СОВРЕМЕНА ФИЛОЛОГИЈА
УДК 821.111.09

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY PHILOLOGY
JCP 2019, 2 (2), 133-147.

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND MUSIC IN DOROTHY RICHARDSON'S *PILGRIMAGE*

Ivana Trajanoska
University American College, Skopje
trajanoska@uacs.edu.mk

The present paper explores the quest of Miriam Henderson, the main protagonist in Dorothy Richardson's thirteen-volume novel *Pilgrimage*, for religious identity and its connection to music. *Pilgrimage* has previously been read as a quest narrative by several critics, but the role of music in the pursuit for deconstruction and an ultimate refute of Miriam's Anglican religious tradition has been neglected. By comparing the religious practices of Anglicanism and Lutheranism during the protagonist's stay in Germany in the first volume *Pointed Roofs,* and their relevance to congregational singing, choice of hymns and the sermons, Miriam starts her quest aimed at redefining her religious identity. In this paper we review the stages of Miriam's religious quest by outlining her path towards revelation and establishing a new relation to God throughout the volumes *Backwater*, *The Tunnel*, *Deadlock*, *The Trap*, *Clear Horizon* and *March Moonlight*.

Keywords: literature**,** quest narrative, musico-literary relations, religion

РЕЛИГИСКИОТ ИДЕНТИТЕТ И МУЗИКАТА ВО РОМАНОТ *АЏИЛАК* ОД ДОРОТИ РИЧАРДСОН

Ивана Трајаноска
Универзитет Американ колеџ, Скопје
trajanoska@uacs.edu.mk

Овој труд ја истражува потрагата на Миријам Хендерсон, главната протагонистка во тринаесеттомниот роман *Аџилак* на Дороти Ричардсон, за верски/религиски идентитет и неговата поврзаност со музиката. Многу критичари го разгледуваат романот *Аџилак* како приказна потрага, но улогата на музиката во потрагата на Мирјам Хендерсон по начин за деконструкција и, на крајот, отфрлање на англиканската верска традиција, е запоставена. Споредувајќи ги верските практики на англиканизмот и лутеранизмот за време на престојот на главниот лик во Германија во првиот том *Зашилени покриви*, поврзани со конгрегациското пеење, изборот на химни и проповеди, Миријам ја започнува својата потрага насочена кон редефинирање на нејзиниот религиски идентитет. Во овој труд ги разгледуваме фазите на потрагата на Миријам за верски/религиски идентитет, исцртувајќи го патот на Миријам кон откровение и воспоставување нова врска со Бога.

Клучни зборови: книжевност, роман-потрага, музичко-книжевни врски, религија

1 Introduction

Pilgrimage by Dorothy Richardson is a quest novel which envisions life as a journey. It recounts the quest for a religious, national, and feminine identity of the protagonist Miriam Henderson from her teenage years to adulthood closely following Richardson's life from 1893-1909. Moreover, *Pilgrimage* is a novel of a woman becoming a writer and finding a female writer's voice. However, as the title of the novel indicates, Miriam's quest for a religious identity and a new relationship to God is at the core of the novel and it will be further developed in the present article.

Pilgrimage was published throughout fifty-two years. The first volume *Pointed Roofs* was published in 1915, while the last *March Moonlight*, left unfinished, was published posthumously in the Complete Edition in 1967. The choice of one title, *Pilgrimage*, for a novel which is composed of thirteen volumes (or chapter-novels as Richardson called them) points to Richardson's plan to give unity to the novel by accentuating the deconstruction of her Anglican religious identity inherited from her family, and then, the reconstruction of that identity by opening herself to the "inner light". The concept of "inner light" is tightly related to Quakerism. However, in *Pilgrimage*, it is further developed and adapted. Miriam's religious quest consists of rediscovering that inner lights and of accessing the "center of [her] being" (Richardson 4 2002: 609) which represents the only goal and the true destination of the quest and of Miriam's religious and spiritual journey which has a circular form and ends as Miriam starts writing what constitutes the first volume *Pointed Roofs*. *Pilgrimage* has often been deemed by critics as a fragmented narrative, without unity and without plot. However, it is the protagonist's quest for a religious identity that, in all its complexity, creates the unity of the novel. Moreover, music accompanies the protagonist-pilgrim in her quest for religious identity and, at the same time, makes the very quest possible.

