

Empire of Analogies: Kipling, India and Ireland.

Kaori Nagai. Cork: Cork University Press, 2006. 192pp.
ISBN 978-1-8591-8408-0

Is there Kipling beyond *Kim*? Once upon a time, Kipling's 1905 novel was just one of an assortment of his works that were required reading for the well-informed Anglophone. Today it's usually the only novel still considered palatable to adults. A number of recent scholarly studies, including Andrew Hagiioannu's *The Man who would be Kipling* (2003) and Peter Havholm's *Politics and Awe in Rudyard Kipling's Fiction* (2008), have attempted to recuperate Kipling beyond *Kim*. Kaori Nagai's *Empire of Analogies: Kipling, India and Ireland* is a welcome and accessible addition to this turn in Kipling studies. Nagai sees Kipling's writings as part of a "discursive war of analogies being fought between imperial and nationalist modes of representing Indo-Irish connections" (3). Two of her six chapters extend this examination to South Africa. Nagai focuses on Kipling's short stories and journalism, though some discussion of *Kim* arises in every chapter.

Chapter One, "The Taming of the Irish Afreets," examines the provocative links between India and Ireland present in Kipling's early short stories. Nagai argues that Kipling's Irish characters feel at home in India in a way that his English characters rarely do, and that India allows Kipling both to contain Fenian fears and to showcase Irish characters who, when treated honorably, are loyal to the empire. The chapter's organization is rather awkward, and the unexpected turns to other topics—*Kim*, the supernatural, theatricality—tend to dilute the argument. Overall, though, Nagai successfully conveys the ambiguity and importance of these early stories, and her central arguments are convincing.

In Chapter Two, "When East Meets West: Kipling's India of Anti-Gravity," Nagai argues that most of Kipling's British protagonists fare poorly when they come into contact with the Indian ground. Nagai first considers the technological advances—roads, railways, telegraph—that paradoxically allowed the British to control India by avoiding actual contact with India. The focus then shifts to Kipling himself and the climate change in his writings after he left India in 1889. While Kipling's early stories regularly record his characters' struggles against the Indian heat, his later stories erase the oppressive weather and almost transform India into "an ideal settler colony" (29). Nagai's central argument conflates Indian ground and climate, but the two are separate if related forces and challenges. One might argue that, having freed their bodies from direct contact with the Indian earth (via roads and rails), nineteenth-century Britons still could not escape the air. This chapter's mix of Kipling's letters and historical information is intelligent and engaging, but I would have appreciated more attention to Kipling's stories via these contexts.

Chapter Three, "Exiled Home: The Voice of the Irish Soldiers," focuses on Terence Mulvaney, examining a wide variety of stories and poems associated with or featuring Kipling's Irish hero. Nagai moves through a remarkable amount of material in a very short space—I counted a dozen stories and two poems in its twenty pages. This chapter goes far in resurrecting Mulvaney as a significant literary figure, though Nagai short-circuits any potential readings of Mulvaney as disruptive or subversive. The chapter closes with *Kim*, suggesting that Mulvaney and his Fenian past are finally too Irish for Kipling, who must recreate him as a child of Irish parentage, but lacking an Irish voice.

The next two chapters consider South Africa and the Boer War. Nagai builds on earlier work like Paula Krebs's 1999 *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire*, but she also introduces

some promising new perspectives. In Chapter Four, “Shamrocks in the Veldt: Two Types of Aphasical Empire,” Nagai examines contemporary representations of Irish soldiers, who fought on either side of the conflict. She describes how white colonials from Canada, New Zealand, and Australia affirmed their loyalty to the Empire by fighting for Victorian South Africa, and recounts Queen Victoria’s canny decision to allow Irish soldiers to wear the shamrock (previously a symbol associated with revolution) as a sign of imperial pride and loyalty. Kipling is but one of a variety of writers discussed in this informative chapter. Chapter Five, “Kim in South Africa,” seems to promise an extended discussion of *Kim* that brings together Kipling’s complex relationship with India, Ireland, and South Africa. However, the chapter mostly offers brief, insightful discussions of Kipling’s South African short stories. Nagai explains Kipling’s oddly regular turn to Indian themes in these stories as evidence of “the bankruptcy of a unified vision of the Empire” (108). If so, then what should we make of *Kim*? Nagai calls it “a successful allegory of empire” (108) but says little more. Both of these chapters should encourage further work on South Africa, the Boer War, and how various writers represented these lands and conflicts.

Kipling is somewhat tangential to the final chapter, “The Dynamite War of Analogies,” which examines the ways late nineteenth-century politicians and writers, from Lord Dufferin to Maud Gonne, attempted to forge or fracture metaphorical links between Ireland and India. This is a fascinating subject, especially in a book that presents Kipling as far more successful in imaginatively connecting Ireland to India than connecting either to South Africa. It also has ramifications for recent scholarly work on nationalism that isolates the colonial history of one area (like Krebs’s study, which reminds us that a particular area or people may have been colonized or oppressed by a number of stronger nations), as opposed to empire-focused studies (like Nagai’s).

I learned much from *Empire of Analogies*, and I hope it inspires further research into the analogies that shaped nineteenth- and twentieth-century debates around empire and sovereignty. Nagai’s chapters on South Africa, and her occasional references to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, suggest this is a topic where more work is needed. Nagai shows that there is much to say about Kipling beyond *Kim*, though her regular return to *Kim* suggests that there isn’t much to say without it.

Thomas McLean