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WHITENESS, MISCEGENATION, AND ANTI-COLONIAL REBELLION IN RUDYARD KIPLING'S *THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING*

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> Race is the ultimate trope of difference because it is so very arbitrary in its application . . . we carelessly use language in such a way as to *will* this sense of *natural* difference into our formulations. To do so is to engage in a pernicious act of language, one which exacerbates the complex problem of cultural or ethnic difference, rather than to assuage or redress it.
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> —Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Writing 'Race' and the Difference It Makes" (1985)

> "I won't make a Nation . . . I'll make an Empire! These men aren't niggers; they're English! Look at their eyes – look at their mouths. Look at the way they stand up. They sit on chairs in their own houses. They're the Lost Tribes, or something like it, and they've grown to be English."
>
> ——Daniel Dravot in Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King* (1888)

IN 1827, JOSIAH HARLAN, a Quaker from Chester County, Pennsylvania, set up camp just south of the border of the Punjab region of India. He rummaged up a ragtag army of Muslim, Hindu, Afghan, and Akali Sikh mercenaries, and with Old Glory flying above him, he and his army started their journey, along with a caravan of saddle horses, camels, carriage cattle, and a royal mace bearer to announce the coming of the would-be American king. With Alexander the Great's march through the same lands twenty-one centuries earlier very much on his mind (Macintyre 40), Harlan set out – under the auspices of restoring the exiled Afghan monarch Shah Shujah to the throne – determined to win power and fame for himself. Disguising himself as a Muslim holy man and at times using brute force, he crossed the Afghan border and ultimately became the Prince of Ghor under secret treaty (227). By 1839, loyal not to Shah Shujah but to his enemy, Dost Mohammed Khan, Harlan returned to his Kabul home to find that the British had seized his property "by right of conquest" (252). Harlan left Kabul, fully intending to return and reclaim his princely title. Once back in the United States, Harlan proposed various schemes to the U.S. government (for which he would be the

emissary, of course), including an Afghanistan-U.S. camel trade and grape trade, neither of which succeeded. Harlan penned a memoir that the British lambasted – unsurprisingly, for it sharply criticized the British presence in Afghanistan.[1] In 1862, at the age of sixty-two, with no formal rank or U.S. military experience, Harlan became the colonel of Harlan's Light Cavalry, fighting on the side of the Union in the Civil War (Macintyre 275). Too weak to perform his duties, he left the army the same year, wandered the U.S. aimlessly, and died in 1871, buried "after a funeral without mourners" (286).

Although Harlan's tale is perhaps one of the more peculiar of its kind, he was not the only nineteenth-century adventurer to pursue the fantasy of penetrating the so-called "secrets of the East" by disguising himself as a "native" during his travels. Among other such sojourners were renowned British anthropologist Richard Burton, who traveled to Mecca, and surveyor William Watts McNair, who disguised himself as a *hakim*, or doctor, and infiltrated Kafiristan, a small region of what is today northeastern Afghanistan (Marx 53). Victorian readers delighted in such stories of a lone Western explorer donning "native" garb and thus accessing native secrets, passing as easily as he could claim expertise of local language or religion. The nineteenth-century fascination with such tales manifested itself in fictional works such as Rudyard Kipling's 1888 novella *The Man Who Would Be King*, which recounts the adventures of two rough-and-tumble Englishmen, Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan and Daniel Dravot, who are determined to infiltrate Kafiristan and become kings there.[2]

The Man Who Would Be King details Dravot and Carnehan's perilous journey to Kafiristan; their desire for kingship stems from their frustration at finding their con schemes in India repeatedly interrupted by the British colonial government. The unnamed narrator of the story, a respectable middle-class journalist, befriends the two loafers after discovering that they are fellow Freemasons. He learns that they plan to pose as newspaper correspondents for his own newspaper and under this pretense, blackmail a local Indian prince. Deciding to avert trouble for his fellow Masons and himself, he reports them. They later reappear in his office, wishing to peruse his maps and encyclopedias for information about their intended kingdom. Dravot and Carnehan present the narrator with a "Contrack" they have drawn up, which includes foreswearing women – "black, white or brown" – liquor, and any abandonment of each other (164). The bemused narrator sees them off when they depart for Kafiristan, Dravot disguised – convincingly, we are told – as a mad native priest, and Carnehan as his servant.

Years later, Carnehan returns to the newspaper office, shrunken and possibly mad, to recount the tale of what transpired in Kafiristan. Carnehan and Dravot learned that the Kafirs were reputedly descendants of Alexander the Great, who once ruled the area and established among the Kafirs the practice of Freemasonry. The Kafirs interpret Dravot and Carnehan's knowledge of Freemasonry as a sign that the two men are gods, a belief that Dravot and Carnehan take no trouble to correct, for godhood is a means of securing their rule. Dravot, believing that the Kafirs are "white people – sons of Alexander" (176), decides to marry a Kafir woman in order to bear an heir to his throne. Yet when he tries to kiss her at their wedding, she bites him, drawing blood. The blood proves that Dravot is a mere mortal; the Kafirs "mutiny" and overthrow Dravot and Carnehan. Dravot is killed and subsequently beheaded. Carnehan is crucified, survives, and is released, returning to India to relate his adventure to the narrator. He bears as proof of his tale Dravot's shriveled head, crown and all. Carnehan dies shortly thereafter of sunstroke after wandering the streets.

The Man Who Would Be King is unique in that Dravot and Carnehan's emphasis on the Kafirs' whiteness and Englishness twists colonial narratives of the period, in which it

was more common for white British colonizers to assert their dominance over non-white, non-English colonized peoples. Kipling himself provided one of the most famous visions of a challenging yet dutiful and ostensibly benevolent imperialism by white colonizers over supposedly inferior, non-white natives in his 1899 poem, "The White Man's Burden," intended to encourage Americans to colonize the Philippines after the Spanish-American War. *The Man Who Would Be King* offers a challenge to critics in terms of what we are to make of its colonizing mission – its "white man's burden" – when white English colonizers in this story seek to dominate people who are themselves described as white.

