DOROTHY RICHARDSON'S PARTICULAR FEMINIST MODERNISM AS A CASE FOR MONUMENTAL GRANULARITY

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> Comparisons between V.W. & D.R., as far as I have met them to date, have been made only by those who, with such good reason, adore V.W. & have therefore consisted in presenting her in terms of her virtues, minus their defects, & poor D.R. in terms of her defects alone. Actually, both in virtues & defects, we are alien to each other.
> (Dorothy Richardson, Letter to John Cowper Powys, 24 April 1940)[1]

As is common knowledge in modernist studies, the first three chapter-volumes of Dorothy Richardson's thirteen-volume novel sequence *Pilgrimage*—*Pointed Roofs* (1915), *Backwater* (1916), and *Honeycomb* (1917)—were the first literary works to be described using the phrase 'stream of consciousness', in a 1918 review by May Sinclair.[2] Pioneered through the early twentieth century by Richardson along with contemporaries such as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Marcel Proust, stream of consciousness has evolved to become one of modernism's principal contributions to the development of literary style and narrative representation. Yet despite the acknowledged influence Richardson had on modernist themes, techniques, and styles, Sinclair's often-cited review of Richardson's work seems to carry more weight in the history of modernism than the novel itself. Today, though there is a burgeoning of scholarly interest in her, Richardson is hardly taught or written about in her own right when compared to other giants of literary modernism.

What is lost in conceptions of modernism when we elide its particularities? This article first looks at the current literary conversation surrounding Richardson and characterises her position in modernist

[1] Gloria Glikin Fromm, ed., *Windows on Modernism: Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson* (University of Georgia Press, 1995), 400.
[2] May Sinclair, 'The Novels of Dorothy Richardson', *Egoist* 5, no. 4 (1918): 58.

studies using John Guillory's framework of monuments and documents.[3] It then seeks to establish how Richardson's stream of consciousness technique in *Pointed Roofs*, *Backwater*, and *Honeycomb* constitutes its own form of feminist modernism. Finally, it argues that a heightened attention to *Pilgrimage* as its own literary 'monument' is a defence against what Guillory calls 'calcified monumentality': the potential for a monument to lose its 'ability to attract interpretation' and to become indifferent, invisible, and ultimately unmemorable.[4] Understanding Richardson as a distinct stylistic innovator is an important part of recognising the complexity of modernism, which as a movement itself emphasises the very impossibility of generalising about individual experience.

Richardson as Modernist Document

Taking the terms 'monument' and 'document' from Erwin Panofsky's earlier theorizations of them, John Guillory's 'Monuments and Documents: Panofsky on the Object of Study in the Humanities' offers a useful dichotomy for categorising the ways in which cultural artifacts lay claim on present scholarly conversations in humanistic study. According to Guillory, the two terms can be applied to the same artifact; the terms 'give us two necessary ways of looking at the same kind of object'.[5] The difference lies in those particular 'ways of looking'. Documents, on the one hand, 'are always instrumentalized in the process of scholarship … they are studied because they tell us about something else'.[6] A monument, on the other hand, is that 'something else' to be told about, that object which has 'the most urgent meaning' for the present.[7]

Within this framework, Richardson appears as more of a 'document' than a 'monument' to modernist studies, for she resides at the edges of literary criticism, often discussed in tandem with the work of Virginia Woolf or the history and development of stream of consciousness. Literary histories do not grant Richardson her own entry; rather, she and her work are 'instrumentalized' to 'tell us about' some other, larger

[3] John Guillory, 'Monuments and Documents: Panofsky on the Object of Study in the Humanities', *History of Humanities* 1, no. 1 (2016): 9–30, https://doi.org/10.1086/684635.
[4] Guillory, 'Monuments and Documents', 25.
[5] Guillory, 'Monuments and Documents', 19.
[6] Guillory, 'Monuments and Documents', 23.
[7] Guillory, 'Monuments and Documents', 12.

literary 'monument'. For example, a search for 'Dorothy Richardson' in *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* receives two hits, one of which is 'Woolf, Virginia' and the other a more general survey titled 'Fiction Theory and Criticism: Early Twentieth-Century British and American'.[8] More often than not, Richardson is used as a literary counterpoint to Woolf, who is the author receiving 'monument' status as the primary subject of the entire handbook. And beyond her sparse inclusion in these guidebooks, the difficulty of even obtaining a full set of the *Pilgrimage* sequence indicates a 'continued absence of Richardson's work on modernist syllabuses', reinforcing 'a narrative of modernist literature in which Richardson's influence on and contribution to modernism is significantly downplayed, and credit for techniques usually associated with the "stream-of-consciousness novel" was still primarily given to more well-known authors, including James Joyce and Virginia Woolf'.[9]

