

English 216: Notes for Chapter 8

“Race,” Racism, and Representation

- **“race”**: ideology that characterizes skin colour as significant
 - Storey’s quotation marks are meant to show that it’s a spurious division
- **xenophobia**: fear of the unknown, the alien, the “other”; xenophobia ≠ racism (see below)
- **racism**: ideology that claims “races” of people can be categorized as inferior/superior
- **white supremacy**: ideology that claims Whites (Europeans) are superior to all else

Ideology of Racism: Its Historical Emergence

- created to rationalize/justify actions beneficial to the British Empire
- **slavery**: characterize Black bodies as inhuman, beasts of burden
 - rationalizes wealth acquired through slavery
- **colonization**: claims the British are naturally better at governing, valorizes colonization
 - claims colonized subjects are like children who need to be raised up
 - rationalizes imposition of colonizer’s religion as “enlightenment”

Edward Said, Orientalism

- **Self/Other relationship**: defining the Self by defining the Other as its opposite
- **Orientalism**: the (European) ideology that separates Europe from “the Orient”

- i.e., Europe defined itself by projecting itself onto the “Oriental”
- **the Orient**: everything East of Europe, from Egypt to Japan
- **ideological fiction**: a story or collection of false ideas that embodies the ideology
 - **succumbing** (“going native”): Whites transformed/driven mad by native culture
 - **imposing** (“mighty whitey”): Whites “naturally” dominating native culture

Vietnam Movies as American Orientalism

- **war movies**: Foucault’s regimes of truth, produce the meaning of the Vietnam War for US
- **narrative paradigms**: kinds of stories America tells about its war in Vietnam
 - **betrayal**: of soldiers and by politicians, generals, and civilians
 - **inverted firepower**: lone soldiers against “horeds” of Vietnamese soldiers
 - **Americanization**: war as defining moment for US, Vietnamese people ignored
 - **imperial narcissism**: Vietnam as mere backdrop for exclusively American story

Whiteness

- cultural construct, not biological
- absence of ethnicity/race, non-raced, “normal”; what everyone else must measure against

Anti-Racism and Cultural Studies:

- ethical obligation to learn to “live with difference” (Stuart Hall)