

Colonialism & Slavery

Age of Expansion, Empire and
Subjugation

LET'S CATCH UP

In the past couple of weeks we have witnessed several important developments in history that affect how we think about race, sexuality and gender.

The ideas of Aristotle together with ideas within Christian tradition, devalue and dualize the role of women in society.

The goddess in religions of the West are eliminated. We still see female goddesses in other cultures.

The female body as represented in art shifts with Praxiteles' Venus. The female is now represented to be looked at. Eroticized for male fantasy as opposed to goddess responsible for important aspects of human life.



MASACCIO, *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden*, 1425

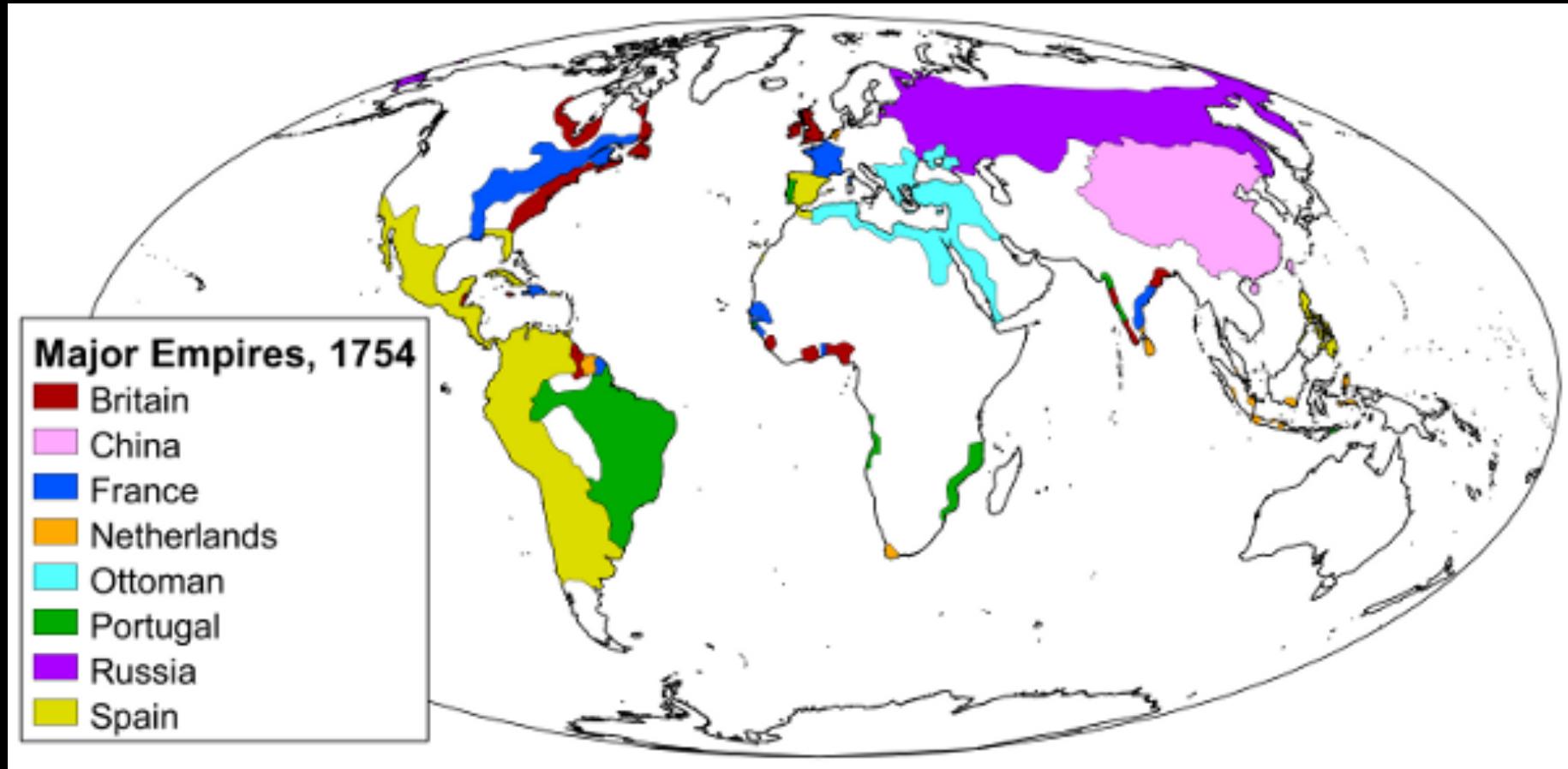
Roman Copy of Greek original--Venus

LET'S CATCH UP

Review

Here are some important points:

