 'accountable' in the main body of the letter, tempers the pleasure somewhat but the phrase 'impersonal joy' is more resonant. By the following September she can also reveal to Bryher that she is not only settled on a title but the chapter-volume has quickly gone to press: 'Dawn's Left Hand is now printing' (65).

Richardson found *Dawn's Left Hand* more than usually difficult to write, the process semantically encoded by three dominant fields of smallness of scale, struggle and separation. In (64) and (62) to Bryher, she refers to writing 'scrap by scrap' and 'the battered fragments of my perpetually halted book'. The nouns 'scrap' and 'fragment' are linked semantically by the idea of smallness, 'scrap' also having the meaning of discarded, and 'fragment' denotes similar ideas of something broken, isolated or separated. 'Battered' intensifies the meaning, denoting damage or injury and together with 'perpetually halted' brings to mind

the image of a boat battling in vain to move forward but continuously held back by the elements. Progress, slow and sporadic, is expressed more prosaically to her friend and writer E.B.C. Jones (55) ‘a line now & again of Miriam’ and to the pen and ink artist John Austen (59) ‘line by line’ and ‘at odd moments’, these letters nearly two years apart. The letter to Austen, however, sounds the first note of hope that completion of the tenth volume is possible: ‘perhaps I’ll write the last pages in freedom at Jesson’, the prospect of a visit to Austen’s home means ‘freedom’ from domestic duties and more time to write. In another letter to Bryher, Richardson also sounds animated by her association with Austen. Her introductory preface to *John Austen and the Inseparables* (1930) has exposed her and her work to a different firm of publishers who can see a money-making opportunity, for themselves (and Richardson), in America where chapter-volumes 1-7, are now out of print. Unexpected interest in her work from a new quarter has a positive motivational effect although expressed with characteristic tentativeness: ‘I *may possibly* get done within the year’ (60).

The topic of new interest from publishers continues in (61) with Richardson telling Wadsworth that Grant Richards ‘nibbled’ for her work, the verb expressive of a cautious or gentle level of interest. She relates the episode in anecdotal mode, conveying telegraphically the ironic amusement she felt at the time: ‘Incidentally asked for my sales statements. Saw them. Heart failure’. The humour signals either a healthy detachment or a need for distance from the anxiety associated with publishers and their commercial motivation. Her cynicism surfaces in the description of ‘a most charming letter’ she received from Grant Richards: ‘expressing himself as both shocked and miserable, but the publisher that is in him, & consideration of his backers, make it impossible for him to lift a finger to remove the cause of his misery.’ Here the homely idiom ‘lift a finger’ mixed with the more formal reported language of Richards’ letter heightens the comic inference. In (63) a more hyperbolic form

of humour surfaces as Richardson tells Wadsworth of ‘the killing effort’ she is making to finish the tenth chapter-volume and the extent of the demands being placed on her by ‘foreign visitations’ including ‘strenuous young females writing theses for diplomas on the English W. Novelists.’ Her tendency in her letters to Wadsworth is to be positive and to build a picture of busy activity, balancing writing with all her other domestic demands.

After *Dawn’s Left Hand* Richardson appears energised and several letters to Bryher reveal that Richardson is thinking carefully about *Pilgrimage’s* material form. She notes that she made another personal visit to Duckworth with two purposes in mind (67). The first is to negotiate a way forward: ‘to try and make them see the importance of a swift successor to this ‘truncated starveling’ (another description which animates her work in a negative way, ‘starveling’ denoting somebody, often a child, who is undernourished or emaciated, and a reminder of the abortion metaphor used to describe *The Tunnel* in (15)). The second to propose a new way of publishing *Pilgrimage* ‘in twos and threes’. The idea of publishing *Pilgrimage* in larger chunks than the individual chapter-volumes has its first mention in this letter of September 1931. Richardson also, since *Oberland*, has taken an active interest in the material covers of her work and tells Bryher that she has taken an ‘Odle wrapper’ with her, presumably a piece of art work that her husband had produced with one or more of the chapter-volumes in mind. Using a similar stylistic mixing strategy to the one she used with Wadsworth (61), she wryly recounts how Duckworth’s animated response to her suggestions in the meeting contrasts with his business-like objections formulated in a swift follow-up letter. She summarises Duckworth’s socially-skilled demeanour, ‘charming agreement and much flattery’, reports his own words, “this is a red-letter day for me, Miss R.; for Miss Edith Sitwell was here also this morning,” and then reveals how both of her own ideas are rejected as impractical, (the work would have to be reset) and inappropriate (*Pilgrimage*

being a 'superior intellectual (!) type of novel' does not warrant the use of a 'decorative jacket').

Although approving of Duckworth's promotional activity, Richardson voices her concerns to Bryher about two specific material details, the proofs of *Dawn's Left Hand*, ('The lay-out is too awful') and her unhappiness with a pricing change ('I am sorry to see, ventured to raise the price of this volume from 6/- to 7/6. I think it is a mistake not to keep a uniform price'). This letter (68) also refers to Knopf's refusal to take *Dawn's Left Hand*. Richardson accepts that her slow productivity, combined with the out of print status of the early chapter-volumes in America has inevitably led to this negative outcome: 'I can't blame him'. She now is tasked with finding a replacement for Knopf, someone willing to take on her tenth chapter-volume in isolation. She also restates her idea about 'a fresh edition' of *Pilgrimage*. It is clear that Richardson's energies are being channelled into trying to make the best of what she has already produced of *Pilgrimage*, including investigating translation opportunities, as she no longer trusts Duckworth's competence. She is trying to be resourceful but these additional burdens are a considerable drain on time and energy and Bryher would, I think, have been aware of their potential to disturb Richardson's equilibrium.

In the same long letter Richardson notes her pleasure in reading some of the reviews of *Dawn's Left Hand*, including an ironic reference to a surprisingly good one from Rebecca West. She is clearly interested in what 'the younger fry' have to say, many of whom have come to *Dawn's Left Hand* without knowledge of the other chapter-volumes and are reading it as a one-off. Richardson uses the striking phrase 'vitriol throwers', a reformulation of 'Brickbats and vitriol' (41) for the negative reviews, offering an explanation for their renewed destructive strength, 'whipped to fury' by John Cowper Powys' highly enthusiastic

monograph on her work (1931). This letter also makes reference to financial anxiety and its negative impact on productivity: 'And I shall be very much surprised & more than very much delighted if there is anything to come to me & feed a new volume'. Food, physical and spiritual, is a metaphor for money and Richardson thanks Bryher for the promise of financial help which might enable her to 'to launch out with XI'.

(69) and (70), both to Bryher, reveal that Richardson has received good news on multiple fronts. Her debt to Duckworth, accrued over the years, is significantly reduced by a 'distinct increase in sales' and she has received 'a crop of letters from new readers'. Both 'straws' are motivating her to write more of *Pilgrimage*, making her 'more than ever desirous of getting the new book ready this year, whatever else has to be done as well'. Richardson seems unable to mention working on *Pilgrimage* without some kind of qualifying comment, usually about other work commitments. Bryher must be only too aware of this familiar linguistic formula, having received so many letters over the years, and alert to any small tonal change that suggests real progress on *Pilgrimage* is being made (70). In (71) Richardson refers to reading the proofs of an academic textbook by a Professor of Psychology at Manchester University, Tom Hatherley Pear. (The final chapter of his book published in 1933 as *Psychology of Effective Speaking*, was devoted to *Oberland and Dawn's Left Hand* and entitled 'A Novelist's View on Speaking'). This is evidence that *Pilgrimage* is generating interest in ways that Richardson could have hardly foreseen.



## Concluding comments

Fragments from seventy-two letters (one letter used twice) to thirteen different recipients, spanning the years when Richardson was at her most productive, have been explored. They attest to her own doubts and uncertainties about *Pilgrimage*'s quality and development but also occasionally reveal the deep pleasure she derives from writing. The letters vary from the humdrum to the more arresting, the early letters to Robert Nichols standing out with their highly intimate disclosures and evaluations. Over a third of the letters (35%) are written to Bryher, with whom Richardson first corresponded in 1923 when she was writing *The Trap*, the seventh chapter-volume. The extended sequence of febrile letters to Bryher concerning *Oberland* marks a point when Richardson was unusually focussed on *Pilgrimage* as a commodity. The next most written to recipient is Wadsworth (23%), whose first correspondence dates from 1919 when Richardson is reading the proofs of *Interim*, the fifth chapter-volume. There is a more even distribution of letters to Wadsworth. There are some extended sequences but nothing as marked as the *Oberland* cluster to Bryher. Richardson's letters to Wadsworth provide some of the most intimate glimpses into the rhythms of her life and work. Perhaps his youth and enthusiasm for literature colour her perception as she writes to him with great affection but without the candour of her letters to Nichols.

The surge of optimistic feeling after the publication of *Dawn's Left Hand* sadly heralds an extended period of nervous exhaustion that interrupts the writing of *Clear Horizon*. Once recovered, Richardson confides to Bryher that her ability to write has been profoundly affected. Looking at *Clear Horizon's* earlier sections, the work feels as if it were, 'written by someone else' and this 'scares' her, if only 'a little' (letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> April 1935, Fromm 1995, p.292). A different kind of doubt, uncertainty or vulnerability is being expressed here. The writing seems unfamiliar, not her own, and impossible to replicate or continue in the

same vein. Given the serial nature of *Pilgrimage*, this realisation must have been most uncomfortable.

The next chapter charts how Richardson deals with the pressure exerted on her by Dent, at a time when she is still recovering from illness, to complete *Pilgrimage* so that a new omnibus edition, with additional paratextual material, can be published. Richardson is called upon to help Dent with a promotional brochure as well as write her own authorial preface.

## **CHAPTER TWO: “THE ENDLESS BUSINESS”**

(Letter to P. Beaumont Wadsworth August 1938, Fromm, p.350)

### **Dent’s 1938 Omnibus Edition of *Pilgrimage***

#### **An epitextual analysis of the letters leading up to publication**

*Pilgrimage*’s early publishing history reflects the difficulties inherent in a complex, multi-volume text. The chapter-volumes were published separately over a number of years, all by Duckworth (apart from *Clear Horizon*) but in 1938 the first twelve chapter-volumes were published, by J.M. Dent (Dent) and the Cresset Press in Britain and by Alfred A. Knopf (Knopf) in the United States, in a four volume omnibus set, *as if* complete. Fortunately there is a large body of correspondence relating to this publishing project that helps to shed some light on how and why this ‘false’ omnibus was produced.

The shift in publishers from Duckworth to Dent occurred prior to the omnibus edition, when Richardson was writing the eleventh chapter-volume, *Clear Horizon*. Richardson’s new friend, Samuel Solomonovich Kotliansky, a Russian Jewish émigré, and reader and literary advisor to the Cresset Press, Dent’s associate company, suggested that Richardson take *Clear Horizon* to Dent (Rosenberg, 1973, p.132). Kotliansky and Richardson’s long-term plan was that Dent should publish a collected edition of *Pilgrimage*, a plan that Duckworth would or could not countenance, given two cold hard facts; the ten chapter-volumes they had published were not in a material condition conducive to such a project and *Pilgrimage*’s weak sales made the project commercially unviable.

A letter to Richardson from Richard Church, the poet, essayist and novelist and Dent’s representative, (dated 12<sup>th</sup> March 1936), triggered, it would appear, by a postcard from

Richardson, nudging Church into action, is a good place to begin the charting of the process.

After apologising for the delay, Church raises the thorny issue of *Pilgrimage*'s length and fragmented form:

I have given a lot of thought to the very difficult problem of "Pilgrimage", its format, its launching, its mode of attack, and the several problems to be mastered if we are to bring the venture to success: the success being the secure establishment of your fame, both for what you have done for the evolution of the English novel, and for the intrinsic quality of the work itself. The recognition of these two aspects of the work depends upon our political handling. You know, from our conversation together how very strongly I feel about the method which is necessary: and how important for us all will be the fact that the great book has been drawn to a conclusion.

Church's eulogistic descriptions, 'the great book' and its 'intrinsic quality', to some extent, mitigate the text-as-problem theme, and a desire to soften the main thrust of the letter can also be detected in the postscript: 'I write this as a fellow-craftsman, and not as a publisher' (Fromm, 1995, pp.306-7). Church seems to be communicating that his thinking about *Pilgrimage*'s publication strategy is personal, rather than, or as well as, professional, and that he is acting in solidarity with Richardson, hence the location of this statement in a postscript, the usual place for afterthoughts. This letter exerts a clear paratextual '*function*' on its addressee in that its message is specific and serious, that a collected edition is conditional on *Pilgrimage*'s completion (Genette, 1997, p.373). The postscript, however, can be seen to complicate the relationship between the sender and the addressee, established in the main body of the letter, and generate ambiguity. The first person singular pronoun 'I' signifies Church's cognitive processes as an individual, 'I have given a lot of thought' and 'I feel' but the meaning of the first person plural pronoun 'we' is more difficult to pin down. It has three possible meanings: either both individuals working together (the inclusive 'we'), or Richardson and Dent the company, (a different version of the inclusive 'we') or just Dent the company. The same ambiguity underlies the phrase 'our political handling', 'political'

in this context referring to the way in which *Pilgrimage*'s status and influence will be changed through the process of offering it as a new, whole book to the reading public. Church uses the second person possessive determiner '*your* fame' and the second person personal pronoun '*you* have done' to emphasise that it is Richardson's reputation and work that is at stake and nobody else's and makes a more intimate appeal to their shared understanding, '*you* know from our conversation together'. The phrase 'for us all' in the final summative sentence means Richardson, Church and Dent, the alternative being 'for us both' if he were just signifying the two of them as individuals. Genette notes that when a private epitext comes into the public domain, as in this example, any new reader learns about the message in an 'over the shoulder' way (1997, p.371). Richardson, the named addressee, would not, perhaps, have had any trouble decoding these potentially sliding meanings but had to think about her own response to the 'political' way in which *Pilgrimage* was being mediated and the pressure on her to complete. Nevertheless, as will be made evident, the communication between Richardson and her publisher continued to be thwarted by conflicting aims and misunderstandings, either genuine or fabricated.

Several letters from the period 1936-38, of a professional and personal nature, express Richardson's frustration with Dent and reveal, more importantly, that *Pilgrimage*, rather than drawing to a close, was a novel-in-process that Richardson was struggling to write. A sequence of letters, written by Richardson in close succession in April of 1936, is particularly revealing.

A polite letter to Church from Richardson, (dated April 14<sup>th</sup> 1936), reveals that she was initially 'shocked into silence' by his letter (quoted above) and had delayed responding. She refers to an 'initial misunderstanding' about *Pilgrimage*'s state of progress 'for which no one is to blame,' and expresses concern about the consequences of 'an indefinite postponement' of the omnibus edition, namely that her work should stay in print and be

listed in Dent's catalogues. She makes an alternative suggestion for a collected edition, in the form of sets of volumes, published in intervals, 'up to & including Clear Horizon', (the twelfth *Dimple Hill*, still a work in progress). Richardson, to reinforce her argument, asserts that a 'number of persons who write to me suggesting or pleading for a compact edition of the scattered chapters must represent a crowd.' This plaintive statement expresses hope that such a strategy might boost sales but is also an implicit recognition of her narrow readership (Fromm, 1995, p.310). When signing off, Richardson also betrays that she had been allowing herself to believe in the fantasy of this interim strategy, 'counting upon the sales of these sets' and warns that lack of money may result in the abrupt end of her writing project, 'failing such [financial] help, the possibility of finishing Pilgrimage becomes remote' (ibid, p.308).

The following day, in a letter to Bryher, (dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 1936), Richardson unburdens herself about her writing difficulties, including details that, according to Genette's epitextual framework, are more typical of unguarded and spontaneous 'oral confidences' (1997, p.385). Richardson warns Bryher, who is about to visit them, that *Dimple Hill* is a taboo topic that she does not wish to discuss 'before Alan' who would be 'harassed by all this uncertainty' (Fromm, 1995, p.309 and p.310). Richardson also confides that she has been struggling with writing *Dimple Hill* to a degree far worse than is usual for her and explains what she considers to be its root cause, the 'exacting' demands of translation work that interfere with the creative process. This problem with language and semantics has rendered the first draft of *Dimple Hill* 'entirely lifeless', with Richardson unable to 'get back' to Miriam from the inside. Unwilling to compromise, Richardson describes taking the extremely brave action of burning her 'script' and starting again.

Three days later, in a letter to Koteliansky (dated 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1936), Richardson provides more detail about the nature of the misunderstanding between Dent and herself. Its style is

less formal than her reply to Church but more formal than her letter to Bryher. Kotliansky has an official role to play for Dent but Richardson addresses him as 'Kot' (in contrast to 'Mr Church') which suggests a more intimate relationship. She refers to some 'blurb' she has received from Richard Church, which 'rejoiced' in *Pilgrimage's* completion, *Clear Horizon* perceived as its resolution, Church attributing to it key qualities marking it as such: 'the narrative coming full circle & the portrait of the heroine rounded off' (ibid, p.311). Richardson's use of 'rejoiced' is ironic and expresses not a little contempt, but Richardson then explains, in a more formal style, that Church has made an 'erroneous supposition' and that she has written to Church to clarify matters.

In a letter to Bryher, the following month, (dated May 1936), Richardson openly expresses her relief that Dent 'have come round' and are 'issueing [sic] sets of vols, rather than the whole at once' but that the publication of the first volume has been postponed until 1938, in the hope of 'awakening public interest' (ibid, p.312). It is clear that Richardson feels that a compromise has been achieved but she makes a significant confession: 'they hope by the time all are out, the book will be complete; though they undertake to go on publishing if it is not. All I can do, is to indicate that this delay will not assist the production of the final volumes' (ibid).

Two years later, in a letter to Bryher dated June 1938, Richardson describes the strenuous pre-publication pressures of proofreading but this small gripe heralds a more interesting revelation. 'I cannot say I enjoy having the twelve chapters to date, wich [sic] have landed Miriam in Quakerism from whose insufficiencies I am now engaged in rescuing her, represented as the whole of *Pilgrimage* (ibid, p.347). It is clear that the 'misunderstanding' has extended over a long period of time, neither side really willing to compromise. Church now, apparently, considers *Dimple Hill* to be the final chapter-volume (rather than *Clear*

*Horizon*) and the fact that Richardson has embarked on *March Moonlight* has either been ignored or not known about.

Letters to Bryher from Richardson (in December 1937 and February 1938) refer to *March Moonlight* by name and allude to a particular setting therein. In the first letter Richardson appears to refer to *March Moonlight* for the first time, signalled by the explanatory apposition following its mention: 'I have spent this last week there, in Vaud, in a vignette occurring in March Moonlight, the successor to Dimple Hill. In the second, clearly in response to enquiries, Richardson offers: 'The Vaud portion in March Moonlight is only an episode: about 5000 words, & entirely English, complete with Bishop and school-marm' (ibid, p.340 and p.343). Two other letters from Richardson to her friend, P. Beaumont Wadsworth, (dated August and December of 1938), reveal more, from her point of view, about the nature of the communication difficulties with Dent and her strong feelings of powerlessness and anger about the way in which *Pilgrimage*'s imminent publication has been handled.

The endless business of the Dent edition bids fair to come to something like an end, in the autumn, when the set, in four volumes, is to be published, (with Dimple Hill, the new volume, included) presented, to my helpless dismay & disgust, as a complete work. Please, as opportunity arises, correct this hateful misrepresentation! (ibid, p.350).

In the second letter, Richardson's anxiety about *Pilgrimage*'s critical reception is expressed with ironic references to 'the friendly critics' and 'the rest' (the unfriendly critics). Here she can communicate to Wadsworth, intimately and confidentially, what is inexpressible in a public epitextual or peritextual document:

You know, I daresay, that *Pilgrimage* is not finished. Dents, with whom the preliminary arrangements were made, by a friend, without my knowledge, presumed that it was, & had all their machinery set, for launching it as such, when the truth



came out. Whereupon they wailed aloud, were offered release from their contract, refused it & were allowed to go ahead on the understanding that they should not present the book as finished.

In compromising on implying that it is, they may conceivably have helped their initial sales; I don't know, & shan't until April. But they have queered their pitch in regard to sales-via-reviews. The friendly critics, puzzled, emit pleasing generalities & pass over the new book, a cul de sac rather than a conclusion, in silence. And it is exactly this new book that was to tempt, in Dent's view, buyers. The rest triumphantly yodel their delight. What did we say? This endless chronicle never was getting anywhere & now peters out (ibid, p.357).

In this letter she also, significantly, shifts the root cause of the misunderstanding from herself or Richard Church to 'a friend', (Koteliansky) (ibid). Whether this attribution of blame is fair or not is another question, but the perception is also communicated in a letter to Bryher, (dated Summer 1937), although on this occasion, Richardson is more philosophical: 'Kot's assumption that the book, *Pilgrimage* was finished. Nobody's fault' (ibid, p.337).

A note to Richardson from Dent (dated the 21st April 1938) acknowledges receipt of the *Dimple Hill* manuscript on which, interestingly, there is a fragment of Richardson's handwriting describing *Dimple Hill* as the 'concluding book of volume 4' (Dent Papers). True to form, Richardson's careful use of language extends the ambiguity about the chapter-volume's structural status. What she does not say is that *Dimple Hill* is the concluding chapter-volume to *Pilgrimage*, but those with a vested interest to read it as such could easily make that assumption. Both author and publisher can thus be seen to be political in their manoeuvrings and economical with the truth.

## **The materiality of the 1938 omnibus editions: form and early sales figures**

Towards the back of Richard Church's epitextual brochure (the subject of the following section) the material form of the Dent 'uniform edition' is detailed, revealing that the product is boxed and made to a high standard:

Four volumes (size 8 by 5 ¼ inches).

Each volume contains about 500 pages, set in 11 point Monotype Imprint.

Paper: specially made satin-surface antique wove.

Binding: Biscuit -coloured cloth, lettered in gold on a red panel.

Price: Single volumes 8/6 net each.

The set complete (in box) 30 /- net.

Publication, October 1938.

Clearly this material packaging is designed with the collector or devotee in mind but sales were disappointing nevertheless. Rosenberg notes that the timing of its publication might have been a negative factor:

The war now seemed imminent. It had not been the most propitious moment for the collected edition of *Pilgrimage* to appear. The edition proved an absolute failure, the royalty statement in 1939 showing a deficit of £4 on the advance of £30. A mere 699 volumes had been sold (1973, p.148).

A short article for *The Publisher's Weekly* for November 26<sup>th</sup> 1938 (author unknown) reveals that The American omnibus edition, published by Knopf at three dollars a volume and ten dollars for the boxed set, consists of the same uniform edition (Knopf imported one thousand sets), but the binding of the volumes, 'in natural finish cloth, two volumes stamped in green

and two in orange' took place in New York. This article also provides some information about American sales figures for the individual chapter-volumes:

Exact sales figures are not available for the various volumes. "Pointed Roofs" was published in 1916, in English sheets. The exact number is not known, as Knopf's records have been destroyed. A second printing of 1,500 copies was manufactured here. Three volumes were issued in 1919: "Backwater (1,500 copies manufactured here); "Honeycomb" (1,600 copies manufactured here) and "The Tunnel" for which records are lost. In 1920 "Interim" was issued in an American edition of 1,400 copies. "Deadlock," 1921, had two American printings, a first of 1,000 copies and a second of 500. "Revolving Lights," 1923, was published from English sheets, 1,000 copies all told, in two printings. Only 500 copies of the sheets for "The Trap," 1925 were imported. "Oberland," in 1928, was also issued in 500 English sheets, followed by a second printing of 250 additional sheets from London (p.1903).

What is apparent from this record is that sales were low and that print runs became smaller with the passage of time and that, from *Revolving Lights* onwards, concerned about poor sales figures, Knopf did not set up the printing of the chapter-volumes himself, instead using 'English sheets'. *Dawn's left Hand and Clear Horizon* were not published separately in America as they were in Britain, Knopf having temporarily lost faith in *Pilgrimage*. When he came round to publishing the omnibus edition these, together with the twelfth chapter-volume, *Dimple Hill*, were published for the first time in America.

In the peritextual material on the left-hand jacket flap of the Knopf edition, underscored by his signature, Alfred Knopf summarises the part he played in *Pilgrimage's* publishing history in the United States. His public beneficence as publisher contrasts with his hard-nosed decision-making in private and his failure to publish chapter-volumes ten and eleven is airily glossed over:

A year later [1916] I published *Pointed Roofs* for the first time in America and at intervals thereafter eight subsequent chapters of Miss Richardson's great work (...) Now, with the completion of the twelfth and concluding chapter, *Dimple Hill* – which is published in this edition for the first time here or abroad – I am both happy and proud to be able to present Miss Richardson once again to American readers.

Richardson referred to him in later years as, “‘Shark’ Knopf” who ‘secured the rights [for *Pilgrimage*] for a song when we were in extra low water’ (letter to Rose Odle, dated December 8<sup>th</sup> 1949, Fromm, 1995, p.623).

**‘Dent’s little fanfare’ (letter to Bryher, September 1938, Fromm, 1995, p.350): The material form of Richard Church’s epitextual essay**

The launch of the Dent omnibus edition of *Pilgrimage* in 1938 was accompanied by two significant paratexts. The first was a small brochure, a publisher’s public epitext, announcing the forthcoming launch and comprising an introductory essay written by Richard Church followed by a series of endorsements from other writers.

As the brochure was not ‘materially appended’ to its anchoring text but circulated in the ‘physical and social space’ outside, to booksellers and the like, it is, according to Genette, an epitext, rather than a peritext (1997, p.344). Genette observes that the epitext can be differentiated from the peritext, not just by the category of space but also by discourse. He states that whilst a peritext always has a paratextual function, in that it ‘presents and comments’ on the text to which it is anchored, an epitext, ‘a fringe of a fringe,’ lacks precise boundaries and its discourse is more ‘diffuse’ (ibid, p.346). This is true of this particular epitext as later analysis will make clear. Genette is generally dismissive of the publisher’s epitext stating that its promotional function usually results in a lack of ‘meaningful’ involvement with the author (ibid). Examples of this brochure can be found in the British Library and the Harry Ransom Center but, to my knowledge, this more ‘ephemeral’ epitext has not been widely discussed amongst Richardson scholars. The second paratext to

accompany the omnibus edition, a Foreword written by Richardson, an authorial peritext, has, however, become a significant point of reference.

### **The proto-brochure**

First mention of a publisher's epitextual brochure occurs late in 1934 in Richardson's letters to Koteliansky. These letters reveal that Richardson, in the early stages of the omnibus edition project, had a temporary and reluctant involvement in the process of producing the brochure. Genette's observation that authorial involvement in this aspect of the process is unlikely to be 'meaningful' is of interest in this particular context. The implication behind Genette's statement is, I think, that promotional activities are something to be wary of, usually conducted at a 'healthy' distance from the author who, having placed their trust in the publisher's judgement, is rarely consulted. This is certainly a stance shared by Richardson, whose procrastination of the task of writing to her literary friends, H.G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw, asking them if they might write something for the publisher's brochure, is a symptom of the discomfort she feels about the negative 'meaning' of her role in the process.

In a letter, (dated October 1934), Richardson refers to the task as 'still undealt with' and asks Koteliansky for advice. Her concerns are communicated in the enumerated items, their business-like format a means of dealing with the rather delicate issues of personal involvement underlying the queries:

I find, also that I cannot get these notes written until I know: 1) whether what is intended is a collection of brief, signed statements 2) whether the answers, if any, are to be sent direct to you. It is of course possible, if not probable, that both the dears will recoil, with admirably-worded excuses. But the chance of their consenting will be increased if they realise exactly what is intended & what they are asked to do (Fromm, 1995, p.274).

In a letter (dated November 9<sup>th</sup> 1934) Richardson thanks Koteliansky for his ‘crystal-clear instructions’ and informs him that she has ‘drafted a note that will do for H.G. & Shaw, (shivering, the while, at the mere thought of writing to anyone else’) (ibid, p.275). Her fear seems comedic but does reveal her vulnerability and sensitivity. Imagining the ‘recoil’ of her friends suggests that her mind has been exercised, constructing a scenario where her friends read the request, flinch in disgust and horror and write a polite refusal. Moreover the reference to the *drafting* of the notes suggests that she found the task, that she had put off doing, less than straightforward and that these notes, already delayed, were still unsent. Her distaste for this work is clear. The noun ‘note’ suggests a written document both brief and informal, not one requiring careful drafting. Richardson’s evaluation of the note as one ‘that will do’ is equally ambiguous. It could mean that it serves its purpose well or good enough, in the sense that she is unable to devote any more time and mental energy to it. A few weeks later, in a letter (dated 29<sup>th</sup> November 1934), what has been implied in the earlier letters is communicated much more forcefully, the modal verbs conveying the thrust of her feelings at the beginning of the segment:

If the plan turns on my writing any more, it *must* fall through. For I *cannot* do it (my emphases).

A possible alternative would be a well-drawn-up circular letter from the firm, indicating the plan of the booklet and asking A.B. or C if they would like to make any contribution to it.

Uncles Shaw and Wells are fair game. But others, and especially those who very much like my work, I cannot personally attempt to exploit. No Kot. It is useless to boom at me.

I feel, moreover, that the applications would come much more suitably from the publisher; impersonally. Those who really welcome the plan, will help. Those who are lukewarm would not, in response to no matter what appeal from me, produce anything worth having (ibid, p.279)

Richardson's doubts about the way her involvement in the process might be interpreted and her fears about how her writer friends might respond were, in the event, neither hypersensitive nor groundless. George Bernard Shaw, one of her 'dears,' whom she did not seem to mind exploiting, declined. In a letter (dated December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1934), Richardson writes to Kotliansky: 'Unless your so nice and charming Signor Cresset will be satisfied with Wells, adieu to plans. Shaw excuses himself on the grounds of being ill as a result of over-work. Perhaps it is just as well'. Richardson appears able to deal quite robustly with Shaw's refusal, deflecting the emotional blow by shifting her focus to the bigger picture:

For though, personally I do not regard G.B.S. as an essential sponsor, & feel that quite a formidable little army of godfathers and godmothers (a various army, too, including the professor of psychology at Manchester univ. who devoted to D.R. the last chapter of his last book, & at least one big Harley St. physician) would be willing to support the scheme, everything, i.e. the response of the general public & thence, financial return, depends not only upon the wide advertisement & wide circulation of this little propagandist brochure, but also upon intensive & extensive advertisement of the new edition (ibid, p.280).

The long and detailed parenthetical aside, with its hint of a quiet boast about admiring expert readers, perhaps communicates a psychological need for self-reassurance. These letters reveal much about Richardson's sense of self and more particularly about the meaning of her role in this matter. They chart the small but significant movements of role conflict: implicit acceptance of role, difficulty with role, retreat from role and the handing back of the burden of the role to the publisher, via her friend, intermediary and psychological buffer, Kotliansky.

These same letters also provide an insight into Richardson's varied perceptions of her readership. The way in which she describes the occupational details of her expert readers in the third letter might be interpreted as a desire to see her work as specialist, appealing to intellectuals and high status professional people, but, in the very same letter, her concern for

a 'financial return' for *Pilgrimage* leads her to describe a contrasting vision of another potentially much larger readership:

I know there are thousands of people, quite simple people & a sprinkling of others, who would like my books if they could get at them; if the libraries, even, stocked them, (few do) & the librarians of those where there is an odd volume, usually in tatters, (I quote the testimonies of innumerable friends & readers) knew the order of the sequence (which D. [Duckworth] does his best to conceal) (ibid).

The need to make some money from her writing means that she must engage the interest of 'quite simple people'. The tone of this particular segment of the letter is different from the one cited earlier, where Shaw's refusal is dismissed. In this stretch of discourse Richardson's argument rests on a personal and rather hopeful vision of scale and audience that is, however, coloured by doubt and an inability to accept that her work lacks broad lines of appeal. Superlative expressions in the phrases '*thousands* of people' and 'testimonies of *innumerable* friends & readers' (my emphases) have a rather hollow effect suggestive of exaggeration, and these contrast with other language expressive of quantity with regard to audience, specifically the phrase 'sprinkling of others', denoting a thinner, more scattered and unknown readership, and perhaps a more accurate and realistic description. Furthermore Richardson points the finger of blame for poor sales at distribution difficulties rather than at the failure of her work to engage a healthy readership. The repetition and intensity of the subordinating conjunction 'if', underlying the suggestion that readers are thwarted both by lack of access to the chapter-volumes and by lack of knowledge about the form and sequence of *Pilgrimage*'s component parts, has a plaintive effect. Richardson is motivated by the basic financial need to make some money in order to live and a higher, psychological need, for her work to be better understood *and* liked.



A letter (dated December 27<sup>th</sup> 1934) from Richardson to Koteliansky expresses defeat and issues her friend with unambiguous commands: ‘Drop this burden now, Kot. Turn to something else.’ Richardson has had a breakdown and is unable to devote any more time and energy to the project: ‘I cannot afford the desirable new edition, whether or no (sic) in the end it should pay for itself & a bit more’ (ibid, p.282). Koteliansky, nevertheless, refuses to give up and negotiations continue behind the scenes whilst Richardson seeks the help of the ‘healer’, William Macmillan, and gradually becomes able to engage with her work again, finishing the eleventh chapter-volume *Clear Horizon* in 1935 (ibid, pp.186-7).

### **The lead-up to the published brochure of 1938**

In a letter to Bryher, (dated 6<sup>th</sup> March 1935), Richardson refers to ‘a sound probability of a compact corrected edition of Pilgrimage ‘and ‘a provisional contract’ with a publisher, whose name she cannot state ‘until the publishers launch a little brochure they are proposing as a preliminary. The firm is solid, well-known & with excellent distributing organisation’ (ibid, p.291). The publishers referred to here are J.M. Dent and Richard Church, as senior editorial advisor, is managing communications. Two months later in a letter to Bryher, (dated 21<sup>st</sup> May 1935), Richardson explicitly mentions Dent and the time scale she is working to: ‘I have now signed Dents contract, swearing to be ready by July 1<sup>st</sup>, & hope I may. After that must read every syllable and comma of my ten vols, & help with their brochure’ (ibid, p.293). Given the complications already detailed about the misunderstandings between Church and Richardson, the brochure itself still takes some time to materialize.

A letter, (dated January 1938), from the poet, Ralph Hodgson, to Richard Church provides an insight into the behind-the-scenes process resulting in the brochure’s production. The

subtext appears to be that Church has asked Hodgson to contribute a quotation, by way of positive endorsement. Initially there is some congratulatory warmth about the launch of the collected edition, 'it is very good news,' and Hodgson praises Dent for its efforts to secure Richardson's literary status: 'Predictions I know, are unsafe, but Dorothy Richardson does seem to be permanent – likely to be found among 'the survivors round the embers, when it is all over'. But Hodgson's ambivalence about Richardson's work, ('does seem' and 'likely' are both linguistic markers of tentativeness), his judgement that the launch is rather extravagant and his discomfort about the endorsement request are also communicated: 'The idea of the brochure is spirited and generous but a bit absurd to my mind; I prefer to be left out.' Hodgson then moves on to explain his position, and in so doing, describes what he considers to be a more appropriate set of peritextual features for *Pilgrimage*. 'Good printing and binding, with particular attention to the quality of the gold-leaf stamping – if any – and the ordinary announcement in the Press is the proper homage, it seems to me, that should be offered to such a writer and in keeping with her own qualities.' His parting shot before signing off, 'I dread even a Foreword' seems loaded, suggestive of more potential for embarrassment, this time specifically deriving from Richardson's preface (ibid, p.342).

Several letters to Bryher make reference to the brochure. In one, (dated June 1938), Richardson describes its evolution as a 'circular, not quite what was originally planned, [that] has boiled down to a longish article by Richard Church, incorporating tributes. It will, I hope, more or less serve its purpose' (ibid, p.347). This comment from Richardson echoes Genette's characterisation of the usual authorial response to a publisher's public epitext: 'Most often he is satisfied just to close his eyes officially to the value-inflating hyperbole inseparable from the needs of trade' (ibid). Richardson's words do seem to reflect a certain psychological distance, important to maintain, given the mental strain the brochure caused her during its early developmental stages. In another letter to Bryher, (dated September

1938), Richardson ironically refers to the brochure as ‘Dent’s little fanfare’ which she ‘has promised to broadcast’ (ibid, p.350). It has already been established that Richardson felt pressurised into compliance with Dent and the use of the possessive ‘Dent’s’ and the verb ‘promised’ signal this.

Both Hodgson and Richardson seem to agree, in their separate and perhaps different ways, that the brochure is a rather ridiculous paratext, whose transactional function, to achieve a positive reception for the text, has somehow grown into something extraordinary. Richardson, however, conceals her embarrassment about the essay from its writer, Richard Church, to whom (in a letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> April 1938) she expresses gratitude for his ‘penetratingly sympathetic treatment’ of her work and the effort he has made to find so many positive endorsements. She comments on one particular endorsement from the writer and critic Frank Swinnerton, whose support is unexpected, the anecdote reinforcing the personal as well as the professional nature of the relationship between herself and Church:

Admirably lucid and forceful are these good friends, several of whom are quite unknown to me. Frank Swinnerton’s presence in their midst is a complete surprise. Years ago, Robert Nichols told me how, in the presence of Arnold Bennett as a smilingly silent umpire, he nearly came to blows with Swinnerton over the first three volumes of *Pilgrimage* (Dent Papers).

The front page of the brochure is in the form of an announcement and the body of the main text is an essay by Richard Church entitled ‘In estimation of Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage*’. The abstract noun ‘estimation’ has a dual meaning of ‘judgement of worth’ and ‘esteem’ and has been carefully chosen to signal the essay’s primary function to praise Richardson’s work. The brochure’s key function is clearly to stimulate sales, by making *Pilgrimage* known ‘to a much wider public’ (Church, 1938, p.10). Church’s essay, is a preface by another name, close to Genette’s definition of an ‘allographic preface’, one

written by somebody other than the author which signals a 'separation' between the text's sender, the author and the preface writer (1997, p.263).

Church's essay begins in celebratory mode, presenting Richardson as a writer whose name has 'become *legendary* amongst the public and *revered* amongst other writers' (my emphasis). The function of the praise is to recommend her work and draw attention to its value. Jorge Luis Borges describes the pitfalls of the allographic preface, in his *Prólogo de prólogos*: 'Most of the time, alas! The preface resembles an after-dinner speech or funeral oration, and it abounds in gratuitous hyperbole' (cited in Genette, 1997, p.270). Church's essay certainly contains a significant amount of positive hyperbolic lexis of the type that Borges warns against. Miriam, for example, is likened to 'one of those pilgrims of eternity whose quest symbolizes the needs and striving of every man or woman' (1938, p.4). Her status as a character is equated to that of a universal type, perhaps in a bid to widen the text's appeal, but as if to check himself, Church then elevates *Pilgrimage's* subject matter, by contrasting it with the popular fiction of the early twentieth century, dealing with the vulgar and the sensational: 'Dorothy Richardson, with the few others of her kind, does not need murders, political crime, and the violence and recoil of sexual passion to flagellate her spirit into action' (ibid, p.5). Richardson's fictional world is also praised as representing 'a civilization whose exquisite sensibility can never be destroyed', a heartfelt, albeit nostalgic, attitude that contrasts starkly with the present time described as 'the reign of brutality and barbarism' in the lead up to WWII.

Borges' argument that an allographic preface is only successful when it 'is not a type of toast' but 'a lateral form of criticism' is modified by Genette, who believes that these two functions can happily coexist (1997, p.270). Examples of critical comments are present, usually implicit rather than explicit, Church having called his preface an 'essay' for this purpose, one assumes. When he, for example, describes Richardson's method of 'slow

deliberation’, the tone is more muted. Richardson’s aim, presented as a desire ‘to maintain *pari passu* with the current revelations of her own experiences in life,’ is mentioned without any evaluative comment (such an aim being an impossible task for a writer to set herself, one could be forgiven for thinking) (1938, p.3).

Richardson’s relationship with her reader is explored, the lexis reflecting the more difficult, testing nature of the territory, suggesting that there is little room for the reader’s negotiation with the text. One good example is the way in which the reader can only access the fictional world ‘after *coming to terms* with the artist who has made it’ (my emphasis) (ibid, p.5). This ‘coming to terms’ process involves the reader having to submit to the text. Church uses an unusual phrase ‘the aristocracy of mind’ to suggest the way in which the life of the mind holds sway in the text and the modal verb ‘must’ combined with the passive voice is used to reinforce the reader’s position of acceptance. Thus the reader is told: ‘The aristocracy of mind, *must*, from the beginning, *be taken for granted*. The set of values *must be accentuated*; values that are founded upon a new assessment of the material conditions of life’ (ibid) (my emphasis). Church ends his personal input with a rhetorical, poetic flourish in the form of an extended simile: ‘Like the seer whom William Blake portrays, she makes a world from a grain of sand, and extends an hour into eternity’ (ibid).

