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SECTION ONE
A REVISED SURVEY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

CHAPTER 2
FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD TO THE 'NEW' WORLD

Greece and Rome

Let our artists be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful . . . .

—Plato

I paint with my prick.

—Auguste Renoir

Western civilization rests not only on moral and religious systems of the Bible, but also on the art, philosophy, and science of Classical Greece. In Sparta, activity which did not contribute to the preservation of the military state was not valued; hence, Spartans took less interest in art than did Athenians. However, Spartans strove for sexual equality. In the seventh century, Lycurgus codified Spartan law, setting forth that the bearing of children was equivalent to military service. The only Spartans honored with the inscribing of their names on their tombstones were males who died in battle and females who died in childbirth. In Athens, infanticide was practiced on females. In Sparta, all females were raised to adulthood, but infanticide was practiced on sickly male infants. A woman's marital status at the time of childbirth was of little consequence to the Spartans.

Further understanding of the status of Athenian women is revealed in Lerner's (1986) *locus classicus* on Homer's *Odyssey.* In Odysseus's absence, suitors have been besieging his wife, Penelope. She has defended her virtue by a ruse. She tells the suitors she will acquiesce to one of them when she has finished her weaving. She weaves diligently all day, and at night unravels what she has woven. Meanwhile Odysseus roams the land engaging in take-no-prisoners sexual exploits. On his return, he is angered to discover that men have attempted to seduce his wife, and have raped several of his maidservants. He slays these suitors. Then he calls in Eurycleia, a slave who is in charge of the fifty other female slaves, and asks the names of the raped slave women. Twelve of the fifty have been raped. They are brought before Odysseus and his young son Telemachus. They are told to dispose of the dead suitors and scrub the hall. Then Telemachus is ordered to stab the slave women to death for 'dishonoring' their house. But Telemachus chooses instead to deny the women a 'clean' death, since they brought dishonor to his family. He hangs them. Then the thirty-eight remaining slave women rush in and fall on Odysseus, embracing and kissing him.

Let us review. Twelve slave women, victims of rape, are killed for the 'dishonor' they have conferred on their master and his family. (This scene has been replayed within recent memory in Korea, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Kuwait, the former Yugoslovakia, and Afghanistan.) The master's son, not big enough to protect the women, is big enough to kill them, and in an especially dishonorable way—but not before they have tidied the place up. Their deaths are delayed until they have removed the dead and scrubbed the hall, setting the scene for the "idyll of domestic bliss" that will follow their deaths. (Brought to mind are popular images of the antebellum South in which joyous pickaninnies yip and yowl over the return of the master to the plantation.)

The Greek goddess Demeter (Grain Mother) is a manifestation of the Neolithic goddess, but in a diminished form adapted to a society whose contentious pantheon was ruled by a 'thunderbolt god', Zeus. The myth of Demeter and her daughter Persephone encapsulates how the place of women had changed. Hades, god of the underworld, wants the beautiful Persephone for his wife. He conspires with Zeus to kidnap her. As she walks in a meadow, the earth thunderously splits and the chthonic god's chariot bursts forth. He bears Persephone to the underworld. The grief-stricken Demeter searches in vain for her daughter. With the wise goddess Hecate she consults with Helios, the sun god, who reveals the truth. To force the return of her daughter, Demeter stops the growth of all crops. The people starve and cannot sacrifice to the gods. Persephone is returned, but conditionally. She is required to return to Hades for a third of every year. Demeter, overjoyed at her daughter's return, restores life to the crops. The once-omnipotent goddess, her personality split into the tripartite *personae* of Persephone the maiden, Demeter the matron, and Hecate the crone, has degenerated into a mother helpless to prevent her daughter's abduction, a mother whose fruitless search is ignored and whose grief is trivialized (Gadon, 1989).

Note also that one of the earliest instances of phallo-theocracy's severance of the erotic from the maternal was the creation by the Greeks of separate deities for each—Demeter and her alter-ego, Aphrodite. Many people today, both men and women, believe the two are at odds. A common view is that the erotic is sinful while the maternal is godly. Freudian theory, which entwined sexuality with pathological diseases, demonstrated that unhealthy attitudes can come from science as well as religion, and can occur in the recent as well as the distant past.

What is to be gained by studying the lot of artists in the Cradle of Civilization? Ironically, during Greece's golden age, an era that produced countless artistic representations of these gods and goddesses—some of them among the most revered artifacts in the history of art—artists were considered mere artisans. Some were slaves. At many points in Western his-

tory, knowledge of visual art has been a badge of elitism, while at other points, such as in ancient Greece, such knowledge was the province of the underclass. The status of art education depends on how it fits into ruling class agendas. Today, with the exception of the rare superstar, the artist is considered a member of the working class, and the art teacher is considered a member of a modest profession. Appreciation, however, particularly in the form of connoisseurship, remains a badge of membership into the upper classes.