- The shift from many gods and goddess to one God (no goddesses)
- The Catholic Church controls all image making in the West.
- Inter continental exploration brings Europe in contact with new cultures and people.
- The Renaissance with Classical Revival bring these changes:
 - A merchant class also commissions art besides the Church
 - The Church still has enormous power that rivals Kings
 - Even though the Catholic Church condemns homosexuality, many artists are actively homosexual.
 - Martin Luther splits from the Catholic Church and creates Protestantism



Colonialism and Imperialism during the 17th through 19th centuries involved a few small European countries exploiting the people and resources of other countries for their own economic wealth and power.

This map shows the colonies in 1754. We can see that the Caribbean, Central and South America and the east coast of North America are colonized by Spain, Portugal, England and France.

EUROPEAN COLONIALISM

According to the art and popular culture website Colonialism is:

- The extension of a nation's sovereignty over territory beyond its borders. This happens by:
 - The establishment of either settler colonies or administrative dependencies in which indigenous populations are either directly ruled or displaced.
- Colonizing nations generally dominate the resources, labor, and markets of the colonial territory.
- It may also impose socio-cultural, religious and linguistic structures.

The term 'colonialism' may also be used to refer to a set of beliefs used to legitimize or promote this system. Colonialism was often based on the ethnocentric belief that the morals and values of the colonizer were superior to those of the colonized; some observers link these beliefs to racism and pseudo-scientific theories of the 18th and 19th centuries related to race.

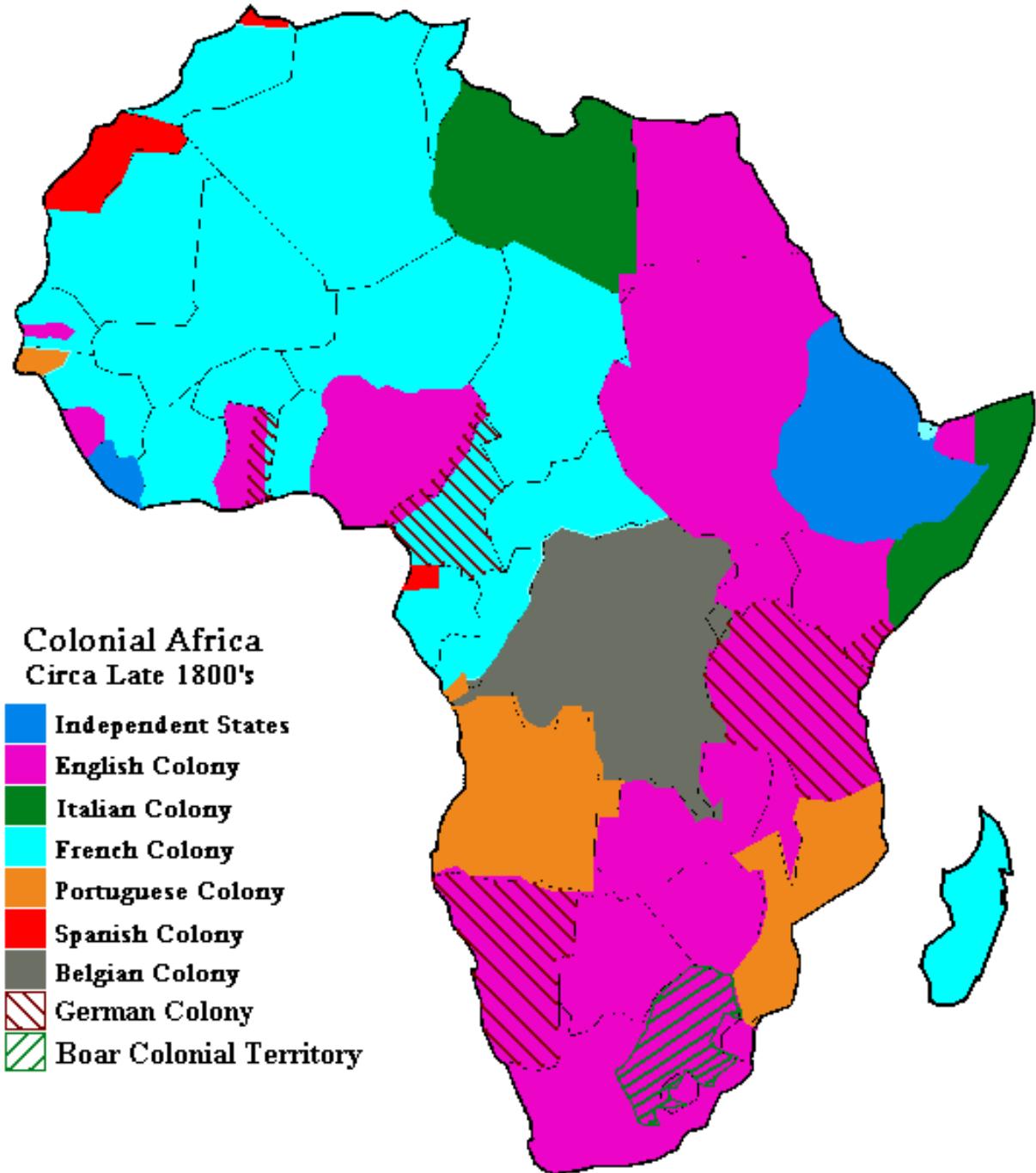
In the Western world, this led to a form of proto-social Darwinism that placed white people at the top of the animal kingdom, "naturally" in charge of dominating non-European indigenous populations.

