Chancellor's English Essay Prize

Motto: There's a certain Slant of light

Essay title:

Borrowed light: second sense and sensing second with Dorothy Richardson

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Borrowed light: second sense and sensing second with Dorothy Richardson

> "Miriam left the gaslit hall and went slowly upstairs. The March twilight lay upon the landings, but the staircase was almost dark. The top landing was quite dark and silent. There was no one about. It would be quiet in her room." (*Pointed Roofs*: 1916, 1)[1]

In this opening passage of *Pointed Roofs*, the first novel in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, Miriam pauses in the hallway at home. It is the night before she leaves for Hanover to take up her position teaching in a girl's school, and she is in a liminal state psychologically as well as spatially, contemplating the change in her life that will imminently come to pass. The passage throws a certain anticipatory nostalgia upon the presence of the opening, like an echo of light that finds its way into a windowless space, through a door opening onto a lighter room. The term for this is 'borrowed light,' and while it is not explicitly used by Richardson, the spacial doubleness it suggests is productive to consider in relation to Richardson's *Pilgrimage*. Just as 'slant'-ness in Emily Dickinson's poetry is a poetic image, a formal technique, and a way her poems themselves can be read, 'second sense', too, has this multiplicity. This essay takes 'second sense' not only as something to find in Richardson's writing, but as an approach *to* her writing itself. A sense of a disjunction and doubleness permeates the thirteen-novel work - temporal, perceptual, ontological, linguistic – whether between or within settings, senses of herself and her relations to other characters, or even, at a formal and syntactical level, between tenses or units within sentences. This essay aims to find a 'second sense' of this disjunction, by coupling a reading of various types of 'doubleness' *Pilgrimage* with analysis of a selection of her poems. I will read by 'borrowed light', using her poems as light on *Pilgrimage* and *Pilgrimage* as light on the poems.

In *'Art of Memory': Space, Identity, Text*, Elizabeth Bronfen quotes Dorothy Richardson's response to the question 'What should you most like to do, to know, to be?' in an interview for the journal *Little Review*. She said, "Build a cottage on a cliff, know how to be perfectly in two places at once, and be a member of a world association for broadcasting the goings-on of metaphors."[2] One might interpret her second answer, a desire to "know how to be perfectly in two places at once", as a possible explanation for Richardson's placing of Miriam in hallway spaces and frames of mind, and of her refusal to commit Miriam to a single state of being. Yet Richardson does not deal in extremes in *Pilgrimage*; "Refusal" is perhaps too strong a word; 'reluctance' might be more fitting. Being "perfectly in two places" is for Richardson a wish, and only that, and it is this impossibility that Richardson alights on, even in this opening passage. By yearning for this state, Richardson in consequence writes into the space between these two places; the hallway space. Hallways have huge significance for Miriam in *Pilgrimage*: she often

[1] Richardson, Dorothy M, and Gillian E Hanscombe. *Pilgrimage, 1*. (London: Virago, 1979.) p. 1. All further references to Richardson's novels will be in-text citations.
[2] Bronfen, Elisabeth. *Dorothy Richardson's Art of Memory : Space, Identity, Text.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012.) p. 2.

does her most perceptive or productive thinking *on the way* to a room. The lighting is neither one thing nor another, "almost dark", or "quite dark." It is as if Richardson can't quite decide which hedging adjective better expresses the slight slant light negating 'darkness'. "Twilight", too, is expressive of betweenness: according to the OED, it is "the light diffused by the reflection of the sun's rays from the atmosphere before sunrise, and after sunset; the period during which this prevails between daylight and darkness."[3] Twilight is almost a natural kind of borrowed light, at an atmospheric level, and by dwelling in this light, Miriam is neither here nor there, in a liminal space which is also neither one way or another.

