

Dorothy Richardson, *Pointed Roofs*, edited by Stephen Ross and Tara Thomson (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Editions, 2014), pp.274. ISBN: 978-1-55111-799-7. US\$17.95; Dorothy Richardson, *The Tunnel*, edited by Stephen Ross and Tara Thomson (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Editions, 2014), pp.384. ISBN: 978-1-55481-110-6. US\$19.95.

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Finally, paperback copies of two volumes of Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*; and sold at a reasonable price, so that Richardson's work can at last be taught on undergraduate courses. Armed with Ross's exemplary introduction, Ross and Thomson's excellent notes and invaluable appendices, scholars and students can engage anew with Richardson's experimental prose. Is it time to announce that the sad publication history of Richardson's work has been redeemed?

Yes, if you live in the United States or Canada, but alas the mischievous spirit that has bedevilled the reception of Richardson's work throughout the twentieth century is still active in the twenty first. For copyright reasons this invaluable edition is not available outside North America. Many teachers beyond those legal borders, who would gladly add these texts to a modernist module and enjoy introducing students to 'stream of consciousness' via Richardson's experimental prose (an introduction that would of course include an advisory about Richardson's detestation of the phrase) will be denied the chance, at least for now.

But it would be ungenerous to let their restricted availability distract from the qualities that make these editions so desirable. The two volumes act as a good primer for *Pilgrimage* as a whole. *Pointed Roofs* (1915) is the first 'Chapter' of Richardson's long, unfinished work and with *Le côté de chez Swann* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* its appearance marked a revolution in literary language. Richardson's decision to limit the narrative perspective to her young and naïve heroine, Miriam Henderson, results in a new form of prose that is at once delicate and tentative, breaking into fragments as Miriam attempts to grasp her world, and at the same

time bold and fresh in its encounter with the novel social possibilities available to women at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Tunnel (1919), the fourth Chapter, represents Miriam's first proper encounter with the urban, an encounter that, if delayed, is nonetheless a pre-requisite for Richardson's art. Miriam moves to central London, to Bloomsbury without becoming a Bloomsburyite, her modest income of a pound a week and dowdy existence as a dental receptionist debarring her from its more comfortable salons. A large part of the text is taken up with 'a day in the life' that includes both her working existence and, at last, her escape across the threshold into the 'elastic' space of the London night.

Ross's introductions set the scene admirably; but one of the most valuable aspects of these editions is their appendices. In *Pointed Roofs* these include 'Intellectual Contexts', 'Literary Debates', and key letters, also an account by Vincent Brome of his meeting with Richardson in Cornwall when she was in her seventies. In edition of *The Tunnel*, there are reviews by Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, and John Rodker, more letters, six of Richardson's essays, and her Foreword to the 1938 collected edition of *Pilgrimage*. Given the difficulty of getting hold of Richardson's writings, particularly her non-fiction, this means that the Broadview editions have become overnight the most accessible point of reference for Richardson scholars.

The notes are less detailed than George Thomson's *Notes on Pilgrimage*, but complementary and more accessible, in that they assume less knowledge in the reader.¹ They offer the ideal introduction to Richardson for the uninitiated, and much that will be new to even experienced modernist scholars.

Ross and Thomson have chosen to use the 1938 edition as their copy text. This has the virtue of being the last which Richardson approved and the most familiar to readers in the second half of

¹ See George H. Thomson, *Notes on Pilgrimage: Dorothy Richardson Annotated* (Greensboro, N.C: ELT Press, 1999).

the twentieth century. The versions of *Pointed Roofs* and *The Tunnel* published in the 1938 edition of *Pilgrimage* survived unchanged in the 1967 edition (which included the unfinished *March Moonlight*) and the paperback *Virago* editions introduced by Gillian Hanscombe in 1979.

There are, however, a number of differences between the single volume published in 1915 and the collected 1938 edition.² Richardson made minor changes and corrections to the original – although, as George H. Thomson reports, the process her proof reading was haphazard rather than systematic. More interestingly, the sections within the chapters are numbered in the first edition, a practice that continues until the sixth Chapter, *Deadlock* (1921), returns in the eighth, *The Trap*, to be abandoned thereafter for the blank gaps of varying sizes that are used throughout the collected edition. Quite how this relates to Richardson’s developing understanding of how she wanted to *Pilgrimage* to be read – chronologically or as an ‘adventure for readers’, where they dived in at random – remains a topic for further research. In the meantime, these two volumes are just what is needed. We can only hope that they become more widely available and that more volumes of *Pilgrimage* are destined to appear in the same series.

² George H. Thomson with Dorothy F. Thomson, *The Editions of Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage: A Comparison of Texts* (ELT Press, 2001).