Grecian children of aristocracy studied art little if at all. Even in Rome of c. 200 BCE, when art collecting had become a sign of status, the artist remained anonymous. It was in Rome that the underdoggery of art production was first separated from the dilettantism of connoisseurship. And artists who were women received almost no mention—Pliny the Elder (CE 23/24-79), in his *Historical Naturalis*, a treatise of classical painting and sculpture, mentions six women painters, none of whose work has survived, that we are aware. Timarete, Aristarete, Kalypso, and Olympia are mentioned with no accompanying commentary. Helen of Egypt was regarded for painting a battle scene. Iaia of Kyzikos painted portraits of women, and was judged a better artist than her male competitors so long as she remained a virgin.

Following Pericles, Greece's golden age waned. The Athenian focus had shifted from the *oikos* (society bonded by family units) to the *polis* (society bonded by a common ethical spirit), and then to a value system not unlike the materialism of our own culture. In *The Republic*, written as a response to these shifting priorities, Plato called for rule not by the aristocracy or the wealthy, but by the educated (VII:540). He offered a rosy view of certain arts as social instruments: "Let our artists be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful and the graceful; then will our youth dwell in the land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the good in everything" (in Jowett, 1927). According to Plato, however, "artists" did not include those engaged in the visual arts. His argument against visual art education was based on his concept of "ideal form": perfect, unable to be manifested physically, and conceivable only to those trained in reason. In the tenth book of *The Republic* he illustrates this with the example of a bed. The *idea* of a bed can be perfect truth. The bed built by the carpenter is at best only an imitation of this ideal. This makes a painting of a bed an imitation of an imitation, and hence the more suspect as a source of truth. Despite the rebuttal of his pupil Aristotle (Schaper, 1968) and 2000 years of contrary evidence (he also favored censorship of poems and dramas that aroused passion rather than reason), Plato's influence as a founder of Western culture continues to place into question the role of visual art.

Aristotle, whose influence is comparable to Plato's, rebutted his mentor with a positive view of art. He suggested that art objects, rather than merely imitating reality, expand reality by revealing heightened understanding of the subjects they depict. When drawing became accepted as part of the school curriculum in Hellenistic Greece, Aristotle supported it, writing that its goal should be to make students judges of beauty, which would lead to virtue. This in turn, he claimed, would lead to a better society. These irreconcilable rationales—one opposing arts education because of its ability to corrupt virtue, and the other favoring art education because of its ability to instill it—defined the poles of a debate that continues.

In the third century CE, the Roman Plotinus, founder of the neo-Platonic tradition, did acknowledge Aristotle by claiming that art was not merely imitation, but revelation as well. The Roman attitude toward art education, however, was more Platonic than Aristotelian. Despite their awareness of the utility of an educated citizenry, Roman references to art education do not occur (Efland, 1990).

The corpora of both sages reveal strong views about women. In Book IV, Plato (in the character of Socrates) suggests that women be given the same opportunity as men to be trained as guardians, his elite leadership group. He offers this rationale:

> *. . . if the difference [between the sexes] consists only in women bearing and men begetting children, this does not amount to proof that a woman differs from a man in respect to the sort of education she should receive; and we shall therefore continue to maintain that our guardians and their wives ought to have the same pursuits.*

In proposing equal education for boys and girls, Plato seeks to eliminate class antagonism, which he traces to the existence of private property. He further wishes to diminish the family unit as society's core unit, to be replaced by society itself as a communal family. He argues that "men and women are to have a common way of life . . . common education, common children; and they are to watch over the citizens in common."

Aristotle grounded his theory of the origin of human life within a patriarchal philosophy. Conception, he suggested, included four factors: the material, the efficient, the formal, and the telos. In accordance with contemporary Greek thought, Aristotle regarded matter as lower than spirit. He explained that the efficient, the formal, and the telos came from the male; the material (i.e., the physical) came from the female. He felt that semen itself contributed nothing material. Its contribution was spiritual, and hence more divine. Life was created when the sperm met 'the female discharge', which he called catamenia. He felt that catamenia was

impure semen. An overabundance of catamenia caused deformities. Aristotle clarified his premise:

> *. . . for just as the young of mutilated parents are sometimes born mutilated and sometimes not, so also the young born of a female are sometimes female and sometimes male instead. For the female is, as it were, a mutilated male, and the catamenia are semen, only not pure; for there is only one thing they have not in them, the principle of soul.*

The view of woman as mutilated permeates Aristotle's writings on philosophy as well as biology. He suggests that woman's inferiority makes her less able to reason. From this he builds a grand teleological construct: "The nature of a thing is its end. For what each thing is when fully developed, we call its nature, whether we are speaking of a man, a horse or a family." That is, whatever condition exists now has evolved from inferior conditions in the past. For example, "it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal." Women, he argued, were not.