After being initially dismissive of Richardson, Virginia Woolf wrote in her review of *The Tunnel* for the TLS in 1919 that one can detect in her writing "a genuine conviction of the discrepancy between what she has to say and the form provided by tradition for her to say it in."[4] It seems sometimes, however, that this very frustration between expression and the capacity to express is what she gets at in *Pilgrimage*, particularly with regard to the 'I' of Miriam. There is also, arguably, a genuine discrepancy between the narrating self and the subject of the narrating self. This discrepancy is not only present and underlying in the narrative, but is a question which is actively navigated in the form of the text. Take the final paragraph of the third novel, *Honeycomb*, which describes Miriam alone after the suicide of her mother:

> Moving her body with slow difficulty against the unsupporting air, she looked slowly about. It was so difficult to move. Everything was airy and transparent. Her heavy hot light impalpable body was the only solid thing in the world, weighing tons; and like a lifeless feather. There was a tray of plates of fish and fruit on the table. She looked at it, heaving with sickness and looking at it. I am hungry. Sitting down near it she tried to pull the tray. It would not move. I must eat the food. Go on eating food, till the end of my life. Plates of food like these plates of food . . . . I am in eternity . . . where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched. (*Honeycomb*: 1919, 489-499)

She describes her body as something to move, detached from the self unable to move it. The repetition and repositioning of phrases such as "plates of food" and the change of repeated verbs from the past participle or unmarked infinitive to the present participle in their repetition, such as "looked" and "looking", "eat" and "eating" inject the passage with a disjunction of action as well as identity. The biblical reference to Mark 9:48, in which Jesus describes hell in a way that connotes enduring and relentless torment, suggests an "eternity" of suffering, leaving Miriam's 'self' unresolved and in turmoil. Richardson also writes turmoil into the paragraph's structure: she offers an image or sensation to describe Miriam and then revises it, shifting between contrasting descriptions of her body, from "heavy" and "solid" to "a lifeless feather" and "airy and transparent", from "heaving sickness" to "hungry". She

[3] "Twilight, *N.*" *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford UP, December 2025, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3575045064.
[4] Woolf, Virginia. *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 3: 1919-1924, ed. Andrew Mcneillie (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1989), p. 11.

contrasts first person and third person voice, from "her body" and "she looked about" to "I am hungry" and "I am in eternity". This moment follows the distressing suicide of Miriam's mother, and therefore one could connect the extreme absence of stable subject with the brutal and sudden loss of her maternal figure.

Richardson's style throughout the *Pilgrimage* series is often indicative of a fractured or dissolving consciousness: as Scott McCracken writes in his introduction to Pilgrimage, "the narrative is marked by absences indicated by ellipses and gaps between sections, which indicate the gaps and breaks in Miriam's consciousness".[5] The technique can be seen in the very passage quoted above, as Miriam's self is unresolved and dissociated from her body at the end of the novel *Honeycomb*. She was highly attuned to these elliptic, visual absences, writing them even into her letters as ellipses or dashes.[6] Her 1924 essay, 'About Punctuation', provides further evidence that her formal absences were part of an epistemological project. She criticises the devitalisation of the act of reading, which has become mechanical, with readers lolling on "the borderland between inertia and attention." She wishes instead for irregularity of punctuation, a more organic application of it, or its absence altogether, retaining the text as "unbroken."[7]

To consider a 'second sense' of the potential for the 'I' voice to be double, and for the text to position itself between this doubleness, take one of her poems, 'Gift'. This poem, and most of her poems generally, are surprisingly conventionally punctuated considering her more radical use of punctuation in her essays, novels, and even letters. Yet the threshold where attention remains organic and unconscious yet still intense is perhaps already privileged by the compressed form of a poem, which is inevitably more visually spacious on a page. It is also evidenced in other ways, such as the uncertainty of subject and object.

It was not you who gave me my strange earth
And fabulous skies, my sea so glad to run
And leash its ardour into waves that spun
Fans of frail foam unfurling for my mirth;
Nor my enchanted garden, that bright birth
Daily of blossoms ever newly blown
For sunlight, bees, & me, the three in one
Who knew no night & knew no winter's wrath.
But you it was – when the ever-living day

[5] Guy, Adam. and McCracken, Scott. 'Editing Experiment: The New Modernist Editing and Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage', Modernist Cultures Vol. 15 Issue 1. (2020) pp. 110-131.
[6] Richardson, Dorothy, and Gloria G Fromm. *Windows on Modernism : Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson*. (Athens ; University of Georgia Press, 1995).
[7] Richardson, Dorothy. 'About Punctuation', *The Adelphi*, Vol. 1. No. 11. (April 1924).