The notion of pilgrimage can be read as a religious expression of the archetypal quest. Pilgrimages represent a source of transformative energy when the need for change is felt in the life of the pilgrim. The pilgrimage includes a physical but also an inner journey. The geographical journey must be done in parallel with the internal one. The reasons for undertaking a pilgrimage can be many, but in any case this voyage is understood as inevitable. The pilgrim's call to begin the journey is linked to the basic human need to establish a connection with something outside of oneself that gives meaning and direction to life. The pilgrim's reward at the end of their quest is maturation, integration into the world, and the reconciliation of physical life with spiritual life. Miriam Henderson's pilgrimage starts with her leaving of her family home in England at the age of seventeen due to her father's financial constraints and arrival in Germany to work as an English teacher in a girls' boarding school in Hanover. In the subsequent volumes Miriam's pilgrimage continues in London where she first starts teaching at Wordsworth House in Banbury Park. Soon

after she finds a job as an assistant at a dental practice, earns her living, lodges at several places throughout London, explores London's bustling life, attends various lectures and meetings, and meets different people from various classes, religions, nationalities, and political backgrounds. Most of her pilgrimage occurs in London except from her visit of Oberland in Switzerland and Dimple Hill at a farm of the Quaker family Roscorlas. Miriam artistic pilgrimage starts with translation endeavors and calumniates with her beginning of writing a novel in the last volume *March Moonlight*. Although Miriam's pilgrimage does not abound with many places and it is mainly confined to the diversity of imperial London, Miriam's pilgrimage is rich with London's social and political life at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century providing a fertile ground for development of her feminine consciousness and growth.

The present article aims at reviewing Miriam's religious quest through the prism of music and its role in the (de)construction of her religious identity.

2 Literature Review

Several critics have studied *Pilgrimage* as a quest narrative detailing different aspects of the protagonist's quest. According to Caesar Blake, *Pilgrimage* is a mystical novel in which the protagonist Miriam embarks on a quest for a transcendent reality in order to create a relationship with the Absolute (Blake 1960). For Shirley Rose *Pilgrimage* represents the quest of a writer to find the form of expression appropriate to her conscience (Rose 1970). For Rachel Blau Duplessis, *Pilgrimage* evokes the quest of a writer who seeks to move away from the narrative tradition and the traditional plot (Duplessis 1985). Esther Kleinbord Labovitz writes that the pilgrimage of the heroine is a spiritual quest whose goal is to acquire a mystical vision that makes possible the discovery of her vocation as a writer (Labovitz 1988). Moreover, Jean Radford studies the narrative form of the novel by making comparisons between *Pilgrimage* and John Bunyan's allegorical novel *Pilgrim's Progress*. According to Radford, *Pilgrimage* takes the form of a quest through Miriam's alienation "from the familial hearth and from a position of a consumer, Miriam looks with 'eyes of a stranger' at familiar territory, the physical and social space in which she moves and has her being" (Radford 1991: 47). In addition, Janet Fouli describes Miriam as a pilgrim-traveler who seeks to know herself, to gain experience and to find her vocation (Fouli 1995). María Francisca Llantada Díaz suggests that *Pointed Roofs*, the first novel, represents the first stage of Miriam's mythical quest and analyzes *Pointed Roofs* through The Fool card in Tarot (Diaz 2010). According to her, the development that Miriam undergoes in *Pointed Roofs* reveals a striking correspondence with the stage of the archetypal quest that The Fool embodies like new beginnings, inexperience, belief, faith, but also naivety, poor judgment, lack of direction, chaos. In her review of some of *Pilgrimage'*s readings as a

quest narrative, Díaz identifies two types of interpretation of the quest that *Pilgrimage* highlights; ones which ignore the inner aspects of the quest (Rachel Blau Du Plessis, Shirley Rose and Janet Fouli's) and the others which ignore the outside aspects of the quest (Esther Kleinbord Labovitz and Caesar Blake's), which make them incomplete (ibid., 57). However, music has never been included in any of the reviews concerned with the protagonist's quest. The aim of this article is to provide a comprehensive understanding of Miriam's religious quest and its connection to music as an integral part of the protagonist's spiritual journey.

