MIRIAM'S WASTE PAPER BASKET: READING ECONOMIES IN *PILGRIMAGE*

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> Every 'thing' fails. But every 'thing' is an amazing extra added to 'everything'; & each brings its flash of revelation. A little further on, nothing fails.[1]

Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* is indeed a pilgrimage of sorts for the reader, a quest for understanding echoing that of its protagonist, Miriam Henderson. And, like many pilgrimages, it is also a test of faith: the novel's thirteen volumes (the final *March Moonlight* forever unfinished) span nearly three decades; the narration drifts from first to third person with no apparent explanation; frequent ellipses dot the sentences; and what most would consider 'important' details (Miriam's miscarriage in *Clear Horizon*, for example, or Mrs. Henderson's suicide in *Honeycomb*) are often left either ambiguously glossed or only retrospectively illuminated. Everyday objects, scattered memories and impressions, lengthy days in the dentist's office in *The Tunnel*, and Miriam's choices of reading material, however, are all impeccably catalogued – and are all hallmarks of Richardson's 'stream of consciousness' technique (though Richardson herself disagreed with the term, of May Sinclair's coinage). Miriam makes little of her Saratoga trunk, for instance, though it confoundingly reappears, one object repeated among many running repetitions of soap, cigarettes, tables, and books. The sheer plethora of Miriam's reading materials – well-catalogued, from *Villette* and Dickens to Ouida's scandalous writings and *The Evening Standard* in *Backwater* to Darwin in *The Tunnel* and the contemporary fiction of Joseph Conrad and Henry James – draws particular attention to reading, and, in meta fashion, to *our* reading. So what does it mean to successfully read this immensity, to read a text wherein a life may be considered *overrecorded*? In answer to this, we must examine a critical juncture in Richardson's text – an overlooked and

[1] Letter to Robert Nichols, 27 August 1918, British Library, uncatalogued.

seemingly innocuous exchange regarding a waste basket between Miriam and Hypo Wilson, in *Clear Horizon*. This, I argue, teaches us a method with which to read Richardson's temporally and materially complex text. While many critics cry boredom in reading *Pilgrimage*, I believe that these critiques miss the valuable point in Richardson's project – that of teaching us how to read modern consciousness, and in turn, how to read an 'economy' of daily life, replete with accumulated inconsistencies, incongruities, and 'wasted' matter.

An 'overrecorded' life is the antithesis of what Virginia Woolf once rued as the 'unrecorded life'[2] common to the early twentieth century. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf calls an 'accumulation of an unrecorded life' the great potential tragedy of the era, a result of 'the pressure of dumbness'[3] in failing to document oneself. This rings as a particular loss for women, whose lives are often, Woolf explains, firmly centred on an ephemeral domestic dailiness – 'dinners are cooked; the plates and cups washed; the children set to school and gone out into the world', yet 'Nothing remains of it all. All has vanished. No biography or history has a word to say about it'.[4] To document one's life is crucial, as Woolf urges women to write of themselves, to 'illumine [their] soul with its profundities and its shadows, its vanities and its generosities'.[5] This passage in *A Room of One's Own* points us not only to the importance of a written record to account for a life, but also a tangible object of everyday activity, and thus encouraging an *attention* to the abundance of everyday activity often overlooked in representation. The Modernist fascination with the material of daily life has become central to a number of recent studies, including Liesl Olson's *Modernism and the Ordinary* (2009), Bryony Randall's *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (2008), and Michael Sheringham's *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (2006). Rita Felski's introduction to *New Literary History*'s issue on everyday life studies (Autumn 2002) heralded the trend of examining the realism of Modernism's everyday: 'The everyday

[2] *A Room of One's Own.* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1981). p.89.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid, p.90.