Indeed, Woolf is often the figure against or through which Richardson and many other female modernists are defined. In 'Impressionism and Post-Impressionism', Tamar Katz defines the literary impact of Richardson through Woolf's assessment:

> For Woolf, *Pilgrimage* exemplified one promising path for modern fiction, but her reviews of several volumes find Richardson's scope limited. … Woolf's more extended comments on Richardson in her reviews of *The Tunnel* earlier in 1919 and of *Revolving Lights* in 1923 also reveal her concern with the potential difficulties of Impressionism when narrowed to the scope of a single mind.[10]

Here, Richardson is simply part of the landscape of modernism and its techniques, her particular brand of impressionism used to discuss Woolf's opinions about its weak points. Similarly, Dora Zhang in her 'Stream of Consciousness' entry in *The Oxford Handbook of Virginia Woolf* introduces Richardson via Sinclair's 1918 review and goes on to discuss

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[8] Michael Groden et al., eds, *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism*, 2. ed (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).
[9] Tara Thomson, 'Annotating the Everyday in a Modernist Scholarly Edition', *Modernist Cultures*, 15, no. 1 (2020): 94.
[10] Tamar Katz, 'Impressionism and Post-Impressionism', in *The Oxford Handbook of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne E. Fernald (Oxford University Press, 2021). https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198811589.013.24.

her writing and technical innovation through Woolf's reception of it.[11] Even in the entry for Richardson in the *Cambridge Guide to Women's Writing in English*, her contributions to a feminist literary lineage are determined by Woolf, and ambivalently: '[Richardson] has been thought of as a feminist and a modernist writer, credited by Virginia Woolf with inventing the woman's sentence but also criticized for letting "the damned egotistical self" get in the way, as it had with Joyce'.[12]

Besides being placed in conversation with Woolf, Richardson also appears in articles and encyclopaedic entries focusing on gender as a theme or simply a unifying factor. These entries often group multiple female modernist writers together or discuss broader topics like autobiography or sexuality. In the places in *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms* where Richardson takes up more space than just in the context of Sinclair's 1918 review, it is in chapters on gendered, queered, and cinematic and city-oriented readings of modernist texts.[13] The 'Key Novelists' section of *The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel* groups Richardson with Gertrude Stein and May Sinclair in a chapter on autobiography titled 'Writing Lives'.[14] These entries condense Richardson's work into the larger trends of the period, sometimes hinting at the ways she varies from those trends but ultimately relegating her, again, to documentality.

In all these examples, Richardson's work as a pioneer modernist writing is noted only as a 'document' to these other literary 'monuments'—Richardson is not the focus of critical attention. Certainly, some scholarly monographs include Richardson as more of a monumental author, taking her as the or one of a few primary subjects.[15] But I turn to

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[11] Dora Zhang, 'Stream of Consciousness', in *The Oxford Handbook of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne E. Fernald (Oxford University Press, 2021).
[12] Jane Miller, 'Richardson, Dorothy (Miller)', in *The Cambridge Guide to Women's Writing in English*, ed. Lorna Sage (Cambridge University Press, 1999).
[13] Peter Brooker, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms* (Oxford University Press, 2010), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199545445.001.0001.
[14] Howard Finn, 'Writing Lives: Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair, Gertrude Stein', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel*, ed. Morag Shiach, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 191–205.
[15] See Rebecca Bowler's *Literary Impressionism* (2016), which reads the work of Richardson along with that of Ford Madox Ford, H.D., and May Sinclair in order to rethink modernism through the frame of impressionism, as well as Joanne

these more introductory, encyclopaedic or pedagogical materials to show that the general framework of modernist studies positions Richardson as marginal or documentary rather than monumental. In these more definitional, prescriptive resources on modernism as a period and as a set of formal and narrative innovations, Richardson is instrumentalised to talk about other monuments of modernism which are, by extension, deemed more worthy of attention.

