

## Writing as Remembering: Proust's Influence on Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*

LILIAN RÁCZ  
raczlilian1998@gmail.com

This paper aims to examine the influence of Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* on Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* in order to emphasise that Proust's influence extends beyond the Bloomsbury group. The two protagonists, Marcel from *À la recherche* and Miriam Henderson from *Pilgrimage* share the path of becoming authors which is revealed in relation to the process of remembering. Remembering requires a unique handling of time and memory; notions that are based, in the case of these novels, on the theories of Henri Bergson and Paul Sollier.

*Keywords:* Proust, Richardson, Bergson, Sollier, time, memory.

### Introduction

Dorothy Richardson's literary career started with writing short pieces of journalism for a periodical from 1904. What really brought attention to her, however, was the novel sequence *Pilgrimage*. The first of the altogether 13 volumes (or "chapters" as Richardson chose to call them) of *Pilgrimage* was published in 1915, titled *Pointed Roofs*, and the last chapter, *March Moonlight*, came out in 1967. Most of her books received mixed critical reviews but Virginia Woolf penned a relatively positive article about the fourth volume, *The Tunnel*, in 1919. She wrote that Richardson had shown an understanding of the difference that exists between "what she has to say and the form provided by tradition for her to say it", and that "this book is better in its failure than most novels in their success", even though, like her previous novels, it still lacks the "shapeliness of the old accepted forms" (81). Virginia Woolf was a founding member of the Bloomsbury group, a group of writers and artists from the early twentieth century that included Virginia and Stephen Woolf, Vanessa and Clive Bell, Roger Fry, E. M. Forster. Mary Ann Caws and Sarah Bird Wright state in their book *Bloomsbury and France: Art and Friends* that what connected the wide variety of people within the Bloomsbury group was France—more precisely, French culture and literature. Caws and Wright (2000) suggest that an "aesthetic dialogue" was formed between French and British artists during the years before and after the Great War, and that this international artistic interaction resulted in

the exchange of innovative “theories and techniques developed by French novelists, poets, and critics” (19). Most of these had a profound impact on the *Belle Époque*, including Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and, most importantly, Marcel Proust.

Writers of the Bloomsbury group were deeply influenced by Marcel Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time*). Caws and Wright (2000) argue that the members of the group considered Proust “the most revered French writer” (11). Henri Peyre and Baucum Fulkerson state in their article already in 1940 that the influence of French literature “has certainly never been as powerful” as in the two decades before the Second World War, approximately from 1920 until 1940 (328). Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Edward Morgan Forster all took great interest in Proust, and he soon became a frequent topic of conversations, letters and studies. Thus, the literary connection between the Bloomsbury circle and Proust has been thoroughly researched, but the one between the works of writers outside the most intimate circle of the Bloomsbury group, for instance, Dorothy Richardson, and those of Proust has not been given much attention. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the influence of Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* on Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage* in order to emphasise that Proust’s influence on English literature was so extensive that it would be a mistake to restrict the possibility of this influencing factor only to the Bloomsbury group. The two protagonists, Marcel from *À la recherche* and Miriam Henderson from *Pilgrimage* share the path of becoming authors themselves, and that this process is revealed in the novels in relation to the process of remembering. Both in *À la recherche* and in *Pilgrimage*, remembering requires a unique handling of time and memory, notions that are based, in the case of these novels, on the theories of Henri Bergson and Paul Sollier. While contemporary critics Judit Karafiáth (2007) and Matthew Taunton (2016) consider time and memory rather exclusively in relation to the act of remembering, this article argues that a clear distinction has to be made between time and memory in order to fully comprehend the process of remembering as described by Proust and Richardson. The article further argues that Henri Bergson’s ideas on remembering and Paul Sollier’s thoughts on memory are fundamental to the creation of the narrative in both *À la recherche du temps perdu* and *Pilgrimage*.

### **The Treatment of Time in *À la recherche du temps perdu***

Time has a key role to play in Proust’s *À la recherche*. “Combray”, the first chapter of *Du côté de chez Swann* (*Swann’s Way*), already embodies and incorporates all the themes of the later chapters and volumes, and, as Leo Bersani (2013) claims, the relation of this chapter to the rest of the novel sequence is “Proust’s most profound

statement about the nature of mental time” (xi). Throughout the work, the narrator is looking for time that is supposedly “lost”, and which he only “finds” in *Le Temps retrouvé* (*Time Regained*), the last volume, after volumes of self-doubt and trying to find himself while chasing time. At a crucial point in the narrative, he actually realises that writing the book itself is the only way to recover what he has lost through the years:

Then a new light arose in me, less brilliant indeed than the one that had made me perceive that a work of art is the only means of regaining lost time. And I understood that all the material of a literary work was in my past life, I understood that I had acquired it in the midst of frivolous amusements, in idleness, in tenderness and in pain, stored up by me without my divining its destination or even its survival, as the seed has in reserve all the ingredients which will nourish the plant. (Proust [1927] 2018, 283)

Simultaneously, the narrator finds his subject as well: time, the past, *his* past. He claims that “it was that notion of the embodiment of Time, the inseparableness from us of the past that I now had the intention of bringing strongly into relief in my work” (Proust [1927] 2018, 296). In other words, the narrator discovers that by remembering, that is, retelling the past through his own subjective point of view, through his perception of *internal time*, he can actually capture the past. Naturally, capturing the past means he can move forward in *external time*, and write his book, which at this point is self-realisation itself.

