English 10: Landscapes of Self and Other
Introductory Texts, Fall 2019

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The I Is Never Alone
by Marcel Marien

Suna Siriak had just turned fifteen when he was hired as a cabin boy on board the SS Max Havelaar, a barge of light tonnage, which navigated among the islands of the Sonde. The ship had just left Makassar for the isle of Timor when an atrocious drama completely changed the fate of its crew.

Siriak replaced Morok at the helm while he had his evening meal with the three other mates and the captain. Generally, he was never gone for more than fifteen minutes. But after an hour he still hadn't come back, so Siriak went down to the mess to see what was going on. He found his five companions crippled with pain, poisoned by some preserved meat. They all died together before sunset.

The adolescent was too inexperienced to steer the ship. During the night, he vainly tried to fight against sleep, but by the next day he passed Timor, and the ship headed out into the Indian Ocean. Three days passed. He had to get rid of the cadavers, which were putrefying in the heat. Then, in the middle of the fifth night, while he was sleeping, the little boat hit a reef. A jet of water shot into it and the condemned vessel soon sank. Siriak threw himself into the ocean and floated on a trunk, which he hastily filled with various tools.

At dawn he set foot on the isle. It didn't take long for him to see that it was deserted. Twenty minutes was enough to walk to the other side. There was no trace of human habitation that could let him hope the isle was known to sailors. On the other hand, he did find a spring, and coconut, mango, and banana trees grew in abundance and would make it possible for him to survive.

Siriak hadn't read *Robinson Crusoe*, but there aren't very many ways to make do after a shipwreck. He took an inventory of his trunk and gathered up the bits of flotsam, which the sea had thrown up on the sand. This harvest was meager except for a large box which contained nothing but mirrors. Siriak sat down on the shore and began to organize his life.

A few days had to pass before he truly understood the depth of his solitude to which he was condemned. Except for birds and insects there were no animals on the island. Siriak managed to capture several parrots, which he tied to a branch with some rope. He let them struggle there until evening. As the sun was setting, he went up to them, stared at them with insistence, and pronounced his name, "Siriak" a great number of times in a clear voice. Attentive, the parrots looked and listened without moving. Siriak gave them a few seeds and the next day repeated the lesson. After he had pronounced his name fifty times, he fed them again and let them go.

Nothing happened for a few days, then one beautiful morning Siriak woke up, surprised to have heard himself called by his name. Perched on a branch a few meters away, one of the parrots called out the boy's name several times. As one might guess, the outcome was everything Siriak might have hoped for, if not foreseen. By instructing one another, soon all the parrots on the isle were repeating Siriak's name from dawn to dusk.
In spite of the continual presence of his self which he was confined to by solitude, he struggled to remember that he also existed outside of his self, even though this might be as a mere object on the island.

And so the weeks and months flew by. Nothing came to trouble his solitary life. Sometimes in the distance, he thought he saw a passing ship or an airplane, but these were nothing but mirages. Then one day he noticed the useless trunk that had floated onto the island, the one that contained only mirrors. There had to be a thousand of them, all cut up in the same shape. According to the barely legible words on the lid, they were being shipped to a framing shop called Welsh. Siriak took out a half dozen and leaned them against some coconut trees. He saw himself reflected six times. Partly out of despair and partly out of boredom, he scattered them about the entire island. Leaning them against whatever he could, against trees, against rocks, between branches and leaves, he told himself that these mirrors might perchance be seen in the distance and catch the attention of a boat. Of course, nothing of the kind occurred.

Time passed and each day Siriak walked about his miniscule empire and saw in passing his omnipresent reflection at every turn in the path. Meanwhile, his parrots proclaimed his name in the perfumed breeze and the hot scent of the sun.

He died a few years later, perhaps out of boredom. The mirrors that multiplied the island and its sole inhabitant had little time to reflect. But even when his body had entirely decomposed, and his bones mixed with the sand on the beach, for a long time afterwards on the entire island, generations and generations of parrots continued to cry out his name, and it reverberated forever.

Text from "The I Is Never Alone." *Sudden Fiction (Continued): 60 New Short-Short Stories.* Eds. Thomas, James and Robert Shapard. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996. Print.