In the second section of the essay, Church uses supporting quotations from other writers. He opens by conceding that public ‘recognition’ of Richardson’s work has been limited, mainly deriving from ‘fellow-writers’ (ibid). The longest, and first, endorsement comes from the writer, John Beresford who wrote the first allographic peritextual preface to *Pilgrimage*, or more specifically, to its first chapter-volume *Pointed Roofs*, in 1915. Beresford refers to this earlier preface as ‘that long-forgotten little essay of criticism’ (ibid) and congratulates himself on his ‘perspicuity’ at the time, regretting only his ‘understatement’ of Richardson’s achievement (ibid, p.6). In 1915 he avoids making a

decisive conclusion: 'The final judgement I hesitate to set down in any detail,' although he implies that his reticence is caused by a mixture of two things; a desire to avoid hyperbole: ('I do not wish to annoy either critic or public by a superabundant eulogy') and an admission of inadequacy with regard to critical skills: 'I leave all further praise of it to those who may have the insight to comprehend it' (vi and viii). The comment, 'Not often does the writer of Prefaces of this kind have his judgement so fully confirmed by the author's subsequent work' (1938, p.6), underlies the fear of making a poor judgement and the possible loss of face in so doing. Beresford revisits a figure of speech he used in 1915 to describe Richardson's method of having 'gone head under and become a very part of the human element she has described', noting the similarity between his own metaphor and that of John Cowper Powys, who wrote in a monograph on Richardson sixteen years later: 'She has drawn her inspiration ... from the abyss of the feminine consciousness'. Beresford goes to some length to make the reader understand that the comparison drawn between his own 'halting phrases' and those of Cowper Powys' is made to salute the latter's superior 'literary acumen' (ibid). This attempt, however, smacks of false modesty and echoes his earlier self-congratulatory stance. He concludes: 'All that I can find to say is that I recognized Dorothy Richardson's rare genius before anyone else had the opportunity to do so' (ibid, p.7). That Beresford is so dependent on what he wrote twenty-three years earlier about one chapter-volume and, arguably, wastes rather a lot of words comparing his earlier response to Cowper Powys' later one, is curious, and suggests either that he has not much to say about the other chapter-volumes or that he is more than a little egocentric. Beresford identifies May Sinclair, (who wrote her own allographic peritextual preface for the first three chapter-volumes of *Pilgrimage* in 1919), as one of Richardson's 'disciples,' but then modifies his argument by suggesting that imitating Richardson's 'personal' and 'individual' writing is an impossibility, comparing Richardson to the modernist greats, Proust and Joyce, whose

writing is also inimitable (ibid, p.6). As the first key contributor it is also worth noting that Beresford fails to mention *Dimple Hill*, the new chapter-volume.

There are several shorter endorsements, each one framed by Church. H.G. Wells, for example, is described as ‘a prophet on her [Richardson’s] behalf’ (ibid, p.7). It is interesting and not a little ironic that Wells should be described in this way as someone who interprets and speaks for Richardson. There is a semantic field of religion in Church’s discourse and in the discourse of several of the contributors. Rebecca West, for example, describes *Pilgrimage* as ‘a miracle of performance.’ Church implicitly likens Richardson to a god with her disciples and prophet, and a message that needs evangelising and interpreting by ardent advocates. Wells commends Richardson’s method, ‘the new reality and intensity of rendering’ and alludes to her ‘powerful influence upon a multitude of contemporary writers’. He does not choose to specify what this ‘powerful influence’ is, the knowing reader understanding that this refers to Richardson’s technique of representing the life of the mind. Nor does he name any of the ‘multitude’ of writers she has influenced. Wells concludes: ‘The unfaltering skill and precision with which Miss Richardson makes this uneventful life continually vivid, and an adventure to read, gives her a unique position amongst the novelists of the world’ (ibid, p.7). The morphologically realized negative polarity, in the two modifiers, ‘unfaltering’ and ‘uneventful,’ results in a curiously flat summative sentence.

Given that May Sinclair has already been referred to as Richardson’s ‘disciple’ by Beresford, Church makes much of her endorsement, praising Sinclair’s ‘generous recognition of a writer *of her own stature*’ (p.7) (my emphasis). This is a neat, flattering manoeuvre, repositioning Sinclair as Richardson’s equal. Sinclair praises Richardson’s commitment and ability to represent Miriam’s mind ‘with its ‘first-hand, intimate and intense reality (...) Miss Richardson seizes reality alive’. Sinclair’s language has much more positive shading than Wells’.

Church ends the section of endorsements from British writers with a long quotation from Virginia Woolf, written fifteen years earlier in a review of *Revolving Lights* for *The Times Literary Supplement* (19<sup>th</sup> April 1923). The fact, that Church has had to rely on an ‘old’ response from Woolf, raises a question as to whether a ‘new’ response was either not asked for or not granted. An authorial epitext, a letter from Richardson to Bryher, (dated March 1937), reveals that Richardson declined a request by the *London Mercury* to review *The Years*:

I told them that V.W., enormously as I admire her work, does not deeply move me & that I felt it would be unfair for me to write about her & better to put the book in the hands of someone to whom she means a great deal (Fromm, 1995, p.330).

The feeling was mutual. Woolf was wary of Richardson and, as early as 1919, there is evidence in Woolf’s diary, an intimate authorial epitext, that she also declined an offer to review Richardson’s work. Just prior to the extract quoted below, (dated the 28<sup>th</sup> November 1919), Woolf writes of her irritation with Katherine Mansfield who had just reviewed Woolf’s *Night and Day*:

Today, bearing K.M. in mind, I refused to do Dorothy Richardson for the Supplement. The truth is that when I looked at it, I felt myself looking for faults; hoping for them. And they would have bent my pen, I know. There must be an instinct of self-preservation at work. If she’s good, then I’m not (cited in Barrett, 1979, p.28).

In a similar way to Beresford’s retrospective glance at his earlier preface, this revisiting of Woolf’s review, albeit influential and interesting, might be interpreted in a negative way as an unfortunate dependence on past evaluations.

Church then moves on to introduce endorsements from farther afield, beginning with an unnamed French critic who dares to compare Richardson in a positive way to Proust:



‘Dorothy Richardson était proustienne avant Proust. Je ne suis pas sûr qu’un prochain avenir ne la mette au tout premier rang des précurseurs de la littérature des Temps Retrouvés’ (1938, p.7). This critic, Abel Chevalley, writing in the monthly arts magazine *Vient de paraître* in 1928 on ‘Les Lettres Anglaises’ uses the subjunctive to express the possibility that, in the future, Richardson might be perceived as *the* significant precursor of the stream of consciousness technique.

Church then quotes Philip Luttrell in *The New Republic of New York* whose comment about the writer-reader relationship echoes earlier points about Richardson’s intractable terms: ‘Interim was the volume I began with, and I thought the method teasing, but later, reading the books in their order, I found myself liking the method better and better, surrendering to it unconditionally’ (ibid, p.9).

Church moves back to British writers for more of a reflective overview. The female novelist Storm Jameson takes a frank, culturally superior approach, praising Richardson’s work and blaming the public for being inadequately trained readers: ‘The only thing I can say is that she is without any possible doubt one of the most stimulating and vitally interesting of modern English novelists and has suffered more than any of them from the lack of a critically informed reading public’. The poet, Walter de la Mare, is more indirect, hoping the new collected edition will achieve a ‘fuller recognition’ for Richardson. Another poet, Sylvia Lynd, echoes May Sinclair’s response to *Pilgrimage*’s subject matter, referring to ‘the freshness and unexpectedness of actual life’. The writer, Aldous Huxley, mirrors Wells’ focus on Richardson’s writerly skill, preferring to gloss over the subject matter: ‘her work is very interesting and technically significant’ (ibid, p.9). Church concludes this section with an effusive ‘tribute’ from the writer and critic, Frank Swinnerton, who begins confidently enough with the relatively safe territory of Richardson’s technique, but ends with observations about *Pilgrimage*’s style and purpose that seem oddly wide of the mark:

Miss Dorothy Richardson's work is like nothing else in modern literature. It has a precision, and a brilliant, inexorable veracity, to which no other writer attains. It is bound to influence novelists of the future (as it has influenced those of the present); and as it presents no difficulties to the ordinary reader, but only a continuous stream of entertainment, it ought to be very widely read and enjoyed (ibid, pp. 9-10).

Few would agree that *Pilgrimage* is an easy and entertaining read but there is a truth lurking behind the final statement, that *Pilgrimage*'s readership is limited and an acquired taste, the use of the modal verb 'ought', a tactful admission that *Pilgrimage* is not currently being 'read and enjoyed.'

The brochure draws to a close with Church's hope that the 'uniformity of the new format' will enable readers to enjoy *Pilgrimage* 'as a single work of art' (ibid, p.10), a view presupposing that uniformity and unity are desirable qualities in a work of art. Richardson had no issue with 'uniformity', perceiving a 'compact edition' to be a solution to the problem of scattered chapters 'in varying types' created by Duckworth (letter to Richard Church dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 1936, Fromm 1995, p.308), but was less keen on 'unity' and its associations of things coming together, of completion. Genette usefully questions the concept of 'unity' in relation to art, describing it as a 'dominant value; a value as impervious as it is unconsidered, almost never subjected to scrutiny' (1997, p.204). Richardson refused to fall in with received opinion on this matter and this is, perhaps, best illustrated in a criticism of her artistic method in *Tunnel* by Woolf in a *Times Literary Supplement* review of February 13<sup>th</sup> 1919:

The method, *if triumphant, should* make us feel ourselves seated at the centre of another mind, and, according to the artistic gift of the writer, we should perceive in the helter-skelter of flying fragments some unity, significance, or design' (cited in Barrett, 1979, p.190) (my emphases).

Woolf's two uses of the modal verb 'should' in conjunction with the qualifying subordinating clause 'if triumphant' convey the disappointment of a failed expectation. Such ideas about the significance of unity in art would have been well understood by Church who seems intent on imposing unity on *Pilgrimage*, considering it an attractive feature.

In his summation, Church explicitly addresses two types of reader, those familiar with Richardson's work who will now be able to 'review' it, in its supposed complete state, and those for whom 'Miriam and her world are a new experience' (1938, p.10). He uses two letters, one from Sir Hugh Walpole and another from Henry Major Tomlinson to provide historical overviews of *Pilgrimage*. Walpole uses the phrase 'her [Richardson's] Miriam sequence' which emphasises the text's uniformity of perspective (ibid). He suggests that Richardson's 'stream of consciousness' technique, innovative at the time and instrumental in that she paved the way, 'so that all other writers could understand how it might be used,' is now 'a commonplace' and that her novels can now be read differently, less for technique and more for 'character creation (...) sensitiveness and humour' (ibid, p.11). Tomlinson's quotation is prefigured by a comment from Church who finally makes a critical and explicit allusion to the precarious nature of Richardson's status as a writer, 'the vicissitudes of Dorothy Richardson's reputation and (...) whether it deserves to stand today' (ibid). Tomlinson's words are used as a final summation and read like a piece of oratory. He begins by referring to Edward Garnett, the writer and critic, who, as a publisher's reader, had recommended *Pointed Roofs* for publication to Duckworth in 1915. Garnett is a man whose judgement Tomlinson respects, 'who knew what he was talking about' and who introduced Tomlinson to *Pilgrimage*. Tomlinson, in a teasing way, partially allows the reader to share their chummy conversation from the past: 'what he said about her amounted to something so new that I could not accept it, even from Garnett'. The actual words are withheld, but their gist is communicated, reinforcing the idea that Richardson's work is

special, precious and challenges norms of what is possible in fiction. Tomlinson continues by proclaiming Richardson's status (as the first stream of consciousness novelist) and assumes a consensual agreement 'to whom the honour should go, of course' (ibid, p.11).

What is conspicuous by its absence in the brochure is any direct and specific comment on the new chapter-volume, *Dimple Hill*. This is presumably what Richardson is referring to in her letter to P. Beaumont Wadsworth (dated December 1938) when she writes: 'the friendly critics, puzzled, emit pleasing generalities & pass over the new book, a cul de sac rather than a conclusion in silence'. An absence of comment in this context conceals either a negative judgement or a superficial reading: 'And it is exactly this new book that was to tempt, in Dent's view, buyers' (Fromm, 1995, p.357).

### **Reviews of the 1938 Dent and Knopf editions**

One reviewer, falling (for the most part) into Richardson's 'pleasing generalities' category, is Paul Rosenfeld, who reviewed the Knopf edition for *The Saturday Review* in December 1938. *Dimple Hill* gets one indirect and glancing mention at the beginning, described as 'the latest, equally bright, hitherto unpublished' chapter-volume, before his eponymous theme of 'the inner life' is developed. Rosenfeld considers the subject matter, method, form and meaning of *Pilgrimage* and is critical of its lack of selection, the way in which 'the passage of a lover' or 'the passage of a circus-parade' is given equal treatment (p.6). He speculates how 'a novelist possessing a hierarchy of values' might represent Miriam differently, with attention to what she did not see and understand, as well as what thrilled, excited and enchanted her and, moreover, how other people were affected by her presence and behaviour (ibid). Rosenfeld's evaluation is a balanced one. He cites May Sinclair and John Cowper Powys as two writers whose view differs from his own and concludes with more positive

statements about Richardson's creative achievement. Rosenfeld is clearly drawn towards *Oberland*, the ninth chapter-volume: 'the art with which these perceptions, intuitions, images are merged with the internal monologue increases almost to the end of the vast novel. In the chapter "Oberland" it attains a kind of jewel-like perfection' (ibid). This statement contains an embedded criticism of *Dimple Hill* that Richardson would have been sensitive to; the art 'increases almost to the end' implies that the 'final' volume, *Dimple Hill* as well as those that follow *Oberland* (*Dawn's Left Hand* and *Clear Horizon*) are also perhaps lacking in this regard.

Another reviewer, who falls into Richardson's 'pleasing generalities' category, is Babette Deutsch, who reviewed the Knopf edition for *The Nation* in February 1939. She states that she is 'convinced' that Richardson, 'has only begun to find her proper audience' and that the 'four stout volumes' of *Pilgrimage* are substantial evidence that others share her opinion: 'Publishers do not print books for the fun of the thing' (p.210). Deutsch focuses on the character of Miriam and the critical objections made about her as 'a person of small importance,' describing the formative stages of her life as rather ordinary, uneventful and undramatic. Three rhetorical questions are posed: 'Where then, is the interest? Where the significance? What, under the sun or moon, are these nineteen hundred-odd pages about? Deutsch argues that *Pilgrimage's* chapter-volumes should be valued for the way in which they: 'leave the reader with a heightened awareness of the most unconsidered elements in his own daily experience. They perform the supreme service of literature, that of increasing consciousness, even when they seem to deal with trivia' (p.212). Deutsch does not, however, bring the new chapter-volume *Dimple Hill* to the fore nor does she name it. In her contextualisation, however, Deutsch does make reference to Richardson's new Foreword and identifies which writers gain a mention and which do not. She notes that the male writers Proust and Joyce are named, as are Balzac, Bennett and James. Woolf is

referred to indirectly but not named and Sinclair not referred to at all: ‘She might too, have mentioned May Sinclair, whose “Mary Olivier,” published in 1919, is a condensed and somewhat vulgarized version of what Miss Richardson has done with exquisite subtlety on a major scale’ (p.210). It is as if Deutsch’s sensibilities tell her that Richardson’s references to other writers are very telling and that the absence of a name, or indeed a reference, disguises a negative attitude on Richardson’s part.

An epitextual review that does give sustained attention to *Dimple Hill* is one by Rolfe Arnold Scott-James for the *London Mercury*, entitled ‘Journey without End’. After listing the titles of the existing eleven chapter-volumes, Scott-James specifically mentions the new one: ‘and now, at last, *Dimple Hill*. Each of these chapters in the history of Miriam’s pilgrimage has appeared as a separate book, except for the last, which refusing to make a conspicuous début, is tucked away rather secretively in this collected edition’ (p.214). His diction suggests an uncanny awareness of the covert status of this so-called final chapter-volume but a rational explanation is provided for the means by which it has been brought to the public’s attention:

Perhaps it was just as well that it should be brought out in this form, not because of any unworthiness, but because it needs what went before to make it fully intelligible. If I had approached it without any previous knowledge of Miss Richardson and Miriam I do not know what I would have made of it (ibid).

Scott-James goes on to reflect on how the reader has to ‘learn’ how to read Miriam’s language and that unless a reader has prior knowledge of ‘what her spirit has been through, what these various intimate recollections are which colour all her thinking,’ then *Dimple Hill* will be unreadable. He refers to the ‘effort’ involved for the reader already familiar with *Pilgrimage* ‘to get on terms with the old Miriam and pick up the threads if he is to get much out of *Dimple Hill*’. Perhaps the other reviewers (those whose work appeared in the

epitextual brochure as well as the more distant epitextual reviews located in newspapers and literary journals) were neither motivated nor sufficiently patient to do this.

Scott-James' opinions on *Pilgrimage's* composition and the reader's need to 'pick up the threads' of previous chapter-volumes, in order to facilitate their understanding of the latest one, are of particular interest to this thesis. Not only is he using a sewing/weaving metaphor for reading that Richardson herself uses (see the end of this paragraph), he is directing attention to *Pilgrimage's* relational nature, and making a proto-structuralist observation about, what Genette calls, *intertextuality*, defined as: 'a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts' (1997 (a) p.1). Scott-James' comments can be seen to prefigure Genette's concept of *hypertextuality*, the range of relations that unite a text B (the hypertext) to an earlier text A (the hypotext) by suggesting, albeit using a different form of expression for the same underlying concept, that *Pointed Roofs* is the hypotext to which all the other chapter-volumes stand in hypertextual relation (ibid, p.5). *Dimple Hill*, in Scott-James' opinion, needs the others to make proper sense.

In an essay for *Life and Letters* entitled 'Adventure for Readers' (22<sup>nd</sup> July 1939) Richardson differentiates 'the new novel of reality' from 'the storytelling novel of whatever kind,' and likens the former to a tapestry whereby 'each portion is seen to enhance the rest and the shape and the intention of the whole grows clear, any single strip may be divorced from its fellows without losing everything of its power and meaning' (reproduced in Rainey, 2005, p.601). This essay was written a year after the Dent/Knopf omnibus edition and has a clear application to *Pilgrimage*. Not only is *Pilgrimage* evidently a novel 'of reality' but also its fragmented form lends itself to the tapestry/strips of material analogy. Richardson is clearly hopeful that her chapter-volumes, like those strips of tapestry, can stand alone and the reader be able to gain at least something from them. She would, I think, not have been wholly

disappointed by Scott-James' evaluation of *Dimple Hill*. At least he acknowledged its presence in the omnibus edition and did so in a considered way.

**'Seriously I don't believe in prefaces' (letter to Koteliansky, dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 1934, Fromm, 1995, p.260): The context to Richardson's authorial Foreword of 1938**

The background to Richardson's own peritextual statement, the authorial Foreword to the omnibus edition, is recorded in private epitextual sources, her letters to Koteliansky, Richardson's friend and publisher's reader for the Cresset Press, and later for J.M. Dent. They describe her experience of writing the Foreword and the high level of discomfort she felt about it early on in the project through to completion.

In a letter (dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 1934) to Koteliansky, the first mention of a preface is made, although in this case it is one to a work that she is translating from German into English, Joseph Kastein's *Jews in Germany*. Richardson expresses various reservations about the possible function and positioning of an allographic preface as well as questioning the wisdom of having a translator's foreword:

Seriously I don't believe in prefaces, in so far as they are intended to steer the reader's thoughts. But since there is to be a preface, I hope it will be soundly oriented. Two prefaces, however, though of course readers can skip them, seems rather like two chairmen at a meeting. If therefore, I am to do anything at all – I won't unless I can put together a statement which more or less satisfies me – would it not be better to let me buttonhole the reader after the meeting, make a few remarks and suggest a vote of thanks? An unusual procedure, true, as one might remark in stepping forward, but this is an unusual book (Fromm, 1995, pp.260-1).

Interestingly Richardson's feelings of unease about 'steering' or directing the reader chime with those of Genette, who sees a disadvantage in the 'advance commentary' preface that precedes a text with which the reader is, as yet, unfamiliar (1997, p.237), preferring its



opposite, the 'postface', placed after the text in a position 'more logical and relevant' (ibid, p.238). Richardson's desire that her own Foreword would be better placed at the end, after the reader has read the book and can be perhaps reluctantly detained in conversation with the translator, might suggest a lack of ego although this is countered by her determination that whatever she writes 'satisfies' her and not, by implication, the publisher.

Three months later Richardson writes to Koteliansky: 'I am relieved to hear from the nice Cresset Press that they find my small foreword helpful. To me it seems so lame and tame; also ill-expressed' (Dent Papers, n.d. June 1934). Such a negative evaluation might suggest genuine dissatisfaction or hypercriticism. Whatever the reality, the process clearly discomfited her and the feelings she has about this translator's preface can be seen to foreshadow those that attach themselves to the writing and publication of her own Foreword to *Pilgrimage*.

A letter to Koteliansky, (dated August 1937), expresses anxiety at not having heard back from Richard Church, to whom she had sent a draft copy of the Foreword. Vagueness and powerlessness encoded in her language reflect uncertainty with regard to her fulfilment of the task, her relationship with Church himself and her interpretation of the communications delay or absence.

When I sent in my brief foreword to R.[ichard] C.[hurch], with a little note expressing the hope that it would more or less fulfil the purpose for which it was designed, I thought I might have had a line from him. Since he has not written & a proof has come from Latworth, I am left wondering whether it has been accepted as useful, or cursed &, nevertheless, put through (Fromm, 1995, p.336).

Four months later a letter to Bryher, (dated December 1937), reveals more directly that Richardson found the task of writing the Foreword onerous: 'I struggle to put together some sort of foreword for Pil. The most horrible job I ever attempted' (ibid, p.341). The use of

the simple present tense 'I struggle' suggests that she is currently writing the Foreword, which implies that Church did ask her to make some changes. A letter to Koteliansky, (dated April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1938), expresses some anxiety. Despite receiving a printed, (generic) acknowledgement from Church, she is still concerned about his personal opinion about the Foreword:

[I] could not help wondering whether my [foreword], in not being the kind of thing he had in mind for his prospectus, had stricken R.C. into a disgusted silence. I thought you might know & could perhaps set my mind at rest, & should hate him to feel he must put together a letter he doesn't want to write' (ibid, p.345).

It is clear from a quick follow-up letter that Koteliansky has acted as an intermediary: 'a nice little letter from R.C. indicates that you must have boomed gently & with discretion' (ibid, p.346). This 'nice little letter' of the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1938 (Dent Papers) has served the function of reassuring Richardson and provides a plausible excuse for the communication breakdown: 'I thought the preface a characteristic piece of work, and passed it on without comment so that no time would be lost.' The modifier 'characteristic' is of interest here because of its neutrality, neither flattering nor critical, but suggestive of a certain idiosyncratic predictability. But an internal memo dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 1938 from Church to another Dent employee, a Mr Bozman, an epitextual source of a confidential nature designed for the addressee alone, reveals that Richardson's intuition was correct as it provides a much less reserved and more negatively encoded evaluation. It expresses misgivings about the Foreword as well as a personal unwillingness to take any action or suggest any edits, perceiving in its style something in keeping with *Pilgrimage*. In this, at least, Church shows respect for the author:

This Foreword from Dorothy Richardson is somewhat disconcerting, but I do not think that we can take liberties with it. Her mind is curious in its lack of co-ordination but, quite distinctly, she achieves an effect here, as she does in the main body of her

work. It is a curious, groping sort of mind, and I think we might do no good by trying to express herself in a more modern way. As sales talk the Foreword is not of much use, but I do not think that this matters since we can do all the necessary sales talk ourselves (Dent Papers).

Richardson's anticipation of her friends' response to the Foreword is recorded in her private letters. To P. Beaumont Wadsworth, (in August 1938), she writes that she had 'put together a preface over which you will probably shriek with laughter!' (Fromm, 1995 p.350). Two months later, in a letter to Bryher (dated 11<sup>th</sup> of October), Richardson makes an apparently casual observation about the restricted distribution of her Foreword, hidden between paragraphs on Hitler and the likelihood of war and the domestic arrangements of her house in Cornwall: 'It appears that Dent is sending around Vol 4 only. Possibly because they think my foreword [inserted in volume 1 only] would put up the backs of the reviewers' (ibid, p.353). Richardson has clearly interpreted this action as strategic rather than pragmatic, expressed via the vague or ironically polite encoding of 'it appears that' and 'possibly.' She sees it as a creative solution to the potential irritation her Foreword might cause in some quarters. Being materially appended to Volume I only, its peritextual status is partial and can be conveniently overlooked. It is unclear, however, *how* Richardson was made aware of this turn of events, whether told directly by Church or indirectly through more informal channels. Given that Church was slow to respond to Richardson about the Foreword and that she had to use Koteliansky to intercede on her behalf, it is more likely that she made her own discovery.

These epitextual references, taken together, provide some interesting contextual information, not just about Richardson's anxieties but also about Dent's manoeuvrings. The usual practice of promoting an authorial preface to give the text a unique selling point was side-stepped in this particular case. No explicit mention of a decision to restrict the

Foreword's distribution was made in the internal memo to Mr Bozman, but the idea was probably generated at this point in the process. Church's concern was, first and foremost, to maximise *Pilgrimage*'s sales rather than honour his promise to Richardson that he would 'circulate it widely' as expressed in a letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1938 (Dent Papers). Richardson's struggle to write 'her species of foreword,' her suggestions (in a letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> April 1938) that Church 'write the wretched thing himself' or even replace her Foreword with his essay (Dent Papers), and her concern about the Foreword's subject matter and effects, more so than Church's commercially oriented retraction, should make the curious reader reconsider its content, function, tone and status as a text for scholars to unpick.

### **Analysis of Richardson's 1938 Foreword/peritextual preface**

Richardson's reluctance to write the Foreword has to be factored in to a textual analysis. Genette's identification of the five types of characteristic that constitute the status and illocutionary force of any given paratext, 'spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic and functional' provides a useful analytical model to start with (1997, p.4). In terms of location, temporality and substance, the Foreword was written for the new collected edition of *Pilgrimage* published in 1938, comprising the first twelve chapter-volumes of *Pilgrimage*, one of which, *Dimple Hill*, was being seen for the first time. Given the serial nature of *Pilgrimage*, this Foreword appears twenty-three years after the first chapter-volume was published and coincides with the publication of the twelfth, penultimate chapter-volume. According to Genette's classification of temporality, this Foreword lies somewhere between a 'late' and a 'delayed' paratext (1997, p.6), close in publication date to some of the later chapter-volumes and much more distant to the earlier ones. Genette notes that the function of later prefaces (rather than 'original' ones which appear at the same time as the text) can

be to express 'afterthoughts' 'at a safe distance' and that such thinking with hindsight can be 'fair and dispassionate (...), the effect of re-reading after *forgetfulness* – that is, after an interval of detachment and separation that transforms the author into an (almost) ordinary and (almost) impartial reader' (1997, p.253).

Richardson's Foreword is something other than this although some Genettian ideas can be applied. There is a strong element of retrospection, as Richardson at the age of sixty-five, attempts to put *Pilgrimage*, a work she had embarked on twenty-three years earlier, into some kind of literary context. Richardson provides a brief history of realism in prose fiction, outlines the genesis of her writing project and acknowledges literary inspirations. She refers to the work of Balzac and Bennett whose respective 'sympathetic imagination' and 'complete fidelity [to] the lives and adventures of inconspicuous people' she applauds, unlike their 'immediate successors' whose work she undermines as a learnt 'creed' (I, p.9). These observations, at the beginning of the Foreword, have a hint of the 'mellow' quality Genette suggests is typical of the delayed preface (1997, p.175). Once Richardson begins to describe the initial stages of her own writing, the tone shifts and her irritation and frustration is palpable. There is a semantic field of struggle and negative emotions: 'dissatisfaction,' 'torment,' 'failure' (I, p. 10). The remembering is painful and detachment impossible because Richardson is writing with the knowledge of *Pilgrimage's* incomplete state and the recent memory of the rejection and ceremonious burning of *Dimple Hill's* first draft. The Foreword, a public peritext, whose function is to present and comment on *Pilgrimage*, is not the place to divulge all the unpleasant realities of the writing process but some strain can be detected. Richardson's continuous reference to herself in the third person, as the 'present writer' (I, p.9) or 'the author of 'Pilgrimage' (ibid, p.12) has an odd distancing effect, suggestive of 'detachment' but of a different kind from the measured and calm state that Genette describes (1997, p.253). There seems to me to be a barely restrained

anger accompanying these usages as if she is using the nouns 'writer' and 'author' to draw attention to her professional role, undermined by Dent's commercial motivations and her own need to make a living through writing.

The communicative situation or pragmatic status of Richardson's preface is complex. It is the one element of Genette's model which he, himself, playfully concedes is in need of development. He lists the following elements that constitute a preface's pragmatic status: 'the nature of the sender and addressee, the sender's degree of authority and responsibility, the illocutionary force of the sender's message and undoubtedly some other characteristics I have overlooked' (ibid, p.8). The (reluctant) sender of the preface is Richardson, whose authority is complicated by the fact that she has been coerced to agree to a communicative event (the publication of the omnibus edition as a finished entity) by her publisher, Dent. The sender's 'responsibility' is mixed. She is the author of *Pilgrimage* and there is therefore an 'official' element to the responsibility, but she feels compromised, knowing that the work is incomplete and that by writing the Foreword she is colluding in the falsifying of *Pilgrimage's* status. What she writes in the Foreword cannot be disclaimed later although it can be re-evaluated in the light of experience.

With regard to the other side of the communicative situation, there is more than one addressee. The audience for the Foreword is three-fold; the critics, the readers and the publisher, all of whom are directly addressed. It does read, in places, as if Richardson is having an ironic joke at the critics' expense, whose art is described as 'exacting' and whose activities she likens to dancers, who dance upon her work with their 'reiterated tap-tap' (I, p.12). Her polite contempt for their phrase 'stream of consciousness' is barely disguised: [a term] 'welcomed by all who could persuade themselves of the possibility of comparing consciousness to a stream' (I, p.11). This is more than just a 'defence against criticism undergone or anticipated' (Genette, 1997, p.214), it is a veiled attack on critical practices

and language and collides with the language of the epitextual brochure, where the term 'stream of consciousness' is used without an appreciation of Richardson's view on this matter. It could be argued that Richardson is using the Foreword to wield some authorial control, although this is done implicitly and slyly. Her 'apology' and 'heart-felt gratitude' to her readership for their persistence in reading *Pilgrimage* sounds rather mocking and hollow as does her thanks to Dent for 'assembling the scattered chapters of 'Pilgrimage' in their proper relationship' (I, p.10).

Richardson's Foreword fulfils a range of functions. Genette suggests that typical prefatory functions include to inform and to make known intentions. Richardson's Foreword does both of these but it also narrativises *Pilgrimage*'s genesis, using the metaphor of a journey. One section, where the writing appears to be particularly candid and the emotional shading positive, is when Richardson describes the thrilling feeling, as a budding writer in 1913, of being on a writing quest, a 'fresh pathway, an adventure so searching and, sometimes, so joyous'. Here the act or process of writing is equated with the idea of a pilgrimage. The publication of *Pointed Roofs* is presented as an important narrative event:

To a publisher, nevertheless, at the bidding of Mr J.D. Beresford, the book was ultimately sent. By the time it was returned, the second chapter was partly written and the condemned volume, put away and forgotten, would have remained in seclusion but for the persistence of the same kind friend, who acquired and sent it to Edward Garnett, then reading for Messrs Duckworth. In 1915, the covering title being at the moment in use elsewhere, it was published as 'Pointed Roofs' (I, p.10).

Richardson's presentation of this early publication story gives prominence to Beresford's 'character' whose role, she stresses, was pivotal, at the same time underplaying her own role as author in offering the book for publication. Her lexical choices 'condemned volume' and 'seclusion' both inject some narrative drama and reveal something about how she dealt with the rejection of her first manuscript. The modifier 'condemned' suggests more than

mere disapproval on the part of the anonymous publisher, it also conveys ideas of a punishment sentence or that the book was unfit for purpose. 'Seclusion' in context is also inherently negative, reinforcing a meaning of obstructed access rather than desirable privacy. The dates of 1913 and 1915 are significant as the Foreword is not just a vehicle for telling the back story of *Pilgrimage*, but also a way of putting Richardson's work into context and alluding to other writers with similar literary concerns and methods who were on a parallel path at more or less the same time. Richardson's 'fresh pathway' is initially a 'lonely track,' a coded expression for being the first person on it, but it becomes a 'populous highway,' the second phrase an exaggeration but an acknowledgment that other writers had joined her as fellow travellers. Two prominent characters are described; a woman 'mounted upon a magnificently caparisoned charger and a 'man walking, with eyes devoutly closed, weaving as he went a rich garment of new words wherewith to clothe the antique dark material of his engrossment' (ibid). Neither character is named but the knowing reader would understand these characters to be the writers Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. The new reader, fresh to Richardson's work, might be forgiven for feeling somewhat baffled. Richardson is situating her reader as the knowing reader, who understands these context-bound references, as the Foreword does not seem to be providing direction for a new reader. The narrative then gains momentum, 'news came from France of one Marcel Proust' who is then credited with being 'the earliest adventurer' because he had been published first, in 1913 (I, p.11). The final part of this convoluted, subtextual 'who did it first' narrative is a direct reference to Henry James, critically accorded the roles of 'pathfinder' and 'high priest.' His complex prose style is praised for requiring 'upon the first reading, a perfection of sustained concentration akin to that which brought it forth' (ibid).

One important function served by the Foreword is Richardson's attempt to express her experimentation with form, her development of a different type of 'contemporary pattern'



leading her towards 'a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism' which, in turn, evolved into a desire to represent 'contemplated reality' (I, p.9). This section of the Foreword reflects the discourse of other writers and critics who, since the publication of *Pointed Roofs*, the first chapter-volume, had seen in *Pilgrimage*'s language and expression, something of the feminine. Edward Garnett was the first critic to use this word, describing *Pointed Roofs* as 'feminine impressionism' (Fromm, 1977, p.77). Virginia Woolf's intriguing characterisation of Richardson's feminine style in a review of *Revolving Lights* (19<sup>th</sup> April 1923) for the *Times Literary Supplement* was, and continues to be, very influential. Both Richardson and Woolf were developing ways of representing the inner life of their female characters and it is, therefore, unsurprising that Woolf should recognise and praise this aspect of her contemporary's work. Initially Woolf appears to be identifying a feminine quality in Richardson's syntax: 'She has invented a sentence we might call the psychological sentence of the feminine gender. It is of a more elastic fibre than the old, capable of enveloping the vaguest shapes'. It is easy to overlook the modal verb 'might', with its suggestion of possibility or doubt, and be carried away by the enthusiasm conveyed at the end by the comparative and superlative adjectives, 'more elastic' and 'vaguest'. Later in the article, Woolf seems to be qualifying this statement further, by explicitly acknowledging that syntactic elasticity can be found in the work of male as well as female writers. 'Other writers of the opposite sex have used sentences of this description and stretched them to the extreme'. Woolf then moves on to establish another distinction between Richardson's style and that of 'other writers', deriving from her use of syntax *and* subject matter.

But there is a difference. Miss Richardson has fashioned her sentence consciously, in order that it may descend to the depths and crannies of Miriam Henderson's consciousness. It is a woman's sentence only in the sense that it is used to describe a woman's mind by a writer who is neither proud of nor afraid of anything that she may discover in the psychology of her sex' (cited in Barrett, 1979, p.191).

The tone of the article seems to shift from modified assertion to increasingly cautious qualification, but Woolf's proto-narratological description of Richardson's syntax has remained firmly embedded in *Pilgrimage's* paratextual discourse. It has generated a high level of interest in Richardson's sentencing and style and is still used in the publisher's peritextual information on the back of the most recent Virago edition of *Pilgrimage* (2002). I think that it can be stated with some confidence that Richardson could not have avoided having Woolf's comments in her head as she wrote this part of the Foreword.

Richardson herself used the term 'feminine' twice in the Foreword as a modifying adjective to describe her writing. The first usage is when she describes her attempt to produce 'a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism' (I, p.9). Here Richardson is trying to define her work 'in relation to an earlier [generic] norm, a typical feature of authorial prefaces, as well as show her experimentation with form (Genette, 1997, p.224). The second, and more playful, usage occurs when Richardson comments ironically on a micro element of her writing, her use of punctuation:

Feminine prose, as Charles Dickens and James Joyce have delightfully shown themselves to be aware, should properly be unpunctuated, moving from point to point without formal obstruction. And the author of 'Pilgrimage' must confess to an early habit of ignoring, while writing, the lesser of the stereotyped system of signs, and, further, when finally sprinkling in what appeared to be necessary, to a small unconscious departure from current usage (I, p.12)

Here Richardson appears to be making a joke at the expense of those male writers, suggesting that their 'unpunctuated' representations of female speech and thought are stereotypical in terms of what they communicate about women's language. The apology for her unusual and erratic punctuation practices, described as 'sprinkling in what appeared to

be necessary' (like a cook), is also tongue-in-cheek. That Richardson herself used the term 'feminine' in a preface to describe different aspects of her writing, macro and micro, is, however, likely to be of interest to the critic and scholar, although the cultural context of the Foreword's production is significant and the approach adopted by Richardson, as has already been established, raises some interesting questions of interpretation. Genette suggests that this type of preface is usually 'legitimated' by the author and likely to influence the reception of the text to which it relates (1997, p.2). Richardson's Foreword is, perhaps, the exception that proves the rule, being neither particularly authoritative nor influential. It is hardly a developed manifesto of feminine poetics, being brief and difficult to understand in parts, although it is regarded as a significant peritext by Richardson scholars. George H. Thomson, who has devoted much scholarly energy to Dorothy Richardson, describes the Foreword thus:

The difficulties of so condensed a treatment are exacerbated by an ironic tone, judgemental stance, and involuted style. It is small wonder that so unforthcoming a document should have invited neglect rather than scrutiny.

Thomson foregrounds the Foreword's defiant tone and the way in which it fights Richardson's strongly held belief that 'all novels were expressive of the author, were in an important way, autobiographical.' He regrets that Richardson missed the opportunity to express her views on the autobiographical subject matter of her work and concludes that what 'should have been the crown of this deeply autobiographical enterprise' became instead 'an act of obfuscation, a reluctant manifesto that managed to obscure even its most important truth, the announcement of *Pilgrimage* as a new kind of feminine fiction' (1996, p.344).

The curious mixing of tone and discourse in the Foreword does, perhaps, signal that Richardson is sending up the authority of the author to make pronouncements about 'her'

text in the manner described by Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle in their chapter ‘the author’ (2004, p.21). ‘Just because it comes from ‘the horse’s mouth’ does not mean that the horse is telling the truth, or that the horse knows the truth, or indeed that what the horse has to say about the ‘words on the page’ is any more interesting or illuminating than what anyone else has to say.’ Richardson’s stance can be explained in another way – as a desire for distance from received ways of thinking about prose fiction. Ellen Friedman, for example, identifying Richardson as an ‘anti-canonical’ writer, argues that: ‘expression of the feminine requires a disengagement not only from the modes of traditional fiction, as Richardson, Woolf and Cixous have argued, but also a stance of irreverence towards or distance from the central myths of dominant culture’ (2009, p.220). The Foreword could also be interpreted as expressing the tensions of authorship, in particular the way in which authorial control is relinquished once a text is in the hands of publishers and critics. As I consider my response to this peritext, I am mindful of what Richardson wrote in an article, ‘Novels’, for *Life and Letters* in March 1948, about reading to detect ‘the stamp of the author’s consciousness’ (reproduced in Scott, 1990, p.435). As I write this, I can see that I have practised this way of reading, at first unconsciously and now consciously, ‘empathetically aligning’ or ‘feeling-with’ the writer (Toolan, 2009, p.146).