With magic all undimmed had moved away
Into my being, sinking space by space,
Receding & receding, grew to be
Not mine but for another with my face –
Who, coming, found & brought it back to me.[8]

The two thoughts considered in the poem are like mirrors of each other, or inversions. Take, for instance, the very syntactical arrangement of the openings of the octet and sestet, "It was not you who gave me" in line 1 and "But you it was" in line 9. When juxtaposed alongside each other, they are almost a chiasmus. Richardson, in the octet, suggests one direction through the poem, "It was not you", listing the landscape and Eden-like paradise "you" did not give, before inverting the phrasing by foregrounding "you", in "But you it was." It would make sense, therefore, to read the final six lines of the poem as in resistance to the first eight. The poem stages a rediscovery, or reparation, of the subject of the poem. As a sonnet, its volta is not a turn in a new direction, but a turn inwards: the poem enacts a remembering process. We learn over the octave and sestet of this sonnet, split evenly into two sentences across the two sections, that the 'you' and 'me' are, in some ways, the same person: "you" brings back the face to "me." It is notable that "I" never enters the poem, but only "me", the personal pronoun being an object rather than a subject. The very syntactical arrangement of the opening of the octet and sestet, "It was not you who gave me" and "But you it was" emphasizes this.

A longer, earlier poem, 'Waiting',[9] also mediates between "you" and a speaking subject, which here uses the "I" pronoun. At the time of this poem's writing, Richardson had recently published *Revolving Lights* and was working on *The Trap*, the eight installation of *Pilgrimage*, published in 1925. With the composition of this poem temporally nestled deep amongst her investment in the creation of her epic project of *Pilgrimage*, it is productive to read her poems as entangled in her engagement with theories of consciousness as seen explored in more depth in the novels. 'Waiting' is a poem in which the speaker is despairing and waiting for some sort of change, perhaps death, or love, but what arrives instead is a memory of love. Rather than a rediscovery of "my face", and a reconciliation of "you" and "me" as in 'Gift', here it is as if the "you" figure interrupts the poem, and the speaker's loneliness, "you" being more certainly in this poem a distinct other person, or rather, the memory of a person. Interruption can be detected in the exclamatory passage from the middle of the poem, quoted below:

Hark! In this street, where never music sounds,
Sounds music—faint through some close-shut window
Reaching me.

[8] Richardson, Dorothy. 'Gift', *Outlook*, 61. (June, 1928), p. 678.
[9] Richardson, Dorothy. 'Waiting, *Poetry*, 24. (June, 1924), pp. 142-144.

Chiasma is at work here too ("music sounds/ sounds music"). It is as if the poem revises itself, with a tone of surprise; sound breaks through silence. Yet the fallibility of windows for keeping things out is foregrounded earlier: at the beginning of the poem, wind pushes through "the loose window frames." Perhaps the poem understands and carries a sense of the potential for sound, and surprise, which operates in a different sense to the speaker's narrative control. The poem's form is a tension of intimacy and estrangement, its uncertain, unarrived revelation being what the poem waits for, and comes to know.[10] The compound adjective "close-shut" describing the window encapsulates this. Could "close-shut" mean shut *closed'*, or almost closed, and *close-to-being* shut?

Richardson's compound words are often unexpectedly playful and confusing. As the body of her poems is relatively compact and small, particularly in comparison to the expansive *Pilgrimage*, any repetitions or lexical chimes are interesting and should be regarded as significant, perhaps highlighting specific concerns to find in *Pilgrimage* itself. One notably consistent concern across her work is with light, dark, or the space between them, namely, shadows. It is a 'second sense' in multiple ways: it privileges a light of betweenness and liminality, encouraging an intuitive way of seeing rather than a clear vision, and this might be taken on by the reader too, in uncertainty, with phrases such as "close-shut" or "sun-shadowed". Finally, reading 'shadowed' light could almost itself be a metaphor for the relation between *Pilgrimage* and Richardson's poems: themes, images, and ideas are shadows of each other in the different forms. To extrapolate one example from *Pilgrimage* to illustrate this feels reductive, and destructive of Richardson's 'dappled' dispersal of this image throughout, yet this passage from *Pointed Roofs*, describing a moment of the coming of spring in the school in Hanover where Miriam works enacts this interplay of sun and shade:

