Colonial Ways of Thinking
Five Key Ideas

• Hierarchy of Races
• ‘Superior’ Civilisation
• The White Man’s Burden
• Terra Nullius
• The Other
Hierarchy of Races

• The Great Chain of Being, with whites (northern/Western European whites) at the top, below the angels.

• ‘Savages’ lower down.

• This gave colonial Europeans authority, in their own eyes.
‘Superior’ Civilisation

Considered to be more ‘advanced’ than ‘primitive’ ‘barbarism’ or ‘savagery’.

- Complex society
- Urban development
- Social hierarchy
- Writing (vs oral tradition)
- Perceived dominion over nature (vs being ‘part’ of nature)
- Farming (vs. nomads, hunter-gatherers)
- Architecture/permanent/large buildings (vs huts, caves)
- Religion (vs ‘paganism’)
- Etc...
The White Man’s Burden

- Responsibility
- Sense of cultural superiority, and a consequence responsibility to spread that ‘civilisation’.
- Replace ‘lower’ indigenous cultures (languages, stories, etc) with ‘superior’ European ones.
"THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN."

(Apology to Rudyard Kipling.)
Terra Nullius

• ‘No Man’s Land’
• Land that wasn’t being ‘used’ (i.e. farmed, mined, settled on) was no-man’s land and could be claimed.
• Resources: extraction of resources for the benefit of the metropole.
‘I cannot admit that wandering tribes have a right to keep other and superior races out of large tracts [of land] merely because they have acquired the habit of straggling over far more land than they can utilise.’

Sir Charles Eliot
Commissioner of British East Africa
1900-1904
"I GUESS OUR COUNTRY OWES ITS EXISTENCE TO A FORM OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN THE THEN UNSETTLED OR, UM, SCARCELY-SETTLED, GREAT SOUTH LAND"

TONY ABBOTT, JULY 3, 2014
AUSTRALIA UNSETTLED BEFORE THE BRITISH ARRIVED... “ABBOTT

I SEE NO NATIVES...
The Other

• Thinking about a category of people, groups, or places as non-normal, different, separate from the societal norm.

• Stereotyping: assuming common characteristics of a group of people.

• In the case of the colonised, this thinking and stereotyping was usually negative.

• This allowed (and allows) discrimination, domination, oppression.
STOP "OTHERING" ME!

WHAT'S "OTHERING"?

YOUR KIND COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND.

Human
Eddie Izzard on English Settlers and Native Americans
Izzard on Empire (and some other stuff)
Find examples of these ways of thinking in *The Tempest*

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