

DOROTHY RICHARDSON, QUAKERISM AND
'UNDOING':
REFLECTIONS ON THE REDISCOVERY OF TWO
UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

Richard Ekins

Excellent detective work . . . Rediscovery, it seems to me, is as important as discovery. A number of the letters we have found have been 'known' in the sense that they were in archives, but we only came aware of them by writing to the library, or they have been brought to light by a researcher looking for something else. I can't wait to see them.¹

Background

The importance of Quakers and Quakerism to Dorothy Richardson is well known amongst Dorothy Richardson scholars and enthusiasts, both from her own writings² and those of the most relevant secondary sources.³ I follow Gloria Fromm,

¹ Email correspondence, Scott McCracken to Richard Ekins, 17 December 2014. I thank Scott McCracken for permission to draw upon our extensive email communications. I also thank John Springhall for his advice throughout the preparation of this article.

² Dorothy Richardson, *Gleanings from the Works of George Fox* (London: Headley Brothers, 1914); Dorothy Richardson, *The Quakers Past and Present* (London: Constable, 1914); Dorothy Richardson, *Pilgrimage*, Vol. 3, (London: Virago, 1979); Vol. 4 (London: Virago, 1979); Gloria G. Fromm (ed.) *Windows on Modernism: Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1995).

³ Elisabeth Bronfen, *Dorothy Richardson's Art of Memory: Space, Identity, Text* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Howard Finn, "In the Quicksands of Disintegrating Faiths": Dorothy Richardson and the Quakers', *Literature and Theology*, 19, 1 (2005): 34-46; David Stamm, *A Pathway to Reality: Visual and Aural Concepts in Dorothy Richardson's "Pilgrimage"* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2000); Eva Tucker, 'Dorothy Richardson and the Quakers', *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies*, 1 (2008): 124-31; Bryony Randall, 'Work, Writing, Vocation and Quakers in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies*, 2 (2009): 39-60; Annika J. Lindskog, 'Dorothy Richardson and the Poetics of Silence', *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies*, 5 (2012):7-34; Eva Tucker, 'Dorothy/Miriam in Sussex:

Richardson's most significant biographer, who states that Miriam's 'relationship with the Quakers seems in general like Dorothy's own'.⁴ Dorothy/Miriam first attended a Quaker meeting at the Quaker Meeting House in St. Martin's Lane, London, probably in 1901,⁵ on the initiative of Dr Salem Oldfield and Benjamin Grad/Michael Shatov (III 324-6). In *Revolving Lights* (III 324), Miriam refers to this visit as 'the most deeply engraved of all her memories' Later, in 1907, Richardson first meets the Penrose Quaker family on their farm in Sussex, also on the initiative of Benjamin Grad.⁶ Whilst in Switzerland, the following year, she writes 'A Sussex Auction', inspired by her visit to an auction with the Penrose brothers who impressed her with their 'quiet and gentle', 'less involved', 'more detached' and 'more observant' 'way of being'.⁷ This short piece – 'A Sussex Auction' – was published in the *Saturday Review* of June 1908.⁸ On her return from Switzerland, Richardson lived with the Penrose family, as a paying guest, for some three years, from 1908-11, a period in her life later to be written up as Miriam's experiences on the Roscorla farm in *Dimple Hill* (IV 401-552). There are further reflections on her experiences of Quakerdom in *March Moonlight* (IV 588-94; 617-23; 650-3).

While with the Roscorlas, Miriam is referred to as 'a Friend in all but name' by Rachel Mary (IV 540), but Miriam/Dorothy remains an occasional attender at Quaker meetings and never becomes a Member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). In *Dimple Hill*, Miriam says of her stay with the Roscorlas, 'even while I pine to stay, I pine, in equal measure, to be gone' (IV 552). Much the same might be said of Dorothy's unwillingness to become a Friend 'in name', as well as in inspiration. During the period with the

Between Memory and Promise', *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies*, 6 (2013-14): 107-15.

⁴ Gloria G. Fromm (1977) *Dorothy Richardson: A Biography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), p.316.

⁵ Tucker, 2008, op. cit; George H. Thomson, *A Reader's Guide to Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage* Greensboro, NC: Elt Press, 1996), p.76. Tucker, 2013-14, op. cit, p.108, says 1896.

⁶Fromm, 1977, op. cit. pp.59-61.

⁷Fromm, 1977, op. cit. p.61.