Richardson's Particular Stream of Consciousness and Feminist Modernism in Pointed Roofs, Backwater, and Honeycomb

Given that modernism offers numerous (female) modes of self-formation, confining Richardson—and other female modernists—to these larger trends reduces the variety of narrative and representational techniques that modernism actually offers. It flattens the complexity of modernism's innovations into a reductive like-Woolf-not-like-Woolf dichotomy, over time closing off texts on the fringes from fresh, new interpretation. In the following section, I turn to *Pointed Roofs, Backwater,* and *Honeycomb* as modernist monuments to re-assert the contributions of Richardson's particular mode of feminist modernism. Richardson's narrative technique is one based on granular, sentence-level creative interventions, in which a young woman is seen to be developing an individual sense of interiority and mode of expression over the course of the novel sequence. In particular, Richardson's unique use of punctuation—especially her use of ellipsis—crafts an alternative feminist approach to the modernist project of narrating the development of the mind and resisting narrative conventions imposed onto novelistic heroines.[16] Her particular stream of consciousness technique not only shows this gradual development of feminist dissidence in her heroine, but also implicates her readers, bringing them along in a co-creative process of writing. This particular feminism—one which refuses complacency at the granular level of the sentence, through constant change over time—aligns with Guillory's definition of the monument as

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Winning's *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson* (2000), which interprets and positions *Pilgrimage* as a seminal lesbian modernist work.

[16] Since Richardson utilizes ellipses frequently in her work, all instances of ellipses without brackets (. . .) are in the original text, while ellipses in brackets ([. . .]) indicate my own elisions.

an object which has the quality of being 'recalled to mind': of requiring an urgent, active attention.[17]

Pointed Roofs begins the unconventional coming-of-age story of protagonist Miriam Henderson, who resists traditional female plots as she attempts to forge her own path apart from the only acceptable resolution for a woman's storyline: marriage. This is no easy task. Teaching at a boarding school for young girls, Miriam repeatedly faces the societal and narrative inevitability of marriage. After Miriam learns about the boyfriends of some of her young female students, she falls into a sort of despair about their vision of their futures, which conflicts with her own:

> She grieved over the things that she felt were lying neglected, "things in general" she felt sure she ought to discuss with the girls . . . improving the world . . . leaving it better than you found it . . . the importance of life . . . sleeping and dreaming that life was beauty and waking and finding it was duty . . . making things better, reforming . . . being a reformer. . . . Pater always said young people always wanted to reform the universe . . . perhaps it was so . . . and nothing could be done.[18]

Miriam's vision of what life should mean is idealised at this early stage of her life. She dreams of 'improving the world' and 'making things better': romantic aspirations only realistically available to men and male bildungsroman. The other girls do not share these aspirations, which reach beyond what is expected of their lives—they 'did not seem to be in the least afraid of the future. [Miriam] envied that'.[19] This then leaves Miriam at a standstill as she tries to envision her own future, for, as Scott McCracken writes, 'If social and generic resolutions beckon in the prospect of marriage, that prospect is always refused or evaded, leaving her in narrative culs-de-sac'.[20] Indeed, Miriam finds herself lost as she tries to sidestep the societal structures and norms of the world in *Pointed*

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[17] Guillory, 'Monuments and Documents', 24.
[18] Dorothy Richardson, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Dorothy Richardson, Volume IV: Pilgrimage 1 & 2: Pointed Roofs and Backwater*, ed. Scott McCracken (Oxford University Press, 2020), 67–68.
[19] Richardson, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Dorothy Richardson, Volume IV*, 57.
[20] Scott McCracken, 'Experience Not Consciousness, Backwaters Not Streams: Dorothy Richardson's "Investigation of Reality"', *Literature Compass,* 17, no. 6 (2020): 2.

Roofs: she 'envied' the girls their lack of fear about the future because theirs promise a predictable, determined ending while her alternative paths lead to irresolution.

However, for Miriam, the traditional marriage plot also *is* the narrative cul-de-sac. In the beginning of the above passage, her thoughts cut from one to the next, free to grasp open-endedly at these idealised visions for her personal future that do not adhere to societal norms. Eventually, a male figure—'Pater'—enters the stream of consciousness and encroaches on her mental wandering. Her father's words sober her, and the fragmented section abruptly ends with the realisation that 'nothing could be done'. Here, too, lies a narrative dead-end. Miriam, at this stage in her life, is unable to come up with a coherent, imaginable alternative for the lives of the young girls.