By the late 1800's Africa was almost completely colonized by England, France, Italy, and Belgium.

There are a number of reasons for this colonization of Africa in the 17th – 19th centuries.

If you are interested there is much research on the topic.

In this class we focus on the art.



JUSTIFICATION FOR COLONIALISM:

It is not difficult to understand why a small country would want to colonize another. The need for land, resources, water rights, people, basically economic reasons.

But how is it justified? How does one country justify going into another and basically setting up shop? And how does that country then justify subjugating the indigenous people who are living there?

Well, one reason is religious. Under the guise of 'conversion and salvation' of indigenous people to Christianity, military conquest was legitimized.



FIRST BAPTISM IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, JULY 22, 1769.

JUSTIFICATION FOR COLONIALISM:

Another reason is the ‘civilizing’ argument. The belief that a temporary period of political dependence was necessary in order for ‘uncivilized’ societies to advance so they could sustain self-government.

Believing that White Europeans were ‘superior’ to those being colonized, justified the practice.

‘Whiteness’ and ‘civilization’ were concepts constructed in the 18th century and they had to be constructed in opposition to something. That something is blackness.

Let’s see how these concepts are reinforced in art.



Mother Negra, Albert Eckhout, 1641

Notice Spanish or Dutch ships in the distance.

RACE and COLONIZATION

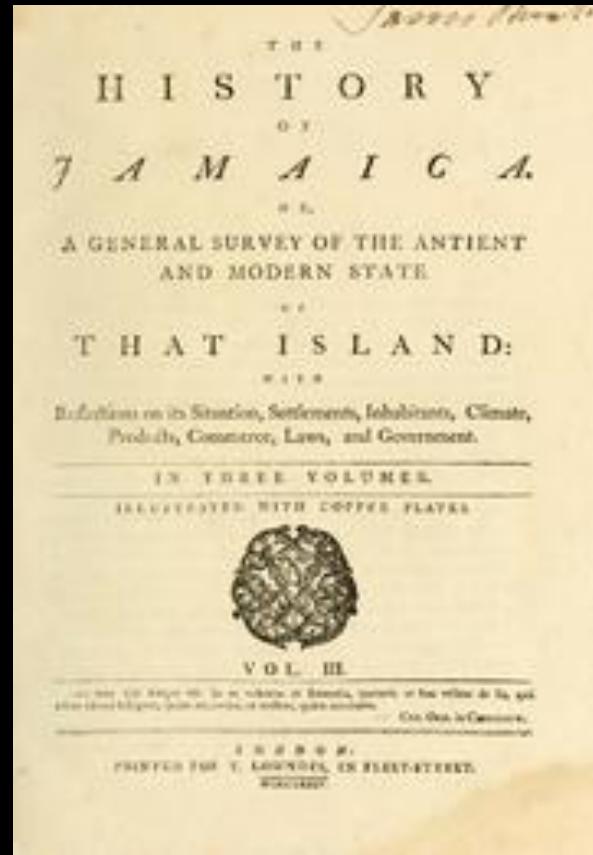
Two things contributed to stereotypes in art and idea regarding race:

