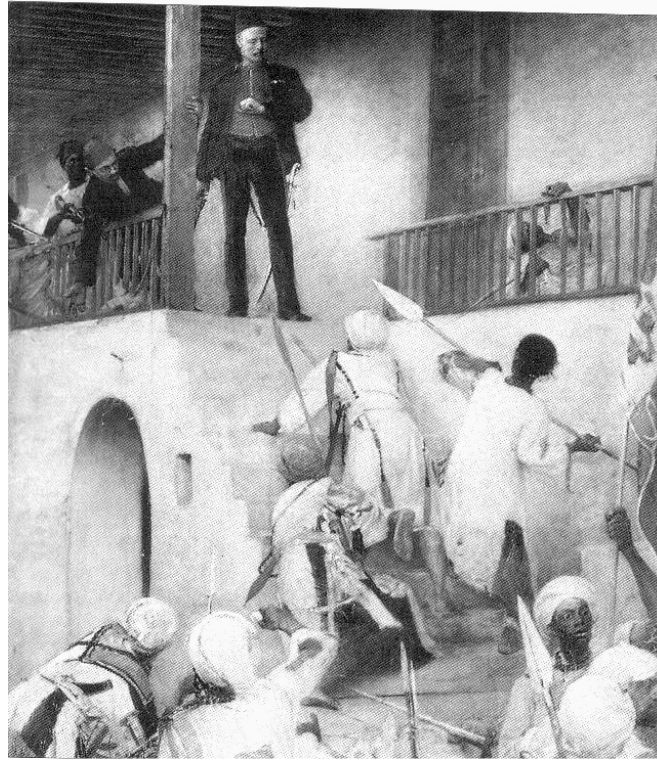


HIST 30621
Empire, Gender and British Heroes, c.1885-1985
Dr Max Jones



G. W. Joy, *The Death of General Gordon* (1894)

Why and how did societies in the past celebrate certain men and women as heroes? To answer this question we must turn our attention away from the heroes themselves to the *hero-makers*, to those who promoted heroes to achieve particular ends, and to their tools - books and portraits, speeches and sermons, statues and ceremonies. Heroes have always been made not born. Politicians, religious leaders, writers and artists celebrated heroes, usually promoting elite white men as a national ideal. G. W. Joy's painting presented General Gordon, who was killed in Khartoum in 1885, as an imperial martyr, an embodiment of British civilization defined against "native savagery". Propagandists used Gordon's image to promote Kitchener's campaign to re-conquer Sudan in the late 1890s.

Students will examine how the heroes which Britons chose to celebrate expressed the attitudes of the past. We will analyse how far the rise and fall of the British empire, the development of the mass media, world war, immigration, and campaigns for women's rights changed the face of British heroes. The course will introduce students to different approaches to the study of heroes: heroes as propaganda, as commodities and brands, as expressions of 'charisma'. Women and BAME Britons rarely gained entry to the nation's halls of fame. How much changed between 1885 and 1985?

Indicative course outline:*

1. Introduction: Studying Heroes
2. Gordon of Khartoum and the 'Heroic Myths of Empire'
3. Henry Morton Stanley: Charisma, the Media and Explorer Heroes
4. Scott of the Antarctic
5. Edith Cavell, Gender & Shell-Shock in the Great War and After
6. Florence Nightingale, Lytton Strachey, and Debunking Between the Wars
7. Lawrence of Arabia
8. 'Temperate Heroes' in 'The People's War'
9. Gordon, *Khartoum* (1966) and the End of Empire
10. Debunking, Decline and the Death of the Hero?
11. Course Review and Exam Preparation

* This outline is indicative and may be revised.

Teaching Methods

1 x 3-hour Lecture/Seminar per week + Film Screenings/Course Unit Office Hours equivalent to 1-hour per week

Indicative Reading:

- Max Jones, 'What Should Historians Do With Heroes? Reflections on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain', *History Compass*, 5:2 (2007), 439-54.
- 'Decolonising Imperial Heroes: Britain and France', Special Issue: *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 42:5 (2014).
- Joanne Begiato, *Manliness In Britain, 1760-1900: Bodies, Emotion and Material Culture* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2020).
- Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994).
- Barbara Korte and Stefanie Lethbridge (eds.), *Heroes and Heroism in British Fiction since 1800: Case Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Assessment:

Assessment task	Length	Weighting within unit
Essay	2,500-words	50%
Exam	2,000 words	50%