

RUDYARD KIPLING AND OTHER IMPERIAL
TRACES: PROJECTIONS OF THE
COLONIAL PERIPHERY INTO THE IMPERIAL
CENTRE IN DOROTHY RICHARDSON'S *THE
TUNNEL AND INTERIM*

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Recent Richardson scholarship exploring the undercurrent of contemporary imperialist ideologies in *Pilgrimage* has for the most part focused on Miriam Henderson's vacillation between tracing an indeterminate cosmopolitanism and her complete assimilation by hegemonic imperial discourses. Jean Radford, one of the first scholars to examine the character's racial politics, associates Miriam's 'xenophobia' with the notion of Jewishness and her relation to her suitor, the Russian-Jewish émigré, Michael Shatov.¹ Carol Watts and Jane Garrity examine the ways in which Miriam's contact and association with foreigners allow her to challenge the dominant notions of Britishness and racial superiority on a par with 'her own cultural positioning, about which she feels an extreme ambivalence';² yet both find that, by and large, her 'new-woman discourse is inextricably that of the centre'.³ This prevents her from imagining a culture 'outside the terms of imperialism itself' to the extent that the novel ultimately values 'not incessant mobility, but stillness; not internationalism, but Englishness'.⁴ Francesca Frigerio draws on Edward Said's concept of contrapuntal reading in order to focus on historiography and evolutionary theories depicted in Richardson and examine Miriam's search for her identity 'both as a woman and as a citizen of the British Empire' in *Interim* (1919), *Deadlock* (1921) and

¹ Jean Radford, *Dorothy Richardson* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p.99.

² Carol Watts. *Dorothy Richardson* (UK: Northcote House Publishers, 1995), p.54.

³ Ibid, p.56.

⁴ Ibid, p.53; Jane Garrity. *Step-Daughters of England* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003), p.86.

Revolving Lights (1923).⁵ Celena E. Kusch discusses the concept of cosmopolis in the early volumes of *Pilgrimage*, arguing that ‘the model of the British “colonial” looking for financial opportunities’ is applied to ‘the modernist seeking intellectual pursuits ... thereby creat[ing] a cosmopolitan identity that can deploy the cultural capital of both colony and empire’.⁶ For Kusch the first five volumes of the novel ‘repeatedly reify national and cultural boundaries’ through Miriam’s ‘cross-cultural encounters’ with ‘colonial citizens and laborers’, and reveal ‘the foundation of intellectual cosmopolitanism not in universality but in differentiation from the cultural otherness of ‘colonials’.⁷

Miriam’s racial and imperial politics are ambivalent and the text itself attests to an oscillation between challenging and reproducing the dominant imperial discourse. In this vein, this article aspires to contribute to the scholarship on the representation of imperial politics in *Pilgrimage* by specifically exploring the three instances where Rudyard Kipling’s colonial subtext surfaces in Richardson’s text. I will read the emergence of Kipling’s work in *Pilgrimage* as a paradigm of the way ‘the imperial experience while often regarded as exclusively political also entered into the cultural and aesthetic life of the metropolitan West’.⁸ Rather than reaching a verdict as to whether Richardson fully assimilates what Said calls Kipling’s ‘Tory imperialist’ politics⁹ or vehemently opposes what these politics entail, my interest lies more in the way the complexities of the imperial experience enter the realm of popular culture – Kipling being a ‘persistent cultural icon’¹⁰ – so as to leave their mark on Miriam’s consciousness and subsequently on the text.

⁵ Francesca Frigerio. ‘Imperialism Wants Imperial Women: the Writing of History and Evolutionary Theories in Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage*.’ *Pilgrimages: A Journal of Dorothy Richardson Studies* 3 (2010): 8.

⁶ Celena E. Kusch, ‘Disorienting Modernism: National Boundaries and the Cosmopolis.’ *Journal of Modern Literature* 30.4 (2007): 39.

⁷ *Ibid*, p.43.

⁸ Edward Said. *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage Books, 1994), p.164.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.161.

¹⁰ Caroline Rooney and Kaori Nagai, ‘Introduction’, in Rooney and Nagai (eds), *Kipling and Beyond: Patriotism, Globalisation and Postcolonialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.14.