Throughout *Pilgrimage,* men continually deny Miriam a tangible narrative future. As Miriam grows older and is confronted with the prospect of finding a husband, the theme of marriage becomes even more present. Again, though, this ideal can never become a lived reality. In a conversation with Miss Haddie, one of the teachers at her new school of employment, Miriam seems categorically opposed to the prospect of marriage, saying she 'never shall' marry. Miss Haddie asks of a previous male interest, 'Have ye quarrelled with him?', to which Miriam responds: 'Oh, well, *him* [. . .] It's *they*, I think, goodness knows, I don't know, it's so perfectly extraordinary'. [21] Men as a group—'they'—are the problem for Miriam, not just an individual man. In *Honeycomb*, during a dinner at Miriam's next place of employment*,* Miriam's 'thoughts flashed forward to a final clear issue of opposition, with a husband. Just a cold blank hating forehead and neatly brushed hair above it'.[22] The men block off Miriam's attempt to imagine a future; her thoughts 'flash[ing] forward' come to a stop once they reach the idea of marriage, that 'final clear issue' of having a husband. The imagined husband—who comes at the end of the sentence, grinding the thought to a halt—is literally 'blank' to her—he offers nothing interpretable, interesting, or desirable, just 'cold opposition'. By the second half of *Honeycomb,* men and the prospect of marriage actively threaten Miriam's sense of freedom and self. The narrative pull toward marriage is strong; the end of the novel features a wedding, which prompts Miriam to reflect women's lack of freedom:

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[21] Richardson, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Dorothy Richardson, Volume IV*, 221.
[22] Dorothy Richardson, *Pilgrimage* (Virago Press, 1979), 1:438.

> The only way to feel quite secure at night would be to marry . . . how awful . . . either you marry and are never alone or you risk being alone and afraid . . . to marry for safety . . . perhaps some women did. No wonder . . . and not to turn into a silly scared nervous old maid . . . how tiresome, one thing or the other . . . no choice.[23]

The fragmentation of this passage with the ellipses again suggests Miriam searching through her mind for something that naturally should come next; yet that 'next' always promises equally undesirable options. Those options are 'tiresome' for Miriam, and the sentence ends with a sense of deflation, as she concludes that this choice between marriage or no marriage is a false one, 'no choice' at all.

To develop a new narrative structure for her female protagonist, Richardson turns to more granular formal techniques as a mode of female self-formation—granular in the sense of a minute linguistic, grammatical, and syntactical experimentation embedded in Richardson's development of narrative technique over time.[24] Her unique brand of feminist modernism manifests in the alignment between Miriam's self-formation as a young woman coming-of-age in the modern world and Miriam's internal self-formation as it appears on the page, on the granular level of syntax and style. This makes female self-formation in *Pilgrimage* an extremely active process—a stuttering, fragmentary, and open-ended mode of thought that constantly grasps at and creates for itself what comes next.

Early in *Pointed Roofs*, Richardson establishes her particular mechanisms of stream of consciousness in syntax and punctuation:

> Late at night, seated wide awake opposite her sleeping companion, rushing towards the German city, she began to think.

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[23] Richardson, *Pilgrimage*, 1:466–67.

[24] This is notably different from Beci Carver's usage of the word 'granular' in *Granular Modernism* (Oxford University Press, 2014). Carver treats granularity more as a unifying theme across certain modernist texts and as an aesthetic which attempts, sometimes futilely, to capture in art the fragmentation and shapelessness of reality.

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> It was a fool's errand…. To undertake to go to the German school and teach … to be going there … with nothing to give. […] She imagined one of the rooms at the old school, full of scornful girls…. How was English taught? How did you begin? English grammar … in German? Her heart beat in her throat. She had never thought of that … the rules of English grammar?[25]

The opening sentence first positions Miriam in time and place and then signposts the narration's movement directly into her consciousness with the phrase 'she began to think'. Following the section break, the narration leaps into Miriam's unadulterated thoughts, strung together mid-sentence by successive ellipses. These two orthographic elements—ellipses and occasional spatial gaps between paragraphs or sections in the text—signify what Sinclair often describes as Richardson's characteristic 'plunge' into the mind and are part of what differentiates Richardson's style from that of other modernists.[26] While these orthographic elements may seem to represent a fragmentation or disruption of thought, the separate clauses are still comprehensible when read together without the ellipses; as Annika J. Lindskog characterizes them, 'The three-dot ellipses do not stop the flow of the prose, and they do not necessarily force the reader to pause and reflect; rather, they visualise the flow and urge the reader onwards, as though they are illustrating the movement of the thoughts themselves'.[27] Phrases like 'to be going there … with nothing to give' and 'English grammar … in German?' contain clauses that syntactically complete the clauses that come before them. The ellipses, rather than being a breakdown in continuity or linearity, actually represent the motion of Miriam's mind fumbling through the emptiness of the immediate future, the present moment of her searching for the next appropriate word or phrase. After Miriam thinks, 'English grammar … in German?', she notes to herself the newness of that very thought: '[s]he had never thought of that'. The ellipses stand in for the process of arriving at her next linguistic expression, modelling the work of self-formation on the granular level of the sentence.