3 Miriam Henderson's Quest for Religious Identity and Music

3.1 Religion and Music

The goal of the paradigmatic Christian pilgrimage is the religious development of the pilgrim who, at the end of their pilgrimage, will achieve a greater mastery of religious practice. The pilgrim must, during his pilgrimage, dispense with the banal elements associated with religion in order to confront the basic elements and the structures of their faith in their essence. The pilgrim experiences religious and spiritual development, seeks a certain high purpose, such as truth, and establishes a new relationship with God. On the other hand, in Western cultures, the dialogue between music and theology has been very intense and it is still very much alive. In the Christian church, music occupies an important place. In the majority of Christian churches, the congregation sings and a musical instrument is being played as well, which is an integral part of the connection to God. This motivated the exploration of how music is related to Christianity in general and to the religious practice in particular, but also to its form and content. This exploration begins with Saint Augustine and Saint Severine Boethius and continues in the Middle Ages. Efforts to intertwine music and theology continued further on in the following centuries and many Enlightenment philosophers and theologians incorporated music into their theological interpretations. In the nineteenth century, Romanticism gave music a quasi-religious character. J. G. Herder, J. W. Goethe, E.T.A. Hoffman, and J.P. Richter constituted the spiritualist debate and promoted the concept of 'absolute music' and music as the 'higher realm'. On the other hand, theology started to defend a point of view which opposed music to theology. In addition, music was also considered to be the realm of the demoniac (Begbie and Guthrie 2011: 25) and was separated from religion completely. To reconcile theology and music Jeremy Begbie and Steven R. Guthrie, distinguished British scholars who explore the interplay between music and theology, have suggested a distinction between the aspects which constitute music in order to inquire into the musico-theological relationships. The creation of music provides temporally organized patterns of sounds which constitute the primary text of the musical activity. However, when we talk about music, beside the musical text, we should have in mind the two musical practices such as "music-making" and the "music-hearing" (Begbie and Guthrie 2011: 5). Thus, a tripartite model: music-making / text / music-hearing is created,

which refers to the semiotic model of Jean-Jacques Nattiez - production, trace and reception (Nattiez 1990), and one must always have it in mind even if the focus is only on one part of what is called music. Furthermore, they argue, musical practices can also be socially, politically, and culturally conditioned which should also be taken into account. However, in order to understand and describe music, the approach must be multidisciplinary and capable of capturing all facets of music (Begbie and Guthrie 2011: 6,7). Music is often understood as a means of transmitting religious ideas by theology, a way of directing attention to theological truths. If we assign to music only this secondary place, if we only read the theological significance of music, we endanger the integrity of music itself.

3.2 Miriam Henederson's religious pilgrimage and music

In the novel, Miriam's religious pilgrimage is a process of continuous spiritual maturation, a perpetual quest for a religious identity liberated from organized religions and based on experience and the discovery of the Kingdom of Heaven in herself accompanied by a musical maturation where music plays a major role; music represents a source of transcendental and meditative experience which allows the (re)discovery of the "light", of religious essence residing within the person "down to the center of being where everything is seen in perspective" (Richardson 4 2002: 609). The entire novel is imbued with references to religious music, classical pieces, as well as musical experiences of performing and listening to music, some of which offer moments of ecstatic perception often transforming reality and the present moment. The first volume, *Pointed Roofs*, is particularly important for understanding the relationship between Miriam's musico-religious pilgrimage. Her stay in Germany is of crucial importance because it represents the revelation of the 'destination' of the quest which joins together her religious, national, and feminine identity through music. The protagonist would repeatedly return to this moment of revelation, of attaining awareness throughout the novel in order to deconstruct, and then rebuild and further develop her religious identity during her pilgrimage presented in the subsequent volumes. Due to this reason, a special attention will be given to the first volume.

In *Pointed Roofs*, Miriam is confronted with and expected to conform to the strict religious practices and routine at the German boarding school where she teaches. Praying is obligatory and public, a joint activity performed in the sitting room. Thus, the reader is introduced to Miriam's religious doubts and disquietudes. Miriam does not like the idea of praying every day while Fraulein, the head mistress of the school, reads from the Bible to the girls. She is revolted by the idea to be read from the Bible, and even decides to leave the room. She thinks that Fraulein's attitude is too insincere and excessive, too "smarmy" as she puts it (Richardson 1 2002: 49). However, when she hears Fraulein's "slow" and "clear" pronunciation, her

"pure" and "unaspirated" North German accent (ibid., 49), Miriam sees the narrative in a different light and decides to stay as if enchanted. Fraulein's enunciation seems to Miriam to suit the text. The narrative appears to Miram "new, vivid and real in this new tongue" (ibid., 49). When one of the English students is about to play a hymn in English on the piano, Miriam feels ashamed by the choice. The girl is to play from the "Moody and Starkey" hymn book: "She longed for the end. She glanced through the book—frightful, frightful words and choruses. The girls were getting on to their knees. Oh dear, every night" (ibid., 50).