Critics have largely overlooked the significance of the Kafirs' whiteness, with the exception of Bidisha Banerjee and Edward Marx.[3] For Banerjee, the "visibility of race as a signifier of discrimination is absent in Kipling's story and the construction of the Kafirs as a population of degenerate types based on their race is an impossibility." For this reason, she argues that, "the construction of the other as an object of derision which attempts to justify conquest and colonization, is absent in the story" (12).[4] Banerjee reads Dravot's desire to marry a Kafir woman and produce an heir by her as a transgression of the colonial self/other binary. She concludes that, "by eschewing [this] binary opposition . . . Kipling critiques the imperialist project," "suggests that colonization is a violent and despicable crime against one's own kind," and provides "a scathing critique of the project of imperialism" (18). Banerjee's characterization of Kipling's novella might surprise readers who know him best as the bard of empire. Certainly Kipling at times painted the work of imperialism as difficult, thankless sacrifice, yet he did not reject colonization or imperialism wholesale.[5]

Marx reads the Kafirs' whiteness not as a component that enables a critique of imperialism's evils, but rather as "a deliberate narrative strategy deployed by Kipling" (60) which allows the white "Englishmen" (Kafirs) to triumph at the end of the novella, even though the other white Englishmen, Dravot and Carnehan, lose their kingdom. Such an outcome, Marx argues, would appeal to both liberal reformers in England, who would favor a work critical of Dravot's self-important and heavy-handed rule, and those Anglo-Indians living in the colony who would find the ultimate message of white triumph particularly palatable.[6] Like Banerjee, Marx argues that the Kafirs' whiteness disallows racial differentiation, denying Dravot and Carnehan "the opportunity to impose a racial hierarchy similar to that of the late nineteenth-century British colonies." For Marx, the story's setting is "racially neutral" which "distinguishes the story from other Kipling stories in which specifically interracial marriages end badly, for these tales can and generally are read as lessons on the perils of miscegenation" (62).[7]

Marx's reading of whiteness as "racially neutral" (62), and Banerjee's assertion that the Kafirs' whiteness renders impossible their classification as "degenerate types" (12), both overlook that *whiteness itself is a racial construction*. The Victorian imperial construction of whiteness was imbued with a set of social and cultural meanings, as is evident from the numerous textual references to whiteness in *The Man Who Would Be King*.[8] Indeed, as I shall show, these references mark the Kafirs' whiteness and Englishness as highly unstable and suspect.[9] *The Man Who Would Be King* draws on nineteenth-century scientific racism, and in particular, its taboo against interracial mixing. This science – one of the pseudo-sciences of the nineteenth century, alongside physiognomy, phrenology, and the rise of criminal anthropology – relied on a racial hierarchy according to which different racial "types" were mapped. It was believed that sexual contact between partners of distant racial types would result in "tainting" of the "purer" racial line and physical and moral "degeneration," since

inferior physical and moral traits were associated with "lower" racial types.[10] If one could "read" the character and inclinations of others based on racial type, then the so-called mixed-race subject who appeared "white" created enormous anxiety, rendering illegible the ostensibly "natural" differences between racial groups. Victorian race science partially (though by no means satisfactorily) managed the anxiety of interracial unions through a concept known as regression, also called reversion, according to which a mixed-race subject, despite appearing white and possessing some corresponding "superior" characteristics, was said to necessarily revert back to her/his "inferior" racial type. The concept of reversion bolstered the idea of an ostensibly superior English whiteness that must be protected from the threat of people who were, to use Homi Bhabha's apt phrase, white "but not quite" (86).

I read whiteness in *The Man Who Would Be King* within this context of nineteenth-century scientific racism. There are clear indications in the text that the Kafirs are not *truly* white since they are the product of miscegenation between ancestors who were not racially proximate "types." True to the logic of racial typology, Dravot's Kafir bride-to-be inevitably "regresses" back to her ostensibly inferior racial type when she bites him during their wedding – thus prompting the Kafirs to "mutiny" and return to their baser racial types, as well. I argue that Kipling relies on the reversion myth to offer his Victorian readers a cautionary tale against miscegenation, warning readers that a "pure" whiteness and Englishness exists and must be protected, and that to mistake racial mixture for racial purity is tantamount to the dissolution of the Empire.

Recognizing the novella's reliance on the idea of reversion enables critics to see Kipling's characterization of Dravot's would-be Kafir queen – savage, animalistic, and mutinous – for what it really is: part of a deeply anxious imperial impulse to protect and preserve "pure" whiteness and Englishness. Acknowledging that the novella's cautionary tale is grounded in an anxiety-driven, pseudo-scientific justification for imperial racism opens up space to move beyond the limited vantage point of nineteenth-century British imperial racial discourse and instead to read the colonized Kafir woman's bite as something other than savage regression. Drawing on postcolonial studies and critical whiteness studies to offer a different reading of the novella, I identify the colonial violence at the heart of the text: Dravot's intention to forcibly marry and rape, for the purposes of impregnating, the Kafir woman. In acknowledging this colonial violence, I offer a rereading of the Kafir woman's bite, arguing that her act serves as both individual resistance and the first move in a full-scale, premeditated, organized rebellion against colonial oppressors.

White Englishmen, White Kafirs, and the Regression Narrative

In crafting *The Man Who Would Be King*, Kipling drew on a corpus of orientalist texts that claimed an encyclopedic knowledge of Kafiristan and its inhabitants. For example, when William Watts McNair disguised himself as a *hakim* and traveled to Kafiristan, he catalogued the appearance of the Kafirs he met as ranging from the uncommon "sharp Aryan features and keen, penetrating" blue eyes, to the more common "brown eyes and light hair, even to a golden hue," to "the other of bronze, quite as dark as the ordinary Panjabi" (qtd. in Marx 54). Descriptions of the physical appearance and, specifically, the whiteness of Kafirs did not find their first expression in McNair's account. Drawing from Captain H. G. Raverty's 1859 "Notes on Kafiristan," published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Marx writes

that in 1839, a group of Kafirs approached Sir William MacNaghten in Jelálabad "to pay their respects, and, as it seemed, to welcome [them] as relatives" (49). The Afghan attendant who claimed a blood relation between his master and MacNaghten, Marx wryly observes, was not particularly well received by MacNaghten. Kipling was familiar with these accounts and incorporated them into his novella; when Dravot and Carnehan prepare for their trip by reading about Kafiristan and its people, they are directed by the narrator to none other than Raverty, as well as Surgeon Major Henry W. Bellew (Kipling 163).[11]

Bellew, who wrote numerous texts on Kafiristan between 1862 and 1880, opines in his 1879 lecture to the United Services Institute in Simla on "Kafristan [sic] and the Kafirs" that the claim of kinship between the Kafirs and Europeans was in fact legitimate. Bellew considers

> . . . legends of a common descent – the chiefs from Alexander himself, and the people from his Greek soldiers; and their claim to this ancestry is not without some foundation for we are told by the historians of Alexander's Asiatic conquests that the king married "the fair Roshána, a noted beauty, the daughter of a noble of the district which is now known as Roshan; whilst from the same authorities we learn that 10,000 of his Greek soldiers had taken to themselves wives of the country." (qtd. in Marx 50)[12]

Resonating with the advantageous policy of marrying into the bloodline of the conquered described by Ernest Renan in his 1882 lecture "What is a Nation?" (10), a practice on which I shall say more below, Alexander's marriage attempted "a sound political gesture, symbolizing alliance with and domination of the local tribes" (Macintyre 225). Through its references to Alexander's connection with Kafiristan, the story raises the specter of blood mixture in the Kafirs' ancestry, thus complicating "the colonial politics of exclusion, [which] was contingent on . . . designating who was 'white'" and "who was 'native'" – a process for which "skin shade was too ambiguous" (Stoler 345).

