

Polarity of Post-Colonial Discourse: A Comparative Analysis of the Poems “The White Man’s Burden” and “The Black Man’s Burden”

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Abstract

The main objective of this article was to analyze two inter-textually constructed texts: “The White Man’s Burden” and “The Black Man’s Burden”. An attempt has been made to show the ambivalent portrayal of colonizers and their colonies in which it technically states the polarized discourses that scholars have towards postcolonial literary theory in particular and post-colonial philosophy in general. While polarity of ideas is inevitable as life is an interactional process of individuals, it is believed that the very essence and fate of post-colonial literature and post-colonial philosophy at large remain contentious. Some scholars are in favour of the conceptions and objectives advocated by postcolonial theory, whereas others posit against the point in focus. Both sides have their own justifications. Thus, the background, and the conceptual framework which indicates some conceptual descriptions on the idea in focus has been made. And then, a conclusion from the analysis of poems was made. As we can understand from the titles of the poems, “The White Man’s Burden” and “The Black Man’s Burden” where the first poem leads readers to access the latter in the form of parody. The opposition is composed in verse level of the poems, and that is why the poems (though they might have different versions) have the same number of lines; the pattern of writing is composed by providing the parody of each /line, even in some cases, the opposition is composed in word level of each line of verse.

Keyterms: Polarity of ideas, discourse, colonial discourse, post-colonial discourse

Introduction

Postcolonial theory is a concept basically related to the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social roles and practices that European colonial have played since the 18th century (Elam, 2019). It may be resulted from its presence as a theme in various fields where scholars in post-colonial philosophy in general and post-colonial literary theory in particular suggest ideas related to it differently. Although scholars agree on the issue that post-colonialism is a notion which deals

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with imperialism and colonial rule, postcolonial theory is differently conceptualized, approached. It is even taken as a philosophy whose fate or existence as a theory is not yet confidently determined. The very basic motive of this article is, therefore, to discuss the various views and conceptions that the colonizers and colonies view each other. In simple words, this article was designed to show the ambivalent portrayal of colonizers and their colonies where this is the theme or notion which could be seen as a polarized notion of post-colonial discourse as reflected in two inter-textually constructed poems mentioned in the title of this article.

A literary product or work that is used as a basis or foundation for the production of the other literary product is reiterated in the literature. The latter production may be in favor of the former one, or it may be against the former production. In other words, intertextuality is most frequently used in the literature. It is possible to mention Josef Conrad's novel "Heart of Darkness" which could be taken as the basis for the writing of "Things Fall Apart" and other post-colonial literary works. The same is true for the poems under discussion in which the poem, "The White Man's Burden" could be used as a basis for the other poem, "The Black Man's Burden", a poem which could be considered a reactionary poem to the former one in their theme of post-colonial discourse. Therefore, the objective of this article was to comparatively analyze these poems as polarity of post-colonial discourse. The thesis in favor of colonial practice, which is provided by "The White Man's burden" by Rudyard Kipling (1899), is reacted in the form of antithesis by "The Black Man's Burden" by Hubert H. Harrison (1920).

In this article, although the poems are different in their view point, one is written in favor of colonialism, whereas the other is against the viewpoints of colonialism. The poems are treated equally from the view point of post-colonial discourse as post-colonial discourse will be discussed in detail in the conceptual framework of this article. The phrase: 'post-colonial' in this article includes literary works during post-independence period including the then colonial experience. Because it is not easier and important to deal post-colonial experience without the colonial experience of the masters as post-colonial- a hyphenated term refers to both the pre- independence and post-independence periods in its implications or by-product of colonial experiences.

In addition, the issue of post-colonial experience is discussed because the post-colonial practice related to the colonial experience. It is important to revisit both the positive and negative by-products and implications of the

colonial practice of the masters upon the people of their colony. The following idea may explain this issue better:

The Post-colonial Literature and theory investigate what happens when two cultures clash and one of them with accompanying ideology empowers and deems itself superior to the other. The *Writer of Empire Writes Back* using the term “‘post-colonial’ to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (Sawant, 2012, p.120).

The next part of the paper is devoted to highlighting the introductory concepts as a form of theoretical framework, or clarifications on the key terms such as the very essence of the post-colonial literary theory, post-colonial discourse in relation to the colonial discourse and polarity of ideas.