What Miriam refers to as "Moody and Starkey" is actually titled *Sacred Songs and Solos*, a hymn collection compiled by Ira David Sankey which first appeared in 1873. David Sankey was an American gospel singer and composer. Together with Dwight L. Moody, an American evangelist and publisher (associated with the Holiness Movement and founder of the Moody Church and the Moody Bible Institute in Massachusetts, USA), they started a series of religious revival campaigns in USA and Great Britain at the end of the 19th century. The hymn book was widely known as *Sankey and Moody's Songs* even though many of the tunes and lyrics were written by others. The hymnbook also incorporated a lot of standard church hymns. During their campaigns, Starkey who also composed and arranged some of the tunes and wrote some of the lyrics, would sing and Moody would preach. Starkey did not have any formal musical education. The critics of the time were mixed. Some applauded his expressiveness and the pathos, and some deplored them characterizing him as a "third-rate star" (Osbeck 1985: 18). Sankey accentuated emotion, dramatic expression, and pauses in order to convey the meaning of the lyrics to the congregation (Everett 1999: 55). When he was performing his solos, Sankey would play on a small portable reed organ. He would choose less complicated tunes which could be easily memorized and insisted on soft accompanying music in order to accentuate the message of the lyrics. Furthermore, congregational singing was an important part of their campaigns. Miriam clearly expresses her dislike of Sankey's hymns, their lyrics and choruses. The reason for this reaction rests in Miriam's distrust of words and her disapproval of subordinating music to them, which is what Sankey actually did. She feels that the integrity of music is being violated by the lyrics and the insistence on conveying the religious message. Music is used to serve the purpose of words and religious doctrines which is something she does not agree with. What she admires music for is its openness for interpretations; the lack of authority compared to words, which she believes has been taken from it in the Moody and Stankey's hymns. It is what Begbie and Guthrie call "reductionism" or stripping music of its complexity and pluralism (Begbie and Guthrie 2011: 7).

When Fraulein reads from the Bible in German, since German is not Miriam's native tongue, it seems less authoritative. She focuses on the pronunciation, enunciation, and the melodiousness of the language, and does not mind the words and their meaning since they do not refer to her tradition and culture of origin she is trying to

break free from. If interpreted within Feridnand de Saussure's semiotics, Miriam prefers the sound-image of the sign and tries to loosen the strict division between a signifier (or "sound-image") and a signified (or "concept"). Her belief in the lack of conceptual content in music and its non-representational value is evident. She seems to believe that the Anglican Church has contaminated this intrinsic facet of music and uses music for indoctrination and imposing authority over music, words, and the congregation. She protests against congregational singing because it narrows the possibilities of individualism, of personal interpretation and questioning. In Germany, acquiring the needed distance for building an objective stance, she visits several churches, an Anglican, a Lutheran, and a Catholic church. We would carefully examine these scenes in order to explore Miriam's musico-religious quest. The visit of an Anglican church in Germany confirms her already formed opinion. At first, the small gathering of English men and women seems elegant and refined to her. As she looks at their faces while they are singing, she has the feeling of knowing those women. They all look completely the same to her. She recognizes the way they speak, the way they smile and take things for granted. Taking things for granted, carelessness, listening to sermons without being able to question and speak your mind, are the things that made church going unbearable for Miriam at the first place. Miriam tries not to listen to the preacher, to think of something else, but the preacher's voice prevents her thoughts of spreading their wings. In the preacher's voice, Miriam hears doubt; his voice is neither convincing nor convinced. She feels threatened by his voice which also provokes a furious resentment within her. Miriam tries to pretend and project a serene face. Suddenly, during the singing of the hymn, a flash of light appears in the distance and sends a breath of fresh air that agitates the stifling air of the church. However, the ecstatic moment has barely begun as the supplicating singing voices interrupt it. She thinks of these English women again and she suddenly realizes that Emma Bergmann, one of the German school girls, is laughing silently and remembers how she laughed with her sister in church too back in England. Instead of experiencing an ecstatic, transcendent moment that music could have offered her, Miriam starts thinking about whether she would be able to pretend all her life and continue going to church:

> It would be practicing deception... To despise it all, to hate the minister and the choir and the congregation and yet to come […] weekly to some church— working her fingers into their gloves and pretending to take everything for granted and to be just like everybody else and really thinking only of getting into a quiet pew and ceasing to pretend. It was wrong to use church like that" (Richardson 1 2002: 72).