1. Colonization
2. Slavery

Those eager to defend colonization and slavery assembled new claims and old theories about black and indigenous people, which they disseminated through books, pamphlets, and cartoons.

Edward Long dismissed the entire African continent as ‘backwards’ and the source of everything ‘monstrous in nature.’

He wrote that Africa was so barbaric and chaotic that Africans were better off as slaves, since slavery saved them from worse fates were they to stay in Africa.



The book that did most to disseminate racial ideas about Africans was written by Edward Long. His ideas about black people and Africa were widely accepted as rigorous and scientific (though Long had NO scientific training).

REINFORCEMENT FOR IDEAS THROUGH ART

These paintings by Eckhout are designed to give his depicted “specimens’ the illusion of subjectivity— in other words, they are painted to look like formal portraits of real people but they contain ideological bias.

They have been carefully constructed to convince the viewers of the subjects character and social position— she is indigenous, her breasts bare and is benefiting from her colonizers influence.

This painting, while seemingly innocent, is depicting the indigenous woman in a setting that indicates her bounty is a result of colonization, the plantation on which she now works, made her life better. It is visible in the distance.



Tupinamba Woman and Child, Albert Eckhout, 1641

REINFORCEMENT FOR IDEAS THROUGH ART

The *Rape of a Negress* by Dutch artist, Cristiaen Gillisz van Couwenburgh, shows an appalling scene of three young white men about to rape a naked, struggling and terrified black woman.

This image, clearly pornographic, highlights the sadistic pleasure taken by the young men and by extension, the implied viewer.

The powerlessness of the victim with the fantasy of subjugation and denigration is evident.

It has been suggested that this painting would have been perhaps humorous to audiences of the time. Depicted as strongly masculine and almost animal-like, the woman wears only a kerchief on her head. Very different than the depictions of Eckout.



Rape of a Negress, Christian van Couwenburgh, 1632

1. We do not know who commissioned this painting. But why would someone want to own it? Why would someone paint it? How does the style (Baroque) cloak the violence of the subject?

CASTA PAINTING:

The term ‘Castas’ was a Spanish and Portuguese term used in the 17th and 18th centuries to describe the mixed-race people who appeared after the Conquest period in South American countries.

A system of categorization based on the degree through which connection by birth to Hispanic culture was made.

The caste system was used for social control and determined a person’s place in society. The four main categories:

1. Peninsular—born in Spain
2. Criollo—Spanish descent born in the New World
3. Indio—descendent of original inhabitants of the Americas
4. Negro—person of black African descent.



Painting depicting the 16 casa combinations of socio-racial classifications.

IMAGES FROM POPULAR CULTURE

Pear Soap advertisement based on Aesop's Fable of 'Washing the Ethiopian White.'

In the 18th and 19th centuries the fable was used to support the idea that black skin indicated "inferiority" both socially and morally.

I have posted a contemporary advertisement by Dove on the website.