⁸ Dorothy Richardson, 'A Sussex Auction', *Saturday Review*, 13 June, 1908, p.755.

Roscorlas, Miriam ‘reviews her various writing initiatives over the years and laments her present failure’.⁹ However, as Howard Finn, Eva Tucker, and, particularly, Annika Lindskog and Elisabeth Bronfen¹⁰ indicate it is in Miriam/Dorothy’s grappling with her ultimately ‘outsider’ position within Quakerdom that she comes to formulate her life’s work, as a writer who seeks and draws upon Quakerdom’s ‘silent attention’ and attention to ‘being’, in particular, but in the service of her developing identity as a writer, not as a Member of the Society of Friends. As Bronfen puts it: ‘By emulating the Quakers’ silence, she comes to realise that one becomes conscious of one’s own being at those times when speech is held back: “a sudden touch upon one’s inmost being . . . bringing the sense of being, for the fraction of a second, oneself the dynamic centre of advancing life (IV 540)’.¹¹

The validity of this view is most evident when it is recalled that in the latter part of 1912 into early 1913 Richardson completes her first draft of *Pointed Roofs*, after leaving the Roscorlas. While her manuscript remains unpublished and consigned to a trunk or otherwise stored away,¹² she then turns her attention, throughout 1913, to her first two published books, the first – *The Quakers Past and Present* – published in February 1914, and the second – *Gleanings from the Works of George Fox* – published in May 1914.¹³ Later, with the publication of *Pointed Roofs* in 1915, she is then set fair for her life’s work: *Pilgrimage*. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that her writing method is the Quaker method, as she understands it, adapted, as John Cowper Powys puts it, to ‘a universally significant psychic biography: the biography of a solitary human soul’¹⁴ – her own. Howard Finn makes the essential point: ‘the

⁹Thomson, 1996, op. cit. p. 86. According to Thomson, 1996, *ibid*, this is in August 1907. Richardson, herself, in a ‘Letter to Sylvia Beach’, in December 1934, says ‘*Pilgrimage* was mapped out in 1909, in a summer house of a fruit farm [the Roscorlas’ farm].’ See Fromm, 1995, op. cit, p. 282.

¹⁰Finn, 2005, op. cit.; Tucker, 2013-14, op. cit; Lindskog, 2012, op. cit.; Bronfen, 1999, op. cit.

¹¹Bronfen, 1999, op. cit. p. 160.

¹²Fromm, 1977, op. cit, p. 68 and p. 74.

¹³Finn, 2005, op. cit. p. 36.

¹⁴John Cowper Powys, *Dorothy M. Richardson* (London: Joiner and Steel, 1931), p. 5. The novelist, poet, philosopher, and literary critic John Cowper Powys (1872-

initial writing of *Pilgrimage* occupies almost the same moment and impulse as the writing on the Quakers'.¹⁵ Finn then goes on to endorse Gloria Fromm's view of the Quaker inspiration for Richardson's literary work thus: 'She combined the lesson of Henry James with the lesson of Quaker life: an impersonal narrative, like "discovery about oneself", could be highly personal as well; it could be both an objective existence and a subjective identity.'¹⁶

As many of Richardson's letters evidence, the inspiration of George Fox's mystical Quakerism is of continuing importance to her throughout her life. Most frequently cited is the letter to John Cowper Powys in 1939:

The Quakers, though 'heretics' in their misunderstanding of the function of ritual & sacraments, live, the best of them, in touch, in collaboration, in free submission to the influence upon their own, within their own, of that spirit. Never shall I forget my one visit to their great annual gathering, the London Yearly Meeting made up of their best; picked members of Quarterly & Monthly meetings throughout the kingdom. As an outsider, admitted at the request of Quaker friends, I had to sit on a sweltering midsummer evening, in a sloping gallery almost under the roof. The place was packed. Before the preliminary silence was settled down to, during the initial formalities – for this was the great 'business' meeting of the year I wondered how long I should endure without fainting or apoplexy. A few minutes after these massed Friends had gathered themselves into stillness, I felt, physically, coming up from that sea of humanity, boxed in that old, ill-ventilated building, packed together & certainly sweating, the most refreshing air I have ever breathed. It remained. During the whole of that evening of 'debate' as Quakers understand it, my head remained clear & cool & the air in the 'stifling' gallery pure & fresh.

1963) was a lifelong devotee of the work of Dorothy Richardson, and this quotation comes from the first monograph written on Richardson.