Time was a central concept of philosophic and scientific investigations at the end of the nineteenth century. Judit Karafiáth (2007) states that Henri Bergson was one of the first philosophers to redefine time in modern terms (45). Marcel Proust himself was a student when Bergson's studies came to light; in fact, Proust was Bergson's student at Sorbonne in Paris. Louis-Auguste Bisson (1945) calls Bergson's influence on Proust's *oeuvre* an axiom, claiming that Proust's novels are constantly linked to Bergson's theories (104). For instance, Proust read Bergson's doctoral thesis *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (later published as *Time and Free Will: Essay on the immediate data of consciousness*), as the example of a short sentence shows in the third volume of *À la recherche, Le Côté de Guermantes* (*The Guermantes Way*): “you remember that book of philosophy we read together at Balbec, the richness of the world of possibilities compared with the real world” (Proust [1920–1921] 2019, 104; qtd. Vial 1940, 1193–1194). This comparison between reality and possibility—dividing the world into two according to what is real and what is possible (that is not [yet] real)—was an important theme in Bergson's *Time and Free Will*, especially in the second chapter, entitled *The Multiplicity of Conscious States; The Idea of Duration*. Much of this essay is dedicated to differentiating between and determining the nature of two types of time: *external* and *internal time*.

In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson states this about the different kinds of time:

Now, let us notice that when we speak of time, we generally think of a homogenous medium in which our conscious states are ranged alongside one another as in space [...]. [...] it is to be presumed that time, understood in the sense of a medium in which we make distinctions and count, is nothing but space. That which goes to confirm this opinion is that we are compelled to borrow from space the images by which we describe what the reflective consciousness feels about time and even about succession; it follows, that pure duration must be something different. (Bergson [1889] 2001, 91)

Bergson differentiates between the objective, real, *external time* which can be measured by objective numbers, for example (and which he also identifies with space), and *internal time*, that is, the subjective perception of time experienced internally which he calls "*la durée pure*", pure duration. When it comes to duration, he also says that "as soon as we try to measure [pure duration], we unwittingly replace it by space" (Bergson [1889] 2001, 106). Space here means the objective, external time as he claims that the moment we start to objectively try and measure *internal time*, we get to the domain of *external time*. Bergson later specifies in his study that "we are more inclined to regard duration as a subjective form of our consciousness" (210). Regarding objective time, Vial (1940) suggests that it is when the consciousness reflects on something situated in the past that one can conceive the flow of time and how time becomes one with the idea of its flow. Consequently, consciousness becomes measurable by time, and by applying this measure to the exterior world, it is possible to get hold of the *external* or *objective time* (1198).

Proust's own method regarding the treatment of time in a narrative seems to be in accordance with Henri Bergson's theory about the two types of the temporal perception as laid out in *Time and Free Will*. This is because *external* and *internal time* are both present in the narrative of *À la recherche*, although it should be noted that primarily, it is the narrator's perception of *internal time* that shapes the way the story is narrated. In *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* (*In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower*), the second volume of *À la recherche*, the narrator himself explicitly addresses one's perception of time and how writers should treat it in their novels:

In theory one is aware that the earth revolves, but in practice one does not perceive it, the ground upon which one treads seems not to move, and one can live undisturbed. So it is with Time in one's life. And to make its flight perceptible novelists are obliged, by wildly accelerating the beat of the pendulum, to transport the reader in a couple of minutes over ten, or twenty, or even thirty years. At the top of one page we have left a lover full of hope; at the foot of the next we meet him again, a bowed old man of eighty, painfully dragging himself on his daily walk about the courtyard of an almshouse, scarcely replying to what is said to him, oblivious of the past. (Proust [1919] 2017, 52)

In other words, the narrator claims the movement of time to be generally unrecognised, since, as with the revolving of our planet, people are too small particles within the overwhelming whole to be able to see every small movement forward, whether that is in space or time. As he continues, he acknowledges immediately that novelists should reflect on this phenomenon by, for example, speeding time up at certain points, jumping decades at a time, if necessary. This is important because what he decides to “jump over” (or leave out from the narrative), what he chooses to tell are all going to be choices based on his own subjective perception of *internal time*, not on the *external time*. In *Du côté de chez Swann*, much more detail is dedicated to events like how Swann falls in love with Odette, or how the narrator (called Marcel) later falls in love with Gilberte, than to events like the way Swann and Marcel fall out of love. This is because the former events are perceived by the narrator to be of great importance, while the latter events do not seem to matter much to him.

In “Un amour de Swann”, the second part of *Du côté de chez Swann*, Swann meets Odette de Crécy, and slowly he falls for her. Although the exact length of their relationship is not given, Swann talks about years saying “to think that I’ve wasted years of my life, that I’ve longed to die, that I’ve experienced my greatest love, for a woman who didn’t appeal to me, who wasn’t even my type!” (Proust [1913] 1992, 521). The reason for highlighting this sentence is that it helps explain Marcel Proust’s use of *external* and *internal time*. *External time* is always easier to detect because it is an explicit and objective expression of time passing; here, it is present in the mentioning of the years that have passed. However, *internal time* is also present: it exists in the way the narrator *subjectively* decides to tell the readers something with an abundance of detail and information, while with other events, he is not as generous. The years Swann mentions here are described extensively; the narrator comfortably takes hundreds of pages to capture the course of Swann and Odette’s love. However, when it comes to the actual closure of the relationship, there is a difference:

Once, when they had gone away ostensibly for a month only, either they succumbed to a series of temptations, or else M. Verdurin had cunningly arranged everything before-hand to please his wife, and disclosed his plans to the “faithful” only as time went on; at all events, from Algiers they flitted to Tunis; then to Italy, Greece, Constantinople, Asia Minor. They had been absent for nearly a year, and Swann felt perfectly at ease and almost happy. (Proust [1913] 1992, 510)

