

Stream and Destination: Husserl, Subjectivity, and Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*

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ABOUT fifty years ago, Shiv Kumar and Shirley Rose engaged in an arcane and seemingly inconsequential debate over whether Dorothy Richardson's flowing narrative style could be described in terms of Henri Bergson's notion of flux—"life evol[ing] before our eyes as a continuous creation of unforeseeable form" (Bergson, *Creative* 30).¹ Examining the mental processes of Richardson's protagonist Miriam Henderson, Kumar was struck by "the indeterminate and primordial flow" of her "stream of sensory impressions" (495). He argued in 1959 that *Pilgrimage* was a "faithful rendering in a fluid medium of the Bergsonian concept of becoming" (499). A decade later, Rose countered that "whereas Bergson asserts the fluidity and alteration of apprehensible reality, Dorothy Richardson argues for its stability and changelessness" (371), citing Richardson's own rejection of the stream-of-consciousness metaphor (she called it "a muddle-headed phrase" [qtd. in Rose 370], one "isolated by its perfect imbecility" [367]), as well as Richardson's declaration that while life did seem to exhibit "a sort of streamline," consciousness itself "sits stiller than a tree" (368).² I would argue that this exchange rests on a false opposition. Kumar and Rose imply that ever-changing movement and stable self-knowing are mutually exclusive, while Richardson's massive project (*Pilgrimage* consists of twelve volumes published between 1915 and 1938, as well as a thirteenth, unfinished volume that appeared posthumously in 1967) elaborates how they are not. But before proposing an alternate reading, perhaps it is necessary to address a more basic question: Why should such an obscure point matter?

As Martha Nussbaum points out, the formal characteristics of texts are bound up with their authors' conceptions of "how human beings should live" (144); literature cannot help but be philosophical. And Richardson's work expressly situates itself in reference to multiple philosophical influences—including, as Deborah Parsons Longworth has demonstrated, William Stanley Jevons's logical empiricism, Herbert Spencer's evolutionism, John McTaggart's idealism, and Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalism. Thus, it is hardly surprising that critics tend to read *Pilgrimage* through the lens of philosophy. Jean Radford has proposed that Richardson's investigation of subjectivity and signification make her a precursor to Kristeva, Irigaray and Cixous (*Dorothy* 109-15), and more recently has invoked Edmund Husserl's description of the intentionality of consciousness to argue that *Pilgrimage's* analysis of subjectivity is not egoic, but rather "an extended exercise in the impersonal method" ("Impersonality" 88). Longworth contends that Miriam's Emerson-inspired "intuitive-empirical vision of reality" demonstrates a lived resolution of the "Idealist/New Realist deadlock" that gripped Britain as Bertrand Russell's New Realism challenged and gradually replaced John McTaggart's idealist metaphysics. She suggests that William James's radical empiricism, eradicating the distinction between mind and matter by attending strictly to experience, provides the best philosophical lens through which to understand Richardson's work. What all these claims have in common is the assumption that *Pilgrimage*, no less than any philosophical text, makes an argument about the nature of reality.

I agree that *Pilgrimage* can and should be approached in this light, yet it seems to me that none of the above readings account for the richness of Miriam's both/and consciousness. Rose's focus on "stability and changelessness" (371) minimizes the flowing features of Richardson's text. Kumar's insistence on flux disregards the stable witnessing presence at the heart of the work. Radford's use of Husserl's intentionality to stress that Miriam's "consciousness is always consciousness of something" ("Impersonality" 90) similarly overlooks Miriam's awareness of pure presence apart from the contents of her consciousness. And though radical empiricism does account for much of what occurs in *Pilgrimage*, Longworth's appeal to James sits uneasily with her assertion that Miriam had experiences like Emerson's "intuitive sense of an ultimate and original inner self" (see the section of the essay titled "Emerson; and the comet"), given that James also viewed any stable self as strictly illusory. Instead, I would argue that

the workings of Miriam's mind best correspond not to Husserl's notion of intentionality but rather to his description of consciousness. Though there is no evidence that Richardson studied Husserl,³ still she was immersed in her era's debate about immanent perception, and Husserl's peculiar description of immanent awareness as involving both being and flow most fully accounts for the ambiguous nature of her *Pilgrimage*.

Modernism and immanence

Immanence is derived from the Latin verb "manere," to stay. In its broad sense, it means to stay within; it refers to the condition of existing inside a given sphere. Together with its antonym, transcendence, it figures in theological debates about whether divine presence dwells within the world or outside it, as well as in philosophical debates about whether consciousness is part of the material world, or exists independent of it.⁴ The idea that we can never truly know the thing-in-itself stems from the belief that transcendent consciousness is exiled in a realm apart from matter; the widely accepted death of the subject, which has wreaked such havoc with the whole notion of plot (not to mention our ability to tell and believe stories about our lives beyond books), is a consequence of the relatively recent conclusion that consciousness can only grasp itself after the fact, as a transcendent object rather than an immanent phenomenon.

Richardson's contemporaries certainly thought about immanence; however, far from being skeptical about whether consciousness could achieve direct, unmediated contact with its contents, many in Richardson's day worried about whether the rationally determined, ordered world might be swept away in a tide of immanent sense-data. Pater's remarks about the "unstable, flickering, inconsistent" (151) impressions that provide all we know about the world are emblematic. One can hear echoes of the same fascination and alarm in Woolf's "Modern Fiction," when she speaks of the "myriad impressions" that bombard the mind like "an incessant shower of innumerable atoms" (631). Empirical psychology of the late 1800s and early 1900s did much to ignite both interest in and fear of immanent states, as Judith Ryan has pointed out. Thinkers like Ernst Mach and Franz Brentano (one of Husserl's teachers) stressed the primacy of immediate sense perception and called into question anything "beyond" what appeared within consciousness. With their insistence that all we can really be sure of are our ever-changing sense-perceptions, the

empiricists effectively “reduced the self to a mere bundle of associations, changing from moment to moment and devoid of any substantial, constant core” (Ryan 13).

William James, himself an empirical psychologist, moved to soothe fears about a radically unstable self by stressing the continuity of thought. While many of his peers claimed that impressions were registered in a series of atomistic moments, James, in *Principles of Psychology*, countered with his own now famous observation: “Consciousness . . . does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. . . . It is nothing jointed; it flows. A ‘river’ or a ‘stream’ are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. *In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life*” (239). A feature of this connectivity was that thought could pass memories along to subsequent thoughts; each new thought could “inheri[t] his title” (339) of selfhood, creating the illusion of an enduring self without its actual existence. James did not believe in stable identity any more than did other empirical psychologists, but he held, as Ryan puts it, that the “convenient, practical label” of selfhood was good enough, given that it “accord[ed] with a strongly felt inner conviction” (14).

Working in France, the influential Bergson popularized a similar model of immanent consciousness, which he termed duration.⁵ “Considered in themselves, the deep-seated conscious states have no relation to quantity, they are pure quality; they intermingle in such a way that we cannot tell whether they are one or several, nor even examine them from this point of view without at once altering their nature” (*Time* 137). Bergson’s intermingling states were heterogeneous and ever-changing, but like James he believed that the felt experience of connectedness was a key feature of immanent perception, and was sufficient to preserve a workable sense of identity.⁶ Immanent consciousness did not have to step apart from experience in order to maintain an awareness of its past states: “It is enough that, in recalling these states, it . . . forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole” (100). He argued that duration was humanity’s natural state, and that most people, trapped in an illusory, purely conceptual realm of space, were pale copies of what they could be: “The greater part of the time we live outside ourselves, hardly perceiving anything of ourselves but our own ghost, a colourless shadow which pure duration projects into homogeneous space” (231). He urged readers to “get back into pure duration” (232).