Far from being a static, stable construct, imperial whiteness was inflected by a number of contingencies that rendered some forms of whiteness superior to others. Ann Stoler notes that by the mid-eighteenth century, the British East India Company "legally and administratively dissuaded lower-class European migration and settlement, with the argument that they might destroy Indian respect for" European superiority (Stoler 357–58). Dravot and Carnehan's lower-class status is evident in their speech – their "Contrack" – and their colorful past: "Late of the British army, they exist on un- and semi-skilled labor, petty crime, impersonation, extortion, blackmail in the Native States, etc." (Brebach 76). Dravot's plan to present his Kafiristan empire to Queen Victoria "has a comic, bargain basement quality", given that his troops are so poorly equipped and that the English helpers he wishes to enlist "include a sergeant-pensioner and jailer – both presumably involved in some way or other with Dravot and Peachy's [sic] earlier escapades" (Brebach 77). Dravot's humorous misappropriations of Biblical quotations further develop a sense that these adventurers are not only bold, but also ridiculous.

Yet Dravot and Carnehan's comedic lower-class buffoonery does not undercut the novella's cautioning against an error with serious consequences: Dravot's inability, as a white Englishman, to discern between "pure" whiteness and its deceptive white other, a mistake which leads to death and imperial downfall.[13] The story's "apparent absurdity is subverted by imagery and language that idealize the imperial mission" (Sullivan 101). This idealization

happens through the framing of the story, narrated by a respectable, educated, middle-class Englishman who recounts Carnehan's narration of his adventures with Dravot; this framing enacts a "neutralizing of irony with compassion" – that is, the narrator's compassion for Dravot and Carnehan (Sullivan 101). Ultimately, even working-class whiteness – certainly not an ideal trait for an English colonizer – is not as damaging to the empire as miscegenation, a point that is made clear through the contrast between Carnehan's distaste for interracial sexual liaisons (and indeed, his warning to Dravot that he must not partake in such a union), and Dravot's eagerness to explore them.

In fact, before Dravot even sets foot in Kafiristan, his desire to rule is linked with the possibility of miscegenation. When Dravot and Carnehan appear in the narrator's office to consult his maps, Dravot explains his motivation for selecting Kafiristan: "we have decided that there is only one place now in the world that two strong men can Sar-a-*whack.* They call it Kafiristan" (162). "Sar-a-*whack*" refers to Sarawak in Borneo, where Charles Brooke, nephew of Sir James Brooke, famously followed his uncle's footsteps to rule from 1868 until his death in 1917. Dravot's reference to Sarawak calls up not only an instance of imperial rule by white rajahs over their colonized subjects, but also the ideas about sustaining an empire that were associated with this particular ruler – ideas that addressed miscegenation between colonizer and colonized.

These ideas are expressed in Charles Brooke's *Ten Years in Saráwak*, published in 1866, in which Brooke reflects on the 1857 Uprising in India and how it could have been prevented. He attributes the rebellion to "holding ourselves too much aloof, being too exclusive, and too careless of native rights, sympathies, and interests" (338–39). Brooke says that this problem cannot be overcome through "conventional modes of etiquette" because "in the East . . . flesh and blood are so different" (339). The solution, for Brooke, is to ensure "steadfast populations and rulers" (334), which can only occur through miscegenation:

> It is my conviction that a time will arrive when by modification of races, resulting from intermixture and amalgamation through marriage, a kind of inhabitants will be found who can make such a country their permanent home. Time, and successive periods of change and generations, will thus bring about a good cross betwixt the black race, who are deficient in mental organization and other qualities, and the white, whose thinness of skull and nervous system are too delicately constituted to cope with the trying warmth and melting heat of these latitudes. (331)

Not only did Brooke predict that these mixtures would result in a population able to withstand the climate, but as Robert Young points out, Brooke regarded intermixture as the key to securing "a more efficient form of colonialism" (Young 143). Without interracial sex and miscegenation, Brooke thought that the English in Sarawak would die out.[14]

While Dravot's justification for his desire to marry a Kafir woman is not to ensure survival in a tropical climate, he does share one of Brooke's central concerns: to avoid holding himself aloof and thus overlooking the interests of the colonized. Dravot explains to Carnehan that he wants "a Queen to breed a King's son for the King. A Queen out of the strongest tribe, that'll make them your blood-brothers, and that'll lie by your side and tell you all the people thinks about you and their own affairs" (179). The purposes of this queen are clear: she is to breed, to facilitate a blood connection between ruler and ruled, and to provide intelligence about those who have been colonized. To join with her is an extension, for Dravot, of military conquest, for Dravot's revelation to Carnehan that he wants to marry

a Kafir woman follows immediately upon his description of a series of strategies he plans to employ to expand his empire. "Two hundred and fifty thousand men, ready to cut in on Russia's right flank when she tries for India!" he exclaims to Carnehan, addressing his plan to mobilize a defense against the Russian invasion so anxiously anticipated by the British during the "Great Game" of the late nineteenth century. Dravot proclaims that, "we shall be Emperors – Emperors of the Earth! Rajah Brooke will be a suckling to us" (177). Dravot hopes to not only emulate but best Sir James Brooke's empire in Sarawak. His plan for doing this includes interracial mixture, which was advocated by Charles Brooke, the first Rajah Brooke's successor.

Although both Charles Brooke and Dravot perceived miscegenation as a useful tool for securing power over colonized subjects, their view was not widely accepted by their Victorian contemporaries. Brooke recognizes this fact, including a disclaimer in *Ten Years in Saráwak* to mollify critics of his support for "amalgamation": "Far be it from my wish to make any remarks that may be liable to the charge of disregarding strict rules of propriety and morality. But I can never believe that such conventional modes of etiquette can remain stable in the East" (338–39). Brooke knew that his plan for securing a stable empire might be read as an assault on a moral code that aligned with a "white man's burden" which included stark separations between white and non-white peoples. Furthermore, he was aware that his proposal might be condemned as an incorrect theory according to the scientific racism so popular in the Victorian period.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Victorian race scientists such as J. C. Nott and George R. Gliddon argued that only "proximate" racial types could create "self-sustaining hybrid progeny" (McBratney 57–58). Black/white mixing, for example, was said to create short-lived, weak offspring. If non-proximate types were mixed, according to Nott and Gliddon, "amalgamation" would result, in which the so-called superior race would deteriorate. Nott and Gliddon went so far as to speculate on the extinction of humankind should such mixtures proliferate (McBratney 58–59).[15] Later in the nineteenth century, Herbert Spencer echoed Nott and Gliddon's warnings about interracial sexual unions. Spencer argued that the rigidity of custom could not be altered for "the semi-civilized nations" who most frequently manifested negative, inferior characteristics (Jackson and Weidman 81). Spencerians contended that races must be kept separate and sometimes relied on arguments about preserving "purity of the blood," asserting that "race mixture must be resisted" (85). They pointed to Rome as an example of an empire that fell "because of an influx of unassimilable elements" (85); the same argument was reproduced with regard to the British Empire.[16]

Out of such theories arose a categorization of "mixed" unions, from the more fruitful – "for example, the Norman and Saxon – might intermarry beneficially for both races" – to the less: "for instance, the Anglo-Saxon and the Indian, especially the Hindu" (McBratney 60). In the case of offspring between Britons and Indians, referred to as Eurasians, many nineteenth-century Anglo-Indian novelists held that, "When one drop of white blood expressed itself, the Eurasian might be capable of a white man's pluck and resource, but when its effect faded, he sank back . . . into his inferior black self" (McBratney 63). John McBratney writes that, "Britons' vehement antipathy to Eurasians often veiled a powerful erotic attraction" (63). This erotic attraction was held at bay through cautions against mixture, wherein the attractiveness of the other was coded as deceptive and ultimately degenerate. Thus "savages" who could imitate a civilized person were regarded as unstable, able to "throw off the guise and revert at any moment" (Jackson and Weidman 83).

