

EDITORIAL

Scott McCracken

The fifth issue of *Pilgrimages* feels like something of a milestone. Six years since the founding of the Richardson Society in 2007 and after three conferences attended by Richardsonians from all over the world, we are the richer for the new scholarship the journal has collected, much of which, it is pleasing to see, has come from younger scholars.

The Society is also on its way to achieving one of its principal aims: to facilitate the publication of new scholarly editions of Richardson's work. Editions of the Collected Letters, *Pilgrimage*, and the short stories will be coming out with Oxford University Press over the next few years. We are still no nearer to having cheap, well-edited paperbacks of the individual Chapters of *Pilgrimage* for students and the general reader; but once the new editions are out, they will form the basis for all future versions and the goal of Richardson's permanent return to the canon and the syllabus will have been reached.

The Society has also succeeded in bringing together not just new scholarship, but a concentration of resources. Thanks to generous donations by George Thomson, all the transcripts of the letters made by Gloria Fromm and George and Dorothy Thomson are now held by the Society at Keele University; and thanks to Harold Fromm, we also have most of the first British and American editions of the individual Chapters of *Pilgrimage*. These will be used as the copy texts for the Oxford editions.

The new editions will, the editors hope, form the basis for new research about Richardson, but in the meantime, as this issue of the journal amply demonstrates, there is a lot going on. Renée Stanton's article on the paratexts and epitexts of *Pilgrimage* begins the long overdue work of a genetic study of Richardson's masterpiece. Using the work of Gerard Genette, she examines the mediation between Richardson and her publishers and readers, a

mediation which, as she points out, was all the more complex because of the long period over which *Pilgrimage* was written, produced, and read. The 1938 Foreword benefits particularly from this new approach. Stanton draws attention to Richardson's often playful stance with regard to textual authority, something many critics have overlooked and which will provoke fresh debate about *Pilgrimage's* relationship to intertextuality and the novel form.

This issue opens, however, in silence. Annika J. Lindskog's article, 'Dorothy Richardson and the Poetics of Silence' returns to the theme of Richardson's relationship to Quakerism (see Eva Tucker in issue 1. and Bryony Randall in issue 2.). Lindskog asks how the new Liberal Quakerism of the nineteenth century influenced what she calls Richardson's 'philosophy of silence'. How, she asks, did Quakerism's disdain for the spoken and, even more, the written word impact upon Richardson's own writing practice and her own conception of truth? She concludes that Richardson aimed for a truth in her work measured against her own experience, but it was a standard against which she often felt she had failed.

Yet how far we measure Miriam's immediate, and unreflective responses (which often are akin to what Walter Benjamin described as the 'shock-experience' of modernity) is a constant problem for the reader of *Pilgrimage*. This is no more the case than in relation to Miriam's developing understandings of 'race' and nation, which are inflected by what seems to be at first sight to be unmediated prejudice. In her correspondence too, Richardson often seems to mimic the 'racial' theories of her time. In a letter to Percy Beaumont Wadsworth written in 1922 when he had just arrived in Prague, she includes, amidst much praise, these sentences about Jacob Wassermann's novel, *Christian Wahnschaffe* (1918) (translated as *The World's Illusion* in 1920):

My only reservation is perhaps hardly an objection. It is the reservation I am forced to make in in the case of all Jewish work [...] It is the too clever conscious grasp of everything that is being done. So that one finds in him all the methods & all the knowledge of his contemporaries, & a very conscious use of them. This in itself is not inconsistent with a

tremendous individuality. But again & again, especially in his big episodes & most especially in his horrors, you find him with his eye on what has been done before & his mind so set on the determination to go one better than the whole thing becomes self-conscious & unconvincing.¹

The complex set of associations that cluster round this critique – superficiality, a lack of originality, a self-defeating ambition – might all be related to the contradictory stereotypes found in contemporary ideologies of anti-semitism. Yet not only is Richardson's reading contradictory in itself – Wasserman might be superficial and unoriginal, but she praises him both as a 'draughtsman and an architect' and claims the novel stands re-reading – but her response to a novel which she says is '[p]erfectly balanced as a whole, & each small section a novel in itself', might as well describe the gradually emerging structure of her own work.

This letter was written after the publication of *Interim*, where Miriam first encounters London's cosmopolitan nightlife through Mr Mendizabel, and after she had finished *Deadlock*, where Miriam first meets Michael Shatov. So, it is not the case that Richardson has not considered the question of cultural difference at this time. While it is true that, as Lauren Curtright showed in her article, 'Scattered Vision and Silent Masks: Dorothy Richardson's Critical Perceptions on Race', in issue 4, *Deadlock* offers a more considered and reflective approach to questions of cultural difference, the reader of Richardson's fiction is often left in the uncomfortable position of not knowing whether the text is endorsing Miriam's prejudices or not.

Emma Sterry's article, 'The "Pilgrimage" of the Single Woman: the Search for the Cosmopolitan Self in *Deadlock* and *Revolving Lights*' approaches these same questions from the perspective of theories of cosmopolitanism. She emphasises the transnational nature of Miriam's journey of development, arguing that Miriam's status as a single woman in the imperial metropolis makes her as much of an outsider as the Empire's 'racial' others. The very notion of

¹ Letter to Percy Beaumont Wadsworth, 9 January 1922, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

otherness is inverted and destabilised in *Pilgrimage* 'to illuminate the fractured subjectivities available to the single woman'.

Part of the complexity of *Pilgrimage*'s meaning, and hence its rewarding difficulty for the reader, stems from its treatment of time; and, as Valentina Paradisi's article, 'Dorothy Richardson's Adventure in Memory' shows, memory plays a central role in *Pilgrimage*'s conception and structure. Making productive comparisons with both James Joyce and Marcel Proust, Paradisi finds in *Pilgrimage* echoes of their use of the imagery of light to signify remembrance in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *A la recherche du temps perdu*. She traces Richardson's use of a spatial imaginary to reconfigure fragmented and dislocated memories, so that in re-arrangement and recomposition, the 'illusory, horizontal chain of events is replaced by a vertical and deep perspective which, denying chronology, makes a new clarity of vision possible'.

Amongst the many things that have impeded critical work on Richardson, is the lack of easy access to her non-fictional journalism and other writings. In future, this journal hopes to include more work on the key essays and reviews. To make a start, in this issue, Amanda Juliet Carrod, examines the publishing context of one Richardson's essays on feminism, 'Women and the Future', first published in *Vanity Fair* in 1924 and then republished in British *Vogue* shortly afterwards. Why Carrod asks might a serious piece on women's place in society have been published in a magazine devoted largely to fashion? As new work in modernist studies on twentieth-century periodicals is showing, research into the place of publication can tell us much about the history of modernism, offering new insights into its dissemination and reception.

This issue also includes a review of Vittoriana Villa's new monograph on Richardson, a good example of the increasing interest in her work among contemporary European critics. We also welcome a very attractive new book on Richardson's husband, the artist, Alan Odle, by Martin Steenson.