In *Culture and Imperialism* Edward Said contextualizes the ‘unembarrassed cultural attention’ to the empire by citizens of nineteenth-century Britain and France:

British India and French North Africa alone played inestimable roles in the imagination, economy, political life, and social fabric of British and French society ... scholars, administrators, travellers, traders, parliamentarians, merchants, novelists, theorists, speculators, adventurers, visionaries, poets, and every variety of outcast and misfit in the outlying possessions of these two imperial powers, each of whom contributed to the formation of a colonial actuality existing at the heart of metropolitan life.¹¹

Said constructs his argument about the affiliations between oppositional cultures within imperialism by drawing on the convergence of geographies and the cultural and political reciprocities that imperialism generated both in the metropolitan as well as in the colonial areas. This convergence of geographies – a de-contextualization and re-making of the colony within the metropolis – is explicitly seen in the three fissures inflicted on the text of *Pilgrimage* by the text of Kipling. As I hope to demonstrate, a certain colonial aesthetics and politics haunt the metropolitan centre and are subtly manifested as part of Miriam Henderson’s urban experience; thus Richardson’s intertextual politics allows the spectral presence of the colony as a peripheral space to disrupt the metropolitan space of the centre.

The three instances manifested in Richardson’s text are citations of Kipling’s poems ‘Gunga Din’, ‘Mandalay’, and ‘The Ballad of the East and West’; the first two were published in the *Barrack-Room Ballads*, 1892, while ‘The Ballad of the East and West’ was published in 1889. Characteristically, the *Barrack-Room Ballads*, reprinted three times in 1892 and fifty times in the next thirty years, was one of the most popular verse-books for more than a generation, which probably accounts for its inclusion in *Pilgrimage*.¹² In an essay originally published in 1909, E. M. Forster, ‘alternately praising and criticizing the Nobel Laureate’s political

¹¹ Ibid, p. 9.

agenda as well as his aesthetic vision¹³ offers insight into an early critique of Kipling and contextualizes Kipling's impact on the readership at the very heart of the Empire:

We middle classes — our life today is so sheltered, so safe, we are so protected by asphalt pavements, creosoted palings and policemen, so guarded on all sides from all that may injure the body or disturb the soul, that in literature we are apt to rush to the other extreme, and worship vitality unrestrainedly. How magnificent (we think) to lead a lawless roving life somewhere east of Suez, where the divorce laws, which we should be discussing this evening, need no reform because there are none. Armed with a sword instead of an umbrella, and a revolver instead of a tram ticket, how magnificent to meet some other strong man face to face and of course to get the best of him.¹⁴

Forster ironically discusses middle-class values seeking refuge in a literary celebration of imperial explorations and conquests, the vitality that is an essential element of Kipling's text: 'sheltered', 'safe', and 'protected', the middle class reader of colonial literature will unrestrainedly worship this vitality, which on the one hand makes up for the monotony and banality of urban life, and on the other constitutes its imaginative expansion.

It is not therefore surprising that Kipling should surface in Richardson's text as part of Miriam's working life, where colonial aesthetics meets the middle-class metropolitan everyday. Colonial vitality is projected into the quotidian as a form of escapism for the working woman from her labour. In *The Tunnel*, one of the partners at Mr Hancock's dental practice, Mr Orly, arrives to find Miriam already there, engaged in what she will later describe as 'housekeeping':¹⁵ 'She was dabbing at the stains of the American

¹² Charles Carrington. *Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1955), p.196.

¹³ Michael Lackey, Introduction to 'Kipling's Poems: Lecture by E. M. Forster', *Journal of Modern Literature* 30, 3 (2007): 12.

¹⁴ E. M. Forster, 'Kipling's Poem's', *ibid*, p.13.

¹⁵ Dorothy Richardson, *Pilgrimage* Vol. 2 (London: Virago 1979), p.40 (henceforth all page references in text).

cloth cover of the bracket when Mr Orly came swinging in, putting on his grey frock-coat and humming *Gunga Din* as he came' (II 38). Mr Orly proceeds to give Miriam hectic orders, demanding:

'I say, has this man got a chart? Don't throw away those teeth. Just look at this – how's that for twisted? Just look here.' He took up an object to which Miriam forced reluctant eyes, grotesquely formed fangs protruding from the enclosing blades of a huge forceps. 'How's that, eh? [...] 'I'll see to those. I say has this man got a chart?' 'I'll see', said Miriam eagerly making off with the appointment book. She returned with the chart. Mr Orly hummed and looked. 'Right. Tell' em to send him in. I say, 'v' I got any gold and tin?' Miriam consulted the box in a drawer in the cabinet. It was empty. 'I'm afraid you haven't', she said guiltily. 'All right, I'll let y'know. Send 'im in', and he resumed *Gunga Din* over the wash-hand basin.' (II 39)

The inclusion of Kipling in the text subtly reminds the readers of how they should be aware 'both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts'.¹⁶ The most quoted lines of the poem –

Tho' I've belted you and flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!¹⁷

concludes the rhyming narrative told by a British soldier in India, about a native water-bearer ('bhisti') who – after having been persistently abused by the regiment – saves the soldier's life by sacrificing his own.