2. Why do you think some people are upset about the ad that has since been pulled by Dove?



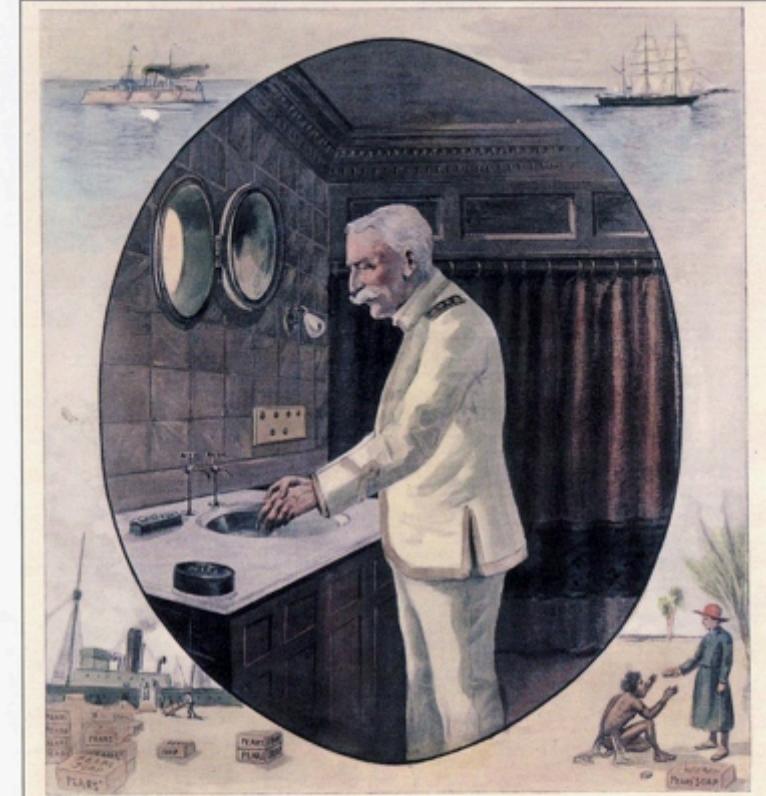
Advertisement for Pear Soap, 1884

2. Do you think that advertisements like this have influenced some of the outrage to the Dove Soap ad?

IMAGES FROM POPULAR CULTURE

The White Man's Burden was a poem written by Rudyard Kipling about the Philippine-American War. In it he invites the U. S. to assume colonial control of the country.

Supporting Eurocentric racism the poem supports Western industrialization as the way to civilize the Third world.



The first step towards lightening
The White Man's Burden
is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness.
Pears' Soap

is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances, while amongst the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place—it is the ideal toilet soap.

The White Man's Burden, Advertisement for Pear Soap, 1890s and *The White Man's Burden*, taking colored peoples of the world to civilization, Judge magazine 1899.

IMAGES FROM POPULAR CULTURE

While this may look like a sea scape painting with dramatic light, it is actually a history painting by Turner of an event from 1781 when the captain of a slave ship ordered 133 slaves to be thrown overboard to collect insurance payments.

Turner painted it in 1840 after reading *The History and Abolition of the Slave Trade*.

Slavery had been outlawed in the British Empire since 1833 but still existed in other areas around the world.

Click this link to read more about this painting

<http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/classes/4c/turner.004.htm>



Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying (The Slave Ship), J.M.W. Turner, 1840
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Turner was an abolitionist and believed slavery should be outlawed around the world.

GENDER AND EXOTICISM

We have already seen how the female body became eroticized with Praxiteles' Venus.

Then, in the Renaissance, legitimized by naming it "Venus" (a mythic story not a real person), artists began depicting nude females for the pleasure of male patrons.

Remember the *Venus of Urbino*, by Titian?

At the time it would have been inappropriate to simply commission a painting of a nude woman. Associating the female body with Venus, made it okay.
This practice continued.

P.S. Some of you may be noticing the body type in these paintings tends to be fuller than the 'ideal' of today. This is about class. Fuller-figure indicates middle-upper class as lower class people would be thinner. This body type is seen as more desirable.



Venus of Urbino, Titian, 1532-34



Venus and Satyr, Sabastiano Ricci, 1715-20

GENDER AND EXOTICISM

However, as we move through history we can see in the artwork more overt sexualization of the female body.

Still designated 'Venus' or some other Biblical story, the female body is presented for viewing, for consumption by a mostly male audience.

3. What do you think the paintings are doing for or to women? What are they doing for the male patron?

The story of 'Leda and the Swan' is a story from Greek mythology. In the story, the Greek god Zeus, seduces Leda, a human queen, by assuming the form of a goose.



Leda and the Swan, Rembrandt, 1598-1602



Leda and the Swan, Boucher?, 1740

GENDER AND EXOTICISM

Even in religious paintings we can see a sexualization of the female body.