This passage shows that the nature of the description of the love story starts to become much less exhaustive once Odette and Swann have grown apart, “as though this moral distance were proportionate to the physical distance between

them” (Proust [1913] 1992, 510). Bergson’s theory about identifying external time with space thus becomes part of this picture, too, exactly because of the way physical and moral distance is treated here. The more (*external*) time Swann and Odette spend apart, the greater the physical and moral distance will be between them. However, from another point of view, after describing with detail Swann’s day-to-day life as he grew closer and closer to Odette, this act of “jumping” a whole year in the matter of a line is quite a change. In fact, it is a clear indication of how the narrator’s *internal time* leads the narration at this time in the story.

The situation is quite similar in *À l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*: after taking quite an effort to describe Gilberte and himself falling in love, the narrator does not describe in great detail the actual end of his love for her. Just like in *Du côté de chez Swann*, finishing off the relationship is done in a matter of a few lines, although the actual time that it took for the narrator this time was two years: “I had arrived at a state almost of complete indifference to Gilberte when, two years later, I went with my grandmother to Balbec” (Proust [1919] 2017, 208). Just as in the case of Marcel’s story, *external time* is indicated here, too; it is possible to know exactly how much time has passed. Moreover, the feeling of being separated comes to Marcel only once they have spent a considerable amount of (*external*) time apart, which could only happen, once again, with being geographically, physically separated in space. Therefore, existence within the limits of external time and space has the same characteristics and consequences in *À la recherche*. This notion can be traced back to the Bergsonian thought of *external time* being nothing but space: measurable, calculable and objective.

What is more, in his own narrative, it is Marcel through whose perception of time these events are described, thus revealing his personal judgement. What he perceives as a longer period of time with much to tell, he will tell accordingly (e.g. the process of falling in love), but when he perceives a period to be more transient and passing, he will not go into great detail about it and will cut that part quite short. Either in the case of Swann and Odette in *Du côté de chez Swann*, or in the case of Marcel and Gilberte in *À l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, when it comes to actual events being described, it is the narrator’s sense of *internal time* that leads the way, since it is up to his own judgement what he chooses to tell and at what lengths he is willing to go to give detail on certain events.

### The Treatment of Time in *The Tunnel*

Time plays a similar, yet different, role in Richardson's *The Tunnel* to Proust's *À la recherche*. The presence and effect of time is much more difficult to grasp in her work than in Proust's, in which it is often the narrator himself who gives voice to the importance and to the presence (or passing) of time. María Francisca Llantada Díaz argues that Dorothy Richardson had read Proust passionately and makes the case that Richardson's notion of narrative time had been influenced by Proust's treatment of temporality in *À la recherche*. "Richardson's obsessive and enraptured readings of Proust's novels could be taken as the reason of their striking influence on *Pilgrimage*" (Llantada Díaz 2009). What she does not mention, however, is that Henri Bergson's theories are present in Richardson's treatment of time in *The Tunnel*. Nor does she mention that the Bergsonian concept of time appears in this modernist novel, even if in an altered form.

*The Tunnel* lacks any real manifestation of *external time*. This leaves the reader with a very subjective point of view and with an equally subjective perception of time. Lloyd N. Goldman (1960) perceives that "everything in the book seems to be happening almost at once" (119). This is originally a Bergsonian idea taken from *Time and Free Will* that is concerned with the workings of *internal time* (*pure duration*): "it is enough that, in recalling these states, [*pure duration*] does not set them alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole" (Bergson [1889] 2001, 100, my italics). For example, *The Tunnel's* sixth chapter starts with the following lines describing Miriam sitting at the train station:

Miriam sat on a damp wooden seat at the station. Shivering with exhaustion, she looked across at the early morning distance, misty black and faint misty green...Something had happened to it. It was not beautiful; or anything. It was not anything... That was the punishment... The landscape was dead. (Richardson 1919, 128)

There is no explanation whatsoever as to why she is there, when she went there and how much time has passed since the previous chapter. There is no foreshadowing that would lead to this change of place and time in the previous chapter either. The passage continues with a description of the landscape and then, there comes a shift:

They are not my sort of people. Alma does not care for me personally. Little cries and excitement and affection. She wants to; but she does not care for anyone personally. Neither of them do. [...] It was so tiring that one could not like being with her. She seemed to be carrying something off all the time [...]. (Richardson 1919, 129)

Miriam jumps back to earlier years' experiences and feelings, seemingly without any reason, and there is also a very strong change in person, time and space. The explanation that could account for these changes is that this is all happening inside the narrator's head: she is following her line of thought lead by her sense of internal time. This is a clear indication of how the Bergsonian *internal time* shapes the style of narration.

One important preoccupation that Miriam has throughout *The Tunnel* is writing, just like Marcel in *À la recherche du temps perdu*.

"You know you're awfully good stuff. You've had an extraordinary variety of experience; you've got your freedom; you ought to write."

"That is what a palmist told me at Newlands. [...] she kept saying whatever you do, write. If you haven't written yet, write, if you don't succeed go on writing." (Richardson 1919, 151)

Here, in *The Tunnel*, Hypo Wilson (whose character is based on novelist H. G. Wells) advises Miriam to write, and interestingly he mentions her experiences as a possible topic for her writing, which can be interpreted as Wilson encouraging Miriam to write about her own past. Eventually, while starting to reflect on her life at the end of *Pilgrimage*, Miriam decides to finally dedicate herself to writing, and the novel she is going to write will be the novel sequence *Pilgrimage*.