Psychologists and philosophers were not the only thinkers exploring the notion of consciousness interfused with the material world, rather than standing apart from it. Reflecting on the implications of Planck's 1899 work on radiation, Einstein's "Special Theory of Relativity," published in 1905, and Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle, published in 1927, James Jeans remarked that "the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine" (137). In 1910, anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's *How Natives Think* asserted that the "primitive mind" enjoyed a non-dualistic way of experiencing the world that was highly unlike the western way: "Our perception is directed towards the apprehension of an objective reality, and this reality alone. . . . Their perception is oriented in another fashion, and in it that which we call objective reality is united and mingled with, and often regulated by, mystic, imperceptible elements which we nowadays characterize as subjective" (59).⁷

The surge of interest in various kinds of religion around the turn of the century was likewise characterized by a preoccupation with immanence—in this case, divinity implicated in matter. Theosophy, Helena Blavatsky's flamboyant reinterpretation of pre-Vedic Brahmanism and Buddhism, saw all phenomena first and foremost as productions of subjective consciousness. In the conclusion of *Isis Unveiled* she wrote, "It needs only the right perception of things objective to finally discover that the only world of reality is the subjective" (258).⁸ More direct sources of information about Eastern religion could also be found, as Britain's colonial project promoted the dissemination of Indian philosophy. In an 1896 talk in London, Vivekananda told his audience, "The Vedantist finds that He who, he thought, was standing outside is he himself and is in reality within" (228). The revival of interest in Western mysticism was also characterized by the notion of an indwelling God. Suzanne Raitt notes that Quakers, with their belief in inner light, saw a large increase in numbers during the first dozen years of the century (121), and she observes a "general trend of research on the history and practice of [western] mysticism" (120). One such researcher was Evelyn Underhill, whose *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness* carefully analyzes "the extreme theory of immanence, which plays so large a part in modern theology" (99), and in her second chapter, Underhill links immanence to Bergsonian flux. The Catholic Church, for its part, was quick to spot and condemn the public's infatuation with immanence. As

early as 1907 Pope Pius X issued an encyclical letter, "Pascendi Dominici Gregis," in which he denounced the pernicious effects of the belief in "vital immanence" (155). By calling into question "external signs," the notion of immanence undermined the authority of sacred tenets and texts, not to mention the authority of church officials representing fixed eternal truths. The encyclical insisted that religious belief could not be based on "a kind of intuition of the heart which puts man in immediate contact with the reality of God" (168). From philosophy and science to every variety of religion, thinkers were exploring the implications of immanent perception.

No less than any other group, Britain's literati were preoccupied with the notion of immanence. Like the Pope, however, many allied themselves not with the the flowing, subjective qualities associated with immanence but rather with transcendence. In what is typically understood as a revolt against romanticism, they called for external, universal literary standards rather than ones based on subjective feeling; they endorsed narratives that focused on external events rather than internal, subjective states; they valued stable, hard-edged forms over those characterized by permeability and flow; and they maintained that rather than tout humanity's oneness with the infinite, art should recognize its very limited place in the scheme of things. Irving Babbitt, for example, in 1910 identified James and Bergson with a rejection of the scientific attitude, and claimed that Bergson was perpetuating an expansive, spontaneous romanticism that began with Rousseau (*New* 212). Two years later, after again mentioning James and Bergson by name, he wrote, "Too many of our modern philosophers . . . are always getting dizzy from constantly going round and round . . . they think there is nothing stable or permanent, but only flux and motion" (*Masters* xxviii-ix). T. S. Eliot, a student of Babbitt's at Harvard, proposes in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" that, to achieve a transcendent perspective, writers steep themselves in the established literary tradition, a process involving "a continual extinction of the personality" (6-7).⁹ "Hamlet and His Problems," published in the same year as "Tradition," suggests that successful literary work must properly externalize its material, arguing that Shakespeare's play fails because "*Hamlet*, like the sonnets, is full of some stuff that the writer could not drag to light, contemplate, or manipulate into art" (124).

Originally in sympathy with immanent values, Hulme and Pound also came to oppose them. Michael Levenson has traced Hulme's progression

from an early infatuation with Bergson to a classicist desire to temper individualism with “dignity, restraint and modesty” (100), and finally to “an extreme anti-individualist perspective” that considered even classicism overly “bound to a humanist and vitalist perspective” (101). For Hulme, poetry should have “nothing to do with infinity, with mystery, or with emotions” (133), but instead prove that beauty could be found in “small, dry things” (131). Pound began with early Imagism’s faith in subjective perception and individual genius, but his trajectory was influenced by Ford Maddox Ford’s literary impressionism, which he valued for its near-scientific fidelity to the concrete, immediately given world. “Mr. Hueffer [i.e. Ford] believes in an exact rendering of things,” wrote Pound in “Status Rerum,” “He is objective” (Pound’s antipathy toward all things subjective, organic, and flowing increased as he aged. His 1914 essay on “The New Sculpture” praises hard-edged, abstract forms, and his 1916 memoir of Gaudier-Brzeska, revealing the tenets of his Vorticist movement, compares Vorticist poetry to analytic geometry, as both aim to capture “the universal, existing in perfection, in freedom from space and time” (91). Vorticists themselves are described, not as individualistic rebels, but as having an appreciation for tradition and authority (90).

Perhaps the most vehement critique of immanence was Wyndham Lewis’s *Time and Western Man*, which claimed that the “time-cult” (135) of immanent duration had become so pronounced that there was no way for a thinking person not to define a position in relation to it.¹⁰ To counter Bergson’s “*interpenetrating world of direct sensation*” (435), Lewis calls for a “spatial philosophy” that reads more like an aesthetic program than a philosophical system:

As much as he [Bergson] enjoys the sight of things “penetrating” and “merging,” do we enjoy the opposite picture of them standing apart—the wind blowing between them, and the air circulating freely in and out of them: as much as he enjoys the “indistinct,” the “qualitative,” the misty, sensational and ecstatic, very much more do we value the distinct, the geometric, the universal, non-qualified—the clear and the light, the unsensational. (443)

Like Hulme, Lewis criticized “‘religious’ consciousness” that “attacks the distinctiveness of that other, supreme Object, God, and soon fuses it with the rest—the tables, the chairs, the garden-hose, the bath-salts, looking-

glass and chimney-pots” (405). He warned readers who felt tempted by “pantheistic immanent oneness” that they stood to lose “not only the clearness of outline, the static beauty, of the things you commonly apprehend,” but also “the clearness of outline of your own individuality which apprehends them” (175).

None of these cautionary classicist pronouncements appear to have disturbed Dorothy Richardson, whose enduring affinity for immanence is evident in her love of flowing film and her interest in the Quaker religion.¹¹ The 1938 Foreword to *Pilgrimage* is an unapologetic description of aesthetic standards and practices grounded in immanence. She acknowledges an empirical, decidedly non-abstract realm by beginning with a reference to Balzac, the “father of realism,” but, after this nod to a literary predecessor, explains she has had to set aside the attempt to conform to external standards, specifically the standards of realism practiced by writers like Arnold Bennett (Foreword 9).¹² Rejecting Bennett’s attention to externals, she commits her own work to an acutely subjective focus, bound up with the process of “discovering the truth about [her] own thoughts and beliefs” (10).¹³ She sees herself sharing her path with Proust and sees the “pathfinder” as Henry James, who consistently refused to take his readers “before the drama begins, upon a tour amongst the properties,” or to supply “descriptive introductions of the players” (11).

The Foreword also declares Richardson’s preference for prose that is permeable, for storylines that are amorphous, and for authors who dare to invoke the infinite. Defending her diffuse style, she explains that while writing, she found it impossible to mentally focus on a single face without “a hundred faces” (10) being revealed alongside it, and thus considered her work to have failed from “the moment it was entrapped within the close mesh of direct statement.”¹⁴ Clarifying that her narrative will prize flow and process at the expense of structure and finished product, she describes the writing of *Pilgrimage* as a “searching, and sometimes . . . joyous” adventure, noting that this process of discovery could not begin until she had set aside “a considerable mass of manuscript” spoiled by her attempt to respond in a controlled way to the “contemporary pattern” (9-10).¹⁵ (Her essay “Novels” expresses similar criticism of fiction written to a pattern. There, Richardson deplores the compulsion to “supply a story complete with beginning, middle, climax, and curtain” because such a template ignores “the always unique modifications of contingency” [434]).¹⁶ Finally, Richardson ignores the classicist call to keep the divine

apart from items like bath-salts and chimney-pots. Her Foreword's sole criticism of Henry James is that in his narrative, "no plant grows and no mystery pours in from the unheeded stars" (11). The comment highlights Richardson's own determination to acknowledge the inexplicable, everyday marvels that attend earthly life.