> Up the railing of the stairway and over the entrance of the summer-house a creeping plant was putting out tiny leaves. It was in shadow, but the sun caught the sharply peaked gable of the summer-house and on the left the tops of the high shrubs lining the pathway leading to the wooden door and the great balls finishing the high stone gateway shone yellow with sunlit lichen. (*Pointed Roofs*: 1916, 132)

In this passage, sun and shadow seem in opposition, but in contact too, meeting and defining each other by their contrast. It is more than coincidence that this moment is caught "Up the railing of the stairway and over the entrance of the summer-house", in an entry way or place of transition into another place. It is itself reminiscent of being between states, whether inside/outside, sun/shade, or winter/spring.

[10] Bevis, Matthew. 'Unknowing Lyric', *Poetry Foundation* (2017).

In Richardson's poems, many of which have a lyric concern with the natural world and find their revelations, or anti-revelations, from an almost post-romantic pastoral setting, this mutual dependence of sunlight and shadows can be noted most clearly in her creation of a compound word combining the two, which appears in two poems, 'Buns for tea'[11] ("When I buy a bun/ I buy a shadowed world,/Lit by sunlight,/ Dark with shadowed sunlight", and "When I buy a bun/ I buy a world, sun-shadowed") and 'Dark harmony'[12] ("rain-soaked tan to set sun-shadows in"). 'Dark harmony' attempts to wistfully capture the moment of winter at which is feels impossible to imagine the lightness and warmth of summer; winter seems sunk into the poem, yet in being wistful, the poem retains the memory of previous warmth: "sun-shadows" might be a lament for the way that sunlight is itself in a shadowed position. The doubleness of the presence of memory of sun, and its simultaneous integrity to the formation of shadows in its absence, haunts the compound word, and the poem. This regretful lament is evident throughout, particularly in lines such as "Rob meadows of their splendour till the gold/ Of sunlight falls no more on green outrolled". Here, the enjambment of "Of sunlight" to and the word order delaying the meaning that sunlight "falls no more" rather than "no more falls" creates the sense in syntax that, although sunlight is gone, it still lingers: Richardson resists letting go of sunlight, instead retaining it with the image of a "shadow", paradoxically using something which is by definition the absence of sunlight to retain the idea of it. This can be read in the poem 'Sussex',[13] which uses the metaphor of shadows and light throughout, and begins as an ode to Sussex elm trees: the dearest "Shadows that stand and grow beside each tree – " are those of the Sussex elms, "Beneath whose shade one say I saw my soul/ That had been clear for all to see save me." That the speaker's soul is visible not by light but beneath shade is significant: revelation comes not in clarified conclusion, but in indistinctness. The ending of the short poem makes a theological turn:

> While even its shadow-shape drawn by the sun
> Upon the further earth, tells day by day
> How narrowly, yet surely, through the folds
> Of unlit darkness strives its being up
> To meet the everlasting light of heaven.

Richardson found herself in Sussex in 1907, long before the publication of this poem in 1925, living with a Quaker family while recovering from stress and from the miscarriage of her child with H.G. Wells.[14] Read with the importance of Sussex as a place for Richardson, the poem holds a greater significance. Quakerism privileges 'being' over 'knowing', and it is perhaps the case that 'sensing' is a fitting middle