Richardson creates two cyclical processes in *Pilgrimage*: one in which the protagonist becomes what she was destined to become: *an* author, and one in which the protagonist/narrator becomes *the* author of the work itself. She becomes one with the author of the novel sequence, one with Dorothy Richardson herself. This is exactly what appears at the end of *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Discussing *Pilgrimage*, Joanne Winning (2000) describes this as "an act of the writer producing her own life both as a continuous narrative and as a fiction" (15). In other words, one cannot really separate certain realities from one another because, in the cyclical process of life, they are destined to become one. It seems that they do not make sense without each another. Curiously, Proust always denied that his novels would have autobiographic features, as he denied that he would have any knowledge of Henri Bergson (Bisson 1945, 104; Vial 1940, 1192). Richardson, on the other hand, was much more forthcoming. When asked in response to a criticism of *Pilgrimage*, she answered: "isn't life the plot?" (qtd. in Winning 2000, 15). Alluding to the fact that the plot of her novel sequence is largely based on her own life, a life that is not yet concluded, she said: "*Pilgrimage*, whose conclusion was clear before it was begun, is not yet finished" (qtd. in Winning 2000, 15).

Time is crucial both in *Pilgrimage* and in *The Tunnel*, as it is Miriam's task to take into consideration how time has passed in her life and write about what has happened to her. Rebecca Bowler (2016) suggests that "it is this continual self-reflection that makes *Pilgrimage* a tour-de-force of modernism" (6), and later on she adds that "Proust and Richardson (among a few others) are pioneers in the transformation of "literary impressionism into something quintessentially modernist" (232). This is because instead of *regaining* time,

they are *reshaping* time (232). The incessant flow of time gives a profound understanding of the past and a clearer consciousness of the present and these contribute to a new way of explaining the realities of Miriam as well as of Marcel (the narrator of *À la recherche* who shares his first name with Marcel Proust) (Paradisi 2012, 57).

Being conscious of the passing of time, and actually time itself, is much less explicit in *The Tunnel* than in *À la recherche*, but the two protagonists share a very similar, if not identical, path to becoming writers, and the result is much the same too—which is the books being written. Undoubtedly more complex in *À la recherche du temps perdu*, time nevertheless has similar roles in the narration and in the ending of the sequences in both novels. Both Marcel and Miriam have to realise that in order to become writers, they have to dig deep into their own selves to be conscious of the depths of their past. In *À la recherche du temps perdu* as well as in *The Tunnel*, this way, they become conscious of how time behaves (passes) and how their memories may serve as tools to recreate their own reality. Therefore, in other words, the way the two protagonists can get in touch with their own past is through remembering; through their memories.

### **The Use of Memory in *À la recherche du temps perdu***

As mentioned before, time has a multifunctional role in *À la recherche du temps perdu*. On many occasions, different Bergsonian perceptions of time (*internal* and *external time*) influence how the narration flows. They also affect how much information the narrator includes about the various events in the narration. These events are told with the use of the first-person narrator Marcel's memory and his constant and unique remembering of past events. Proust first tested his ideas on the use of memory in narration in *Jean Santeuil*, written between 1896 and 1900. At that point in time, though, he was not yet a mature writer and he was not able to create a story that would make use of the workings of human memory. Therefore, he left *Jean Santeuil* unfinished (Carter 2001, 34; Azérad and Schmid 2013, 68). Proust had become a more mature thinker by the time he started writing *À la recherche* around 1909. Roughly a decade passed between the composition of the two works, which gave Proust the time and opportunity he needed to work on his ideas on memory and narration. As a consequence, *À la recherche du temps perdu* is a significantly more complicated work than *Jean Santeuil*. This is primarily manifested in the way memory works and the theory of remembering unfolds during the seven volumes: Proust now clearly differentiates between *voluntary memory* (*la mémoire volontaire*) and *involuntary memory* (*la mémoire involontaire*). He does this in order to accommodate his ideas and those of Henri Bergson.

Bergson himself did have a theory concerning memory, in which he distinguished between *habit memory* (*souvenir-habitude*) and *memory image* (*souvenir-image*). However, as

Judit Karafiáth (2007) explains, the former represents knowledge and conformity in remembering, while the latter symbolises detailed personal memories (45). Bergson (1991) addresses the *memory image* in the second chapter of *Matière et Mémoire*, entitled “Of the Recognition of Images; Memory and Brain”, in which he makes it clear that he associates these memory images primarily with movement (95). Such an idea does not seem to be crucial to Proust’s theories as he rather focuses on, for instance, the temporal aspect of remembering, hence the importance of Bergsonian ideas of time. Furthermore, in an interview with Élie-Joseph Bois (1913), Proust himself refuted the claims that when it comes to the use of memory, *À la recherche* is a Bergsonian work. Proust’s distinction between *voluntary* and *involuntary memory* in fact rather focuses on sensations, on the narrator sensing the world around him. So the question naturally arrives: if not Bergson, then who inspired Proust to make the distinction between *voluntary* and *involuntary memory*? Who helped him distil his ideas on memory so that, after failing to finish *Jean Santeuil*, he eventually wrote (and finished) a seven-volume novel sequence a few years later?