The story of Suzanna and the Elders is a scene from a story in the Old Testament of the Christian Bible (the Hebrew Bible).

In the story a young married Jewish woman is being watched by two guests of her wealthy husband as she takes her bath.

Because she rejected their advances, they accused her of adultery, a transgression punishable by death. She was later proven to be innocent.

The story is represented a lot in art. Interestingly, Artemisia Gentalisci, the female artist we discussed last week did a version of this story.



Suzanna and the Elders, follower of Lambert Sustris

Leda and the Swan,
Artemisia
Gentalisci,
1610

4. What is different about this painting than the other?



GENDER AND EXOTICISM

While there are many paintings in the history of art that depict the sexualized female body there are also a number from this post Renaissance period that depict extreme violence.

Let's look at a few.

These two paintings by extremely famous artists, one Dutch and one French, depict scenes of rape. In each case, there are mythic or historic stories being depicted.

The abduction of the Sabine Women was an incident in Roman History when the men of Rome abducted young women from other areas in the region to populate the city.

The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus is a complex story from Greek mythology. These two daughters were coincidentally, daughters of Leda.



The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus, Rembrandt, 1618



The Abduction of the Sabine Women,
Nicholas Poussin, 1633
This one is in the MET

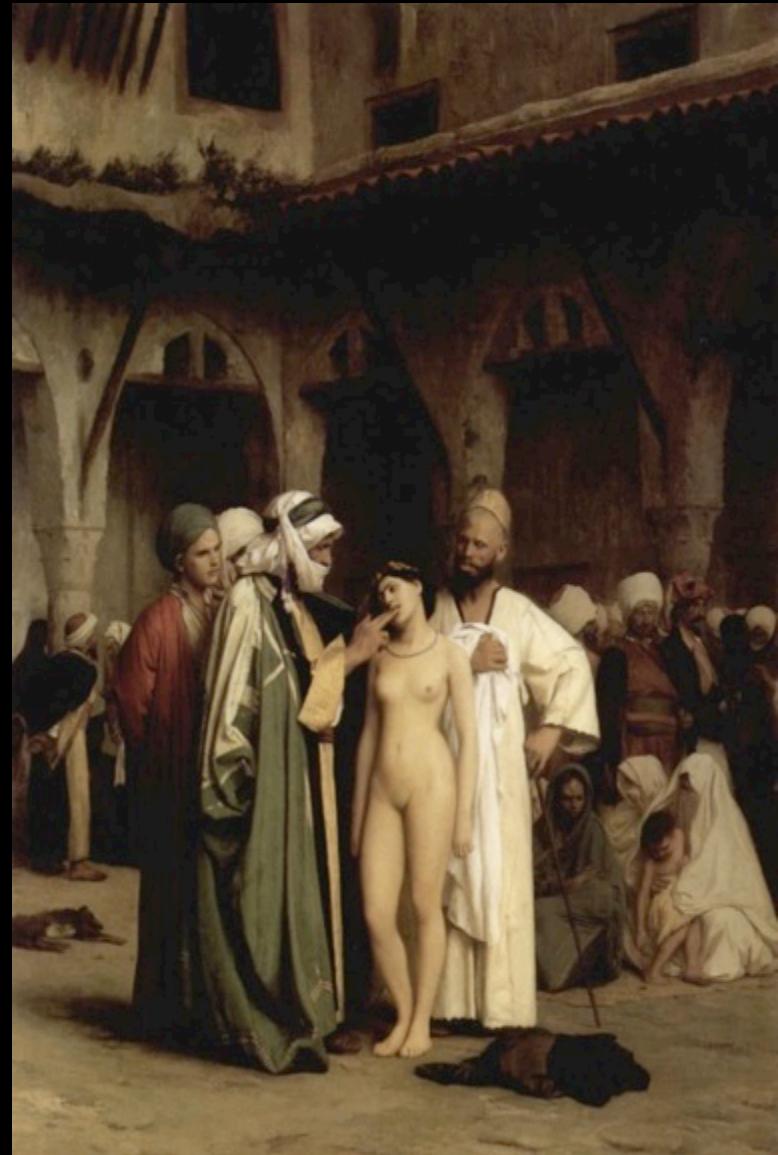
GENDER AND COLONIALISM

Paintings like this one by Gerome, a French painter, use the highly naturalistic style of the Renaissance to depict ‘romanticized’ scenes from the Near and Middle East.

