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***Dorothy Richardson’s The Tunnel as archive: the life of a working woman in turn-of-the-century London.***

This paper proposes a reading of Dorothy Richardson’s *The Tunnel* (the fourth out of the thirteen novels that comprise *Pilgrimage*) with a focus on her heroine’s working life as a dental assistant. By making Miriam Henderson critically reflect on the urban and social surroundings—e.g. the condition of the London employees—Richardson (1873-1957) documents her own life between 1891 and 1915 and emerges as the woman archivist who provides a challenging, radical commentary. Miriam’s portrayal is “beyond the scope of traditional romance and marriage plots,” it is the experience of “living with work… a life of white collar urban poverty” (Mepham 462). Thus, Richardson’s materialist historiography, read retrospectively, shares affinity ties with Benjamin’s archive of the city and modernity; both attempt to rescue a specific cultural heritage of fragments from oblivion and both turn the “excavation sites” of experience into “construction sites” where there can be “a shift away from a melancholic culture that views the historical as little more than the traumatic” (Foster “Archival Impulse” 22). My intention is to explore the way Richardson articulates a voice from the margins, and, in that, to pursue Benjamin’s lead of subverting hegemonic discourses and standard histories. In 1912, when at the age of 36, Miriam, the author’s alter ego, sits down to write what will eventually become *Pilgrimage*, the working woman and the archivist become one.