Marcel Proust’s father, Dr Adrien Achille Proust was a famous doctor who wrote several articles and books on medicine (*Traité d’hygiène publique et privée*, 1877; *La défense de l’Europe contre le choléra*, 1892). W. L. Werner (1931) notes that the father was interested in neuroscience, and that Jean-Martin Charcot’s writings on neurobiology were regular topics in Proust family discussions (276). Charcot was the teacher of Sigmund Freud, for example, and of another neuroscientist: Paul Sollier. Suffering from psychological exhaustion, Marcel Proust spent six weeks in Sollier’s sanatorium at the end of 1905 and the beginning of 1906 (Bogousslavsky 2007, 133). Sollier had already written two theses on memory, *Les troubles de la mémoire* (1892) and *Le problème de la mémoire* (1900) by that time. His latest, *Le mécanisme des émotions* (1905), was published just a few months before Proust was admitted to the sanatorium (Bogousslavsky and Walusinski 2009, 130). According to Edward Bizub (2006), right at the beginning of Proust’s stay at Sollier’s sanatorium, he and Sollier had a quarrel about Bergson. Proust probably wanted to impress the French doctor, or test his knowledge, or provoke him, as Sollier was famous for harshly disagreeing with Bergson (184). The latter can be seen, for example, on the pages of *Le problème de la mémoire* (Sollier 1900, 11–12).

As a doctor, Sollier was interested in the medical study of hysteria and neurasthenia. Sollier’s treatments were aimed at “awakening the inhibited cortical areas, mainly in stimulating apparently forgotten memories”, for example, in traumatised soldiers (Bogousslavsky and Walusinski 2011, 108). Sollier highlights in *Le problème de la mémoire* that it is through the senses that he aims to bring back memories from the past: “la reproduction des images de ces souvenirs se ferait, elle,

par l'intermédiaire des centres fonctionnels moteurs ou sensoriels"<sup>1</sup> (Sollier 1900, 92). In other words, his treatments were based on evoking memories in the patients by introducing them to sensations. Bogousslavsky (2007) states that "Sollier tried to obtain a 'catharsis' through sensory stimulations and awareness of inner and outer stimuli" (134). Sollier—in fact made them relive certain experiences from their past, as though they were there again, in those moments. In his thesis on memory, he presents his concepts of memory and remembering this way:

A memory is an image [...] which reproduces a past impression. Re-experiencing is something more: it is not only the appearance of an image into the field of consciousness, but this appearance is so clear and is accompanied by such a precise and intense reproduction of the state of personality of the subject at the time of the initial impression, that this subject again believes they are going through the same events as before. (trans. Bogousslavsky and Walusinski 2011, 110–111)<sup>2</sup>

The sensations bring back memories that have been long buried in the patient's mind. Through Sollier's sensory experiments, not only were the memories recovered but also the personality of the patient at that time, as well as his/her past thoughts and emotions connected to who they were at that point in time. In other words, the patient's *involuntary memory* helped the patient reconnect to his/her past self. In addition, self-recovery or identity-recovery is a process that has been discussed with regard to time as well. The main point there was that with the help of reconnecting with his past (which is actually done with involuntary remembering), Marcel can finally get in touch with time and put it into words, thus becoming a writer and realising himself.

Sollier also discusses how hearing a word, for example, might involuntarily bring back certain images from the past: "Each memory is composed of unequally intense elementary images whose essential character is the ability to be associated with each other. [...] Simultaneously, these images (according to the subjects) can be awakened by the memory of a word" (Sollier 1892, 32, my translation).<sup>3</sup> Here,

<sup>1</sup> The images of these memories would be reproduced through the motor functional or sensory centres. (my translation)

<sup>2</sup> "Le souvenir est une image [...] reproduisant une impression passée. La reviviscence est quelque chose de plus : c'est non seulement l'apparition dans la conscience d'une image, d'une impression ancienne, mais avec une teinte nette, et de plus accompagnée de la reproduction si précise et intense de tout l'état de personnalité du sujet au moment de l'impression première, que ce sujet croit de nouveau traverser les mêmes événements qu'autrefois" (Sollier 1900, 29).

<sup>3</sup> "Chaque souvenir est composé d'un certain nombre d'images élémentaires dont les unes et les autres sont d'inégale intensité, mais qui ont pour caractère essentiel d'être associées chacune à toutes les autres. [...] Le souvenir d'un mot éveille en même temps, mais d'une façon prédominante suivant les sujets, ces différentes images."

Sollier essentially explains that memories are composed of a number of images (some of higher, some of lower intensity) and that they all constitute the same memory. He also claims that these images can be revoked in one's memory *involuntarily*. This idea is the basis of both Sollier's and Proust's work. Both emphasise the fact, though, that voluntary remembering will not have the same results as the evocation of memories involuntarily. Sollier explains this with a simple, almost proverbial example: the more one tries to remember something, the further the memory will drift. Thus, the will power (*la volonté*) proves counterproductive. However, if one is not forced to remember, the memory comes back right away involuntarily, bringing the emotions of the past with it. Marcel of *À la recherche* describes the same thought right at the beginning of *Du côté de chez Swann*:

It is a labour in vain to attempt to recapture [our own past]: all the efforts of our intellect must prove futile. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that material object will give us) of which we have no inkling. (Proust [1913] 1992, 60)

This idea is crucial to our understanding of the volumes of *À la recherche*: it points to the fact that Proust's novel sequence is not simply about telling the story of Marcel's past but rather it is about *how* that story from his past is narrated. The passage suggests that no matter how hard one tries to remember something from the past using one's intellect, only a sensation will bring back the whole of the memory. A similar thought process can be recognised in this to a previous one related to a distinction between Bergson's *external* and *internal time*. Bergson claimed in *Time and Free Will* that will power is also futile in that forcing ourselves to measure our sense of internal time will only result in "creating" external time. Here, forcing the intellect, the will power in theory would transform involuntary to voluntary remembering. However, the point Proust makes in *À la recherche*, like Sollier in *Le problème de la mémoire*, *voluntary memory* and *will* are deemed powerless because only the *involuntary memory* has the power to capture the past.