[…] beckons to us with the beguiling allure of the "really real,'" and additionally refutes the common notion that Modern intellectuals were seemingly unreal and distanced from what we think is everyday life.[6] The notion of dailiness and daily life is inseparable from that which we recognize as "real" or most connected to a sense of being. Reading dailiness, then, is reading what we conjecture to be 'real'. Richardson, keenly aware of this, emphasized narrative as rehearsal for and expression of experiences of daily life: in 1938, Richardson wrote to Edward Sackville-West, 'Isn't life the plot?'[7] And so, then, in its glut of daily detail, *Pilgrimage* assuages Woolf's fears of unrecorded lives, and too echoes its era's concern with the everyday – or more precisely, what I deem an economics of the everyday.

The idea of 'reading economies' in my title is intended to be twofold. First, I aim to point out the ubiquity and potency of twentieth century Britain's socioeconomic system within the text, as its era's concerns with efficiency models and production in Britain pervade textual consciousness. Secondly, I will posit 'economy' in a narratological sense, combining analyses of our reading process in encountering Richardson's lengthy work with economic consumptive practices. This examination will ultimately suggest a mode of reading textual economics within *Pilgrimage* that jeopardizes the system of capital within which *Pilgrimage* appears to exist, instead positing a new kind of textual economy through the proliferation of what appear to be 'wasted' descriptions of no immediate significance to the storyline or, occasionally, even to Miriam herself. The unusual (and for some, troublingly off-putting) accumulation of goods, observations, and objects in the text in fact not only alters our reading of *Pilgrimage*, but also revolutionizes our reading habits. The new reading practice, by troubling our expectations of reading so much 'waste' (for my purposes, the term 'waste' in a textual sense will indicate an excess of detail and observation that does not strictly further the narrative), forces us to revisit the capability of narrative to play

[6] Rita Felski, 'Introduction', *New Literary History*, 33, 4 (2002): 607-622.
[7] Letter to Edward Sackville-West, 23 November 1938, Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

with and serve as testing ground for conceptions of consciousness and everyday realities.

The passage that primarily sets forth the concept of reading economies – in both of its aforementioned aspects – arrives relatively late in the volumes of *Pilgrimage,* in *Clear Horizon*. In the passage, Miriam has just read a letter from Hypo, charging that Miriam is incorrect in their ongoing discussion of Being versus Becoming. He writes to her: 'I don't perhaps catch your drift. But I think you're mistaken and I don't share your opinion of yourself. The real difference between us is that while you think in order to live, I live in order to think'.[8] This contest between Being and Becoming has been much theorized in Richardson criticism, but the debate dates back to Plato and has continued through Nietzche and Sartre as part of the investigation into the nature of consciousness under the influence of time. Here, Miriam lands in favour of Being, while 'ceaseless Becoming' relates more closely to Richardson's composition of the text. A Bergsonian understanding of consciousness as a demonstration of 'Becoming' was never intended by Richardson. She once insisted, against the charge that she had modelled Miriam's textual consciousness closely upon Bergson's theoretical approaches, that she 'was never consciously aware of any specific influence', although 'no doubt Bergson influenced many minds'.[9] Indeed, a critique that finds Richardson's *Pilgrimage* demonstrating or modelling anything rather misses the point – *Pilgrimage* does not mirror, but examines and plays out possibilities of everyday consciousness. To continue in critical departure from this view, I'd like not to dwell on Being versus Becoming, but rather move to a brief moment shortly after the Being versus Becoming debate that illuminates the experience of consciousness as related to the 'stuff' of the everyday, and which becomes deeply connected to new demands on reading processes.

[8] Richardson, *Pilgrimage* Vol.4, (London: Virago, 1979). Henceforth page references in text.
[9] Letter to Shiv K. Kumar, 10 August 1952, cited in Shiv K. Kumar, 'Dorothy Richardson and the Dilemma of "Being Versus Becoming"', *Modern Language Notes*, 74, 6 (June 1959), 495.