Theoretical Framework

Though the main purpose of this paper is to deal with the issue of polarity of post-colonial discourse, which is very much related to ambivalent view of comparative analysis of the poems, “The White Man’s Burden” and “The Back Man’s Burden”; it is good to clarify the key concepts such as polarity of ideas, discourse, and post-colonial discourse to readers. This is because these are the most frequently mentioned terms throughout this article.

Discourse

As “Discourse is linguistic communication seen as a transaction between speaker and hearer, and is as an interpersonal activity whose form is determined by its social purpose” (Leech & Short, 1981:209), it is situated in any communication in which information exchange or communication purpose is carried out. Discourse is as vast as our needs and wants- both in verbal and in written form. This conception of discourse fits with Stubbs’s (1983, p.1) statement that “organization of language above the sentence or above the clause and therefore... larger linguistic units such as conversational exchanges and written texts” which elaborated by Yeibo (2011) as follows:

discourse is basically concerned with linguistic structures that are larger than the boundaries of a sentence or utterance (i.e. conversation and narratives), and can be presented in two basic forms: spoken and written, both of which have definable communicative function. This further implies that it involves the

use of language in society as an interactive tool, which involves the speaker and listener, on one hand, and the writer and reader, on the other. The fundamental point is that, in both instances, we can only decode the meaning intended by the communicant from a vast range of variable sentences (Yeibo, 2011, p.197).

Therefore, discourse is any structured or situated mode of communication established through linguistic elements and their respective implications. The implications should be included in the transmission and understanding of ideas in the text if it is a written discourse and the same is true for verbal discourse as discourse is beyond the language of any discourse. Likewise, the following section will provide a comprehensive discussion on the post-colonial discourse as one modality of the various cases that discourse is concerned with.

Post-Colonial Discourse

Post-colonial discourse is a reactionary discourse or theory which deals with the misdeeds and wrong perceptions of colonial discourse upon the colonized nations. Therefore, a reconstruction or modification practice upon the misdeeds especially perceptions experienced as a result of the colonial theory is revisited. This assumption is advocated by the extract placed below:

postcolonial counter hegemonic project urges the post-colonial intellectuals of the neo-colonized countries to thoroughly interrogate and dismantle imperialist forms of knowledge ingrained in their own political and cultural unconscious as well as inscribed in the Western representations of the non-Western (Xie, 1997, p.9).

In addition, the following quote could describe the issue under discussion more:

Post [-] colonial theory has often been defined as a political project designed to promote the contesting of colonial domination and to critique the legacies of colonialism. Postcolonial literature uses the language and literary forms of the colonizers to write about the history and mythology of the colonized. Thus, postcolonial literature is by nature transformative, and often subversive. It presents a hybrid culture, history and literature (Ogunsiji & et al, 2012, p.17).

Therefore, the word, post-colonial in this discussion, refers to literary works written as a result of colonialism and in reaction to colonialism as

the extract above, “Postcolonial literature uses the language and literary forms of the colonizers to write about the history and mythology of the colonized”, states. Post-colonialism is a philosophy designed to think and critically adjust the wrong remnants of colonialism in the colonized lands of nations where the excerpted below substantiated this contention clearly:

Most post-colonial critics analyze a literary text whether a topic supports or subverts colonial ideas.. In other words, it deals with the ways in which the text reinforces or resists colonialism’s oppressive ideology. For example, a text can reinforce colonialist ideology through positive portrayals of the colonizers, negative portrayals of the colonized, or the uncritical representation of the benefits of colonialism for the colonized. Analogously, texts can resist colonialist ideology by depicting the misdeeds of the colonizers, the suffering of the colonized, or the detrimental effects of colonialism on the colonized (Tyson, 2006, p. 427).

For example, “The White Man’s Burden” has a positive point of view for colonization due to its portrayals of colonizers and the negative portrayals of the colonized nations; whereas, “The Black Man’s Burden”, has anti-colonialist portrayal in which colonization is a burden to the colonized nation where the colonized people were experiencing the different misers of colonization. Because of its complex nature, post-colonialism stands in series of ambiguous circumstances, and the problem is attributed to the prefix ‘post’ used in post-colonial/post-colonial. Accordingly, the hyphenated word is preferably used in this paper. Further, issues treated in the post-colonial theory starts from the introduction of the colonial practice to the prevailing or existing situation. Therefore, the literary products written in English/english for the purpose colonization to reveal the mal- and wrong practices and perceptions of colonizers over their colonized nations have been the most preferred point of arguments in the post-colonial practice.