According to Anna Balakian, the *voluntary memory* in *À la recherche* represents the "chronological, rationally remembered events of the past", while the *involuntary memory* works with the "more vivid though less structured visions" of the past (96). A well-known example for the latter is the famous madeleine scene from *Du côté de chez Swann*, the first volume of *À la recherche*:

And suddenly the memory revealed itself. The taste was that of the little piece of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray (because on those mornings I did not go out before mass), when I went to say good morning to her in her bedroom, my aunt Léonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of tea or tisane. The sight of the little madeleine had recalled nothing to my mind before I tasted it. (Proust [1913] 1992, 60)

Marcel, the narrator, struggles to remember the past but the taste of the madeleine is suddenly able to bring back his childhood memories, and all the emotions, thoughts, reflections attached to the sweet madeleine. In the words of Llantada Díaz (2009), "the difference between outside and inside is blurred, as the person interiorises external objects, connecting them intimately with his/her own self, giving them another dimension, a more spiritual form of existence" (paragraph 5).

This idea shows great similarity to the one Sollier (1900) used in his memory sessions with his patients, when he sought to bring back memories with sensory stimuli (92). However, Proust knew better than Sollier the artistic value of these moments of *involuntary memory*. Proust recognised them as moments of inspiration. He believed also that these memories can work towards re-creating reality, can help find the time that a character would feel was "lost" in his/her daily existence (Carter 2001, 34). Proust thus uses this "technique" of remembering to create an opportunity for his narrator, Marcel, to actually "recapture" his past, which will be Marcel's chief aim. Marcel struggles with his relationship with time throughout the seven volumes of *À la recherche*, and it is when he realises the power that lies within remembering that he can finally understand how time works (at least, for him). This is how he becomes self-identical: he finds himself in being able to capture time though remembering. In literary circles today, Marcel Proust and his novel sequence is well-known for this special way of using memory to create the narrative, so much so that he is called by the *litterati* as "the apostle of passive memory" (Lalou 1927, 2).

### **The Use of Memory in *The Tunnel***

Dorothy Richardson was an enthusiastic reader of Proust's work. María Francisca Llantada Díaz (2009) mentions that Richardson often talked about her admiration of the French writer in her letters to Beaumont Wadsworth, and she also wrote an extended review, entitled *Mr Clive Bell's Proust* (paragraph 3). Richardson's close acquaintance with *À la recherche* is rather noticeable in her novel sequence *Pilgrimage*.

Memory and remembering are tremendously important notions in both series of novels. Valentina Paradisi (2012) claims that "in Richardson's case, memory is the most important of the wide range of mental phenomena to which she pays attention. If we take *Pilgrimage* to be a single work, it is significant that memories open and close the novel" (49). Memory is the principle on which the narrative depends: its role is to organise and arrange past experiences according to the narrator's subjective point of view. Remembering has the power of creating a kind of constancy against temporal erosion, that eternal destructive force which naturally and inevitably comes with time passing. However, while Proust considers losing and regaining time of equal importance, Richardson takes these matters much

more nonchalantly (54–55). Miriam of *Pilgrimage* is not as conscious of the passing of time as Marcel is in *À la recherche*. A further reason as to why memory is such a critical concept in the works of both authors is that memory has to fill in the role that the omniscient narrator would normally play in other novels (55). As Leon Edel (1955) puts it, “this removal of the author from the scene [...] created the need to use the memory of the characters to place the reader in a relationship with their past” (15). This means that it is memory (and the act of remembering) that is responsible for creating one of the chief relationships of the novels: the relationship between the reader and the narrator. Besides this, Marcel Proust’s differentiation between *voluntary* and *involuntary memory* had an influence on Richardson’s narrative style. *The Tunnel* contains several instances of her use of *involuntary memory*, instances that are similar to ones that were described by Paul Sollier in the medical field, and later used by Proust in his literary work. Proust’s influence is clearly visible in the way remembering works in Richardson’s *The Tunnel*.

As mentioned earlier, during his psychiatric sessions, Sollier used to retrieve events from his patients’ past and recover their past self with all the old emotions and thoughts that had become attached to their personalities from an earlier period in their lives (Sollier 1900, 29). He also identified the emotions that had resurfaced during the sessions as the consequence of involuntary remembering (114–115). Proust used *involuntary memory* as a tool to build the narrative of *À la recherche*. One of the features that echoes Sollier in the way Proust uses involuntary remembering is how a past state of the personality is brought back together with the state of emotions from that time. *The Tunnel* is not different in this respect:

“Is she German?”

“Well... I think, as a matter of fact, she’s part Austro-Hungarian and part—well, Hebrew.”  
A Jewess... Miriam left her surroundings, pondering over a sudden little thread of memory. An eager, very bright-eyed, curiously dimpling school-girl face peering into hers [...]. (Richardson 1919, 122)

In this passage, the *involuntary memory* is triggered by Miriam hearing the word “Hebrew”. This causes her consciousness to invoke an old memory that has attached itself to the word, and in an instant, she is back in her past again as a little girl without wanting or trying to remember. Importantly, this memory soon turns out to have a negative significance in Miriam’s life as her thoughts and feelings re-emerge from the shadows of the past. She feels those emotions, has those thoughts as if they were part of her present condition. This means that when *involuntary memories* appear in *The Tunnel*, they bear emotional information with them. This is a feature of Marcel Proust’s work as well, since in *À la recherche*, Marcel also shows emotional attachment when, for example, memories resurface in the madeleine scene.