COLONIALISM

[excerpted from The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy]

https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. One of the difficulties in defining colonialism is that it is hard to distinguish it from imperialism. Frequently the two concepts are treated as synonyms. Like colonialism, imperialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory. The etymology of the two terms, however, provides some clues about how they differ. The term colony comes from the Latin word *colonus*, meaning farmer. This root reminds us that the practice of colonialism usually involved the transfer of population to a new territory, where the arrivals lived as permanent settlers while maintaining political allegiance to their country of origin. Imperialism, on the other hand, comes from the Latin term *imperium*, meaning to command. Thus, the term imperialism draws attention to the way that one country exercises power over another, whether through settlement, sovereignty, or indirect mechanisms of control.

The legitimacy of colonialism has been a longstanding concern for political and moral philosophers in the Western tradition. At least since the Crusades and the conquest of the Americas, political theorists have struggled with the difficulty of reconciling ideas about justice and natural law with the practice of European sovereignty over non-Western peoples. In the nineteenth century, the tension between liberal thought and colonial practice became particularly acute, as dominion of Europe over the rest of the world reached its zenith. Ironically, in the same period when most political philosophers began to defend the principles of universalism and equality, the same individuals still defended the legitimacy of colonialism and imperialism. One way of reconciling those apparently opposed principles was the argument known as the "civilizing mission," which suggested that a temporary period of political dependence or tutelage was necessary in order for "uncivilized" societies to advance to the point where they were capable of sustaining liberal institutions and self-government.

Definition

Colonialism is not a modern phenomenon. World history is full of examples of one society gradually expanding by incorporating adjacent territory and settling its people on newly conquered territory. The ancient Greeks set up colonies as did the Romans, the Moors, and the Ottomans, to name just a few of the most famous examples. Colonialism, then, is not restricted to a specific time or place. Nevertheless, in the sixteenth century, colonialism changed decisively because of technological developments in navigation that began to connect more remote parts of the world. Fast sailing ships made it possible to reach distant ports and to sustain close ties between the center and colonies. Thus, the modern European colonial project emerged when it became possible to move large numbers of people across the ocean and to maintain political

sovereignty in spite of geographical dispersion. This entry uses the term colonialism to describe the process of European settlement and political control over the rest of the world, including the Americas, Australia, and parts of Africa and Asia.

The difficulty of defining colonialism stems from the fact that the term is often used as a synonym for imperialism. Both colonialism and imperialism were forms of conquest that were expected to benefit Europe economically and strategically. The term colonialism is frequently used to describe the settlement of North America, Australia, New Zealand, Algeria, and Brazil, places that were controlled by a large population of permanent European residents. The term imperialism often describes cases in which a foreign government administers a territory without significant settlement; typical examples include the scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century and the American domination of the Philippines and Puerto Rico. The distinction between the two, however, is not entirely consistent in the literature. Some scholars distinguish between colonies for settlement and colonies for economic exploitation. Others use the term colonialism to describe dependencies that are directly governed by a foreign nation and contrast this with imperialism, which involves indirect forms of domination.

The confusion about the meaning of the term imperialism reflects the way that the concept has changed over time. Although the English word imperialism was not commonly used before the nineteenth century, Elizabethans already described the United Kingdom as "the British Empire." As Britain began to acquire overseas dependencies, the concept of empire was employed more frequently. Imperialism was understood as a system of military domination and sovereignty over territories. The day to day work of government might be exercised indirectly through local assemblies or indigenous rulers who paid tribute, but sovereignty rested with the British. The shift away from this traditional understanding of empire was influenced by the Leninist analysis of imperialism as a system oriented towards economic exploitation. According to Lenin, imperialism was the necessary and inevitable result of the logic of accumulation in late capitalism. Thus, for Lenin and subsequent Marxists, imperialism described a historical stage of capitalism rather than a trans-historical practice of political and military domination. The lasting impact of the Marxist approach is apparent in contemporary debates about American imperialism, a term which usually means American economic hegemony, regardless of whether such power is exercised directly or indirectly (Young 2001).

As I shall be using the term, "imperialism" means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; "colonialism," which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory. As Michael Doyle puts it: "Empire is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire."[14] In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism, as we shall see, lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices.

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with words and concepts like "inferior" or "subject races," "subordinate peoples," "dependency," "expansion," and "authority." Out of the imperial experiences, notions about culture were clarified, reinforced, criticized, or rejected. As for the curious but perhaps allowable idea propa-

The Bird-Dreaming Baobab

By Mia Couto

Birds, all those who know of no abode on the ground.