Demonstrating the timeless need of those who enslave to believe the enslaved are naturally suited to their circumstance, Aristotle argued at length that 'inferior' people are happiest when ruled by their 'superiors'. This he based on what he saw as a natural dichotomy of spirit and body. He established the association of men with the spirit (culture) and women with the body (nature).

> *It is clear that the rule of the soul over the body, and of the mind and the rational element over the passionate, is natural and expedient . . . . Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind . . . . And indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life . . . . It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right.*

Aristotle's worldview is based on notions of soul over body, rationality over emotion, humans over animals, male over female, masters over slaves, and Greeks over barbarians—hierarchies which justify sexism and racism, as well as economic and religious discrimination. The ideas of Aristotle, like the ideas of Plato, shaped Western civilization. By the time philosophy developed as a means of inquiry, the subordination of women had become so accepted that it was invisible and hence not subject to moral scrutiny. As a result, the symbolic ordering of the universe and humanity's relationship to God included an unquestioned view of women's inferiority. In the *Theogony,* Hesiod describes Zeus's procreative activity. To prevent the possibility of his overthrow by sons his wife Metis might bear, Zeus swallows Metis. In so doing, he co-opts her power of procreativity, mirroring the earlier co-optation of this power by the Hebrews' male god Yahweh. Athena springs full grown from Zeus' head. It is hard to overestimate the consequences of male gods giving birth. The hidden sexist assumptions underpinning Western philosophy have impeded women's awareness of their oppressed state and hence their ability to remedy it.

The Roman worship of 'masculine reason' and denigration of 'feminine spirituality' created a cultural interstice that Christianity filled. One may suspect that the fundamentalist revivals which rise periodically perpetually fail in part because they deny women's voices. In any case, the abandonment of Rome by Emperor Honorius in 402 CE signaled the end of the Empire, and many historians mark its demise in 476 CE, when the city fell to the Visigoths and Vandals.

<u>The middle ages</u>

> *. . . if there be artists in the monastery, let them exercise their crafts with all humility and reverence. But if any be proud of the skill he hath in his craft . . . let him be removed from it and not exercise it again.*
>
> —The Rule of Benedict

The early middle ages witnessed the rise of the church as the unchallenged seat of power. Fearful of a learned citizenry, the clergy—themselves well educated—disavowed lay education. They argued that it would lead the unwashed masses to vanity. A learned clergy, on the other hand, was necessary, burdened as it was with the responsibility of conveying God's message. As literacy vanished, the church turned to clerical artisans to create visual imagery for propagandizing the peasantry with Christian ideology. The centers of education were monasteries and convents. Particularly in the early middle ages, the female clergy—almost entirely consisting of women born to privilege—participated in art education that usually involved media different from that of males. Monks tended to work in wood, glass, leather, and metal, while nuns studied embroidery and manuscript illumination, but crossovers and collaboration were not uncommon. Both received equal approval from the church and the citizenry.

By the 'middle' Middle Ages Rome had become fearful of its learned clergy, including the large number of skilled artisans. It imposed the Rule of Benedict, which stipulated that artisans were not to work for their own glory, but God's. The Rule of Benedict provided a mechanism by which the clergy

could be purged of thoughtful creators who developed ideas in conflict with those of Rome. At the same time, the Rule allowed for monasteries and convents to be built side by side, which encouraged monks and nuns to practice their crafts together and on equal footing. Such practice was undertaken according to prescribed limitations, however. The artifact qua commodity was inconceivable. The medieval system opposed the idea of individual creativity. Anonymity was a rule, which explains the lack of attribution of much artwork from this period. The church discouraged creative thought by developing monastic art schools which trained students only to mimic their masters. Success was judged on the fidelity of this mimicry, rather than on innovative solutions.

Although women were second-class citizens in most aspects of their lives, at least those of the aristocracy/clergy enjoyed a degree of gender equality in the arts, and wives of landowners possessed economic power. Matters would become far worse in the Renaissance. Still, writers of the middle ages (almost all of them male) developed an elaborate set of theories positing the natural inferiority of women based on ideas from ancient Greece and the Old Testament. A common theme was the polarity of Eve the seducer and Mary the saint. Perhaps the physical proximity of the sexes in medieval art production prevented these themes from developing, enabling females to participate heavily.