During the scene which describes Miriam's visit of the Catholic church in Germany, we realize that Miriam has never been to one before. Miriam looks around, smells the incense, observes the stations and chapels, the altars with offerings, the painted Madonna, the banners, the artificial flowers, the carvings. Everything

seems new and strange to her. The French teacher who accompanies them expresses her fear constantly. "'Je connais ces gens-là, je vous promets… vraiment j'en ai peur….'" (Richardson 1 2002: 119). Miriam moves away from the French teacher who does not stop saying she is afraid of the Catholics as they walk around. Miriam is also very prudent. Richardson describes the scene using vocabulary that involves coldness and distance: the windows are "frosted", the ceiling is "low", the wall is made of "plaster", and the room they entered is completely empty except for a small cupboard (ibid., 120). The whole atmosphere is not hospitable, nor inviting. It is a strange, new experience for Miriam which is also additionally undermined by Mademoiselle's constant expression of fear. When the priest shows the girls a cross crusted with jewels, Miriam stands apart in an angle and does not come closer. She neither wants to see the artifacts more closely, nor touch them: "She stood as thing after thing was taken from the cupboard, waiting in the corner for the moment when they must leave." (ibid., 120). The Roman Catholic Church has nothing to offer her which could be understood in historical terms and the process of the formation of Protestantism and the Anglican Church. Instead, she is enchanted by the Lutheran Church, by Martin Luther's courage to speak his mind, to stand up for what he believes, and confront the Roman Catholic Church: "They pinned up that notice on a Roman Catholic church... and all the priests looked at them... and behind the priests were torture and dark places... Luther looking up to God... saying you couldn't get away from your sins by paying money... standing out in the world […] (ibid., 169). In the scene at the Lutheran church, the atmosphere is described with tenderness and enthusiasm. The congregation, motionless and seated, is singing a hymn. This time, she does not mind congregational singing because the congregation leaves an impression as being more autonomous, more independent, and less subdued. The whole atmosphere resembles a "tea-party" to her: "The people near her had not moved. Nobody had moved. The whole church was sitting down, singing a hymn. What wonderful people.... Like a lot of tea-party..." (ibid., 75). The Anglicans seemed elegant, careless, but credulous, and their smile seemed artificial. She uses the word "refined" but in quotation marks as if to suggest that their refinement is superficial. The Anglican men, she calls them "unconscious forms" with whom she can not in any case be linked: "And the men, standing there in their overcoats.... Why were they there? What were they doing? What were their thoughts? She pressed against a barrier. Nothing to do with these unconscious forms" (ibid., 70).

On the other hand, the people at the Lutheran church seem happy and comfortable with themselves. Lutherans are not refined like the Anglicans, she notices, but they are not stiff and they do not have to stand up. They sing comfortably sitting, which suggests a less ecclesiastical authority to which Miriam is instantly drawn to. Miriam reads the first line from the hymn book and recognizes the hymn *Now thank we all our God*. Sung without the *we* and *our* in German, the sentence seems to her more satisfactory than in English, even perfect. The Germans sing it better, Miriam thinks,

without jerks and, for Miriam, it is neither a proclamation nor an order. The sentence seems to her accessible and natural:

> She hung over the book. "Nun—dank—et—Al—le—Gott". Now—thank—all—God. She read that first line again and felt how much better the thing was without the "we" and the "our". […] But sung as these Germans sang it, it did not jerk at all. It did not sound like a «proclamation» or an order. It was... somehow... everyday. […] people, not many people, a troop, a little army under the high roof, with the great shadows all about them. "Nun danket alle Gott". There was nothing to object to in that. (ibid., 75-76)

This idealization of the Lutheran church could be expected of a seventeen year old teenager. It leads her to a momentous conclusion that she has found her place in Germany and that she must stay there. However, this would change very soon. If we read carefully, subconsciously, Miriam describes the Lutheran congregation as "a troop, a little army", and it will not be long for Miriam to realize how she idealized her surroundings. When Miriam left her family because of financial problems and began her pilgrimage, she was only seventeen. She had a lot to learn about the world and herself. She wanted to prove to herself and her family that she could be independent, that she could help her family and make a living on her own. However, she feels lonely; she is worried and without much confidence in herself despite her pride. She is analytical but often confused. She is determined to build an authentic identity, but she does not know how. She is a young woman at the turn of the century: "She could only think that somehow she must be different" (ibid., 81). She feels that she embodies something new: "I'm something new - a kind of different world" (ibid., 260), different from her mother, who is calm and submissive, "such a little thing" (ibid., 184), and from her father who, despite his desire to offer his family a comfortable life, he did not succeed; despite his desire to be a gentleman and an intellectual, despite his taste for art, literature and music, he fears new things and he is a conformist who despises "new fangled music" (ibid., 43). However, Miriam managed to escape the trap of her family home and their expectations. She challenged the roles imposed by her family and the society: "... and she had run away, proud of herself, despising them all, and had turned herself into Miss Henderson" (ibid., 112), but she has yet to discover who that Miss Henderson wants to be. The fight in search of an authentic national, feminine and religious identity, the distance from her family, from the identity of a long-desired son her father never had, from her country, from her English and Anglican culture, give her the possibility to mature, to question the concepts of femininity of her culture and religion, and to begin to construct an identity that is not based on imitation which is her biggest fear. Germany, a new country for Miriam and a culture different from the English, has been a perfect start in this respect.