*Involuntary memories* tend to come back because of certain sensations: a smell, a taste, a noise. The madeleine scene in *À la recherche* is a perfect example for this and so is the next scene from Richardson's *The Tunnel*:

But 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 in the garden at Babington between two banks of flowers, the flowers level with her face and large bees swinging slowly to and fro before her face from bank to bank, many sweet smells coming from the flowers and amongst them a strange pleasant smell like burnt paper [...]. It was the same moment. (Richardson 1919, 251–252)

In both cases, the taste brings back quite a huge chunk of memory from the narrator's childhood. There are several sensations affecting Miriam in the moment described but she emphasises only one of them: the sense of smell. The smell of burnt paper involuntarily takes her back to a moment of the past due to which she re-experiences that particular fraction of the past as if it was in the present, as if it was "the same moment" (Richardson 1919, 252).

Although the core features of the treatment of memory are the same in *The Tunnel* and in *À la recherche*, there are still a number of differences that need to be mentioned. Firstly, in *The Tunnel*, *involuntary memories* may also appear when Miriam is in a "dreamy state" (Goldman 1960, 104), that is, when her psyche is relaxed or passive, but also unstable in a way. In such a dreamy state of mind, Miriam does not exist consciously in the present, thus, she is much more prone to wander off into the past. Secondly, while Proust only uses *involuntary memory* in his novels, Dorothy Richardson makes use of both the *voluntary* and the *involuntary memory*. In *The Tunnel*, when the past is involuntarily evoked, it sets off a stream of consciousness, and sometimes a "directive force", that is, the will power (or the intellect) starts to control the evoked experience in order to reveal "relevant and significant details" about it (Goldman 1960, 106). This force can be referred to as the power of *voluntary memory*:

She closed her eyes and drifted drowsily back to the moment of being awakened by the sudden cry. In the instant before her mind had slid back and she had listened to the muffled footsteps thudding along the turf of the low cliff above her head, waiting angrily and anxiously for further disturbance, she had been perfectly alive, seeing; perfect things all round her, no beginning or ending... there had been moments like that, years ago [...]. Her mind wandered back amongst these; calling up each one with perfect freshness. They were all the same. In each one she had felt exactly the same; outside life, untouched by anything, free. She had thought they belonged to the past, to childhood and youth. (Richardson 1919, 251)

The trigger above is the mentioned “dreamy”, passive state of mind which enables the memory to come back to Miriam involuntarily, though still in a rather shapeless and mysterious form. This is when Miriam can best find a connection to her past and “discover in the pattern of her experience a unifying thread” (Goldman 1960, 104–105). It is also important to note that after the *involuntary memory* appears, the intellect *voluntarily* interrupts the flow of remembering, and *continues* with the act of remembering. In this instance, remembering becomes a conscious, wilful action on Miriam’s part. This is significant because in this respect *The Tunnel* is different from *À la recherche*. Richardson does not explicitly differentiate between *voluntary* and *involuntary memory* like Proust, she uses both without restrictions. When it comes to remembering, *voluntary* and *involuntary memory* are found close together within the narrative of *The Tunnel*.

One final feature that differs in Proust and Richardson is the effect that memory has on narration. Proust’s narrative focuses entirely on the past and uses only instances of *involuntary memory* – thus rendering the narrator powerless until the moment he realises how he can “tame” time itself. Richardson’s storytelling is different in that, instead of Miriam constantly going backwards into the past, she rather brings the past to the present by using both her *voluntary* and *involuntary memories*. This contributes to the feeling of everything happening simultaneously in *The Tunnel* (Goldman 1960, 119). It also means that Miriam as narrator has a somewhat larger influence on her own storytelling: her narration does not rely on anything else other than herself and her own consciousness.

## Conclusion

*Pilgrimage* has been called the “English, feminine *À la recherche*” (Paradisi 2012, 49), and it is true that there are many instances in which Proust had an influence on Richardson’s work. Most obviously, in both works, the narrators, Miriam and Marcel become fictional authors and in fact the actual authors of the novel sequences, making it difficult to separate fiction from reality at the end of *À la recherche* and *Pilgrimage*. Other than this, in Proust’s novels time becomes the central theme because the narrator’s aim is to find lost time and figure out how to actually capture it—and capture it, he does, due to the realisation of the power that lies within remembering the past and writing it down. But while in Proust’s work time is both subjective and objective, in Richardson’s novels perception of time is entirely subjective. Both authors make use of Bergson’s theories on remembering but objective, *external time* does not play as important a role in *The Tunnel* as it does in *À la recherche* as it is almost entirely through Miriam’s consciousness that the

reader gets to know all the events of the book. When it comes to Sollier's influence on the use of memory in Proust and in Richardson: Proust uses both *voluntary* and *involuntary memory* to form the narrative, although he makes more use of involuntary memory, while Richardson prefers using them together, although she does sometimes use only one of the types to build the narrative of her book(s). Finally, it is worth emphasising the point that Proust and Richardson (under Proust's influence) lead both protagonists (Marcel and Miriam) to a state of mind where they can fulfil their destinies and become authors. That is because in order for them to become writers, they have to realise the power of their own ability to recall and to capture the past, and write their own stories through remembering. *Pilgrimage* is not simply an "English, feminine *À la recherche*" but an English female modernist writer's re-thinking and re-working of Proust's famous novel sequence of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, one that clearly indicates Proust's influence on British literature beyond the modernist circles of the famous Bloomsbury group of Vanessa and Clive Bell, Roger Fry, E. M. Forster, and Leonard and Virginia Woolf.