Taking the issue mentioned above into consideration, the main purpose of the article is to reveal the polarities or the opposite sides of post-colonial discourse as depicted in the poems, “The White Man’s Burden” and “The Black Man’s Burden”. At this juncture, it could be good enough to precisely describe the very notion of polarity of idea before dealing issues related to polarities of ideas in the post-colonial discourse.

Polarity of Ideas

Polarity of ideas is a state in which two ideas, opinions, etc., are completely opposite or very different from each other. Similarly, the definition of the term polarity: “the situation when two tendencies, opinions, etc. oppose each other” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 2010). Therefore, the phrase, polarity of ideas is used here to indicate the comparative analysis of opposite point of views/ambivalent practices of the post-colonial view point as reflected in the poems: “The White Man’s Burden” and “The Black Man’s Burden”. Having this conceptual description in mind, the next part of the paper presents some sort of reviews and scholarly discussion on the two poems about which scholars attempt to interpret the individual poems based on their understanding. The following comparative analysis on the poems under discussion is made from the point of view of their polarity or difference as per the postcolonial notions.

Analysis of “The White Man’s Burden” and “The Black Man’s Burden”

So far, an endeavor to establish the background and the conceptual framework has been made. The third part of the article deals with the analysis of the poems under discussion in line with the polarity of post-colonial discourse, which was followed by the conclusion/summary of the article.

The approach that a post-colonial reading seeks would practically be put into practice. “Keeping in mind that most postcolonial analyses, regardless of the issues on which they focus, will include some attention to whether the text is colonialist, anticolonialist, or some combination of the two ideologically conflicting ideas” (Tyson, 2006, p.431). For example, “The White Man’s Burden” has portrayed a colonialist view point in which the whites colonized the colonized nation for the benefit of the colonized ones probably colonization is a burden to the whites or to the colonizers; whereas, “The Black Man’s Burden” has portrayed anticolonialist view point since it is a reactionary poem to the former one, and it is the motive or the justification behind. I have considered these poems as poems which could show of polarity/ambivalence of post-colonial discourse, and these poems are going to be analyzed in detail below.

As it is understood from the very beginning of the poems’ titles, “The White Man’s Burden” and “The Black Man’s Burden”, the first poem leads to access the latter in the form of opposition. In other words, the “Black Man’s Burden” is a reactionary poem against “The White Man’s

Burden”. Surprisingly, the opposition is composed in verse/line level of the poems, and that is why the poems have the same number of verses/lines—56 lines in each poem. The pattern of writing portrays the opposite concept of each verse/line, even in some cases the opposition is composed in the word level of each line of verse. The analysis of each poem in this article is merged in one section. To begin with, the first four lines of the two poems are as follows:

Take up the White Man's burden—

Send forth the best ye breed—

Go bind your sons to exile

To serve your captives' need;

(“The white Man’s Burden,” Lines 1-4)

The above quatrain of “The white Man’s Burden” is challenged from “The Black Man’s Burden” as follows:

Take up the Black Man’s burden

Send forth the worst ye breed,

And bind our sons in shackles

To serve your selfish greed;

(“The Black Man’s Burden,” Lines 1-4)

As it has been indicated in the paragraphs before the extracts above, the composition of the above quatrain of each poem is made in the same pattern with ambivalences made in word and phrase levels of the verses where the words, ‘white’ and ‘best’ are opposed with ‘black’ and ‘worst’, words of the reactionary poem. On the other hand, the phrase, ‘bind your sons to exile’ and ‘your captives’ need’, are opposed with ‘bind our sons in shackle’ and ‘your selfish greed’ respectively.

The first quatrain of “The White Man’s Burden” commands readers to think to discharge the responsibilities of the Whites in sending their sons abroad for the betterment of their colonies. However, this concept is clearly opposed by a counterattack from the latter that implore the white to discharge the responsibilities of the blacks in being captivated in lots of hardships such as binding in shackles for the fulfilment of the voracious desires of colonizers. Therefore, the first quatrains of each poem are polarized by which we find the poems opposed each other in their next lines as follows:

To wait in heavy harness,
 On fluttered folk and wild—
 Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
 Half-devil and half-child.

(“The White Man’s Burden,” Lines 5-8,)

This part of the poem titled: “The White Man’s Burden” is found to be contradictory to the latter poem as follows:

To wait in heavy harness
 Be-devilled and beguiled
 Until the Fates remove you
 From a world you have defiled.