After reading his letter, Miriam reflects upon Hypo's assessment of her thoughts. She decides she would 'gladly sacrifice his companionship and all that depended therefrom for the certainty of seeing his world of ceaseless "becoming" exchanged for one wherein should be included also the fact of "being"' (IV, 361-62). Concluding that 'becoming depends upon being' (IV, 362), an adequate response to Hypo is reached: Miriam 'welcomed the arrival of a phrase and wrote serenely, sideways across the wide space left below the compact lines on the centre of the card: 'I have no waste paper basket. Yours, I know, is capacious. M'. (IV, 363). This initially appears an odd response to Hypo's comparison between his thoughts and those of Miriam, but is actually a critical juncture where consciousness, writing, and everydayness become lucid. While Hypo may discard drafted writings, incomplete or changed thoughts, Miriam alleges that she does no such thing. She chooses a waste basket – an everyday object, and one deeply connected to her position as writer – to explain this vision of selfhood, of Being and Becoming. A 'waste paper basket' does not exist for Miriam, as 'waste' cannot be categorized as such for her. Waste, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is using or spending something idly, or unprofitably; and as an adjective characterizes material that is unwanted, such as unusable remains or incidental products thrown aside as worthless after a completed process. Yet for Miriam all thoughts are equally significant, or equally insignificant; all thoughts are transitory. Modern experience, for Miriam and for Richardson, consisted of endless perceptions, an 'assault' upon consciousness, Woolf's myriad impressions on the mind on the ordinary day. Nothing need be made of these impressions; rather, they frequently escape from intellectual grasp, being transitory, fleeting, merely suggestive. These are the 'flashes of revelation' Richardson describes in her letter to Robert Nichols (previously mentioned in the epigraph above). That we find Miriam continually relaying to us her impressions, objects seen, reading material, among myriad other ruminations, indicates the text's (and Richardson's) concern with the economic and literary practices of its age.

Richardson lamented in a letter to E.B.C. Jones on 12 May 1912 that trying to mould her material was difficult, unwieldy even –

'This business of compression, so essential, if the unity and continuity of consciousness is to be conveyed, gets of course more troublesome as the material accumulates'.[10] Suzanne Raitt explains why Richardson felt this need to compress her material by grounding her writing in the era's larger cultural discourses. Raitt equates early Modernism's aesthetic work with the 'new' culture of efficiency. Efficiency – in its elimination of waste – was one of the industrial era's central ideals, leaving behind the decadence of the nineteenth century, and with it the 'useless' art that Oscar Wilde and others extolled.[11] Raitt cites Henry Spooner, a London professor of engineering, who in 1918 declared that public opinion 'has been flowing strongly in the direction of economy and the elimination, or at least the reduction, of wastes'.[12] Waste became increasingly associated with Edwardian decadence, low productivity, unemployment, and childless women – thus becoming a dangerous undercurrent to the modern age. Through fiction writers including Henry James and H.G. Wells, along with Imagist poets such as Ezra Pound, new forms of fiction and poetry were argued to represent this heralded efficiency, namely utilizing processes of perception that required every word that was placed on the page.[13] Raitt argues that paradoxically *Pilgrimage* – despite frequent criticisms of its immensity and mass of detail – also mirrored the new rhetoric of 'efficiency'. Richardson achieves this through the establishment of an literary-economic system wherein all that is recorded in *Pilgrimage* is *necessary* to be recorded, not 'wasteful'. Both Imagism and the so-called 'stream of consciousness' technique adjusted 'the economy of the art-work to the economy of the world'.[14] Indeed, *Pilgrimage* demonstrates an efficient form of economics, wherein it does not actually strive to *eliminate* waste (as was the popular desire), but rather to transform our relationship to what we deem as 'waste'. Its sprawling pages

[10] Gloria Fromm (ed.) *Windows on Modernism: Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), p.49.
[11] Suzanne Raitt, 'The Rhetoric of Efficiency in Early Modernism'. *Modernism/modernity* 13, 1 (January 2006), 835.
[12] Ibid., p.835.
[13] Ibid., p.836.
[14] Ibid., p.836.

point us toward valid economic concerns of its early twentieth century world.