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[25] Richardson, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Dorothy Richardson, Volume IV*, 15.
[26] Sinclair, 'The Novels of Dorothy Richardson', 57.
[27] Annika J. Lindskog, 'Dorothy Richardson and the Grammar of the Mind', *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies*, no. 6 (2013-14): 17.

These sentence-level instances of self-formation offer a way for a young woman to navigate the 'frightening' blankness of the future when she spurns the confinement of traditional female narratives. Besides simply telling the story, Richardson's particular mode of narration 'serve[s] as a textual realisation and representation of Miriam's conception of consciousness and reality: we are not presented with her "contemplated reality" but with the very faculty of contemplation itself'.[28] In *Pointed Roofs,* Miriam is just embarking on this process, but its effects already start to appear, at the local level. At the school with her students, Miriam describes one of the girls' faces, asking herself, 'What was it like? It was like—like—like jasmine—that was it—jasmine—and out of the jasmine face the great gaze she had met in the morning turned half-puzzled, half-disappointed upon the growing group of girls examining the watch'.[29] This presents another unmediated glimpse into Miriam's consciousness as she attempts to articulate, notably, a simile: a figure of speech, an artistic abstraction. It is not the writer or the narrator who grasps at words—who stutters the start of a simile—but Miriam herself.[30] The reader witnesses Miriam's mind reaching toward a different register of making meaning from her surroundings, an interior process made explicit. Miriam first asks herself, 'What was [the face] like?'. Then follows the effort of arriving at the answer to that question: 'It was like—like—like jasmine'. The repetition of the crux of the simile—'like'—intensifies the difficulty of artistic self-formation. Miriam struggles to break through the barrier of 'like' to enter into a more conscious formation of her world, into a more individual mode of mediating experience. After the stuttering, the clause 'that was it' follows, an almost exuberant celebration of her arrival at the right word. And Miriam relishes that arrival, repeating 'jasmine' again and then applying the word to the sentence expressing her visual experience: 'and out of the jasmine face [. . .]'. If in *Pointed Roofs* Miriam cannot yet alter the trajectory of her entire life, she can at least mould for herself the immediate future of, literally, what comes next.

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[28] Annika J. Lindskog, '"Not Recalled, But Present": Narrating the Past in the Present in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*', *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies*, no. 11 (2020-21): 19.
[29] Richardson, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Dorothy Richardson, Volume IV*, 46.
[30] In her review, May Sinclair writes that Richardson is, radically, truly one with her protagonist: 'She must not be the wise, all-knowing author. She must be Miriam Henderson. She must not know or divine; she must not see anything that Miriam does not see. She has taken Miriam's nature upon her': Sinclair, 58.

Richardson's project to represent the consciousness of her protagonist is tied deeply to the act of writing, which, to Richardson, models the actual development and movement of the mind. Earlier in *Pointed Roofs,* Richardson makes explicit this connection between Miriam's stream of consciousness and the writer's process of finding the 'right' word for something, in the scene when Miriam first meets Ulrica Hesse, a new girl in the house at which Miriam teaches:

> Ulrica Hesse had come. Miriam had seen her. There had been three large leather trunks in the hall and a girl with a smooth pure oval of pale face standing wrapped in dark furs, gazing about her with eyes for which Miriam had no word, liquid—limpid—great-saucers, no—pools … great round deeps…. She had felt about for something to express them.[31]

Just as in the scene with the 'jasmine face', the em-dashes here mark the rapid movement of Miriam's mind from word to word as she 'felt about for something to express' Ulrica's eyes, searching for the language that best conveys Miriam's true experience and understanding of the world around her. She makes associations as she ponders how to express that 'for which [she] had no word', and the language she comes up with subsequently become more evocative—moving from the adjectives 'liquid' to 'limpid', and the nouns 'great-saucers' to 'pools' and then 'great round deeps'. The retraction 'no' before the final em-dash even suggests that Miriam is editing herself as she thinks, actively working toward a final product in language through an interior contemplative process.

In *Backwater* and *Honeycomb,* the connection between reading and writing and developing an original inner consciousness is drawn out more explicitly. As Miriam reads a newspaper in *Backwater*, she begins to evoke the larger world of which she is a part, and 'for a long time she sat blankly contemplating the new world that was coming'.[32] Richardson's narration enters this state of contemplation, and soon the thought 'I'm alive' flashes through her, and is then reiterated twice again a sentence later: 'I'm alive. . . . I'm alive. […] "It's me, *me* ; this is *me* being alive"'.[33]

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[31] Richardson, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Dorothy Richardson, Volume IV*, 19.
[32] Richardson, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Dorothy Richardson, Volume IV*, 193.
[33] Richardson, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Dorothy Richardson, Volume IV*, 194.