Genette’s view that peritexts have a more focussed function to present and comment on their anchoring text compared with the more diffuse effect of epitexts is one that, I suspect, is generally accurate but which does not precisely describe the differences in the paratextual space of the 1938 omnibus edition of *Pilgrimage*. My developing understanding is that peritexts and epitexts can both fulfil functions of presentation and commentary but that epitexts, by virtue of their greater spatial distance, are more flexible and free about what they can express. The peritextual authorial preface is where I first detected Richardson’s tonal strain overlaid by a brisk cheerfulness. Richardson is constrained by the conventions

governing prefatorial content and style and does what she can to make the form her own, but the tensions are discernible. Church is disconcerted by Richardson's handling of the Foreword, commenting in a critical way in a memo of the 15<sup>th</sup> March 1938 to his colleague, Mr Bozman, about the way in which the Foreword's structure reflects something of the author's 'curious and groping mind' and stating that its typically Richardsonian style, is tamper-proof: 'I think we might do no good by trying to express herself in a more modern way' (Dent Papers). It is, here, in the epitexts, produced by Richardson and others, that it is possible to see much clearer evidence of the manoeuvrings and misgivings generating the strain of the peritextual Foreword.

The decision to make Richard Church's essay epitextual rather than peritextual is an interesting case in point. The choice of on/within versus outside can be arbitrary or, indeed, political. Genette is clear that epitextual and peritextual messages can be one and the same, differentiated only by their 'choice of channel' (1997, p.403). In this case it is clear from the epitextual evidence that Richardson considered two prefaces to be *de trop* (letter to Church, 20<sup>th</sup> March 1938, Dent Papers) and that Church had reservations about Richardson's preface, resigning himself to doing 'the sales talk' himself (memo to Bozman, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1938, *ibid*).

Perhaps Church agreed with Richardson, that one peritextual preface was sufficient whereas two might well over-egg the pudding. He presumably made the decisions that a) Richardson's preface should be of the 'advance commentary' type rather than a 'post-face' (Genette, 1997, p.237 and p.238) and b) that his own 'sales talk' preface might sit more comfortably in more distant epitextual space, where its celebratory tone could be accepted on its own terms and not interfere with the more delicate equilibrium of the peritextual space of the 1938 omnibus edition.

**CHAPTER THREE:**

**LATER 20TH CENTURY ALLOGRAPHIC PERITEXTUAL**

**PREFACES**

**Introduction to Walter Allen's preface to the 1967 Dent edition**

The launch of a second omnibus edition of *Pilgrimage* in 1967, ten years after Richardson's death, was accompanied by a new and significant paratext. Applying the Genettian framework, this preface, by the literary critic and novelist, Walter Allen can be defined as a *posthumous*, allographic peritext (1997, p.270). Its function is, to some extent, quite different from Church's epitextual essay of 1938, being contextual rather than celebratory. There is, however, another shared function between the two. Neither were merely prefaces to an omnibus edition, both had to present and comment on a new chapter-volume, being published for the first time, namely *Dimple Hill* in 1938 and *March Moonlight* in 1967. *Dimple Hill*, as has been established, was the penultimate chapter-volume, mistakenly represented as the final chapter-volume and one of the effects of this confusion on the discourse of the 1938 essay is the absence, or avoidance, of direct comments on the new chapter-volume. The opposite is true of the 1967 preface which opens with a quotation from *March Moonlight*, 'current existence, the ultimate astonisher'. The title of the new chapter-volume is used in the second sentence (p.3) and in the third, Allen, can with confidence and authority, describe *March Moonlight*'s structural function as: 'a coda, (...) the rounding-off and summation of all that has gone before' (p.3). Later on Allen quotes at length from *March Moonlight* to illustrate that Miriam's 'subjective life' is *the* subject matter of *Pilgrimage*, from first to final chapter-volume (p.4).

Allen's direct approach can be explained by a particular element of the Genettian framework; the 'pragmatic status' or communicative situation of the preface (1997, p.8). Allen's task, as the posthumous preface writer, is perhaps easier and more clear-cut than that of Church. His relationship with the author of *Pilgrimage* is more distant temporally and socially. Richardson is no longer alive and Allen therefore does not have to consider her personal response, nor was he a key player in *Pilgrimage*'s publishing history. *Pilgrimage* is now a completed text, not a novel-in-process, and Allen knows that *March Moonlight* is the final chapter-volume. He is writing a retrospective preface for an audience of critics and readers and his reflections can be dispassionate, critical and even-handed. Genette notes, with a small, dry qualification, that the communicative situation of the posthumous preface can be liberating for the preface writer, free from 'any sort of semi-official status' and '(almost) [from] any obligation to attribute high value to the work' (1997, pp.270-1).

**Walter Allen's literary criticism on *Pilgrimage* prior to 1967**  
***The English Novel 1954***

In order to gauge the extent to which Allen finds his role 'liberating,' it is necessary to examine his preface alongside his other literary criticism on *Pilgrimage*. In *The English Novel*, published thirteen years earlier in 1954, Allen apparently felt free to give an uninhibited view of *Pilgrimage* whilst Richardson was still alive. In the chapter entitled '1914 and After' Allen discusses Richardson's work alongside that of Joyce, Lawrence, and Woolf. He enthuses about the 'formidable original genius' of the male writers whereas Woolf and Richardson are seen as lesser 'talents' (pp.342-343). He concedes, however, that it is, perhaps, too early to make a judgement and that his view is 'purely personal' (ibid, p.343). His more extended evaluation of *Pilgrimage*, understood then to be complete, 'a

dozen novels which together compose the single work' cannot be interpreted as trying to please its author. After a discussion of stream of consciousness and a nod to Richardson as 'the first novelist deliberately to employ the technique' (ibid, p.346), Allen states:

*Pilgrimage* is a remarkable achievement, and yet, having read it once, it is not, I think, a novel one wishes to return to. In the end, one is bored by Miriam and by the method of rendering her. This is not so at first. The first volumes, recounting Miriam's life as a governess in Germany, are remarkable in their freshness; the day-to-day flux of the very intelligent girl's moods and sensibility to the world outside her and the people who dwell in it, is enchantingly caught. We experience Miriam's own individual re-creation of her world from moment to moment. But when she returns to England, falls in love and is disappointed against a background of advanced thought, it is another matter. Miriam's momentary perceptions are often delightful; her aspirations are not; they are dull even in their worthiness. And at the end we are left wondering what is the significance of it all, what has it all amounted to. One feels indeed, that for Dorothy Richardson, as sometimes for Virginia Woolf, the world exists only to provide fodder, as it were, for the voracious sensibility of her character. Of *Pilgrimage* it might be said that if one robbed Miriam of her sensibility there would be not only no novel and no Miriam but also no world at all.

Allen's opening words convey respect and praise for *Pilgrimage* but by the end of the first sentence, the reader is left in no doubt of his negative opinion, despite the polite softener 'I think' and the distancing personal pronoun 'one'. The second sentence is even more direct with its use of the participle 'bored' to describe his twofold disengagement. These two framing sentences firmly establish Allen's critical stance before he concedes a preference for the 'freshness' of the first chapter-volume of *Pilgrimage*. (This liking for *Pointed Roofs* over and above all the other chapter-volumes is a safe critical position. In this, for example, Allen concurs with an earlier evaluation made by Q.D Leavis in 1935 (p.81) when she reviewed *Clear Horizon* for *Scrutiny*: 'The intrinsic interest of *Pilgrimage* is slight and best sampled in the first volume which remains the strongest in the series'). Allen then explores his dissatisfaction with the remaining chapter-volumes, casting doubt on their readability, interest and value, describing his inability to sustain an interest in their subject matter, narrative technique and focalising character, Miriam. Allen's use of the post-modified



phrase, 'dull even in their worthiness,' to describe Miriam's 'aspirations' is especially withering. The abstract noun 'worthiness' denotes 'the state, character or quality of being worthy; an instance of this' but its meaning here, collocating with the adjectival complement 'dull' in a position of emphasis, is the negative or ironic 'estimable but somewhat unimaginative' (*Shorter Oxford Dictionary* 2007). Allen is not the first to be critical of the quality of Miriam's mind. W.L. George, over thirty years earlier, in an article for *The English Review* in March 1920, refers to Miriam's mind as 'average' and thinks that Richardson's method of representing consciousness might have been more successful if Miriam's mind was of 'extraordinary originality' (p.232). Q.D. Leavis, in the aforementioned article of 1935, makes a similar point more forcefully, attacking not only the quality of Miriam's mind, but also that of her creator:

The Stream of Consciousness method, like any other method, is dependent finally on the quality of the sensibility behind it, and to use successfully this particular method, which excludes implicit criticism and the variety afforded by the play of the mind from the outside onto the subject-matter, it is indispensable that it should be backed by a distinguished, rich and profound personality. That Miss Richardson's is not so has become painfully apparent by now (pp.81-2).

Allen continues with a series of rhetorical questions about *Pilgrimage's* subject matter, form and lack of selection, both emphatic and persuasive, but arguably a derivative rehash of earlier critical reviews. W. L. George, in the same article cited earlier, identifies lack of selection as a major problem in *Pilgrimage's* first five chapter-volumes: 'Literature rests on selection and Miss Richardson throws at our feet a mess of curds and whey' (ibid, p.232). Similar observations are made on *The Tunnel* and *Interim* in *The Athenaeum* in 1919 by Katherine Mansfield who expresses annoyance at the nature of Miriam's all-embracing perceptions: 'She leaves us feeling, as before, that everything being of equal importance to her, it is impossible that everything should not be of equal unimportance' (Murry, 1930,

p.140). It is not just 'old' ideas that are being reworked, courtesy of George and Mansfield, Allen also 'borrows' metaphors from Virginia Woolf. His reference to 'the head-lamps of a motor-car' echo the image used in her 1919 essay 'Modern Fiction': 'Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo' (reproduced in McNeille, 1984, p.160). Although Allen is using the idea, of car head-lamps arbitrarily catching and illuminating an object before moving on to another, to describe 'the movement of the mind' and Woolf is using the idea of 'gig lamps' being uniformly spaced, to describe what the life of the mind is not, there is an uncanny resemblance to image and context:

How if the novelist's material is to be extreme subjectivity, the movement of the mind from moment to moment, with the phenomena of the external world merely reflected in it or picked out sporadically as the head-lamps of a motor-car briefly illuminate objects within their range, how is structure to be retained at all? How are limits to be set? On what principle is the selection of thoughts, sense-impressions, and associations that must stand for the whole flow of mental activity, to be made? It is impossible, with *Pilgrimage*, to speak of structure or form at all. There is selection, but it is largely the selection of censorship in the Freudian sense, which is very much a negative form of selection: there are whole areas of a woman's experience Miriam is never allowed to be conscious of; she might still be living in a nineteenth-century novel (1954, p.347).

Allen's final point is hardly new territory either. It continues a way of thinking about Miriam that began with Lawrence Hyde in an article in *The Adelphi* in 1924 when he referred to her 'fatal coldness' and 'absence of passionate driving force' (cited in Kunitz, 1933, p.563). It is hard to take Hyde and Allen's criticisms seriously, given that Miriam communicates much about the female experience. Even in *Pointed Roofs*, there is an earthiness, warmth and intensity about the way in which female experience is rendered. Sydney Janet Kaplan (1975, p.19), for example, notes that Miriam refers to the onset and process of menstruation in a way that is 'relatively advanced' for the time.

Kaplan's observation is worth closer scrutiny, given its implicit challenge to Allen's criticism about the gaps in Miriam's female consciousness. Miriam's description of menstruation occurs in *Pointed Roofs*, where Miriam is in Germany employed as a school teacher. She is prompted by the heat of the day (so hot that all the girls are given 'permission for the reduction of garments to the minimum and sent (...) to rest uncorseted until tea-time'), surely quite a detailed, albeit asexual, reference to female clothing and bodies) and the suggestion that she might lie down (another girl having fainted from the heat earlier) to think about times in her life when she has felt ill enough to take to her bed:

She remembered with triumph a group of days of pain two years ago. She had forgotten. . . . Bewilderment and pain . . . her mother's constant presence . . . everything, the light everywhere, the leaves standing out along the tops of the hedgerows as she drove with her mother, telling her of pain and she alone in the midst of it . . . for always . . . pride, long moments of deep pride. . . . Eve and Sarah congratulating her, Eve stupid and laughing . . . the new bearing of the servants . . . Lilly Belton's horrible talks fading away to nothing (I, p.137).

This extract communicates much about the physical and psychological impact of menstruation but it is subtle, perhaps too subtle for some readers. It lists a series of connected memories, segmented by a series of dots, and refers, not only to the associated physical and mental discomfort of menstruation, but more obliquely, to its transformative aspect. Miriam's new found sense of womanhood is both precious and profound, affecting how others perceive her and how she perceives herself. She feels different because of the special treatment she receives from her sisters and the servants. Her experience allows her to reappraise what she has been told about menstruation by Lilly Belton and dismiss some of the horror stories. All of this processing is very much to do with 'a woman's experience' and Richardson, via Miriam, does not shy away from it. Moreover there is no lack of passion in Miriam. Her feelings are strong and seem to come from deep within. The reader often has to infer the causes of her feelings and read sensitively and slowly for meanings beyond

the word, communicated by syntax and prosody, what Michael Toolan terms the art of ‘voicing’ or ‘vocalising’ the text (2011, pp. 178-199).

The following extract, from early on in *Pointed Roofs*, describes Miriam’s happy memory of her last summer term at school, triggered by the sound of a piano-organ tune, *The Wearin’ o’ the Green*. It illustrates how this type of reading practice is expected by the way in which the text is encoded:

rounders in the hot school garden, singing-classes in the large green room, all the class shouting ‘Gather *roses* while ye may,’ hot afternoons in the shady north room, the sound of turning pages, the hum of the garden beyond the sun-blinds, meetings in the sixth form study. . . . Lilla, with her back hair and the specks of bright amber in the brown of her eyes, talking about free-will (I, p.2)

This textual segment includes the partial italicisation of the concrete noun ‘*roses*’ to indicate the elongated stress on the initial syllable of the word in the class chant, an iconic device used by Richardson to help the reader vocalise the line, as well as a more subtle use of punctuation to suggest prosodic emphasis. The proper noun ‘Lilla’ occurs after a series of dots, a punctuation device used by Richardson throughout *Pilgrimage* to segment a list or indicate a gap, silence, interruption, digression, repression or hesitancy in Miriam’s consciousness. The list structure gives equal status to each item before the dots but the mention of ‘Lilla’ is separated by the punctuation. The sentence seems to come to a point of emphasis at the mention of ‘Lilla’ and helps to signal, perhaps, Miriam’s latent attraction to, or strong identification with her school-friend, whose eyes she admires and whose ability to hold forth on a philosophical topic, a skill culturally defined as masculine, she respects. The ambiguity of Miriam’s feelings in this regard is productive. Joanne Winning’s argument that *Pilgrimage* contains a subtext of ‘lesbian desire and sexuality’ might be usefully applied in this instance (2000, p.4). These two examples provide evidence to

suggest that aspects of Miriam's female experience lie beyond the understanding of Hyde and Allen.

### ***Tradition and Dream* 1964**

Allen's *Tradition and Dream*, a critical survey of British and American fiction from the 1920s onwards, was published a decade later than *The English Novel* in 1964. This was seven years after Richardson's death and predated Allen's preface to *Pilgrimage* by a short interval of three years. Allen opens his authorial preface to *Tradition and Dream* with: 'This is a sequel to my book *The English Novel*. That ended as this begins: with a consideration of Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Lawrence. There is therefore, some repetition, though I have taken the opportunity to incorporate what second thoughts I have had about those writers.' In the final paragraph he adds: 'I am acutely conscious of many omissions. Readers will decide for themselves which are wilful and which the result of ignorance' (1964, p.11). This reader has decided for herself that Richardson's omission from the list of writers who, Allen claims, ended *The English Novel* is 'wilful', given that in that text, he unequivocally refers to a group of four, not three and the individuals concerned are all named (Joyce, Woolf, Lawrence and Richardson). Within the actual text of his second book of literary criticism, *Tradition and Dream*, *Pilgrimage* is given, unsurprisingly, a perfunctory treatment (one page) sandwiched in between James Joyce (ten pages) and May Sinclair (two pages). Allen ends his section on Joyce by predicting his 'enduring influence' on both readers and writers and then opens the section on Richardson with a negative anaphoric reference:

One wouldn't prophecy with any such confidence a revived influence of, or interest in, the novels of Dorothy Richardson, whose sequence of twelve novels, beginning in 1915 and ending in 1935, together compose a single work, *Pilgrimage*. Remarkable as it is, once having read it, one feels little wish to return to it' (ibid, p.38).

Much of what he says in the short condensed section is either verbatim repetition, or a close reworking, of what he wrote on Richardson in *The English Novel*. He is a little more explicit about the supposed negativity of Richardson's selection of her subject matter, stating that her (Richardson's) 'notion of psychology is pre-Freud' and that 'bodily functions do not exist for her' [Miriam]. Here Allen seems to be suggesting that Miriam lacks a sexual or erotic drive and this brings him to conclude, although he concedes it might be unjust, that *Pilgrimage* has failed and that Richardson has short-changed her reader because the text avoids the 'new' psychological territory opened up by Freud's notion of the unconscious. 'It is unfair, but it is next to impossible now not to think that Dorothy Richardson cheated' (ibid, p.39). And to further reinforce his negative view, he moves on to praise May Sinclair for her awareness of Freud and the way in which psychoanalytical thinking informs her novels. Thus Richardson is wedged between two positive sections on Joyce and Sinclair, positioned as the lesser novelist.

#### **An analysis of Walter Allen's 1967 preface: functions and pragmatic status**

In the light of the approach taken in these two critical works, Walter Allen is a surprisingly brave choice of preface writer for the 1967 omnibus edition. It is clear from his track record that he is, at least, not biased in Richardson's favour and unlikely to praise her work immoderately in the way Genette ridicules as the 'I, x, tell you that y has genius' approach (1997, p.267). Allen must have had his previous literary criticism in his head and to hand when he wrote the preface and presumably would have been concerned on two counts: looking foolish if he radically altered his critical opinion and appearing ungenerous to Richardson. Having air-brushed Richardson out of *The English Novel* in his 1964 authorial preface to *Tradition and Dream*, Allen three years later in 1967, has to refocus his thoughts on Richardson for the various pragmatic functions of this allographic, posthumous preface.

The communicative situation of this preface is undoubtedly complex. Allen's recent literary criticism on Richardson has been highly critical and his authority as preface writer will be questioned if he performs a *volte-face*. Just three years earlier he considered Richardson's status over a significant time period of circa fifty years and found her wanting. His sense of responsibility in the role of preface writer leads him, I think, to adopt a more measured and less opinionated approach. He effects a compromise by kindly allowing Richardson back into the fold of novelists who 'reshaped English fiction in the years between roughly 1914 and 1930' but notes that she is *not* a canonical writer like Joyce, Lawrence and Woolf:

They have overshadowed Dorothy Richardson inevitably perhaps, since their genius was certainly the greater, but unfairly none the less, for *Pilgrimage* is a unique and remarkable work. It exists in its own right and will continue to interest for many years to come, and for reasons probably quite remote from those that first come to mind when her name crops up in literary history (1967, p.3).

Allen proposes a compromise, a way of thinking about Richardson which had its first tentative expression in J. D. Beresford's 1915 preface to *Pointed Roofs*. Beresford stated that 'a peculiar difference which is, perhaps, the mark of a new form in fiction' separated *Pointed Roofs* from other novels, (p.vii) and it [*Pointed Roofs*] 'cannot be ranged either with its contemporaries or with the classics' (ibid, p.vi). Allen recycles this idea, suggesting that Richardson's work is *not* on a par with the modernist greats but is, nevertheless, special and deserving of a particular type of isolationist critical scrutiny, one that avoids direct comparison with her contemporaries. Fromm, Richardson's most recent biographer, for example, makes the same argument, nearly thirty years later (1995, p.627). This argument, however well intentioned, is open to question. Why avoid comparison between *Pilgrimage* and other modernist texts if there are obvious points of similarity? Is it because the comparative principle has, so far, restricted *Pilgrimage*'s status to an 'also ran'? Perhaps it would be better to enter the comparison debate with a more open mind – not with a

preconceived view about not measuring up to the value of other modernist texts – but with an alternative set of metrics that can explore new ways of according cultural value (Culler, 2007, p.263). And surely putting Richardson into some kind of specialist quarantine might have the unfortunate effect of marginalising her work? Allen, who died in 1995, would have been aware that despite significant critical interest in Richardson’s work with the second wave of feminism in the 1980s, there had been much less attention paid to it ‘in its own right’ compared with the wealth of monographs on Woolf and Joyce. And he also would have known that although Richardson’s name features in the indexes of numerous critical studies, (‘crops up in literary history’), on closer examination it is frequently a one-off reference to a sentence which either contains the names of the modernist writers, Woolf and Joyce or refers to Sinclair’s term ‘stream of consciousness’.

Allen’s elaboration of his argument in the 1967 preface is particularly interesting in terms of its ‘epistemic modality’ (Nørgaard et al, 2010), the way in which shifting degrees of certainty are encoded into some of his judgements. He begins with a declarative statement in the active voice which communicates a strong, clear-cut and definite opinion. He does not mince his words with the verb choice ‘overshadowed’. The adverb ‘inevitably’ which post modifies ‘overshadowed’ adds to the feeling of certainty, were it not for the second post modifier ‘perhaps’ that softens the judgement and makes it less certain. This hedging is then counterbalanced by the subordinate clause ‘since their genius was certainly the greater’. The adverb ‘certainly’ again emphasises confidence in the judgement being made but the phrasing is tentative. Joyce, Lawrence and Woolf had the ‘greater’ genius but Richardson is considered worthy of the label ‘genius’ too, but a weaker version. Allen seems to be suggesting that there are gradations of genius. The next adverb ‘unfairly’ refers back to the main verb ‘overshadowed’ which suggests that this process of Richardson being cast into the shade is less clear-cut than first assumed, and is in some way partial. ‘Unique’ and



'remarkable' are both positive modifiers that denote a strong level of conviction about the text. The verbal structures 'exists' and 'will continue to interest' express *Pilgrimage's* present state, a completed whole, and its future survival. The modal verb 'will' expresses a high degree of certainty that the text is of sufficient quality to endure, although 'for many years to come' is a vague time quantifier. This combined with a certain reticence at this point to spell out, why the text might endure and what future readers might gain from reading it, conveys a certain coyness or vagueness about *Pilgrimage's* qualities. The phrasal verb 'crops up' is also very revealing, suggesting that Richardson's name will surface in ways that are unexpected, random or merely occasional. The argument about *Pilgrimage's* continuity of interest also clearly contradicts what Allen wrote just three years earlier in *Tradition and Dream* about personally having 'little wish to return to it [*Pilgrimage*]' after having read it once in its entirety and feeling unable to 'prophecy a revived influence of, or interest in' Dorothy Richardson (1964, p.38). This brief analysis reveals not just this rather barefaced contradiction but also an interesting mixture of contrasts written into the modality of the preface that communicate degrees of tension and uncertainty about *Pilgrimage*.

Allen's ideas are, by no means, so contradictory or so coded on all aspects of Richardson's work and he brings to the fore some issues submerged in Church's 1938 essay. Indeed he takes Richardson to task for her indirect attack ('perfect imbecility') on Sinclair as a critic, namely the latter's use of the term, 'stream of consciousness,' suggesting that it was not only 'much less than fair' on Richardson's part, but also ungenerous, given that Sinclair, herself a 'brilliant woman, a fine and at present unjustly neglected novelist, (...) first gave the phrase a literary application and used it, moreover, to define the originality of Dorothy Richardson's talent' (1967, p.4). Unlike his comments on Richardson, Allen's commendation of Sinclair chimes with his 1964 evaluation. Allen moves on to describe and cite Sinclair's 1919 review of *Pointed Roofs* as 'a classic of modern criticism of fiction' (ibid) and one that 'still

cannot be bettered': 'The moments of Miriam's consciousness pass one by one, or overlapping; moments tense with vibration, moments drawn out fine, almost to snapping point. . . . There is no drama, no situation, no set scene. Nothing happens. It is just life going on and on. It is Miriam's stream of consciousness going on and on' (ibid, pp.4-5). Such positive statements about Sinclair's critical skills could be interpreted as examples of Genette's 'backlash effect,' when an allographic preface writer is 'presumptuous enough to pronounce on some other writer's genius' (1997, pp.267-8). Allen's approach is, however, straightforward and even-handed, not malicious in any way. He writes that Sinclair was one of the very early critics with sufficient acumen to recognise the nature of Richardson's 'wholly original' talent and define Richardson's achievement 'from the word go' (1967, p.4). Allen's criticism of Richardson's judgement with regard to Sinclair contrasts strongly with Church's flattery, hyperbole and avoidance of more difficult topics.

Neither does Allen dodge *Pilgrimage's* reading difficulty. He provides a useful overview of how it has been perceived up to this point. The challenges it poses for the reader, he argues, have changed over time. No longer 'baffled' by newness, the discursive properties which once seemed so unusual have become codified conventions: 'the stream of consciousness method, the transitions without warning from third- to first-person narration, the shifts of association from present to past – these have become familiar, part of the common stock of technical devices generally available to novelists' (ibid, pp.5-6). Nevertheless Allen is precise about the particular nature of *Pilgrimage's* textual difficulty, identifying one specific aspect, its syntax: 'but where Dorothy Richardson is most difficult, as at times in *March Moonlight*, she is so in the manner of the last novels of Henry James; the difficulty is one of complexity of sentence structure rather than of technical innovations' (ibid, p.5).

Allen moves on to make a plea for a fresh critical focus for *Pilgrimage*, one less shackled to past concerns with technical innovation. Here the preface has a metatextual function, (Genette, 1997, p.270), supplying critical commentary and suggesting more fruitful lines of enquiry such as genre, characterisation and subject matter. Without explicitly mentioning the generic classification ‘roman-à-clef’, Allen makes a two-fold allusion to the writer, H.G. Wells, as a ‘principal’ character in *Pilgrimage*, referred to as Hypo Wilson, and as a critic of Richardson’s work. Allen cites Wells’ generic description of *Pilgrimage*, ‘a very curious experiment in autobiography’ to introduce a line of thinking about the difficulties of a generic classification. He identifies some similarities between *Pilgrimage*’s subject matter and the details of Richardson’s own life as outlined in her autobiographical essay, ‘Data for a Spanish Publisher’, but refuses to accept a simple reductive classification, urging some caution: ‘There is still a world of difference between autobiography and an autobiographical novel, and we have no more right to see Dorothy Richardson and Miriam Henderson as interchangeable and synonymous than we have Joyce and Stephen Dedalus or Lawrence and Paul Morel’ (1967, p.6).

It is, however, the ‘value’ of *Pilgrimage*’s subject matter, as a ‘close-up’ representation of the development of a young woman during a particular time in history, 1890-1915, that Allen is most taken with (ibid). ‘It is largely the world of the ferment of ideas, of advanced thought, of which feminism was an important part, of the London from the nineties to 1914’ (ibid, p.8). *Pilgrimage*’s focus on the female psyche with a strong feminist slant is of interest to him, precisely because early or influential readings of the text were so often negative in this regard. He cites two anonymous critics to make his point; one a male American, writing in 1928, who summed up Miriam’s mind and its tendency to compare male ones unfavourably with her own as, ‘something a little pinched and sour and old maidish’, and a contemporary female critic who labelled Miriam’s feminism ‘fanatical’

(ibid, p.6). I have not been able to locate the identity of the male reviewer but the second quotation probably belongs to Rachel Trickett, whose article 'Dorothy Richardson' was published in *London Magazine* in June 1959. The context is an observation about Miriam and Richardson's attitudes towards male novelists and what they omit:

to be distracted while reading Henry James by 'all he is unaware of' is, to say the least, an uncommon experience, and though Dorothy Richardson 'groaned gently and resignedly' at the many accusations of 'feminism, of failure to perceive the value of the distinctively masculine intelligence', she could hardly complain if her readers found many of her ideas, as expressed by Miriam, sometimes eccentric to the point of fanaticism. For on this point she was a fanatic (p.22).

Trickett writes with an understanding of *Pilgrimage* and its author and her reference to Richardson's response to such criticism suggests detailed knowledge. The repetition of the abstract noun 'fanaticism' and the common noun 'fanatic' in consecutive sentences does, however, communicate a view that such a position is excessive.

Allen, eight years later than Trickett, in arguing that it is time to make a new judgement about the nature of Miriam's feminism, is trying to ensure that *Pilgrimage* is properly understood in its historical and social context and avoids any words with negative connotations such as 'fanatic' in order to foster a better understanding: 'The writing of *Pilgrimage* was as much an assault, and conceived as such, on the citadels of masculine supremacy as any suffragette demonstration in Downing Street. One source of the work lies in Dorothy Richardson's reaction against novels as written by men. They left too much out; they were not true enough' (1967, pp.6-7). Allen's language elevates rather than denigrates Richardson's feminism.

He then moves on to describe *Pilgrimage* as 'very much a novel of its time', one that fulfils *all* the criteria which Woolf identified in her essay, 'The Modern Novel':

if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted sense, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it' (ibid, p.5).

Here he quietly puts Woolf in her place by stating that Richardson had been writing 'just such a novel' 'for almost a decade' but later, towards the end of the preface, Allen singles out Woolf's 'brilliantly perceptive criticism' on *Pilgrimage*. He refers to Woolf's 'psychological sentence of the feminine gender' to describe Richardson's stylistic innovation and quotes, in full, Woolf's description of Richardson's narrative art:

A man might fall dead at her feet (it is not likely), and Miriam might feel that a violet-coloured ray of light was an important element in her consciousness of the tragedy. If she felt it, she would say it. . . . We are made uncomfortable by feeling that the accent on emotions has shifted. . . . At first we are ready to say that nothing is important to Miriam Henderson. That is the way we generally retaliate when an artist tells us that the heart is not, as we would like it to be, a stationary body, but a body which moves perpetually, and is thus standing in a new relation to the emotions which are the same. Chaucer, Donne, Dickens – each, if you read him, shows this change of heart. That is what Miss Richardson is doing on an infinitely smaller scale' (ibid, pp.7-8).

Woolf's penultimate sentence compares Richardson's work to the literary Greats, Chaucer, Donne and Dickens, a generous gesture on her part, although the final summative sentence with its allusion to Richardson's 'infinitely smaller scale' signals *Pilgrimage*'s narrow scope and, for the knowing reader, Woolf's dislike of Miriam's stifling perspective. Allen picks up this theme of scale in his positive summation and disagrees with Woolf: 'It [*Pilgrimage*] is not a small achievement' (p.8).

## Concluding comments on Allen's preface

Genette contrasts the mutability of the paratext with the immutability of the text to which it is anchored (1997, p.408). Allen's preface treads a careful line between criticism, contextualisation and praise. It would appear that the preface writer role has had an ameliorating effect on his own personal views but to this he makes no allusion. Only those familiar with his literary criticism would appreciate the mutation. Allen's prefatorial discourse strongly contrasts with the forced tone of Church's 1938 essay with its multiple endorsements. Allen is able to air some contradictions and difficulties that have been in the paratextual surround of *Pilgrimage* for some time. He is disapproving of Richardson's judgment on Sinclair, and allows other writers and critics to comment freely about Richardson. His preface invites a new way of reading *Pilgrimage* as a text of historical and feminist interest, 'deeply rooted in a specific time and place,' which reveals 'what it felt like to be a young woman, ardent, aspiring, fiercely independent, determined to live her own life in the profoundest sense, at that time' (1967, p.8). Allen goes much further than Q.D Leavis, in her 1935 review of *Clear Horizon*, who saw 'the historical value of her [Richardson's] achievement' but was much less enthusiastic about its feminist value, challenging the assertions and demands of feminism, and preferring to see herself as a 'person' not as 'a kind' (p.82). Allen, of the same generation as Leavis, has much more appetite for and empathy with Miriam's feminism. His obituary in the *Independent* (2<sup>nd</sup> March 1995) provides a clue as to why this might be the case. As a working-class boy, with a grammar school education who became a 'man of letters', perhaps there was something in Miriam's fierce independence that he recognised. Whatever the reason, Allen's sensibility in this regard paves the way for the next peritextual preface to *Pilgrimage* written twelve years later.

## **Gillian Hanscombe's preface to the 1979 Virago edition: background to the choice of preface writer and the feminist context**

All the prefaces for *Pilgrimage*, bar one, May Sinclair's in 1919, had been written by men. The 1979 Virago edition was published with a new introductory preface by Gillian Hanscombe, a Richardson scholar, whose dissertation on feminist consciousness later developed into a monograph *The Art of Life: Dorothy Richardson and the Development of Feminist Consciousness* (1982). Unlike Allen, Hanscombe was writing about *Pilgrimage* for the first time in a public context and the knowledge, interests and perspective of this particular preface writer are very different from her predecessors. Here was a young feminist academic, with an enthusiasm for *Pilgrimage*, immersed in her own study of the work. Carmen Callil, the owner of Virago, had commissioned a preface writer for *Pilgrimage* who not only had an established relationship with Richardson's literary executor but also shared a similar cultural background to her own; someone born and educated in Melbourne, who, like herself, had studied English Literature at the University of Melbourne and responded in a similarly negative way to the influence of F.R. Leavis (the husband of Q.D Leavis). Hanscombe continued her academic studies at St. Hugh's College Oxford, (her scholarly status is provided at the signing off at the end of the preface), whereas Callil pursued her love of literature through her publishing project, Virago. They did not know each other from their Melbourne days, Callil being a few years older than Hanscombe, but their shared background probably facilitated the working relationship.

In a series of emails to me, Hanscombe reflects on her experience of writing the preface for Virago and the memories she recalls from that time about Callil herself and Virago's working practices. With some admiration she acknowledges Callil's 'encyclopedic knowledge of fiction' and her impression that Callil 'had planned the green gravestones (as

we called them then) almost by herself' (9<sup>th</sup> September 2013). Hanscombe describes how the opportunity to write the *Pilgrimage* preface came about, revealing the organic nature of feminist networking and Callil's ability to act quickly and decisively when an opportunity, in this case, Hanscombe's relationship with Richardson's literary executor, presented itself:

I gathered that Carmen had been inquiring about the *Pilgrimage* rights, but I can't remember how - it may have been co-incidental - I was in the Virago office to discuss a plan Carmen had had about a quite different project (a response/rebuttal about lesbian mothers because of the furore caused by the Evening News scandal at the time (...)) Anyway, I was at Virago to discuss that project and then talk must somehow have got round to DR and *Pilgrimage* - but I don't remember how. I do remember saying that I knew Sheena Odle and would push the Virago offer with her. Whatever Mark Paterson [the agent] was saying to Sheena didn't hide the fact that no one else was wanting to do a reprint (September 15<sup>th</sup> 2013)

The reality of working for Virago in its heyday is captured vividly and irreverently and a modest and pragmatic explanation provided as to why Hanscombe, and not any other Richardson specialist with feminist leanings, was chosen to write the preface. She also reveals some interesting details about the ideological attitudes of those responsible for Richardson's literary estate and the complex and conflicting issues generated by the prospect of a new feminist Virago edition of *Pilgrimage*:

Virago in the late 70s was a one room outfit up dark stairs in a Soho building that had seen better days. Wardour St, as I remember...? Three women worked together in this one room: Carmen Callil (public face, money person, planner and general Head Girl... she had an encyclopaedic knowledge of fiction - my impression was that she planned the green gravestones (as we called them then) almost by herself...); Ursula Owen (editorial, dealing with details, follow-ups etc - a good no. 2); and Harriet Spicer (copy-editing, book production etc). I dealt with Carmen. She had been trying to get the paperback rights for *Pilgrimage* but the DR Estate's agent wasn't playing ball. I knew the executrix, Sheena Odle, because of my thesis work, and told Carmen I'd put in a word. Sheena was nervous about tainting DR with feminism... and the agent was after cash. I think Carmen had had Jean Radford in mind for the Preface but decided on me instead (September 9<sup>th</sup> 2013).



Hanscombe reflects on the drafting of the 1979 preface and the difficulty posed by a trio of competing needs: 'It was somehow important to balance the needs of Virago for foregrounding the 'woman writer' theme; the needs of the executrix and the overlord DR agent to play down 'woman' and highlight 'literary'; and my own need to focus my discussion with a feminist consciousness lens' (September 25<sup>th</sup> 2013). This nexus of needs is complex and likely to generate tension. The potential for ideological collision is clear and Hanscombe's tricky task is to find the right 'balance' in the discourse, satisfy the various needs of the three parties and, presumably, camouflage the difficulties. The epitextual information contained in these emails provides a much fuller picture of the writing context than has previously been possible for me to ascertain for any of the other prefaces. Unfortunately Hanscombe has been unable to locate an annotated draft of the preface with Callil's comments, an epitext which might have revealed something more about the nature of Callil's response, judgement and influence: 'I want to find it for you because I have a faint memory of there being two versions (...) But I need to find the drafts with Carmen's comments' (ibid). Hanscombe does not have the burden of a past history of published literary criticism on *Pilgrimage* to deal with, as Allen did, but has to be responsive to the extrinsic pressures from Richardson's literary estate and Virago as well as communicate the essence of her own personal vision.

### **An analysis of Gillian Hanscombe's 1979 preface: functions and pragmatic status**

Like Allen's 1967 preface, Hanscombe's is, self-evidently, a retrospective, allographic peritext. It is less complex than Allen's in one way, in that it does not have to introduce a new chapter-volume. It does, however, have a dual function: to contextualise and celebrate *Pilgrimage* as a feminist text or, as Hanscombe herself expresses it, to view *Pilgrimage*

through a ‘feminist consciousness lens’ (ibid). As has already been established, this second function is less than clear-cut. Allen was the first preface writer to characterise *Pilgrimage* as a feminist text. His prescient observations are developed by Hanscombe, although Allen is neither cited nor acknowledged. This omission is unlikely to be conscious. Hanscombe, in conversation with me (April 24<sup>th</sup> 2014), commented that she does, and did not at the time, regard her Virago preface as an academic text and is unsure whether she read the other prefaces to *Pilgrimage* before writing her own. It is perhaps more likely that she wrote the preface from the starting point of her own research on ‘the development of feminist consciousness’, rather than seeing the task as one with a tradition or themes that might need revisiting. The absence of any reference to other prefaces, apart from Richardson’s authorial one, suggests that this is likely to be the case. Carving out a new way of thinking rather than re-inscribing the past was also an essential part of the feminist literary project.

The pragmatic status of the 1979 preface is particularly interesting. Hanscombe has a little more temporal distance from Richardson than Allen, writing her preface just twelve years later, but if social distance can be said to include emotional distance, its communicative situation involves a certain partiality, or identification with Richardson’s interest in things female making it distinctively different from Allen’s. Hanscombe, as an expert feminist scholar, has been chosen to produce a preface for a publishing house which expects a feminist slant for its particular niche audience. She is on-side in a way that Allen was not. It is also not the ‘liberating’ type of posthumous preface which Genette describes (1997, pp.270-1) because it has a particular function to promote *Pilgrimage* as a feminist Modern Classic text and redefine its cultural value and status. This is an agenda with which the preface writer sympathises, but there are also competing agendas; the needs of the ‘overlord DR agent’ ‘to play down ‘woman’ and highlight ‘literary’ and those of the executor, whose attitudes towards feminism are far from sympathetic. These are clearly

complicating factors for Hanscombe as she plays her role in the cultural handling of *Pilgrimage* as a feminist text.

The preface opens with a forthright position that reflects the political stance of both publisher and preface writer: 'Of the early twentieth-century modernists, there is no one who has been more neglected than Dorothy Miller Richardson' (1979, p.1). This strong statement slightly echoes that of Allen's, who begins: 'they [canonical modernist writers] have overshadowed Dorothy Richardson' (1967, p.3). There is, however, a significant lexical difference. Allen used the verb 'overshadowed' in the active voice without ideological coloration whereas Hanscombe's choice of the passive verb 'neglected,' with its 'lexical negative polarity' (Nørgaard et al, 2010, pp.128-9), denoting failure to give proper care or attention to something or someone, is an emotive, loaded word, used frequently by feminist scholars in the 1970s, when writing literary criticism of a 'revivalist' nature, to expose a male-dominated tradition of literary history. It is those invisible linguistic agents, the (probably male) critics, who are guilty of the neglect, the knowing reader infers.