These works, created for a male French audience reinforces European notions of racial hierarchy while also providing a female body as fantasy for male dominance.

Here a young woman (standing in a pose reminiscent of Praxiteles' Venus) is stripped by an Istanbul slave trader and presented to some fully clothed men in eastern style clothing. One of the men inspects her teeth.

Paintings like this allowed 19th century French viewers to both feel superior to the men here (who still engage in slavery) but also fantasize about the woman and her fate.



The Slave Market, Jean-Leon Gerome,
1866

Gerome painted 6 Slave Market scenes.

GENDER, EXOTICISM AND COLONIALISM

In this group of paintings by Ingres, you will all recognize the pose of the prominent female figure. The difference we see is that instead of masking the intent by titling it a 'Venus', Ingres provides direct ways for the viewer to engage in voyeurism and fantasy. French Male viewers can be transported to the Orient (see the hookah, fabrics, fan, the black attendants), including cultural practices of the bath and harem.



JEAN-AUGUSTE-DOMINIQUE INGRES, *Grande Odalisque*, 1814. Oil on canvas, approx



The Turkish Bath, Ingres, 1862



Odalisque with Slave, Ingres, 1858

GENDER, EXOTICISM AND COLONIALISM

The word 'Odalisque' originally referred to a maid. However, for the 19th century western mind, she is a concubine.

In case you didn't notice this, while all of these paintings are presumably depicting females in the Turkey or Near East, they all have very white skin.

5. Why do you think Ingres painted the women as white?



JEAN-AUGUSTE-DOMINIQUE INGRES, *Grande Odalisque*, 1814. Oil on canvas, approx



The Turkish Bath, Ingres, 1862



Odalisque with Slave, Ingres, 1858

Representations of women in 18th and 19th century

The history of art is filled with images of women, mostly created by male artists. It is important to understand this in relation to an overarching historic cultural assumption that women had particular characteristics and men others.

The highly dualized division between the genders was first written about by Aristotle.

The characteristics subscribed to women did not include those of creative endeavors.

At the same time, representations of women in art depict them in a few narrowly defined social roles.

The last concept we will examine with regards to gender in art is the way artwork serves to reinforce ideas about what women should and could do in society.

The artwork reinforces assumptions about women. Her:

1. weakness and passivity
2. sexual availability for men's needs
3. domestic and nurturing function
4. identity with nature
5. her existence as object rather than creator of art
6. and the ridiculousness of her attempts to insert herself into the realm of history.

Let's look at some famous paintings and see if you can identify some of the points mentioned on the previous slide

In this painting notice the difference between the actions and gestures of the men and women.

6. What is being visually said about each gender?



JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784. Oil on canvas, approx. 11' x 14'. Louvre, Paris.

Let's look at some famous paintings and see if you can identify some of the points mentioned on slide 23

This painting was created by Paton "to commemorate the Christian heroism of the British Ladies in India during the mutiny of 1857."

The Indian Mutiny of 1857 shook British rule in colonized India. The painting served to depict the British women as innocent victims of the Indian rebels.

Their Irish rescuers are seen rushing through the door. The women are thought to have shown heroism by kneeling to pray, waiting for men to save them.

Making no attempt to protect themselves or children, they exhibit what was considered appropriate feminine behavior.



Sir Joseph Noel Paton, *In Memoriam*, 1858

Let's look at some famous paintings and see if you can identify some of the points mentioned on slide 23

Mary Osborn was one of the most important artists fighting for women's rights in the 19th century.

This painting focuses on the predicament of a single woman in the modern city.

It suggests this orphan (her black dress) is trying to support herself and brother by selling paintings to a critical dealer.

Osborn is accentuating the idea of the city and art world as the domain of men. Women occupy a precarious position.



Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless: "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, etc"*, 1857, Oil on canvas, Tate, London

This week we have looked at a number of paintings that contain images of people of color and women.

Please look carefully at the images to see if you can identify the meanings inherent in them.