¹⁵Finn, 2005, op. cit. p. 36.

¹⁶Finn, 2005, op. cit. p. 36 and fn. 6, p. 45 quoting Fromm, 1977, op. cit. pp. 66-67.

That was a central experience I can never forget. An astonishing revelation.¹⁷

As late as 1950, for instance, Richardson is enthusing about some new information about George Fox she has received from Ferner Nuhn: 'Enchanting I find the idea of G. [eorge] F. [ox] sending bright red dress goods to Margaret Fell! Having read the whole of F's writings & not very much of what has been written about him, I did not know of this frivolity, bless him.'¹⁸

The Unpublished Letters

In the 'Foreword' to *The Quakers Past and Present*, 'D.M.R.' states 'My thanks are due to Mr. Norman Penney, F.S.A., F.R. Hist.S., Librarian of the Friends' Reference Library, for a helpful revision of my manuscript.'¹⁹ The Friends Reference Library, then in Bishopsgate, London EC, sought to acquire a single copy of everything published on Quakers and Quakerism, and two copies of everything published by Quakers on Quakerism. A copy of Richardson's book was hence duly purchased direct from Headley Brothers, a Quaker printing firm in Kent,²⁰ on 5 March 1914. It was this copy, deposited in the Friends Library and now in Friends House library, Euston Road, London, that led me to my 'rediscovery' of the two unpublished letters from Dorothy Richardson to Norman Penney.²¹

¹⁷ 'Letter to John Cowper Powys', 19 February 1939, in Fromm, 1995, op. cit. p.368; cited in John Rosenberg, *Dorothy Richardson: The Genius They Forgot* (London: Duckworth, 1973), p.47; Finn, 1995, op. cit, p.36; Lindskog, 2012, op. cit, p.10.

¹⁸ 'Letter to Ferner Nuhn', 24 July 1950, in Fromm, op. cit, p. 645.

¹⁹ Richardson, 1914, op. cit, p.vi.

²⁰ <http://www.headley.co.uk/history.php>

²¹ I thank David Blake, Head of Library and Archives, for a print out of the full catalogue entry of the two unpublished letters, and Lisa McQuillan, Records Manager and Deputy Archivist, and Josef Keith, former Archivist, for further details about the depositing and cataloguing of *The Quakers Past and Present* in the Library of the Religious Society of Friends, Euston Road, London. I acknowledge permission to quote from the letters from David Blake, whilst acknowledging his view that the copyright of the letters' contents fall within the Dorothy Richardson Estate until 2039.

The Richardson Editions' Project is currently in progress, with *The Collected Letters of Dorothy Richardson* (Oxford University Press) set to be published in three volumes between 2016 and 2018.²² Collected Letters Vol. 1. 1900-1930, the relevant volume for these two letters, is now scheduled for 2016. As is well known amongst Richardson scholars and enthusiasts, much of the spade work on the letters was carried out in Gloria Fromm's *Windows on Modernism: Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson* (1995) and George Thomson's *Dorothy Richardson: A Calendar of Letters* (2007). According to Fromm, 'Dorothy Richardson's surviving letters number approximately 1,800'.²³ Fromm published 488. According to Thomson's *Calendar of Letters* (2007), there are 2,086 items. Less well-known, perhaps, is the fact that in 2008 Janet Fouli edited a volume of letters of Richardson's correspondence with John Cowper Powys, which contains 104 items from Richardson.²⁴ According to Scott McCracken, editor of the forthcoming Collected Letters volumes, 'fewer than 30 other items have been published in books or journals'. McCracken also states that since Thomson's *Calendar of Letters* 'the editors of the forthcoming volumes have discovered 17 further items.' Of these 17 items, McCracken states: 'The only letter with a London address before Richardson moves to 32 Queen's Terrace is for Endsleigh Street and it is undated'.²⁵ More to the point, McCracken was unaware of the two letters to Norman Penney, even though he had written to Friends House seeking information on any Dorothy Richardson letters known to them. In brief, it seems that nowhere in either the published or unpublished material, known to Richardson scholars and enthusiasts, is there any mention whatsoever of the two letters to Norman Penney, far less any citation or reference given to them.

These letters are important for two reasons. Firstly, they clarify the chronology of the impact of Quakerism on Richardson, and,

²²See <http://dorothyrichardson.org/Editions/Letters.html>. The information in the remainder of this paragraph is mostly taken from this web page.