Amidst compulsions toward efficiency, the disruptive undercurrent of waste within English socioeconomic structures is most readily apparent in Miriam's near-poverty in the novel. Miriam frequently feels she is failing to be productive as she cannot earn the money she needs not only to support herself as an unmarried woman, but also to rescue her family from her father's bankruptcy. For instance, when her mother fails to recover from her insomnia and depression in *Honeycomb*, Miriam 'blamed herself. If only she would not blame herself' (I, 475-76). She arrives at a one-word realization: 'Money. That was why nothing had been done' (I, 476) for her mother beyond bromide, prayers, and a series of housecalls:

> 'The doctor' had to be afforded as she was so ill, but nothing had been done. Borrow from the boys to take her away […] To-morrow she should know she was going away. Nothing else in life mattered. Someone must pay, any one' (I, 476).

In the absence of money to spend toward recovering her mother's health, her mother's remaining life itself is turned into a 'waste', with little to occupy her: 'To-morrow and every day till they went away she should come round to Harriett's new house. Something for her to do every day' (I, 476). Still earlier, in *Backwater,* Miriam's anxieties over failing to be productive are evident when she chooses reading over sleep during her nights at Wordsworth House. For the final weeks of the summer term, Miriam stayed up at night reading, 'spending hours of time that was meant for sleep, for restful preparation for the next day's work, in a "vicious circle" of self-indulgence. It was sin' (282). She realizes her 'wasteful' choice is an ethically dangerous one: 'She had read somewhere that sin promises a satisfaction that it is unable to fulfill' (282). The sin of wasting her time reading suggests that Miriam is then kept suspended, in a transitory state unable to reach its conclusion. Miriam also begins to find that money can *produce* things – even altering time itself. In *Honeycomb*, she muses at Banbury Park that 'People with money could make the spring come as soon as the

days lengthened' (I, 369). While not a real achievement, Miriam entertains the idea that money can make the season arrive unnaturally soon, picturing 'Clear bright rooms, bright clean paint, soft coloured hangings, spring flowers in the bright light on landings' (I, 369). Miriam in all of these and other occasions in the novel realizes herself conditioned by the economic world of the early twentieth century, moving among a variety of low-wage positions as governess, teacher, dental assistant, and others while under the suffocation of 'the conviction that the rest of her life must be spent in a vain attempt to pay off [her father's] debts' (I, 424). Save marrying into wealth, options are limited for her to do so: 'Even if she went on the stage she could not make enough to pay off one of his creditors. Most women who went on the stage, Gerald had said, made practically nothing, and the successful ones had to spend enormous sums in bribery while they were making their way – even the orchestra expected to be flattered and bribed. She would have to go on being a resident governess, keeping ten pounds a year for dress and paying over the rest of her salary' (I, 424-5). The disruption that is 'wasted' energy expended toward no gains (if she became wealthy, she thinks, she could pay her debtors secretly, though 'Probably that would be never' (I, 425) then causes a revaluation of her life as it would be spent in continual debt. Waste, Miriam recognizes, jeopardizes efficient models of how one ought to spend one's daily life. Miriam's life and consciousness become interminable – much like her 'sinful' nights spent reading – with no distinctive end point.

The novel's frequent use of economic concerns and terminology extend from Miriam's musings into the very shape of the novel, both eking out a new vision of her consciousness and leading us to experience the interminability of textual waste. This, I argue, is where an alternate, narratological 'reading economy' begins to take shape. In composing the work, Richardson herself describes her material in economic terms as 'accumulating' in the letter mentioned above, and even earlier as 'agglomerative' in her August 1918 column in *Dental Record*. Richardson writes of records as essential to communal memory, declaring the past never quite gone, but 'alive and creative in human consciousness to-day':