[11] Richardson, Dorothy. 'Buns for Tea.' *Poetry*, 24 (June 1924), p.144.
[12] Richardson, Dorothy. 'Dark Harmony.' *Spectator*, 164 (18 Dec. 1942), p. 573.
[13] Richardson, Dorothy. "Three Poems: Sussex - Discovery - Barbara." Poetry, 27 (Nov. 1925), p. 68.
[14] Tucker, Eva. 'Dorothy Richardson and the Quakers', *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies* No.1 (2008) p. 145-152. https://www.dorothyrichardson.org/journal/issue1/Tucker.pdf

ground, suggestive both of the bodily experience of 'being' and on its way to the understanding of 'knowing', but with a less destructive clarity. That the "everlasting light of heaven" is reached "through the folds/ Of unlit darkness" frames the light of heaven as a kind of 'lit darkness.' Inner light is a key element of Quaker theology, particularly Liberal Quakerism which during the period of Richardson's engagement with Quakerism sought to combine traditional Quaker spirituality with modern thought. Annika Lindskog references the centrality of 'light' to liberal Quakerism: "The faculty which allows one and all to come into direct contact with God is referred to by modern Quakers as the 'Inner Light', which in turn is described by Richardson as 'an immediate pathway to reality within the man himself.'"[15] The darkness in 'Sussex' must be navigated through its own "folds", and this suggests an inner, almost intimate journey to the "everlasting light." In her introduction to her history of the Society of Friends, *Quakers Past and Present*, she wrote that "the artist lives to a greater or lesser degree in perpetual illumination…but he remains within the universe constructed for him by his senses…the great mystics…have consciously bent all their energies to breaking through the veil of sense, to making a journey to the heart of reality…a setting forth to seek something already found."[16] It is interesting to note her uses of ellipses, even in historical prose writings such as here as well as throughout Pilgrimage; this formal inscription of absence into her prose is evidently a wider literary project. By her references to "sense", the "senses" and "the veil of sense" Richardson demonstrates that for her, sense is both understanding and vagueness, or an indistinct illumination.

Megan Quigley, in *Modernist Fiction and Vagueness*, invokes distinctions between the ways in which modernist writers approach and use 'vagueness', from Woolf and Joyce to Eliot and Pound.[17] Quigley finds from a google Ngram viewer that the use of the word "Vague" hit an "all-time high in the early 1920s."[18] Richardson deserves a place in this critical discussion of vagueness in modernist writing, not only because of her contemporariness to this period and often-overlooked importance to the supposed principles of 'modernist' writing, but for the evidence in her work of an engagement with "vagueness" as an epistemological, theological, and literary mode – and how these three modes might be in tension with one another. Ironically, considering that the famous (and arguably unsuitable in the eyes of both critics' and Richardson herself) term 'stream of conscious' derives from psychologist William James, Richardson certainly resists the kind of style he suggests: he calls for "no twilight or mustiness in the plot, with great vigor and decisiveness in the action, and absolute straightness in style."[19] Instead, the epistemological vagueness she subscribes to in her novels is that closer to Woolf's: both invoke a vagueness of the style

[15] Lindskog, Annika J. 'Dorothy Richardson and the Poetics of Silence', *Pilgrimages, a journal of Dorothy Richardson studies* 5 (2012), pp. 7–34.
[16] Richardson, Dorothy M. *The Quakers, Past and Present / by Dorothy M. Richardson.* (New York (State): Dodge Publishing Company, 1914).
[17] Quigley, Megan. *Modernist Fiction and Vagueness : Philosophy, Form, and Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
[18] Quigley, Megan. *Modernist Fiction and Vagueness : Philosophy, Form, and Language*, p. 7.
[19] James, William. quoted in Quigley, Megan. *Modernist Fiction and Vagueness : Philosophy, Form, and Language,* pp. 5-6.

Bertrand Russell promoted in his paper entitled "Vagueness" delivered at Oriel College, Oxford, in 1923. He consciously spoke in vague language, as "all language is vague", and explained that "vagueness is very much more important in the theory of knowledge than you would judge it be from the writings of most people."[20] Although Richardson was writing vagueness into and through her work long before Russel delivered this paper, her participation in a collective concern with how vagueness might be formally and narratively insightful is significant. Indeed, she even preceded and anticipated this concern. Perhaps, instead of 'stream of consciousness' to describe a state of narrative flow, we might be better to take the etymological home of "vagueness", from the French 'vague' meaning wave: Richardson works with overlapping waves of consciousness which emerge, fade, and fall at organic intervals.