Women born into the tiny aristocracy enjoyed advantages denied women born to the swelled ranks of serfdom. The gulf between them was such that a woman to the manor born might enjoy privilege close to that of males of her class. She may have found herself managing the estate for her crusading husband or participating in an emerging urban female working class. In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the Wife of Bath describes the woman merchant as enjoying full civic status. The status of the male serf was between that of his wife and of the lady of the manor. This is reflected most poignantly in the unspeakable medieval custom of *droit du segneur,* or 'right of the lord'. This phrase referred to the privilege of the lord enjoying the bride of his serf on the first night of the marriage.

The humanizing of the Virgin Mary as a loving mother in the late middle ages may have begun with the rise of women's political power. The contradictions embodied in her persona reveal the difficulty she presented the early church. The idea of woman as carnal had become so engrained that, to reconcile Mary's holiness with her womanhood, the church had to contort itself with unprecedented theological acrobatics. One envisions a clerical version of The Flying Wallendas. Eve, whose motherhood was expressed not as the power to give life, but as a curse, epitomized the base, the earthly. Her sin in Eden replaced immortality with death. This puzzling link of women's sexuality to death rather than life created the need to make Mary a virgin. This idea first appeared in the second century, submitted by the heretical Gnostics, who disclaimed the notions that marriage and procreation were good. Church fathers rejected the Gnostics' idea but it found popular support. By the fourth century the heresy had become part of mainstream belief. Jesus' birth had to be protected from the taint of sexual intercourse (Ruether, 1977). The debate—a heated one that raged for a century—became whether Mary's hymen was broken when she gave birth to Jesus or whether he miraculously passed through it.

Mary's 'virgin state' occurred as a result of translation. The Hebrew *almah*—a term denoting the social status of unmarried womanhood—was replaced with the Greek *parthenos*, a term denoting the physiological state of virginity. This exempted the mother of God from the evil of sexuality, but her womb, however pure, was nevertheless still a womb. When church fathers assembled what was to become the canonized Christian Bible in the fourth century CE, Mary still constituted a problem awkward enough to make her all but ignored. After all, did she or did she not menstruate? Stories of Mary's life were recorded, however, in the Apocrypha. By the twelfth century, she had acquired cult status, assuming characteristics of the prehistoric goddess. Early Christian legend claimed that St. Luke painted a portrait of her, and today the Catholic world is filled countless paintings and sculptures attributed to Luke, handily earning him the title Most Prolific Artist of All Time.

The earliest artistic expressions of the Virgin are found among the earliest such expressions of Christianity itself—on the walls of the catacombs, the underground caves in which Rome buried its dead, and where early Christians retreated from Roman oppression. The image of the virgin mother with the baby Jesus in her lap evolved from the ancient Egyptian goddess Isis holding the baby god-king Horus. The motif of the mother nursing her infant is ironic; the mother was to become asexual and the son celibate. Separated from the earth, from their humanness, they were transformed into beings of transcendent spirituality—although not so transcendent, perhaps, as to be off limits in all respects. Homosexuality has been common in monasteries throughout their history. No doubt a number of such celibates, denying themselves access to earthly men, in the privacy of their cells found the Son of God an acceptable object of their masturbatory fantasies; likewise their heterosexual brethren with God's mother.

The solution of the church to Mary's all-too-human body was a sedulous effort to change her identity from Mother of God to Queen of Heaven. Throughout the thousand years of the middle ages, in murals, stained glass, sculptures, and mosaics, Mary shape-shifted into a stiff, nonhuman queen whose divine child, depicted as a diminutive man, sat on her lap all but ignored. It took the humanism of the renaissance for Mary to make eye contact with an infant Jesus.

Catholic dogma proclaims the Virgin so pure that she bypassed death and ascended directly into eternity, and Western art depicts her as a goddess, but this does not neutralize the Christian message that human sexuality and people's bodies are evil. This duality was split into two personae mimetic of Demeter and Aphrodite—Mary the virgin and Mary Magdalene, the whore. The virtuous wife cannot be sexual; the sexual woman cannot be virtuous. The redefinition of sexual abstinence as a virtue is at the root of Mary mythology. The placement of this schismic figure of Mary as an exemplar of womanhood has created an attitude that underlies today's violence against women. Church fathers' fear of their physical attraction to women reached its zenith in the church-sanctioned witch burnings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The embarrassment of the church over the cult of the Black Virgin—worshipped by Latinos (the Virgin of Guadalupe) and Whites (France has over 300 Black Virgins) as well as peoples of African descent—reveals not only the church's misogyny but its race-based xenophobia as well.