Given Richardson's adherence to values that some of her most influential peers were loudly rejecting, there is small wonder that her aesthetic choices were misunderstood. Reviewers not only attacked her style, but insinuated that it was the result of an abnormal, immature, or too unrestrainedly feminine personality. Said one, "minds which observe and record in her close, literal fashion are not normal minds" ("Novels" 473). Another placed her among those "artistic rebels who try to free their form from all restraint and try to dodge all responsibility" ("Fiction" 209). A third did see Richardson as part of a wider movement including Proust and Joyce (Scott-James 202), but claimed that her "unique claim to distinction" lay in a feminine style "like a river . . . moving on . . . towards no conceivable goal" (201).

Even Mansfield and Woolf, subjectively-focused women writers who might be expected to defend her, were critical of Richardson's methods. This perhaps reflects the fact that, as literary impressionists, they were governed by a very different aesthetic than the one Richardson chose.¹⁷ Despite its subjective focus, impressionism undermines identity by striving to represent discrete moments of subjective experience rather than unbroken flow, and by stressing the multiplicity of phenomena, rather than their unity.¹⁸ In this, as Ann Banfield has argued, it is more consistent with the tenets of Russell's New Realism than with flowing models of immanence like the one set forth by Bergson.¹⁹ Small wonder, then, that both Mansfield and Woolf expressed reservations about Richardson's work. In a review of *The Tunnel* published in 1930, Mansfield decried Richardson's unwillingness to select and prioritize the elements of her narrative, charging that instead she had merely reproduced wholesale the contents of her memory. "Until these [memories] are judged and given each its appointed place in the whole scheme," she said, "they have no meaning in the world of art." Mansfield went on to link Richardson's alleged lack of craft to egotism: "One cannot imagine her appealing to the reader or planning out her novel; her concern is primarily, and perhaps ultimately, with herself." Woolf, who agreed with Russell's stress on impersonality and his insistence that "the world was not made for us" (qtd. in Banfield, *Phantom*

224), seconded the charge that Richardson's work was too personal and self-involved. She noted in her diary that "the damned egotistical self" was ruining both Richardson and Joyce (qtd. in Fromm 154). No less than male critics, Richardson's female contemporaries misunderstood her project. She strove neither for classicism nor impressionism, but rather an investigation of immanent awareness with uncanny parallels to Husserl's description of immanent states.

Pilgrimage's Husserlian immanence

Husserl's phenomenological project begins from "this everyday life," the one that we all engage in routinely, to "see[k] verifications of a new kind" (*Cartesian* 12). He asserts that the quest for a solid foundation for "the whole storied edifice of universal knowledge" (14) must begin with the phenomenological reduction, by which "the experienced world [is] deprived of its naïve acceptance" (18). He does not discount the reality of the external world. He simply points out that all that we can legitimately speak of are the various kinds of phenomena that arise within our field of awareness.

Like Husserl, Richardson focuses her attention on the mundane—Miriam's work as a teacher, a dental assistant, a translator and essayist; her interactions with family members, fellow boarders, lovers, and a Quaker family with whom she lodges. Two trips to Switzerland offer the only real interruption of Miriam's daily concerns, and even these are uneventful. Yet, far from finding her life boring, Miriam is impatient with people who want to speak to her "not about the little real everyday things that give you an idea of anything, but only the startling things that are not important" (I: 265). She criticizes those preoccupied with "desert islands and the other side of the moon, as if they were real and wonderful and life was not" (III: 19). Furthermore, just as Husserl held that all we can really know is what occurs in our field of awareness, Richardson subjects her narrative to a radical constraint: she will only write about what arises within Miriam's consciousness. As May Sinclair describes this endeavor in her 1918 review of *Pilgrimage's* first three volumes, "she must not know or divine anything that Miriam does not know or divine; she must not see anything that Miriam does not see. She has taken Miriam's nature upon her" ("Novels" 443).²⁰

Richardson's steely determination not to stray from the confines of Miriam's mind posed a unique artistic challenge, one that specifically prohibited the kind of cutting and shaping that her critics recommended. As George Thomson notes in his *Reader's Guide*, the narrator cannot "orchestrate neat bridges between the varied sites of her past and present experience," nor "lay out background as traditional narrative does" (9). Conventional foreshadowing is excluded, so that, for example, when Miriam first encounters Dr. Densely, a future suitor, there is no cue that he will play a significant role in subsequent books (II: 264-65). When her consciousness screens itself from too-painful content, the reader is excluded from knowledge as well. The untimely death of Miriam's beloved sister Eve is revealed only as an aside, in the course of Miriam's reminiscences about a servant with the same name (III: 485); her guilt and grief over the death of her mother inhabit her enigmatic reaction to a particular shop sign, and are only made explicit when a much older Miriam reports that the pain of the suicide has, for no apparent reason, finally begun to abate (IV: 155). Richardson acknowledged that the limited point of view created difficulty both for her and for readers, but nevertheless saw it as central to her project: "Within the text of my book, which is not a novel . . . the handing out of direct information is . . . excluded. This, in one direction, is a severe handicap, but also the necessary price of what I have tried to do" (qtd. in Thomson 9).

The conscious craft involved in such a project is evident in, for example, the careful way that Richardson shows Miriam's consciousness acquiring complexity as she ages. In *Pointed Roofs*, a seventeen-year-old Miriam, experiencing many things for the first time, is relatively unreflective. Thus, sentences are short and concrete, the punctuation uncomplicated: "The sun had set. Miriam had found a little thin volume of German poetry in her pocket. She sat fumbling the leaves. She felt the touch of her limp straightening hair upon her forehead. It did not matter. Twilight would soon come, and bed-time" (I: 142). However, as time passes and Miriam grows more reflective, her sentences lengthen and their syntax becomes more involved, mapping a consciousness that occupies multiple simultaneous positions. For example, learning that her suitor Michael Shatov has had previous lovers, Miriam registers a complex reaction:

Tears sprang to her eyes, blotting him out, and with them she sprang forth into a pathless darkness, conscious far away behind her, soon to be obliterated on the unknown shores open-

ing ahead, but there gladly in hand, of a debt, signed and to be honoured even against her will, by life, surprised once more at this darkest moment, smiling at her secretly, behind all she could gather of opposing reason and clamorous protests of unworthiness. (III: 212)

As Miriam stands before Shatov, weeping, another part of her springs forward into the “pathless darkness” of her future. In that pathless future, yet a third part is aware of a much earlier moment when life offered a contract made in her favor. In just the first half of the sentence, the reader is asked to visualize Miriam as simultaneously occupying positions in the past, present and future. As if that were not enough, the last half of the sentence describes Miriam’s triple perspective on the present. In this “darkest moment” she not only sees Shatov, but looks through him to life itself “smiling at her secretly,” even as she views the twin obstacles of her own resistance to happiness. The rational insistence that this is no time to be happy joins forces with the irrational feeling that she is undeserving; together they create a psychological barrier through which her true, happy life must peep in order to deliver its secret smile. This sentence, which might seem so unnecessarily convoluted at first reading, in fact offers a precise and economical account of the complex capacities of a maturing consciousness.