Miriam frequently seems paradoxically conscious of her unconsciousness. Woolf said of Miriam's character, "All these things are cast away and there is left, deluded, unsheltered, unbegun and unfinished, the consciousness of Miriam Henderson, the small sensitive lump of matter, half-transparent and half-opaque…the source beneath the surface, the very oyster within the shell."[21] Woolf wrote this in a review of *The Tunnel*, herself borrowing from a passage in which Miriam herself comments that she exists "somehow between two worlds, neither quite sheltered, nor quite free." In 1920, Richardson reviewed her friend, Barbara Low's *Psycho-Analysis: A Brief Account of the Freudian Theory*,[22] evidently therefore deeply involved in contemporary theories of consciousness, pre-consciousness, and unconsciousness. Take the passage in *Pointed Roofs*, where Miriam remains in bed while her roommates have begun to get up:

> "Sounds came to her with perfect distinctness; the sounds downstairs and a low-voiced conversation across the landing, little faint marks that human beings were making on the great wide stillness, the stillness that brooded along her white ceiling and all round her and right out through the world; the faint scent of her soap-tablet reached her from the distant washstand." (Pointed Roofs: 1916, 158.)

There it is again – the landing, that space of liminality which always seems to be the setting for a scene in which Miriam is half-asleep, halfway to a decision, or uncertain. The passage is initially asking a question uncertainly, calling to consideration what a "perfect distinctness" might mean – what degree of distinction might be perfect, and for whom. Yet from the qualifiers Miriam suggests, "the sounds downstairs and a low-voiced conversation across the landing", she seems certain that a "perfect distinctness" is one which is held a little at a distance, not exacting or clear. It might also be called a "perfect indistinctness", perhaps. Here, as in the lines quoted above from 'Waiting', sounds seem without origin: they "come to her" or are "reaching" her. In this passage, scent, too, has this quality of its own agency in her sense of it:

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[20] Russell, Bertrand. quoted in Quigley, Megan. *Modernist Fiction and Vagueness : Philosophy, Form, and Language,* p.3.
[21] Woolf, Virginia. Quoted in Zarevich, Emily. 'Dorothy Richardson and the Stream of Consciousness'. JSTOR Daily Arts and Culture (2024).
[22] Richardson, Dorothy. "Review of *Psycho-Analysis: A Brief Account of the Freudian Theory* by Barbara Low." *Dental Record* 40 (August 2): 522–523.

"the faint scent of her soap-tablet reached her from the distant washstand." The passage is full of sonic echoes, giving it a sense of spacial containment itself. Take the repetition of "faint" to refer both to scent and the "little faint marks" of human beings beginning their day, along with the chime of "distant" with "distinctness": these lexical and phonological echoes are both reminiscent of each other, yet also differentiating themselves. James Longenbach wrote in *Resistance to Poetry*, "to exist in time is necessarily to exist in repetition. And to exist successfully in repetition is to recognize that the past repeats itself always with a difference."[23] Take the repetition of "shadow" in poems like 'Sussex' and 'Dark harmony already mentioned, for example. She also, even when withholding exact lexical repetition, repeats ideas and senses. Take, for instance, the multiple returns to either 'forgetting' or 'remembering' in the poem 'Message'[24]. The question she begins asking in the poem modulates from "Did you remember" to "Will you forget", reframing the question of memory from the past to the future, in anticipation of forgetting, and this development is itself reminiscent of an opening passage in *The Tunnel* (1919, 4): "Coming events cast *light*. It is like dropping everything and walking backwards to something you know is there." The questions "Did you remember" and "Will you forget" have a certain stagnancy, too, suggestive of the vagueness of "something", and neither question is answered by the poem. The difference of which Longenbach theorizes is here one which is a slight displacement of what came before: a memory or phrase repeated at slight disjunction is a second, muddying sense. Longenbach continues by writing that "Thematically, repetition allows memory to become a kind of forgetting, a release from the self." On repetition, Giles Deleuze wrote that "We must distinguish between these discrete elements, these repeated objects, and a secret subject, the real subject of repetition, which repeats itself through them ... We must find the Self of repetition, the singularity within that which repeats. For there is no repetition without a repeater, nothing repeated without a repetitious soul." Although this at first appears antithetical to Longenbach, Deleuze's phrasing itself seems a little uncertain of its own suggestion of two sorts of repetition, the surface and the self. While on one level he distinguishes within repetition a repeated object and repeating self, the terms he uses to describe this 'repeating self' become tangled ('discrete element', 'secret subject', 'real subject', 'itself', 'self of repetition', 'singularity within', 'repeated', 'repetitious soul'.) The various iterations of the very word "repetition" also speak to this ("repeated", "repetition", "repeats", "repeater", "repeated", "repetitious".) It is clear that for Deleuze, repetition itself is not so stable an occurrence. How then, could the repeating self be stable, or discrete and constant? Deleuze subtly and syntactically leads us to regard repetition itself simply the very condition under which the instability of self becomes legible, recalling Woolf's repetitious use of the negative "un-" prefix to describe Miriam's consciousness: "unsheltered", "unbegun" and "unfinished."