The poem is characterized by what is often perceived as an unreservedly racist agenda and 'us and them' rhetoric. Even

¹⁶ Said, op. cit, p.51.

¹⁷ All quotations from Kipling's poetry are taken from *Rudyard Kipling: The Complete Verse* (London: Kyle Cathie Limited, 2002).

though it has been argued that the ending celebrates Gunga Din's heroism and the (impossible) possibility of the friendship between the imperial soldier and the colonized water carrier, still it is a heroism that can be acknowledged only because (following the economy of racial superiority) the colonial Other is annihilated while the Englishman survives and rules. Thus, the virtue of the non-European is praised and the colonial soldier matures, but with the prerequisite that only the Westerner is to live. The bhisti's vulnerability is heightened within the confines of a colonial socio-political economy which ultimately thrusts him headlong towards annihilation.

How then does Kipling's text work in *Pilgrimage*? Using Said's method of contrapuntal reading,¹⁸ it is possible to argue that Richardson's text reverses the centre and the periphery by dismantling the fixity of a colonial versus a metropolitan topography regulated by solid boundaries. Miriam's labour space, the dental practice, is invaded and disrupted by the geographically and culturally discrepant experiences the colonies stand for. This conjunction symptomatically reveals the complex processes through which the metropolis can no longer remain impervious to the developments on its periphery. It is an act of mutual transmutation, counteraction, and empowerment in certain respects and disempowerment in others. 'Gunga Din' cuts through *Pilgrimage* while Miriam is at work, underlining the ways in which the capitalist metropolitan economy of the centre is entangled with imperialist policies abroad, and whose thriving is predicated upon the exploitation of colonial resources overseas.

The second instance of Kipling found in the text is when Miriam is taking a tea break. While sitting for her afternoon tea, enjoying a few moments off work, she finds herself distracted by the lyrics of a song:

¹⁸ Drawing on music, Said argues we should re-read the cultural archive 'not univocally, but contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts' (*Culture* 51). The task of contrapuntal reading attempts to unearth the forgotten or silenced histories, demonstrating 'there was always some form of active resistance' (*Culture* xii).

When she had retired, Miriam sauntered, warm and happy almost before she was inside the door, into the den. With her eyes on the tea-tray she felt the afternoon expand... 'There's a Burma girl a settin' and I know she thinks of me' ... 'Come you *back*, you British soldier, come you *back* to Mandalay.' (II 67).

The reference is to the second line of Kipling's ballad, 'On the Road to Mandalay', published the same year as 'Gunga Din'. 'Mandalay' speaks of the discharged British soldier's nostalgic longing to return to the charming Burmese girl he had met by the old Moulmein Pagoda, creating a sensuous orientalist atmosphere and giving us 'the romance of the East'.¹⁹ The soldier dislikes the cold weather of England and wants to be dispatched 'somewhere east of Suez', so that he can return to the 'spicy garlic' and the 'tinkly temple-bells'. The ballad has been read as promoting love for the east and a desire for the 'different' life.²⁰ In fact, it justifies the return of the Westerner to Burma as the plea dictated by the native love-struck girl ('come you *back* to Mandalay'), underlining Said's comment about the 'correspondence between suppressed Victorian sexuality at home' and the Empire's 'fantasies abroad'.²¹ Charles Allen notes that 'Mandalay' now sounds almost maudlin. Kipling's cockneyfication seems contrived and the racial insensitivities contained in such poems as 'Gunga Din', 'Loot', and 'Fuzzy Wuzzy' are embarrassing, even were we to accept that Kipling is giving voice to the Victorian working man'.²²

¹⁹ Forster, op. cit, p.18.