Later volumes represent a consciousness that can not only assume multiple positions with respect to its own experience, but also imaginatively occupy the experience of others. In *Dawn’s Left Hand*, as Miriam waits in Oberland at midnight for the delayed train to Paris, she finds herself inspected by a group of travelers opposite. Her discomfort reminds her of a similarly awkward moment in the lunchroom with her co-workers and employer in the dental office:

Contemplating [the travelers] without looking at them and yet unable to escape the spectacle without either closing her eyes or gazing at the floor or ceiling, it seemed to be in the very person of Mr. Orly, seated at the lunch-table in the bare-walled basement room at Wimpole Street where the confronted lunchers were, beyond the dishes on the table and the unvarying lights and shadows made by the electric light, the only external refuge for unpreoccupied eyes, that she gazed upwards and mentally emitted his humorously despairing sigh, glancing at the same

time sideways-down at herself seated at his right hand and just growing aware of the meaning, for him and from his point of view, of one of his kindly sarcasms, and yet obstinately set against admitting any justification for it, desperately refusing to show any sign of awareness and choosing rather to appear idiotic, and justify his sigh, than to give him the satisfaction of seeing her look "rather sick." (IV: 132)

Here Miriam's consciousness not only maintains compassionate contact with her former self's point of view (its dawning awareness of a slight and its futile determination to avoid looking "idiotic") but also expands to occupy the perspective of the senior partner in the practice, experiencing firsthand his "humourously despairing" attitude toward her. As Mr. Orly, she confronts the lunchers on the opposite side of the table, takes in details of the room, and looks "sideways-down" at her own body. This enlarged awareness creates such a sense of kinship with the dentist that Miriam literally takes on his being, looking up at the train station ceiling with one of his characteristic mannerisms and copying his good-natured sigh. And the insight continues to expand. She recalls having earlier complained of Mr. Orly, "One *moment* of my consciousness is wider and deeper than his has been in the whole of his life." Now, thanks to the empathy gained from her spontaneous reflection, Miriam realizes that she has no reason to continue feeling superior. "It was not true that Mr. Orly's consciousness was less deep and wide than hers but simply that . . . he was unconscious of his consciousness. Had been trained away from it" (132-33). This certainly cannot be said of Miriam—nor of her creator. Reducing her focus to this single, fundamental topic, Richardson examines the development of Miriam's mental processes with clinical acuity.

Hallmarks of immanence

Given that *Pilgrimage* operates within a phenomenological reduction, everything occurring within the sphere of Miriam's mind, it might seem that the distinction between immanence and transcendence would be rendered moot. However, Husserl points out that even within the confines of a single mind, there is the appearance of an external world, and so there remains a need to distinguish between "inwardness" and "outwardness" (*Cartesian* 3). He proposes a way to tell the difference between a percep-

tion that is immanent and one that is transcendent in Book One of *Ideas*. Transcendent things are given “one-sidedly” (94), “through appearances” (95). By contrast, says Husserl, we grasp immanent things immediately and completely: “It is essential to the givenness of something immanent precisely to present something absolute which cannot ever be presented with respect to sides or be adumbrated” (96–97). To illustrate the difference, he compares an immanent phenomenon—a feeling—to a transcendent one—a violin tone. With regard to a feeling, “what I see when I look at it is there, with its qualities, its intensity, etc., absolutely” (96). A violin tone, on the other hand, will differ “in accordance with whether I approach the violin or go farther away from it, in accordance with whether I am in the concert hall itself or am listening through the closed doors, etc.”

This example helps to clarify the difference between transcendent phenomena and immanent ones, but in practice, as Husserl goes on to explain, the distinction is not quite so neat. One can easily objectify feelings by turning them into after-the-fact memories, “things” to analyze and inspect. And before the violin tone can be grasped as a thing apart from consciousness, the sensory experience of its tone is implicated in the hearer’s mental processes. In fact, this is another way to recognize the perception of something immanent: “By *intentional mental processes related to something immanent*, we understand those to which it is *essential that their intentional objects, if they exist at all, belong to the same stream of mental processes to which they themselves belong*” (*Ideas* 79). Distinctions between subject and object, perceiver and perceived, are put out of play; objects and mental processes stream as one. This description points to two qualities of immanence: merger and flow. Though Husserl was not party to the friendly exchange that developed between James and Bergson, his two somewhat older contemporaries, his philosophical description of immanent perception is much like theirs in its stress on these key features.²¹

In a variety of ways, *Pilgrimage* suggests an immanent merger of perception and its objects. The strange materiality of Miriam’s mental life is made clear in the opening words of *Deadlock*: “Miriam ran upstairs narrowly ahead of her thoughts. In the small enclosure of the room they surged about her, gathering power from the familiar objects silently waiting” (III: 11). The thoughts of others seem tangible as well; Miriam confidently assesses the mental contents of everyone from the parlor maid (“you’ll have toothache and neuralgia with that thin head. You’re devoted to your relations. You’ve got a tiresome sickly old mother. You’ll never know you’re a servant” [I: 361]) to a woman encountered by chance in

a London carriage (“Children and housework and a selfish husband and nothing in life of her own. . . . In her brain was the pain and pressure of everything she had to do. . . . Yet she would love a day in the country. The fields and flowers would make her cry” [II: 357]). Miriam conceives of thought as an active agent in the physical realm. After a lecture she thinks, “Perhaps even a moment’s contemplation of the future helped to bring it about? Every thought vibrates through the universe” (III: 238).

Like thoughts, feelings in *Pilgrimage* are material, blurring the boundary between self and world. Filled with happiness on hearing a beautiful song, Miriam finds that her joy “ma[kes] the bowls of roses blaze with deepening colours” (I: 405). Asked at lunch about her weekend plans, she experiences “a flood of embarrassment. Her delight and horror and astonishment seemed to flow all over the table. . . . She felt astonishment and dismay coming out of her hair, swelling her hands” (II: 168). Lingering in a café over a beer, she finds the warmth it generates “expanding to a golden glow that flowed through the room and held her alight within itself, an elastic impalpable bodiless mind” (III: 128). And Miriam is equally sensitive to emanations from others. A woman seated next to her at a lecture has the “curious effect of making in the atmosphere about her, a cold, delicate, blue and white glare” (159). From a new boarder, she feels “waves of strength and kindness coming from him, bringing exhilaration” (III: 265).

The blurring of the distinction between self and world makes Miriam’s environment come to life. As Longworth has noted, her apartment walls seem sentient, responding to her emotional states. When she is happy alone, the walls of her room in Mrs. Bailey’s boarding house are “thrilled companions of her freedom;” when she succumbs to a desire for companionship, they “scornfully spe[e]d her desperate excursions into other lives (III: 86). Still, the boarding house walls “always greeted her” (III: 446). By contrast, the walls of the Flaxman’s Court rooms she later shares with Miss Holland actively “disow[n] her.” Miriam’s manmade environs engage with her, and she finds the natural world similarly alive. Seeing the Swiss Alps from a train she thinks, “They knew, they smiled joyfully at the glad shock they were, sideways gigantically advancing” (IV: 21). Elsewhere, the Alps’ “mighty . . . sounding” interacts with her own “small intricate buzzing” (72). Husserl writes that “In the . . . perception of something immanent (so-called ‘internal’ perception), perception and perceived form essentially an unmediated unity, that of a single concrete cogitatio” (79). *Pilgrimage* suggests precisely such a condition.

Just as perceiver and perceived merge, the stream of mental processes must continuously flow. Indeed, the unbroken streaming of *Pilgrimage* is probably its most commented-upon stylistic feature. Sinclair (in possibly one of the first applications of James's phrase to literature) described the first three volumes of the book as "Miriam Henderson's stream of consciousness going on and on" ("Novels" 444). Stephen Heath writes that "There is no *one*, only the myriad, the flow that only by a fiction—the old idea of the novel—can be stopped in some simple unity, some given identity" (133). Examining Richardson's way of making disparate scenes flow into one another by eliminating transitional statements, Caesar Blake comments: "There are omissions from the sequence of events, but not statements to summarize them;" thus, "there appears to be no break when in fact there is a deliberate one" (119–20). Perhaps even more than her scenic transitions, Richardson's flow is achieved by her unusual sentence. As Susan Gevirtz has pointed out, a young Miriam's walk down Regent Street nicely exemplifies Richardson's streaming style: "Flags of pavement flowing—smooth clean grey squares and oblongs, faintly polished, shaping and drawing away—sliding into each other. . . . I am part of the dense smooth clean paving stone" (I: 416). "The hard has become soft and now flows like lava," Gevirtz observes, adding "there is a 'shaping and drawing away—sliding into each other' of which the narrator partakes" (153).