> the characteristic vice of the intellect to see the past as a straight line stretching out behind humanity like a sort of indefinite tail. In actual experience it is much more like an agglomeration, a vital process of crystallisation grouped in and about the human consciousness, confirming and enriching individual experience, living unconsciously in individual nerve-cells […] and consciously in individual intelligence, thanks and thanks only to Records (Aug. 1918, 351).[15]

Agglomeration, the term Richardson uses here to describe the phenomenon of recording and of consciousness – defined as a mass, grouping, or cluster of things together – is a description that also expresses the reading experience of *Pilgrimage*. Far from a shortcoming of the novel, the inclusion of prolific 'waste' drives the narrative. In forcing the experience of everyday interminability of debtedness, of observations and surplus detail, the text moves the reader away from the urge to jettison 'reading waste' so that narrative desire can be satisfied, and a (false) finality of meaning acquired. Peter Brooks's discussion of readerly desire serves as adequate example of consumerist economic reading. As Brooks writes in *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (1984), all readers are animated in a sense-making process as they read, engaged in a driving passion *of* and *for* meaning. For Brooks, reading is 'a form of desire that carries us forward, onward, through the text' as narrative 'arouse[s] and make[s] use of desire as dynamic of signification'.[16] A narrative's twists and turns are then only delays of a final pleasure reached at the conclusion of the novel, when a 'holistic' knowledge is achieved. The crucial dynamic or motor to our reading is desire: 'Eros as motor and motor as erotic'.[17] This creates a central paradox in narrative plot as the reader 'consumes' it: 'diminishing as it realizes itself, leading to an end that is the consummation (as well as the consumption) of its sense-making. If the motor of narrative is desire, totalizing, building ever-larger units of meaning, the ultimate determinants of

[15] Kristin Bluemel, *Experimenting on the Borders of Modernism* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), p.144.
[16] Peter Brooks, *Reading for Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p.37.
[17] Ibid, 47.

meaning lie *at the end*, and narrative desire is ultimately, inexorably, desire *for* the end'.[18] Richardson's text is a clear obstacle to this kind of reading process. As her contemporary Katherine Mansfield once wrote, Richardson has no 'filter' to sift out the various things circulating in the text – she includes 'a pair of button boots, a night in spring, some cycling knickers, some large, round biscuits – as many as she can fit into a book'.[19] Accumulation of 'stuff' and the inclusion of the destabilizing force of textual 'waste' stages interminability and prevents finality and the satisfaction of an endpoint. To be clear, however, textual waste does not deny the reader pleasure. Rather, it begs for a new approach to reading that provides satisfaction in engaging with an alternate staging of everyday life in narrative, one which necessarily denies the ultimate object of knowing.

Miriam's varied modes used to express the expenditure of her time throughout *Pilgrimage* take on larger significance when considered against Brooks's model of desirous reading. Representations of temporality are troubled even before the reader reaches the novel's difficult 'un-ending'. Miriam tends to divide time not into beginnings, middles, and ends, but moves us with her as she 'physicalises' her time in myriad – and contradictory – descriptions. Bryony Randall discusses these qualities as evidence of a 'chronotopic' – Bakhtin's term for the spatial and temporal – concept of dailiness.[20] For example, Miriam alternately divvies her days into 'portions', like salaries of time dispensed as her past is lumped together, and conceptualises time as rooms or spaces 'she had just passed through', as she for instance goes 'as if by appointment' to meet daily activities such as her midday walks, the hours ahead holding 'warm promise' in their familiarity (I, 279). When new teacher Julia Doyle arrives at the school in *Backwater*, Miriam gives another physical element to time, as she explains, 'The fabric of the days, too, had changed' (I, 278). The day can also be an object Miriam can hold in her hand, a 'funny little

[18] Ibid, 52.
[19] Katherine Mansfield, 'Three Women Novelists', *The Athenaeum* (4 April 1919), repr. in *Novels and Novelists* (New York: Knopf, 1930), p.6.
[20] *Modernism, Daily Time, and Everyday Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.63.