This type of 'critical neglect' interpretation is now challenged by several Richardson scholars. Scott McCracken, in his editorial to the first edition of the e-journal *Pilgrimages*, argues for more caution in this regard: 'It is only necessary to consult the detailed bibliography on the Dorothy Richardson website to see that interest has been unbroken from the early articles by May Sinclair in 1918 to the present' (2008, p.1). Hanscombe's opening sentence does establish a clear ideological stance, very much of its time, one with which the publisher would concur but certainly not Richardson's agent and executor. Hanscombe's language is, however, more restrained than some. Lynette Felber, for example, expresses herself with much more highly charged rhetoric, describing Richardson, in the same sentence, as 'long neglected', 'critically abused' and the 'unrecognised matriarch of a feminine aesthetic' (1995, xi). Felber firmly puts the blame on those other critics whose

failure to care about, give attention to and accord Richardson her rightful status has resulted in a lack of understanding and appreciation of *Pilgrimage*. Her vehemence might have an unfortunate backlash effect on those who do not share her ideological position.

Hanscombe chooses to adopt a less emotive, more business-like approach, systematically listing three reasons for her critical neglect interpretation: Richardson's 'difficult style', 'explicitly feminist' stance and unpopular 'sympathetic response to German culture,' expressed with particular force in *Pointed Roofs* published in 1915 (1979, p.1). All three reasons sound plausible and focus on the writer rather than critical myopia. They help to explain some of the early hostile critical responses of the 1920s but are less convincing, perhaps, in explaining why *Pilgrimage* was 'neglected' later on, if indeed it was.

Hanscombe's first reason focuses on Richardson's 'difficult style' but in the context of modernism where difficulty of style is a key characteristic, Richardson's style is arguably more 'difficult' than some writers, but less 'difficult' than others. Moreover a modernist text like Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), with an abnormally low level of readability, has *not* been critically neglected. Seamus Deane (1992), in his introduction to the most recent Penguin Modern Classics edition, offers an insight into the wide scope and nature of the criticism, both positive and negative. *Pilgrimage*, like *Finnegans Wake*, is digressive and repetitive, challenging even the most committed type of attentive reader, who privileges style over narrative momentum. *Pilgrimage* is, undoubtedly, much more readable and much less difficult stylistically. The reader has only to glance at the opening 'sentence' of *Finnegans Wake*: 'riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from the swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodious vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs' (ibid, p.3) and compare it to any of the opening sentences of the thirteen chapter-volumes of *Pilgrimage* to appreciate that.

In her essay, 'Adventure for Readers,' for *Life and Letters* (July 1939) Richardson reflects on the reading difficulties generated by *Finnegans Wake* and the way in which a reader can be 'heavily burdened' by authorial style: 'struggling from thicket to thicket without a clue, weary of abstruse references that too often appear to be mere displays of erudition, weary of the mélange of languages ancient and modern, of regional and class dialects, slangs and catchwords, and slogans, puns and nursery rhymes'(reproduced in Rainey, 2005, p.601). Rather than giving up, however, she advocates two ways of reading it; a provisional 'plunge': 'enter the text and look innocently about' and *listen* to it: 'Not so much to what Joyce says as to the lovely way he says it, to the rhythms and undulating cadences of the Irish voice, with its capacity to make every spoken word a sentence with parentheses'. Richardson argues that these reading strategies enable otherwise hidden elements of the text to 'show themselves', by a re-orientation of the reader's attention, and compares the adventurous and experimental reader to 'the rider who leapt into the saddle and rode off in all directions' (ibid, p.602).

A 'difficult style' leads to the question of audience and lines of appeal. Not everyone has Richardson's capacity, enthusiasm, patience and energy to fine-tune their reading and 'leap into the saddle' to discover 'coherencies' and more fully appreciate 'the author's signature not only across each sentence but upon almost every word' (ibid, p.601). Richardson's commitment to reading is remarkable as is her willingness to find a way to respond to textual features that flaunt narrative expectations. She must have felt deep disappointment that there were not more people, like herself, willing to work hard at reading seemingly impenetrable texts. Deane refers to 'various attempts to present the *Wake* (and *Ulysses*) out of his [Joyce's] ghetto of admirers' in order to reach 'a larger audience' (1992, p.xxv). Similarly the analysis of the paratextual apparatus surrounding *Pilgrimage* will reveal the many efforts made over time to locate or define its new audiences and broaden its appeal.

The expression 'ghetto of admirers' used by Deane, ironically encodes the two ideas of 'low status' and 'minority' to describe those who like, respect or approve of Joyce's less accessible works. I do not think Richardson's 'admirers' would see themselves as inhabiting a critical 'ghetto' as such, but frequent use of a defensively ardent critical tone has sometimes communicated such a position. Hanscombe avoids this kind of emotional coloration in her preface, possibly a deliberate strategy on her part to appease the anti-feminist position held by Richardson's agent and executor, and instead manages to find a way of reading *Pilgrimage* which sounds appealing and straightforward.

Hanscombe's second reason for *Pilgrimage*'s critical neglect is Richardson's 'explicitly feminist' stance. Given the context for the preface, in a feminist edition of *Pilgrimage*, this is a particularly interesting reason to examine further. Hanscombe could safely assume that the Virago readership would understand the cause and effect link; that the adoption of a stance such as feminism in an openly 'explicit' way might indeed put off a certain type of critic (male, conservative) who might otherwise have shown more serious interest in the text. A good example of such a critic is Lawrence Hyde who, in an article for *The Spectator* in 1923, expressed his irritation with 'Miss Richardson's besetting sin – her tiresome twist towards feminism' (cited in Kunitz, 1933, pp.1084-5).

The feminism in *Pilgrimage* that upset certain male critics in the 1920s, and to which Walter Allen also referred in his preface, is, however, rather different from the feminism characterising the later middle decades of the twentieth century when social perceptions of women, work and the economy were again transformed by WWII and its aftermath. Moreover other female modernists such as Virginia Woolf take an 'explicitly feminist' stance, but their work has not subsequently been critically neglected, quite the reverse. Some critics would also challenge the idea of Richardson taking an 'explicitly feminist stance' at all in *Pilgrimage*. Fromm observes: 'It [*Pilgrimage*] could be tested against A

*Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* and found reactionary' (1995, p.627). *Pilgrimage* is a text which privileges Miriam's female perspective but 'female' does not equate with 'feminist' and the views she expresses about women vacillate between love and loathing. Miriam perceives only too clearly in the abstract how women have been culturally degraded and systematically repressed: 'If women had been the recorders of things from the beginning, it would all have been the other way round' (*Tunnel II*, p.251) but there are concrete occasions when Miriam finds the presence or the behaviour of other women more than just mildly irritating. She frequently feels excluded or displaced from the world of women and dislikes much of their superficial social behaviour, 'smirks – self-satisfied smiles as if everybody were agreed about everything' (*Pointed Roofs I*, p.21) and concludes this about herself on the train to Germany: 'I don't like men and I loathe women. I am a misanthrope. So's Pater. He despises women and I can't get on with men. We are different – it's us, him and me' (*ibid*, p.31).

Early on in the preface Hanscombe paves the way for a later more detailed exploration of Miriam's feminism, noting that Miriam was *not* a militant but an individual who believed in the 'authority of a woman's experience and world view' (1979, p.1). It is the quality of Miriam's passionately-held attitudes about gender that Hanscombe wishes to convey: 'It seems to her that the experiences and perceptions of women have been brutally and unreasonably discounted by men' (*ibid*, p.5). Miriam's complexity of thinking about gender is revealed in the round. Women as well as men are the target of Miriam's criticism and Hanscombe reveals the contempt Miriam holds for women who play at being female, by for example, servicing men's conversational needs: 'Nor has she any mercy for the majority of women who have, in her judgement, colluded with men in the suborning of their female gifts and attributes. Such women are satirised, caricatured and eventually dismissed' (*ibid*). The implication here is that Miriam does not feel solidarity with other women just because they

are women, nor does she formulate arguments that might explain such compromising behaviour in a more positive light. Rather, she prefers to distance herself from such women and refuses to see them as anything else but idiotic, sometimes savagely ridiculing their behaviour. Jane Miller, in an article for the *Guardian* (February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998), sums up the variant of feminism represented in *Pilgrimage* as: ‘a discouraging sort of feminism, more or less unsisterly and ultimately unconsoling’ but one that nevertheless gives her ‘the sheerest pleasure’. Hanscombe makes her reader fully aware of the complexities of seeing Miriam through a ‘feminist consciousness lens’, showing how Miriam is a free thinker, ideologically unattached and far from some kind of ideal proto-feminist figure. Hanscombe’s ideas prefigure those of Miller by nearly twenty years and were written during feminism’s second wave. She does not fall into the trap of making Miriam more feminist than she actually is; her lens is both telephoto and close-up.

Hanscombe’s third explanation for *Pilgrimage*’s critical neglect locates an ideological problem that provoked hostility amongst some readers; a love and respect for German culture expressed in the text, most obviously in the first chapter-volume *Pointed Roofs*. Such feeling communicated at a time leading up to, or following, wars with Germany is certainly problematic, but attitudes change over time and the sympathies expressed were located primarily in Germany’s cultural traditions of music and literature, not in its politics. A typical example is Miriam’s veneration for German musical expressionism: ‘Miriam believed that she could do it as the Germans did. She wanted to get her own music and play it as she had always dimly known it ought to be played and hardly ever dared (I, p.45). She also expresses a fondness for Germany’s landscape: ‘das deutsche Vaterland – Germany, all woods and mountains and tenderness (I. p.21). I think it possible that some readers, affronted by sentiments such as these, (particularly the second example with its use of the German word ‘Vaterland,’ a loaded word, which might be perceived as communicating an



implicit sympathy with German National Socialism) could, at the time of publication in 1915, and later, during the period of WWII and its aftermath, be put off reading any more of *Pilgrimage*, but consider such a reaction to be time-sensitive, Richardson's readers likely to be discerning ones, responsive to the nuances of meaning shaping Miriam's cultural attachment to Germany. Moreover *Pointed Roofs*' prominent position within the novel sequence as a whole, rated by many critics as the most accessible and most admired chapter-volume, and for many readers standing metonymically for *Pilgrimage*, does not correspond with this ideological explanation of critical neglect.

I would question whether these three reasons, alone are, indeed, *the* root causes of the so-called neglect. *Pilgrimage*'s uncompromising focus on the consciousness of one female character over thirteen chapter-volumes, with which readers have to align themselves, to gain enjoyment from reading is, I think, a more likely explanation and one which Hanscombe explores in a later critical essay 'Dorothy Richardson versus the Novvle' (1989). Hanscombe briefly alludes to *Pilgrimage*'s narrative perspective in her preface but does not suggest that it might be off-putting: 'The whole world of *Pilgrimage* is filtered through Miriam's mind alone; the reader sees what she sees and is never told what any of the other characters see (1979, p.1). Perhaps Hanscombe considered a feminist preface the ideal place to present this perspective without explanatory comment or a need to seek the reader's approval. The idea is communicated simply and matter-of-factly as if to avoid problematizing it. Hanscombe might have chosen to engage further with this issue of perspective and the demands it makes on the reader, no matter how sympathetic and empathetic, but probably considered the function of this preface to be one of encouragement not dissuasion.

*Pilgrimage*'s genre and subject matter were identified by Allen as complex and ripe for critical scrutiny. Hanscombe does take on this territory and alerts the reader to the problem

of reductive generic classifications. She argues that *Pilgrimage* is fictional and autobiographical but not in the sense of a 'photographic reproduction,' rather that Richardson drew on 'the real material of her own life for writing, and [she] used herself as her central character' (ibid, pp.1-2). Again Hanscombe summarises the complex relationship between autobiography and fiction in a way that communicates easily. In relation to her other literary criticism on Richardson, published in 1982 and 1989, Hanscombe's preface is certainly less academically rigorous, but as a peritextual threshold, it is clear, helpful and sensitively written to engage the interest of the educated, but not the expert, reader.

The following section compares Hanscombe's preface with that of Allen's and adopts, in part, a quantitative stylistic approach in order to examine the language of the two prefaces and the gendered attitudes conveyed towards the work and its creator.

### **A gender-sensitive stylistic comparison between the two allographic prefaces**

Hanscombe's preface, with its woman writer theme, has Richardson, rather than *Pilgrimage*, as its centre. It makes implicit references to Richardson's 1938 Foreword and foregrounds the literary efforts Richardson made 'to delineate a female consciousness' (1979, p.6). Allen's focus is, unsurprisingly, the opposite, foregrounding the artistic work not the author's hard work. This key difference can be appreciated more precisely through a quantitative stylistic approach calculating the frequency of occurrence of a particular linguistic feature as a percentage of the text's total length. Hanscombe's preface is 2964 words and Allen's 2226 in total (hyphenated words counting as one item). Only the discourse of each writer is of interest here so quotations from others have been discounted. This means that the total length of the prefaces is 2844 and 1682 respectively. Scrutinising

the discourse in this way immediately reveals that Hanscombe's preface is more self-reliant than Allen's.

The gendered pronouns 'she', 'her' and 'herself' have a more restricted range of reference in Hanscombe's preface than they do in Allen's. In Hanscombe's they refer to Richardson and Miriam. In Allen's, as well as this, they also refer to Richardson's contemporaries, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf. For the purposes of this comparison, only those pronouns used to refer to Richardson have been tabulated. Of interest, however, is the fact that Allen uses the pronoun 'she' four times to refer to Sinclair, whose full name is also used three times, always with the highest regard for her intellect, artistic work and skills as a writer and expert reader: 'the brilliant woman, a fine and at present unjustly neglected novelist' (pp.3-4), 'knew exactly what she was doing' 'her description of *Pilgrimage* on her reading of its first volume – it still cannot be bettered' (p.4). Quantitative analysis helps to explain more precisely how Allen's preface communicates a certain ambiguity of feeling towards Richardson and her work.

**Table 1**

	<b>She</b>	<b>Her</b>	<b>Herself</b>
<b>Hanscombe</b>	46 (1.617)	58 (2.039)	3 (0.105)
<b>Allen</b>	5 (0.297)	11 (0.584)	2 (0.118)

Table 1 shows clearly a significant difference in the frequency of two out of the three pronouns. Clearly this difference reflects a contrasting approach. Hanscombe prefers to

refer to the agency of writer (the subject pronoun 'she' is doing something) and emphasises and firmly establishes the idea of the *woman* writer.

*She* stretched the unit of the sentence sometimes to the length of a long paragraph; *she* dispensed with the usual rules of punctuation, often substituting a series of full stops in place of explanation or other detail; *she* changed from one tense to another within a single paragraph; and *she* changed from the first person 'I' to the third person 'she' within a single reflection. *She* omitted details about people and places which readers could justifiably demand to know (1979, p.6) (my emphases).

There are occasions where the object pronoun 'her' occurs in a cluster, again for emphatic effect: 'Richardson used the real material of *her* own life for *her* writing, and *she* used *herself* as *her* central character' (my emphases). The distribution of these pronouns is clearly more sparsely distributed in Allen's preface. On one occasion the delay between a pronoun and its referent is very marked indeed:

They have overshadowed *Dorothy Richardson*, inevitably perhaps, since their genius was certainly the greater, but unfairly none the less, for *Pilgrimage* is a unique and remarkable work. It exists in its own right and will continue to interest for many years to come, and for reasons probably quite remote from those that first come to mind when *her* name crops up in literary history' (1967, p.3) (my emphases).

Richardson is much less of a 'presence' in Allen's discourse and the example above is a good example of the way in which the delayed link in cohesion helps to reinforce a meaning of being overshadowed or lost in the company of significant others. The use of the delayed 'her' feels dismissively impolite and the tonal effect is compounded by the proximity of the pronoun 'her' to the rather casual phrasal verb 'crop up'. To be fair to Allen, this is an uncharacteristic linguistic feature which only came to light when looking closely at the pronoun distribution. It does seem to suggest to me, however, that some of his negativity towards *Pilgrimage* (already evidenced in his other works of literary criticism) is unconsciously expressed here. His emotional distance from Richardson contrasts with an

evident enthusiasm for Sinclair. His warmth of tone at the mention of Sinclair is markedly different from his careful manoeuvrings around Richardson's name. At the end of his preface, however, Allen's tone towards Richardson becomes more upbeat. A cluster of object pronouns (her) has an emphatic rhetorical effect, much closer to Hanscombe's style. Indeed this sentence could have easily been written by Hanscombe: 'But, even more than most novelists, *her* life was *her* work, the patient recapturing in minute detail of *her* experience of the ultimate astonisher' (1967, p.8).

**Table 2**

	<i>Pilgrimage</i>	It	It's	Its	Itself
<b>Hanscombe</b>	11 (0.386)	2 (0.067)	0	2(0.067)	0
<b>Allen</b>	14 (0.832)	8 (0.359)	0	9(0.404)	0

Table 2 reveals that Allen uses '*Pilgrimage*' significantly more frequently than Hanscombe, providing strong evidence for the impressionistic perception that Allen foregrounds the artistic work not the author. Supporting evidence is provided by the use of 'it' (when used as a subject and object pronoun) and 'its' (possessive pronoun) when used to refer anaphorically or cataphorically to *Pilgrimage*. Allen makes much greater use of both of these pronouns.

References to individual chapter-volumes reveal that neither preface writer is able to do justice to *Pilgrimage's* composite nature as table 3 reveals.

**Table 3***Pointed Roofs Backwater Honeycomb Deadlock March Moonlight*

<b>Hanscombe</b>	4 (0.140)	1 (0.035)	1(0.035)	1 (0.035)	0
<b>Allen</b>	2 (0.118)	0	0	0	4 (0.140)

Only five out of thirteen of the chapter-volumes are mentioned across both prefaces. Hanscombe's preface has more range of reference than Allen. Both make reference to the first chapter-volume *Pointed Roofs*. *Backwater*, *Honeycomb* and *Deadlock* are used once only by Hanscombe in the section where she maps the text to the author's life. Allen's references to *March Moonlight* are not surprising, given that one of the key functions of his preface is to introduce this new chapter-volume. The fact that neither preface writer refers to *Pilgrimage* in its totality does suggest how difficult it is, even for an expert reader trying to provide a textual overview, to keep the whole of the text in mind.

**Table 4**

	<b>Richardson</b>	<b>Dorothy Miller Richardson</b>	<b>Dorothy Richardson</b>	<b>Dorothy</b>
<b>Hanscombe</b>	24 (0.843)	1 (0.035)	2 (0.070)	9(0.316)
<b>Allen</b>	0	0	21 (1.248)	

More revealing are the differences in references to authorial name. The default reference is of particular interest. A gap in age and cultural attitude explains this marked contrast. Allen (1911-1995) is of a generation who would only use a surname to refer to a male writer, whereas Hanscombe, a second wave feminist scholar, does not make such a gendered

distinction. Allen therefore prefers the more polite or perceived to be so, 'Dorothy Richardson' as his default reference. A similarity in frequency of usage of the default references might appear to disprove my theory that Hanscombe pays more personal attention to the writer, but what must also be taken into account are the other variations of authorial name, if any, as well as pronoun usage. Allen uses the same default reference throughout, regardless of subject matter and tone, and a closer look at context yields interesting results.

**Positive contexts:** 1,2,3,9,10,12,14,15,18,19

**Negative contexts:** 4,5,8,11

**Neutral/mixed contexts:** 6,7,13,16,17,20,21

4 out of 21 contexts (19.04%) are negative, where Richardson is either seen as a less successful writer or somebody whose criticism of others lacks judgement. In one case of a mixed context, example 6, Richardson's 'originality' is offset by her 'imbecility' comment. Richardson's name is only used in a wholeheartedly positive manner 47.61% of the time.

1. key to **Dorothy Richardson's** art (p.3)
2. born in 1873, **Dorothy Richardson** was the oldest by almost ten years of those novelists (p.3)
3. **Dorothy Richardson**, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf (p.3)
4. They have overshadowed **Dorothy Richardson** (p.3)
5. **Dorothy Richardson** herself described the phrase as standing alone amongst the company of useful labels . . . isolated by its perfect imbecility' (p.3)

6. (...) May Sinclair, who first gave the phrase a literary application and used it, moreover, to define the originality of **Dorothy Richardson's** talent (p.4)
7. **Dorothy Richardson's** first novel (p.4)
8. When she [May Sinclair] applied the phrase 'stream of consciousness to **Dorothy Richardson's** technique (p.4)
9. It is a great achievement on **Dorothy Richardson's** part' (p.5)
10. It was such a novel that **Dorothy Richardson** had been writing (p.5)
11. But where **Dorothy Richardson** is most difficult (p.5)
12. If we concentrate too much on seeing **Dorothy Richardson** simply or even primarily (p.6) (...) It is much more than that.
13. How close to the actual course of **Dorothy Richardson's** early life (p.6)
14. We have no more right to see **Dorothy Richardson** and Miriam Henderson as interchangeable (p.6)
15. But the point is **Dorothy Richardson** was a feminist (p.6)
16. One source of the work lies in **Dorothy Richardson's** reaction against novels (p.7)
17. Reading Henry James, whom she much admired, **Dorothy Richardson** was distracted (p.7)
18. Like Virginia Woolf, **Dorothy Richardson** is opposing (p.7)
19. Virginia Woolf herself praised **Dorothy Richardson** (p.7)
20. If this element in **Dorothy Richardson** does not strike us today (p.8)



21. **Dorothy Richardson** died in 1957 (p.8)

Hanscombe uses a variety of naming references, making a total of 36 against Allen's 21. 'Dorothy Miller Richardson,' the author's full name, is used once in the opening sentence, to formally introduce the writer. The more familiar 'Dorothy' is used on nine occasions for two different functions:

(i) For allusions to the author in her youth

1. In **Dorothy's** eleventh year (p.2)

2. The husband of **Dorothy's** eldest sister, Kate

3. On the 29 November 1895, while on holiday in Hastings with **Dorothy**, Mary Richardson committed suicide (p.3)

4. Charles Richardson always called **Dorothy** his 'son' (p.4)

5. to **Dorothy's** failure to adjust to the feminine role expected of her (p.4),

(ii) when drawing on the fond reminiscences of Alan Odle's niece:

6. **Dorothy** always called him [Alan Odle, her husband] 'sergeant' (p.4).

7. He, like **Dorothy** had dark brown eyes (p.2)

8. **Dorothy** talked the most and late into the night (p.2)

9. **Dorothy**, in contrast to Alan (p.4)

An interesting effect of the use of 'Dorothy' is the creation of the author as a character in her own life-story with a very real physical, social and cultural presence. The contextual

frame for understanding the use of 'Dorothy' is a positive one, even if some of the details such as 3 (Mrs Richardson's suicide) are in themselves negative, or, in this case, tragic. In example 5 'Dorothy's failure to adjust' might, in isolation, be read as a negative context but immediately following the sentence in which this phrase occurs, Hanscombe poses two questions, 'But was it failure? Or might it be seen as a triumph?' that turn the idea on its head.

The neutral 'Dorothy Richardson' is used twice. Firstly it is used as a transition between Richardson the author and Richardson the person, marking a general shift in the discourse to biography:

When she was five years old, **Dorothy Richardson** was sent for a year to a small private school (p.2).

The second instance is used in a context where the author's marriage is being described and the use of first name and surname together, differentiates her from her husband, whose name she did not take on, once married:

A niece of Alan Odle's, who knew **Dorothy Richardson** and Alan Odle (p.4).

This variation in naming reference also has another explanation beyond that of context sensitivity. Hanscombe's differentiation expresses a finely-tuned empathy, a feeling that can be explained by Genette's term 'emotional distance' and contrasts with Allen's corresponding lack of personal engagement, communicated by the flat repetition of his default naming reference. One of the stylistic effects of the variation of naming references in Hanscombe's preface is a foregrounding of the author's identity as a real person, with familial as well as occupational roles; a child, a wife as well as writer. Hanscombe is writing in a feminist context, rediscovering the writer as well as the writing and wanting to

communicate this in a concrete way. Indeed, for the first time in a preface to *Pilgrimage*, the reader is given a potted biography of Richardson's life. Allen (1967, p.6) makes only one fleeting, embedded reference: 'How close to the actual course of Dorothy Richardson's early life the events narrated in *Pilgrimage* are (...)' when he considers generic boundaries between autobiography and autobiographical novels, whereas Hanscombe feels justified in providing a detailed chronology of Richardson's life because of her interest in *Pilgrimage*'s autobiographical subject matter: 'There is [therefore], much in her life and personality to lend interest to her work' (1979, p.2).

Given that it is impossible to compare representations of Richardson in these two prefaces, the following section will briefly explore Hanscombe's representation with that of Anthony West, whose biography of his father, H.G. Wells, *Aspects of a Life* published in 1984, includes some detailed description of Richardson's physique, appearance and manner.

### **A gender-sensitive comparison between different representations of Richardson in Hanscombe's preface and Anthony West's *Aspects of a Life***

Hanscombe conveys a distinctive sense of Richardson's presence by minimising her own. She keeps her own voice from obtruding by drawing heavily from an informal verbatim account of Alan Odle's niece, Elizabeth Turner, a woman who knew Richardson well and whom Hanscombe met on more than one occasion. Hanscombe observes that Turner was: 'friendly and welcoming. She knew and accepted that I was researching DR/Pilg but I don't think we had a formal agreement about what I could or couldn't use from her recollections. Both she and Sheena [Richardson's literary executor] were very keen for DR's work to be recognised' (email dated April 14<sup>th</sup> 2015). Intimate first-hand memories of Richardson's

physical appearance, speech style and personality traits are given with Hanscombe using a high ratio of direct quotation to her own summation:

In middle age, Richardson still had a golden heap of very long hair, piled on the top of her head; she had a 'massive' face, dark brown eyes, a clear skin and pince-nez balanced on her nose, because she was 'always reading'. She created the impression of being tall, because she was 'so stately' (...) Dorothy talked the most and late into the night; she seemed never to do 'anything ordinary' and had a voice 'like dark brown velvet'. She spoke very slowly indeed and was 'immensely impressive as a person'. Her life seemed to be arranged 'very very carefully' and she was 'not at all spontaneous in her actions'. She could 'only work on a certain image of herself' which was 'very cerebral.' (...) Dorothy, in contrast to Alan, was, 'very plump, with white creamy arms and very beautiful hands'; as she spoke she would screw up her eyes and slightly purse her mouth and everyone would listen' (1979, p.4).

An assumption is being made that the reader of the Virago preface is interested in these personal details and clearly such a 'revivalist' practice helps to bring the author, one who has been 'neglected' to life. Given that Richardson avoided being photographed, such descriptions are very useful, there being very few visual images of the author in circulation. Elizabeth Turner's memory is a variant of a 'female gaze,' in this case one woman is remembering how another woman looked (Mulvey, 1975). It conveys both a sense of Richardson's attractive qualities ('golden' hair, 'dark brown velvet' voice and 'very beautiful hands' albeit counteracted by 'massive' face), her stateliness ('spoke very slowly indeed'), her sharp intellect ('very cerebral') and a hint of something else, repressive, controlled or controlling ('talked the most, 'everybody would listen').

This can be usefully compared to another description of Richardson in her middle-age which occurs in Anthony West's biography of his father, H. G. Wells, where an objectifying male gaze is very much to the fore:

When I first met her [Richardson] as an adult (...) she made a very strong impression upon me as at once the most conceited and the least sensuous person of either sex that I had up to that time encountered. She carried herself and wore her clothes with

a peculiar stiffness that suggested a dressmaker's dummy or one of the human figures from an old-fashioned Noah's Ark set. It was hard for me to believe that she could ever have been to bed with so lively a man as my father' (1984, p.335).

These polarised descriptions are particularly interesting, not only for their gendered nature but for their similarities as well as their more obvious differences. West's biography was published five years after the Virago edition and the two descriptions are a good example of Genette's views on the giving and taking away of meaning in paratextual space. Turner's memory could be understood as rose-tinted, as she fondly remembers, the occasions when she saw her imperious, albeit sensuous and loquacious aunt. As a first-hand recollection it has authority, although this is tempered by the context – Turner's desire to support Hanscombe's research in a bid to get her aunt's work more widely recognised. West's memory is based on his first meeting with Richardson and his abiding impression of a self-centred, sexually unattractive woman, who once had an unsatisfactory physical relationship with his father. Moreover West's memory occurs in a chapter mostly dedicated to Richardson but explicitly designed to expose her as a 'fabulist', an unreliable source of information about his father, H.G. Wells (ibid, p.362). The filters through which these two people see Richardson, one positive, one negative, clearly shape their perceptions but both suggest that Richardson was a powerful force and perhaps rather overbearing. Details such as these, whatever their insinuation, would be incongruous in Allen's more emotionally distant preface.

### **Concluding comments on the feminist agenda of Hanscombe's preface**

Allen is of the opinion that Richardson's literary style has been overanalysed. Hanscombe probably does not know that Allen has made this assertion, but clearly would disagree with it if she had, because she has some interesting and new things to say about Richardson's

style viewed through her 'feminist consciousness lens.' As a second wave feminist, Hanscombe would have been keenly aware of the significance of style and the language that underpins it. The debates of the 1970s and 1980s about the power of language and its role in female oppression were there in embryonic form in the pages of *Pilgrimage*, in the subject matter of Miriam's thoughts and misgivings about language as well as in Richardson's writing style (1979, p.7). Hanscombe's scholarly work had led her to examine Richardson's autograph manuscripts and she notes towards the end of the preface how Richardson used the abbreviation 'I.R' ('imperfectly realised') on segments of her work which seemed to her to be stylistically flawed. Hanscombe's appreciation of Richardson's efforts with style to 'transform those conventions to accommodate Miriam's world view' evolves from a position of understanding and sympathy (ibid). Her comments, analysis and even her deployment of naming references with regard to the author of *Pilgrimage* communicate what Winning calls an 'affective investment' in the scholarly approach (Northern Modernism Seminar, November 14<sup>th</sup> 2014).

Hanscombe's preface is one that undoubtedly fulfils its key paratextual function: 'to ensure for the text a destiny consistent with the author's purpose' (Genette, 1997, p.407). Its feminist agenda counteracts the doubts and uncertainties in *Pilgrimage's* paratextual space by choosing to applaud Richardson's resilience and persistence. *Pilgrimage* is considered a magnum opus requiring an unusual degree of writerly dedication rather than a modernist also-ran, the preface ending as it begins by celebrating Richardson's extraordinary achievement. 'Affective investment' not only transformed *Pilgrimage's* cultural handling in the preface but also in the edition as a whole. Chapter four explores the materiality of the 1967 Dent and the 1976 New York Popular Library omnibus editions of *Pilgrimage*, both of which offer an interesting contrast in reading community and cultural handling to the 1979 Virago edition.

**CHAPTER FOUR:**

**THE MATERIAL FORM OF THE 1967 DENT AND**

**1976 NEW YORK POPULAR LIBRARY OMNIBUS EDITIONS**

**Peritextual variation and reading community**

The editions of *Pilgrimage* that followed in the wake of the first ‘false’ omnibus, were not only different in material form from their earlier counterpart, being thirteen rather than twelve chapter-volumes, but also substantially different from each other in terms of visual appearance. In a relatively short time period of twelve years, three omnibus editions of *Pilgrimage* were produced by three publishers: Dent (1967) (hardback), New York Popular Library (1976) (paperback) and Virago (1979) (paperback). The covers of these three editions communicate contrasting ideas about the nature of *Pilgrimage*, appeal to distinct reading communities and share little in common apart from the designations of title and author.

The Dent edition would appear to communicate to the cognoscenti, those British readers already familiar with *Pilgrimage*, who might be interested in discovering what the final chapter-volume, *March Moonlight*, contains. The New York Popular library edition would appeal to a younger and progressive type of American female reader, new to *Pilgrimage*, and the Virago edition to educated British women with feminist sympathies. The Dent and New York Library editions, with their identical texts and prefaces but very different covers, can be seen to represent two extreme types of cultural handling. The expensive hardback Dent edition, retailing at 42 -/- the set, has specially commissioned illustrations for the dust

jacket covers, evoking a bygone era. The New York Popular Library edition, published only nine years later, is modern in style and form, a cheap paperback edition, retailing at \$1.95 per volume. The Virago edition sits in the middle, a hybrid form of a Modern Classic paperback (£3.50 per volume) with a new allographic preface by a feminist scholar, Gillian Hanscombe. The socio-cultural positioning of the Virago edition will be explored in detail in chapter five, whereas this chapter will focus solely on the polarised relationship between the Dent and New York Popular Library editions.

The Dent and New York Popular Library editions share the same prefatorial contents (Walter Allen's preface and Richardson's Foreword) but are otherwise, in paratextual terms, diametrically opposed. The Dent covers wistfully evoke *Pilgrimage's* historical setting and foreground the dynamic role that places and spaces play in the novel sequence. These covers and Allen's allographic preface sit comfortably with each other and their anchoring text. The New York Popular Library edition covers, by conveying a very different and modern reading of *Pilgrimage*, Miriam's sexual journey from innocence to experience, are actively enticing new readers. The four photographic close-up shots of the same blonde model, striking a series of different poses, bear no relation to any female character, least of all Miriam, but would certainly attract the interest of young female readers. The woman's face fills the covers and the contemporary styling (hair, make-up, jewellery and provocative relationship to the camera and viewer) unambiguously suggest a particular type of self-conscious and glamorous female sexuality prevalent in the late 1970s. These unreconstructed images of female sexuality are, however, an ill-fitting match for both prefaces, which, in such close proximity, seem rather staid companions.



## **Capturing Miriam's mind state: The cover illustrations of the 1967 Dent Omnibus edition**

And I love the stately illustrated edition, provided author and artist are worthy of each other, and the illustrations, when such are explicit, emerge first in their own right to delight me as things of beauty, and have therefore the power of retaining, when presently they become one with the text, their quality of a finely supporting decoration (Richardson, 1930, pp.16-17).

Given Richardson's views on book illustration, as expounded above in *John Austen and the Inseparables*, she clearly would have had an opinion on the illustrated covers of the Dent omnibus edition, had she been alive to give one. Whether she would have thought the illustrator, Faith Jaques (1923-77), worthy of her, or vice versa, and whether she would have considered Jaques' pen-and-ink drawings to be 'things of beauty' is questionable although the significance of the illustrated wrappers would have been appreciated. Dent had clearly moved on from its 1931 position when Richardson's idea, of using a wrapper designed by Alan Odle, had been politely rejected (see letter (67) chapter 1, p.54).

In Jaques' obituary in *The Independent*, (August 7<sup>th</sup> 1997), Nicholas Tucker draws attention to the sensitivity and creativity of her book illustrations and the way in which her work complements that of the writers with whom she worked in respect of 'emotional tone' and 'visual atmosphere'. Richardson herself challenged the view that 'book-illustration, or art produced in relation to any kind of text, is a secondary form of fine art' (1930, p.14) and declared herself to be of 'catholic taste' with regard to this art form (ibid, p.16).

Whilst working on *Pilgrimage*, Jaques was also involved in two other projects: Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1967) and a multi-volume *History of Costume* published over a four year period (1966-70) by Hugh Evelyn with a commentary by Margaret Stravridi. This book, like *Pilgrimage*, had four volumes (from 4 B.C to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century) and the

illustrative task it posed has been described as a ‘mammoth undertaking’ (blog.book.storey.co.uk). Jaques must have been very busy indeed during this period. She mostly illustrated children’s books so she was an interesting choice for *Pilgrimage*, although her expertise in costume history probably helped her secure the commission. Tucker (1997) lists a number of prominent writers of children’s fiction with whom she worked: Nina Bawden, Phillipa Pearce, Allan Ahlberg, Henry Treece and Leon Garfield. Tucker (ibid) provides an extended analysis of the front cover to Bawden’s *Carrie’s War* (1975) where the children, Carrie and Nick, get off a train at a small Welsh railway station:

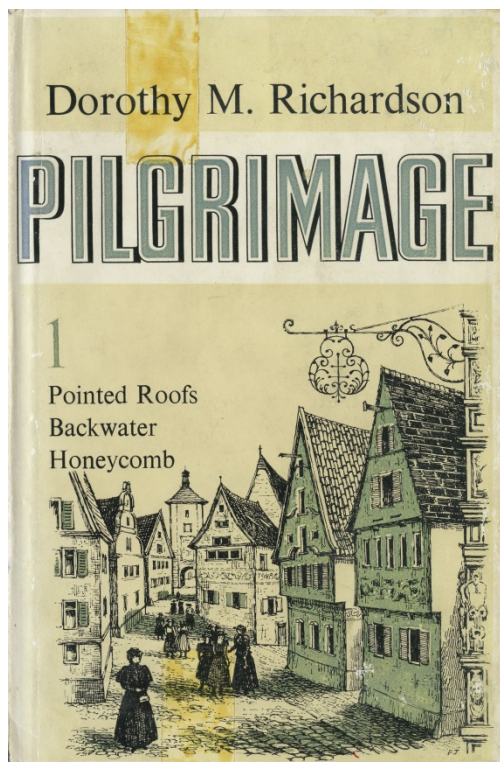
In Jaques's cover illustration, we see all the extra details as well: a porter's trolley, a shabby arcade and diminutive waiting room and in the background, coal tips and a working mine. More significantly, the two young evacuees are pictured standing on the platform very much as they are feeling at that particular moment in the story: small, isolated and uncertain what to do next. Later on, their glum host Mr Evans, up to that moment an unattractive character, is drawn crouched by his kitchen fire. Once grimly forbidding, he now looks shrunken and dejected. This reflects the moment in the text when both children come to feet (sic) sorry for him despite his many faults.

What is evident from Tucker’s exploration is that Jaques read *Carrie’s War* carefully, did some meticulous research and was able to make visible some of the quiet power of the text – moments when the children *feel* something very strongly.

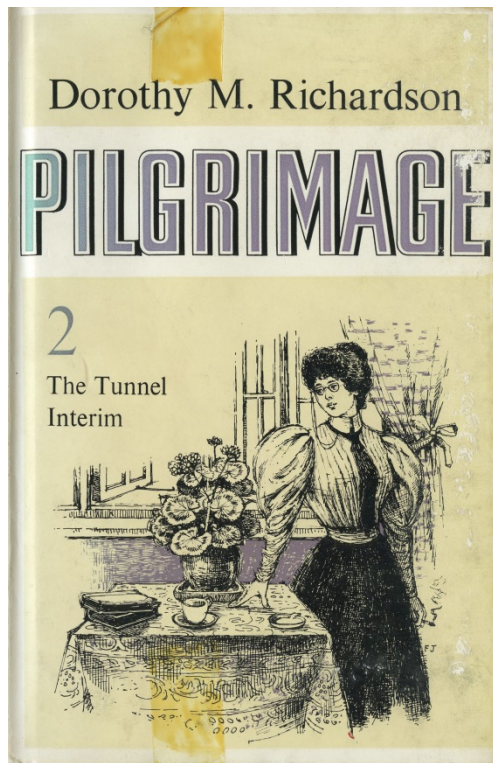
The same ability to capture Miriam’s mind state is also present in Jaques’ illustrations for *Pilgrimage*. Whether she read *Pilgrimage* in its entirety, or was given a brief to consider particular passages, is not known. The latter is more likely, given that thirteen chapter-volumes would have taken up valuable time when she was also working on other demanding projects. Whatever the case might be, her cover illustrations are the product of a sensitive and sophisticated reading. It is likely that Jaques’ own experience, of having to supplement the income she earned as a freelance artist by teaching, as well as living in a Salvation Army

hostel while she was training at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London, enabled her to feel empathy for Miriam, who, like herself, had been an independent woman making her way in the world (ibid). The selection of subject matter for the front covers appears to be based on key moments in Miriam's life and careful consideration has been given to the significant places, spaces or environments that form an integral part of her developing consciousness. These settings are affective, endowed with Miriam's thoughts and feelings. The pen-and-ink illustrations also reflect Jaques' sense of Miriam's disposition and character. The line drawings might, on the surface, appear simplistic and, perhaps, rather incongruous for the core text but serve an important purpose, to enhance *Pilgrimage's* appeal.