That man will always remain in shadow: no memory will be enough to save him from the dark. To be true, his star was not the Sun. Nor did he come from a country called life. Maybe that was why he lived with all the caution of an outsider. The bird seller didn't even have a name to shelter him. They called him the birdman.

Each morning, he would pass through the white folks' neighbourhood carrying his enormous cages. He made those cages himself, from such flimsy materials that they didn't even look like a prison. What they did look like were winged cages, cages that might fly away. Inside them, the birds fluttered around in a twinkle of colour. A cloud of twitters enveloped the bird seller, so loud that they made the windows rattle.

'Mother, look, here comes the dicky bird man!'

And the birds would flood the streets. Joyfulness was exchanged: the birds shouted and the children chirped. The man would take out a mouth organ and put sleepy melodies to tune. The whole world was filled with stories.

Behind their curtains, the settlers tut-tutted at such abuses. They sowed suspicions among their children – who did that black think he was? Did anyone know his credentials? Who had authorized those grubby feet to dirty the area? No, no and no again. The black ought to return to his proper place. But the birds, they're so sweet – the children insisted. The parents took on sterner airs; enough said.

But the order was not destined to be greatly respected. One little boy more than all the others disobeyed it, and devoted himself to the mysterious birdman. That was Tiago, a dreamy child, whose only gift was to pursue his fancy. He would wake up early, put his nose to the window pane waiting for the bird seller to come by. The man would come into view and Tiago would rush down the stairs, thirty feet in five jumps. Feet bare, he would go down the street and disappear among the swarm of birds. The sun would sink and there was no sign on the lad. At Tiago's home, people would start to give their worries a polishing:

'Barefoot, just like them.'

The father planned his punishment. Only the mother's soft heart brought relief to the little boy's arrival, in the fullness of the night. The father insisted on an explanation, even if it were but the outline of one:

'Did you go to his house? But does that good-for-nothing have a house?'

His dwelling was a baobab, the empty hollow inside its trunk. Tiago told them: it was a sacred tree, God had planted it upside down.

'See what the black has been filling his head with.'

The father turned to his wife, heaping blame on her. The lad continued: *'It's true, Mother. That tree is capable of great sadness. The old men say that a baobab can commit suicide in despair by way of fire. Without anyone setting it alight. It's true, Mother.'*

'What nonsense,' the lady of the house soothed.

And she would draw her son away from his father's reach. Then the man would decide to go out, and join his rage to that of the other settlers. At the club there was clamour from all: the birdman's visits had to be stopped. Measures could not include death by killing, nor anything that might offend the eyes of women and children. In a word, the cure would have to be brought about.

The following day, the bird seller repeated his joyful invasion. Even the settlers hesitated: after all, that black was bringing with him birds of a beauty never before seen. No one could resist their colours, their chirping. The sight was like nothing else in this true and natural world. The bird seller bowed in nameless modesty, disappearing from himself out of humility.

'These are truly excellent birds, these ones with their wings all ashow.'

The Portuguese began to wonder: where in the name of magic did he get such miraculous creatures? Where, if they themselves had already brought the most distant bushland to heel?

The bird seller dissembled, answering with a chuckle. The whites began to fear their own suspicions – might that black have a right to enter a world which was closed to them? But then they set about paring down his merits: the fellow lived in trees, among the birds. They were like creatures of the wild, was the general conclusion.

Whether because of the scorn of the powers that be, or because of the admiration of the meek, the birdman became a topic of conversation in the concrete part of town. His presence began to fill the length of a conversation, unsuspected empty moments. The more people bought from him, the more their houses were filled with sweet song. Such music fell strangely on the settlers' ears, proving that the area they lived in had little in common with the land around them. Could it be that the birds were eroding the residents' sense of self, turning them into foreigners? Or was it the black who was at fault, that son-of-a-bitch who insisted on existing, unaware of the duties of his race? The traders ought to realize that there was no room for his bare feet in those streets. The whites were concerned at such disobedience, blaming it on the times. They yearned jealously for the past, when creatures could be tidied away depending on their appearance. The bird seller, by overstepping himself in such a fashion, was leading the word towards other awareness. Even the children, thanks to his seduction, were forgetting their behaviour. They were becoming more like children of the street than of the home. The birdman had even made inroads into their dreams:

'Pretend I'm your uncle.'