Reformation spin doctors found abhorrent the notion of Mary as a conduit between heaven and earth. They stated with divine political correctitude that, after the Fall, nature was synonymous with evil. Mary, the symbol of human and earthly nature, was impugned. The teachings of Genesis and Paul were affirmed to maintain the subordination of women as lower creatures hovering in the wings of a stage crowded with male players: God the father, Jesus the god-man, and the blessed clergy.

The rennaissance

It is a great marvel that a woman can do so much.

—Albrecht Durer,
after viewing a painting by Susan Hornebout

During the 1000-year span of the middle ages, the church's power rested on pillars of Christian mythology set into a foundation of land-based economy. In the renaissance, cracks developed in the foundation, put there by aristocratic merchant doges who had acquired their own economic base. One response of the church to this power threat was to appropriate visual art as a weapon, introducing the concept of deity-bestowed (and therefore church-controlled) artistic genius. The first expression of this is Leon Battista Alberti's 1435 treatise, *On Painting*. Alberti made clear that genius was found only in the male. A lifelong bachelor, he admonished women to be passive, pure, and pretty. Men were advised to keep their wives at home where they could not cause embarrassment.

The counter-response of the new private-sector elite (the house of Medici is the best example) to the church's appropriation of visual art was simply to embrace the concept. They recycled the Roman notion of art ownership as status but reversed the view of the artist as anonymous. The amateur studios of medieval monasteries and convents gave way to the private studios of artist/scholars. Wealthy merchant families competed with the church in patronizing such knights of bright countenance as Michelangelo (dubbed *Il Divino*), Leonardo, Raphael, and Donatello (not to mention the rest of the Ninja Turtles). At the same time, by controlling the purse strings, patrons kept their artistic prima donnas from becoming a power threat themselves. Some renaissance artists did become popular cultural figures, but in a politically innocuous sense, not unlike that of Michael Jackson or Madonna today.

As the renaissance progressed, humanist thought weakened theology's pillars and in concert with the expansion of private commerce undermined the medieval societal model, replacing it with a model more akin to the classical. Humanism elevated science and art, defining both as functions of the male mind. During the middle ages women were described as nature's mistake, but renaissance humanism made no place for them at all. An educated lay aristocracy and a middle class (ideas disparaged for the preceding 1000 years, which leads some historians to refer to this millennium as the dark, rather than the middle, ages) became desirable. Aesthetic education, defined as the study of classical literature, architecture, poetry, and drama, was defended with the 'art for art's sake' rationale of acquiring appreciation for beauty. As with any such ersatz rationale, it masked agendas—in this case, to fill the dual needs of the now entrenched merchant class to employ a sophisticated workforce capable of making handsome, marketable products, and to prevent women from competing in mercantile circles. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, art had become in essence a capitalist commodity in a secular economy, particularly in Florence, the wealthiest and most conservative of the great renaissance cities. The artist's canvas had become a codpiece.

At this point, in its own effort to strengthen art as a weapon, the merchant class set forth the notion of 'fine' art, as distinguished from 'lowly' craft. 'Fine' art's definitions—as a commodity, and as the expression of God—earned it unprecedented cultural respect, undermining the 1500-year-old attitude (rooted in the Greek concept of the artist as slave) that visual art was a suspect endeavor. Fine art was painting, a profession, a male pursuit. It required genius, divine inspiration, and the ability to reason. Craft was

embroidery, the domain of the female amateur. It required diligence, discipline, and the ability to perform fine handwork. Creative women aspired to paint (a handful achieved their goal), but creative men did not aspire to embroider. Women and the poor found their places shrinking in a world of mercantile and professional men. It was these men whose patronization of artistic and architectural superstars resulted in the monuments we visualize when we think of Florence today: the Duomo and Baptistery, the Palazzo della Signoria, and the palace of the Medici.

Jacob Burckhardt, the most respected renaissance historian of the mid-eighteenth century, wrote in 1860, "To understand the higher forms of social intercourse in this period, we must keep before our minds the fact that women stood on a footing of perfect equality with men." This view was not discredited until the 1970s when historians discovered that during the renaissance the medieval cultural tradition of woman as art producer metamorphosed into a tradition of woman as art object. Albrecht Durer, described as a genius of the northern renaissance, provides an example of how cultural traditions can prompt observations that fall below the level of genius. In 1520, after spending a florin to purchase a miniature of Jesus painted by 18-year-old Susan Hornebout, he commented, "It is a great marvel that a woman can do so much" (in Chadwick, 1990).