Charles Brooke recognized the weaker traits that Victorian race science attributed to the offspring of so-called intermixtures. He acknowledged that, "the few half-castes in this country by Anglo-Saxon fathers have not been considered a healthy and strong progeny, and there are many examples to confirm this statement." Yet he maintained that his theory of the benefits of miscegenation was still correct because even though "according to established rules of breeding, too sudden and great a contrast between the parents produces a somewhat imperfect offspring . . . it has been found that the next generation of children considerably improved" (Brooke 337). Thus Brooke's plan can be seen as one for long-term imperial stability, notwithstanding a rough period in which regression was to be expected.

Dravot's attitude towards intermarriage is similar to Brooke's outlook, embracing racial mixture as a means to achieve imperial stability. But if Dravot, as an "overreacher," supports the purported benefits – both physiological and political – of miscegenation, then Carnehan – "the cautious worker and the voice of restraint and practicality" (Sullivan 106) – provides the counterpoint to this view. Carnehan advocates adhering to the "Contrack," according to which "any Woman, black, white or brown" is off limits, as getting "mixed up" with women would be "harmful" (164). Carnehan reminds Dravot of their contract as soon as Dravot expresses his desire for a wife; initially it seems that Carnehan is concerned with Dravot's becoming involved with a woman only because she is a woman, and thus in his view a hindrance to their exploits. Yet Carnehan's subsequent comments, and Dravot's responses, suggest that Carnehan's deeper concern is interracial mixture. He provides a case from his own experience to remind Dravot what he is getting into:

> "Do you remember that Bengali woman I kept at Mogul Serai when I was a plate-layer? . . . A fat lot o' good she was to me. She taught me the lingo and one or two other things; but what happened? She ran away with the Stationmaster's servant and half my month's pay. Then she turned up at Dadur Junction in tow of a half-caste, and had the impidence to say I was her husband – all among the drivers in the running-shed too!" (179)[17]

The woman whom Carnehan "kept" – his Bengali mistress – lets him in on a few insider secrets (like language instruction) that would be valuable for Carnehan as he interacted with colonized people, an experience that could in some ways parallel Dravot's desire for a wife to clue him in as a sort of native informant. That this Bengali woman would run away with a servant – ostensibly not an Englishman and thus a "step down" from Carnehan – and that she would steal from Carnehan are textbook orientalist stereotypes. What is worse to Carnehan is not this predictable behavior, but rather that she has the "impidence" to show up with a Eurasian "half-caste" child and attribute that child's parentage to Carnehan in front of others. She is speaking out of turn, it is implied, for she is a "kept" woman and thus ought not to have claimed Carnehan's affection or commitment by identifying him as her husband. The humiliation that Carnehan experiences at her revelation is evident in his description of the incident. What is missing is whether or not the woman spoke the truth – that is, whether or not the child is actually his. The indignity of interracial marriage, to the end of producing a "half-caste" child, is enough to render concerns of actual parentage inconsequential.

Carnehan sees Dravot's desire to unite with a Kafir woman to produce an heir as a dangerous sexual act, one that will surely unleash the perils of reversion. That Carnehan's concern is rooted in the perceived dangers of miscegenation is evident in Dravot's response to Carnehan's story of the Bengali woman and her half-caste child. "We've done with

that . . . These women are whiter than you or me," Dravot responds, an argument rooted in Dravot's belief that what he intends cannot be considered racial mixture since the Kafirs are white in appearance – in other words, he does not believe that *his* child will be a "half-caste." Thus he views the upcoming union with nothing short of sleepless excitement, as Carnehan narrates: "He licked his lips, did Dan, and stayed up walking about more than half the night, thinking of the wife that he was going to get in the morning" (180). This description is in direct contrast with Carnehan's own feelings about the affair, which immediately follow: "I wasn't any means comfortable, for I knew that dealings with a woman in foreign parts, though you was a crowned King twenty times over, could not but be risky" (180–81). Through Dravot and Carnehan's contrasting views on the advisability of sexual involvement with colonized people who appear white, the novella poses some central questions for the Victorian reader: to what extent was it acceptable for the two English kings to become close to/part of the Kafir people? Were the Kafirs *really* white, given that Dravot insisted on their whiteness so strongly – perhaps protesting too much, as it were (and what did "real" whiteness mean, in any case)? And finally, could miscegenation truly stabilize colonial rule – as Charles Brooke theorized – without severe risks to the survival of the empire itself?

"Mingling" vs. "Mixing": The Boundaries of Acceptable Intimacy

WITH REGARD TO THE BOUNDARIES around intimacy between English colonizers and their colonized subjects, Kipling himself made clear demarcations between what was acceptable and what was not. Kipling's works reflect a phenomenon that David Gilmour, borrowing from one of Kipling's epigraphs to a chapter in *Kim*, refers to as the two sides of Kipling's head: "One side stayed with him in the office and the Club, mocking Indians for their political pretensions and their 'orientally unclean . . . habits'" while "the other, intensely receptive to sights, smells and sounds, roamed the bazaars and the native states, absorbing the experience without feeling the need to censure" (54). In fact, Kipling did not believe that Indians needed to submit to Western ideas of religion or education, finding such training virtually useless and resulting in the creation of the Babu, the western-educated Indian (often portrayed as Bengali) who desired self-rule, and whom Kipling deplored (Gilmour 63; McBratney 77).

The image of the two sides of Kipling's head – the side that appreciated and absorbed the experience of being in India and around Indians, and the side that viewed India and its native peoples with scorn and contempt – reflect the logic that guided Kipling's own sense of the dangers of producing "mixed" offspring. McBratney explains that in Kipling's mind, there was a difference between "mingling" and "mixture" between Britons and Indians: "mingling" signals a type of interaction "that preserves the integrity of the original components and permits them to separate without change," while mixture "suggests the creation of a single, new entity that alters the integrity of the constituent elements." Mingling is "a *cultural* phenomenon that allows for a variety of consequences, including reversal of the mingling process." Mixture, however, is very different, for it "describes primarily a *biological* event that limits variety by making reversal more problematic," endangering the purity of the so-called superior racial line (McBratney 63). For Kipling, mingling was acceptable and even desirable, but mixing was profoundly undesirable and dangerous.