distant fussy thing' (II, 255-6). And still further, time also takes on mathematical component, as days add to weeks and years. While waiting for sleep at Wordsworth House, for instance, Miriam's thoughts wander to the life of servants, only to quickly admonish herself, 'Go to sleep. It would be better to think in the morning' (II, 270). Then, 'But then this clear first impression would be gone and school would begin and go on from hour to hour through the term, mornings and afternoons and evenings, dragging you along further and further and changing you, months and months and years until it was too late to get back and there was nothing ahead' (II, 270). This passage is particularly of note, as Miriam acknowledges impressions, hours, mornings/afternoons/evenings, months, and then years in mounting fashion. Yet she piles these temporal markers with 'and's, mentioning the alternate states 'too late', 'get back', and 'nothing ahead'. None of these apparently competing concepts of time are prioritised over another. Rather, like the thing they attempt to describe, they simply 'mount up', producing no conclusive model. What Miriam is pondering here – beyond the spectre of the chronotope as explained by Randall – is mounting *time*, the saving and spending of time, things that Miriam thinks can amass and 'add up' to something or perhaps will not produce something in itself, but become conditions in which something may be produced. Just after her meditation on mounting time, the text breaks into another paragraph: 'The thing to remember, to keep in mind all the time, was to save money – not to spend a single penny that could be saved, to be determined about that so that when the temptation came you could just hang on until it was past' (II, 271). Both the placement and the language of this moment are intriguing. In its sheer proximity to the previously mentioned musing on time in itself indicates economic and temporal connections. And moreover, her language reveals that Miriam is not avoiding the desire to spend until it 'had passed', indicating a diachronic progression of time. By waiting until it 'was past', Miriam suggests not something earlier, but another model of time, of portions accreted. 'Sooner or later saving must begin' (II, 271), she muses, as ellipses creep into the text and Miriam drifts into sleep.

Endlessness, however, is clearly – as it is discussed by Bakhtin and Randall – a temporal state connected to the experience of the physical, a slowing or frustrating of the thing desired. Of a technique that delays a linear drive to something like Brooks's narrative *jouissance*, Richardson wrote in 1913:

> The material that moved me to write would not fit the framework of any novel I had experienced. I believed myself to be, even when most enchanted, intolerant of the romantic and the realist novel alike. Each, so it seemed to me, left out certain essentials and dramatised life misleadingly. Horizontally. Assembling their characters, the novelists developed situations, devised events, climax and conclusion. I could not accept their finalities.[21]

Examining the relation between the economic concerns of Richardson's world and readerly consumption of Richardson's text is not a new one. Even Richardson herself noted the contributions of the reader to the writing itself. In an unfinished manuscript draft, she writes, 'Readers are <u>far</u> too modest. Always they regard themselves as recipients, never as donors'.[22] Jean Radford writes that while 'Miriam's continual scrutiny of the details of objects, clothes, accents, furnishings, rooms, expresses her hermeneutic quest',[23] the abundance of 'superfluous' details makes it difficult to surmise from these any thematic quality. On another level, Richardson's detail may become privileged point of contact for the reader with the text, a 'hook to which the reader may fasten their own fantasies, associations',[24] putting forth questions as to what signifies before the reader. Often, Richardson's use of detail is a device meant to frustrate meaning-construction, to delay or slow the reading and 'hold up the development of the whole' which Richardson thought desirable in the novel'.[25] Our reading time

[21] Richardson, 'Data for a Spanish Publisher', in Trudi Tate (ed.), *Journey to Paradise* (London: Virago Press, 1989), p.139.
[22] 'Authors & Readers', autograph ms. draft, pp.3. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
[23] *Dorothy Richardson* (Hemel Hempstead, U.K.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p.17.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid, p.19.