By the fifteenth century, education for women occurred only in the home. Its goal was preparation for marriage or the cloister; its content consisted of Christian teachings and models of virtuous behavior. Since art activity involved public exposure, it was deemed inappropriate; hence, art training found no place in women's educations. Young men, however, progressed through a public education system which included reading, writing, and mathematics. Their educations opened doors through which males of the working class could rise from artisan status to that of artists. Such figures as Masaccio, Donatello, Uccello, and Ghiberti—all of whom were respected for their knowledge of science as well as art—followed this path. Most women artists of this time had artist fathers, which enabled them to acquire art educations without leaving the home. Gradually the humanities assimilated visual art, and only males were considered capable of humanistic study. Since linear perspective, a system of illusion developed in Florence in the late fourteenth century, had a mathematical basis and in turn formed the basis of renaissance painting, it was not taught to women. This displaced women to art's hinterlands, to points removed from the theoretical discourse of the day.

Women did fill one role related to art: that of the painter's object. Berger (1977) found that traditional images of the reclining female nude found so frequently in art beginning with the renaissance only superficially refers to female mythological figures or is concerned with formal issues such as composition or color. Rather, most are about the display of women as passive erotic objects to be symbolically possessed by male viewers. Many of the masterpieces studied in today's art history classes were intended to fulfill a pornographic function. These *Penthouse* Pets of the Past represent another age-old means of gender-based ownership—woman as property.

Marietta Robusti, daughter of Jacopo Robusti (better known as Tintoretto), was born c. 1560 in Venice, by which time the view of the male artist as genius was established. Marietta entered her father's workshop as a youth. Not surprisingly, her art education resulted in a painting style similar to her father's. She became known throughout Italy, Spain, and Austria as a portraitist. She was invited to paint as a member of the court of Spain's Philip II, but her father refused to allow it, instead marrying her to the head of the Venetian silversmith's guild. She was forbidden to leave her father's household in her lifetime. Four years after her marriage, at age thirty, she died in childbirth.

Nineteenth century Romantic painters and writers found her an appealing character because of her father and her untimely death. She became the subject of paintings, at least one novel, and one play. The neutralizing of the woman artist by transforming her into an object for viewing is common enough to form a *leitmotif* in the history of art. Robusti illustrates how the circumstances of a woman's birth governed her access to art education. Male artists typically emerged from the artisan class, a social level well below the aristocracy. Female artists almost without exception were born to wealth. This and the fact that the counter reformation emphasized not only piety, but accomplishment, opened the doors of the male-run *ateliers* to some women.

Sofanisba Anguissola, born between 1532 and 1540, exemplifies this renaissance artist/gentlewoman. Despite her lack of access to a conventional art education, she was recognized as a child prodigy, at one point drawing the attention of Michelangelo. Her reputation spread, and in 1559 she, like Robusti, was called by Philip II to the court of Spain. Unlike Robusti, she was free to accept the position of court painter and lady-in-waiting to the Queen, Elizabeth of Valois, which she filled until 1580. She also received papal commissions. Her competence placed her in a precarious position for two reasons. The rationale that she was an aberration only partly negated the threat she posed to less successful male artists. Her success also undermined the emerging idea of the woman as an object for the male gaze. The beauty of woman was fast becoming a synecdoche for the beauty of painting. To buffer herself from criticism, Anguissola employed self-portraiture (a genre almost never practiced in sixteenth-century Italy) that emphasized her patrician stature. By overcoming the feminine prescriptions of her time,

Anguissola pioneered a path that was followed by other women.

In 1568 Georgio Vasari, a prominent renaissance art historian, identified a handful of women artists in a voluminous treatise that became a standard. He assigned intellect to males and perseverance to females. His comments on the sculptor Properzia de' Rossi included the observations that she was an excellent housekeeper, a pretty woman, and a beautiful singer. Her relief sculpture, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*, was "a lovely picture, sculptured with womanly grace and more than admirable" (in Chadwick, 1990). His thesis about women artists was that some were able to compensate for their lack of intellect with industry, thereby managing to produce art worthy of praise.

The model described in Vasari's text—that the woman artist was a gender exception—shaped art criticism for four centuries. Even these exceptions were forced to produce work that, by male standards, was modest. Measures of the work's inferiority were found in selection of subject matter, execution, and diminutive scale (in the renaissance, like today, largeness equated with quality), all of which were forced on women. The artistic ability of women was legitimized only when blended with 'feminine' virtues. In sum, art by men was 'better' than art by women. Men encouraged a type of education for women of nobility as a means to differentiate them from middle and lower class women. Appreciation for chastity and obedience were important components of the noblewoman's education. Adherence to these tenets (or the careful appearance of it) removed the noblewoman-artist from criticism, a privilege not extended to her plebian sisters.