#### **Analysis of the front covers of volumes I-IV**

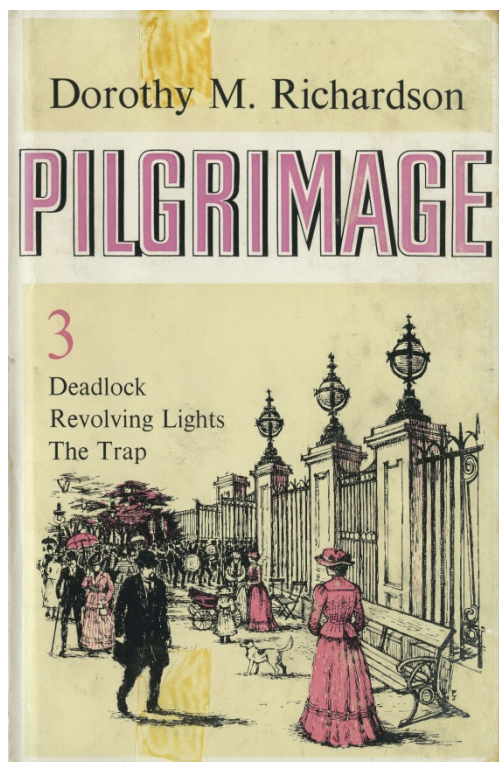


Volume 1's design, with a grey-green wash, is a German street scene and features its typical urban architecture: gabled ends, pointed roofs, windows with shutters and a cobbled pavement. It clearly designates the main setting of *Pointed Roofs*. The street has within it several female figures, some girls and some women in the formal costume of the day. One figure stands alone in the foreground and a reader, familiar with the text, would identify this as Miriam, whose sense of difference in Germany is keenly felt. There is a stiff and a diffident quality in the attitude of the lone figure, looking over her left shoulder, which contrasts markedly with that of the other more socially-oriented female groupings and might well represent Miriam's dislike of 'Saturday walks'. On these occasions, when sent out to promenade for an hour, Miriam's desire, 'to go leisurely and alone along these wonderful streets,' had to be curbed by a need to keep the girls, for whom she is responsible, 'in sight' (I, p.91). Miriam's longing to roam is also compromised by her uncomfortable 'winter clothes,' and Jaques, who would have had a good eye for late Victorian clothing, by virtue of her work on the *History of Costume* project, has captured some of the cumbersome qualities of Miriam's heavy 'cloth coat' and 'stiff hat like a board against her uneasy forehead' (ibid).



Volume II, with its grey wash is quite different. It shows an interior scene with a woman (Miriam) standing in an attitude of smiling repose by a table on which there is a decorated cloth, books, a cup and saucer, what appears to be another saucer and a flowering geranium. In the background there is a window opened to its fullest extent with its curtains neatly secured. In *Tunnel* Miriam has to move the heavy window bars and open the window of her attic room, smelling the rust and dust and, in the process, covering herself with grime. The window and the bars clearly have not been opened for some time and this action is significant – staking her claim to the space (II, pp.14-15). Jaques has chosen not to represent this involved physical action, showing instead the results of Miriam's effort. The room represented has little of the attic about it, no sloping roof or dormer windows (as described in the anchoring text), but the small size of table suggests that it is a room for one person. Miriam, bespectacled, wears a blouse with very full sleeves, and a long skirt. She is discreetly smoking. She holds a cigarette in her left hand very close to the edge of the

illustration and the saucer on the table is now understood to be an ash tray. It establishes, in a subtle way, the importance of Miriam's room as a private space. In *Tunnel* Miriam's attic room in Mrs Bailey's house is prominent. The room is modest but symbolises her freedom at twenty-one to be earning her own living and is the subject matter of the first long section. In the seclusion of her own room, Miriam can think, read, write and smoke.



Volume III, with a pink wash, shows a wide pavement next to what appears to be a city park. There are benches and ornamental gates and a marching band is walking through the open park gates. There are various people in the background, women with a young girl and a pram and a couple walking together with walking stick and parasol. In the foreground a woman (Miriam), in a pink suit and wide brimmed hat, with her back towards us, watches, we assume, as a bearded man makes his approach. Her posture seems composed, the position of her arms suggests the attitude of clasped hands and she stands immobile whilst

he walks purposefully towards her, looking at her intently from under his bowler hat. Miriam's public life as a single woman in the city, enjoying some recreational time, is suggested, but this scene also faithfully represents a resonant moment in *Deadlock* (III, pp.209-210), where Miriam waits to meet Michael Shatov, the man with whom she has recently fallen in love, but who has, earlier the same day, when she was just about to board a train, confessed to her something of his past, his sexual experience with prostitutes. That difficult topic is conveyed mostly via narrative report rather than direct speech, registered in Miriam's consciousness as, 'that he had been lost to her for ever, long ago in his independent past' (ibid, p.204). Shatov ends his confession with the plaintive statement: '*I did not know that you would come.*' Miriam has spent her time since the bombshell, thinking through her response and what she might say to him. In the interim she has been to lunch with her friends, the Brooms, and has had to excuse herself to contemplate her 'frightful problem' (ibid, p.206). She is confused and crushed by the knowledge, pained and angry. 'When he first kissed me', started her mind, 'those women were all about him. They have come between us for ever' (ibid). Her concern shifts from the prostitutes to him and to men in general, their 'greed' before acknowledging the 'monstrous' collusive possibility that she might forgive him (ibid, p.208). Jaques chooses to illustrate the point where Miriam's thoughts have gone full circle and she sees Shatov approach:

When at last he appeared, the sight of the familiar, distinctive little figure, plunging energetically along, beard first, through the north London Sunday Evening crowd drifting about the park gates, their sounds quenched by the blare of the Salvation Army's band marching townwards along the battered road, for one strange moment while a moving light came across the gravel pathway at her feet, decking its shabby fringe of grass with the dewy freshness of some remembered world far away and unknown to this trampling blind North London, she asked herself what all the trouble was about (ibid, pp.209-210).





Volume IV, with a green wash, is an exterior scene, this time a rural, peaceful one with a horse-chestnut tree in full bloom and a variety of cottage-garden flowers in the foreground. Miriam, hatless, in green jacket and skirt, standing in the shade of a tree, whose trunk she appears to be touching, looks towards the horizon beyond the rolling hills. We see her face in profile. Miriam is alone in a beautiful place, possibly meditating. Behind her there is a steeply sloping lawn with smaller trees and there is a suggestion that this garden merges with the open countryside in the background, via a break in the hedges or the fencing. This scene is more difficult to pin down precisely, there being several textual references that might fit. My intuition is that Jaques has amalgamated ideas or scenes from at least two of the chapter-volumes. In *Dawn's Left Hand*, for example, where Miriam and Hypo Wilson (H.G. Wells) converse about life and writing, the latter tells Miriam that she needs a '*green solitude*' in order to write (IV, p.236). Later on in the same chapter-volume, Miriam refers to a habit of leaving things 'standing on the horizon,' a metaphor for the way in which the mind can store an image first seen and leave it there to be accessed at a later date (ibid, p.253). In *Dimple Hill* where Miriam stays with a community of Quakers, there are several

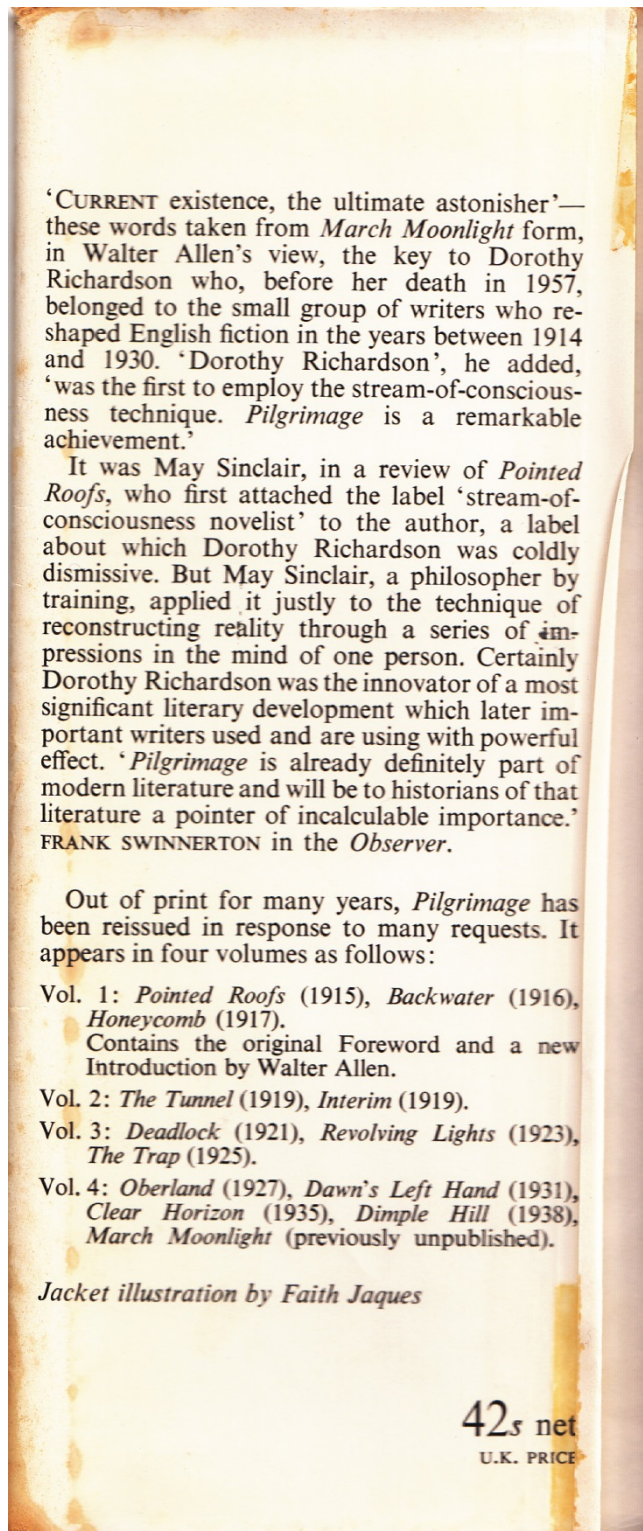


physical descriptions of the large garden: ‘the wide lawn, sentinelled and shaded on three of its corners, by this morning’s shadowy chestnut, the sycamore balancing it across the way’ (ibid, p.463) and ‘just beyond the broken-down fence, the ground fell abruptly (ibid, p.465). There is also a more reflective description of the garden prompted by the significance of the day, Sunday and its particular qualities; a recurring theme throughout *Pilgrimage*.

One saw the whole garden in a single eyeful and from all angles at once, because the part one was in, belonging to itself and seeming to throw one off, sent one’s mind gliding over the whole, alighting nowhere. And it was at these times that all the different beauties were most apparent and most deeply bathed in unattainable light. Distance does not *lend* enchantment. It shows where it is. In the thing seen, as well as in the eye of the beholder. And I realized one of the Quaker secrets. Living always remote, drawn away into the depths of the spirit, they see all the time, freshly. A perpetual Sunday’ (ibid, p.491).

Any book cover constructs a visual reading of its anchoring text. Jaques’ illustrations manage to capture some epiphanic moments that would be appreciated by those familiar with *Pilgrimage*. Those readers new to the text are unlikely to see this ‘developing consciousness’ reading although they might pick up a hint of this and expect the narrative perspective to be that of a woman who likes her own company. They would gain, at the very least, a general impression of *Pilgrimage* as a historical text. Jaques’ illustrations could be understood to have two other functions apart from the one identified earlier. They also signal something essential about the narrative focus on mental rather than physical experience and also, more straightforwardly, reinforce a key theme of Allen’s preface, *Pilgrimage*’s historical significance, rooted in time and place. As such, they provide an important cohesive element to the peritextual packaging of Dent’s omnibus edition.

**Other peritextual features of the 1967 Dent edition: the metatextual function of the jacket flap and dust wrapper**



The information on the left-hand jacket flap of the four volumes, in the form of a mini précis, is closely aligned with the subject matter and attitudes conveyed in Allen's allographic preface. The mild controversy already aired in the preface, namely Richardson's 'coldly dismissive' response to Sinclair's use of the term 'stream of consciousness' to describe *Pilgrimage*, resurfaces here. This controversy sits more comfortably, perhaps, in an epitextual article than it does in the peritext of a posthumous omnibus edition, the purpose of which is, surely, to celebrate the author in question, rather than undermine her critical judgement. Nevertheless Allen chose to raise the issue in his allographic preface, a place of critical prominence, but hidden in the interstices, whereas the jacket-flap text is a place of visual prominence. It could be the case that a decision was made by the publisher to bring this issue to the readers' attention in this edition, now that both women were dead and neither could be slighted. The difference of opinion between Richardson and Sinclair was a latent presence in the peritextual and epitextual material of the 1938 omnibus edition but is now very much alive in the peritextual material of the 1967 omnibus edition. Perhaps this debate on the matter of nomenclature could be interpreted as a means of engaging the prospective reader in thinking about the term's efficacy, but I think, more obviously, it sets up a degree of doubt about Richardson the woman, as well as Richardson the writer and critic.

It seems to me that the phrase 'coldly dismissive' is being used insidiously. Richardson, according to the anonymous writer of the jacket flap text, is not only stating that the term in question, 'stream of consciousness' is unworthy of serious consideration but also that Richardson's communicative manner – 'perfect imbecility' is the phrase she used – (Kunitz, 1933, p.562) is lacking in emotional warmth and respect for her fellow-writer, Sinclair. A value judgement about Richardson is being made which reinforces the disapproval that Allen expressed in his preface.

### **The provenance of the quotation from Frank Swinnerton on the jacket flap**

The final quotation on the jacket flap text is not, as one might expect, a new one, written to honour *Pilgrimage*'s completion, but one derived from a much older *Observer* article, written twenty-eight years earlier, entitled 'Novels of Last Year: "The Testament" and Others' by the critic and writer Frank Swinnerton. In this article he takes a look at the previous year in the round and identifies some 'notable titles' (January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, p.6). Swinnerton, at this point, was Principal Novel Reviewer for the *Observer* and, prior to that, had worked at Dent from 1901-1907 as a clerk before moving to Chatto & Windus as reader (1909-26) (Swinnerton, 1938, flyleaf).

Dent's reliance on an out-of-date quotation rather than presenting a new one by someone who had read *March Moonlight* (and the other twelve chapter-volumes) perhaps suggests that such a person was hard to locate. It is also an example of recycled paratextual criticism that perpetuates doubt and uncertainties about its anchoring text although purporting to do otherwise: '*Pilgrimage* is already definitely part of modern literature and will be to historians of that literature a pointer of incalculable importance.' The modality of the two consecutive adverbs is of interest here; 'already part of modern literature' has more conviction than 'already definitely' which seems to express uncertainty by overemphasis. Also the adjective 'incalculable', meaning that which cannot be calculated, estimated or predicted, expresses vagueness about how and why *Pilgrimage* might be considered important, as well as functioning as a hyperbolic rhetorical flourish, reinforced by the modal verb 'will', expressing certainty.

This critical judgement shares some of the mixed or tentative qualities identified in Allen's prefatorial discourse, and a closer examination of Swinnerton's 1939 *Observer* article reveals that the quoted sentence on the jacket flap is, in fact, part of a much longer one that

mixes positive and negative comments about *Pilgrimage* to ambiguous effect: ‘Miss Richardson was the first writer to introduce to English fiction what is known as “the stream of consciousness”’: and while ordinary novel-readers may find her two thousand pages not so much a stepping-stone as a riverside monument to a dead self, *Pilgrimage* already definitely (...)’. Swinnerton, in his role of Principal Novel Reviewer, presumably, disassociates himself from those ‘ordinary novel-readers’ who might fail to find any merit in *Pilgrimage*, but the image of a ‘riverside monument to a dead self’ is damning, suggesting, as it does, something large in scale, solid in form and yet somehow overlooked.

Swinnerton begins his 1939 article in a curmudgeonly manner: ‘My first impression of the year’s novels is that they would not, as a body, set on fire any river known to me,’ but continues in a more rational and appeasing way: ‘But that is an ungrateful and an ungracious view, the result, probably of having read too many of them at high pressure’. To be fair to Swinnerton, it should be noted that *Pilgrimage* is the first book he introduces from his very long list of books read, not read, reviewed and not reviewed, and his opening comment is respectful: ‘In any case the year has been distinguished by the republication in four handsome volumes (which also contain a new instalment of the work) of Miss Dorothy Richardson’s serial novel PILGRIMAGE.’ His accuracy in representing *Pilgrimage* as republished with ‘a new instalment’ would have pleased Richardson.

Swinnerton’s role in endorsing the 1938 omnibus edition and, much more indirectly, the 1967 one, is arguably peripheral but nonetheless interesting for comparative purposes. Richardson, in a letter dated April 8<sup>th</sup> 1938 to Richard Church (Dent Papers), notes her ‘complete surprise’ to see Swinnerton’s positive contribution in Church’s epitextual essay and alludes to an anecdote where her friend, the writer Robert Nichols, ‘nearly came to blows with Swinnerton over the first three volumes of *Pilgrimage*’. This comment suggests that Richardson knew that Swinnerton did not rate her work highly and that, perhaps, she

had read, or been made aware of, his book of literary criticism published the same year, in 1938, by her own publisher, Dent, entitled *The Georgian Literary Scene*. A letter written in 1920, (dated February 21<sup>st</sup>) to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, reveals a carefully worded but essentially negative evaluation of Swinnerton's critical skills: 'I cannot say that it altogether displeases me that you do not get on with Swinnerton. I cannot myself find more in him than a very good essayist in a threadbare tradition; rather perhaps a tradition that would not wear because the fabric was woven on a faulty mechanism' (Fromm, 1995, p.40).

### **An examination of Frank Swinnerton's *The Georgian Literary Scene***

In *The Georgian Literary Scene* Swinnerton deals with Sinclair and Richardson together in a chapter entitled 'Post-Freud' that also includes more substantial comments on the writers E.M. Forster, D.H. Lawrence and James Joyce. Whereas the male writers are given their own named subsections, Swinnerton's comments on Sinclair and Richardson are very brief indeed. He deals with them in part one of the chapter when making some initial points about psychology, literature and Freudian theory and the extent of Freud's influence on novelists. Sinclair is given a cursory treatment in comparison to the male authors, but is definitely given more prominence than Richardson. A quotation from Sinclair's first novel *Audrey Craven* (1897) functions as the chapter's epigraph: 'In our modern mythology, Custom, Circumstance, and Heredity are the three Fates that weave the web of human life' (ibid, p.283). In the main body of the chapter Swinnerton states:

May Sinclair (...) wrote in 1922 a book called *The Life and Death of Harriet Frea*n which was a *genuine advance* in a particular form of *impressionistic realism* then first attracting notice. This short novel, which told the story of a woman from childhood until her death under anaesthetic, was *significant*. It *skimmed the cream*, as it were, of a life; there were *no redundancies, no comments*, only such *selected details* as contributed to our calm knowledge of the way things happened to one ordinary woman (my emphases) (ibid, p.285).

His comments are measured, commending, in the main, Sinclair's narrative concision. The modifiers 'genuine', 'significant' and 'selected' are all positive in meaning and the three sentences concern Sinclair's work only. He then turns his attention to Dorothy Richardson, to whom in the spirit of fair play, perhaps, he also devotes three sentences.

And Dorothy Richardson invented in *Pilgrimage* a new kind of impressionism in literature. She did not dodge, as Virginia Woolf does, among the past and present moods of her heroine, but with extremely *dexterous selectiveness* managed to tell a continuous life-story as if it were in progress under our eyes. But *so exact and indeed endless* is her recollection that instead of compressing the life of Miriam into 184 pages, as May Sinclair compresses that of Harriet Frean, *she makes every few weeks or months of it fill three hundred pages and could seemingly go on for ever* (ibid, pp. 285-6) (my emphases).

This segment typifies much of the dominant critical discourse on Richardson, prior to the 1970s, where a careful path is often being taken, and positive and negative comment mixed in an obscurantist way. There are some modifiers that communicate positive meanings, 'a new kind of' and 'dexterous' and some others that, in context, are inherently negative, namely 'exact' and 'endless'. Looking again at Swinnerton's observations on Sinclair that precede those on Richardson, it is now possible to see that the syntactically realised negative polarity in 'no redundancies, no comments' is being used for a 'special purpose', in this case to activate the idea that 'redundancies' and 'comments' are inherently negative (Leech, 1983, p.101, cited in Nørgaard al 2010, p.129). The reader is thus primed to make an unfavourable comparison before one is explicitly developed.

Unlike his apparently 'isolated' treatment of Sinclair, Swinnerton chooses to embed observations on Woolf and Sinclair into his commentary on Richardson. He suggests that Richardson's narrative method, leading to interminable length, is less desirable than Sinclair's brevity. The final sentence of the quoted segment closes the chapter's opening section and has a suspended quality. The possibility that Richardson might 'go on for ever'

with *Pilgrimage* does not seem to be one that Swinnerton finds appealing, quite the reverse. The lack of comment in relation to this possibility encodes, I think, a negative judgement.

Swinnerton's more distant epitextual literary criticism in *The Georgian Literary Scene*, his closer epitextual criticism (his contribution to the 1938 brochure) and the recycled quotation on the jacket flap of the 1967 omnibus edition, shifting his criticism from epitextual to peritextual, seems to me to be a very good example of Genette's thinking on the 'giving and taking away' of meaning characterising paratextual space (1997, p.183). What is metatextually 'given' in the close epitextual material of the 1938 omnibus edition is 'taken away,' to some extent, by the truncated, recycled and out-of-date quotation on the jacket flap of the 1967 omnibus edition and both are thrown into relief by Swinnerton's wider epitextual literary criticism on Richardson.

### **Dent's publishing voice in the 1967 edition**

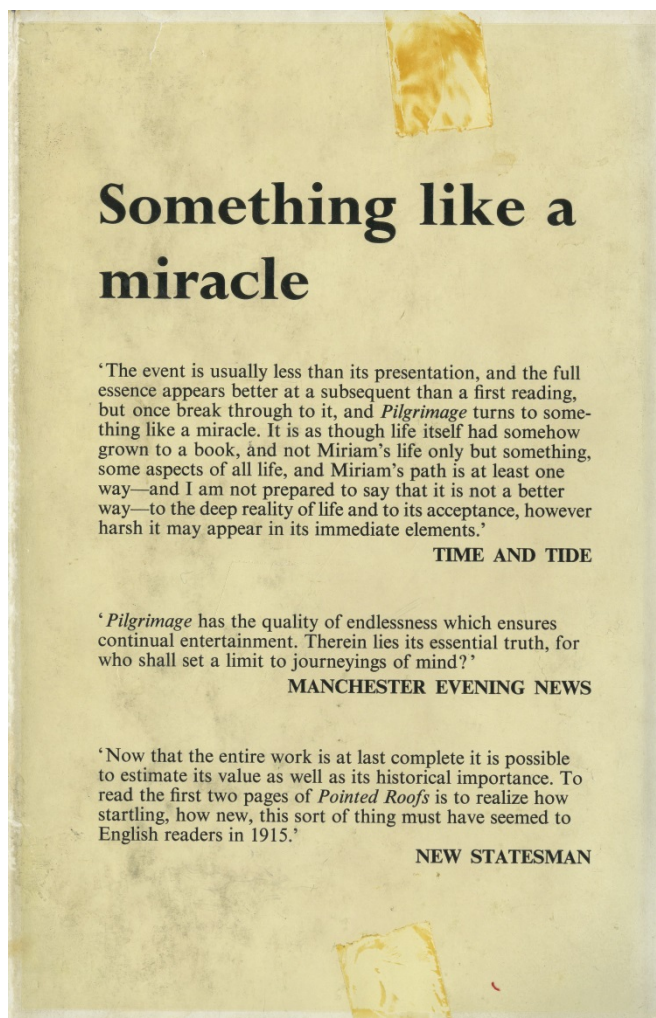
Dent's voice as publisher is not as strong a peritextual feature as its New York Library counterpart, but it does surface in the jacket flap information on the topic of *Pilgrimage*'s intermittent publishing history: 'Out of print for many years, *Pilgrimage* has been reissued in response to many requests'. Here the use of the vague quantifier 'many' to modify 'years' and 'requests' suggests that the text has been out of print for a significant amount of time and that its reissue is not a publisher's whim but a positive, responsive gesture to *Pilgrimage*'s readership. It provides a personal touch to an instrumental business function although the use of the passive voice '*Pilgrimage* has been reissued' helps to maintain formality and distance. Dent published the 'false' omnibus edition of *Pilgrimage* in 1938 and nearly thirty years later is publishing the complete edition and laying the matter to rest,



something not directly expressed but understood by those who have knowledge of *Pilgrimage's* publishing history.

### ***Pilgrimage's* framing on the back page peritext**

The back page of the dust wrapper indicates how *Pilgrimage* was being framed for different reading communities in 1967.



## **Something like a miracle**

'The event is usually less than its presentation, and the full essence appears better at a subsequent than a first reading, but once break through to it, and *Pilgrimage* turns to something like a miracle. It is as though life itself had somehow grown to a book, and not Miriam's life only but something, some aspects of all life, and Miriam's path is at least one way—and I am not prepared to say that it is not a better way—to the deep reality of life and to its acceptance, however harsh it may appear in its immediate elements.'

**TIME AND TIDE**

'*Pilgrimage* has the quality of endlessness which ensures continual entertainment. Therein lies its essential truth, for who shall set a limit to journeyings of mind?'

**MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS**

'Now that the entire work is at last complete it is possible to estimate its value as well as its historical importance. To read the first two pages of *Pointed Roofs* is to realize how startling, how new, this sort of thing must have seemed to English readers in 1915.'

**NEW STATESMAN**

The first review extract is taken from *Time And Tide*, a weekly literary journal, founded by Lady Margaret Rhondda to identify and promote, 'the customs and the ideas that could be health-giving and life-saving' (Dowson, 2009, p.530). A suffragette and hunger striker,

Lady Margaret Rhondda's strongly held views on the position of women were reflected in the journal's articles, essays and literary reviews, particularly in the 'first stage' of its development (Sullivan, 1986, p.443). Its front cover, serious and functional, resembled a newspaper, with two column blocks of print and a small illustration of Big Ben and Westminster Bridge located above the 'And' of the title. *Time And Tide*, like several other literary and artistic magazines of the time, was adversarial in ethos, with a small educated readership. These 'little magazines' published experimental writing and visual art and proved a discussion forum for the dissemination of new ideas and the challenging of traditional ones (Brooker and Thacker, 2009, p.3). Each magazine had a distinct modernist inflection and its own 'periodical code' reflecting its editorial influence (ibid, p.14). *Time And Tide* promoted class as well as gender equality and encouraged 'free-thinking dialogue' about contemporary matters. Literary reviews were a staple part of the magazine which was 'open to innovation that broadened minds' and 'women's texts were given the serious consideration denied them in other papers' (Dowson, ibid, p.540 and p.542).

In the extract from the undated review on the peritextual blurb of the 1967 edition, *Time And Tide*'s 'health-giving and life-saving' values are reflected in the abstract noun 'life' and the tentative suggestion that *Pilgrimage* might be understood to be an expression of what life is. Despite some initial reservations about narrative technique and a warning that *Pilgrimage* lacks an immediate obvious appeal, the blurb is a positive endorsement, highlighting how *Pilgrimage* might spiritually uplift its readers:

The event is usually less than its presentation, and the full essence appears better at a subsequent than a first reading, but once break through to it, and *Pilgrimage* turns to *something like a miracle*. It is as though life itself had somehow grown into a book, and not Miriam's life only but something, some aspects of all life, and Miriam's path is at least one way – and I am not prepared to say that it is not a better way – to *the deep reality of life and to its acceptance*, however, harsh it may appear in its immediate elements.

The rhetorical use of the ‘miracle’ simile echoes an earlier description of *Pilgrimage* in Richard Church’s epitextual essay to the 1938 omnibus edition by the writer Rebecca West, who uses the metaphor ‘a miracle of performance’. This could be coincidental, of course, but one review can influence another, developing over time a dominant paratextual discourse with recurring issues and figurative language.

The second peritextual review, the *Manchester Evening News*, a newspaper with a more general interest audience than *Time and Tide*, uses a surprisingly high level of abstract language, the effect of which is both vague and mystifying. Clearly this is only a segment from a longer stretch of discourse but its selection is odd considering its instrumental function: ‘*Pilgrimage* has the quality of *endlessness* which ensures continual entertainment. Therein lies its *essential truth*, for who shall set a limit to journeyings of mind?’ (my emphases). The logical link between the ideas of ‘endlessness’ and ‘continual entertainment’ is unclear but the point, that this is a text where the life of the mind is given a free rein, is communicated. Like ‘miracle of performance’ in *Time And Tide*, this review uses two expressions from earlier epitexts. ‘Continual entertainment’ is a summary of Swinnerton’s phrase ‘a continuous stream of entertainment’ used in the 1938 essay and the abstract noun ‘endlessness’ repeats the use of the modifier ‘endless’ in Swinnerton’s *The Georgian Literary Scene* of the same year. These examples of lexical recycling could be conscious or unconscious but are nonetheless interesting. ‘Entertainment’ has already been judged to be an odd word to use to describe *Pilgrimage* (see chapter 2, p.91) and its recurrence here, in a review designed to appeal to a general readership, is perhaps explained by the fact that ‘entertainment’ has a broad meaning associated with amusement and enjoyment.

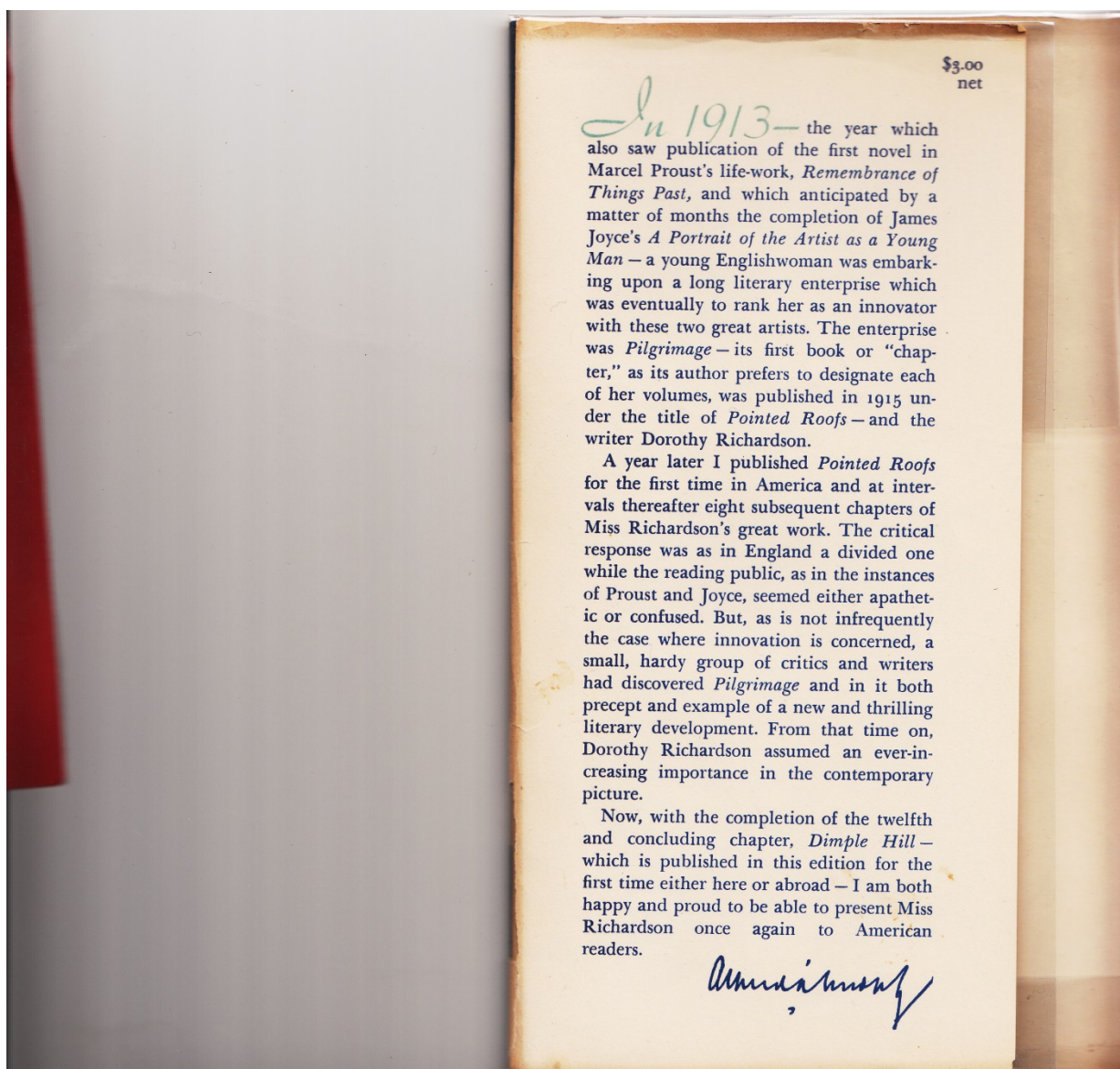
The third, the *New Statesman*, a left-wing, political and cultural magazine, at its circulation peak in the late 1960s, has a more concrete, brisk approach and is clearly informed by the

approach taken in Allen's preface. It does not attempt to describe *Pilgrimage's* subject matter but reflects more on its status and style, trying to consider it anew in its complete state, but in so doing, takes the potential reader back to a relatively well-worn path: 'Now that the entire work is at last complete it is possible to estimate its value as well as its historical importance. To read the first two pages of *Pointed Roofs* is to realize how startling, how new, this sort of thing must have seemed to English readers in 1915.'

These three peritextual segments from the back of the dust wrapper not only indicate how *Pilgrimage* was being mediated for new audiences in 1967, they also uncover the palimpsestic traces of earlier metatextual reviews and ways of thinking about *Pilgrimage*. This is, in one way, unsurprising, in that any back cover blurb might convey a potted history of critical reviews, but I think, in the case of *Pilgrimage*, this history has always been problematic, characterised by the ambiguity and uncertainty of many reviewers, who, in the face of doubts, have been a little too over-reliant on previous criticism. The reused quotation from Frank Swinnerton on the jacket flap is another example of the same phenomenon. Genette's ideas about the mutability of the paratext compared with the immutability of the anchoring text might need a little modification in the case of *Pilgrimage*. This novel sequence is a text that *has* mutated over time (growing gradually and unevenly) and its paratexts have been less responsive than they might have been to this mutative process. A selection of ideas have been recycled, making these ideas more influential than they, perhaps, deserve to be. Thus certain fixed ways of thinking about *Pilgrimage* have proved hard to circumvent.

**The 1976 New York Popular Library edition: what is foregrounded and what is disguised in the peritextual back cover blurb**

The 1976 New York Popular Library edition, published by arrangement with Knopf and by agreement with Dent, does more than most to counteract the residual reservations and doubts that have been seen to characterise *Pilgrimage's* paratextual discourse. The second American omnibus of *Pilgrimage*, the first being the 1938 Knopf edition, follows a trend set by its earlier incarnation in communicating more directly with its audience and being more upbeat in tone than its British predecessor, the 1967 Dent edition.



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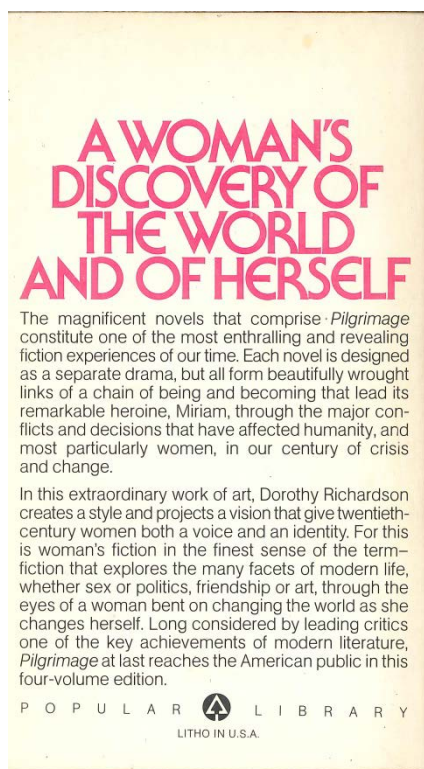
In 1913—the year which also saw publication of the first novel in Marcel Proust's life-work, *Remembrance of Things Past*, and which anticipated by a matter of months the completion of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*—a young Englishwoman was embarking upon a long literary enterprise which was eventually to rank her as an innovator with these two great artists. The enterprise was *Pilgrimage*—its first book or “chapter,” as its author prefers to designate each of her volumes, was published in 1915 under the title of *Pointed Roofs*—and the writer Dorothy Richardson.

A year later I published *Pointed Roofs* for the first time in America and at intervals thereafter eight subsequent chapters of Miss Richardson's great work. The critical response was as in England a divided one while the reading public, as in the instances of Proust and Joyce, seemed either apathetic or confused. But, as is not infrequently the case where innovation is concerned, a small, hardy group of critics and writers had discovered *Pilgrimage* and in it both precept and example of a new and thrilling literary development. From that time on, Dorothy Richardson assumed an ever-increasing importance in the contemporary picture.

Now, with the completion of the twelfth and concluding chapter, *Dimple Hill*—which is published in this edition for the first time either here or abroad—I am both happy and proud to be able to present Miss Richardson once again to American readers.

Alfred Knopf

Alfred Knopf's signature at the bottom of the jacket flap of the 1938 edition conveys the authority of a publisher confident in his own judgement, one who saw Richardson's potential early on: 'I am both happy and proud to be able to present Miss Richardson once again to American readers'. He openly refers to the 'divided' critical response to the 'great work' of *Pilgrimage* and applauds those 'hardy' critics and writers who 'had discovered *Pilgrimage* and in it both precept and example of a new and thrilling literary development'. The peritextual blurb to volume I of the 1976 New York Popular Library edition is also direct, confident and laudatory. Unlike the 1938 Knopf edition, however, there are no references to, or traces of, critical reservations.



In this New York Popular Library peritext, details – such as the text’s abnormal length – are camouflaged by a vague sense of plurality encoded in ‘magnificent novels that comprise *Pilgrimage*’. The noun phrase ‘separate drama’ to describe the formal organisation of the text suggests there is a play-like quality to the novel sequence, whereby significant events, productive of tensions, occur systematically in each chapter-volume and that the narrative is conveyed by action and dialogue rather than stream of consciousness. Also misleading, is the way in which Miriam is represented as a heroic character, making decisions and involved in crises and conflicts that she addresses head on. The marked use of pre-modification creates a supremely confident tone that communicates an unambiguously positive evaluation, free of any shade of doubt and uncertainty about *Pilgrimage*. The modifiers form a cluster of heightened and superlative meanings to describe the nature of



the text as a whole ('magnificent', 'extraordinary work of art', 'women's fiction in the finest sense', 'one of the key achievements of modern literature'), the reader's experience ('most enthralling'), the craft of the novel sequence ('beautifully wrought') and the protagonist ('remarkable').

### **The 1976 New York Popular Library edition: the role of the flyleaf textual summaries**

The preface writer of the 1979 Virago edition of *Pilgrimage*, Gillian Hanscombe, reflecting on the New York Popular Library edition, notes 'how truly American and indeed how truly Popular Library the promo was/is' (email dated April 25<sup>th</sup> 2014). Hanscombe is here alluding to the cultural handling role played by the publisher in attempting to determine *Pilgrimage's* generic status and the upbeat tone of the discourse. Her comments relate to its use of textual summaries on the flyleaf as well as the blurb explored above. The former is a distinctive feature of the American paperback edition, the result of a difference in cultural framing. The Virago reader (serious-minded, independent) has to negotiate their own way through *Pilgrimage's* thirteen chapter-volumes, whereas the New York Popular Library reader (used to a lighter diet of reading) is given a brief résumé of each chapter-volume on the flyleaf to each volume. Here is the titillating textual summary of volume I:



**Christine E. McMillin**

**Pointed Roofs,**

filled with the intrigues and hidden passions of a German girl's school, where young English-woman Miriam Henderson has come to teach, and where she must learn what it is to be a stranger and afraid in a world of new emotions and vulnerability . . .

**Backwater,**

a school of life and love in London, where two different men each demand that Miriam be his, one symbolizing all that is safe and trusted, the other all that is foreign and forbidding, and both threatening to devour her with their ravenous desire . . .

**Honeycomb,**

a world of women where Miriam seeks refuge, a world ruled by a dazzling beauty who represents all that is most outwardly successful and inwardly corrupt in the skillful playing of a woman's role . . .

These are the opening novels of

**PILGRIMAGE**

one of the supreme human revelations of our time.

Now Popular Library is proud to republish this great underground modern masterpiece!

This summary does not concern itself with shifting conceptions of *Pilgrimage's* genre identity and the way in which the text's length, composite structure and style have caused problems for those seeking to fit the novel sequence into a particular type. This area of critical difficulty is left well alone and the approach adopted here is to describe each chapter-volume as if it were the next instalment of a serial narrative about Miriam's love affairs. Such an interpretation, as unlikely as it sounds, is not, however, without precedent. John Rosenberg, Richardson's first biographer, reflecting on Miriam's character, only three years prior to the publication of this omnibus edition, states:

Miriam is much more the beloved than the lover, someone pursued by involvements and commitments, from which she is impelled to break away – thereby hurting herself most of all. The other people want her or need her in various ways, and yet curiously the greater share of intensity is on her side: she is vulnerable, a source of light-energy and emotion of which people are instinctively aware and which draws them to her, to drain these resources of hers' (1973, p.164).