inevitably drifts through varying models of desire and spending time, a frustration that has led critics even quite recently to deem *Pilgrimage* 'really excessive'[26] in length, or to use the words 'dull', 'ennui', or 'boredom'[27] in their analyses of the text. That Richardson found these techniques of 'holding up' the whole through excess as desirable, demonstrates that even time resists typical consumption in Richardson's text. Richardson's mention of 'holding up' appears within a quote from Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister', in the foreword to the 1938 edition of *Pilgrimage*. In her use of the passage, Richardson seems to interpret Goethe as suggesting the central figure's 'holding up' is support for apprehending the whole through the central figure's consciousness. Richardson defends her own style using Goethe and the 'far from inconsiderable technical influence' of Henry James, in relying centrally on such a figure's 'thought-processes'.[28] Yet Radford rightly suggests a reading of the passage wherein 'holding up' implies a delay in action in favour of conscious or unconscious reflection – the interminability seen in Miriam's consciousness and her indebtedness.

In a discussion of economic readings, it appears fitting to consult Marx on the idea of surplus. If the text has no real 'waste', in that it proposes that nothing ought to be discarded (Miriam, after all, has no waste basket), and nothing prioritised over another or 'surplus', where might we place 'value'? Marx's theory of surplus value is explained in *Capital,* Volume I as follows:

> [T]he labour-process may continue beyond the time necessary to reproduce and incorporate in the product a mere equivalent for the value of the labour-power. Instead of the six hours that are sufficient for the latter purpose, the process may continue for twelve hours. The action of labour-power, therefore, not only reproduces its own value, but produces value over and above it. This surplus-value is the difference

[26] Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth Century Women Writers* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), p.145.
[27] See Kristin Bluemel, *Experimenting on the Borders of Modernism: Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), p.6.
[28] Richardson, 'Foreword', *Pilgrimage* Vol.1 (London: Virago, 1979), p.11.

> between the value of the product and the value of the elements consumed in the formation of that product, in other words, of the means of production and the labour-power.[29]

The value of this surplus labour is realised when the capitalist sells the product at a profit. This process, which prioritises exchange-value over use-value (that which fulfills basic human needs), is what drives the capitalist economy. As for use-value, Marx explains:

> Though a use-value, in the form of a product, issues from the labour-process, […] other use-values, products of previous labour, enter into it as means of production. The same use-value is both the product of a previous process, and a means of production in a later process. Products are therefore not only results, but also essential conditions of labour.[30]

The idea that use-value is a both a product and a condition of labour is helpful when establishing the value of reading. If we transfer Marx's model to the experience of reading *Pilgrimage*, then we, as reader-consumers, spend our time poring over the commodity-text only to be dissatisfied by its inconclusive end. Yet, this problem only occurs if readers maintain consumerist desire, and treat the text solely as a commodity. The work of *Pilgrimage* is in part to convey a more complex understanding of use-value than simple necessity, overturning the consumerist (and illusory) desire for closure. The reader is instead encouraged to become a newly discriminating consumer who desires more than the fetish of finality, or is capable of deriving pleasure from complexity and uncertainty. Further still, the reader may become not only consumer, but also *co-worker* with the text's producer (or producers, if we include the text's editors, printers, publishers, etc.) in the meaning-making process. Expanding use-value to that which is beyond mere utility, Richardson's text refuses to waste any aspect

[29] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol.I, Friedrich Engels (ed.), trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (New York: Modern Library, 1906), p.201.
[30] Ibid, p.232.

of what life offers, opening readers to alternatives to the commodity – beyond the fetish of finality – and so to new pleasures.