Richardson also achieves her text's flow through watery imagery, hypnotic rhythms, and repetition. Walking home from work at the dental practice, Miriam regularly "lo[s]es consciousness of everything but . . . the drawing away under her feet of the varying flags of the pavement, the waxing and waning along the pavement of the streams of lamp-light, the distant murmuring tide of sound passing through her from wide thoroughfares" (II: 373–74). In *Deadlock*, Miriam is "melt[ing] and vanish[ing] . . . into the flow of light down the streets" (III: 85). In *Dimple Hill*, when she is riding on a bus, the hedgerows on the other side of the window "flo[w] quietly," and the fresh air from the window "stream[s] from the misty rain-soaked meadows" and "pour[s] into her being" (IV: 433). Sometimes the flow continues even when physical movement ceases. On her Regent Street walk, Miriam stops in front of a shop window,

rooted . . . in the middle of the pavement, in the midst of the pavement, in the midst of the tide flowing from the clear window, a soft fresh tide of sunlit colours . . . clear green glass shelves laden with shapes of fluted glass, glinting transparencies of mauve

and amber and green, rose-pearl and milky blue, welded to a flowing tide, freshening and flowing through her blood, a sea rising and falling with her breathing. (417)

As Miriam herself stands rooted, the rhythmic repetition of the phrases “in the middle . . . in the midst . . . in the midst” suggest continuing movement, and “flowing” is repeated three times, as is “tide.” The objects behind the glass surge toward her, their colors merging with the streaming of her blood and breath. In such ways, Richardson vividly represents what Husserl sees as an immanent present, consisting of “only one, but also always a continuously flowing, absolutely originary phase—the moment of the living now” (*Ideas* 179-80).

Just as Richardson's depiction of experience as a flowing mixture of mind and matter corresponds to Husserl's immanence, it invites comparisons, as we've seen, to the seamless, streaming consciousness described by Bergson and James. However, unity and flow are not the only features of Miriam's subjective life. As Shirley Rose observes, Miriam often pauses to remark on a magical, pervasive presence that is stable, and this third feature is not accounted for by Bergson or James. For Husserl, there can be no experience, immanent or otherwise, without an abiding presence to witness its existence:

My consciousness of whatever sort is originally and absolutely given not only with respect to its essence but also with respect to its existence. Only for an Ego, or a stream of mental processes, in relation to itself, does this distinctive state of affairs exist; here alone there is, and here there must be, such a thing as perception of something immanent. (*Ideas* 101)

Immanent perception, that is, depends consciousness registering, in addition to its flowing contents, the fact of its own enduring presence. Addressing the distinction between the witnessing ego and the streaming contents of perception, Husserl does so in terms of a consciousness with two “sides”: a changeless, empty, “*subjectively-oriented side*” registers the ever-changing contents of a rich and busy “*objectively-oriented side*” (191). Though it might seem that the ego's ability to witness its streaming contents implies a stepping-apart from those contents, Husserl insists that this is not the case. While the sides are indeed distinguishable from one another, they are not finally separate, and their “necessary relatedness” remains fundamental.²²

Richardson addresses this sense of a witnessing presence. The introduction to her book *The Quakers Past and Present* speaks of the practice of letting the objects of everyday awareness “fade away to the ‘margin’ of consciousness” (34). In the tone of an initiate, Richardson explains that “making a breach in the normal, unnoticed rhythm of the senses allows our ‘real self’—our larger and deeper being, to which so many names have been given—to flow up and flood the whole field of the surface intelligence” (34–35). In *Pilgrimage*, Miriam often pauses to register such an experience. As teenager, she senses a “magic that [lies] over everything,” pervading and uniting seemingly mundane objects and routine acts:

It was everywhere, in the food, in the fragrance rising from the opened lid of the tea-urn, in all the needful unquestioned movements, the requests, the handings and thanks, the going from room to room, the partings and assemblings. It hung about the fabrics and fittings of the house. Overwhelmingly it came in through oblongs of window giving on to stairways. Going up-stairs in the light pouring in from some uncurtained window, she would cease for a moment to breathe. (I: 158)

Miriam uses the impersonal pronoun “it” for her heightened sense of presence, here and elsewhere associated with light, but she never addresses “it” as a separate being. In *The Tunnel*, after visiting Miss Deer in the hospital, Miriam pauses to register “the ripe afternoon light . . . even outside a hospital,” calling it “the strange indistinguishable friend, mighty welcome, unutterable happiness,” and thinks “the light has no end. I know it and it knows me, no misunderstanding, no barrier” (II: 255). The attending light might seem to contrast with the changing content of her experience, but it is somehow “indistinguishable” from it. They know one another perfectly, without obstruction. Miriam suggests that experiencing this source of immanent illumination is a universal human capacity, though it depends on turning attention away from the colorful streaming contents of life to the still and empty light itself: “It is in everybody; but they won’t stop. Maddening. But they know.” She finds that presence can appear anywhere, even in the most quotidian of settings:

It was there at once when she was alone. . . . It was there radiant, obliterating her sense of existence, whenever she was in the midst of things kept going by other people. It could be given her by a beggar, purposefully crossing a street . . . not “pitiful,” as

he was so carelessly called—but something that shook her with gratitude to the roots of her being. (III: 239)

Neither Bergson nor James address quite the sort of presence that features so prominently in Miriam's awareness. But it is an integral feature of the immanent consciousness described by Husserl, who affirms, "as soon as I look at the flowing life in its actual present and, while doing so, apprehend myself as the pure subject of this life . . . I say unqualifiedly and necessarily that I am, this life is, I am living: cogito" (*Ideas* 100).

Being, becoming, and the Rose-Kumar debate

By virtue of Miriam's sense of immanence, the flow of *Pilgrimage* is also a stillness. Richardson elaborates on this stillness-within-movement in her description of the ideal woman, who "lives, all her life, in the deep current of eternity, an individual, self-centered. Because she is one with life, past, present, and future are together in her, unbroken. Because she thinks flowingly, with her feelings, she is relatively indifferent to the fashions of men" ("Women" 413). The changing "fashions" of the world make a superficial kind of movement, in marked contrast to the deep current encompassing all times, uniting them in a single subjective experience.

The distinction between this deep current and the effortful movement Richardson associates with the objective masculine world emerges in Miriam's frequent conflicts with Hypo, her literary friend, mentor, and lover. Hypo is "a man achieving, becoming, driving forward to unpredictable becomings, delighting in the process, devoting himself, compelling himself . . . to a ceaseless becoming, a ceaseless assimilating of anything that promised to serve the interests of a ceaseless becoming for life as he saw it" (IV: 220). Hypo's motion through the world, though delightful, nonetheless requires exertion; he must "drive" and "compel" himself forward. Though his "becoming" (a word repeated here four times) is "unpredictable," he tries to make the process conform to "life as he s[ees] it"—to manipulate what happens to fit his predetermined vision. Despite all his effort, thus, he seems "uncreated, without any existence worth the name," and fundamentally isolated: "Dismally, in every one, he saw only what they were becoming or might become, and of the essential individual knew, and wanted to know, nothing at all."