²³From, 1995, op. cit, p. xiii.

²⁴Janet Fouli (ed.) *Powys and Dorothy Richardson – The Letters of John Cowper Powys and Dorothy Richardson* (London: Cecil Woolf, 2008).

²⁵Email correspondence, Scott McCracken to Richard Ekins, 17 December 2014.

secondly, they raise interesting issues in regard to Richardson's own psychology and her often preferred 'solutions' to her psychic conflicts. In particular, the content of the two letters, taken together, may be seen as an illustration of Richardson's use of 'undoing', a mechanism of defence first outlined in the work of Sigmund Freud,²⁶ and highlighted, in particular, by Anna Freud.²⁷ For the Freuds, anxieties provoked by instinctual demands unacceptable to the ego are defended against, in the case of 'undoing', by a warding off of 'unwelcome affects' by an 'undoing' of what has previously been done. As Freud puts it, 'one action is cancelled out by a second, so that it is as though neither action had taken place, whereas, in reality, both have.'²⁸

However, before clarifying what I have in mind on these two counts, I want to pay the proper respect to the person who brought these letters to my attention, and to a Dorothy Richardson researcher, Eva Tucker, who may have read these letters and drawn on them in her own writing on Richardson and the Quakers, even though she has no recollection of having done so. My discussion of these two preliminary matters will lead into the text of the letters themselves.

Why the letters have not previously been rediscovered by Richardson scholars is a puzzle, because I found them pasted in the front cover of the Library of the Society of Friends' copy of *The Quakers Past and Present*. It might be thought that a previous Richardson researcher would have discovered them and duly referenced them. If my own experience be the guide, it may be supposed that previous researchers either acquired their own copies of the book, or used library copies provided by other libraries. I had bought my own second-hand copy of *The Quakers Past and Present* but had balked at buying *Gleanings from George Fox*,

²⁶Sigmund Freud, 'Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis', in *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 10 (London: Hogarth, 1909), pp. 235-6; Sigmund Freud, 'Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety (1926)', in *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 20, op. cit, pp. 119-20.

²⁷Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (London: Hogarth, 1986 [1936], pp. 34, 43-4 and 50.

²⁸Sigmund Freud, 1926, op. cit, p. 119.

then being sold by ABE Books at a selling price of over £300. It was only when I sought access to the Friends House library copy of *Gleanings* that I learned of the letters within their copy of *Quakers Past and Present*. My enquiries revealed that it was only in 'the last two or three years' that it had been moved from the open access shelves to closed access, in view of the rarity of the letters. The book was then re-catalogued with the following catalogue details: 'Copy Notes' : 'A photograph of Dorothy Richardson & 2 letters from her to Norman Penney (one dated 27.ii.1914) are pasted in.' It might well be that the letters languished on the open shelves unseen by anyone for decades, until their 'discovery' two or three years ago by recent library staff.²⁹

There is a further puzzle, moreover. The content of the letters suggest that at least one researcher – namely, Eva Tucker – may have had sight of the letters. Tucker writes:

So when in 1901 Benjamin Grad took her [Richardson] to the Quaker Meeting House in St Martin's Lane (where it still is) she found herself in a religious gathering that spoke more clearly to her condition than any had ever done; *it was her my [sic] first experience of a sense of life and reality in a religious gathering*. In the shared silence she was relieved of the tension between inner and outer self.³⁰

In Richardson's unpublished letter to Norman Penney, dated 27 February 1914 and addressed from 'S^t Merryn, North Cornwall', Richardson uses the same form of words as those emphasised in Tucker, above. Richardson writes:

Dear M^r Penney

I have, so far as I know, no Quaker ancestry.

I was brought up in the Anglican Communion & early developed agnosticism.

²⁹According to Lisa McQuillan, Records Manager and Deputy Archivist, the 'discovery' probably followed the move from a card catalogue to an online catalogue.

³⁰Tucker, 2008, op. cit, p.124. My italics.