The resultant reading strategy proposed by *Pilgrimage* does not involve steadily acquiring 'stuff' – stuff that might form the text's central core or induce a transformation of one's Being – rather it involves an amassing of life itself that confounds neat interpretation. This is perhaps what has made *Pilgrimage* continue to be so difficult to interpret. As Kristin Bluemel writes, a central critical 'border' of *Pilgrimage* is its inconclusiveness – the work:

> is defined by the difference between a period in which *Pilgrimage* lives, in the eyes of its author, through her continuing concern with its development, and the much longer period in which it lives, in the eyes of its readers, through their continuing engagement with its unresolved course'.[31]

We, as the work's readers, are ever in the state of process, despite the work's conclusion being relatively predetermined. Like Stephen in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* or the narrator in *In Search of Lost Time,* Miriam is always destined to become the author of her own narrative. Bluemel finds an analogy with Richardson's writing on dentistry in her column in *The Dental Record*: 'the trouble about dentistry […] is the trouble about *Pilgrimage* in the eyes of literary critics; there is no end to either of them'; and this endlessness 'suggests that the nature of Richardson's experiments with narrative representations of the body and her experiments with narrative forms of ending are not coincidentally, but rather crucially, linked'.[32]

The trouble of beginnings, middles, and endings only disappears fleetingly, when our 'discomfort' – like the discomfort of dentistry – is eased by narrative conventions.

[31] Bluemel, p.169.
[32] Ibid, p.150.

Pilgrimage depends upon its play with our expected relationships to objects, confounding the desire to consume and produce meanings, our desire to insist upon interpretation, to imbue the objective with the subjective. Ultimately, the text's reliance upon 'wasteful' detail, upon boring its readers with gelatinous stretches of time, can be seen as an attempt for what Schopenhauer once described as knowledge without desire.[33] By inundating us with details through Miriam's observations, Richardson insists upon their in-themselves-ness. With this in mind, I'd like to conclude this examination of the economies of reading with a closing gesture towards Mark Currie's account of the relationship between time and in *About Time* (2007).

Currie asserts that when reading recorded time in a text, our senses of time are multifold: we read time unfolding within the narrative, and we experience our own sensation of time as we read from the beginning to the end of the novel. As we progress, we move from unknowing to knowing, as 'the past of the narrative is fixed in a way that the future of the narrative is not'.[34] This seems quite like how we experience time in life itself – we remain in a present, facing our unknown futures and a known past. Yet, Currie points out, this is actually quite *unlike* the way time unfolds in narrative – 'the present for a reader in a fictional narrative is not really the present at all but the past. It is somebody else's present related to us in the past tense'.[35] If time in the novel, Currie writes, is an exploration of the theme or nature of time through the 'temporal logic of storytelling, it is only so because the temporal logic is unconventional. If we say that a narrative which obeys a more conventional logic is not about time, we are merely succumbing to its naturalisation'.[36] All novels, then, are 'about time', as Currie's title suggests.

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[33] See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* Vol.1, Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, and Christopher Janaway (trans. and eds) (Cambridge and NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.234-236.
[34] Mark Currie, *About Time: Narrative, Fiction, and the Philosophy of Time*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2007), p.4.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid, p.4.

In an analogous schema, I propose that *Pilgrimage* is *about* economics – an economics of everyday consciousness, of reading, and most significantly, of waste. If we say that the narrative demonstrates its era's concerns with finances and economic development, we limit ourselves to a thematic that, as I've argued throughout, insists on final meanings rather than allowing for the experience of narrative play. Waste functions in *Pilgrimage*'s narrative economy as a key to discovering this. While initially a destabilizing force, it later becomes liberating as it reveals itself, like consciousness and reading, to be a philosophical concept. In a late letter to Peggy Kirkaldy on 5 October 1946, Dorothy Richardson aptly summarizes this project, explaining, 'Life is people. Not "individuals," (a biological category) but "persons," spiritual beings independent of time & space, for whom "the future" regarded as distinct from "the present" has no meaning. For whom "eternity" is "now."'[37] In its immensity, *Pilgrimage* can indeed be considered an eternity of 'now', a narrative whose immediacy and indeterminacy attests to the changing capabilities of our reading practices, of narrative's capability to stage everyday possibilities.

[37] Fromm (ed.), op. cit, p.547.