Miriam sees her own way of moving through the world as very different from Hypo's "planful tinkering" (IV: 171). She thinks that "to have a distinct end in view," as Hypo does, "endangers both end and means," precluding the possibility of real movement: "To know beforehand where you are going is to be going nowhere. Because it means you are nowhere to begin with" (172). Rejecting abstraction, staying with her immediate experience, she maintains a sense of contentment even as she roams: "If you know where you are you can go anywhere, and it will be the same place, and good." *Pilgrimage* thus concerns two kinds of movement. One is Hypo's kind, driven by abstraction, oriented toward a predetermined goal, and ultimately unfulfilling. The other is the self-present flow enjoyed by Miriam.²³

Once these two kinds of movement are recognized, it becomes clear that Rose and Kumar argue from a misunderstanding. Both mistakenly equate the book's many references to becoming, which in *Pilgrimage* is a transcendent phenomenon, with immanent flow (or, as it is termed in their debate, Bergsonian flux). The problem reveals itself in their contrasting interpretations of a key passage in which Miriam muses about the tension between "being" and "becoming":

Being versus becoming. Becoming versus being. Look after the being and the becoming will look after itself. Look after the becoming and the being will look after itself? Not so certain. Therefore it is certain that becoming depends upon being. Man carries his bourne within himself and is there already, or he would not even know that he exists. (IV: 362)

For Rose, this passage indicates that Richardson privileges being over flow. Pairing Miriam's claim that "becoming depends upon being" with her earlier realization that "she would gladly sacrifice [Hypo's] companionship . . . for the certainty of seeing his world of ceaseless 'becoming' exchanged for one wherein should be included also the fact of 'being'" (361-62), she asserts Miriam's "passionate resistance to the idea of flux as the basis of existence" (378). Miriam in fact does passionately reject transcendent becoming, associated with ideation and objective goals. However, she certainly does not reject immanent flow. Conflating becoming and flow leads Rose to the problematic conclusion that Miriam "resist[s]" flow. Kumar, on the other hand, takes the passage's "affirmation of 'being'" (498) as a temporary aberration. Richardson inadvertently "falls in

with the traditional metaphysical emphasis on 'being' as against 'ceaseless flux,'" he argues, though this is only a temporary lapse "on the dialectical plane." As soon as Miriam stops thinking and returns to living, Kumar suggests, Miriam "realizes 'becoming,' in the strict Bergsonian sense, as the only true explanation of experience." Here, like Rose, Kumar, conflates *Pilgrimage's* transcendent becoming with Bergson's immanent duration. Though Rose argues against "flux" and Kumar argues for it, both work within the same conceptual framework, mistakenly equating Richardson's term for transcendent activity with Bergson's notion of immanent movement.²⁴ When one reads the passage above from *Pilgrimage* remembering that "becoming" refers to getting on in the world in the manner of the calculating Hypo, Miriam's priorities are clear: "becoming depends upon being." Immanent existence sustains and makes possible all transcendent worldly activities. However, because of its subtlety, the awareness of being is easily obscured and must be cultivated, "looked after."

The disputed passage, opposing changing transcendent movement to unchanging immanent presence, appears at first glance to make no reference to the flowing, content-rich side of immanent awareness. Yet even here there is an unmistakable hint that Richardson conceives of immanence as double, comprised of both being and flow. At the end of Miriam's reverie, she concludes, "Man carries his bourne within himself and is there already, or he would not even know that he exists" (IV: 362). The importance to Richardson of the curious term "bourne" is suggested by its proliferation in Volume IV (see for example 408, 513, and 592). In its one sense, a bourne is a boundary or a destination; in this sense, the term can be read as a reference to the stable limit-point of pure presence. But Richardson would have known that a bourne, or "burn," is also a stream.

Represented immanence

I have argued that both Richardson and Husserl set out to describe the capacity of consciousness to be in direct contact with its immediate experience. But such a claim raises a fundamental question: how can one remain in direct contact with a phenomenon and at the same time attain the perspective needed to describe it? Both authors see the question, but both hold nonetheless that it is possible to reflect on immediate experience without departing from it.

Husserl's argument here rests on his account of how time functions. In *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, he contends that the present moment is not instantaneous, but rather elongated enough to allow consciousness to register that it knows what it knows without departing from the utterly certain realm of immediate experience. He calls this "present-time memory retention" (31), and illustrates the concept in terms of a musical tone. When listening to a tone, he says, one is not only conscious of the first instant of its sounding, the "primal impression," but also of its seamless recession into the past. Such running-off tones should "be characterized . . . as perceived tones, as present tones, but in no way as past" (34). It thus makes no sense to conceive of the immediate past as a reproduction, a "pictorial representation" (36) of the original experience, because in retention, the just-past is still there, like a "comet's tail that attaches itself to the perception of the moment" (37).²⁵ This conception of time allows Husserl to claim that his philosophical reflections, associated with retention, are trustworthy. In *Ideas*, he draws a sharp line between the immediately retained past and the more distant recollected past, arguing for "the absolute legitimacy of reflection on perceiving something immanent" in contrast to "the relative legitimacy of recollection of something immanent" (180-81). What he apprehends in reflection is still in some sense present as he describes it, so "it would be wrong to doubt the having existed of what, in the turning back of the regard, is found as 'still' intended to (the immediate retention)" (181). One finds a similar argument in *Logical Investigations*, where Husserl posits the existence of a kind of language that arises in direct contact with the immanent events that elicit it. This language, termed "expression," involves utterances which are "phenomenally one with the experiences made manifest in them in the consciousness of the man who manifests them" (275).

Richardson also claims that the past exists as an immediate feature of the present, arguing that there are two kinds of memory. Ordinary memory, which objectifies and contextualizes its material, is nothing like "memory proper," an immediate experience of the past that is wordlessly one with what it contemplates: "memory proper, as distinct from a mere backward glance, as distinct even from prolonged contemplation of things regarded as past and done with, gathers, can gather, and pile up its wealth only round universals, unchanging, unevolving verities that move neither backwards nor forwards and have neither speech nor language" ("Con-

tinuous" 423). Richardson suggests that this sort of memory accesses its riches only by remaining in direct contact with truths that precede language.

Instances of such "memory proper" are depicted repeatedly in *Pilgrimage*, but its workings become especially clear in relation to Miriam's first memory of immanent experience—the "strange independent joy" (316) that she lives for. She is able to "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" (I: 316-17).²⁶ Variations of this edenic memory occur throughout. During a holiday, as Miriam dozes by the sea, her mind revisits Babington, "that blazing alley of flowers without beginning or end" (II: 213), and finds it in no way distanced or diminished: "The moment she had just lived was the same, it was exactly the *same* as the first one she could remember, the moment of standing, alone, in bright sunlight on a narrow gravel path. . . . It was the same moment." She is surprised at how, when she reminisces with her old friend Alma about the past, "the mere mention of a name sent her back to the unbearable happiness of . . . a sunlit flower-filled world opening before her" (III: 334). Staying with the Quakers, she finds that the Roscorlas' garden became one with the garden at Babington" (IV: 490). As Miriam ages and changes, the memory is always there, the same, and she remains the same in relation to it. Yet it grows with her, too. She reflects on this mystery after she begins attending Socialist meetings and contemplates a liaison with Hypo:

This person who had stood for the first time alone upon the sunlit garden-path between the banks of flowers and watched them, through the pattern made by the bees sailing from bank to bank at the level of her face . . . and now could re-see them with knowledge of their names and ways and of the dark earth underneath. . . . This person, who was about to take a lover, presently, in time, at the right time, was the one who had gazed for ever at the flower-banks, unchanged. (177-78)

Her having learned to name the flowers does not alter the fact of her immediate experience of them; thanks to the power of memory proper, even as she ages, gaining experience and perspective, she remains a child amid the sunlit blossoms.²⁷ Thus, near the end of *Pilgrimage*, Miriam

muses that “the whole of what is called ‘the past’ is with me, seen anew, vividly. No, Schiller, the past does not stand ‘being still.’ It moves, growing with one’s growth” (657). Richardson here does go well beyond Husserl’s relatively modest claim that experiences just past remain in present consciousness for an unspecified period of time. Nevertheless both see the past as a feature of the immediate present, leading to their faith in the trustworthiness of reflection.²⁸

Both Husserl and Richardson recognize the difficulty in trying to communicate their reflections to others. As Husserl admits, words that affirm what is certain for the speaker can only be mere “indications” (*Logical* 277) for the listener, who has no access to the speaker’s subjective experience. “Meaning-conferring acts” of communicative speech are fulfilled only if, in the mind of the hearer, “the naming becomes an actual, conscious relation between the name and object named” (281). Obviously, not all readers establish that crucial relation between Husserl’s claims and their own experience. One contemporary asked, “When . . . retrospective observation is always knowledge about mental processes just *had* as objects, how can one establish the states of which one has no knowledge, of which there is only consciousness?” (Watt, qtd. in *Ideas* 183). This critic could not verify Husserl’s descriptions of immanent experience by connecting them with anything in his own subjective field. Husserl could only respond that if it were not possible to make statements about “mental processes pure and simple” (184), we could claim to know nothing with certainty. Without the ability to retain an awareness of immediate experience, it would literally be “asserting too much by claiming in self-observation that we were just now attentive to this book here and were still attentive to it” (185); the experience would vanish from awareness before we could notice it. It would literally be “asserting too much by claiming in self-observation that we were just now attentive to this book here and were still attentive to it.” Derrida’s more recent critique of Husserl has elements in common with Watt’s objection to “the cognition of immediate mental living” (qtd. in *Ideas* 182). His *Speech and Phenomena* attacks Husserl’s notion of retention for assuming that presence is pure to begin with. For Derrida, “the presence of the perceived present can appear as such only inasmuch as it is continuously compounded with a nonpresence and nonperception, with primary memory and expectation (retention and protention)” (64). Equating retention with “nonpresence,” Derrida holds that presence cannot be fully conscious. In his influential

understanding of language, then, words do not faithfully express truths that exist silently prior to language; rather, due to the deficiency of a presence that is not fully present, language must function as a medium that itself “gives birth to meaning as such, gives it out to be heard and read” (93).²⁹