(“The Black Man’s Burden,” Lines 5- 8)

Like the first quatrains of the poems under discussion, opposition is prevalent both in word and phrase levels of the lines. The quatrain of the poem extracted from “The White Man’s Burden” states the situation that waiting with the colonized people (who are not considered as normal people, but ‘half devilish and half childish’ to mean that they are unhelpful savage people. On the other hand, the latter extract portrays fate and a glimmer of hope for the black ones when they are emancipated from living with the white who makes the colonized ones to be impure as they are made to be devilled and dishonest. Then, let us continue analysing the second stanzas of the two poems as per each poet’s ambivalent views as stated below:

Take up the White Man's Burden—
 In patience to abide,
 To veil the threat of terror
 And check the show of pride;

(“The White Man’s Burden,” Lines 9-12)

Take up the black Man’s burden
 Your lies may still abide
 To veil the threat of terror

And check our racial pride;

(“The Black Man’s Burden,” Lines 9- 12)

The former extract has a sense of requesting the non-whites to prove the whites’ superiority and consider the possibility of replacing the white endurance into threat of terrors and full of problems of the colonized people with some sort of bright expressed as ‘check the show of pride’. Whereas, the latter extract from “The Black Man’s Burden” opposed this idea questioning the white as who can sense the pride of blackness or take the blacks’ duty of tolerating the whites’ trick in covering or pretending their source of threat and problem upon the blacks or the colonized nations. Again the opposition in the perception of the discharging of duty one to the other is strongly developed as quoted below:

By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain.
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

(“The White Man’s Burden,” Lines 13-16)

Your cannon, church and courthouse
May still our sons constrain
To seek the white man’s profit
And work the white man’s gain.

(“The Black Man’s Burden,” Lines 13-16)

The above stanzas are extracted from ‘The White Man’s Burden’. In these lines, the speaker of the poem is asserting that while the whites are people who make their speeches simple, open, plain to the others or the colonized ones, they are making this for the benefit of the colonized nation. However, this concept is clearly opposed by the speaker of “The Black Man’s Burden” as the poet denounces the values of the church/religion and the court house which the whites tried to make themselves as canonical to the whole race for both the colonized ones and the colonizers portraying that these values are making the sons and daughters of the colonized nations be simple servants for the wealth accumulation/profit of the whites.

In addition, the second poet refuses to accept the whites' claim for their speech/language, church/religion and courthouse, which are considered canonical to the whole race emphasizing that their argument cannot hold water and is simply their Eurocentric sense in which the world will be constructed from their viewpoint so that the indigenous elements of life will be replaced by the whites'. Based on the following lines of the poems under discussion, the interpretations below are made:

And when your goal is nearest
 The end for others sought,
 Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
 Bring all your hope to naught.

(“The White Man’s Burden,” Lines 21-24)

Then, when your goal is nearest,
 The end for which you fought
 Watch other’s trained efficiency
 Bring all your hope to naught.

(“The Black Man’s Burden,” Lines 21-24)

The extract from “The White Man’s Burden” portrays that the natives are lazy, uncivilized, and unwise which all bring no effect or null and void. Regarding this, the last verse of the extract clearly proves this very fact stating that ‘bring all your hope to naught’. To the contrary, in the extract from ‘The Black Man’s Burden’ especially in the third line of the extract, we get the poet’s sentiment and pride exhorting: ‘Watch other’s trained efficiency’ to assert the ‘trained efficiency’ of the native people who will bring the desire of the colonizers to an end or to null and void. Therefore, these two extracts from the poems under discussion are conflicting ideas that portray the ambivalent views of colonizers and their colonies. The next lines of the poems under discussion are analyzed as follows:

The cry of hosts ye humour,
 (Ah, slowly!) Toward the light: —
 Why brought ye us from bondage,
 Our loved Egyptian night!

(“The White Man’s Burden,” Lines 37-40)

From your Canadian cities
 And your Australian ports;
 And when they ask for meat and drink
 Go, girdle them with forts.