Kipling's critique of "mixing" translates, in the novella, to an illustration of the danger and imperial downfall brought about by Dravot's actions when he tries to marry a Kafir woman and bear an heir by her. Kipling establishes the Kafirs' racial otherness from Dravot

and Carnehan – despite the Kafirs' apparent whiteness – at several points in the novella, as I shall discuss below. Kipling uses the signifier of whiteness not to construct a racially neutral setting, but rather to warn against abandoning the construction of racial difference, even when confronted with apparently white, mixed-race subjects. To overlook the signifying power of whiteness – and the way in which whiteness is used, as other racial signifiers are, to "*will* [a] sense of *natural* difference into our formulations" (Gates 5) – is to overlook a central aspect of Kipling's narrative. For it is Dravot's belief that the Kafirs are white – his *mis*construction, according to the logic of reversion, of whiteness – that causes the downfall of his kingdom. The "Contrack" that Dravot and Carnehan sign before leaving India acknowledges whiteness as a racial signifier, for it classifies "any Woman, black, white or brown" as a "harmful" vice in which the would-be kings must not indulge, drawing the boundaries of what constitutes gendered and racialized danger to the two Englishmen from the outset (164). Significantly, "white" bodies – which would include Dravot's would-be queen – are implicated in that danger.

The Kafirs: White, But Not Quite

DRAVOT'S CONTINUOUS REFERENCES to the Kafirs' whiteness, rather than simply describing a lack of racial difference, instead serve to highlight how the Kafirs are not quite "white" in the same sense as Dravot and Carnehan. Once in Kafiristan, after the two Englishmen have met with some success at teaching Kafir men to drill and form an army, Dravot exclaims to Carnehan that the Kafirs "aren't niggers; they're English! Look at their eyes – look at their mouths. Look at the way they stand up. They sit on chairs in their own houses. They're the Lost Tribes, or something like it, and they've *grown to be English*" (177, italics mine). Dravot assesses the Kafirs' Englishness through both their physical characteristics and their behaviors. His reference to the Lost Tribes actually distances the Kafirs from the Englishness that he attributes to them, hinting instead at the racial otherness which saturated Victorian perceptions of Semitic peoples, a product of what Stephen Prickett calls the "'indo-europeanizing' [of] established Christianity" (66).

There is some slippage between Dravot's claim that the Kafirs *are* English, and his follow-up explanation that they have *grown to be* English. The notion of "becoming" English did have some currency in late Victorian narratives of the imperial civilizing mission, by which colonizers justified their rule over the colonized. According to what Uday Singh Mehta refers to as "the liberal justification of the empire," the notion of "progress" relied on a linear, developmental narrative of history in which "civilized" societies were positioned ahead, so to speak, of "backward" ones. Although both societies could exist simultaneously, their presence in history was considered to be different, with the "backward" societies civilizationally dead and in need of being "towed" forward by a colonizer (81–82). Mehta calls the space between the colonizer and colonized the "not yet" (30) or "waiting room of history" (97); it is the existence of this perpetual gap that allows the colonized to be deemed "not yet" civilized enough for self-rule or the various privileges that accompany it. While the colonized could be enculturated with English values (a process reminiscent of Thomas Babington Macaulay's famous plan to use English literature to create a buffer group of educated Indians), according to the narrative Mehta describes, the colonized would never quite catch up to the colonizer.

Thus, even though Dravot says that the Kafirs have "grown to be English" – indicating that they have finally caught up, as it were, to the level of civilization of their English rulers, Dravot follows up with statements that betray his sense that the Kafirs are "not yet" at the same level as himself and Carnehan. He shares with Carnehan his plan to ask the Viceroy "to send me twelve picked English – twelve that I know of – to help us govern a bit" (177). These men would be "cleverer men than us . . . that we can scatter about for our Deputies" (178). There are no trusted Kafir men who can take on this job, despite the Englishness that Dravot attributes to them.

The same slippage between the Kafirs' Englishness, on the one hand, and that they are not-yet-English-enough, on the other, manifests in Dravot's desire to marry a Kafir woman. "You go get a wife too," he tells Peachey, "a nice, strappin', plump girl that'll keep you warm in the winter. They're prettier than English girls, and we can take the pick of 'em. Boil 'em once or twice in hot water, and they'll come out like chicken and ham" (179). The benefits of Kafir women (apart from functioning as wintertime bed warmers) are their superior beauty and Dravot and Carnehan's free choice – being kings – of which women they want. But even though the Kafir women are "prettier than English girls," they are *not yet* white enough. The reference to boiling and "chicken and ham" not only sexually objectifies the women – they are meat, to be consumed – but also articulates the effort needed to render their flesh properly pink and white (179; 114n). Carnehan is not convinced of the Kafir women's whiteness, for it is in this same conversation, after Dravot's "chicken and ham" comment, that he reminds Dravot of his Bengali mistress and the half-caste she brought to him after their affair ended. This warning would seem out of place if Carnehan accepted Dravot's attempt to situate the Kafirs as racially proximate "types" to Englishmen.

Miscegenation as a Threat to the Empire

INDEED, IT IS THE CENTRALITY of maintaining "pure" racial lines and the danger of the blood mixing resulting from miscegenation that marks Dravot's downfall. The deceptiveness of the Kafirs' whiteness is foreshadowed by the weather on Dravot's wedding day: "A little snow had fallen in the night, and everything was white except the greasy fat clouds that blew down and down from the north" (181). While Daniel perceives that "everything was white," he ignores the murmurs of dissent that Carnehan and their trusted aide and translator, whom they call Billy Fish, communicate to him. When the Kafir woman bites Dravot instead of kissing him, as he has invited her to do, she draws blood – blood which reveals his mortality, and in that same moment, the impossibility of Dravot's securing the marital bond or the production of an heir. Whereas Carnehan describes the woman as a "strapping wench" as she approaches Dravot, and Dravot addresses his would-be queen as "lass" before inviting her to kiss him, when she bites him instead, he exclaims, "The slut's bitten me!" It turns out that neither her whiteness nor her apparent proximity to Englishness quite measure up.