### Works Cited

- Azérad, Hugues, and Marion Schmid. 2013. "The Novelistic Tradition." In *Marcel Proust in Context*, edited by Adam Watt, 67–74. Cambridge: Cambridge University.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139135023.014>
- Balakian, Anna. 1973. "Proust Fifty Years Later." *Comparative Literature Studies* 10 (2): 93–111.
- Bergson, Henri. 1991. *Matière et Mémoire*. Translated by Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. New York: Zone Books.
- . 2001. *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*. Translated by F. L. Pogson and M.A. Mineola: Dover Publications.
- Bersani, Leo. 2013. "Preface to the Second Edition." In *Marcel Proust: The Fictions of Life and of Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199931514.001.0001>
- Bisson, L. A. 1945. "Proust, Bergson, and George Eliot." *The Modern Language Review* 40 (2): 104–114. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3717803>

- Bizub, Edward. 2006. *Proust et le moi divisé. La Recherche: creuset de la psychologie expérimentale (1874–1914)*. Genève: Libraire Droz.
- Bogousslavsky, Julien. 2007. “Marcel Proust’s Lifelong Tour of the Parisian Neurological Intelligentsia: From Brissaud and Dejerine to Sollier and Babinski.” *European Neurology (Online)* 57: 129–136. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000104711>
- Bogousslavsky, Julien, and Olivier Walusinski. 2009. “Marcel Proust and Paul Sollier: The Involuntary Memory Connection.” *Schweizer Archiv für Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 160: 130–136. <https://doi.org/10.4414/sanp.2009.02061>
- Bogousslavsky, Julien, and Olivier Walusinski. 2011. “Paul Sollier: The First Clinical Neuropsychologist.” In *Following Charcot: A Forgotten History of Neurology and Psychiatry*, edited by Julien Bogousslavsky, 105–114. Montreux: Karger Medical and Scientific Publishers.  
<https://doi.org/10.1159/000321780>
- Bois, Élie-Joseph. 1913. “À la recherche du temps perdu.” *Le Temps*. Gallica (13 Nov): 4.
- Bowler, Rebecca. 2016. *Literary Impressionism. Vision and Memory in Dorothy Richardson*. Translated by Madox Ford, H.D. and May Sinclair. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Carter, William C. 2001. “The Vast Structure of Recollection.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Proust*, edited by Richard Bales, 25–41. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL052166019X.003>
- Caws, Mary Ann, and Sarah Bird Wright. 2000. *Bloomsbury and France: Art and Friends*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Edel, Leon. 1955. *The Modern Psychological Novel*. New York: Grove Press.
- Goldman, Lloyd N. 1960. “The Making of a Stream-of-Consciousness Novel: A Study of Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage*.” Master’s Thesis, Rice University.
- Karafiáth, Judit. 2007. *Marcel Proust: Az eltűnt idő nyomában*. Budapest: Akkord Kiadó.
- Lalou, René. 1927. “The Problem of Man in Contemporary French Literature.” *Books Abroad* 1 (3): 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40043250>

- Llantada Díaz, Maria Francisca. 2009. "Proust's Traces on Dorothy Richardson. Involuntary Memory and Metaphors." *Études Britanniques Contemporaines* 36: 125–135. <https://doi.org/10.4000/ebc.4131>
- Paradisi, Valentina. 2012. "Dorothy Richardson's Adventure in Memory." *Pilgrimages: The Journal of Dorothy Richardson's Studies* 5: 48–70.
- Peyre, Henri, and Baucum Fulkerson. 1940. "The Influence of Contemporary French Literature in the World." *The Sewanee Review* 48 (3): 322–342.
- Proust, Marcel. [1913] 1992. *In Search of Lost Time. Volume I. Swann's Way*. Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin. New York: The Modern Library.
- . [1919] 2017. *In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower (Within a Budding Grove)*. Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff. London: Global Grey.
- . [1920–1921] 2019. *The Guermantes Way*. Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff. London: Global Grey.
- . [1927] 2018. *Time Regained*. Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff. London: Global Grey.
- Richardson, Dorothy Miller. 1919. *The Tunnel*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
- Shore, Elizabeth M. 1979. "Virginia Woolf, Proust, and Orlando." *Comparative Literature* 31 (3): 232–245. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1770923>
- Sollier, Paul. 1900. *Le problème de la mémoire, essai de sycho-mécanique: leçons faites à l'Université de Bruxelles, 1898–1899*. Paris: F. Alcan.
- . 1892. *Les troubles de la mémoire*. Paris: J. Rueff.
- Vial, Fernand. 1940. "Le Symbolisme Bergsonien Du Temps Dans L'Œuvre De Proust." *PMLA* 55 (4): 1191–1212. <https://doi.org/10.2307/458902>
- Werner, W. L. 1931. "The Psychology of Marcel Proust." *The Sewanee Review* 39 (3): 276–281.
- Winning, Joanne. 2000. *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

---

Woolf, Virginia. 1977. *A Change of Perspective (The Letters of Virginia Woolf, III, 1923–1928)*. Edited by Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann. London: Hogarth Press.

———. 1919. “*The Tunnel*.” *Times Literary Supplement* 17 (13 Feb): 81.