**Rikki Tikki Tavi**

From a postcolonial perspective, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi can be viewed as a subject of colonial rule. Consider this excerpt from Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden":

*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?"*

The poem speaks to what Kipling called the white man's burden, a rally cry for Imperialist British society to civilize so-called "primitive" societies. According to Kipling, no matter how much the other societies may hate British rule, civilizing will ultimately be for their benefit. Or, as K.B. Rao put it, Kipling wanted to "portray the heroism and self-sacrifice of Englishmen working in India for the empire" and promote imperialism as the great cause.

Now consider this quote from "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi:

*[…] because every well-brought-up mongoose always hopes to be a house-mongoose some day and have rooms to run about it, and Rikki-tikki's mother (she used to live in the General's house at Segowlee) had carefully told Rikki what to do if ever he came across white men.*

Unlike the free-willed hero above, here Rikki-tikki seems like someone who has given up his traditional role as an Indian for the comforts of colonial rule. He desires to become domesticated but not just by anyone. His mother specifically tells him to seek out and come into the good graces of the imperialist conquerors. So he protects the British family from the native dangers in exchange for the comforts of their home.

In this light, Rikki-tikki is the "burden"—and he's working with his colonialist overlords to civilize and sanitize the garden for the British family. The cobras, which stand in opposition to such change, must be eliminated because they are getting in the way of the British's family's desire to live in the garden. (And never mind that the cobras lived in India first).

In this light, Rikki-tikki is less a hero fighting for the protection of the family than a subject fighting to introduce the presence of his colonial masters to the land.