After Dravot's Kafir bride bites him, he "[claps] his hand to his neck, and, sure enough, his hand was red with blood" (182). Dravot literally has blood on his hands at a crucial moment in the novella, the Kafir woman's bite signaling the end of his rule, whereupon the priests "[howl] in their lingo" that Dravot is "Neither God nor Devil but a man!" (182). Those whom he has tricked, killed, or commanded to do his killing for him as their king and god are disabused of the illusion that he is a divine being. The blood on Dravot's hands, according to the logic of Victorian race science, also signals the reversion of the colonized

woman – herself the product of mixed blood unions stretching back to the time of Alexander – to a racial type so savage, so bestial and uncivilized, that she bites Dravot as though she were an animal. True to Kipling's disdain for miscegenation, as long as Dravot "mingles" with the natives without "mixing" with them, he maintains his successful rule as king and god. But as soon as he attempts mixture with the Kafir woman, herself the product of "mixed" ancestry, he becomes subject to the dark danger underlying her seemingly civilized exterior. Thus before her apparent reversion, Dravot perceives her as a woman who will be his confidant, the bridge between himself and his subjects, a Queen "that'll lie by your side and tell you all the people thinks about you and their own affairs" (179). However, upon reversion, the woman who would be queen degenerates not just physically, in terms of her animalistic behavior, but in terms that are framed by moral character and virtue. As a "slut," she is no longer fit to bear a king's son or foster diplomatic relations between the king and his subjects. Through the Kafir woman's transformation, Kipling warns of the danger of reversion – that for a woman who is "whiter than you or me," whiter, in fact, than English girls, it might just be a matter of time before she ceases to boast the merits of her white blood and emerges as her darker, inferior self, a danger that would be replicated in her offspring.

That the Kafir woman walks toward Dravot during the marriage ceremony "white as death" – about to bring, in fact, Dravot's death – is indicative of Kipling's suggestion of the consequences of attributing legitimate whiteness and Englishness to racially "mixed" people. Zohreh T. Sullivan reads Dravot's kissing the Kafir woman, and the subsequent bite, as revealing "not only his inability to restrain desire, but the racist and political implications of that lawless desire: the Englishman has violated the boundaries proper to his place in the ruling class" (109). This violation of boundaries occurs through Dravot's desire for sexual union with a Kafir woman, and his inability to read "correctly" what her whiteness means, or rather, what it conceals – the threat of reversion. Dravot is not only unable to perceive what Englishness is, but also what it isn't. He misreads the native woman as a woman who could be his loyal confidant and queen, rather than the "slut" who lurks beneath. The claim of Kafir Englishness itself could not justify Dravot's marriage. While the "desiring machine" (Young 98) of colonialism drove him to seek an heir, ultimately, Kipling's narrative suggests that Dravot's belief that the "white" natives are *really* white – and English – is a danger to the empire.

This danger is captured in what Billy Fish describes as "Ruin and Mutiny" (182). The very soldiers Carnehan trained now turn against them. "I'm sorry Dan," Carnehan says after Dravot heaps blame upon him for the rebellion, "but there's no accounting for natives. This business is our 'Fifty-Seven" (183). Carnehan's reference to the 1857 Indian Uprising in the moment in which the Kafirs turn against them links the Kafir rebellion to the anxieties the British in India faced post-rebellion. Edward Marx explains that "one of the lessons of 1857" was

> an expression of the "natural" dominance of superior ("White") races over inferior races, a hierarchy that nevertheless had to be reinforced by the conscious separation of races and the performance of specific behaviors referred to as "maintaining imperial prestige" – among which was the injunction against marriage between members of the colonizing and colonized "races." (62)

It is this lesson that Dravot failed to learn, the novella reminds readers through Carnehan's reference to the Indian Uprising, not to mention Carnehan's attempts leading up to the

rebellion to dissuade Dravot from marrying a Kafir woman. Similar to other tales by Kipling that tout the supposed dangers of miscegenation, *The Man Who Would Be King* is a cautionary tale warning against abandoning a strictly demarcated construction of whiteness.

The novella reflects Victorian anxieties stemming from the notion that white English masculinity was under siege and must be protected. These anxieties found their pinnacle in the figure of the white woman, for it was her body that could either uphold racial purity or sully it. Radhika Mohanram explains that, "The invulnerability and superiority of whiteness . . . was revealed to be a political and imperial, rather than a biological, construct. And this message was written on the white woman's body" (46). To "mistake" a "slut" Kafir woman as white – when so much was at stake in the body of the white woman – is, the novella suggests, a serious threat to imperial masculinity and, indeed, to the empire.

The novella's warning against abandoning the construction of racial difference, even against seemingly white adversaries, is informed by deep concerns around the British losing imperial ground in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The 1880s in particular brought a series of challenges to the notion of a secure and stable white English imperial masculinity – including agitation for Home Rule in Ireland, the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885, the proposal of the Ilbert Bill in 1883 (the bill loosened restrictions on Indian magistrates presiding over the trial of British subjects), the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, the Great Game (comprised of military and intelligence operations driven by fear that the northern borders of India and Afghanistan would yield to penetration from a Russian advance from the north), and the rise of the New Imperialism in which European colonial powers competed fiercely against one another to acquire the most territory (notably in the so-called "scramble for Africa").[18] Together, these developments created a sense that a "pure" and powerful white English masculinity must be guarded against onslaughts both at home and abroad.

Addressing Racial and Sexual Violence in "The Man Who Would Be King"

THE CONTEXT OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY British white imperial masculinity under siege sheds light on why Kipling's novella cautions Victorian readers about the need to remain vigilant in protecting whiteness by reading it correctly and avoiding interracial mixture. The undercurrent of Victorian scientific racism in the novella rendered it a cautionary tale to *Victorian* readers. Yet present-day critics are equipped with the knowledge that these cautions were grounded in Victorian race science – a racist pseudo-science that justified, through its hierarchy of superior and inferior racial types, the subjugation of colonized peoples under British imperial rulers. This knowledge opens up certain questions as to how we are to read Dravot's desire to marry a Kafir woman, her bite, and Dravot's subsequent downfall. If we refuse the notion that there is a "pure" white Englishness that must be protected from the contamination of inferior racial types, we are unable to read Dravot's error as marrying a woman who was not white, as he thought she was. If we refuse the idea that the Kafir woman bit Dravot because she was a stupidly superstitious, toxic native woman who regressed and turned savage when she feared she would die for marrying a god, then what other possibilities are there for her actions? When we are not looking for mutinous natives who revolt against bumbling but likeable English kings, essentially good old boys who are knocked from the throne where, after all, they did a lot of good – when we reject such a reading, then what textual clues might we notice? Guided by these questions, I conduct a postcolonial rereading

of Dravot's wedding and the subsequent Kafir rebellion, arguing that the Kafir woman's bite and the Kafirs' rebellion can be understood as well-planned, deliberate acts of resistance by colonized peoples against violent and oppressive English rulers. To understand the rebellion in this way, it is necessary to read between the lines of Dravot's proclamations of desire for a wife and to foreground the violence that lies beneath.