These stuttering reiterations gradually come to form Miriam's sense of herself over time, the reiterations and ellipses suggesting a continual contemplation of this self, of 'me, *me* […] *me* being alive'. That she is 'being' alive reinforces the active quality of selfhood. Later, Miriam turns to reading novels by women in the privacy and freedom of her own room, and these novels allow Miriam to access 'herself, the nearest most intimate self she had known'.[34] Indeed, these moments of encounter with writing are when Miriam feels most self-possessed, and most in tune with her own non-normative feminine identity: 'It was only when she was alone and in the intervals of quiet reading that she came into possession of her own hands. With others they oppressed her by their size and their lack of feminine expressiveness [. . .] But they were her strength'.[35] Near the end of this solitary interlude, Miriam thinks, 'I am myself'.[36]

As Miriam continues to read these novelists in *Honeycomb,* she realizes that reading novels is a way to access another self—the self of the author. She ponders over why she is drawn to certain types of novels:

> There was something more in books than that […] the 'stronger' the author was, the more came. That was why Ouida put those others in the shade, not, not, *not* because her books were improper. It was her, herself somehow. Then you read books to find the author! That was it. That was the difference . . . that was how it was different from most people. . . . Dear Eve, I have just discovered that I don't read books for the story, but as a psychological study of the author . . . she must write that to Eve at once; tomorrow.[37]

The ellipses signal a plunge into Miriam's mental searching. The sentence, 'Then you read books to find the author!' with its opening 'then'—signifying a logical conclusion, a movement from question to answer, or a progression in time—and the final exclamation point encapsulates the genuine newness of this idea, the epiphanic moment of arriving at linguistic expression. And then the exultant phrase, 'That was it'—seen earlier in *Pointed Roofs* when Miriam lands on the correct simile—appears here, as Miriam lands with satisfaction on a clear

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[34] Richardson, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Dorothy Richardson, Volume IV*, 225.
[35] Richardson, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Dorothy Richardson, Volume IV*, 226.
[36] Richardson, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Dorothy Richardson, Volume IV*, 228.
[37] Richardson, *Pilgrimage*, 1:384.

articulation of the concrete idea she has been searching for. Immediately following her realization is her desire to take the next step in this articulation—to write down her thought. The transition from a grasping interiority to a desire to make it external in an address to her sister Eve marks this shift, suggesting the start of Miriam's gradual development from reader to writer.

These granular moments of self-formation embedded into Miriam's stream of consciousness show an alternative feminist purpose for modernist narrative techniques. In her essay 'About Punctuation', Richardson writes that prose which falls into the dulling, conventional uses of the 'machinery' of punctuation leads to a larger complacency in reading: 'And so charming is convention, so exhilarating a deliberate conformity to tradition, that it is easy to forget that the sole aim of law is liberty; in this case, liberty to express'.[38] Richardson's disruption of the standardized uses of punctuation directly speaks to this 'project of feminist individualism': that 'through grammatical experimentation, by rejecting the "machinery of punctuation", that individuality can be produced in writing'.[39] Just like in Miriam's novelistic encounters, Richardson's narrative experiments in prose and punctuation encourage her own readers to wake up from a complacent 'loll[ing] on the borderland between inertia and attention' in order to 'suffer change' through a direct and unmediated experience with the text.[40] The reader participates in this 'collaboration', a 'vital relationship between the reader and what he reads'.[41] Miriam models this; in her reading, she thinks: 'Why did this strange book come so near, nearer than any others, so that you *felt* the writing, felt the sentences as if you were writing them yourself?'.[42] Richardson attempts to create this effect too in *Pilgrimage*, involving the reader in this urgent collaborative act of writing as a way to forge the original self. Richardson, by continuously embedding the process of grasping for and arriving at individual thought, shows that resistance to convention occurs first on the granular level of expression,

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[38] Dorothy M. Richardson, 'About Punctuation', *The Adelphi*, 1, no. 11 (April 1924): 991.
[39] Thomas Haughton, '"The Novel Is Going to Rediscover Itself": Dorothy Richardson, *The Freewoman*, and Individual Expression', *Modernist Cultures*, 18, no. 3 (2023): 210-12.
[40] Richardson, 'About Punctuation', 990.
[41] Richardson, 'About Punctuation', 990.
[42] Richardson, *Pilgrimage*, 1:384–85.