My first contact with Friends was a “chance” visit to St. Martins’ Lane. *It was my first experience of a sense of life & reality in a religious gathering.*

Some six years later I came into contact with a family of Friends. The impression was repeated. They were *uncultured* people – unable to give a rational account of themselves – “narrow” – ³¹

Also relevant is the fact that just as Richardson finds the family ‘uncultured’, so Tucker, in her article, writes ‘She [Richardson] may have found them *uncultured*’.³²

Be that as it may, Scott McCracken wrote to Eva Tucker at my behest and she confirmed that she had no knowledge of the letters and moreover stated: ‘I haven’t come across Mr. Penney’.³³ In addition, Scott McCracken explains the seeming typographical error ‘it was her my [sic]’ in Tucker cited above, as follows:

I’ve gone through the editorial correspondence. The line from the letter was originally a quotation in the first version of the essay, which had no footnotes at all. Eva tracked down all the Pilgrimage references, but she couldn’t find the source of that quotation so took it out of the first person (almost) . . . I’ve written to her with the details about where the letter was and pointed out the quotation in her original essay to see if it jogs her memory.³⁴

In any case, Richardson’s unpublished letter of 27 February 1914 continues:

From them I gained, indirectly, a knowledge of the principles & proportions of Quakerism & an insight into the

³¹ My italics.

³² Tucker, 2008, op. cit, p.126. My italics.

³³ Email correspondence, Scott McCracken to Richard Ekins, 18 December 2014.

³⁴ Email correspondence, Scott McCracken to Richard Ekins, 19 December 2014. It is, of course, possible that Richardson used the same form of words, elsewhere, or that there exist copies of the relevant content of this unpublished letter, elsewhere.

way in which it can – even where dimly grasped & leavened with a stereotype Calvinism at its most rigid and ‘superstitious’ level – work through & give freedom, peace, balance, wisdom, to homely lives. My opportunities for observation extended over several years – & included a fairly regular attendance at London & provincial meetings – considerable reading & tentative discussions with various people. I could not anywhere find an articulate presentment of the significance of the thing called Quakerism, & my little essay hampered of course by the ~~demand~~ <form>³⁵ of Constable’s series – is an attempt in this direction.

Richardson concludes with a final sentence and valediction:

These facts are entirely at your disposal –
With kind regards
Yours sincerely
Dorothy M. Richardson.

Precise dating in Dorothy/Miriam’s biography is a problem fraught with difficulties and those difficulties are only too apparent in the secondary source literature. When I sought, recently, to determine the years that Richardson lived in Woburn Walk, for the purposes of a Marchmont Association Blue Plaque on her former residence at 2 Woburn Buildings (now 6 Woburn Walk), it took me many months of reading, research and correspondence with leading Richardson scholars to pin down the dates with near certainty to 1905-1906.³⁶ Similarly, the dates and types of Richardson’s involvement with Quaker meetings and Quakers, provided in the secondary sources, are speculative. This unpublished Richardson letter of 27 February 1914 makes it clear, for instance, that Howard Finn guesses wrongly after stating correctly that ‘Miriam attends and is profoundly affected by a Friends’ meeting off St.

³⁵ Richardson crosses out ‘demand’ and writes ‘form’ above the deleted word.

³⁶Richard Ekins, ‘Dorothy Richardson (1873-1957), 2 Woburn Buildings (subsequently restored and renumbered as the present 6 Woburn Walk): The Case for a Marchmont Association Blue Plaque’ (Archives of the Marchmont Association, Bloomsbury, London, 2014).

Martin's Lane in London described in detail in *Revolving Lights* (III 325-9)', he adds that 'This scene may have been based on a London Yearly Meeting that Richardson once attended and which she describes in a letter to John Cowper Powys, concluding that it was 'a central experience I can never forget. An astonishing revelation.'³⁷

Lindskog repeats the error when she writes in 2012: 'In the letter to John Cowper Powys . . . Richardson goes on to describe her first overwhelming experience of the Quaker silence.'³⁸ The letter to Penney suggests this is not so. Rather, it was Dr Oldfield who took Miriam/Dorothy and Michael to the 1901 meeting, as I detailed above. This was Richardson's first Quaker meeting as the unpublished letter makes clear, especially when read with Richardson's description of the meeting in *Revolving Lights* (III 324-6). It is of this first meeting that Richardson later writes in *Dimple Hill*:

During the second rustling subsidence of the [Church of England] congregation, she sought relief from her uneasy solitude in the memory of her one visit to a Quaker meeting, recalling the sense of release and home-coming in the unanimous unembarrassed stillness, her longing, as she sat breathing in the vitalizing atmosphere produced by these people gathered together to submit themselves communally to the influence ruling their individual lives, to exchange her status of visitor from another world for that of one born amongst them . Perhaps it was the completeness of that one experience that had made her so easily forget it and fail to seek a renewal. (IV 422)

The meeting described by Richardson in the letter to Powys refers to her attendance at her first *Yearly Meeting* at the invitation, presumably, of one of the Penroses, during her 1908-11 stay with them. This meeting could not have been in 1908, because the Yearly Meeting was held in Birmingham that year, so it was

³⁷ Finn, 2005, op. cit, p. 36.