(“The Black Man’s Burden,” Lines 37-40)

in the former extract, it is evident that the speaker posits that the colonized people themselves called their masters to learn the whites’ way of living. This can be best illustrated when we see the metaphorical phrase, ‘our loved Egyptian night’. Although the word, ‘Egyptian’ is used, it is a metaphor used by the whites to own it as their homeland or country. Therefore, this extract is also used to advocate the idea that it is not the whites who came to the colonized nation; it is rather the colonized nation who must call them the white masters. However, the extract from “The Black Man’s Burden” designates whites as people who are not called to be the lands of their colonies such as in Canada, Australia; rather, they are people who emigrated to others’ lands, and they are the ones who oppress and exploit their colonies to the extent of not allowing their colonies to give something which could be eaten and drunken. Instead, inferring from the third and fourth lines of the excerpt, they/the colonized ones are taken to girdle and forts when they ask for meat and drink: “And when they ask for meat and drink, Go, girdle them with forts” Below are extracts of the first and second poems from their last stanzas respectively:

Take up the White Man's burden—
 Have done with childish days—
 The lightly proffered laurel,
 The easy, ungrudged praise;

(“The White Man’s Burden,” Lines 49-52)

Take up the Black Man’s burden
 Until the tale is told,
 Until the balances of hate

Bear down the beam of gold;

(“The Black Man’s Burden,” Lines 49-52)

The extract from “The White Man’s Burden” shows that the white men should do what is necessary for them and stop thinking and acting like a child and youth. ...if not easy praise / ungrudged praise and reward from such childish people of childish day/ a gift from the colonized nation; rather, they/white men should march /proffered their advance in doing things in the land of the colonized nation, and this is the motive/ great reward that they should sense. In the contrary, the latter extract from “The Black Man’s Burden” portrays that their people need to be endured and remain steadfast until they attain victory stating a paradigm shift/ balance of hate inclines its ray/beam down. In other words, the extract portrays a grain of truth that will be realized at the expense of the idea or desire designed by the whites. The metaphoric expression, ‘until the balances of hate, bear down the beam of gold’ indicates this paradigm shift of reality from the Eurocentric world view to the reality. Lastly, let us have a look at the following extracts that are strongly dedicated themes that appear in the end parts of the poems under discussion:

Comes now, to search your manhood

Through all the thankless years,

Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,

The judgment of your peers!

(“The Black Man’s Burden,” Lines 53-56)

And while ye wait remember

The justice, though delayed

Will hold you as her debtor

Till the Black Man’s debt is paid.

(“The Black Man’s Burden,” Lines 53-56)

The extract from “The White Man’s Burden” shows the white men should realize that now is time that whites can consider themselves ‘the men’ who have done a lot in which the world races could evaluate/judge themselves through the priceless parameters that the whites have designed. Emphasizing that insightful knowledge and respect comes after days of hard work, the poet advises white men to do whatever necessary.

Here, it could be understood that the poem is a biased view with the inclination that the whites or something belongs to the whites is the measurement of judgment and evaluation across the globe. However, the argument above is highly contradicted with the ambivalent view expressed by the extract from the reactionary poem, “The Black Man’s Burden”. This extract has a sense of the parameter of judgment and evaluation the whites designed is ‘unjust’ that should be kept/waited for further investigation and argues that there will be a day or time ‘although delayed’ in which the unpaid lost prices culture, money, identity and etc. of the colonized nation/Black people will be paid back through justifiable circumstances.

All in all, the two poems under discussions are polarized regarding their view points of the white/black race in particular and the colonizer/colonized nation of the globe in general. Based on the interpretations of the two poems analysed so far, the textual extracts of the actual poems revealed portray polarization of the post-colonial discourse related to the theme of ambivalence – the opposite visualization of the colonizers and their colonies. This point leads us to the final part of this paper, the conclusion which is addressed based on the analysis of the article.

Conclusion

The two poems analyzed so far are poems that could be considered under the notion of polarity of post-colonial discourse for various reasons. As it has been indicated in the introduction part, scholars are different in their perception of post-colonial philosophy, which deals with revisiting and rethinking of the misdeeds and wrong perceptions of the colonizer upon their subject in the colony they made. In other words, post-colonial philosophy interrogates the issue of the Eurocentric world view. Hence, advocates of the post-colonial philosophy have a problem in the mode of practice of the theory in practical circumstances including understanding the term, ‘post’ in the phrase post-colonial practice. Therefore, as it has been depicted in the analysis, there are oppositions or contradictions of colonial views or polarities of ideas in the post-colonial discourse.