And they all joined the family, all became related, relatively speaking.

'Uncle? Have you ever heard of a black being called uncle?'

The parents were determined to arrest their dreams, their tiny boundless souls. The command was issued: the street is out of bounds, you can't go out any more. Curtains were drawn, the houses shut their eyelids.

Order seemed to rule once again. That's when things began to happen. Doors and windows opened by themselves, furniture appeared turns back to front, drawers were swapped round.

At the Silvas' house:

'Who opened this cupboard?'

No one, no one had. Old man Silva got angry: everyone in the house knew that firearms were kept there. With no sign of having been forced, who could the burglar have been? Such was the indignant plaintiff's doubt.

At the Peixotos' house:

'Who scattered grass seed among my papers?'

No one, nothing, not anyone, came the reply. The Peixotos supremo warned: you know very well what type of documents I keep in that drawer. He listed their secret functions, their confidential matters. Let the spreader of grass seed own up. Bloody birds, he mumbled.

At the mayor's residence:

'Who let the birds in?'

Nobody had. The governor was unable to govern his temper: he had come across a bird inside a cupboard. Solemn municipal discussion papers covered in bird droppings.

'Just look at this one: bird shit in the middle of the official seal.'

In the wake of all of these occurrences, a general uproar gripped the area. The settlers held a meeting in order to try and reach a decision. They assembled at the home of Tiago's father. The lad slipped out of bed and stood at the door listening to their grim threats. He didn't even wait for the sentence to be passed. He rushed off through the bush in the direction of the baobab. There, he found the old man settling himself by the warmth of the fire.

'They're coming to get you.'

Tiago was gasping for breath. The bird seller was not put out: he knew, he was waiting for them. The little boy tried harder, for never before has the man meant so much to him.

'Run away, there's still time.'

But the bird seller set himself at ease, in sleepy languor. He stepped serenely in the trunk and there he tarried. When he came out, he was wearing a tie and a white man's suit. Once again he sat down, cleaning the sand underfoot. Then he paced up and down, surveying the horizon.

'Run along, boy. It's night time.'

Tiago lingered. He glanced at the birdman, awaiting his gesture. If only the old man were like the river: still but moving. But he wasn't. The bird seller belonged more to legend than to reality.

'And why did you put on a suit?'

He explained: he was the natural offspring of the land. It was his duty to know how to receive visitors. It was for him to show respect, the duties of a host.

'As for you, go, go back home.'

Tiago got up, reluctant to leave. He looked up at the huge tree, as if he were asking it for protection.

'Can you see that flower?' asked the old man.

And he recalled the legend. The flower was where the spirits dwell. Whoever harmed the baobab would be persecuted for the rest of his life.

The settlers began their noisy arrival. They surrounded the place. The little boy fled, hid, and watched. He saw the birdman get up and greet the visitors. The beating started straightaway, with cudgels and kicks. The old man didn't even appear to be suffering, a vegetable were it not for the blood. They bound his wrists and pushed him up the dark road. The settlers followed behind, leaving the boy alone in the night. The child hesitated, now stepping forward now back. Then it happened: the flowers of the baobab fell, like stars of felt. Their white petals turned red on the ground.

Suddenly, the boy made up his mind. He dashed off through the bush after the procession. He tailed their voices and learned that they were taking the birdman to gaol. When it became pitch black behind the wall next to the prison, Tiago began to suffocate. Was it any use praying? If the world around him had stripped itself of beauty. And in the heavens, just as in the baobab, no star glittered with pride any more.

The birdman's voice reached him from beyond the prison bars. Now he could see his friend's face, and all the blood which covered it. Interrogate the fellow, squeeze him hard. That was the order which the settlers left behind them as they withdrew. The guard saluted obediently. But he didn't even know what secrets he was supposed to drag out of the old man. What madness could they prove against the old street hawker? And now, standing there all alone, the figure of the prisoner seemed free of all suspicion.

'May I have permission to play? It's a tune from your part of the world, boss.'

The birdman put the harmonica to his lips and tried to blow. But he recoiled from the effort with a wince.

'They beat me a lot around the mouth. It's a pity, otherwise I'd play.'