When Dravot first puts his desire to marry before a council of Kafirs, he receives no response. Billy Fish, loyal friend and interpreter of the two Englishmen, suggests that Dravot should "ask the girls," as Carnehan explains, yet "Dravot damned them all around." Rather than agreeing to ask a Kafir woman to marry him, Dravot flies into a rage at the very idea of having to ask. His masculinity wounded, he shouts, "What's wrong with me? . . . Am I a dog or am I not enough of a man for your wenches? Haven't I put the shadow of my hand over this country? Who stopped the last Afghan raid? . . . Who bought your guns? Who repaired the bridges?" (179–80). For Dravot, having the consent of the Kafir woman he is to marry is inconsequential. Carnehan reminds Dravot that to "ask the girls" is "how it's done at Home, and these people are quite English." Yet Dravot cannot conceive of abiding by such customs in Kafiristan, where he huffs that, "The marriage of the King is a matter of State" (180). When Carnehan questions Billy Fish as to why no Kafir woman will come forward to marry Dravot, Billy Fish says the Kafir women believe that to marry a god will kill them. This explanation corresponds with orientalist depictions of superstitious natives whose religious customs belie common sense – what the reader knows to be Dravot and Carnehan's mere manhood under the ruse of godhood – but it also serves another purpose. Billy Fish's account of the Kafir women's fear indicates that no marriage between Dravot and a Kafir woman will be consensual. Because Dravot overtly rejects the idea of obtaining his bride-to-be's consent for marriage, essentially regarding consent as unnecessary, his motivation for seeking a wife – to produce an heir – takes on a sinister meaning. This marriage will mean forcibly marrying, for the purposes of impregnating, a non-consenting Kafir woman.

I highlight the issue of consent to foreground that this marriage is an act of racial and sexual violence, a fact routinely ignored in scholarship on the novella. Some critical works on *The Man Who Would Be King* obscure the violence of the marriage by focusing instead on other aspects of Dravot and Carnehan's downfall, such as the morality of impersonating a god.[19] Although they do not overtly discuss the sexual violence of Dravot's marriage, other critics offer useful analyses of the marriage's upsetting of colonial self/other categories.[20] Among some of the most fascinating – yet more troubling – analyses of the novella are those which focus on Freemasonry and the bond of brotherhood between Dravot and Carnehan. For instance, George Grella writes that Dravot "betrays his bonds of friendship and brotherhood with Carnehan to cast his lot with Kafiristan," an act Grella regards as "a noble gesture for essentially benevolent reasons," even though it nonetheless "exhibits the inherent corruption of power" (258). The language of casting one's lot with one side or the other, of strategic attempts to secure kingship, and particularly of nobility and benevolence, obscures the act that actually comprises Dravot's "casting his lot with Kafiristan": to forcibly marry, for the purposes of raping and impregnating, a Kafir woman. This is justified with an evaluation of her fitness for this cause based on her "chicken and ham" whiteness. Tim Bascom also considers Dravot's decision to marry in terms of its impact on Dravot and Carnehan's friendship; Bascom writes of the impending rape as Dravot's attempt to "*let* someone else into their [Dravot and Carnehan's] small circle," and argues that this is what ends Dravot's reign (170, emphasis mine). Bascom ends his article with the contention that *The Man Who*

Would Be King is "still a great story" because "even though we cannot condone Carnehan's and Dravot's exclusive brotherhood of superiority and power, we readers secretly want to be a part of it" (170). He continues, "Despite all our reservations (many of which are mirrored for us by the oftentimes skeptical narrator), we silently join the Brotherhood" (171).

While I agree with Bascom regarding *The Man Who Would Be King*'s literary value – concurring with Edward Said that "the great cultural archive . . . is where the intellectual and aesthetic investments in overseas dominion are made" (xxi) – I would like to put some pressure on the "we" who, according to Bascom, "silently join the Brotherhood." As Benita Parry reminds literary scholars, "The history of Kipling criticism is emblematic of changes in Western attitudes to the modern imperial experience" (186). Informed by the methods and fresh insights of postcolonial feminist studies, which encourage scholars to unpack how one's own positionality impacts one's reading practice, I propose a different "we," a we guided by attention to both imperial constructions of race and our own situatedness, as critics, amidst discourses of race and power. Given the long history of British colonization of India and its imprint on my scholarship as a South Asian woman, I cannot "silently join the Brotherhood." In refusing Bascom's "we," I offer a different reading of the Kafir woman's bite, one that reads against the grain of the novella and thus runs counter to the cautionary tale that Kipling offered his Victorian readers: the bite, I argue, is the first act in a rebellion against colonial oppressors.

A Postcolonial Feminist Rereading of the Kafir Woman's Bite

THE FIRST CLUE THAT RESISTANCE is afoot is the night before the wedding, when, "All that night there was a blowing of horns in a little dark temple half-way down the hill" and Carnehan hears "a girl crying fit to die." A priest explains that the woman "was being prepared to marry the King" (180), though he does not elaborate on what this preparation consists of. While the woman's wails are ominous, they are not the only indication that trouble is ahead, for Carnehan notices early the next morning "the priests talking together in whispers, and the Chiefs talking together too, and they looked at me out of the corners of their eyes" – all behavior that indicates trouble is brewing and that the priests, as a group, share an understanding of what is to come, an understanding to which Carnehan is not made privy. When Carnehan asks the trusted Billy Fish what is happening, Billy Fish warns, "if you can make the King drop all this nonsense about marriage, you'll be doing him and me and yourself a great service . . . I'll stick by you today. I have twenty of my men with me, and they will follow me. We'll go to Bashkai until the storm blows over" (181). This warning of upcoming rebellion – uttered before any Kafir has seen Dravot's blood – suggests that these are not people who are duped into believing that Dravot is a god, so much so that only the sight of blood provoke them to attack. The Kafirs are *already planning an attack*.

Carnehan advises Dravot one last time to abandon his plan, sharing Billy Fish's warning that there will be trouble, but Dravot denies that any such thing could happen. As the procession begins, the Kafirs are already gathered at the appointed place, "leaning on their guns and spears," clearly prepared for a fight. Meanwhile, "A lot of priests went down to the little temple to bring up the girl, and the horns blew fit to wake the dead." When the Kafir woman approaches Dravot, she is "white as death, and looking back every minute at the priests" (181) – the same priests who that very morning could not look Carnehan in the eye as they whispered amongst themselves. The reading of the woman's subsequent bite as

an act of reversion – or an act of "mutiny" and native treachery – on the one hand, or as an act of "white" triumph, on the other, overshadows another possible reading suggested by her time being "prepared" the night before, her eye contact with the priests as she approaches Dravot, and the reinforcement of armed Kafir men around the appointed wedding spot. Simply put, these are not the actions of a people who are waiting for Dravot to bleed to attack. Textual clues suggest that this is a well-planned, concerted effort, and that the Kafir woman is resisting not only a forced marriage with an impending rape, but also launching the first attack on Dravot while the other colonized people (apart from Billy Fish and his group of twenty followers) rally and prepare to eject their oppressors. It is *Carnehan's narration* that seems to suggest that the sight of Dravot's blood is what prompts the priests to "[howl] in their lingo – 'Neither God nor Devil but a man!'" (182). Yet if we are not looking for duped natives who can only discern Dravot's mortality by seeing his blood, copious textual clues indicate that this rebellion is not a surprise attack; it is intelligently planned, well-executed, comes with forewarning from Billy Fish, and is ultimately successful. The "slut" who bites Dravot is not a savage mixed-race woman returned to her animalistic, uncivilized state; rather, she is the Kafir appointed to lead the rebellion against the man who intends to rape her. She is the first to strike in the battle against her people's colonial oppressors.