Everything begins and ends on the first day of her arrival in Germany, during the musical evening, when she listens to the girls, students at the school, play the piano as she has always dreamed to play. Her musical and spiritual evolution begins at that very moment. She discovers a different music, played differently, performed differently. The musical scores she has brought with her make her blush: "She had a whole sheaf of songs with her. But after that first they seemed to have lost their meaning. [...] She blushed at her collection" (ibid., 56). These pieces of music could not possibly be played at the *Vorspielen*, thinks Miriam. She listens eagerly and learns to play Schubert, Grieg, Brahms. She believes she has found the place where she will feel comfortable and safe: "Finally she ensconced herself among her Germans, feeling more securely secure" (ibid., 57). Idyllically, she repeatedly expresses her determination to stay there as if she wanted to persuade herself that this is the place for her: "It would be best to stay with the Germans. Yes.... she would stay" (ibid., 71), "'It is all right. I will stay with you always'" (ibid., 99). However, after a few months, she discovers that in the end she will not be able to stay in the school nor in Germany. It is a painful but inevitable discovery. She concludes that the Germans too, make artificial smiles, they too pretend. The girls at the school are not perfect either and Germany is not the place where she could build a distinct identity: "This is no place for me", concludes Miriam in the end (ibid., 15). Germany is no longer the refuge from her Englishness, nor from her religious doubts. To continue teaching at the school or stay in Germany at one of the school's residents, Emma, and marry her brother, none of these possibilities is the solution to her dilemma. None is the goal of her quest. Miriam is persuaded that she would be forced to pretend in front of German women and men to fit in their society and that does not suit her. She comes to the conclusion that German men despise women and do not appreciate women and their individuality. She refuses the marriage proposal of Pastor Lahmann who wants a "a Little house, well-tiled, a little wife, well-willed" (ibid., 127). The school principal, Fraulein, does not understand her and she could not possibly confine to her and talk to her about her religious issues neither. Fraulein is "despotic" (ibid., 179): she talks about "purity", chastity and preaches about what a 'proper' live of a maiden should be disregarding their individuality and freedom. Furthermore, organized religion disgusts her and makes her feel trapped. However, Miriam cannot imagine her life without God which makes it even more confused and troubled.

Miriam feels helpless. She thinks no one can help her. She knows that if she spoke to a priest, he would tell her to listen to the sermons in "in the right spirit" but she will never be able to do it, she is certain of it: "There she felt she was on solid ground. Listening to sermons was wrong ... Trying to listen to them made her more furious than anything she could think of, more basic in submitting ..." (ibid., 73). What makes her angry is that she does not have the opportunity to express her disagreement; she cannot stop the sermon and say that things are not that simple. It is the injustice she cannot bear, the obligation to take things for granted, without objection. She determinately refutes the authority of the preachers: "Preachers knew no more than

anyone else ... you could see by their faces ... sheep's' faces ....” (ibid., 73). “What a terrible life ...” (ibid., 73), concludes young Miriam who cannot stand being forced to listen to sermons and pretend to agree. Miriam has already made the decision not spend her life pretending. Yet she is not open enough to all possibilities; she is not brave enough; she is prejudiced; prone to generalizations; and confused. Thus, Richardson presents the developing feminine consciousness at the turn of the century, determined to break free from the constraints of Victorian England, but not yet attuned to nor ready for the twentieth century's changes; a consciousness of a young woman, similar to the Tarot's The Fool card, in Diaz words, inexperienced and naïve, full of faith but lost.

However, in the second volume *Backwater*, a change occurs. Miriam, who has kept her religious doubts for herself, finally finds the courage to talk about them. For the first time, Miriam will speak of her turmoil, of the opposition she feels between religion and reason, to Miss Haddie, one of the principals of Wordsworth School in London where she will start teaching on her return from Germany. In *The Tunnel* Miriam will already have discovered Unitarianism. For a moment it will appease her troubles connected to Christ's role but soon she will conclude that Unitarianism is not her destination either. According to Miriam, Christ intervenes between God and man and prevents the “peace” that comes from God to enter into man. Miriam sees Christ as a kind of obstacle that she cannot overcome to reach God (ibid., 457).