The policeman became suspicious. The harmonica was hurled out of the window, and it fell near where Tiago was hiding. He picked the instrument up, and struck its pieces together

again. Those pieces were like his soul, starved of a hand that might make it whole. The lad curled up in the warmth of his own roundness. As he set off into sleep, he put the instrument to his lips and blew, as if he were playing his own lullaby. Who knows whether the birdman, shut away inside, didn't hear the sound of such comfort?

He awoke in a kingdom of chirping. The birds! An infinity of them covered the whole police station. Not even the world, in its universal dimensions, seemed a big enough perch. Tiago approached the cell, surveyed the gaol. The doors were open, the prison deserted. The bird seller had vanished without a trace, the place had lost all recollection of him. He called the old man, but was answered by the birds.

He decided to return to the tree. There was no longer any other place where he might go. No street, nor house: only the baobab's belly. As he walked along, the birds followed in twittering cortege, high in the sky. He arrived at the birdman's abode, and looked at the ground covered with petals. They were no longer red, having returned to their original whiteness. He entered the trunk, putting distance between himself and time. Was it any use waiting for the old man? For sure, he had vanished, a fugitive from the whites. Meanwhile, he began to blow the harmonica once more. He lulled himself in its rhythm, no longer with an ear to the world outside. If he had paid due attention, he would have noted the arrival of a host of voices.

'That black son-of-a-bitch is inside the tree.'

Vengeful steps surrounded the baobab, crushing the flowers underfoot.

'It's the fellow, along with his mouth organ. Play away, you scallywag, for you'll soon be dancing.'

Torches were put to the trunk, and the flames licked the ancient bark. Inside, the boy had unleashed a dream: his hair was growing into tiny leaves, his legs into timber. His wooden fingers dug rootlike into the soil. The boy was in transit to another realm: he was turning into a tree, consenting to the impossible. And from the dreaming baobab, there rose the birdman's hands. They touched the flowers, the corollas curled: monstrous birds were born and released, petal-like, on the crest of the flames. The flames? Where were they coming from, invading the remotest frontier of the dream world? That was when Tiago felt the sting of the blaze, the seduction of ash. Then the boy, a convert to the ways of sap, emigrated once and for all to his newfound roots.

Couto, Mia. "The Bird-Dreaming Baobab." *Every Man is a Race*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1994. Print.

The White Man's Burden: The United States and The Philippine Islands
(1899) By Rudyard Kipling

Take up the White Man's burden, Send forth the best ye breed
  Go bind 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, The savage wars of peace—
  Fill full the mouth of Famine And bid the sickness cease;
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.

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 he us from bondage, Our loved Egyptian night?"

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.

Take up the White Man's burden, Have done with childish days—
  The lightly proferred 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!

[13] THE WHITE (!) MAN'S BURDEN.

Cartoon by William H. Walker

Contemporary parodies of "The White Man's Burden":

"The Black Man's Burden": A Response to Kipling

In February 1899, British novelist and poet Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem entitled "The White Man's Burden: The United States and The Philippine

Islands." In this poem, Kipling urged the U.S. to take up the "burden" of empire, as had Britain and other European nations. Theodore Roosevelt, soon to become vice-president and then president, described it as "rather poor poetry, but good sense from the expansion point of view." Not everyone was as favorably impressed as Roosevelt. African Americans, among many others, objected to the notion of the "white man's burden." Among the dozens of replies to Kipling's poem was "The Black Man's Burden," written by African-American clergyman and editor H. T. Johnson and published in April 1899. A "Black Man's Burden Association" was even organized with the goal of demonstrating that mistreatment of brown people in the Philippines was an extension of the mistreatment of black Americans at home.

The Black Man's Burden
By H. T. Johnson

Pile on the Black Man's Burden. 'Tis nearest at your door;
Why heed long bleeding Cuba, or dark Hawaii's shore?

Hail ye your fearless armies,
Which menace feeble folks
Who fight with clubs and arrows
and brook your rifle's smoke.
Pile on the Black Man's Burden
His wail with laughter drown
You've sealed the Red Man's problem, And will take up the Brown,

In vain ye seek to end it,

With bullets, blood or death Better by far defend it
With honor's holy breath.

From : H.T. Johnson, "The Black Man's Burden," *Voice of Missions*, VII (Atlanta: April 1899), 1. Reprinted in Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., *Black Americans and the White Man's Burden, 1898–1903* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 1975, 183–184.

Source: http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5476

"The Poor Man's Burden": Labor Lampoons Kipling

In one of many parodies of "The White Man's Burden" from the time, labor editor George McNeill penned the satirical "Poor Man's Burden," published in March, 1899.