I'm trying to make some points regarding ways artwork and images speak. What are they saying?

1. Eroticized female body cloaked in mythology or religion
2. Images that depict white men as active
3. Images that depict women as passive
4. People of color depicted in ways that reinforce white superiority

There are 6 questions in this week's lecture. Please answer them in a separate annotation as stated on the website.

Next week we move into the Modern Era. A lot changes with art and idea.

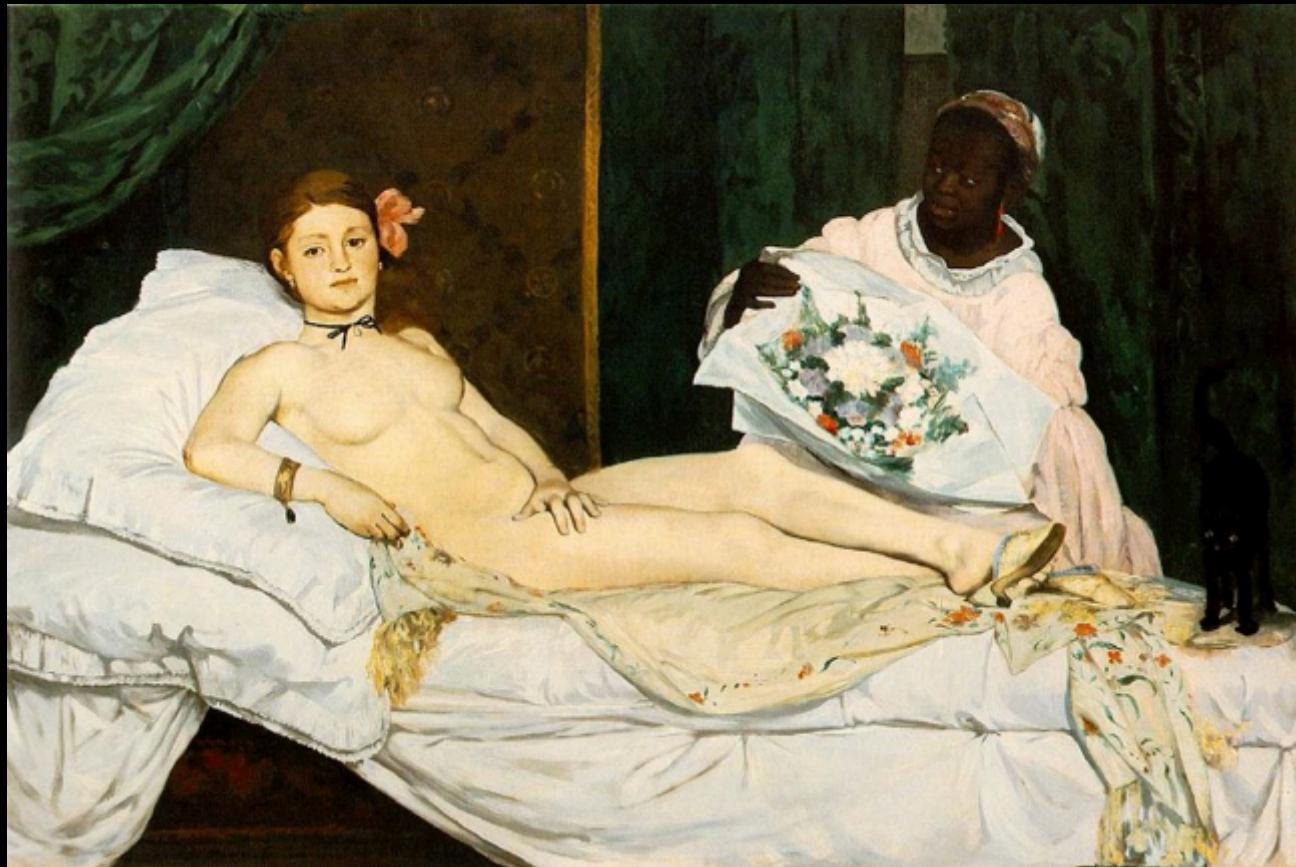
But then how and
in what way?

We'll be looking at:

Industrialization

Primitivism

Modernism



Manet, *Olympia*, 1863