²⁰ Charles Carrington, in his edition of Barrack-Room Ballads, describes the poem as: 'Perhaps the favourite among the 'Barrack-Room Ballads', written to a popular waltz tune, set to music as a tenor song, and long since passed into folklore ... Recently it has been copied by Bertolt Brecht': op. cit, p.162. Brecht incorporates the 'Mandalay Song' into Scene 14, Act 2 of *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*: it is sung by a line of impatient men waiting to make love to Jenny and the other whores, warning that love does not last forever, and urging those ahead of them to make it snappy.

²¹ Edward Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', *Cultural Critique*, 1 (1985): 12.

²² Charles Allen, *Kipling Sabib: India and the Making of Rudyard Kipling* (London: Little Brown, 2007), p.307.

Whereas ‘Gunga Din’ emerges during work, ‘Mandalay’, now in the form of a song often associated with leisure, is tellingly inserted at an interval in Miriam’s working day. The text draws attention to the English tea ritual and the imported tea enjoyed in England as a commodity which is mainly brought from India, and whose circulation presupposes an elaborate network of colonial exploitation. Englishness entails the rationale of imperialism, the violence and pleasures of colonization. More specifically, the tea-tray becomes Miriam’s ‘passage to India’²³ affirming but also evading colonization, as its material presence speaks of Burma girls and infinite geopolitical and temporal ‘expansion’. While waiting for her tea to arrive, Miriam observes the room around her; not surprisingly, the reproduction of the orientalist lyrics is followed by the wandering of the heroine’s observing gaze towards an array of colonial exotic curiosities: ‘the large cool placid gold Buddha’, ‘the Japanese cabinet’, ‘the Japanese cupboard fixed above Mrs Orly’s writing table’, ‘Mr Orly’s African tobacco pouch’, and finally her reflection rests on ‘the strange smooth gold on the strips of Burmese wood fastened along the shelves’ (II 68). Even when the song has passed from her mind, the colony persists through its material traces and her train of thought concludes with a metaphorical return to Burma.²⁴ Englishness then is regulated by what Ian Baucom calls an ‘occult instability’ between the colonised and its colonial counterpart produced by the trafficking of commodities, whose surplus value is effected by the exploited labour of the colonized.²⁵ The luxury commodities betray the traces of invisible and phantasmal others, which haunt the

²³ My thanks to Athanassios Dimakis for generously adding this point to my reading.

²⁴ It should also be noted that Kipling himself fervently wished to return to Burma, where he had only spent three days.

²⁵ Ian Baucom. *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (New Jersey, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999), p.3. Baucom borrows the phrase from Frantz Fanon’s *déséquilibre occulte* to discuss the space of contact between colonizer and colonist: Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* *Frantz*, (New York: Grove Press, 1963), p.227. Baucom argues that over the last two centuries Englishness has been redefined both ‘here’ and ‘there’, in Britain and the dominion states, emphasizing an expansion and decentering of Britishness as opposed to the effort to contain and restrict the purity of Englishness. On this, see also Simon Gikandi. *Slavery and the Culture of Taste* (New Jersey, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2011), p.xv.

London-based consumers of tea. In other words, the spectres of the exploited colonies are doubly contained in this Englishness, both as imported luxury consumer products and as the repressed other. The tea-tray that triggers Miriam's 'expansive moment'²⁶ acts to disrupt the stability of space and time, a collapse of the boundaries between the two distinct but *de facto* affiliated poles of London and the colonies.

Kipling's poetry reappears for a third time later in *The Tunnel*. Miriam's friends Jan and Mag tell her that their 'wonderful' landlady, supposedly a prostitute, is 'Eurasian [...] born in India'. Miriam responds:

'That accounts for a good deal. Eurasians are awful; they've got all the faults of both sides.'
'East is East, and West is West, and never the two shall meet.'
(II 85)

Her last sentence is an almost exact replication of Kipling's line in 'The Ballad of the East and West':

Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgement Seat.

It is not clear whether Miriam is deliberately and ironically quoting a phrase that has already been used by one of the dentists earlier in the novel (II 53) – when Miriam responds negatively to the sentiment, 'That's a dreadful idea—I don't believe it a bit' – or whether she is unconsciously reproducing Kipling's colonial, unapologetic discourse – which pervades *The Tunnel*.²⁷

²⁶ I use the term, following Miriam's characterization of her perception of the occasional elasticity of time. (See 'expansive moments' in *III Revolving Lights* 282).

²⁷ Kusch notes that the repetition of Kipling's refrain both 'by Richardson and in British popular culture of the time affirms imperial divisions in a blatant rejection of the cross-cultural complexities of the poem', op. cit, p.59.