in simply forging one's own original consciousness. In this attempt to revitalize the 'devitalized […] act of reading', Richardson's work contains within it one of the qualities of monumentality: that which 'returns to us [in the present] with a demand', and which, 'if we fail to respond…will only become more urgent, a warning'.[43]

Since *Pointed Roofs, Backwater,* and *Honeycomb* are the first instalments of Miriam's coming-of-age, they represent the earliest stages of this self-formation, both in Miriam's consciousness and as expressed on the page. That process extends and evolves throughout the entirety of *Pilgrimage*, in which 'writing becomes the destination of the spiritual "pilgrimage" Miriam pursues over the course of the novel-sequence, giving her the freedom to explore her consciousness as she wishes'.[44] As Miriam grows, Richardson's formal narrative techniques change and grow more nuances in the later volumes. Annika J. Lindskog writes, for example, that Richardson's most experimental usage of punctuation and typography occurs in *The Tunnel* and *Interim,* the fourth and fifth volumes of the novel sequence.[45] Lindskog also describes a 'distinctive new style' that appears in the last instalment of the series, *March Moonlight*: one that is 'more fragmentary and [in which] Miriam is more prone to comment on events, as though musing on them in hindsight'.[46] Richardson's particular feminist modernism comes through in her refusal for the novel to remain singular; throughout each of the volumes of *Pilgrimage* she 'does not conform to any single, uniform style' but rather models a continuously developing female individuality.[47] Her mode of expressing and exploring Miriam's own consciousness changes over time, constituting an endlessly active process of self-formation.

Richardson as Modernist Monument

Richardson's writing offers a unique mode of female bildungsroman and stream of consciousness narration, the complexity of which is lost when scholars 'instrumentalize' and simplify her work only in the service of defining larger trends. But why register distinctness or particularity in the monument of modernism at all? Guillory notes the potential for

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[43] Richardson, 'About Punctuation', 991; Guillory, 'Monuments and Documents', 22.
[44] Lindskog, "'Not Recalled, But Present'", 16.
[45] Lindskog, 'Dorothy Richardson', 7-8.
[46] Lindskog, "'Not Recalled, But Present'", 16.
[47] Haughton, "'The Novel Is Going to Rediscover Itself'", 213.

monuments to 'mutate into silent surfaces later generations will pass by without a second glance' and eventually become 'hopeless attempts to coerce recollection'.[48] All monuments in their 'metaphorical stoniness' risk this loss of urgency for those in the present.[49] For a movement like modernism, which sought to decentralise and even topple 'monumental' narrative traditions in favour of particular and individual experience, this risk is especially dangerous. Stream of consciousness itself is a manifestation of the impulse toward the particular—the documentary—and sometimes even eschews *any* inclination to monumentalise certain aspects of experience over others.[50] When scholars entrench only a few authors into the modernist canon, they simultaneously push out the many others like Richardson, whose alternative forms of narration and representation are what initially made modernism a monument in the first place. By defining it only by a few voices, modernism loses its hallmark complexity, and we begin to take its innovations, like 'stream of consciousness', for granted. We stop doing what modernism asks us to do: to constantly question normalised modes of representation and search for alternatives.

A discussion of Guillory's theory of monuments is not complete without reference to real, physical monuments—sites and objects that do the work of forcing its visitors to remember that which they memorialise. Recently, some work has been done to recuperate Richardson's significance on this front. In 2015, the Dorothy Richardson Society and the Bloomsbury Marchmont Association collaborated to create the first blue plaque commemorating Richardson's life and writing, an effort spearheaded by scholar Richard Ekins. In his article 'Dilemmas of Placing and Dating in Blue Plaque Research', Ekins outlines in detail the minutiae involved in the process of researching and applying for a blue plaque memorial to be set up at Richardson's former residence.[51] When

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[48] Guillory, 'Monuments and Documents', 25.

[49] Guillory, 'Monuments and Documents', 25.

[50] Tara Thomson writes that part of Richardson's alternative and underappreciated modernist difficulty is her 'proliferation of mundane details and impressionistic narrative' as opposed to a 'density of literary or cultural allusion': an intense prioritization of 'everydayness': Thomson, 102.