³⁸ Lindskog, 2012, op. cit, p. 10.

probably in 1909 or 1910, when it was held at its usual venue in London.³⁹

What then of Richardson's 'solutions' to her psychic conflicts, as exemplified in the two rediscovered letters? The second letter, addressed from 'St. Merryn, Padstow, Cornwall', is not dated, but it indicates that Richardson has been ruminating about the tone and content of her first letter. In this second letter, she writes:

Dear M^r Penney

I am troubled by the memory of having – apparently very arrogantly – expressed the opinion that there has been so far no articulate literary description of Quakerism – What I wished to convey was rather that the significance of this unique experiment in lay-mysticism, its importance to the religious life of the world as a whole has been singularly neglected.

This aspect, Quakerism as a world-value is of course one that Friends themselves are less likely to treat, than those who are so to say watching them & counting on them.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy M. Richardson

Conclusions

As Richardson scholars and enthusiasts know, her work is peppered with explicit statements that indicate she occupies a 'neither/nor' and/or 'both/and' positioning in many matters both fundamental to her identity and in matters seemingly more mundane. Indeed, I would go further and argue that the thrust of

³⁹ Once again, Gloria Fromm (1977, op. cit, 60-1) makes the essential points: 'She [Richardson] joined in the quiet life of the farm and the villages and went with the family on Sundays to the little meeting house at Gardner Street, the village next to Herstmonceaux. Once, when she happened to be in London at the time of the Yearly Meeting, she attended that event, which was regarded as the peak of the Quaker year.' The detail of the descriptions Richardson gives of the 'first experience' in 1901 and the first experience of the Yearly Meeting, some seven years later (in both *Pilgrimage* and in her relevant letters), suggests that she is not merging the two events in her various accounts of them.

much of her life and work can fruitfully be seen in this light. I mentioned, previously, Miriam's statement to Amabel of her time with the Roscorlas: 'even while I pine to stay, I pine, in equal measure to be gone' (IV 552). More widely cited is Miriam/Dorothy's gender positioning,⁴⁰ for instance, in *The Tunnel*: 'I am somewhere between a man and a woman, looking both ways' (II 187).⁴¹ Howard Finn refers to her 'logic of negation' in regards to Quakerism.⁴² In regards to her political positioning, the early Miriam calls herself a "Tory anarchist",⁴³ whilst in her later years, Richardson writes: 'I belong now to all rather than to any single party.'⁴⁴ Most perceptive in these matters is Elisabeth Bronfen's *Dorothy Richardson's Art of Memory*. Throughout this book Bronfen highlights Richardson's wish 'to do, to know, to be . . . How to be perfectly in two places at once'.⁴⁵

In Richardson's own work there is an inability to commit that many scholars have commented upon. Her view was that: 'It is only by the pain of remaining free that one can have the whole world round one all the time'.⁴⁶ Less frequently commented upon is the anxiety that accompanies a potential particular commitment, although this is, perhaps, a subtext in some of the work considering Miriam/Dorothy's sexuality, with regard to both her

⁴⁰ See, e.g. Scott McCracken, *Masculinities, Modernist Fiction and the Urban Public Sphere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Joanne Winning, *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000).

⁴¹ Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Feminine Consciousness in the Modern British Novel* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 11.

⁴² Finn, 2005, op. cit, p. 42.

⁴³ Eva Tucker, 'Letter', *London Review of Books*, Vol. 17, No. 20, 1995 (<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v17/n18/jane-eldridge-miller/no-sense-of-an-ending>).

⁴⁴ 'Letter to Eleanor Phillips', 28 May 1950, in Fromm, 1995, op. cit, pp. 642-3.