It is quite possible, or even probable, that whoever wrote the peritextual blurb for this popular edition read or dipped into Rosenberg's biography of Richardson. The distinctive peritextual linguistic register of this edition firmly establishes *Pilgrimage*'s position within the popular genre of romantic fiction with its stereotypical character roles (the naïve and vulnerable young woman and the predatory male versus the good man) and familiar formulaic subject matter of heterosexual love, passion and desire. The settings suggest the everyday (a girls' school in Germany, London) but the events and experiences are represented as exciting, formative and testing. *Backwater* is, indeed, one of the few chapter-volumes where Miriam indulges in some romantic dreaming about the opposite sex. She imagines the behaviour of a young man, Ted, at a forthcoming party, how he would walk in and interact with other people, whilst communicating a strongly felt intimacy with her through his 'silence' and deliberate avoidance of eye contact:

Amongst the crowd of guests, he would come across the room, walking in his way... . She smiled to herself. He would come 'sloping in' in his way, like a shadow, not looking at anyone. His strange friend would be with him. There would be introductions and greetings. Then he would dance with her silently and not looking at her, as if they were strangers, and then be dancing with someone else . . . with smiling, mocking tender brown eyes and talking and answering and all the time looking about the room (I, p.206).

The reality of their meeting is, however, rather different and subverts the conventional romantic expectations of an intimate encounter. Instead Miriam's attention is completely diverted by Ted's new 'strange friend,' Max Sonnenheim, who dances and flirts with her and ends up taking her for a walk in the garden. Max has many attractive qualities: his German-Jewish, ('foreign') marginalised outsider status fascinates her (Rosenberg, 1973, p.78), his personality engages her by being both bold and composed, and, most significantly, he treats her as an equal. Their time together is short-lived and intense but, in no way, could

it be said to be physical in the sense implied by ‘ravenous desire’. Max departs for New York the next day and disappears from the narrative, only to reappear in a passive sense, when his death is noted by Miriam, in a conversation with a fellow teacher, Miss Haddie, later on in the same chapter-volume. The reader has to ‘reconstruct’ the event from Miriam’s conversational turns, a characteristic of the novel sequence noted by Howard Finn (2007, p.192), and, like Miss Haddie, try and make sense of Miriam’s references to ‘someone – who went away – went to America – who was coming back to see me when he came back’ who has now ‘handed in his checks’ and ‘kicked the bucket’ (I, p.277). Max has died prematurely, the details withheld and the event encoded in euphemistic slang which feels odd and, perhaps, disrespectful, although clearly communicating how the reality of his untimely death has impinged on Miriam’s consciousness through a sense of restricted life choices.

Max’s death and its ellipsis from the narrative stands in an antithetical position to the type of heightened drama associated with romantic fiction but this textual detail and others resistant to the romantic fiction genre, are overlooked or camouflaged in the peritextual blurbs. Richardson’s attempts to denaturalise heterosexual relationships and reject or elude the dominant narrative norms of her day are countered by a peritextual register that stubbornly adheres to a romantic fiction reading of *Pilgrimage* across all four chapter-volumes.

### THE TUNNEL,

in which Miriam enters the world of underground art and bohemian life-styles, and finds herself desperately entangled with a man she does not love but cannot bear to hurt, even when he begins to destroy her independence and pride . . .

### INTERIM,

an escape from the bondage of the flesh into the ecstasies of the spirit, and from self-centered solitude into passionate commitment and concern with the fate of humanity . . .

Two superb novels . . . two perilous stepping stones toward maturity and fulfillment . . . two key pieces in one of the great and towering masterpieces of our century—

Dorothy M. Richardson's  
PILGRIMAGE

The summary of *Tunnel* in volume II foregrounds Miriam's destructive relationship with an unnamed man, whose strong feelings for her are unreciprocated. Miriam's emotional conflict ('desperately entangled' and 'she does not love but cannot bear to hurt') is located in particular artistic contexts. The phrases 'underground art' and 'bohemian lifestyle' suggest liminal places concealed or detached from the everyday world, where self-expression dominates. 'Bohemian' denotes an artistic aesthetic associated with poverty and a carefree attitude. Its meaning broadened in the mid-nineteenth century from an earlier, more literal meaning of 'gypsy' or 'native or inhabitant of Bohemia'. The term was widely used in France in the 1840s when it was popularised by Henri Murger's novel, *Scenes de la vie bohème* (1851) (Gluck, 2000, p.351).

Whilst the peritextual summary of *The Tunnel* foregrounds one heterosexual relationship – distorting content and emotional colouration – it is certainly true that Miriam experiences 'bohemian' socio-cultural spaces where new ways of living, including sexual relations, play

out discreetly and affect her deeply. Mag and Jan's 'wonderful rich Bloomsbury life' (II, p.81) strikes Miriam as witty and flamboyant but also unsettles her (II, p.81). Their 'improper' landlady welcomes Miriam in a 'silk petticoat and a dressing jacket' (II, p.79), Mag and Jan celebrate their own ability to wear what they want when they want (II, p.90) and despite separate bedrooms, intimacy is communicated (II, p.87). Miriam's induction into Hypo Wilson's (H.G. Wells') cultural milieu exposes her more personally to physical intimacy. Miriam is appalled by the social conformity of marriage: 'She [Alma] had gone in amongst the crowds already – for ever' (II, p.78), but is intrigued by the Wilsons' 'open marriage'. Miriam's intellectual friendship with Hypo eventually becomes a sexual relationship (recorded in *Dawn's Left Hand*).

The second summary of *Interim* describes Miriam's spiritual life and uses the juxtaposed set phrases, 'bondage of the flesh' and 'ecstasies of the spirit', a disturbing mixture of sexual and religious imagery. The abstract lexis together with the marked use of parallel prepositional phrases as well as the more convoluted expressions to convey ideas of contrasting concerns (with the self and others) communicate the idea of conflictual psychological struggle and mental turmoil. There does not seem to be much, in the way of material, that can be romantically transposed, so the rejection of physical love is dramatically represented. Miriam's inner life is, of course, *Interim's* subject matter but the rather heroic way in which her conflicts are enacted distorts the tonal quality of the chapter-volume, which is much more ordinary, recording her day-to-day relationships with the people she meets at her boarding house and conversations with friends.

### **DEADLOCK,**

in which Miriam Henderson plunges into an affair with a man of an alien race, an alien faith, surrendering her body, and fearful of losing her identity itself when she discovers what marriage to her lover would mean . . .

### **REVOLVING LIGHTS,**

a masterful evocation of trembling, dazzling awakening as Miriam realizes beyond a shadow of a doubt that she must survive as a woman alone, without the protection of men, and that it is in her hands to do with her life what she will . . .

### **THE TRAP,**

a world of women who scorn men—an inverted world that welcomes Miriam with open arms, as she feels its seduction and its corruption . . .

Three compulsively readable works of fiction—all part of one of the most revealing revelations of a woman's innermost soul ever created—

Dorothy M. Richardson's

### **PILGRIMAGE**

The peritextual summaries of volume III follow the same linguistic formula of reductive clichéd expressions but they also, in an oddly perceptive way, identify something significant about Miriam's feelings about Michael Shatov, a Russian Jew. In conversation with Miriam in *Revolving Lights*, Hypo Wilson repeatedly commands Miriam to 'marry your Jew' and Miriam defends her feelings for Shatov claiming that, 'there are ways in which I like him and am in touch with him as I could never be with an Englishman (III, p.262). Miriam's feelings for Shatov are filtered through his Jewishness, his 'alien race'. There is certainly material in this chapter-volume with 'romantic' potential. *Deadlock* marks Miriam and Shatov's first meeting, and charts their developing relationship from intellectual companions to lovers with their first kiss and Shatov's confession of lost virginity (ibid, pp.203-4). Shatov proposes marriage: 'Ah, Miriam, let us at once be married' but Miriam's response is negative: 'you know we can't; you know how separate we are' (ibid, pp.301-2). There is no

evidence of ‘plunging into an affair’ or indeed a ‘surrendering of the body’. Shatov’s touch: “‘You think you will never marry . . . with *this*’ – his ungloved hands moved gently over the outlines of her shoulders’ (ibid, p.303) is as physical as this relationship gets. ‘She thrilled to the impersonal acclamation; yet another of his many defiant tributes to her forgotten material self’ (ibid) suggests that Shatov has been in the habit of making this kind of physical gesture but Miriam’s response is, at best, mixed. A few lines later, ‘the necessity of breaking with him invaded her’ (ibid, p.304). This is more about resistance to the approach of a lover and prospective husband and fear about the loss of autonomy than surrender to sensual pleasure.

#### **OBERLAND,**

an idyll in Switzerland, an enchanted time when Miriam Henderson experiences life as it could be, before returning to life as it is . . .

#### **DAWN’S LEFT HAND,**

introducing Miriam to the joys and the agonies of a passionate love between two women, even as she is drawn into a degrading affair with a brilliant, self-centered married man . . .

#### **CLEAR HORIZON,**

in which pregnancy forces Miriam to choose between the man and the woman in her life, and between the two poles of desire within her . . .

#### **DIMPLE HILL,**

a splendid English countryside estate, where Miriam seeks escape from the challenge of existence, but instead finds an ultimate confrontation with her destiny . . .

#### **MARCH MOONLIGHT,**

the final, posthumous novel of this magnificent saga, both an ending and a beginning, as Miriam finds the person with whom she will share her life, and embarks upon the work that will give that life meaning . . .

Dorothy M. Richardson’s  
**PILGRIMAGE**

The peritextual summaries of the final volume again repeat the established formula of contrastive experiences ('life as it could be versus 'life as it is,' 'joys and agonies,' 'two poles of desire') heightened emotions ('enchanted time,' 'ultimate confrontation with her destiny') and problems ('degrading affair,' 'pregnancy'), presenting *Pilgrimage* as a text with a clear-cut plot based on a series of love relationships and the emotions arising from their complexities. This final set of summaries suggests that the reader can vicariously experience the highs and lows of Miriam's relationships. The *March Moonlight* one deviates from this pattern, however, and seems more in keeping with the meditative nature of the text it describes, although the reference to 'both an ending and a beginning,' 'finding a person' and 'embarking upon the work that will give her life meaning,' all reinforce a sense of a satisfying and happy ending, a key convention of romantic fiction.

These peritextual summaries serve an important orienting function for the New York Popular Library reader, positioned as someone who might require some advance direction. It would be easy to dismiss them as distortions of their anchoring text, doing little more than forcing *Pilgrimage* into the generic mould of romantic fiction, but they are, on occasion, astute as well as enthusiastic. They also pay a type of stylistic homage to *Pilgrimage* by using Richardson's idiosyncratic punctuation feature of the three full stops, although this feature is used in a much less subtle way than it is in *Pilgrimage*, to communicate 'and you can imagine the rest' meaning, enticing the reader to read on. Also of interest is the way in which the titles of chapter-volumes are integrated into the opening sentence of each summary as the headword. These fragmented titles are poetic and evocative rather than summative and descriptive and the writer of the summaries has made an attempt to interpret them. 'TUNNEL, in which Miriam enters the world of underground art and bohemian lifestyles' explains the metaphor by semantically linking the noun 'tunnel' with the modifier 'underground' to describe the world that Miriam inhabits. The same is true of 'TRAP, a



world of women who scorn men' where the metaphor is explained as attitudinal, not physical and 'REVOLVING LIGHTS' where the imagery is linked to Miriam's 'trembling, dazzling awakening'. These are all valid interpretations that seek to make sense of the titles. Much less valid, and indeed misleading, is the way in which Miriam's sexual liaison with Hypo Wilson (H.G. Wells) is reduced to a 'degrading affair'. There is no doubt that their first attempt at having sex takes place in a fairly sleazy context and that Miriam feels very strange after she has lost her virginity but neither situation causes her a loss of dignity or self-respect (IV, pp.231-2 and p.258).

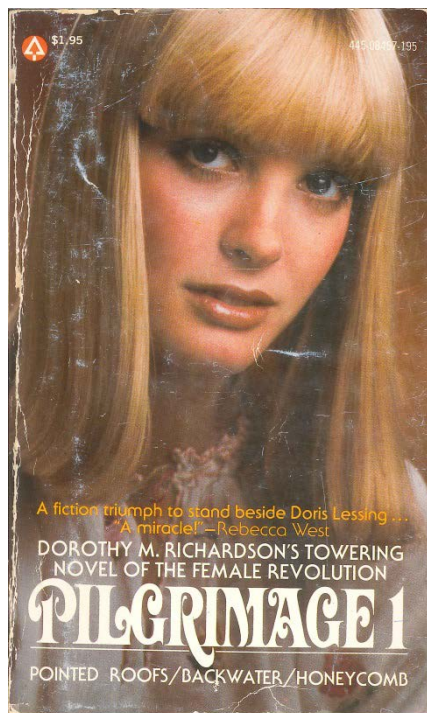
Segments of the peritextual discourse counter the idea of *Pilgrimage* as romantic fiction, such as the two summative sentences at the bottom of the flyleaf to volume I: 'These are the opening novels of PILGRIMAGE one of the *supreme human revelations of our time*' and 'Now Popular Library is proud to republish this *great underground modern masterpiece!*' but these bold statements, in context, are unlikely to be read as anything other than positive endorsements. Someone, most likely a young female reader, with no knowledge of *Pilgrimage*, who picked up any volumes of this popular edition might be forgiven for expecting to read an accessible narrative, with easily identifiable characters and situations conforming to the generic conventions of romantic fiction. They are also more likely to expect the subject matter, rather than the style, to be subversive in some way (signalled by the modifier 'underground' and the noun phrase 'female revolution' on the cover). Such readers are perhaps also less likely to dwell on the literary endorsements from Virginia Woolf, H.G. Wells, Ford Madox Ford, John Cowper Powys and Frank Swinnerton facing the title page. The prefatorial introduction by Walter Allen and Richardson's Foreword might also be skipped in an eagerness to engage with the 'story'.

There might be other types of reader, of course, who buy this edition because they are familiar with the text or might have to read it as part of their literary studies and have taken the opportunity to buy the text in a cheap paperback form. My second-hand copy of volume I of this popular edition has the previous owner's name, Californian female, now in her 70s, (www.intelius.com) stamped in two different places and segments of the introduction underlined. This suggests that the owner was the second type of reader, somebody who, at one time, wanted to keep the text safely in her personal library. Such material evidence is a useful reminder that the purchasing and reading of books is a complex business and that one's initial intuitions about audience in such a case as this might need modifying.

### **The New York Popular Library edition covers: a sexualised reading of *Pilgrimage***

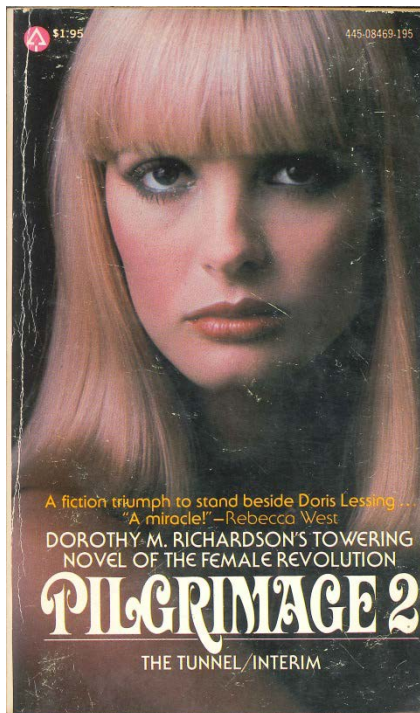
A significant contrast between the Dent and New York Popular Library editions is in their choice of cover. Both depict a woman who represents Miriam across all four volumes but the images presented could not be more different. Unlike the Dent pen-and-ink drawings with their detailed attention to era, place and costume, The New York Popular Library edition uses head-and-shoulder photos of the same blonde model (unattributed) which we might today recognise as a signifier for 'chick-lit' genre fiction. The photographs reinforce an idea of a modern Miriam, a young attractive woman with whom a female reader in 1970s America might like to identify. It could be argued that the glossy shots, with their popular magazine or movie-star glamour, convey very little in the way of the actual subject matter or style of *Pilgrimage* and, moreover, give a false impression of it as 1970s romantic fiction. On the other hand, these four portrait photographs of a woman, looking distinctively different but recognisably the same, not only construct a visual reading of some validity but creatively transform the text into one that speaks directly to a young woman of the 1970s,

promising a certain kind of relevance that transcends the time and place of its publication. A prospective reader picking up these four volumes might well ask themselves what is being suggested by these photographic portraits and, indeed, what might be going on in the woman's mind in order to present such different faces or what has happened to her to fragment her identity in such a way. And, in so doing, they will be engaging with the text in a way that will prepare them for the subject matter of *Pilgrimage* which requires the reader to enter the world of Miriam's mind, her private thoughts, emotions, perceptions, memories and attitudes.



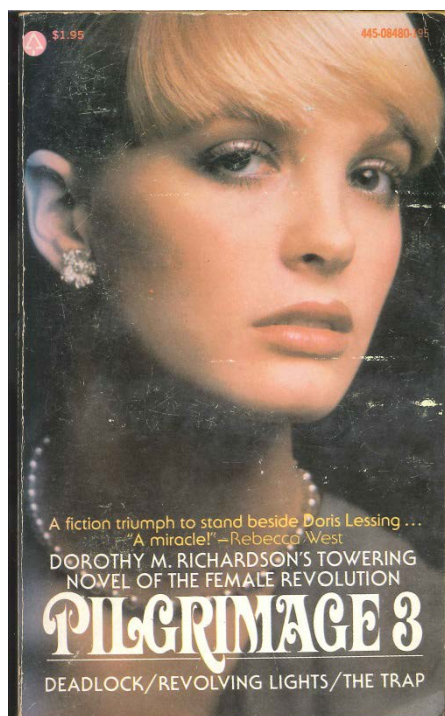
In volume I, the young woman's lips are slightly parted in a half-smile and this feature, reinforced by a direct gaze and tilted head, communicates a certain innocent intimacy with

the reader. Her straight blonde hair, styled into a shoulder length bob, frames her face. She is wearing a blouse or dress with a slight frill joined at the neck by a multi-coloured string tie in a loose bow. There is a tiny gap of bare flesh exposed but no cleavage. The make-up is natural and the whole effect is one of a feminine young woman on the cusp of sexual experience. The image not only communicates a certain readiness for this experience but also a sense of her potential vulnerability and this is in a congruent relationship with the peritextual summaries.



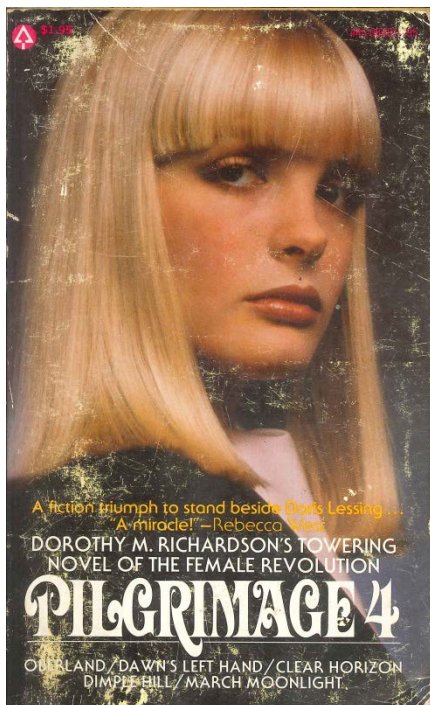
In volume II the same woman looks directly at the viewer and the gaze is more knowing and sexual. The make-up on eyes and lips is heavier and the effect is sultry. The hair is similar in style to volume I although the lighting is pink, so the colour of the hair looks strawberry blonde. The lips are loosely closed but are more voluminous. It would appear that the

woman is naked with a forearm drawn across her breasts but the soft focus lighting and the verbal text at the bottom serve to make the image vague and undefined. This more sexualised image is in a congruent relationship with the peritextual summary of *Tunnel* but less so with the rather spiritual representation of *Interim*.



In volume III the model's stance is oblique, her hair swept back from her face (into a bun or chignon, I think, rather than a pony tail) to reveal her right ear. She is wearing a large sparkling stud ear-ring in the shape of an open flower and a short string of pearls. Her make-up is less heavy than volume II and the look more mature and sophisticated. The facial expression has an element of haughty disdain. The dress is dark and the neck revealing but not overtly provocative. The image is full of contained sexual power. These visual cues,

signifying Miriam's development and maturation, are echoed in the peritextual summaries for volume III.



Volume IV provides another oblique stance of the model, looking over her right shoulder at the viewer. Her appearance is an interesting mix of feminine face and masculine attire, a white shirt/blouse with a high neck, a black jacket and something reminiscent of a black choker around the neck. The woman looks less womanly than in Volume III, more like the Miriam of volume I but the dress and gaze are very different. There is strong sense of a subversive created identity. The facial expression of the woman is difficult to pin down exactly, neither 'come hither' nor hostile, but seems to me to communicate a composed and

self-conscious statement about bisexual identity. It is as if the woman is now the subject rather than the object of the gaze and her stance is one of quiet defiance of or slight amusement at the viewer's response. There is some degree of textual truth to this stylized imagery as Miriam does find herself attracted to both men and women although this does not affect how she presents herself to the world and remains something private and precious rather than a publically defined social and cultural identity. The fact that Jean, a woman she meets in Vaud in the final chapter-volume, and to whom she is deeply attracted and begins to love, addresses Miriam with the masculine name 'Dick' in her letters to Miriam, once returned to England, is never explained. Miriam's attraction to women comes to the fore in this volume, in her relationships with Amabel and Jean.

All four covers contain the same supplementary verbal text at the bottom, an endorsement of *Pilgrimage* attributed to the author, journalist and literary critic, Rebecca West: 'A fiction triumph to stand beside Doris Lessing . . . "A miracle!" and a final summation: 'DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON'S TOWERING NOVEL OF THE FEMALE REVOLUTION'. This crowded cover communicates two confusing messages; one about *Pilgrimage's* textual status, oscillating between popular and literary fiction and another about its time frame (by this point there had been more than one 'female revolution'). This particular edition of *Pilgrimage* exemplifies Mao and Walkowitz's argument that a modernist work can transcend its time and place of origin so that it belongs to more than one historical moment or sociocultural matrix and, as a material product, can be continuously re-framed by different values and concepts (2008, p.738 and p.166).

## **Concluding comments**

In the case of the New York Popular Library edition, the cultural reframing of *Pilgrimage* can be said to be interesting and bold but not harmonious or cohesive. It tries hard to locate a new audience for *Pilgrimage* and foregrounds or transposes material that might speak to this reading community of young women, keen to read about love and sex and female power, but ultimately the effect is one of dissonance. The romantic popular fiction reading does not sit comfortably with *Pilgrimage*'s 'towering novel of the female revolution' status. Virago, on the other hand, finds a new and of-the-moment way to present the text and publishes a paperback edition that is cohesive and in keeping with the essential nature of the anchoring text. Like its American counterpart, however, there are features to silence or avoid as well as to foreground. Chapter five explores the political, cultural and social context that provided the platform for Virago and analyses its cultural handling of *Pilgrimage* as a feminist Modern Classic.



## CHAPTER FIVE:

### *PILGRIMAGE'S* NEW SOCIOCULTURAL MATRICES

#### **Virago: Creative transformation or feminist appropriation of *Pilgrimage*?**

*Pilgrimage's* inclusion in the Virago Modern Classic series produced a characteristically provocative response from Anthony Burgess in an *Observer* review of 1980:

Whatever the motives of the Virago organization in presenting the first popular edition of the work, lovers of literature of either sex, unconcerned with sexism, must be grateful for their irradiating this first year of the eighties with the recovery of a great fictional masterpiece. Or, God help us, mistresspiece' (cited in Scanlon and Swindells, 2010, pp.216-7).

His endorsement of *Pilgrimage* is as strong as his irritation with Virago's ideology:

By no stretch of usage can Virago be made not to signify a shrew, a scold, an ill-tempered woman, unless we go back to the etymology – a man-like maiden (cognate with virile) – and the antique meaning – amazon, female warrior – that is close to it. It is an unlovely and aggressive name, even for a militant feminist organisation, and it presides awkwardly over the reissue of a great *roman fleuve* which is too important to be associated with chauvinist sows (ibid).

Burgess' failure to appreciate the irony involved in the reclamation of 'Virago', despite a well-informed understanding of polysemy and etymology, is bound up with a hostile reaction to *Pilgrimage's* new 'sociocultural matrix' (Rainey, 1998, p.166). His review prompted the Women in Publishing Group to send him a pink marzipan pig for outstanding contributions to sexism (Brooke-Rose, 2009, p.252). Burgess responded in kind in another *Observer* article 'Grunts from a Sexist Pig' (21<sup>st</sup> June 1981), later summarised in a preface

to a collection of his essays as ‘brooding on smarts from women’ (1986, p.xiv). In the second article he states: ‘The Virago press has earned my unassailable gratitude for reprinting *Pilgrimage* (...) but I get from its warlike officers only a rude and stupid insult [the pink marzipan pig], and I cannot laugh it off. Women should not behave like that, nor men either.’ He reflects on the difference between what he said about *Pilgrimage* in his first review and what he thinks Virago would have wanted him to say:

I did not say here that we had a great work of women’s literature, but rather here we had a great work which anticipated some of the innovations of James Joyce. I should have stressed that this was a work by a woman, and the womanly aspect of the thing didn’t seem to me to be important. I believe the sex of an author is irrelevant because any good writer contains both sexes.

Virago’s edition of *Pilgrimage* was thus the cause of some controversy, but Burgess’ evaluation of the core text was unequivocally positive. His admiration suggests that *Pilgrimage*’s appeal is as diverse as it is unpredictable. Given his strength of feeling, what he would have thought of the American popular edition is easy to predict. Presumably, and perhaps mercifully, he was unaware of its existence, calling, as he does, the Virago edition, ‘the first popular’ one.

### **Breaking a silence: The origins, aims and ideology of Virago**

Virago, founded in 1973 by an Australian bibliophile, Carmen Callil, was a youthful, commercial publishing venture based in Soho, not Bedford Square, the location of many long-established publishing houses. Virago had a very different set of working practices and values from a traditional publishing house like Dent. Although not a collective like other independent feminist publishers that emerged later, such as the Women’s Press (1978)

or Sheba (1980), Virago was an all-female organisation which used its networking power to build a community of female experts (agents, publishers, scholars, academics) with feminist sympathies to inform textual selection, carry out research and write prefaces (Callil, *Guardian* online April 26<sup>th</sup> 2008). Its approach was radical and anti-establishment and allied with that political activism now known as feminism's 'second wave'. Unlike feminism's 'first wave,' associated with the suffragette movement, and emerging in an industrial context with regard to women's material needs – the right to vote, to be able to own property, and access educational and occupational opportunities – second wave feminism, associated with Women's Liberation, its roots in post-war welfare society, was more concerned with culture and patriarchy and the need to expose those attitudes continuing to permeate society, disempower women and perpetuate sexual inequality.

The Sexual Equality Act of 1975 rendered unlawful: 'certain kinds of sex discrimination and discrimination on the ground of marriage' and was set up to 'establish a Commission with the function of working towards the elimination of such discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity between men and women generally' ([www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)). This Act of Parliament marked a significant change in the political climate. The language of second wave feminism, informed by neo-Marxism and psychoanalysis, was politically charged, urging liberation, direct action and radical social change (Pilcher and Whelehan 2004, pp.144-145; Krollokke, 2006, p.1). Callil's response was to start a publishing house and exploit the revolutionary potential of books.

Thirteen years after founding Virago, Callil reflected on her key publishing aims in a 1986 article for *The Bookseller*; to promote feminism and effect significant cultural change. She was keen to use books to connect with a wider, non-feminist audience: 'We aimed to reach a general audience of women and men who had not heard of, or who disliked and even

detested, the idea of feminism (cited in Scanlon and Swindells, 2010, p.217). Twenty-two years later, in the *Guardian* article cited earlier (26<sup>th</sup> April, 2008), Callil revealed that she had never been interested in ‘preaching’ but just wanted to engage a mainstream audience and make them reconsider their values:

I started Virago to break a silence, to make women's voices heard, to tell women's stories, my story and theirs. (...) My inspiration was always literary. It was books and writers and writing I loved. I always believed that books change lives, that writers change lives, and I still believe it. I also believed - still do - that injustice corrupts those who are responsible for it, and I wanted change for our brothers, husbands, uncles, fathers too. I started Virago to publish books which celebrated women and women's lives, and which would, by so doing, spread the message of women's liberation to the whole population.

Virago’s political agenda could be understood implicitly in their textual selection but Callil went further, signalling an overt alliance with feminism and making a prominent peritextual statement on the second page of every book published from 1976 onwards. It read: ‘*Virago is a feminist publishing company*’, followed by a quotation from *Women, Resistance and Revolution* by the British socialist feminist, Sheila Rowbotham:

It is only when women start to organise in large numbers that we become a political force, and begin to move towards the possibility of a truly democratic society in which every human being can be brave, responsible, thinking and diligent in the struggle to live at once freely and unselfishly.

### **‘The green gravestones’: Virago Modern Classics**

The first Virago list, launched in 1975, was made up of ‘new’ writers, identified and nurtured through the publishing process by Callil’s core team. In 1978 a second list of Modern Classics emerged, including Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage* at number eighteen. The initial inspiration for this list was Antonia White’s *Frost in May*, whose narrative of a nine-

year-old girl 'closeted in an English convent' resonated powerfully with Callil's own education in Melbourne:

If founding Virago was my first light bulb, dreaming up the Classics was the second. How could I publish Frost in May? The answer came quite easily: here was the celebration and fun I was looking for, here was a way of illuminating women's history in a way that would reach out to a much wider audience of both women and men. I would publish a multitude of novels, I would publish them in a series, I would market them as a brand, just like Penguin. If one novel could tell the story of my life, there were hundreds more, and thousands of readers who would feel as I did (ibid).

Callil's understanding about the various functions of reading and, in particular, its capacity to produce powerful transformative effects, is clearly communicated. She was born into a family where reading was a shared experience and a respect for books cultivated. The rationale underpinning the Modern Classics list appears to be the result of some highly personal choices. Her mother read all of *Pilgrimage*, an achievement that Callil acknowledges to be unusual:

The idea sprang in part from the women's movement, but also from my past: from my father's vast library in which I had buried myself during my childhood and from my mother's love of reading, and of reading aloud to us, her four children. (A number of the novels we were to publish as Classics came from my mother: Willa Cather, Christina Stead, Henry Handl Richardson, and more. To this day, she remains the only person I have known who read Dorothy Richardson's four-volume sequence *Pilgrimage* from beginning to end) (ibid).

In an earlier article, 'Virago Reprints: Redressing the Balance' for *The Times Literary Supplement* (September 12<sup>th</sup> 1980, p.1001), Callil reveals that her rationale was also informed by Professor Elaine Showalter's critical study *A Literature of their Own* (1977): 'Her [Showalter's] judgements led directly to the reprinting by us of May Sinclair, Sarah Grand and Dorothy Richardson'. In drawing up this second list, Callil was doing much more than republishing books by women that readers might have never heard of otherwise; she

was making her mark as a female publisher in a male-dominated field: 'In the publishing world of the 60s and 70s, women rarely had the opportunity to choose which books to publish, and paperback lists, particularly, reflected this. But now the choice of novels was mine' (ibid). The final sentence is a clear statement of the actualization of a cultural ambition.

Virago is now more strongly associated with its reprint list than with its first list of emerging writers. Robert McCrum, reflecting on Virago's achievement, when literary editor of *The Observer*, describes its reissuing of 'lost classics' as striking 'a blow for literary originality' and draws a parallel between Virago and Penguin in the 1930s, both creating 'a specialist marketplace inside British bookshops that influenced the purchasing decisions of a generation of book buyers, male and female' (18<sup>th</sup> April, 1999). The writer and critic, Jonathon Coe, writing around the time of the thirtieth anniversary of the Virago Modern Classics, describes them as his 'literary love affair', recalling his first sight of them in a branch of Heffers:

"Virago Modern Classics". There was something very odd about them. I knew what a classic was. I knew what a modern classic was. I even knew who the authors of the modern classics were: James Joyce, of course, and Virginia Woolf, and Evelyn Waugh, and all those other familiar names. But who on earth were these people? Dorothy Richardson, FM Mayor, May Sinclair, Rosamond Lehmann ... I could see only two things that these mysterious writers had in common. They were all women, and I'd never heard of any of them (...) Reissuing these and even lesser-known authors, declaring their works to be "classics" with such conviction, was a courageous act on the part of Virago Press (*Guardian* online 6<sup>th</sup> October 2007).

Revealing their profound influence on him as both a reader and writer, *Pilgrimage*, his first purchase, is given a special mention:

On that first day, faced with such an embarrassment of unknown quantities, it was difficult to know where to start. In the end I fell back on my existing enthusiasms. I'd also recently become fascinated - through Proust (or, to be more precise, Pinter's

screenplay of Proust) - by the idea of narrative as a repository of lost time: the notion that a long sequence of novels could, by exhaustively tracing the life story of one character, make readers feel that they had actually lived that character's life, in rich, imaginatively continuous detail. And so I recklessly dived in at the Virago deep end by buying all four volumes of Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (ibid).

The journalist, Justine Picardie, reflects on the 'sensation' caused by this series and the particular writers who 'inspired, consoled and delighted' her, summarising the essence of her reading experience: 'That immediate sense of recognition – of discovering a writer who seems to understand you through and through, reflecting your experience in their stories, so that you know you are not alone – has been a defining feature of Virago Modern Classics' (*The Telegraph* online 13<sup>th</sup> April 2008).

Coe and Picardie are examples of 'ideal readers' who felt a certain loyalty and gratitude to Virago for providing books that appealed to them aesthetically, ideologically, intellectually and emotionally. Coe, as a male reader, is proof that Callil's publishing instinct was right; that men, as well as women, would appreciate Virago Modern Classics. Coe was, however, definitely unusual in choosing to buy and read all four volumes of *Pilgrimage*. He reflects on the politico-cultural context in which the Modern Classics had their first flourishing, making a tongue-in-cheek comment about their possible lines of appeal: 'doing your bit for gender politics (...) while also offering a healthy dose of good old-fashioned escapism' (*Guardian* online 6<sup>th</sup> October 2007). Coe also acknowledges that part of their attraction, at a time when he was an undergraduate, studying literature, was indeed his reverence for the word 'classic':

Under the guidance of my supervisors, I was working my way through what was then regarded as the canon, and finding some of it heavy going (...) But I'd not been brought up to question authority, and it was partly my faith in the whole notion of a canon that drew me to those books (ibid).

### **Virago's take on the canon: the influence of Leavis**

Callil was well versed in the dominant literary culture, one still residually influenced by 'canonicity'; that some 'great' works are worthy of status in a canon of literature, whereas others are not. The drawing up of a female-authored Modern Classics List overtly challenged the value system generally associated with the male literary critic and Cambridge don, F.R. Leavis. Callil studied English Literature at Melbourne University which she describes as a 'passionately Leavisite' department against which she reacted strongly: 'I longed to put a bomb under Leavis' agonizingly narrow selection of 'great' novelists (1980, p.1001). Although certainly not the first to develop an understanding about the worth of literary works and the way in which aesthetic judgements can be formed and refined, Leavis' ideas were influential from the 1930s to the period when Callil made her own cultural stand. Callil concedes a grudging respect for Leavis, who despite claiming 'greatness' for the few and obscuring 'the rich enjoyment to be had in the many,' also 'exerted a positive influence (...) at least he claimed that novels matter, that they tell us truths about our civilization, that they are forces for change' (ibid).

Leavis' *The Great Tradition* (1948), based on articles written for the literary journal *Scrutiny* in the 1930s and 1940s, established the narrow parameters of the canon, or great tradition of English novel writing, and set out to explain why some literary works failed to meet its supposedly exacting requirements. It opens with a much quoted list of novelists deemed worthy of inclusion: the 'great English novelists are Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James and Joseph Conrad – to stop for the moment at that comparatively safe point in history' (ibid, p.9). He justifies the list's brevity, two female and two male authors, by arguing that the canon must be small and exclusive, given the very wide reach of prose fiction (ibid). Leavis' exposition is authoritative with a clear stamp of personality. Anticipating the effect



of his critical judgements, he tries to get the reader on side by showing how his ideas might be misrepresented (ibid). But his contempt for those writers, who according to his rationale, belong outside the canon, is antagonistically expressed:

Trollope, Charlotte Yonge, Mrs Gaskell, Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, Charles and Henry Kingsley, Marryat, Shorthouse – one after another the minor novelists of that period are being commended to our attention, written up, publicized, and there is a marked tendency to suggest that they not only have various kinds of interest to offer but that they are living classics’ (ibid, pp.9-10).

In using the label ‘Modern Classics’, Callil was participating in a longstanding cultural discussion about literature and tradition and suggesting that the plural noun ‘classics’ *can* be pre-modified by ‘living’ or, in this case, ‘Modern’. Both Callil and Leavis, (albeit two generations apart), were intervening in British literary culture, trying to sway critical opinion and aiming for an impact with some longevity. In so doing, they have more in common with each other than might first be apparent. Leavis, as part of his theory of what constitutes ‘greatness’ in writers, speaks of their significance ‘in terms of the human awareness they promote; awareness of the possibilities of life’ (ibid, p.10). Callil also believes passionately in the power of books to do good, but the language she uses and the values she promotes are different: ‘celebration’, ‘fun’ ‘illuminating women’s history’ and, of course, telling stories that resonate with the readers’ own lives (*Guardian* online 26<sup>th</sup> April 2008). ‘Celebration’ and ‘fun,’ suggest more entertainment-oriented responses whereas ‘illuminating women’s history’ and telling resonant stories are more politically-oriented. Callil is suggesting that women’s fiction, whether personal or political, familiar or unfamiliar, light-hearted or serious, helps to promote awareness of the breadth and diversity of female experience. She dismisses the unhelpful binary polarities that have helped to perpetuate dichotomous thinking about men, women and writing, describes her vision of a female literary tradition

in rather lofty terms, and challenges the notion that women's writing is limited in scope, variety or tone:

It was common to think of the literary tradition that runs from Jane Austen through Ivy Compton-Burnett to Barbara Pym as a clever and witty women's view of a small domestic world. This was not a ghetto we accepted. The female tradition included writers of vast ambition and great achievement: mistresses of comedy, drama, storytelling, of the domestic world we knew and loved. I saw a large world, not a small canvas, with all of human life on display, a great library of women's fiction, marginalised, silenced, out of print and unavailable. Such writing has always been part of women's history. We despised the concepts of "woman novelist", and "female imagination", so often used to dismiss books we cherished (ibid).

Callil felt strongly about the way in which prevailing cultural values determine meaning and, specifically, how language reflects attitudes, in this case negative ones, about women writers. She bristles at the memory of the way in which meanings of 'woman' and 'female,' used as modifiers to describe the nouns 'novelist' and 'imagination' respectively, suffer from a process of 'semantic derogation' (Schulz, 1975), encoding negative meanings when used by those whose motivation is to devalue such fiction. They then become loaded phrases to be avoided and 'despised' by those who are proud to be women. Not only this, the phrase 'woman novelist' also raises another type of objection – that this type of novelist is only of interest to readers who are themselves women, an idea that Callil considers both ridiculous and damaging. In the *Times Literary Supplement* article of 1980 she had written: 'One of the invigorating aspects of publishing women's history has been to find that the recording of female experience inevitably illuminates all important human experience'. This journalistic article would appear to be the reference point for her online article of 2008, as she recalls a time when those influential literary critics had the power to make those phrases 'woman novelist' and 'female imagination' unusable. In the earlier article Callil identified the critic Anthony Burgess as one who used such phrases, quoting him on the work of Olivia

Manning: 'She [Manning] was never, like so many women novelists, limited to experiences of her own sex.' This double-edged compliment is typical Burgess, celebrating Manning's individuality and simultaneously, and slyly, criticizing many women novelists. In this same article Callil also explained why she finds the phrase 'female imagination' objectionable. This occurs in a context where she is considering how she selected who to publish, wanting 'to bury, if possible forever, the notion that women novelists are confined to this ghetto of the imagination.'