[51] Richard Ekins, 'Dilemmas of Placing and Dating in Blue Plaque Research: The Case of Dorothy Richardson in Bloomsbury (1896–1907) – An Essay in Grounded Theory and the Social Construction of Knowledge', *Pilgrimages: The Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies*, no. 8 (2016): 74–117.

digging into Richardson's particular presence in this local literary history, he found that she was noticeably absent from literary guides and walking tours: 'No mention is made of Dorothy Richardson in the major popular guides to literary London, be they the older ones like Andrew Davies's *Literary London*, 1988, and Ed Glinert's *Literary London,* 2000, or the newer ones such as Roger Tragholm's *Walking Literary London*, 2012'.[52] Ekins' extensive chronicle of the sheer research effort undertaken just to verify the dates of Richardson's residence at her Bloomsbury address corroborates the general lack of attention and documentation surrounding this important author.

After the blue plaque was revealed, Ekins saw a slightly renewed interest in Richardson arise in the press surrounding the event:

> Press coverage was provided in both the national and local press. The *Guardian Saturday Review,* 16 May 2015, featured Rebecca Bowler's article headlined 'Yesterday a plaque was unveiled for the modernist writer Dorothy M. Richardson. About time, argues Rebecca Bowler'. The piece concludes with 'People are starting to read her once more, again reasserting her place in the canon of experimental modernist prose writers'.[53]

Indeed, this coverage demonstrates the impact of physical monumentalisation, as it can both raise awareness of a lesser-known historical figure and can help cement that figure into the public realm by granting her a more lasting physical presence. Yet people 'starting to read [Richardson] once more' is but a first step in really doing that work of 'reasserting her place in the canon of experimentalist modernist prose writers'. While Richardson's blue plaque is certainly a 'monument' in its own right, it is also another 'document' to the monument that is the history of literary Bloomsbury. Increased attention, then, must be followed by increased academic engagement—more scholars turning to Richardson's work as 'an object of study that has its own irreducible specificity', as something that can perpetually offer new insights into what modernism itself means and was.[54]

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[52] Ekins, 'Dilemmas', 87.
[53] Ekins, 'Dilemmas', 111.
[54] Guillory, 'Monuments and Documents', 21.

Over the past twenty or so years, there have been calls to a more explicitly feminist approach to the literary study of modernism. In their introduction to the first issue of *Feminist Modernist Studies,* Cassandra Laity writes that, 'particularly with respect to women's writing, modernism has yet to witness an intensive, wide-ranging recovery of lost and underappreciated women writers'.[55] Indeed, there have been more efforts to take seriously 'neglected' women modernists, and the work of such scholarship is always to 'show how a forgotten or understudied text helps challenge or advance the field'.[56] Less present in this push toward a more feminist modernism, though, is the raising of certain literary works or authors to the monumental status, as both *definitional* to modernism and worthy of their own definitions. It would be remiss to say that Richardson is a 'neglected' modernist, but it is true that she, like many other women writers, are more often 'exclude[d]' from 'questions of form'.[57] Implicit in this assessment of the field is the idea that women's writing has contributed less to defining the monument of modernism—the styles, forms, and techniques which make modernism a recognizable literary period—and are only interesting for their more documentary contributions, only important when agglomerated together, as in these specialised journals and special issues.

For modernism—and a feminist modernism in particular—attention to granularity is especially important. In their shared mission of highlighting the variety and individuality of (women's) lives, modernism and feminism both rely on the action of raising 'documents' to the status of 'monuments'. From Woolf's oeuvre, a prime example of this ideological fusion is *Mrs. Dalloway*. The novel grants monumentality to the mundanity of a single day in Clarissa Dalloway's life, which takes up the entirety of the novel's space and attention. But *Mrs. Dalloway* offers only one way in which modernist techniques can monumentalise women's lives. Turning to a text like Richardson's thirteen-volume epic *Pilgrimage*—quite distinct from Woolf's thematic, generic, and stylistic concerns in *Mrs. Dalloway*—offers another. Richardson gives readers a wholly different model of female self-formation that is still quintessentially 'modernist'. Scholarly recognition of this difference puts

[55] Cassandra Laity, 'Editor's Introduction: Toward Feminist Modernisms', *Feminist Modernist Studies*, 1, nos 1–2 (2017): 2.
[56] Anne E. Fernald, 'Women's Fiction, New Modernist Studies, and Feminism', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 59, no. 2 (2013): 231.
[57] Laity, 'Editor's Introduction', 2.

pressure on the impulse to essentialise modernism into trends and commonalities, to resist its potential 'calcification'. Criticism must continually recognise the importance of granularity not just to the formation of modernism itself, but also as part of the methodological approach to how we study it.