⁴⁵ Bronfen, 1999, op. cit, p. 1. A related approach is to consider Richardson's life and work in terms of its 'liminality', see Claire Drewery, *Modernist Short Fiction by Women: The Liminal in Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

⁴⁶ See Eva Tucker, 'A Reassessment: Dorothy Richardson', July 1982, <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/3rd-july-1982/28/a-reassessment>.

heterosexuality,⁴⁷ and her lesbianism.⁴⁸ It is the anxiety that is particularly evident in the ‘undoing’ in the two unpublished letters. Her ‘solution’ to that anxiety created by the first letter is the second letter which positions her as an ‘outsider’, from a position of safety, ‘so to speak watching them’, as she puts it, but also ‘counting on them’; just the same ‘solution’ and psychical mechanism that is so evident throughout her life and work, whether it is the seemingly trivial matter of these two letters or matters more profound. Her anxieties are now allayed.

When *March Moonlight*, the final chapter/novel of *Pilgrimage*, ends, it is probably October 1912,⁴⁹ which is exactly the same time that Richardson sets about her life’s vocation to write *Pilgrimage*, with her first draft of *Pointed Roofs* being written between October 1912 and January 1913 ‘as one of those magical moments in time that can never be duplicated’.⁵⁰ It is this ‘solution’, this psychical mechanism of ‘undoing’, of having both/and *and* neither/nor which makes the final part of *Pilgrimage* so fitting. In it, we find Miriam/Dorothy reflecting on the same ‘solution’: the ‘freedom’ that her giving of Amabel to Michael had brought her, mirrored, in its fundamentals, with her final sentence of *Pilgrimage* relating to her more recent ‘giving’ of Jean to Joe Davenport. In each case, she has neither and she has both. Richardson is identifying with *both* Amabel and Michael, as she ‘gives’ them both to each other *and* she can take pleasure vicariously from the fact that they are lovers whose sexuality produces a child, hence her ‘sense of fulfilment’ when cradling their baby. Time will tell whether she experiences the same ‘sense of fulfilment’ with any future baby of

⁴⁷ Kaplan, 1975, op. cit. p. 45: ‘The demands for submission, loss of identity, loss of self, called for in sexual relationships are unbearable to her. That is why she so often retreats into reverie while she is experiencing sexual contact.’

⁴⁸ Winning, 2000, op. cit. See, also, Kristin Bluemel, ‘Missing Sex in Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage*’, *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 39, 1 (1996): 20-38.

⁴⁹ Thomson, 1996, op. cit, 90.

⁵⁰ Fromm, 1977, op. cit, 65. The astute Richardson scholar and enthusiast will have noted that she wrote her two unpublished letters to Norman Penney from the same address that she wrote *Pointed Roofs*. I thank Scott McCracken for pointing this out to me.

Jean and Joe Davenport (IV 658).⁵¹ Richardson's final 'altruistic surrender'⁵² paves the way for the sublimation of many of her anxiety provoking 'competing urgencies' in the life's work ahead of her: the writing of *Pilgrimage*. As she recalls cradling Amabel and Michael's baby son, her anxieties are allayed – 'the complete stilling of every one of my competing urgencies' (IV 658). She is now 'free' to embark upon her life's work, her writing of her both/and, neither/nor *Pilgrimage*.

⁵¹For a review of the secondary sources on the so-called 'problems with *March Moonlight*'s ending', see Kristin Bluemel, *Experimenting on the Borders of Modernism: Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1997), pp. 130-5. Like Jean Radford, *Dorothy Richardson* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991) and Fromm, 1977, op. cit, I read 'the end of *Pilgrimage* as a kind of beginning that brings the artist Miriam to the position of writing the novel *Pilgrimage*' Bluemel, *ibid.* p. 134. However, I do not find any 'problems' with the 'ending'. I find it both emblematic of her psychic reality and a fitting conclusion to her chapter series.

⁵²See, A. Freud, 'A Form of Altruism', in *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1966), pp. 122-34. Richardson, herself, may well have proffered an explanation in terms of the vicarious, as in her 'Letter to Eleanor Phillips', 28 May 1950, in Fromm, 1995, op. cit, p. 642: 'So you know Majorca. Envidable experience. Well, no. That is not true, for I don't understand envy. Never have. Masses of one's experience are vicarious, eh?' Although Richardson was a friend of the psychoanalyst Barbara Low, she fought shy of having an analysis, herself (Fromm, 1977, op. cit. 173-4). She preferred the 'self-analysis' of the Dorothy/Miriam encounter and, as a result, in my view, missed out on the significance of the sort of unconscious mechanisms that her 'undoing' evidences. Cf. Fromm, 1977, op. cit, p. 174: 'But the evidence seems to point to her growing less and less sure who was really in control of what.'