



Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850-1950 (Studies in Imperialism)

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This collection of essays is concerned with the interactive culture of colonial warfare, with the representation of the military in popular media at home, the manner in which these images affected attitudes towards war itself and wider intellectual and institutional forces. Attempts to justify and understand war were naturally important to a dominant people, for the extension of imperial power was seldom a peaceful process. The exercise of force - through campaigns of penetration, conquest and incorporation - was usually costly and controversial. However, if the prosecution and costs of colonial warfare often acted as the achilles heel of the imperial venture, the manner in which it could be transformed into entertainment within an exotic adventure tradition could help to assuage popular opposition. The entertainment value of war has a long history, but in the British imperial experience, it does seem to have taken new and more intensive forms from roughly the middle of the 19th century. By the end of that century, a major cultural complex connecting colonial warfare through a whole range of media seemed to be in place, a complex sufficiently interlocked to have survived well into the 20th century. This volume explains and reveals some of the specific forms in which colonial campaigns were justified to the British public, including ceremonial and music, the music hall, juvenile literature, the hagiography of heroic myths perpetuating the christian/military complex and battle paintings. At the same time, the continuation of popular forms of portraying war are seen as being carried over into the 20th century in air displays, for example, and in a multiplicity of theatrical representations.

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