[23] Longenbach, James. "The Resistance to Poetry." *The Resistance to Poetry*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), p. 65.
[24] Richardson, Dorothy. "Message." *Outlook*, 59 (8 Jan. 1927), p. 28.

By charting the repetition of a single memory of Miriam's, one can understand how remembering can also be a kind of forgetting, and how forgetting can itself be productive, and a kind of recovery of a 'second sense' of an experience rather than its immediate primary sense. A key setting which continues to return in her narrative is that of her walk through a garden when very young. In *Backwater* (1916), "she tried to remember when the strange independent joy had begun, and thought she could trace it back to a morning in the garden at Babington, the first thing she could remember, when she had found herself toddling alone along the garden path between beds of flowers almost on a level with her head and blazing in the sunlight." In *Honeycomb (*1917*)*, the repetitions of elements of the earlier description of the memory demonstrate how certain images or sensations rearrange themselves in the memory. Rather than the sunlight "blazing" and the flowers "almost" at her head's level, she senses that "the blaze of the childhood's garden was round her again…she could almost hear the humming of the bees." Later still, in *Deadlock*, (1921), Miriam remembers an element of the memory not mentioned in the initial description of it, sensing "no movement but the hovering of bees." In *Deadlock*, the memory is "Far away in the distance, coming always nearer." Eva Tucker writes of Richardson's quaker faith, "For her, the essence of the pilgrimage was that it never ended, but that there are moments when seeker and sought are one, the kind of moments that made her feel she was 'the enchanted guest of spring and summer'",[25] and this seems fitting to apply to Richardson's position of this memory as in a perpetual state of approach.

Richardson's repeated positioning of perception in a threshold state is evident in 'Barbara' [26] too, where the figure of "you" is simultaneously close yet out of reach:

> Light as a bird blown thither on the wind,
> Soft as a petalled blossom in its prime
> Close as the touch of a swift breath in-caught.
>
> Now, as I fare until forgetfulness
> Brings to full being all you are in me

The "swift breath in-caught" describes a breath both fleeting yet retained, or "caught". The prefix of "in" for "in-caught" is reminiscent of a Gerard Manley Hopkins-style neologism typically difficult to define, making the internal and external aspects of breath meet in a single compound word. Evidently, not only does Richardson privilege a knowledge held at arm's length, but she also insists on it being in motion, on its way, and she waits for it. As with the interplay of light and shadow across her poems and the novels of *Pilgrimage*, her 'threshold perception', or 'borrowed light' approach can be seen in her conceptualisation

[25] Tucker, Eva. 'Dorothy Richardson and the Quakers', p. 149.
[26] "Barbara." *The Sphere*, 95 (13 Oct. 1923), p. 46.

of time, memory, sound, and voice, suggesting not a search for clarity but a sustained attention to the conditions under which experience becomes only partially legible. Through her various "sun-shadowed" worlds, Richardson gestures toward a form of apprehension that is neither direct knowledge nor total uncertainty, but sensing second – an intuition emerging from indistinctness. Analysis of this doubleness in her novels and poems encourages in a reader another kind of second sense: a hermeneutic one which not only accepts but actively searches for the vagueness and space within doubleness.

Motto: There's a certain Slant of light

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