

# The White Man's Burden: The United States and The Philippine Islands

Rudyard Kipling, February 1899

Take up the White Man's burden—  
Send forth the best ye breed—  
Go send your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need  
To wait in heavy harness  
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  
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  
And work another's gain

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) to the light:  
"Why brought ye us from bondage,  
"Our loved Egyptian night?"

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!

1. Describe what you think Kipling means by "the white man's burden."
2. How would you characterize the tone of this poem?
3. To whom do you think the poem is addressed? What do you think Kipling hoped to accomplish by publishing this poem?
4. List two or three words or phrases that Kipling uses to describe indigenous peoples. How do these examples reveal Kipling's attitude towards these peoples?
5. Give three examples of some of the specific difficulties Kipling foresees in taking up "the white man's burden."
6. Kipling portrays "the white man's burden" as a difficult and thankless undertaking, yet urges that it be taken up nevertheless. How does the last verse of the poem reveal why he thinks it should be taken up in spite of all the difficulties associated with it?

# The Brown Man's Burden

Henry Labouchère, February 1899

Pile on the brown man's burden  
To gratify your greed;  
Go, clear away the "niggers"  
Who progress would impede;  
Be very stern, for truly  
'Tis useless to be mild  
With new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half devil and half child.

Pile on the brown man's burden;  
And, if ye rouse his hate,  
Meet his old-fashioned reasons  
With Maxims up to date.  
With shells and dum dum bullets  
A hundred times made plain  
The brown man's loss must ever  
Imply the white man's gain.

Pile on the brown man's burden,  
compel him to be free;  
Let all your manifestoes  
Reek with philanthropy.  
And if with heathen folly  
He dares your will dispute,  
Then, in the name of freedom,  
Don't hesitate to shoot.

Pile on the brown man's burden,  
And if his cry be sore,  
That surely need not irk you—  
Ye've driven slaves before.  
Seize on his ports and pastures,  
The fields his people tread;  
Go make from them your living,  
And mark them with his dead.

Pile on the brown man's burden,  
And through the world proclaim  
That ye are Freedom's agent—  
There's no more paying game!  
And, should your own past history  
Straight in your teeth be thrown,  
Retort that independence  
Is good for whites alone.

1. In Kipling's poem, each verse begins "Take up the white man's burden"; in this poem, the author has changed this line to read "Pile on the brown man's burden." What is the significance of this?
2. How would you characterize the tone of this poem?
3. To whom do you think the poem is addressed? What do you think the author hoped to accomplish by publishing this poem?
4. What is the author's main objection to what Kipling advocates in "The White Man's Burden"?
5. What does the author see as the true motivating force behind imperialism?