In *Deadlock*, Miriam meets the Russian Jew Michael Shatov. She develops feelings for him, as he for her, but she refuses his marriage proposal because she is persuaded that Judaism deems women worthy only for breeding. Thus, her religious doubts and her disbelief in organized religions even more univocally unite in Miriam's quest for a feminine identity. She concludes that conventional religions are opposed to women's freedom and that the Church will continue to be “the Royal Academy of Males” (Richardson 3 2002: 323). In *The Trap*, Miriam will try to redefine what sacred and religious temples are and where they could be found since the Christian temples do not tempt her any more. In *Clear Horizon*, Miriam no longer seeks light beyond herself but within herself. She explores the strange light within her and what she seeks is the divine presence in herself. The discovery of this inner light becomes her temple. However, the process of accessing it is a perpetual effort. In *Dimple Hill*, Miriam leaves London and all the constraints that prevent her from seeing the horizon of her life. She settles in a Quaker family and discovers the Quaker religion which at first seems to her to be the best choice: “the best I've met”, Miriam exclaims (Richardson 4 2002: 603). The doctrine of inner light and religious individualism attracts her powerfully. Quakers believe in personal experience rather than in church or scripture. Personal experience is for them the key to spiritual life. These founding ideas of Quakerism are perfectly suited to Miriam because the Society of Friends seem to offer her the opportunity to be among friends, equal and different, individual and autonomous, to interpret things in her own way, to rely on her personal experience, to put behind her the propositions of the Scriptures which

disturb her and to gain access to her inner light. She repeatedly tries, through these mystical experiences, to gain access to the inner light by practicing what looks like the process that the Quakers call "centring down": "At no matter what cost […] she would reach that central place; go farther and farther into the heart of her being and be there, as if alone, tranquility, until fully possessed by that something within her that was more than herself" (Richardson 4 2002: 219). Nevertheless, as the scheme of her pilgrimage foreshadows, Quakers will not be the solution nor the destination of her quest. The Roscorlas are not as open as they seem and Miriam is again judged for her individualism. She is not considered worthy of a "friend" in the Quaker Society of Friends, and Richards Roscorlas' marriage proposal is withdrawn. Miriam, once again, abandons an organized religion and moves back to London. However, her journey continues, "the strange journey down and down to the center of being" (ibid., 609). Thus, Miriam's quest for a religious identity becomes a spiritual quest towards the center of her essence and being. In *March Moonlight*, the last volume which remains unfinished and most probably not intended to be the last one (Hanscombe 1982), Miriam's spiritual quest continues through her efforts to become a writer: "Travel, while I write, down to that center where everything is seen in perspective" (Richardson 4 2002: 619). To Miriam, writing becomes a spiritualized process and even an act of devotion as Radford has suggested. Her becoming of writer was announced from the very first volume.

However, becoming a writer is not an end in itself, nor does it mark the end of the pilgrimage. Miriam takes her personal religious temple somehow as she takes her suitcase, the "Saratoga trunk" from *Pointed Roofs*, and her journey, her quest, her pilgrimage is a continuous struggle. The title *March Moonlight* refers to the March evening before Miriam's departure for Germany in *Pointed Roofs*. In *March Moonlight*, Miriam begins writing what will become *Pilgrimage*. Her vocation of a writer is a continuation of the pilgrimage and the spiritual quest. While writing, she gradually reaches the center of her being and this process is the foundation of her religious and spiritual identity which evolves and develops during her pilgrimage; travel, as she writes, to that center where everything is seen in perspective (ibid., 619): "While I write, everything vanishes but what I contemplate. 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. Contemplation is adventure into discovery; reality" (ibid., 657). In this quest, music has power similar to writing and it is the same power to dissolve the present, the past and the future. While listening to the music, Miriam gets rid of her body and the memories that weigh on her: "her body with its load of well-known memories" (Richardson 1 2002: 263). What she seeks is to free herself, to get in touch with herself, to access her inner self, but Christian theology and religious practices and none of the Christian doctrines to which she got exposed to allow it. However, when she listens to and plays music she becomes nothing but an ear, without body, without memories, without past, present, or future:

"After a while, everything was dissolved, past and future, and it was nothing but an ear, intent on the mediation harmony which stole out in the garden" (ibid., 205).