Given art's new status, the guild—which met medieval art educational needs by simply transferring skill from craftsman to neophyte—fell from favor. After all, as Efland (1990) points out, how could such a system educate a genius? The answer to this quandary was the renaissance version of the art academy—a group of students, ranging in age and ability, that met in a master's atelier under the auspices of a sponsor. Access to art education lay in the at-times whimsical hands of the sponsor; nevertheless, by the late fifteenth century, these art academies, imbued with the spirit of self confidence that characterized aristocratic men of the renaissance, vibrated with ideas and discoveries. It was into this atmosphere that Sofonisba Anguissola emerged. It is not coincidence that the renaissance's first widely known woman artist did not appear until the sixteenth century, that she emerged from the provinces rather than Florence or Rome, and that her patronage came from the crown of Spain rather than the Vatican.

Prosperzia de' Rossi was part of a group of sixteenth and seventeenth century women artists, most of them from Bologna, who formed what came to be called the 'other renaissance'. This group includes major figures such as Elisabetta Sirani, Artemisia Gentileschi, and Lavinia Fontana. (Fontana, between paintings, bore eleven children.) Certain medieval attitudes toward women survived in Bologna throughout the renaissance and into the baroque period, making the city a model for 'what might have been' in other European cultural centers. Bologna maintained a university that had educated women since the middle ages. It worshipped a female saint who was a painter. The guild system (in which male and female artisans enjoyed equality) remained powerful. St. Luke, 'painter of the Virgin Mary', was the patron saint of Bologna's artists.

This is not to say Bologna was free of prejudice toward its talented women. Public commissions were sought by all artists, and when Prosperzia de' Rossi proved herself able to acquire them, her success met with enough hostility that she was deliberately underpaid and ultimately forced to withdraw from public competition. She took up the less-sought-after vocation of copper engraver. Lavinia Fontana was denied entry into the art academy of the Carracci family because of its use of the nude model. Elisabetta Serani's reputation suffered from the attribution to her of works by lesser artists. Until recently she was thought to be a minor painter of sentimental madonnas. In fact, she was not only a gifted artist; she was a groundbreaking art educator, opening her studio to women who were neither born to the aristocracy nor the daughters of painters.

Artemisia Gentileschi, a virago who became one of the foremost talents of the seventeenth century, was born in 1593. In 1612 her teacher, Agostino Tassi, was tried on a charge of raping her. Artemisia's testimony included torture by thumbscrew. So long as she held to her story, the torture continued. When she recanted, the torture stopped. Tassi was acquitted.

Gentileschi went on to a career that redefined the role of women in art. Her canvases are filled with women of physical and psychological power, figures that shatter the image of submissive womanhood. She discarded the notion of the woman as an object for the male gaze. Gone are the coy glances and seductive drapery of the high renaissance. Gentileschi resurrected the medieval model of woman as art maker and recast it in her own image.

Women of the northern renaissance enjoyed better conditions than did their southern counterparts. In the north, the educational agenda of the protestant reformation extended to women. Art guilds for women continued long after the end of the middle ages, offering them the opportunity for education at the hands of experienced artists. Women became both verbally and visually literate. Judith Leyster, a Flemish painter whose oeuvre was almost lost to greed through attribution to male painters, was born in Haarlem in 1609. The fact that Frans Hals accepted her as his pupil

indicates her ability, and the fact that she eventually taught male pupils is a sign of the respect she was accorded. Several of her works were attributed to Hals, and only in the last one hundred years is her life's work being reassembled.

The patronage of the courts of northern Europe flowed more easily toward women, and northern women also found patronage from a new source—the growing middle class. These patrons called for subjects from daily life, in which women figured prominently. Work that aggrandized mythological and historical figures was common, but it had to make room for the rise of the new genre painting. The male gaze was less prominent in northern renaissance painting. Women appeared frequently, but in domestic settings (note the work of Vermeer) rather than as unclothed, erotic objects. The placement of the woman within the household, however, refers to the oppressive kinship of north and south regarding the containment of 'woman's animal instincts'. It was thought that marriage and domesticity offered control over them. Skill in needlework, regarded by men as harmless, was widely practiced by women and evolved into a substitute for education.