The Poor Man's Burden
By George McNeill

(After Kipling)
Pile on the Poor Man's Burden— Drive out the beastly breed;
Go bind his sons in exile
To serve your pride and greed; To wait in heavy harness,
Upon your rich and grand;
The common working peoples, The serfs of every land.
Pile on the Poor Man's Burden— His patience will abide;

He'll veil the threat of terror And check the show of pride. By pious cant and humbug You'll show his pathway plain, To work for another's profit And suffer on in pain.

Pile on the Poor Man's Burden— Your savage wars increase,
Give him his full of Famine,
Nor bid his sickness cease.

And when your goal is nearest Your glory's dearly bought,
For the Poor Man in his fury, May bring your pride to naught. Pile on the Poor Man's Burden— Your Monopolistic rings

Shall crush the serf and sweeper Like iron rule of kings.
Your joys he shall not enter, Nor pleasant roads shall tread; He'll make them with his living, And mar them with his dead.

Pile on the Poor Man's Burden— The day of reckoning's near— He will call aloud on Freedom, And Freedom's God shall hear. He will try you in the balance; He will deal out justice true:

For the Poor Man with his burden Weighs more with God than you. Lift off the Poor Man's Burden— My Country, grand and great— The Orient has no treasures

To buy a Christian state,
Our souls brook not oppression;
Our needs—if read aright—

Call not for wide possession.
But Freedom's sacred light.

From: George McNeill, "The Poor Man's Burden," *American Federationist* (March 1899).

Source: http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5475

Crosby on Kipling: A Parody of "The White Man's Burden"

Poet Ernest Crosby penned a parody of Kipling's work, "The Real White Man's Burden," and published it in his 1902 collection of poems *Swords and Plowshares*. Crosby also wrote a satirical, anti-imperialist novel, *Captain Jinks, Hero*, that parodied the career of General Frederick Funston, the man who had captured Philippine leader Emilio Aguinaldo in 1901.

The Real White Man's Burden
By Ernest Crosby

With apologies to Rudyard Kipling

Take up the White Man's burden. Send forth your sturdy kin,
And load them down with Bibles And cannon-balls and gin.

Throw in a few diseases
To spread the tropic climes,
For there the healthy negroes
Are quite behind the times.
And don't forget the factories.
On those benighted shores
They have no cheerful iron mills, Nor eke department stores.
They never work twelve hours a day And live in strange content,
Altho they never have to pay
A single sou of rent.
Take up the White Man's burden, And teach the Philippines

What interest and taxes are
And what a mortgage means.
Give them electrocution chairs,
And prisons, too, galore,
And if they seem inclined to kick,
Then spill their heathen gore.
They need our labor question, too,
And politics and fraud—

We've made a pretty mess at home,
Let's make a mess abroad.
And let us ever humbly pray
The Lord of Hosts may deign
To stir our feeble memories
Lest we forget—the *Maine*.
Take up the White's Man's burden.
To you who thus succeed
In civilizing savage hordes,
They owe a debt, indeed;
Concessions, pensions, salaries,
And privilege and right—
With outstretched hands you raised to bless Grab everything in sight.

Take up the White Man's burden And if you write in verse,
Flatter your nation's vices
And strive to make them worse. Then learn that if with pious words You ornament each phrase,

In a world of canting hypocrites This kind of business pays.

From: Ernest Crosby, "The Real White Man's Burden," *Swords and Ploughshares* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1902), 32–35.

Source: http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5475

THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN (A REPLY TO RUDYARD KIPLING)
by Hubert Harrison
from *When Africa Awakes* (New York, 1920)

Take up the Black Man's burden---
Send forth the worst ye breed,
And bind our sons in shackles
To serve your selfish greed;
To wait in heavy harness
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
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.

Take up the Black Man's burden---
Reach out and hog the earth,
And leave your workers hungry
In the country of their birth;
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---
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;
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
From your Canadian cities
And your Australian ports;
And when they ask for meat and drink
Go, girdle them with forts.

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.

Take up the Black Man's burden---
Until the tail is told,
Until the balances of hate
Bear down the beam of gold.

And while ye wait remember
The justice, though delayed
Will hold you as her debtor

Till the Black Man's debt is paid.

Optional challenge texts!