Similarly, “The White Man’s Burden” was designed from the view point that the whites have the authority to control the human race in which they are making the globe best to the whole human race. As the previously analysis of the paper revealed, they are recognized as the cradle or the basis for world civilization. On the other hand the reactionary poem, “The Black Man’s Burden” was designed from the view point of the blacks in particular and the colonized nations in general. The poem has a

general sense of advocating the idea that crafted by the colonizers, the colonies are leading a miserable life with the world. Therefore, there is an ambivalent view between the colonizers and the colonies.

In addition, the poems analyzed so far are presented in polarized modalities. The repeatedly utilized lines of the poems, 'take up the white man's burden' in one hand and 'take up the black man's burden' on the other hand in each introduction of the stanzas of the poems under discussion, show that the poems are in the two extremes or polarities of discharging responsibilities in the issue of post-colonial discourse. One is nagging the other on who could be compared with or on who could take the responsibilities and duties of the world than the white man, whereas the other is reclaiming only the black man who will be recognized by the different duties of the world whatever duties are miserable to the human race, the blacks are in the way of discharging the duties and waiting a day or time in which problems will be revisited.

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Appendices

Appendix A: “The White Man’s Burden” by Rudyard Kipling (taken from *McClure's Magazine* 26 Jan 1996: latest revision 14 July 2023)

Take up the White Man's burden—	1
Send forth the best ye breed—	
Go bind your sons to exile	
To serve your captives' need;	
To wait in heavy harness	5
On fluttered folk and wild—	
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,	
Half devil and half child.	
Take up the White Man's burden—	
In patience to abide,	10
To veil the threat of terror	
And check the show of pride;	
By open speech and simple,	
An hundred times made plain.	
To seek another's profit,	15
And work another's gain.	
Take up the White Man's burden—	
The savage wars of peace—	
Fill full the mouth of Famine	
And bid the sickness cease;	20
And when your goal is nearest	

The end for others sought, Watch Sloth and heathen Folly Bring all your hopes to nought.	
Take up the White Man's burden— No tawdry rule of kings, But toil of serf and sweeper— The tale of common things. The ports ye shall not enter, The roads ye shall not tread, Go make them with your living, And mark them with your dead!	25 30
Take up the White Man's burden— And reap his old reward: The blame of those ye better, The hate of those ye guard— The cry of hosts ye humour (Ah, slowly!) toward the light:— "Why brought ye us from bondage, Our loved Egyptian night?"	35 40
Take up the White Man's burden— Ye dare not stoop to less Nor call too loud on Freedom To cloak your weariness; By all ye cry or whisper, By all ye leave or do, The silent, sullen peoples Shall weigh your Gods and you.	45
Take up the White Man's burden— Have done with childish days— The lightly proffered laurel, The easy, ungrudged praise. Comes now, to search your manhood Through all the thankless years, Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom, The judgment of your peers!	50 56

**Appendix B: The Black Man's Burden (A Reply to Rudyard Kipling)
by Hubert H. Harrison (taken from *When Africa Awakes*. New York,
USA: The Porro Press).**

Take up the Black Man's burden—	1
Send forth the worst ye breed, And bind our sons in shackles To serve your selfish greed; To wait in heavy harness	5
Be-devilled and beguiled Until the Fates remove you From a world you have defiled.	
Take up the Black Man's burden— Your lies may still abide	10
To veil the threat of terror And check our racial pride; Your cannon, church and courthouse May still our sons constrain	
To seek the white man's profit And work the white man's gain.	15
Take up the Black Man's burden— Reach out and hog the earth, And leave your workers hungry In the country of their birth;	20
Then, when your goal is nearest, The end for which you fought, Watch other's trained efficiency Bring all your hope to naught.	
Take up the Black Man's burden—	25
Reduce their chiefs and kings To toil of serf and sweeper The lot of common things: Sodden their soil with slaughter, Ravish their lands with lead;	30
Go, sign them with your living And seal them with your dead,	
Take up the Black Man's burden— And reap your old reward: The curse of those ye cozen, The hate of those ye barred	35

From your Canadian cities And your Australian ports; And when they ask for meat and drink Go, girdle them with forts.	40
Take up the Black Man's burden— Ye cannot stoop to less. Will not your fraud of "freedom" Still cloak your greediness? But, by the gods ye worship, And by the deeds ye do, These silent, sullen peoples Shall weigh your gods and you.	45
Take up the Black Man's burden— Until the tale is told, Until the balances of hate Bear down the beam of gold, And while ye wait remember That justice, though delayed, Will hold you as her debtor Till the Black Man's debt is paid.	50 56