

HL2021: Literature of Empire

In this module we will be focusing on literature produced in response to the historical experience of empire. We will look at the way in which literary narratives have been used to legitimize the imperial project – justifying its ‘civilizing mission,’ reinforcing certain racial stereotypes and hierarchies, and contributing to an archive of knowledge on colonial subjects and territories. But of course this complicity between literature and empire is only part of the story. We will also be exploring the ambivalence that so often haunts the peripheries of imperial narratives, and examining the way in which literature has served to critique colonial ideologies and practices. Our discussion will be wide-ranging, both historically and geographically. Although literature will be our primary focus, the course will also include analyses of Hergé’s early Tintin comics and Michael Haneke’s critically acclaimed film *Caché*.



Primary Sources

FICTION

J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (Penguin 1980)
 Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Oxford World’s Classics 2003)
 E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (Penguin Classics 2005)
 Graham Greene, *The Quiet American* (Penguin 2004)
 Hergé, *Selected Stories* (Available on RBR in the HSS Library)

FILM

Caché (dir. Michael Haneke; 2005)

Secondary Sources

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

Edward Said, *Orientalism*

David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*

Assessment

Class participation	10%
Coursework essay	40%
Examination	50%

Lecturer

Dr. Bede Scott

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Week	Topics	Readings
1 12 Jan	Introduction to Empire	
2 19 Jan	Empire and Race I	Joseph Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i>
3 26 Jan	Empire and Race II	Joseph Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i>
4 2 Feb	Colonial Adventures	Hergé, <i>Tintin in the Congo</i> , <i>The Blue Lotus</i> , <i>The Seven Crystal Balls</i> , <i>Prisoners of the Sun</i>
5 9 Feb	Imperial Irony I	E.M. Forster, <i>A Passage to India</i>
6 16 Feb	Imperial Irony II	E.M. Forster, <i>A Passage to India</i>
7 23 Feb	Imperial Rivalries I	Graham Greene, <i>The Quiet American</i>
8	Recess	

9 8 March	Imperial Rivalries II	Graham Greene, <i>The Quiet American</i>
10 15 March	The Colonial Uncanny	FILM: <i>Caché</i>
11 22 March	Imperial Allegory I	J.M. Coetzee, <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i>
12 29 March	Imperial Allegory II	J.M. Coetzee, <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i>
13 5 April	Conclusion/Revision	