Certainly no one ever convinces Richardson's Miriam of the deficiency of her own immanent experience, or shakes her faith in the capacity of language to communicate it. During her first stay with the Quakers, as Miriam sits outdoors rereading her beloved Emerson, she wonders why writers who, “professing thought and its expression to be secondary activities, had nevertheless spent their lives thinking and setting down their thoughts” (IV: 419). As if in answer to her question, shortly afterward she comes across a “familiar quotation” that strikes her like a visceral blow, “a physical shock passing through her body, carrying with it all she knew and was” (420). Suddenly the foliage on a distant ridge seems bathed in “a golden light so vivid” that the sight brings her to her feet. Even after the initial intensity of the experience has abated, “the rapture that had seized and filled her emptied being . . . still throb[s] to and fro between herself and that far point upon the ridge.” It is with “tremulously apologetic fingers” that she puts the book back in her pocket. Her question has been definitively answered: Words are worthwhile because they have the power to evoke the states they describe, even in hearers who have never experienced such states, or have temporarily forgotten them.

Perhaps it is moments such as these that encourage Miriam to continue to try to speak of immanence, though her attempts to communicate this dimension of her life frequently fail. As a schoolgirl, she longs to ask her classmates, “Isn't it extraordinary? Do you realize?” believing that “if only she could make her meaning clear all difficulties must vanish” (I: 158). It soon becomes clear that her companions do *not* “realize,” and she continues to have difficulty in sharing the subjective experiences that so absorb her:

She wanted to speak to someone of these things. Until she could speak to someone about them she must always be alone. . . . It would be impossible to speak to any one about them unless one felt perfectly sure that the other person felt about them in the same way and knew that they were more real than anything else in the world, knew that everything else was a fuss about nothing. But everybody else seemed to be really interested in the fuss. (317)

As she matures, Miriam does find kindred souls to whom she can impart her sense of wonder. Back in London after a trip to the Swiss Alps, she manages to partially convey the magical quality of Oberland to three friends. Her voice is as much “a barrier” as it is “the vehicle of her everlasting communion with them” (IV: 138); nevertheless, her speech finally “prevail[s] . . . by virtue of the echo within it of the way of being from which it had come forth”—in other words, her meaning-conferring act has been at least partially fulfilled by her listeners. Sometimes she has still greater success. When she describes her garden memory to Amabel, her friend’s “tears of joy and sympathy” (243) finally assuage Miriam’s lifelong desire to communicate this primal moment. Even when she is not able to convey her subjective experience to an auditor, she finds value in the attempt. After vainly trying to make Shatov understand “the nature of the spell” (III: 62) cast by her favorite objects in the British Museum’s Egyptian gallery, Miriam realizes that she is nonetheless glad that he has “forced her to discover something of the reason of her enchantment” (62–63). Though solitude is “necessary, for certainties,” she thinks, it is “the struggle to communicate certainties that g[ives] them new life; even if the explanation were only a small piece of the truth” (63).

Subscribing to similar models of immanence, Husserl and Richardson spent their lives constructing very different texts. Where Husserl wrote philosophy, the narrative that Richardson refused to call a novel is harder to classify, though at one point in *The Trap* Richardson does hint at her intention to write a new kind of philosophy when Miriam speaks to a friend distressed by his initial reading of the work of Schopenhauer. Miriam attempts to “exorciz[e]” his conclusions, drawing on the wisdom gleaned from her own “furious battle” (III: 463) with that thinker. To understand Schopenhauer’s view of life, Miriam explains, “You must look at it from the outside, as shapes, helplessly writhing in the dark. If you *see* all this, and Schopenhauer did, you grin and snort and stand aside. Women, he proves, don’t see it. And so they *are* obscenity, blind servants of obscenity, for ever.” Standing apart from life, viewing it as a meaningless welter of transcendent objects, Schopenhauer, she implies, is the real “blind servant of obscenity.” In fact it is men, not women, who fail to see the whole picture: “The staggering thing about all these men,” Miriam tells her friend, is that “when they make up their philosophies of life they leave out themselves.” Miriam does not address the question of what it would mean to put oneself in a philosophy, instead ending the conversa-

tion with the brusque declaration that “nothing can ever be expressed in words.” Yet that is a verdict that *Pilgrimage* obviously belies.³⁰ Richardson's lengthy non-novel is at once a systematic investigation of two-sided immanent experience, and the immediate unfolding of an argument about “how human beings should live.”

Notes

1. *Creative Evolution* describes flux as follows: “The matter which forms the world [is] an undivided flux, and undivided also the life that runs through it” (249). Though Kumar and Rose both invoke “flux,” it is “duration,” Bergson's name for the experience of subjective time unfolding without reference to anything outside it, that is probably a more appropriate term for the consciousness governing Richardson's work.

2. Rose suggested that the term “fountain of consciousness” would be a more accurate metaphor, given that a fountain depends on “immutability at the heart of flux” (376). Kumar notes that Richardson herself suggested this alternative metaphor in their correspondence (499). Though Rose's description of the fountain metaphor privileges changelessness, the image itself, like Richardson's text, illustrates the interdependence of being and flow.

3. Radford asserts that Richardson would have been aware of Husserl's work as popularized by T. E. Hulme (his series of essays on Husserl was published in *New Age* in 1915–1916 under the collective title of “A Notebook”) and through the 1922 lectures Husserl delivered at University College in London (“Impersonality” 89).

4. While modern discussions of immanence position the term against transcendence in a clearly dualist fashion (e.g. Sartre's *Transcendence of the Ego*), more recently immanence has been associated with a post-dualist stance that does not assume a pre-existent split between mind and body, or spirit and nature (see for example Deleuze's *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*).

5. James was a great admirer of Bergson. When *Creative Evolution* was published in 1907 James wrote: “O my Bergson, you are a magician, and your book is a marvel, a real wonder in the history of philosophy, making, if I mistake not, an entirely new era” (James, H. 290–91).

6. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson asserts that the atomists' insistence on the “independent image” was just a “late and artificial product of the mind,” the result of a habit of “breaking up, for the greater convenience of practical life, the continuity of the real” (165).

7. Michael Bell states that Lévy-Bruhl's 1910 book typified the attitudes of a generation of anthropologists, and goes on to suggest that the then-prevalent belief that "primitive man . . . had, like the pre-Socratic Greeks, a psychological continuity with his world" (21) may reveal as much about the longings of modern anthropologists as it does about the cultures they studied.

8. According to Peter Washington, Theosophy spread rapidly, capturing the imagination of people from Thomas Alva Edison to, for a brief period, Yeats (68, 92). A decade after its inception in 1875, the Theosophical Society could boast 121 lodges and a membership that numbered in the thousands (68).

9. Levenson traces how a recourse to history helped Eliot reconcile his respect for the evidence supplied by "immediate and finite experience" with his awareness of the need for "extra-individual standards" (183). Thanks to this conception, says Levenson, Eliot's version of modernism achieved "cultural dominance" (186).

10. Jameson has proposed that Lewis's critique of subjectivism was ahead of its time, noting "striking similarities" (19) between Lewis's views and those of contemporary poststructuralists. Like the poststructuralists, says Jameson, Lewis stresses "discontinuity . . . the lapse in meaning, [and] the syncope in the experience of the subject" (20).