Elizabeth Bishop
In the Waiting Room

In Worcester, Massachusetts,
I went with Aunt Consuelo
to keep her dentist's appointment
and sat and waited for her
in the dentist's waiting room.
It was winter. It got dark
early. The waiting room
was full of grown-up people,
arctics and overcoats,
lamps and magazines.
My aunt was inside
what seemed like a long time
and while I waited I read
the *National Geographic*
(I could read) and carefully
studied the photographs:
the inside of a volcano,
black, and full of ashes;
then it was spilling over
in rivulets of fire.
Osa and Martin Johnson
dressed in riding breeches,
laced boots, and pith helmets.
A dead man slung on a pole
--"Long Pig," the caption said.
Babies with pointed heads
wound round and round with string;
black, naked women with necks
wound round and round with wire
like the necks of light bulbs.
Their breasts were horrifying.
I read it right straight through.
I was too shy to stop.
And then I looked at the cover:
the yellow margins, the date.
Suddenly, from inside,
came an *oh!* of pain
--Aunt Consuelo's voice--
not very loud or long.
I wasn't at all surprised;
even then I knew she was
a foolish, timid woman.
I might have been embarrassed,

but wasn't. What took me
completely by surprise
was that it was *me*:
my voice, in my mouth.
Without thinking at all
I was my foolish aunt,
I--we--were falling, falling,
our eyes glued to the cover
of the *National Geographic*,
February, 1918.

I said to myself: three days
and you'll be seven years old.
I was saying it to stop
the sensation of falling off
the round, turning world.
into cold, blue-black space.
But I felt: you are an *I*,
you are an *Elizabeth*,
you are one of *them*.
Why should you be one, too?
I scarcely dared to look
to see what it was I was.
I gave a sidelong glance
--I couldn't look any higher--
at shadowy gray knees,
trousers and skirts and boots
and different pairs of hands
lying under the lamps.
I knew that nothing stranger
had ever happened, that nothing
stranger could ever happen.

Why should I be my aunt,
or me, or anyone?
What similarities--
boots, hands, the family voice
I felt in my throat, or even
the *National Geographic*
and those awful hanging breasts--
held us all together
or made us all just one?
How--I didn't know any
word for it--how "unlikely". . .
How had I come to be here,
like them, and overhear

a cry of pain that could have
got loud and worse but hadn't?

The waiting room was bright
and too hot. It was sliding
beneath a big black wave,
another, and another.

Then I was back in it.
The War was on. Outside,
in Worcester, Massachusetts,
were night and slush and cold,
and it was still the fifth
of February, 1918.

Bishop, Elizabeth. "In the Waiting Room." Web: Poets.org. Accessed 24 August 2018.

Originally from *The Complete Poems 1927-1979* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1983).

Elizabeth Bishop
Going to the Bakery (Rio de Janeiro)

Instead of gazing at the sea
the way she does on other nights,
the moon looks down the Avenida
Copacabana at the sights,

new to her but ordinary.
She leans on the slack trolley wires.
Below, the tracks slither between lines of head-to-tail parked cars.

(The tin hides have the iridescence
of dying, flaccid toy balloons.)
The tracks end in a puddle of mercury:
the wires, at the moon's

Magnetic instances, take off
to snarl in distant nebulae.
The bakery lights are dim. Beneath
our rationed electricity,

the round cakes look about to faint—
each turns up a glazed white eye.
The gooey tarts are red and sore.
Buy, buy, what shall I buy?

Now flour is adulterated
with cornmeal, the loaves of bread
lie like yellow-fever victims
laid out in a crowded ward.

The bakery, sickly too, suggests
the "milk rolls,' since they still are warm
and made with milk, he says. They feel
like a baby on the arm.

Under the false-almond tree's
leathery leaves, a childish *puta*
dances, feverish as an atom:

cha-cha, cha-cha, cha-cha...

In front of my apartment house
a black man sits in a black shade,
lifting his shirt to show a bandage
on his black, invisible side.

Fumes of *cachaça* knock me over,
like gas fumes from an auto-crash.
He speaks in perfect gibberish.
The bandage glares up, white and fresh.

I give him seven cents in *my*
terrific money, say "Good night"
from force of habit. Oh, mean habit!
Not one word more apt or bright?

Bishop, Elizabeth. "Going to the Bakery." *The Complete Poems, 1927-1979*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1983. Print.