Callil had a playful confidence in her aesthetic judgement: 'I have always loved flawed novels, as well as those of the great and good. In explaining my literary stance at the time I wrote: "by the word 'classic' we do not always mean 'great', though we often do' (*Guardian* online, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2008). This nuanced statement contrasts with Leavis' insistence that a 'great' work must have formal perfection (1948, p.18). *Pilgrimage* is, perhaps, one of those works, of the 'classic-but-not-great' variety, but its inclusion in the Modern Classics List acknowledged its place in literary history, Callil referring to *Pilgrimage*'s 'vital position in the development of the modern novel' (1980, p.1001).

Undoubtedly Callil's republishing of *Pilgrimage* provided a much needed cultural boost for a text that privileged a woman's point of view. As a publisher, on the 'outskirts' of the literary establishment, Virago was acting as a cultural critic, 'creatively transforming' a text that, hitherto, had been firmly in the hands of a literary establishment publisher (Dent) in order to have a 'recognisable feminist impact' in the way described by the feminist literary critic Toril Moi (1989, p.118).

Burgess was not alone, however, in feeling some unease about the way in which feminism had creatively transformed or appropriated Richardson. Eva Tucker, a champion of *Pilgrimage*, since reading it for the first time in 1957, was the first to approach Virago with

the suggestion that they publish it. In an email (dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013) she reveals both a strategy for dealing with *Pilgrimage*'s formal imperfections and her slight discomfort with the equation of *Pilgrimage* with feminism:

Well, even though I was aware that DR wrote to her friend Koteliansky 'A woodlouse could see I'm not a feminist', it was me who originally approached Carmen Callil in 1979 (...) suggesting she might consider an abridged edition of *Pilgrimage*. I've often felt, and still feel, that some judicious editing would bring a wider readership to DR without losing the essence of what she's about. I even went so far as to indicate what I intended with *Pointed Roofs* (...) She wrote back saying that Virago had no plans for publishing DR but if they ever did it would be unabridged. (...) In so far as the Virago edition went some way towards putting DR back on the literary map, I am very pleased it happened.

Tucker's abridgment idea did not accord with Callil's positive views on 'flawed novels' and, as is detailed later, it also failed to meet with widespread academic approval. Interestingly the first person to suggest an abridged version of *Pilgrimage* was an academic, Q.D. Leavis, (the wife of F.R. Leavis), in a review of *Clear Horizon* for *Scrutiny* in 1935. Leavis rated *Pointed Roofs*, describing it as falling, 'like a rock from a height into the literary waters,' but was less impressed by subsequent chapter-volumes: 'Since then each succeeding volume has made less of a splash, and the latest is likely to part the surface with scarcely a ripple (...) For posterity there will have to be an abridged version (p.81). Leavis does not develop any ideas about abridgement, although presumably *Pointed Roofs* would have taken centre stage, but Tucker had given the task careful consideration. In Genettian terms, Tucker was proposing a textual *reduction*, involving cutting (*excision*) but no rewriting (*concision*) (1997(a), pp.228-9). Callil was only interested, however, in publishing the full text as will be detailed in the following section.

### Traces of negative metatexts in the epitextual flyer

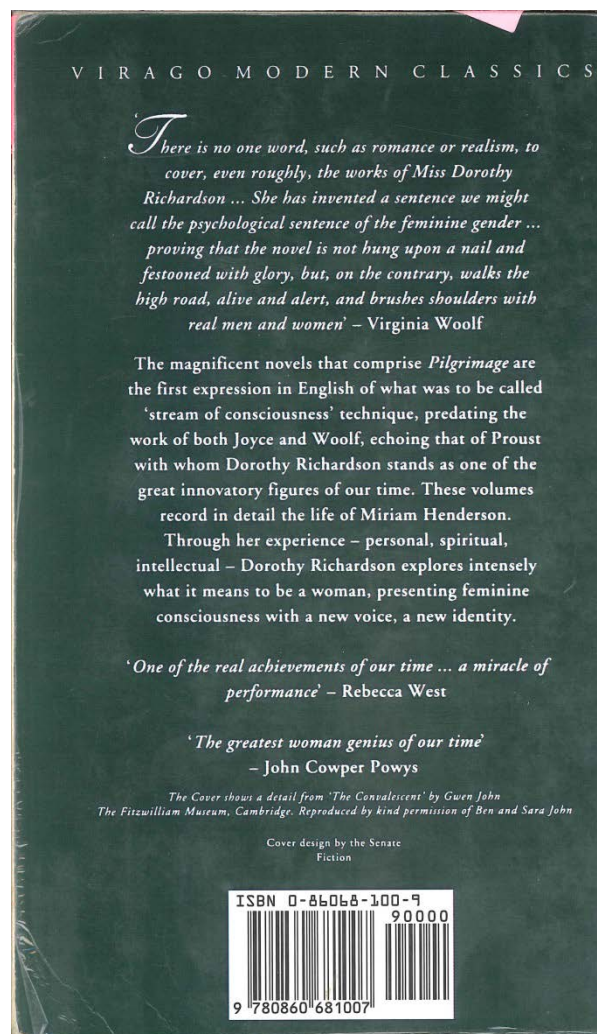
A very simply produced A4 sheet, (what I assume to be a publisher's epitext), entitled 'Virago News', dated November 1<sup>st</sup> 1979, a little more than two weeks before publication, celebrates *Pilgrimage*'s newly vamped material form as a reissued Virago paperback edition, complete with a collector's slipcase. Running through the epitext's promotional language, however, are traces of the critical doubts and uncertainties, stubbornly attached to *Pilgrimage* more or less since its inception, which appeared difficult to avoid, even for a feminist publisher, with new and radical ways of thinking about culture and literature.

*Innovatory, critically honoured*, Dorothy Richardson has to a great extent remained *unread, perhaps* because of the sheer, *daunting* size of her opus, and its *unavailability* in an inexpensive form. On November 19<sup>th</sup> Virago reissues *Pilgrimage* in paperback in their Modern Classics Series. This edition is in four volumes (£3.50 each), runs to 2,200 pages (over 700,000 words), includes all thirteen novels, and is also available in a slipcase edition at £14.50 (my emphases) (Virago Press Archive)

The polarity of this short extract, the micro choices made between positive and negative meanings, communicate a familiar paratextual commentary. Despite the positive pre-modification of Richardson at the sentence opening, attention is soon drawn to *Pilgrimage*'s length, wordage, structure and cost with the implication that each of these is potentially problematic. Tentativeness is expressed via modality ('perhaps') and textual inhospitability via the negative polarity encoded both morphologically ('unread', 'unavailability') and lexically ('daunting size'). Clearly the hope is that a cheaper edition of the text will encourage readers to buy it.

## Foregrounding and silence in the peritextual blurb of the Virago edition

The linguistic restraint or equilibrium between positive and negative meanings achieved in the epitextual flyer is noticeably absent from its peritextual equivalent, the back cover 'blurb'. To some extent this can be explained by the difference in audience (bookshops versus prospective readers) and function (referential versus persuasive), although clearly there are overlaps in both categories. There are slight variations in the peritextual 'blurb'



across the four volumes but all contain an edited (but unsourced) quotation from Virginia Woolf followed by a textual summary with a strong Virago voice. This promotes Richardson as a pioneering 'innovatory figure' in the field of literature, compares her achievement with that of Proust and tellingly directs the reader to two lesser known facts: that some of Richardson's work was published *before* that of her contemporaries, Joyce and Woolf and

that she was the first English language writer to use the stream of consciousness technique. No mention is made of Richardson's hostility towards this term, nor is there any attribution of its first use to describe a literary work to May Sinclair. What was foregrounded in the peritext of the 1967 omnibus edition is silenced in the Virago peritext of 1979.

There are different explanations for this absence. It could be that Richardson's comment about Sinclair does not sit comfortably in a feminist peritext, or that Virago consider the whole business to be exaggerated by the male literary critics, Walter Allen and Frank Swinnerton, and do not wish to perpetuate the story. The issue, could, of course, have been handled differently. Virago could have used the peritextual space to re-examine the whole debate and reflect on patriarchy and literary criticism or, perhaps, have inserted something in Richardson's defence about her preference for the metaphor of a tree over a stream: 'One's consciousness sits stiller than a tree' (Kunitz, 1934, p.562). Perhaps, the Virago thinking was pragmatic; that the peritextual blurb was best kept simple, uncluttered and positive.

*Pilgrimage's* extraordinary length, again a less than straightforward quality, is treated as a cause for celebration ('thirteen magnificent'). Towards the end, emphasis is given to its woman-centred subject matter, the material evidently packaged in a way to appeal to the prospective female reader on a number of levels, including ideas of stylistic originality and greatness. Richardson is, in this context, being represented as a writer who changed 'the possibilities of art for practitioners and readers' (Leavis, 1948, p.10). Such a description exemplifies the way in which Virago sometimes uses literary establishment language and values, a potentially problematic feature of their publicity material and interviews that has not gone unnoticed by some feminist critics, who would prefer less reliance on, or indeed complete avoidance of, the ideas and language of F.R Leavis (Scanlon and Swindells, 2010,

p.218). Moi considers this general problem of influence more sympathetically, arguing that, if feminism is predicated upon the understanding that patriarchy's influence is all-pervasive, then a certain amount of 'contamination' has to be accepted. F.R Leavis' latent influence on the *Virago* peritext could be seen as a specific example. Moi argues that the main issue is not whose influential idea or theory it is but, 'the use to which it is put and the effects it can produce.' The 'effect' in this particular case, is that of a 'feminist impact' through the 'appropriation' or 'productive transformation' of the ideas of F.R Leavis, but Moi is clear that attention must be explicitly drawn to the appropriation and that it should not be 'silent' (1989, p.118). In the particular case of the *Virago* peritextual blurb, however, it could be argued that it is, indeed, 'silent'.

Endorsements by other notable writers, both male and female, provide the finishing touch to the peritextual blurb. There is some minor variation in the quotations used but few surprises in terms of selection. My copy of volume I (2002) includes two edited statements, the first from Rebecca West: 'One of the real achievements of our time . . . a miracle of performance' and the second from John Cowper Powys: 'The greatest woman genius of our time'. Both writers have been seen to play an important role in endorsing *Pilgrimage* over an extended period of time. The same writers are selected for my copy of volume III (1979, first edition) although both statements are now provided in full: 'What she has done has never been done before. She has drawn her inspiration from neither man-imitating cleverness nor from narcissistic feminine charm but from the abyss of the feminine subconscious . . . the greatest woman genius of our time.' My copy of volume II (2002) includes less emotive statements from H.G. Wells, with whom Richardson had a long standing friendship, 'She has a unique position among the novelists of the world,' and Anthony Burgess, 'A great fictional masterpiece'. Burgess' endorsement is resonant for those with knowledge of the context of the *Observer* review from which the quotation has



been lifted, and is another example of silent ‘creative transformation’ or ‘appropriation’ on Virago’s part. My copy of volume IV (1979, first edition) has only one statement, the full one by Rebecca West used for volume III. These variations could be explained by the time difference of twenty-five years between the first edition and the reprints and the likelihood that a different person was responsible for their selection.

The peritextual material from the New York Popular Library edition was found in the Virago Press Archive next to a page on *Pilgrimage*’s publishing history, suggesting Virago had used it as a point of reference. Nevertheless whoever produced the Virago material was not unduly influenced by the New York Popular Library style, preferring to write something more understated and in keeping with their own conventions. Despite the basic similarity in their materiality, there is, of course, an all important difference. The American paperback edition is packaged as popular fiction whereas the Virago edition is packaged as a Modern Classic.

### **The front covers of the Virago edition: a spiritualised atmospheric reading**

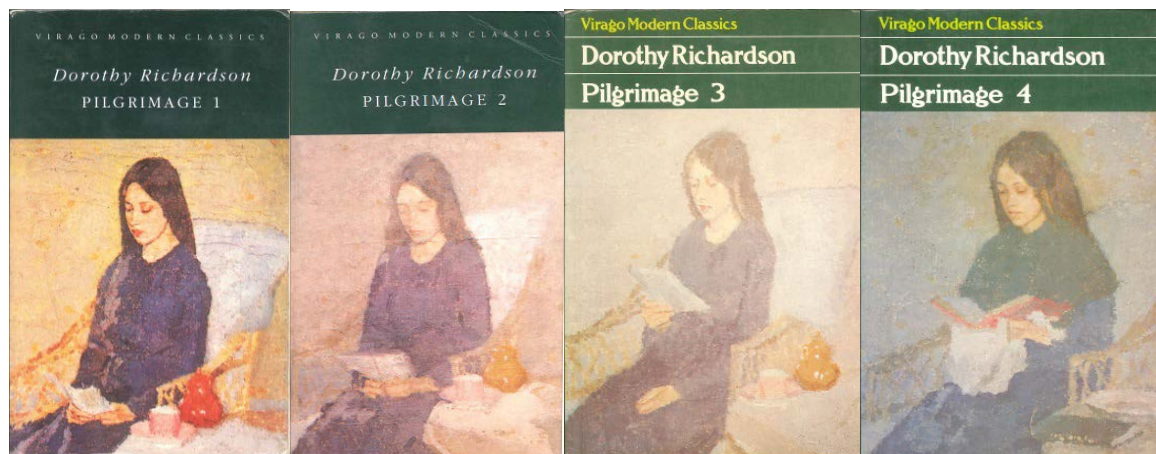
Despite Virago’s radical feminist ethos, an understated approach was adopted for *Pilgrimage*’s front covers. Paintings were the favoured choice for their distinctive Modern Classic branding and, in this regard, Virago followed a convention established by Penguin. *Pilgrimage*’s four volumes posed a particular problem, described in Virago’s pre-publication newsletter:

The portraits chosen had to represent the central character Miriam Henderson, but each portrait had to change as Miriam herself does throughout the novels. Virago solved the problem by choosing the paintings of Gwen John (1876-1939), the sister of Augustus, whose delight it was to paint her subject again and again, each portrait subtly differing from its predecessor. With the help of Mary Taubman, whose biography of Gwen John is to be published by The Scholar Press, Virago found four

of these paintings. The result, *Virago feel*, perfectly expresses the spirit of this magnificent work (ibid).

The rationale for their choice seems to be based on their congruent relationship with *Pilgrimage* – images of a woman reading – who could represent Miriam at different stages of life. No doubt they were chosen for their visual appeal, as well as, perhaps, discriminating in favour of an artist whose subject matter was almost exclusively women, mirroring *Pilgrimage*'s exclusive feminine consciousness.

Virago's cultural handling had completely transformed *Pilgrimage*'s appearance.



The New York Popular Library edition, in an effort to persuade potential readers of its relevance, had given the covers a modern 1970s styling. Virago, however, firmly repositioned *Pilgrimage* in its historical context, Gwen John's post-impressionist portrait paintings the visual art equivalent of Richardson's modernist novel; the life of the female mind and the trope of the room, with its social, psychological and spiritual dimensions their shared artistic concerns. The painter's outlines of the women, deliberately vague rather than

firm, can be likened to the characters in *Pilgrimage* seen through Miriam's perspective, many of whom are presented as 'blurred, indistinct and oblique' (Rosenberg, 1973, p.163).

The cover appeal of these paintings could not be more different to the sharply defined close-up colour photographs of the New York Popular Library edition or the most recent British antecedent, the 1967 Dent edition, with its old-fashioned, nostalgia-evoking text and line-drawn representations of Miriam and the places she inhabited. They were an inspired choice for the Virago covers, not least for the way their visual encoding genuinely primes the reader for a text evoking 'pictures of states of mind' (George, 1920, p.233). These images of solitary women in a calm and still domestic interior, apparently withdrawn from life, convey something of the subject matter and style of *Pilgrimage*, (the importance of reading, thinking, listening and remembering as well as the context of a room as quiet space) and do so in a more profound way than the New York Popular Library covers. In a letter to the author and poet, E.B.C. Jones, Richardson describes the title of Jones' novel *Quiet Interior* as 'perfect' (Fromm, 1995, p.50). Presumably Richardson would have derived a similar type of pleasure from the juxtaposing of her own work with these paintings of quiet interiors.

### **Exploring the visual grammar of the paintings**

The four portrait paintings, entitled *The Convalescent* (volumes I, II and IV) and *The Letter* (volume III) form part of a larger series of eleven, all closely related with very small differences, completed over the period 1919-26 (Jenkins and Stephens, 2004, p.168). In all the paintings the women appear to be self-absorbed as if, by the act of reading, they have lost awareness of the painter's gaze. Tiny variations include the angle of the book or letter held by the sitter and are easy to miss, given the strong similarities of the wicker chair, light

and portable and a symbol of artistic life, the posture and dress of the sitter and the representation of the lips (gently closed rather than slightly parted) (Foster, 1999, p.42). It is difficult to comment on the differences in palette as the representation of the paintings may not be an accurate rendition of the originals, but my four volumes look quite different in terms of colour. Compared to the other three volumes, for example, volume I's colours are vibrant and the primary colours, red (for the teapot), yellow (for the walls) and blue (for the dress) are used. The woman looks much younger in this image, her face is fuller and her complexion is bright. In volumes II and III the colours are much more muted, the woman looks older and thinner and the reading material is held up closer to her face. In volume IV the hair is more styled and the attire more complex, in that she appears to be wearing a stole over a dress. Like the more stylised image used for volume IV of the New York Library edition, the image of the woman more closely resembles that of volume I than the other two volumes in terms of facial expression. It as if Miriam has come full circle.

The visual grammar of the paintings, namely the subdued colours, blurred outlines, domestic interiors and fragile artistry has generated divergent readings. At the time of production these conventions were labelled 'feminine' although the art critic, Lisa Tickner, comments that the term, 'underpinned by middle-class stereotypes about delicacy and gentleness' was only used to describe 'women's paintings of the time not men's'. Seeing the paintings through this culturally-bound filter of the feminine, these women would have been viewed as essentially passive and self-effacing and John's artistic method careful and highly controlled. Tickner also explores how these paintings might encode 'traditional and conservative' values, the women's clothes being plain and the portraits asexual, visual signs that also, of course, reinforce gender stereotypical ideas of the 'feminine' (2004, p.33).

The term still has some currency in the fields of art and literature but its premise has been rigorously questioned. The art critic, Janet Wolff, for example, argues that 'feminine' has been used in the recent past to 'denigrate' women artists, but, rather than challenge or avoid the term, she advocates its more 'productive' mobilization (2000, p.1). With reference to these specific paintings, oppositional readings by feminist art critics and narratologists have drawn attention, not to the paintings' feminine fragility, but to their strength. Tickner argues that the sitters' intensity requires a similar level of response from the viewer (2004, p.40). The narratologist, Maria Tamboukou, observes that these 'motionless portraits' have highly dynamic qualities, releasing 'forces of pure thinking' (2010, p.25). These women reading are not the agents of literary production but their response can be understood as similarly creative and empowering.

These textual qualities, appreciated in a more positive way by those with a differently nuanced understanding of the feminine, might also apply to the text to which these paintings are anchored, one written through feminine consciousness not about it and perhaps best appreciated by those with a shared understanding or sympathy with Richardson's writerly objectives, (such as readers of the Virago edition). A letter from Richardson to P. Beaumont Wadsworth, (dated December 1922), identifies Proust as writing about consciousness, not through consciousness as if to correct a common misunderstanding. Richardson identifies herself as writing through consciousness which she describes as 'a vastly different enterprise'. Writing about consciousness allows Proust 'to let himself go completely and write, as he wishes,' with the implication that Richardson cannot do the same and is constrained and, perhaps, more disciplined (Fromm, 1995, p.64).

Like the viewer of the Gwen John paintings, who has to look attentively to gain pleasure and understanding from a glimpse into the women's consciousness, the reader of *Pilgrimage*

has to align themselves with Miriam's mind for the long-term, as well as respond with their own consciousness, if they want to read the text, as Richardson hoped they would, 'with their 'whole self' as described in her essay 'About Punctuation' for the *Adelphi* in April 1924 (reproduced in Scott, 1990, p.415). The similar 'reading' demands of the paintings and the anchoring text are just one dimension of their congruous relations, albeit the demands of reading such a text over viewing one are clearly much higher in terms of time and patience. As Richardson says of literature, as opposed to visual art: '[it] yields its treasure not directly in a single eyeful but extendedly in the course of a prolonged collaboration between reader and writer' (1930, pp.12-13).

The paintings are characterised by another important feature, germane to *Pilgrimage* and adding to the harmonious partnership, their representation of a moment, something that might occur in the narrative 'intermezzo', the 'gaps and interstices' between events (Tamboukou, 2010, p.25). In this regard, they reflect Richardson's narrative focus on the temporal reality of the ordinary. Bryony Randall calls this 'dailiness' (2007, p.64) and Howard Finn the 'everyday and the mundane', the latter providing a list of such narrative events: 'washing at a basin, drinking a cup of tea, eating a sandwich in an ABC café, opening a window, walking down a street. Or simply sitting in a chair and thinking - the everyday rhythms of the mind' (2007, p.192). It would be quite easy to imagine that the women depicted had just made a pot of tea (three out of the four represent a teapot and a cup and saucer) before sitting down to read. The female sitters are simply just being, not doing anything important, apart from being absorbed in their own feelings and thoughts whilst reading. A particular moment, now frozen in time, has been recorded and its significance left for the viewer to determine.

## Reading with ‘a whole self’

A very active state of mind is encoded, not only by the way in which the women hold themselves in an upright posture with its suggestion of intense concentration, but also by their bleached environment. The way in which the walls seem to merge with the chair, most obvious in the images used for *Pilgrimage* II, III and IV, might suggest a kind of dissolution; the reading process has so firmly engaged their senses that the material environment is ceasing to impinge on their consciousness. The viewer is invited to see the domestic interiors in much the same way as the sitter might catch a glimpse of their surroundings when they look up intermittently from their reading. These paintings would seem to be an attempt to make visible the life of the mind when closely engaged in the reading process and to suggest how the fictional world of a book or letter becomes more real than the material environment of the room wherein the reading takes place. The knowing reader would understand that the women represent Miriam and are in two places simultaneously, the physical world of the room and the imaginative world of their mind and that what is being read, whether a work of literature or a letter, has the power to alter consciousness and transcend the boundaries of time and space.

What exactly the women are reading, the genre of book or type of letter, is not discernible but this does not matter. The paintings are, perhaps, more effective for this withheld detail, the viewer invited to make their own interpretation. Nevertheless everything about them signals that the reading material is not dramatic (the faces are impassive, not shocked, alarmed or excited) and that the mental stimulation provided is altogether more subtle and exacting. Alan Palmer provides a possible narratological explanation for what is happening in their minds. He argues that the essence of narrative fiction is ‘the presentation of mental

functioning’ and that one of the most valuable and interesting things about fiction is the way in which a reader can enter the mind of a character, whose thought processes are exposed (2004, p.5). It is, I think, the powerful, hidden effect of the book or letter on the women’s state of mind that is being suggested by the paintings, an effect all the more intensely felt because of their apparent isolation or detachment from the world. Neither approval nor disapproval is signalled non-verbally but the viewer is given to understand that these women are indeed reading with their ‘whole self’, heart and mind aroused and fused in the manner described by Richardson in ‘About Punctuation’. The energy involved in this invisible process is suggested through the imagery of material coalescence. Deleuze (2003) describes the ‘task of painting’ as an ‘attempt to render visible forces that are not themselves visible’ (cited in Tamboukou 2010, p.19) and John’s portraits go some way towards fulfilling that ‘task’, their experimentation with a new grammar of ‘spatial relations’ producing a profound effect of silent introspection (Roe, 2001, p.186).

Their subject matter also gives value to an everyday event such as reading, a key theme of *Pilgrimage*, in particular the extent to which reading can engage Miriam’s mind and make her think about the world and her place within it (Radford, 1991). Joanne Winning makes a significant link between the act of reading as quest and Miriam’s maturation (2000, p.67): ‘*Pilgrimage* is a narrative of development which places reading at its core: Miriam navigates her way through these [dominant] discourses with the aim of finding her own “true” answer to the nature of womanhood’. The type of reading represented in the cover paintings could be understood as representing Miriam’s quest, one likely to be ‘aesthetic’ rather than ‘efferent’ in function (Rosenblatt, 1978), depicting a type of engagement that is ‘centred directly on’ the act of reading (emotional journey) as opposed to a more literal type of reading where the purpose is to carry away information for later use. These paintings might therefore be understood as representing Miriam in the process of making meaning, reading



books and letters again and again, over a long time period and each time discovering something new.

*Pilgrimage* is full of references to Miriam's reading, charting her development from popular to literary fiction and her shift of interest from story to discourse. Quite early on, Miriam becomes aware of the influence of patriarchy in the formulaic plots of the domestic novels of Rosa Nouchette Carey and the romantic novels of Margaret Hungerford, whose 'mocking happy books' tire her (*Backwater*, I, pp.284-5). From these she moves on to Ouida's sensation fiction where she discovers female characters who are represented as sexual beings with feelings and desires that strongly move her: 'I want bad things – strong bad things ... It doesn't matter, Italy, the sky, bright hot landscapes, things happening. I don't care what people think or say. I am older than anyone here in this house. I am myself' (ibid, p.286). This desire for the bad, bright and hot, clearly a reaction to the stifling norms governing 'feminine' behaviour, is in sympathy with those female characters, whose challenge to gendered behavioural norms is seen as liberating. Miriam makes another important discovery about herself whilst reading Ouida and imagines communicating this to her sister, Eve, in a letter: 'Dear Eve; I have just discovered that I don't read books for the story, but as a psychological study of the author' (*Honeycomb*, I, p.384).

Later on in *The Trap*, Miriam becomes more evaluative about literary style, admiring Henry James for achieving 'the first completely satisfying way of writing a novel' (III p.410). In *Revolving Lights* (III, pp.243-4) Miriam is beginning to read novels as a would-be writer, reflecting on how details of setting are often used as a backdrop whereas she would prefer them to be used in a more integrated way to reflect her own understanding of the significance of places and spaces to her mind state:

But in all the books about these [English] people, even in novelettes, the chief thing they all left out was there. They even described it, sometimes so gloriously that it became more than the people; making humanity look like ants, crowding and perishing on a vast scene. Generally the surroundings were described separately, the background on which presently the characters began to fuss. But they were never sufficiently shown as they were to people when there was no fussing; what the floods of sunshine indoors and outdoors meant to these people as single individuals, whether they were aware of it or not.

In *Deadlock* (III, p.131) Miriam expresses her linguistic sensitivity to authorial style and syntax and the way in which a writer's unique use of language gains a powerful hold in her mind:

It was not only that it was her own perhaps altogether ignorant and lazy and selfish way of reading *everything* so that she grasped only the sound and the character of the words and the arrangement of the sentences, and only sometimes a long time afterwards, and with once-read books never, anything except in books on philosophy, of the author's meaning . . . but always the author; in the first few lines; and after that, wanting to change him, and break up his shape or going about for days thinking everything in his shape.

Her desire to resist the residual influence of the author's thinking is expressed forcefully through the phrasal verb 'break up' and the noun 'shape'. She considers how difficult this is and how the effect can be felt long afterwards.

The cover paintings might also be understood therefore as representing a particular reading stance adopted by Miriam, that of 'reading-for-the-writer.' I have borrowed this label from Eric Paulson and Sonya Armstrong (2010, p.88) but am using it here to mean something quite different. They use the term to describe the kind of reading where the goal is to provide 'some form of feedback to an author,' whereas I am using it to describe the kind of reading event which Miriam experiences in the extract from *Deadlock* cited above and which is paratextually mirrored by Richardson, in her article 'Novels' (March 1948) for *Life and*

*Letters* (reproduced in Scott, 1990, p.435). Richardson describes a process of ‘reading for the stamp of the author’s consciousness,’ which has its fictional equivalent in Miriam’s use of the word ‘shape,’ to refer to the way in which the identity of the author lingers in a text, waiting for a sensitive reader’s recognition and appreciation. In one of her manuscript diaries, Richardson records how she wants to convey Miriam’s experience of being dominated by authorial style as a physiological sensation: ‘Loses track of the arguments by the effect upon her of style. Reading, feeling only the [responsive beat of her blood her nerves *deleted*] glowing of her nerves & the beat of her blood or whole being’ (cited in Hanscombe, 1982, p.42).

Another way of understanding what the reader is doing in these portraits can be explained with recourse to the narratological/stylistic theory of ‘possible worlds’ which describes how a reader might project themselves from the ‘actual world’, where they are reading a book or a letter, to the ‘textual actual world’, the world created by the text (Ryan, 1991, Doležel 1998, cited in Nørgaard et al, 2010, p. 139). This theory seeks to explain how the transference or ‘re-centering’ of the reader from one world to another comes about. Palmer argues that this crossing of the world boundary is enabled by the reader’s active reconstruction of the fictional world and that, ‘the semiotic channel of access,’ is the reader’s understanding of the workings of the characters’ minds (2004, p.34). Whatever the type of reading imagined by the viewer, aesthetic appreciation, the act of re-centering or something else altogether, the power of these paintings text to draw in and engage the sitter’s attention is clearly communicated.

The transformative effect of reading is a recurring theme in *Pilgrimage* and in Richardson’s epitextual correspondence. In a letter of July 1933 to Stanley Kunitz, the poet and editor of a book of authors’ biographies, *Living Authors*, Richardson reflects on the ‘power’ and

‘charm’ of reading and the way in which it can ‘rouse and concentrate’ the reader’s ‘contemplative consciousness’ (Stanley Kunitz Papers). She attempts to describe her understanding of the way in which writer and reader are linked by the mutual engagement of the consciousness, arguing that the production and reception of literature involve similar mental processes of concentration and contemplation. Later in the same letter, she concludes: ‘a literary work for reader and writer alike, remains, emotionally, an adventure of the stable, contemplative human consciousness.’ The ‘adventure’ is shared but the abstract nouns ‘power’ and ‘charm’ suggest the idea of a controlled and magical force exerted by the writer’s words on the reader’s consciousness. The reader’s role is active in the sense that their mind is allowed to open to the consciousness of the writer. In her review of Neel Dorf’s novel *Keetje* (1930), reproduced in part on the novel’s peritextual blurb, Richardson again celebrates the power a writer is able to wield over a reader, using the verb ‘assail’ in a positive sense to communicate the pleasure to be derived from the experience:

I have read *Keetje* almost at a sitting and am still too much under its spell to speak of it with detachment. Every channel of the reader’s sensibility is assailed in this tale that is as vivid as a personal experience. In its quiet deep clarity and minute, sometimes horrifying, but never tedious realism, it is like a Dutch painting, and remains thus in memory as a work of unforgettable beauty and charm.

Interestingly Jonathon Coe, in an *Observer* article (November 26<sup>th</sup> 1995) describes *Pilgrimage* in terms of the impact or ‘mark’ it makes on his consciousness whenever he reads it: ‘Dorothy Richardson has the authentic mark for me of the truly powerful novelist: I only have to read a few pages, and for hours afterwards I am thinking, feeling and writing like her’.

In a letter to Bryher (dated ‘Late 1924),’ Richardson refers to her reading of Proust’s *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*: ‘I read a few pages every after breakfast and he lasts the whole day casting a charm’ (Fromm, 1995, p.109). It is clear that Richardson’s experience of

reading informs her theorising and, in this particular case, she reads Proust in both French and English, preferring the translation to the original: 'he loses a good deal in FRENCH. . . . . Is much more naïve. And there's quite a lot of very floppy writing and badly-made connective tissue that Moncrieff has transformed in the translation' (ibid). This is more than just an idiosyncratic value judgement, given Richardson's practical experience of translating. She believes that C.K. Scott Moncrieff's translation has enhanced the original, her experience enabling her to appreciate the creativity underpinning the interpretative process as well as the accuracy of the translation. Richardson had not only taken the time to read Proust in two languages, she also read his work chronologically and non-chronologically. In a letter to Bryher (dated December 1927) she describes how she has gone about reading Proust:

I am now in my third year of reading him [Proust] – two volumes at a time now one from each end to meet presently in the middle. A change from reading all over the series haphazard, & then from end to beginning. Gee – he's an artist. And whee what an infidel. Wot blarsphemy' (Fromm, 1995, p.145).

Richardson's aesthetic appreciation of Proust's work seems to have been heightened by her various re-readings.

Georges Poulet, a literary critic, describes how reading involves the occupation and subjugation of one person's thoughts by another:

Because of the strange invasion of my person by the thoughts of another, I am a self who is granted the experience of thinking thoughts foreign to him. I am the subject of thoughts other than my own. My consciousness behaves as though it were the consciousness of another' (1969, p.56, cited in Palmer, 2004, p.10).

There is an interesting parallel to be drawn between Richardson and Poulet's ideas on the way in which reading impacts on the mind of the reader. Poulet's phrase 'strange invasion' is not dissimilar to Richardson's 'power' and 'charm.' His focus, however, is only on the thoughts communicated, whereas Richardson thinks beyond written thoughts to consider the role that code (translation) and written devices, such as punctuation, might play. In an earlier essay, 'About Punctuation,' for the *Adelphi* in April 1924 Richardson uses the word 'charm' in a similar context to explore the process of reading: 'Only to patient reading will come forth the charm concealed in ancient manuscripts' [those with minimal punctuation] (reproduced in Scott, 1990, p.414). In this essay she develops her ideas on the way in which minimal or no punctuation can enable a writer's style to communicate through: '*listening*. Reading through the ear as well as through the eye'. She argues that the type of 'slow, attentive reading' demanded by such texts allows the reader to hear the text so that it *speaks* itself' (ibid, p.415).

The next section takes an example from *Pointed Roofs* where Miriam's consciousness is 'charmed' by the reading of a letter in which she can hear her sister, Harriett, speak. It explores how this process operates and what demands are made of the reader, if they are to fully engage in the reading process and respond creatively with what Richardson calls, the 'beat' of their own consciousness (ibid, p.416).

### **Reading as emotional adventure in *Pointed Roofs***

The transformative power of reading is introduced in *Pointed Roofs*. Miriam, away from home in Germany, receives a letter from her sister, Harriett, and seeks out the empty space of the *saal* with its windows overlooking the garden, to complete her reading of the final

section. This act of seeking out the right kind of place in which to savour the reading also involves the emptying and opening up of the mind, the first facilitative step. The *saal* symbolises the idea of a threshold space, a place which helps Miriam to achieve transcendence. It is more than just a room in which Miriam can be alone; its outlook is just as important. The garden it overlooks allows Miriam to connect with her own much-loved garden in England. The impact of spring at home is painfully imagined and filtered through the letter's contents: new clothes for a new social season, her acute sense of separation from her familiar world and her understanding that the rhythms of life, both cultural and natural, continue in her absence:

We are sending you out two blouses. Don't you think you're lucky?' Miriam glanced out at the young chestnut leaves drooping in tight pleats from black twigs . . . 'real grand proper blouses the first you've ever had, and a skirt to wear them with . . . won't you be within an inch of your life? Mother got them at Grigg's – one is squashed strawberry with a sort of little Catherine-wheely design in black going over it but not too much, awfully smart; and the other is a sort of buffy; one zephyr, the other cotton, and the skirt is a sort of mixey pepper and salt with lumps in the weaving – you know how I mean, something like our prawn dresses only lighter and much more refined. The duffer is going to join the tennis-club – he was at the Pooles' dance. I was simply flabbergasted. He's a duffer.

The little German garden was disappearing from Miriam's eyes. . . . It was cruel, cruel that she was not going to wear her blouses at home, at the tennis-club . . . with Harriett. . . . It was all beginning again, after all – the spring and tennis and presently boating – things were going on . . . the smash had not come . . . why had she not stayed . . . just one more spring? . . . how silly and hurried she had been, and there at home in the garden lilac was quietly coming out and syringa and guilder roses and May and laburnum and . . . everything . . . and she had run away, proud of herself, despising them all, and had turned herself into Miss Henderson, . . . and no one would ever know who she was. . . . Perhaps the blouses would make a difference – it must be extraordinary to have blouses. . . . Slommucky . . . untidy and slommucky, Lilla's mother had called them . . . and perhaps they would not fit her. . . .

One of the voices rose to a sawing like the shrill whirr of wood being cut by machinery. . . . A derisive laugh broke into the strange sound. It was Fraulein Pfaff's laughter.

Richardson uses the linguistic tools at her disposal, words and punctuation (series of three dots as well as full stops and dashes) to represent the key features of Harriet's voice (intimate, idiomatic, sisterly, affectionate) which Miriam can hear distinctly as she looks through the window at the garden. Harriett's voice, physically distant, but brought to life by the letter, competes with and affects what Miriam sees in front of her. 'Possible worlds theory' explains this process as 'transference'. Harriet's voice belongs to the 'text actual world' of the letter but the physical words on the page operate like spoken words that Miriam can physically hear. Harriet's words address her personally, asking questions and anticipating Miriam's possible responses of gratitude and excitement, ('Don't you think you're lucky?' and 'Won't you be within an inch of your life?'). Miriam's close up view of the chestnut leaves 'drooping in tight *pleats*' suggests that the absent world of clothes and fashion has merged with her immediate surroundings and the two worlds have, through a process of dissolution, become one. The image of the pleated chestnut leaves seems to be where the 'text actual world' gains a visual as well as an aural hold and affects what and how Miriam sees in the outside 'actual world'. Thoughts of home, where she can't wear the blouses, gradually accumulate and displace the immediate physical reality of the 'actual world', the *saal* and its garden view ('the little German garden was disappearing from Miriam's eyes').

The more frequent use of the three dots in the second paragraph, are used to signal what Annika Lindskog (2013, p.1) calls 'non-verbal content.' Lindskog argues that Richardson's use of punctuation is frequently visually encoded, 'representing and illustrating thought processes and states of mind' (ibid). In this extract the boundaries of Miriam's different thoughts framed by three dots would appear to be signalling a deeper type of thought than those framed by dashes. '- The spring and tennis and presently boating - things were going on' refer to the time of year and its associated activities which come easily to Miriam in a



temporal cluster. Sometimes Richardson mixes the dash and the dots to frame a thought, in order, I think, to signal a contrast between a thought which brings Miriam close to the surface ('it must be extraordinary') as if she is willing herself to feel this way and then a memory which takes Miriam back to her school days and a negative comment that a friend's mother had once made about blouses: '. . . Perhaps the blouses would make a difference – it must be extraordinary to have blouses. . . . Slommucky . . .' Where thoughts are framed both sides by a series of three dots, these often express more painful memories such as Miriam's knee-jerk response to the impending crisis of her father's bankruptcy. Miriam only surfaces from the 'text actual world' when the voices in her immediate vicinity, which she has heard but not listened to, impinge on her consciousness because of their unwelcome interference and aggressive tonal quality. Initially these sounds are likened to a 'sawing' and a 'shrill whirr of wood being cut by machinery', noises that belongs to the outside world of the garden perhaps. Fraulein's laughter is then identified as breaking into the other 'strange sound', as if it were disturbing that sound and rupturing the reading experience. Now Miriam is aware of her material world again and alert to the proximity of someone she dislikes. The sound of voices, Harriet's imagined and Fraulein's real, frame the shifts into and out of the 'text actual world'.

It is not easy for a writer or an artist to represent the invisible workings of consciousness. Richardson's description of Miriam's reading of Harriett's letter seems to me to be the verbal equivalent of what John is trying to achieve in her paintings. The tools of language and punctuation allow Richardson to straightforwardly describe Miriam's actions ('Miriam glanced out at the young chestnut leaves') as well as mimic the movement of Miriam's mind. The three dots show the jumps from one thought or emotion, or attitudinal stance to another: Miriam's sense of injustice at being exiled from home; her recognition that she acted prematurely; the knowledge she has gained with hindsight; her imaginative projection of

what the garden would look like in the spring, drawing on her memories of the flowers and shrubs that would be in bloom; her negative thoughts about herself, ‘silly, ‘run away’ both with childish connotations that contrast with her ironic sense of her constructed self, Miss Henderson, supposedly mature and trustworthy; the distraction and lure of the blouses and what they represent to her – fashion, attractiveness – and the fear that they might not fit her (perhaps she is still growing or put on weight in Germany). Each item requires careful processing on the reader’s part if the train of thought is to be followed.

### **Concluding comments on the Virago covers**

John suggests the workings of consciousness through visual codes: her subjects’ restricted set of impassive facial expressions and bodily postures as well as through a desaturation of colour. Verbal language can be precise and tell, as well as show, whereas painting has to render the look of things. Perhaps an inference can be drawn that the colour and vitality has been absorbed by, or transferred to, the sitters’ reading consciousness beyond the viewer’s reach. Michael Holroyd describes the effect of these paintings as leaving the viewer ‘with the impression of a story told’ (cited in Jenkins and Stephens, 2004, p.13).