Like writing, music is not the substitute either for an organized religion or a religious identity. Music, just like organized religions, can also be influenced by cultural contexts and concepts, and not give access to the inner light. However, the music the Bergmann girls play at the *Vorspielen*, the musical evening, at the German school in *Pointed Roofs,* Chopin's *Fifteenth Nocturne* and another unreferenced piece, gives her the opportunity to encounter for the first time the light that will become the core aspect of her religious identity. Moreover, it is "the light" which represents the nucleus of her quest, the purpose and the destination of her pilgrimage. Richardson contrasts this experience with the fact that religious music played at various churches never produce on Miriam the same effect, whether because of the lyrics, or the preacher. Moreover, the music played by the English girls during the same *Vorspielen* does not have the same effect either. Curiously enough, "the light" is revealed to Miriam at the very beginning of her pilgrimage, during the first day in Germany, and it is also tightly connected to her earliest childhood memory of the Babington Garden what Miriam refers to as the beginning of her consciousness. The light has been there all her life, from the very beginning. Thus, Miriam's pilgrimage is to rediscover it, to grasp its meaning, to liberate herself from everything that contaminated that self-sufficiency, from everything that has dimmed the inner light which she has always had, known, and felt but she had lost awareness of. Her pilgrimage consists of rediscovering that light at the center of her being but also constantly finding ways to access it and surmounting the obstacles that make her doubt and prevent her from reaching it:

> The single notes of the opening motif of Chopin's Fifteenth Nocturne fell pensively into the waiting room. […]Miriam dropped her eyes—she seemed to have been listening long—that wonderful light was coming again—she had forgotten her sewing—when presently she saw, slowly circling, fading and clearing, first its edge, and then, for a moment the whole thing, dripping, dripping as it circled, a weed-grown mill-wheel.... She recognized it instantly. She had seen it somewhere as a child—in Devonshire—and never thought of it since—and there it was. (Richardson 1 2002: 43)

4 Conclusion

Miriam's quest for religious identity is complex and multi faced and spread over thirteen volumes. Her pilgrimage joins together her quest for redefining her religious, national and feminine identity thus making it difficult to separate one from the other. The role of music in this quest has been long omitted by critics. However, it plays an indispensible part in providing a comprehensive understanding of *Pilgrimage* as a quest narrative. By continuously analyzing, and then refuting, several

organized religions and Christian doctrines, Miriam tries to redefine her religious identity. Autonomy, individuality, freedom to question and to dismiss authority are the guiding forces of her quest. Organized religions do not give the possibility to practice those core principles. However, she does examine several possibilities. By contrasting the musical practices of the Anglican and the Lutheran Church, she is at first enchanted by Lutherans but soon realizes it has all been just a perception and a juvenile idealization. In this manner, Miriam establishes a pattern which would repeat throughout the thirteen volumes that constitute *Pilgrimage*, a pattern of trials and failures to become a part of an organized religion. Through the power of music and writing, she would find the Kingdom of Heaven within herself, she would rediscover "the inner light" which she has had in herself "down to the center of her being where everything is seen in perspective" since the beginning of her consciousness.

References

Blake, C. R. (1960). *Dorothy Richardson*. Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press.

Begbie, J. and Guthrie, S.R. (eds.). (2011). *Resonant Witness: Conversations between Music and Theology*. Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Diaz, M.F.L. (2010). Pointed Roofs: Initiation Pilgrimage as a Quest Narrative. *Pilgrimages: The Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies*, 3: 53-56.

Duplessis, R.B. (1985). *Beyond the Hard Visible Horizon, Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writer*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Everett, B. S. (1999). *Ira Sankey: First Gospel Singer*. Fort Washington, PA:Christian Literature Crusade.

Fouli, J. (1995). *Structure and Identity. The Creative Imagination in Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage*. Manouba: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de la Manouba.

Hanscombe, G. E. (1982). *The Art of Life: Dorothy Richardson and the Development of Feminist Consciousness*. London: Owen.

Labovitz, E.K. (1988). *The Myth of the Heroine. The Female Bildungsroman in the Twentieth Century: Dorothy Richardson, Simone de Beauvoir, Doris Lessing, Christa Wolf*. New York: Peter Lang.

Osbeck, K. W. (1985). *101 More Hymn Stories*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications.

Radford, J. (1991). *Dorothy Richardson*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Richardson, D. (2002). *Pilgrimage 1-4*. London: Virago Press.

Rose, S. (1970). Dorothy Richardson's Theory of Literature: The Writer as Pilgrim. *Criticism*, 12: 20- 37.