One may object to this rebellion, arguing that Dravot brought good things to the Kafirs. Indeed, one may rehearse the list of accomplishments that in his mind justified his taking a Kafir woman for his wife, even though not a single one of them consented to marry him. And yet such an objection, one which clings to claims of benevolent imperialism, protesting against the ungratefulness of the angry native mob – much like the ungratefulness of the "half devil and half child" described in Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" (326) – ignores the crucial fact that benevolent imperialism is nevertheless undergirded by violence.

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NOTES

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1. Harlan's book, *A Memoir of India and Avghanistaun – With observations upon the present critical state and future prospects of those Countries*, was published in 1842.
2. Kipling began writing *The Man Who Would Be King* in 1886; it was published in a collection of stories entitled *The Phantom Rickshaw* in 1888. Edward Marx writes that "[i]t seems nearly certain" that Kipling was familiar with the stories of figures like McNair (53).
3. Banerjee is almost correct that "no mention has ever been made of the fact that the natives of Kafiristan are light skinned and frequently called 'British'" by Dravot and Carnehan, for Marx does explicitly address the Kafirs' whiteness. Also, Dravot and Carnehan refer to the Kafirs as English, not British.
4. This is a curious claim, given the many instances in which the Kafirs are derided as inferiors in the story. Sullivan includes a long list of such references (200).
5. Sullivan writes that, "The theme of the story appears to be an anticolonialist allegory in which the adventurers are an absurd parody of the British in the third world; yet its apparent absurdity is subverted

by imagery and language that idealizes the imperial mission" (101). Moreover, Kipling's own writings from this period reflect his feelings about imperialism as a necessary endeavor without which Indians would be helpless. In a letter to his cousin Margaret Burne-Jones, written between November 28, 1885 and January 11, 1886, Kipling writes that, "in spite of what good lies in the native he is utterly unable to do anything finished or clean, or neat unless he has the Englishman at his elbow to guide and direct and put straight . . . every step of that progress [in India] is boosted on both sides, and propped up from below and held up from above by Englishmen who take the blame if anything goes wrong and gloss over the shortcomings and that without the aid – you would get – well anything mismanaged, ill directed, scamped, helpless, and careless that you please" (*Letters* 104).

6. Post-1857, after the Indian Uprising, the narrative of triumphant white Englishmen and women had considerable currency, as Sharpe details in *Allegories of Empire*.
7. Such tales include, for instance, "Beyond the Pale" (1888), in which an Englishman is stabbed in the groin after his affair with a young Indian widow is discovered. He survives but walks with a slight limp for the rest of his life, which he explains away as a riding injury – an explanation that compensates for the wound to his manhood that forever reminds him of the danger of his previous sexual adventures with a "native" woman.
8. As Dyer explains, "there is something at stake in looking at, or continuing to ignore, white racial imagery. As long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they . . . function as a human norm" (1). Mohanram's book, *Imperial White*, brings whiteness studies to bear on the formation of British imperial subjects and the consolidation of imperial power, and in so doing illustrates the importance of unpacking whiteness as a racial construction.
9. Dravot's allusion to Alexander's mixture with local peoples centuries ago, a marriage which "symbolize[d] alliance with and domination of the local tribes" (Macintyre 225), signals the context of miscegenation that subtends the Kafirs' whiteness.
10. Victorian racial typology was based on a hierarchy "from high to low" with "the Anglo-Saxons at or near the top, the other European races in the middle, and the non-European races drifting toward the bottom" (McBratney 15).
11. See Marx for more on Kipling's direct references to orientalist texts on Kafiristan, including John Wood's 1841 text *A Journey to the Source of the River Oxus.*
12. Echoing Bellow's account is the narrative of Josiah Harlan; Harlan, too, was entranced by the story of Alexander's marriage to a woman Harlan called Roxanne – reputed to be "the most beautiful woman in all Asia" and "the daughter of a Sogdian baron" (Macintyre 225).
13. In addition to class, Dravot and Carnehan's surnames (French and Irish, respectively) also contribute to the sense that these are not ideal Englishmen.
14. Renan also points out the benefits of outside invaders mixing with the native peoples in his discussion of nation (10).
15. The issue of blood mixture was central in Victorian debates between monogenists, who insisted on a common origin of all races of human beings, and polygenists, who posited that humankind had multiple origins, an assertion polygenists used to justify the notion that different racial groups were in fact different species.
16. This perception of interracial unions in colonial contexts developed over time. Stoler writes that, "What upheld [white] prestige was not a constant; concubinage was socially lauded at one time and seen as a political menace at another" (350). Thus, "Local women, who had been considered protectors of men's well-being, were now seen as the bearers of ill-health and sinister influences" (360).
17. Citations are from the 1895 Macmillan edition of *The Man Who Would Be King*, as reproduced in John Kucich's *Fictions of Empire*. In his "A Note on the Texts," Kucich explains that the 1895 Macmillan edition is not the same as the version that Kipling revised before his death for the Sussex edition of 1937–39. I use the 1895 version for the same reason as Kucich: "in the interest of preserving the text read by Kipling's readers throughout the years of his greatest popularity" (23).

18. Hall and Schwarz (13–14) and Gilmour (22–23) detail how these historical developments challenged the stability of a unified English masculine identity. McBratney also discusses the hyper vigilance involved in constructing an English self that could oppose various cultural "others" (16). Regarding Kipling's involvement in attempts to protect white British imperial power, the Kipling family "participated in the general hysteria" generated by the Ilbert Bill (Gilmour 23). As for the Great Game, as a correspondent for the *Civil and Military Gazette*, Kipling was all too familiar with the stakes of securing India's northern border; Moran writes that, "Kipling developed a more intimate knowledge of the Afghan/Russian border conflict than almost anyone else in the Raj. In March 1885 he attended the Rawal Pindi conference between the amir of Afghanistan and the viceroy of India as a correspondent for the *CMG*" (vi).
19. For instance, Beckerman writes that, "For Kipling, power without responsibility is a form of blasphemy, and Danny's downfall is the direct result of his impersonating a god" (182). Grella ultimately assigns Dravot's imperial failure to his belief "that his rhetoric is truth. His superiority, he thinks, really does result from divinity; if the people think he is a god, then in fact he must be a god" (258). Fussell, Jr. discusses the irony of Dravot's abuse of Freemasonry in his appropriation of power. Meyers also explores moral authority in the novella.
20. Among these critics are Almond, who focuses on cultural appropriation; Sullivan, who considers Dravot's violation of the boundaries that are meant to restrain the desire of a white English ruler; and Banerjee, whose arguments I summarize above. Showalter considers the novella in light of depictions of colonized women in fin-de-siècle stories more generally, arguing that the woman's bite "link[s] her with the castrating vampire-woman" trope in these stories (94).

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