A prospective reader of the Virago edition might well, in the first instance, choose to buy *Pilgrimage* because they recognise or are drawn towards the introspective quality of Gwen John’s paintings, rather than being attracted by the book’s title, subject matter or author. Such a visually-minded reader might notice the tiny differences and wonder what, if anything, they signify. A less visually-minded reader might assume that the covers are identical until a closer perusal at some point tells them otherwise. For those already acquainted with *Pilgrimage*, these covers might communicate something more profound about the essence of the text and the way in which it represents ‘psychic reality’ as something outside of chronological time, whereby memory or the contemplative state achieved through

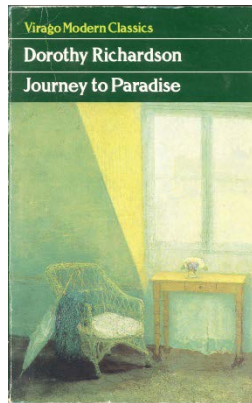
the act of reading, can capture an event or place and replay it again and again with tiny differences.

### **The Virago edition of *Pilgrimage*: developments post 1979**

*Pilgrimage* thus found a new place for itself in the Virago Modern Classics series, viewed alongside other works by women that had not been on the bookshelves for some time, such as those by Antonia White and Vera Brittain. *Pilgrimage*'s inclusion gave the novel sequence a fresh modernist appearance and a new green spine status. It was to remain in print with Virago until 2002 after a number of reprints in 1982, 1984, 1989, 1992 and 1995. Behind the scenes, Virago was doing its best to keep *Pilgrimage* in print although not all its volumes were reprinted as this was commercially unviable, volume I being a better seller than subsequent ones. (This sales trend was evident much earlier on. Richardson, in a letter to Richard Church, (dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 1936), states: 'Of late years, (...) there have been, uniformly, rather more sales of Pointed Roofs than of the subsequent volumes, [volumes here means chapter-volumes] clearly indicating that a proportion of new readers falls away after reading this small crude chapter' (Fromm, 1995, p. 307).

Despite these patchy sales, Virago encouraged another scholarly enterprise in relation to Richardson. An original publication of an anthology of Richardson's short stories and autobiographical sketches entitled *Journey to Paradise*, selected and introduced by Trudi Tate, came out in 1989 alongside a reprint of Volume 1 of *Pilgrimage*. The covers of the two works were linked by the choice of painter. Gwen John's 'a Corner of the Artist's Room in Paris' was used for the anthology, a painting described by Sue Roe, one of John's biographers as:

A poised muted interior in which she [John] captures the essence of the atmosphere of her attic room in the rue du Cherche-Midi, with its sloping ceilings and light falling softly across the eaves. She painted two versions, both of which highlight her empty wicker chair. In both variants, the chair is draped with a discarded jacket or dress, but in one she added a rolled umbrella balanced against the chair leg (2001, p.96).



As can be seen, Virago chose the variant with the umbrella. Roe also notes the ‘quality of absence’ represented in the painting, the umbrella and jacket/dress suggesting that the artist has either just arrived or departed or is out of view. This idea of an absence that is ‘almost tangible, even tactile’ is evoked (ibid) and although this indirect suggestion of subject matter is subtle and idiosyncratic, a parallel can be drawn in *Pilgrimage* where Richardson repeatedly describes the atmosphere of rooms where absence or imminent departure suffuse the atmosphere.

### **Scholarly interest in *Pilgrimage* from North America**

Letters from Richardson provide epitextual evidence of her awareness that *Pilgrimage* was becoming a text of academic interest in various parts of the world including the United States. In 1949, two letters make specific mention of American scholarly interest, one to Bryher, (dated New Year’s Day) and the other to Henry Savage (dated January 26<sup>th</sup>). They

describe how Richardson received letters from undergraduate students from two different American universities (Columbia and Vassar) requesting information to support their research (Fromm, 1995, pp.597-600).

In 1989 Virago produced a co-published version of Volume I with the University of Illinois Press. Indeed an initiative from this educational establishment played a key role in trying to keep *Pilgrimage* in print, as evidenced in email exchanges between staff at these two institutions in the years 1998 and 2000. In an email (dated 21<sup>st</sup> August 1998), Imogen Taylor, Editorial Director at Virago, writes to Ann Lowry, Assistant Director at the University of Illinois Press in response to a query about print status:

Volumes 2, 3 and 4 are currently very low on stock and a reprint is under consideration. Sales, however, have literally been trickling through and while I am loath to let these go out of print we definitely need to boost the sales figures to warrant keeping them going. A co-publication deal with you, would, I'm sure, be a blessing. If you were interested, then I would seriously consider reissuing all four volumes, perhaps with a new introduction to each (Virago Press Archive).

A few days later, in an email (dated 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998), Ann Lowry, Assistant Director at the University of Illinois Press, asks Lennie Goodings at Virago: 'If the University of Illinois were to purchase 2000 copies of Volume I and 1000 copies of Volumes 2-4 of *Pilgrimage* for sale in North America, would those quantities suffice to make your reprints viable?' (ibid). Two years later in April 2000 Kristen Bluemel (Richardson scholar at the University of Illinois) asks Jill Foulston, at Virago about the print status of *Pilgrimage*, also expressing an interest, 'in discussing what conditions would be necessary to bring Dorothy Richardson into print and especially how US professors could start to include her fiction in their modern British Literature classes'. Foulston shows a commercial interest in exploring 'ways of increasing interest and sales in Richardson' and informs Bluemel that *Pilgrimage* is 'out of stock but not technically out of print with us. It is very much a matter of deciding, when

and how best to reissue'. Foulston refers to the problem of 'making this difficult author [Richardson] viable for the modern reader and reveals that a possibility of an 'abridged version' had again been raised, 'not something for the purist, but surely better than letting her languish interminably!' (ibid). The reference to an 'abridged version' is the idea first mooted by Eva Tucker twenty years earlier which resurfaced in 1994 after Tucker approached Mary Swinney, an Associate at Mark Paterson, Richardson's literary agent, with the idea of an 'Essential Dorothy Richardson'. Mark Paterson and Associates were in favour of this idea but Virago, in control of the UK English Language rights to *Pilgrimage*, needed to be persuaded. Swinney, aware of the potential for commercial conflict, had this suggestion for Virago (letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> January 1994) to Lynn Knight, a Virago director):

I guess if *Pilgrimage* were selling like crazy there could be a fear that this might detract from your own sales, but since this is not the case such a project might indeed whet a few appetites and encourage better sales of the complete work. Also we'd be sharing proceeds 50:50 so there could be some reasonable income for Virago out of it (ibid).

Virago rejected this offer. In a letter from Lynn Knight to Eva Tucker (dated March 11<sup>th</sup> 1994), Virago make clear that they have their own ideas for 'a Richardson anthology' and are pursuing this idea with their academic contacts before appointing a project editor (ibid). No such project came to fruition, however, although the idea evolved and was discussed over several years. In an email to Imogen Taylor, (dated 19<sup>th</sup> August 1998), from Ann Lowry, the idea of a condensed version of *Pilgrimage* was rejected as not meeting, 'the needs and interests of North American readers. Certainly scholars would want to read exactly what Richardson wrote (even if they only read part of it) and I suspect students and general readers would feel likewise' (ibid). Such a view is reinforced by Bluemel who states that she is 'uncomfortable' with the abridgement idea but more interested in a 'Richardson

Reader' although admits it might 'amount to virtually the same thing' (email, dated 28<sup>th</sup> April 2000 to Jill Foulston at Virago, *ibid*).

Virago consulted a range of academics about the validity of such a project. Lennie Goodings, Virago's director, contacted the American feminist scholar, Elaine Showalter who responded: 'the point of Dorothy Richardson is indeed the length and the longeurs – even the boring bits' (email dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 1998 to Imogen Taylor, *ibid*). Goodings, however, erring on the side of caution, wrote a handwritten note asking her staff to also 'sound out' academics at the University of East Anglia and University College London (*ibid*). Presumably the academic consensus was that abridgement of the type that Tucker suggested, however well done, was an operation that might distort the text. Genette notes that any reduction (or augmenting) of a text generates changes that affect not only length but structure and substance (1997(a), p.229).

In spite of academic pressure and a desire to encourage and support scholarly interest in Dorothy Richardson and keep her work on bookshelves and in syllabuses, the Virago edition of *Pilgrimage* is no longer in print. It still has an epitextual presence on their website with a summary which reproduces, in part, the peritextual back cover blurb of the Virago edition.

### **Concluding comments on the Virago edition of *Pilgrimage***

From 1979 *Pilgrimage* was located in a very different paratextual surround from earlier incarnations, framed by a feminist publisher, researched and rehabilitated by a feminist preface writer, Gillian Hanscombe, received by feminist critics who spoke of 'feminist literature' and 'women's writing' in positive, rather than pejorative ways, and circulated to an audience of educated readers with feminist sympathies. This was a significantly new

‘threshold’ space (Genette, 1997, p.2) opening up *Pilgrimage* to a new reading community, not necessarily trained in the art of close reading and, perhaps, lacking specialised knowledge about literary fiction, but primed for an affective response, a feeling-with with Miriam. The Virago edition was also very useful to those wishing to make *Pilgrimage* a set or supplementary text on undergraduate English courses. Feminist literary theory was beginning to shape literary studies in the 1980s, not just in textual selection but also in textual interpretation. A new female-centred field of literary criticism was developing to explore the female voice, known as ‘gynocriticism’, a term coined by Showalter to describe: ‘the feminist study of women’s writing, including readings of women’s texts and analyses of the intertextual relations both between women writers (a female literary tradition), and between women and men’ (1990, p.189). Virago was playing a key role in making available texts for these types of intertextual analyses and reassessments (Tolan, 2006, p.328).

*Pilgrimage* might not be a text that perfectly fits this feminist frame but its subject matter, Miriam’s developing consciousness, and the feminine aesthetic which informs its language and structure would certainly have resonated with those early and later Virago readers who identified with Miriam’s feelings and experiences. Jean Radford makes specific reference to this new specialised audience ‘with the ‘empathy’ to take up the challenge that Richardson offers’ (1991, p.3). And for those other readers for whom identification with Miriam was impossible, they could certainly learn a great deal about how it feels to be a woman who seeks something beyond material wealth, social success, or sexual fulfilment.

*Pilgrimage*’s paratextual frame was expanded and fundamentally changed by the Virago edition. The power of the liminal zone of the paratext to achieve a ‘better reception’ or a ‘more pertinent reading’ of *Pilgrimage* was certainly channelled in this particular case



(Genette, 1997, p.2). The 'female idiom' in the discourse of Gillian Hanscombe's preface (Showalter, 1990, p.187), and the carefully selected cover paintings enhance the text to which they are anchored. Virago's specialist marketplace would seem to be the most comfortable and fitting place to attract more readers but, despite what Virago 'gave' in terms of a feminist context, *Pilgrimage's* lack of broad commercial appeal can be evidenced in poor sales figures and demise into 'out of print' status.

***Pilgrimage* – a text to be studied: more recent sociocultural matrices – the Broadview and Oxford University Press editions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The conflictual narrative of *Pilgrimage's* publication history is, however, countered by two recent developments which signal a positive shift in *Pilgrimage's* perceived cultural significance. Teaching editions of *Pointed Roofs* and *The Tunnel* have been published in 2014 by the Broadview Press, an independent academic publisher based in Canada. In Britain a scholarly critical hardback edition of Richardson's long and short fiction and her letters is to be published in stages by Oxford University Press over the period 2016-20. Both these editions position *Pilgrimage* as a text to be studied and, in their different ways, provide a detailed contextualisation. What follows is not a detailed analysis of the two new editions but an attempt to show how they relate to previous ones.

The Broadview editions, based on the copy text of the relevant chapter-volumes of the 1938 edition of *Pilgrimage*, revert to an earlier form of *Pilgrimage*, in being published in single chapter-volumes, not for the commercial purpose of maximising sales but for an academic purpose, ease of close critical reading for undergraduate study. They have an introduction, not a preface, by Stephen Ross, (Professor of English at the University of Victoria) whose attitude to Richardson and *Pilgrimage* is unambiguously positive and respectful. There is

no doubt in his mind that Richardson's work is worthy of this kind of scholarly treatment as he seeks to explain some of its difficulties: 'Starting with the slang-riddled and impressionistic conversation of the opening few pages [of *Pointed Roofs*], the novel throws readers into Miriam's psychological world' (2014, p.12). The need for the reader to be an active decoder is clearly signalled. The compound adjective 'slang-riddled' and the idiomatic phrasal verb 'throw into' might superficially suggest a negative stance but both are used in a contextual frame that finds the coded quirky dialogue and the force and suddenness of Miriam's perspective arresting rather than irritating. No frustration is being expressed or criticism made about Richardson's narrative style – rather her techniques of free indirect discourse and stream of consciousness are said to '*exquisitely* characterise all of *Pilgrimage*' (ibid). In this way the reader is encouraged to adopt a similar opinion, that Richardson's narrative poetics is to be revered.

In the two sections of the introduction tailored to the specific chapter-volume, a rationale for their choice (the first and the fourth in the sequence) is provided. Clearly it would be odd *not* to choose the first one, *Pointed Roofs*, as it is, one might assume, much easier for an undergraduate student to access *Pilgrimage* from its starting point and become acquainted with Miriam's character and concerns, as well as Richardson's narrative technique in their embryonic form. Ross, however, suggests that *The Tunnel* might be an alternative best point of entry for the new reader. This chapter-volume heralds Miriam's life in London and is perhaps easier to teach in a modernist context with Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* for example. Ross, however, dwells on *The Tunnel*'s style rather than its content, arguing that its part in the whole is 'more representative' (with regard to textual experimentation) and that *The Tunnel* is also more self-contained than *Pointed Roofs* (which perhaps is best read in a sequence with *Backwater* and *Honeycomb* – the three chapter-volumes sharing a common theme of Miriam's experience of teaching, albeit in contrasting settings) (ibid). In this

respect, Ross is considering *Pilgrimage*'s intertextual nature and how a reader can get the most out of the least and his comments echo Richardson's on the various ways in which *Pilgrimage* might be read in a non-linear way. His concluding statement: 'Richardson's star has been steadily on the rise, and we look forward to a great many more readers, students and scholars of her work in the decades to come' (p.42) can be usefully compared to Hanscombe's summation in her preface, where she hopes that the Virago edition 'points to a new, rich and perceptive understanding of Richardson's achievement' (1979, p.7). Both scholars are priming the reader with a set of positive expectations about *Pilgrimage*. In his acknowledgements, Ross explicitly makes reference to Hanscombe's work, one of a group of scholars who have, 'worked so hard to put Richardson back on the map' (2014, p.7). His meaning of 'the map' is, I think, a literary/modernist one of English literature, whereby readers can identify and read Richardson's *Pilgrimage* alongside other prominent modernist texts rather than learning about the writer and her work from the more marginal spaces of parenthetical asides, indexes and footnotes. In this way a small readership can be exposed to *Pilgrimage* and taught ways of reading and appreciating her work. Clearly the Virago edition is an important cultural landmark for this new edition, which devotes five pages to 'feminism' in its introduction. Hanscombe's work thus can be seen to pave the way for an integration of a feminist reading of *Pilgrimage* into the mainstream of modernist studies.

In the Broadview editions of *Pointed Roofs* and *The Tunnel*, there are also explanatory footnotes, a chronology of Richardson's life and extensive appendices designed to support undergraduate work. In *The Tunnel* for example, reviews by Katherine Mansfield (for *The Athenaeum* April 1919) and Virginia Woolf (for the *Times Literary Supplement* February 1919) sit alongside that of a slightly later one by John Rodker (for *The Little Review*, September 1919) all prefaced by a useful orienting introduction:

The reviews gathered in this appendix provide an unvarnished perspective on how Richardson's contemporaries, many of them experimental writers themselves, received her work. These assessments do not have the benefit of historical hindsight, but appeared nearly contemporaneously with the novels themselves, and thus articulate first impressions (...) Of particular interest here is the aspect of tone. When Woolf, or Rodker, or Mansfield indicates that Richardson's technique is arresting but ultimately boring, we must attend closely to whether this is an honest professional appraisal or possibly such an appraisal tainted with envy (2014, p.325).

Here Ross is not only drawing the reader's attention to extrinsic context in terms of the temporality of these reviews and the profession of the reviewers, he is also raising awareness of an important intrinsic stylistic feature – tone. That Rodker's review has much less paratextual prominence than that of Woolf and Mansfield's and his tone much more hostile (*The Tunnel* described as 'a tiresome practise of what was originally a rather engaging manner' (1919, p.40) are two withheld evaluations. These reviews are presented as being extremely helpful for the reader not least if they are struggling to read Richardson's work: 'Readers who have experienced some frustration with Richardson's coy, at times obscure, prose will no doubt be relieved to find that they have illustrious company' (Ross, 2014, p.325).

Ross combines an enthusiasm and learned interest in Richardson's work with an openness about its difficulties that works well for his target audience. McCracken, in a review of these editions, comments: 'At last, Richardson can reach the audience she deserves' although he observes that this audience is sadly restricted to North America (2015, p.1). This statement also reveals something significant about the way in which Richardson's audience can be characterised. The implication here is that an educational context, where these editions can provide the basis for a sensitive and informed teaching, provides the best conditions for reading *Pilgrimage*. McCracken hints that readers need to be/need to be made worthy of Richardson – be 'the audience she deserves' and part of what he means, I think,

is to be aware of the literary debates and intellectual contexts in which her work is embedded. The appendices to the two Broadview editions provide the necessary paratextual material to enable this kind of contextualised reading. McCracken applauds these editions on two counts; for making Richardson accessible to undergraduates but also for integrating contextual material that will stimulate the interest of experienced modernist scholars.

The Oxford University edition of *Pilgrimage* is an expensive, hardback scholarly edition for postgraduates and modernist scholars. All of Richardson's output has been gathered together in one place. Unlike the Broadview edition, it is based on the copy text of the first editions of the chapter-volumes. For the first time scholars will be able to see a full collection of the first editions of *Pilgrimage* alongside Richardson's short stories, sketches, journalistic articles and letters. This edition's project is a much more ambitious concept than the 'Richardson reader', envisaged in their different ways by Eva Tucker and Kristin Bluemel in the 1970s, and fundamentally changes the spatial relations of *Pilgrimage*'s paratexts. It will now be much easier for a researcher to make links across the spread of Richardson's writing, for example to trace themes or stylistic links between her fictional and non-fictional writing, to explore her letters as literature or as graphic experiments with punctuation, gaps and ellipses. Richardson's feminine aesthetic can now be better appreciated in the round. As well as facilitating new areas for genetic research, *Pilgrimage*'s paratextual territory will also be easier to navigate.

The Broadview and Oxford editions of *Pilgrimage* share an important ideological function. Both are working to reconfigure Richardson's status and reputation by encouraging her work to be read more widely by undergraduate and post-graduate students as well as by modernist scholars. In Genettian terms they are adding significant 'connotative value' to *Pilgrimage* and its author (1997, p.93).

## CONCLUSION

Two recurring themes circulating in *Pilgrimage's* paratextual space have been the subject of this thesis, namely the materiality of the anchoring text and the doubts and uncertainties that Richardson and others have expressed about *Pilgrimage*. An effort has been made to range widely and draw from liminal paratexts as well as more prominent ones, but clearly the selection reflects the lens through which I am looking.

My interdisciplinary approach has allowed a broad field of view, fusing three different but compatible methodological approaches. Drawing on some of Genette's narratological work, but adopting other approaches, namely stylistics and modernist studies, the thesis has gone beyond purely linguistic and literary study to explore the cultural issues that come into play when a text, or in this case, texts, evolve into different editions of a book and generate paratexts. In the give and take of *Pilgrimage's* paratextual space there are collisions and collusions. It is not so much the opposing polarities of opinion in *Pilgrimage's* paratextual space that are of interest – what Richardson called 'venom and cream' in a letter to John Cowper Powys (dated 19<sup>th</sup> November 1935, Fromm, 1995, p.303) – but the mixed opinion in the zone in between. Here doubts and uncertainties about *Pilgrimage* are present in places where they might least be expected, such as prefaces rather than letters; and their effects, to reject the text, refute the ideas of the author or deter the reader, feel oddly collusive.

In theory, paratexts, provide fortification and sustenance for their anchoring text and prefaces, particularly peritextual ones, occupy a key threshold space to achieve these positive functions. When a text, such as *Pilgrimage*, is widely perceived to be 'difficult', these paratextual functions are problematized. The difficulties cannot be ignored but ideally

need to be signalled in a manner that does not undermine the anchoring text. In this case, however, some weak points in the prefatorial fortress have played a significant role in *Pilgrimage*'s diminution.

The first preface, by virtue of its position, is not so much concerned with sustaining and fortifying as with establishing Richardson's work and, as such, lays the foundations of *Pilgrimage*'s paratextual discourse. J.D. Beresford in 1915 has the opportunity of announcing the début of an exciting new talent but, instead, he expresses his first impressions with great care. His hesitation is at least understandable, given the extent of Richardson's narrative experimentation in *Pointed Roofs*, but he side-steps the role of judgement-maker by concentrating on the interplay between his interpretation of the text and the various formats in which it was presented to him. (Indeed in 1938, Beresford is the first critic to be called upon to 'review his verdict' on *Pilgrimage* in Richard Church's epitextual essay (p.5), and he makes much of his 'regret' for having been 'over-cautious' twenty-three years earlier (ibid, p.6)). Beresford's tentative focus on materiality in 1915 would appear to set a dominant tone and theme for much of the paratextual discourse to come.

The second preface, May Sinclair's, is a prominent presence in *Pilgrimage*'s paratextual space. Published four years later than Beresford's, after Richardson has produced two more chapter-volumes, Sinclair's critical stance is much more confident and positive and *Pilgrimage* is seemingly fortified and sustained. Nevertheless the effect of this preface has not been purely beneficial. It also caused *Pilgrimage* to be widely – but superficially – known as the first 'stream of consciousness' novel in English, and triggered a dense network of references linking Richardson to the appellation she loathed. Sinclair's descriptive label has eclipsed its subject to become a widely adopted term in literary criticism, while

Richardson's strong feelings on being the 'beneficiary' of the first literary application of the metaphor, have occasionally been dismissed as both ill-mannered and ill-conceived.

This attitude is most clearly expressed in Walter Allen's 1967 preface where he appears to be putting Richardson in her place in more ways than one. Admiration and respect for *Pilgrimage* is tempered by grammatical tentativeness and, more explicitly, by semantic choices that encode reservation about Richardson's 'coldly dismissive' attitude to Sinclair. Allen may well have detected something significant underlying Richardson's 'perfect imbecility' comment, directed most pointedly at the intellect of the woman behind the 'stream of consciousness' metaphor.

In the epitextual fringe of Richardson's private letters, where she can more freely disclose her feelings to friends, references to Sinclair are frequently laced with contemptuous humour. In an undated letter to Alan Odle written in 1917 prior to their marriage, Richardson describes herself as giggling over a drawing that Odle has enclosed with a previous letter so, in this context, the sentence: 'I have an interesting thing to tell you about May Sinclair, or not to tell' sounds almost flirtatious, suggesting a tempting snippet of gossip (Fromm, 1995, p.18). And in a letter to Edward Garnett, (dated February 7<sup>th</sup> 1920), Richardson writes of 'still vibrating from a visitation' from the Beresfords and 'Miss May Sinclair whom we had not met [before]' (by this point Sinclair had made her significant contribution to *Pilgrimage*'s paratextual discourse). The alliterative phrase 'vibrating from a visitation' is clearly ironic, with 'visitation' suggesting a divine or supernatural being or an official visit by a high status person, while 'vibrating' playfully implies Sinclair's physiological effect on Richardson and Odle (so powerful that it continues to affect them long afterwards). The choice of phrasal verb to describe how the visitors arrived, '*descending upon us from Watergate bay,*' (my emphasis) not only suggests coming from a high to a low place, but also arriving without notice or invitation. This initial meeting



described as ‘a happy afternoon’ is coloured by Richardson’s realisation that Sinclair and the Beresfords must have been ‘frozen and starved. We forget how hard we get down here’ (ibid, p.39). Whether this admission is genuinely felt or not, is unclear, Richardson perhaps having to be careful how far she takes the joke with Garnett. This first social exchange between the two women inscribes the tone for future ones, recorded in Richardson’s letters to different recipients with its palimpsestual trace surfacing like ‘a stubborn after-image’ (Barthes, 1953, p.17).

Richardson’s letters making reference to Sinclair are worthy of closer scrutiny, in particular those written before the onset of Sinclair’s illness from Parkinson’s disease in the early 1930s. Those written during the period 1917-28 provide additional epitextual evidence to support the argument, expressed in Allen’s peritextual preface, that Richardson’s attitude to Sinclair was indeed uncivil. In these private and confidential letters Richardson was expressing her personal feelings without fear or constraint and it is only when they come into the public domain, albeit on the epitextual fringe, that they can contribute anything to the paratextual commentary. In this case they illuminate a key strand of Walter Allen’s peritextual preface.

Why some of *Pilgrimage*’s paratexts are referred to with such frequency, such as those of Virginia Woolf and May Sinclair, whereas others, such as Walter Allen’s preface, are avoided, overlooked or merely given a cursory reference, is a matter for speculation. In Woolf’s case, her paratextual prominence is probably connected to her female modernist status as well as her memorable description of Richardson’s ‘psychological sentence of the feminine gender’. In Sinclair’s case, her status as a modernist writer is not so salient but the bold style of her review of the first three chapter-volumes of *Pilgrimage* probably adds to its recyclability: ‘There is no drama, no situation, no set scene’. The syntactic negative polarity of this sentence conveys enthusiasm, the reader having to decode the positive

construction and understand the function of the negative version – that a lack of these same qualities is liberating and a cause for celebration. Lack of a quotable sentence in Walter Allen's 1967 preface is unlikely to be the reason for its 'invisibility' in *Pilgrimage's* paratextual space, although its tentative expression might have discouraged citation by Richardson's admirers. A more likely reason, perhaps, is a problem of access to the 1967 (Dent) and 1976 (New York Popular Library) editions containing Allen's preface.

Richardson's own Foreword of 1938 is a prominent paratext even though, not the strongest advocate of her own work, she fails to capitalise on what could have been her moment. It stands in awkward relation to its allographic epitextual counterpart, Richard Church's essay. Whereas the Foreword downplays its own existence, Church's essay overcompensates for the Foreword's lack, in a desire to fortify, sustain and sell *Pilgrimage*. The collision between the two paratexts would have been even more dramatic had it taken place in the peritext of the 1938 omnibus edition, but the essay's positioning, in the epitextual margins in the form of a pamphlet, diminishes its impact. Unsurprisingly therefore, I found very few references to it and it seemed to be, like Walter Allen's preface, a liminal presence only.

Richardson's Foreword, enjoying peritextual prominence in all editions of *Pilgrimage* since 1938, has ensured easy access but not easy decoding, due in part to its opacity. Understanding the other reasons for the decoding difficulty, through an appreciation of the Foreword's extrinsic context, was the key to the formulation of this thesis. My research started to develop after I began to appreciate why the tone of the Foreword was so strained. Prior to that, I had read it several times with some puzzlement, knowing instinctively that there was more to it and that my decontextualized reading was preventing me from understanding the full import of its sentences. My vague sense of the 'stamp' of Richardson's consciousness, behind, within and between the words, alerting me to

something beyond what was being stated, was validated by reading some of her letters. In these epitexts I uncovered some of the causes of Richardson's discomfiture. The publishing opportunity with Dent caused Richardson immense mental and physical strain, pressuring her to complete two chapter-volumes, *Clear Horizon* and *Dimple Hill*, in quicker succession than was comfortable, as well as requiring her to comment on *Pilgrimage* as if it were a whole, when it was still unfinished. Fromm, Richardson's biographer, reflects on *Dimple Hill's* writing demands, specifically the need for Richardson to evoke a new atmosphere and background (rural Sussex rather than London). The effort required to do this properly competed, she argues, with the pressure of having to produce work quickly to meet Dent's requirements. The collision of these two demands, one writerly, the other commercial, would have been difficult to manage after the mental exhaustion of breakdown and could only have added to Richardson's sense of dislocated identity (1995, p.299).

The retrospective Foreword poses a psychological challenge for Richardson, to recall how she felt when she first started to write *Pilgrimage* and, as such, the Foreword is a receptacle for Richardson's writing past. This memory of the distant past, when she was at the beginning of something exciting and new, must have collided painfully with her mental state at the time of writing the Foreword and her recent experience of burning the first draft of *Dimple Hill*. Richardson nevertheless revisits her memories of writing *Pointed Roofs*, remembering the thrill of being on 'a fresh pathway' but has to exercise some control over how she communicates the subsequent hardship of writing *Pilgrimage*. The letters in chapter one reveal just how arduous the process of writing *Pilgrimage* often was and some of this can be glimpsed in Richardson's résumé. The terms she chooses: 'dissatisfaction', 'torment' and 'failure' suggest some of the raw drama of her struggles and, given that she has probably re-experienced these emotions more recently when writing and re-writing *Dimple Hill*, the words would have an enhanced resonance. Richardson, 'the present writer'

is not writing at a safe distance from these experiences, even though she might appear to be so. Providing a palatable public author persona at an unpropitious time is the complicating factor, inflecting the Foreword's tone and style. Richardson had to continuously open her mental pathways in order to write *Pilgrimage*, based as it is on so many of her memories. But her fictionalised persona, Miriam, allowed her some psychological cushioning, of a kind that was not available to her when writing the authorial Foreword, where her own identity is exposed. Although Richardson does not express this directly in her letters, I suspect that she was, in part, grateful that Church restricted the initial distribution of the Foreword.

With the pervasive influence of contextualism, it is becoming physically and psychologically easier to explore paratexts expressing doubts and uncertainties about *Pilgrimage*, and, rather than ignoring or dismissing them as of minimal interest to the Richardson enthusiast, to consider what meaning they give or take away in Genettian terms. The processes of over-reading or under-reading a text come into play here. A desire to ascribe more significance or reverence to a paratext than it actually deserves, or to perceive an ambiguously worded paratext in a positive light, might give rise to both over- and under-reading. I agree with John Mepham's observation that Woolf's cynicism, in her review of *The Tunnel*, is frequently under-read: 'Of course Woolf's tone is correct and courteous but underneath the surface there is a deeply sceptical reaction' (2000, p.451). Perhaps this under-reading of the review has been a type of mild collusion by those wishing to raise Richardson's modernist status. But as soon as the review's tentative quality is appreciated, communicated by its modality and colliding tones of admiration and lack of conviction, it feels impossible to under-read.

There is also the question of what a potentially significant paratext does *not* say, what it ignores, overlooks or represses. The relationship between Walter Allen's preface and the

rest of his literary criticism on *Pilgrimage* is a case in point, (explored in chapter three). Another example is Woolf's decision in her essay, 'Modern Novels,' published in the *Times Literary Supplement* on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 1919, to omit any reference, however minor, to Richardson. Having reviewed *The Tunnel* only a few weeks earlier in the same publication (the 13<sup>th</sup> February), Woolf could hardly have forgotten Richardson's work and the way in which it was trying to get closer to how life is experienced, through a representation of Miriam's consciousness. In her survey Woolf applauds those writers who try and do just this: 'Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit' (reproduced in McNeille, 1984, p.160). Woolf describes her critical perspective as from one standing 'in the crowd' (ibid, p.157) but a lack of lofty overview does not explain her omission. After dismissing the materialists, Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy, Woolf focuses exclusively on Joyce's *Ulysses*, before moving on to contrast the two traditions of English and Russian prose fiction. Her allusion to *Ulysses* 'now appearing in the *Little Review*' is a concrete reference to the context of her reading and she must have been aware of *Interim*'s serialisation alongside that of *Ulysses*. Any survey has to be selective and Woolf's rationale can be understood to be as much strategic and self-serving as it is fair, but in my opinion it provides more confirmation, if any were needed, that her review of *The Tunnel* was as much an expression of doubt and reservation as a genuine expression of interest in Richardson's 'method'.

More recent criticism on Richardson is negotiating some of these paratextual tensions, adding new connotative value to *Pilgrimage* and its author. Rebecca Bowler and Scott McCracken have explored Richardson's own metaphorical preferences for the workings of consciousness, dubbing it her 'wet aesthetics', bringing to the fore Richardson's liking for a water-related metaphor of a different kind, that of immersion. In so doing they are working against the grain of criticism that has foregrounded certain ideas about *Pilgrimage* and

obliterated others although they provide a partial defence for the collusion underpinning the continued use of Sinclair's metaphor in *Pilgrimage's* paratextual space: 'Even today the quickest way to introduce Dorothy Richardson to a public for whom she is still less well known than James Joyce or Marcel Proust is to say she was the first writer whose fiction was described as 'stream of consciousness' (2014, p.2).

But perhaps even more interesting is Bowler and McCracken's revised thinking on Sinclair's metaphor: 'Rereading Sinclair's essay, it becomes clear that the metaphor of immersion is far more important than the metaphor of the stream' (ibid, p.6). Here they make an implicit concession that paratextual commentary frequently operates through the recycling of 'old' ideas and how even familiar paratexts can yield new meanings once the analytic focus shifts. An exploration of the frequency and distribution of the metaphorical language in Sinclair's preface lends itself, I suggest, to a quantitative stylistics approach. In chapter three, when such an approach was adopted to compare the prefaces of Walter Allen and Gillian Hanscombe, patterns were uncovered which provided linguistic evidence to support the conclusions arrived at earlier via more traditional intrinsic and extrinsic methods. The quantitative approach, moreover, revealed the affective meaning of function words such as the pronouns 'she' 'her' and 'it' and their contrasting distribution across the two prefaces. The same method also allowed me to appreciate how the deployment of different naming strategies was a significant gauge of emotional distance. But quantitative analysis can do more than support the findings that have been arrived at through other means. In the case of Sinclair's preface, it might also modify the findings by allowing a closer scrutiny of the figurative language.

The process of giving and taking away meaning in *Pilgrimage's* paratextual space has, in part, been compounded by a type of critical stalemate or paratextual divide, where those who admire Richardson have had little time for her detractors and vice versa. John Cowper

Powys' short monograph of *Pilgrimage* (1931) stands firmly at the admiring end of the continuum, described as a 'remarkable panegyric', written with 'the fury of the enthusiast' by a reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement* (cited in Morgan, 1931, p.2). Richardson herself tried to tone down Cowper Powys' first draft, knowing that its hyperbole would infuriate her disparagers (letter to I. Brussel, dated October 1931, Fromm, 1995, p.221). Powys could see that Richardson's work appealed to different types of reader 'of many varieties of temperament and taste' (1931, p.5) but also alluded to the polarities of opinion in *Pilgrimage*'s paratextual space: 'It is a queer and significant thing that you either love Dorothy Richardson's writings deeply, quietly, intimately – like a large and minutely-detailed landscape by Hobbema – or you just find them "dull"' (ibid, p.43).

Feminist scholars in the 1980s further widened this divide with their 'critical neglect' theory. Their ability to enjoy the process of cognitive alignment with Miriam's perspective contrasted strongly with those critics who found themselves frustrated and irritated by it, wanting more irony, humour and warmth. This was a gendered critical moment for *Pilgrimage*, a point when several feminist readers/critics were able to recognise something in Richardson's work that affected them profoundly, perhaps in the deep, quiet and intimate way that Cowper Powys described. Their cultural appetite for *Pilgrimage*, and Miriam's perspective in particular, enabled them to read the text differently and empathetically, with what Hanscombe called a 'feminist consciousness lens'. Hanscombe's preface avoids stepping over the paratextual threshold (apart from a brief hover in Richardson's 1938 Foreword) and engaging with some of those critics who have belittled Richardson's work. She is thus able to approach Richardson's work with an unsullied perspective. In Genettian terms she is 'giving' new meaning, her scholarship a means by which others (women or men with feminist inclinations) can access *Pilgrimage* through an affective appreciation of Miriam's consciousness.

The Broadview editions of *Pointed Roofs* and *The Tunnel* also ‘give’ more meaning to *Pilgrimage* although the process by which they do so is very different. Rather than hovering over the paratextual threshold or stepping away from it, the editors boldly go in and lift a varied collection of epitextual materials (reviews, letters and essays) and reposition them in *Pilgrimage*’s peritextual space. Material once diffusely spread in the epitextual fringe is now concentrated in the peritext of these two editions. And material that has been firmly established in the peritext of *Pilgrimage* since 1938, namely Richardson’s Foreword, has now become a post-face.

The need to contextualise propelled my research and the three distinct but inter-locking disciplines and their attendant methodologies allowed the application of different analytic techniques with a contextualist turn. Narratology provided Genette’s kernel theory of paratextual space. Genette’s theory on the nature and function of prefaces informed my own thinking. The ideas of collisions and collusions in *Pilgrimage*’s paratextual space were my own. I had a strong reaction to some of the linguistic coding in the prefaces to *Pilgrimage*, Richardson’s Foreword being a prime example. The suspicions I had, particularly about its tone, were confirmed by digging around for context, reading many of Richardson’s letters, accessing correspondence in the Dent Papers and slowly putting the different fragments of the puzzle of the ‘false’ omnibus edition together.

Concepts from new modernist studies enabled me to scrutinise the various editions of *Pilgrimage* as cultural artefacts, reflecting in detail on how they were produced and marketed to meet the perceived needs of new readerships. This discipline provided me with a framework for understanding the cultural contexts and institutional networks that *Pilgrimage* was now circulating in. From this I became much more aware of the significance of peritextual material which I might otherwise have dismissed. Fly leaf and back cover



blurbs, for example, provided useful supplementary material for stylistic analysis. I was able to trace the contributions made by certain critics over time (such as Frank Swinnerton) and the way in which doubts and uncertainties about *Pilgrimage* have been perpetuated through the recycling of ideas or expressions. Whether this was lethargy on the part of publishers or just a very small pool of critics is open to question. I suspect that it was a bit of both.

The New York Popular Library edition of 1976 stands out from the rest by virtue of its communicative energy and its determination to present *Pilgrimage* in a wholly positive light. Its recasting of *Pilgrimage* as romantic fiction brings to the fore a selection of textual features relating to love and female sexuality that would appeal to its target readership. Like the Virago edition, it appeals to the woman reader, but there the similarity ends. The contrast in cultural handling between the 1938 and 1967 Dent omnibus editions was particularly interesting to explore. Richard Church's epitextual essay, a strange mixture of repression and hyperbole, paved the way for Walter Allen's more permissive but less approving peritextual preface.

The cultural backgrounds of the preface writers and the influences and constraints on their writing about *Pilgrimage* were explored wherever possible. I was fortunate to have direct contact with Gillian Hanscombe, who shared her memories of securing the commission for Virago and writing the preface. She was able to recall the ideological tensions she had to manage: her own needs as a feminist scholar and those of the feminist publisher, Virago, in opposition to those of Richardson's conservative agent and executor. My comments on Walter Allen's literary criticism and its relation to his preface had to be far more speculative but were strengthened by stylistic analysis.

If modernist studies gave me the ability to see the wider picture and explore the social reality of *Pilgrimage*'s production, marketing and reception over an extensive period of time, stylistics encouraged me to scrutinise the linguistic details of *Pilgrimage* and its paratexts. And by adopting some 'quantitative' methods I was able to be more systematic and see, for example, patterns that probably would not have come to light otherwise. Reorganising Richardson's letters in chapter one enabled a better appreciation of the intensity of Richardson's feelings at the time of writing *Pilgrimage* chapter-volume by chapter-volume. Stylistics enabled me to synthesise information in *Pilgrimage*'s paratextual discourse, be alert to tonal and semantic patterns that communicated much in the way of affective meaning, as well as consider the role that style plays in the visibility or prominence of *Pilgrimage*'s paratexts.

My own 'temperamental affinity' with *Pilgrimage*, to use Cowper Powys' phrase to describe how a reader might approach and then acquire a taste for Richardson's 'peculiar vision,' has also played its part in this thesis (1931, p.24). That quality which drew me to *Pilgrimage* in the first place, also drew me to the paratextual zone of Richardson's letters and Foreword. What Richardson called the 'stamp,' and Miriam the 'shape' of a writer's consciousness, was what affected me as reader and directed the course of my research. It was the sense of a mind made visible on the pages of *Pilgrimage* and in Richardson's letters and Foreword that attracted me initially. From that point of personal connection, succumbing perhaps to the 'power' and 'charm' of Richardson's writing, the thesis took shape and broadened out.

The interdisciplinary approach has facilitated the examination of some dominant themes in *Pilgrimage*'s paratextual discourse and allowed both intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to be adopted and integrated. I hope that my findings will help to breach what is sometimes

perceived to be a communication gap between the disciplines of linguistics and literature and be of interest to stylisticians as well as Richardson scholars.

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