Kipling's 'Ballad of East and West' features the friendship and respect between an English officer and the Afghan horse-thief Kamal. When Kamal steals a prize bay mare, the Colonel's son follows him into enemy territory where after a lengthy pursuit his horse collapses from exhaustion. Kamal helps the Colonel's son and as a token of his appreciation the Colonel's son offers him the mare, which Kamal does not accept since it should be rightfully returned to its master, in turn also offering other gifts. Kamal introduces his son to the Colonel's son and orders the boy to serve and protect him until death. After both the stolen horse and the native boy have been given to the Colonel's son – as if the two were on a par – Kipling finally resorts to celebrating courage regardless of 'border... breed... birth':

But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face though they come
from the ends of the earth!

The lines in question have been the topic of considerable controversy, since Charles Carrington notes they are 'often misquoted in exactly the opposite sense which Kipling gave them', arguing that 'the first couplet is an echo from the Psalms where the figure of speech is used to express the universality of the divine law in spite of estranging seas' while 'the second couplet is Kipling's commentary, with the same theme as the psalmist' (136).²⁸ David Gilmour admits that '[t]he charge of racism is commonly accompanied by the quotation of these lines ... which imply that the peoples on opposite sides of the globe are so different that they will never understand each other until the Day of Judgement'; yet he goes on to argue that 'the apparent message of these lines is contradicted by the rest of the verse which asserts that two men of equal courage and ability can be equals despite multitudinous differences of class, race, nation and continent (89).'²⁹ No matter whether the strength and bravery of the two men are mutually recognized, Kamal is the only one to sacrifice a son to

²⁸ Carrington, op. cit, p.136.

²⁹ *The Long Recessional: The Imperial Life of Rudyard Kipling*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), p.89.

the English rule. For Forster also, ‘though the border thief is an attractive fellow, the colonel’s son, the other character in the poem, is surely a bit of a stick’:

Though he talks a great deal, he never lets one forget that he is a strong silent man, who says so little and feels so much and feels all the more for saying so little. [...] I can never believe [...] that he wanted to do anything at all except to illustrate the good qualities of the British Army. However the Colonel’s son does not much matter and ‘East and West’ remains a fine poem, though debarred by him from its full measure of human interest.³⁰

On all three occasions, Richardson’s employment of Kipling is marked by the hidden and haunting geography of the colonized periphery that surfaces in the text. In Said’s words, ‘[j]ust as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography’.³¹ Even though Richardson criticizes nationalism in numerous instances throughout the three novels – rightfully earning the title of a ‘step-daughter of England’ that Garrity has attributed to her – she nevertheless cannot escape the oscillation between critique and endorsement.

In London, the capital of the British Empire if not *caput mundi*, Miriam’s metropolitan wandering often assumes the form of an exploration of the nationalist and imperialist discourses that shaped the late-Victorian society.³² While searching for her place in the Empire in an ontological sense, as a woman, and in a political sense, as a subject of history, Miriam is also in the process of deciphering the function of urban space as the *locus* for the reproduction of the capitalist order through colonial sovereignty:

Englishmen; the English were the ‘the leading race.’ ‘England and America together – the Anglo-Saxon peoples – could govern the destinies of the world.’ *What* world? ... millions and millions of child-births ... colonial women

³⁰ E. M. Forster, op. cit, p.15.

³¹ *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit, p.7.

³² Frigerio, op. cit, p.6.

would keep it all going ... and religious people ... and if religion went on there would always be all the people who took the Bible literally ... and if religion were not true, then there was only science. Either way was abominable ... for women. (II 251-2)

This is a characteristic passage where the rhetoric of the English Imperium is challenged in its totality – religion and science, the cornerstones of the empire, are read for their role in perpetuating a patriarchal order for both Englishwomen and, much worse, for the ‘colonial’ women overseas – the ongoing nexus of power/knowledge is depicted as ultimately serving the purposes of imperialism.³³ The diversity of experience in the metropolis provides a pretext for Miriam to reflect on and question the constitutive parts of the imaginative construction of Englishness and the articulation of her inner thoughts occasionally reaffirms certain perceptual fallacies.³⁴

Despite the fact that Miriam is forced to ‘negotiate a complex network of race, class, and empire’, it seems that her reflection on the British Empire and its colonial politics is consistently mediated by her views on the position of women:³⁵

The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world? The Future of the Race? What world? What race? Men. . . . Nothing but men; for ever. (II 220)

It will all go on as long as women are stupid enough to go on bringing men into the world ... even if civilized women stop the colonials and primitive races would go on. It is a nightmare. (II 220-1).