11. Gevirtz, who has studied Richardson's love of film in conjunction with Miriam's "desire to remain forever merged with the 'close dense' streaming of language" (155), notes that between 1927 and 1933, Richardson wrote twenty-three articles on film for *Close Up*, an avant-garde journal on film as art (7). Richardson's interest in the Quakers is demonstrated by the fact that she wrote two nonfiction books about the Quakers, *Gleanings from the Work of George Fox* and *Quakers Past and Present*, both published in 1914. Like the fictional Miriam, she lived with a Quaker family, and considered becoming a Friend.

12. The four-volume Virago edition of *Pilgrimage* cited here contains all thirteen volumes of Richardson's book. To avoid confusion, I use Roman numerals to refer to the Virago volumes.

13. Both Richardson and Husserl frequently employ ellipses. To distinguish between their punctuation and my own, all ellipses inserted into the work of these two authors will be bracketed.

14. The resulting prose prompted Woolf to remark in a 1923 review that Richardson's "psychological sentence of the feminine gender" was "of a more elastic fibre than the old, capable of stretching to the extreme of suspending the fraillest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes" ("Romance" 124).

15. Similarly, the fictional Miriam finds it impossible to write “something alive all over” when “parts” have to be “forcibly twisted back” to a governing idea (IV: 524).

16. The finished impression created by the four-volume collection of the novel's first twelve books was the product of publicity by Richardson's publisher, rather than her own intention. Biographer Gloria Fromm explains, “Dent counted on publishing a collected edition of *Pilgrimage* that would be the finished work” (297), even though Richardson herself “did not really understand what [Dent] was doing” (309). Richardson had already started the thirteenth book, *March Moonlight*, before the collected edition appeared (308).

17. Banfield's 2007 essay, “Remembrance and Tense Past,” provides evidence to support that Woolf and Mansfield, as well as Joyce, should be regarded as literary impressionists.

18. Ford claimed that the best practitioners of the short story treated the form like a photograph, juxtaposing only the bare details that could be captured in a single camera-flash (*Critical* 84). With regard to the novel, he said the last thing a writer should aim for was continuity, since by depicting “little shreds, one contrasting with the other, you would arrive at something much more coloured, animated, lifelike and interesting” (78). Yet this staunch impressionist was a surprisingly sympathetic evaluator of Richardson's work. Grouping her with “realists” like Proust, he called it “amazing” and “abominabl[e]” that she had met with “a complete world neglect” (*March* 773).

19. In *The Phantom Table*, Banfield suggests that Russell's argument for the reality and persistence of objects apart from human perception is evident in passages like the “Times Passes” section of *To The Lighthouse* (223), while his argument that successive thoughts do not imply “a single entity ‘I’” is illustrated by Woolf's “multipersonal method,” her signature randomly drifting point of view (311). (Russell was critical of Bergson, asserting that the French philosopher was forced to rely on the concept of duration simply because he had failed to understand that the mathematical series could provide a sufficient degree of continuity [*Phantom* 102]).

20. As a philosopher interested in immanence, Sinclair was uniquely suited to grasp the crux of the project. Her *Defense of Idealism* (1917) argues for the development of “the sense of the ‘Oneness’ of all things in God” (xviii), while *The New Idealism* (1922) explores a “primary consciousness” very like Bergsonian flux, in that it “is nothing but the cosmos of all experience as it exists from moment to moment, rolling on” (294).

21. Husserl explicitly acknowledged James's influence on his work. In his diary of 1891–1892, he speaks of having read *The Principles of Psychology*. In an 1894

article he cites James, and in *Logical Investigations*, he credits James with showing him how to surmount the problem of psychologism (488–89). James Edie notes that James advised publishers in the US against undertaking an English translation of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, on the grounds that “nobody in America would be interested” (qtd. in Edie 488). But Husserl explicitly acknowledged James's influence on his work. In his diary of 1891–1892, he speaks of having read *The Principles of Psychology*. In an 1894 article he cites James, and in *Logical Investigations*, he credits James with showing him how to surmount the problem of psychologism (Edie 488–89).

22. This account leaves plenty of room for debate about whether the pure ego stands apart from the stream of mental processes and is devoid of content, or whether it is inseparable from both the stream and its content. Joseph Kockelmans stresses the former position, arguing that Husserl's conception of the ego was increasingly influenced by Kant's account of the Transcendental Ego (269–70, 275). Dan Zahavi, by contrast, finds the ego to be finite and inseparable from its streaming contents. (He sees the other, “outdated” interpretation of Husserl as the consequence of reading Husserl through the lens of Heideggerian phenomenology [141–42].) But if Husserl's description of a two-sided presence creates ambiguity, he is condemned by logic to hold fast to his delicately-balanced account. For John Brough, if there were a real separation—a gap—between the part of consciousness that perceives and what it perceives, immanence would lose its claim to absolute certainty, and be doomed to infinite regress (95).

23. As Sydney Kaplan points out, Miriam's diatribes against masculine ideation do not prevent her from recognizing it as a capacity that she herself often wields. It is, ironically, the source of the “verbalized, intellectual, and abstract statements Miriam makes about the feminine consciousness” (17).

24. It is an understandable mistake. The word “becoming” is one that Bergson frequently uses, and it is equated with Bergsonian flux in other texts (see for example Underhill [28–29]). It is specifically in Richardson's work that the equation of the word “becoming” with the notion of immanent unfolding is inaccurate.

25. James made a similar claim, arguing that the instantaneous present is an “ideal abstraction” (*Principles* 608); by contrast the “practically cognized present” of our actual experience is “no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look in two directions into time” (609).

26. Richardson examines what appears to be the same memory in more detail in a short story, “The Garden.” This account of a young child's experience has all the hallmarks of immanence:

She does not think of herself as a limited body, but rather as unbounded consciousness; there is merger with the surroundings; the experience is so saturated with sensuous content that it causes synesthesia. (21)

The toddler is unable to maintain this edenic state—the story literally ends with a “fall” when she trips. By contrast, *Pilgrimage* does not stress the loss of the immanent garden, but rather its ongoing availability through memory.

27. Fromm notes that Richardson's correspondence also seems to reveal the belief that “no experience ever really came to an end, that it continued to work within, whether one was aware of it or not” (340).

28. Just as memory proper and retention are seen as aspects of present experience, they share another quality: both are passive, in contrast to the deliberate, active process of recollection. Zahavi explains that for Husserl, “recollection . . . is a re-presenting intentional act directed toward a completed past occurrence;” by contrast, reflection, “the so-called retentive modification[,] is a *passive* process which takes place without our active contribution” (83) In the Foreword to *Pilgrimage*, Richardson assigns herself a passive role. It is the material that “ha[s] . . . its own say”—she claims only to have “contemplated” it (I:10). In the project's final volume, Miriam describes a similar process: “Imagination means holding an image in your mind. When it comes up of itself, or is summoned by something. Then it is not outside, but within you” (IV: 613). Though “imagination” can prolong the immediately given contents of consciousness, the fact that Miriam waits for material to “come up or [be] summoned” suggests that she too works with the immediate past of retention rather than the transcendent objects of recollection, using focused, passive absorption rather than self-conscious, active craft.

29. A debate about these two views of language continues among writers of fiction, reflected in their modes of narration, as Dorrit Cohn explains in *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness*. One camp holds that “thinking consists of verbalization” (79) and tends to use quoted inner monologue—the reporting of verbalized thoughts that largely drives Joyce's *Ulysses*. The other claims that “thought takes shape independent of language and language is merely the vehicle.” Cohn proposes the term “psycho-narration” (11) to describe a narrator's rendering of a character's wordless internal states, and suggests that the “less rational, more spontaneous and ‘unconscious’” (56) the mental content being rendered, the more ordered and artful the language for rendering it may become.

30. Miriam's ambivalence about language persists until the final volume of the novel, where, just minutes after her fervent vow to give up “thinking in words” (IV: 607), her mind turns to her decision to use a financial gift to buy time for writing, and she thinks of how easily she could “write . . . for ever” (613).

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