It is noteworthy that the first passage reproduces colonial discourse by capitalizing the nouns ‘Future’, ‘Race’, and ‘Men’,

³³ George. H. Thomson thinks the passage is derived from Edmond Demolins, *Anglo-Saxon Superiority, to what is it due* (Paris, 1897) trans. from French by L. B. Lavigne (London: Leadenhall Press, 1898). See *Notes on Pilgrimage: Dorothy Richardson Annotated* (Greensboro NC: ELT Press, 1999), pp.109-110.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.7.

³⁵ Kusch, *op. cit*, p.4.

presenting the reader with the triad of notions of colonial discourse. The patrilinear androcentricity of the empire is predicated on female subordination and submissiveness. In the second, capital letters are absent, so that Miriam's critical voice comes to the fore to undermine the exceptionality of their status. Additionally, the threefold repetition of the word 'men', a colonial triumvirate infinitely reproducing itself, adds to the binary formed between masculinity and imperialism, on the one hand, and Miriam's feminist critical agenda, on the other. In the end, it is as if Miriam accepts the sad state of affairs. Frigerio notes 'the fundamental tension between gender and race, and at times a primacy of race over gender':

Admittedly, Miriam's considerations on race and colonial women – blamed for giving birth to endless generations of men and thus guaranteeing the spread of their despicable theories – casts a shadow on the text and prevents it from being read in a univocal, anti-imperialist and progressive key.³⁶

The rhetoric of racial supremacy is present in Miriam's thoughts ('primitive races') and even though the idea of 'a boys' empire' persists, it is nevertheless surpassed by a veritable imperial ethos of differential allocation of importance shown in the distinction of 'civilized women' versus 'colonials and primitive races.'

As Frigerio argues, Miriam wonders 'what English identity means, how it was formed, and whether it is being eroded and modified by imperial expansion'³⁷ and comments on *Interim's* Christmas Eve scene, in the Brooms's household, a scene which echoes that of the dental practice: 'the picture of Queen Victoria leaning on a walking-stick between two Hindu servants, receiving an address, on the other side, the Satsuma vases and bowls on the side board' (II 293-4).³⁸ Although Kusch reads the scene as 'an abstract and aestheticized meeting of East and West', I argue that, in fact, it very concretely and specifically teems with the tangible material

³⁶ Frigerio, op. cit, p.17.

³⁷ Ibid, p.7.

³⁸ See ibid, p.9.

realities of colonial economies.³⁹ Apart from London presented as ‘the point of access’ to a cornucopia of colonial goods – always within the security of the bourgeois salon – the valuable element in Frigerio’s reading is the ‘variety of different (“subordinate”) cultures ... incorporated as fragments into the “museum/library archive” of the modernist city, the site of a new kind of transnational “metropolitan perception” within the boundaries of national culture’.⁴⁰ The prominence of the bourgeois living-room at home is thus contingent on the influx of colonial luxury items from the colonies. Moreover, the representation of colonial reign is celebrated within the household through the picture of the Queen and her Hindu servants and denotes the political supremacy of the empire sustained by the ongoing import of the colonial goods into the metropolis.

To conclude, the intertextual narrative politics of *Pilgrimage* in *The Tunnel* and *Interim* discloses the colonial hauntings that interrupt Miriam’s everyday pilgrimage in the city. The text thus shows how the alignment of the national with the masculine and the imperial is disjunctive, silencing women, colonial subjects and their mundane, labour-centered realities. Richardson’s new woman narrative critiques the middle-class values which Miriam both endorses and defies, aspires to and resists, by way of exposing the fissures of the imperial-metropolitan thread whose spatial order stretches beyond the visible boundaries to worlds it can neither include nor suppress. In fact, both the insertions of Kipling’s poetry in *Pilgrimage* and the material commodities that attract Miriam’s attentive reflection draw attention to these fissures, which enable a symptomatic reading of the sign. They open up an added space between the lines, which attests to the imperial ideologies of race and gender that infuse both popular culture and metropolitan literary and socio-political discourses.

³⁹ Kusch, p.56.

⁴⁰ Frigerio, op. cit, p.9.