The roots of the modern term 'mainstream' in visual art reach to the renaissance. It was at this point that specific kinds of art activity became gender-assigned. The mainstream tradition refers to large scale oil paintings and sculptures that deal with grand themes. Such works were made by men. It is likewise to the renaissance that we trace the roots of the 'hiddenstream', that artistic undercurrent of work by women manifested in forms such as weaving, quilting, embroidery, ceramics, body decoration, and stitchery—forms characterized by their utility (Collins and Sandell, 1984).

Hiddenstream networks, now as then, have been characterized by cooperation rather than hierarchy, and hiddenstream artists by anonymity rather than celebrity. Such celebrity as there has been occurred locally or regionally, as in fairs, festivals, and fund-raising events. The objects produced within the mainstream have come to be called art; the work produced within the hiddenstream, craft. Art education within the hiddenstream has occurred informally through relatives and acquaintances or self-help books and women's magazines. This form of art education has proved to be resilient. Since hiddenstream skills historically have made women more suitable for marriage, the acquisition of these skills became widespread. Women with such skills were more likely to marry—and therefore to bear children—than women who lacked them. Wishing to see their daughters marry, women were motivated to transmit their skills across generations. Through this process the hiddenstream, walking the appropriate number of steps behind, has followed the mainstream to the present.

The age of the absolute

...the immediate future of civilizaton rests with the protestant White races.

—art educator Isaac Edwards Clarke

France

L'etat, c'est moi.

—Louis XIV

To study the eighteenth century, we turn our attention first to France. During this 100-year span, it was France that suffered the excesses of monarchy and the agonies of revolution. The art academies of Rome and Bologna had degenerated into schools intimidated by high renaissance achievements. These schools developed formulas attempting to mimic the achievements of their recent predecessors. This art-by-formula model shaped the philosophies of the French art academies that dominated art education from the seventeenth century, beginning with the age of absolutism, to the end of the nineteenth century, when they toppled beneath the weight of modernism. These academies became the seats of art education and public exhibition. Initially women were allowed membership. The Paris Academie, for example, admitted women from the late seventeenth century until 1706, when its members voted to bar them.

The new thinking embodied in empirical science was well suited to absolutism. Roger Bacon, John Locke, and other philosophers submitted art to the tribunal of Reason, which found it lacking. Efland (1990) writes, "The language of science was distinguished [from art], something that would have been incomprehensible to Leonardo." Copernicus claimed that the sun was the center of the universe. The metaphorical portent of Copernicus' observation was not lost on Louis XIV, the *roi du soleil*. The most fundamental component of a culture's artistic quality—creative freedom—was circumvented to meet the propagandistic needs of the state. This cultural coup d'etat, combined with the prodigal vagaries of the sun king, set in motion the wheels of discontent that rumbled to the gates of the Bastille in 1789.

Religion too was used as a weapon (e.g., the establishment of Divine Right of Rule) against the people. Both the Council of Trent and the counter reformation reduced art to propaganda. Prying with the levers of patronage, education, and

censorship, the French art academies brutally bent artistic production to the whim of the *ancien regime*. By denying admission to women, they prevented them from obtaining the education needed to execute the large, multi-figured historical paintings that commanded the greatest respect. The effect on French women of a male monarch placed on his throne by divine right was similar to that of Italian women under the pope, God's emissary. Prejudice against women was sanctioned by the deity. In the case of France at this time, a nation in which class division was more powerful than that of gender, the effects of this prejudicial protocol were tempered for noblewomen. Under Louis XV, a king more emotionally secure than his father, the restrictions on art loosened and the decorative Rococco style developed. Rococco answered the needs of the *haute bourgeoisie*, class-fixated but cash-poor, having been taxed out by the economic brinkship of Louis XIV, to gild their reality with the *jouissance* of Arcadia.

The ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau influenced the thinking of the time. He suggested that natural law dictated a subordinate place for women, and that this place was the home. Women were to educate their daughters there, and since females were inferior creatures, they were to be taught the demeanor of submission. He suggested that the sexes be separated as much as possible. Rousseau's 1761 novel *Emile* delineates the "feminine qualities": shame, modesty, desire to please, and love of decoration. A letter from a father to his daughter (in Chadwick, 1990) dated 1741 advises:

> *. . . as sure as anything intrepid, free, and . . . bold, becomes a man, so whatever is soft, tender, and modest, renders your sex amiable. In this one instance we do not prefer our own likeness; and the less you resemble us the more you are sure to charm . . .*

"To model well in clay," wrote George Paston in 1902 in *Little Memoirs of the Eighteenth Century*, "is considered . . . anti-feminine but to model badly in . . . bread is quite a feminine occupation."

Pre-revolutionary art education for women in France consisted of alternatives to the salons, often the studios of successful women who accepted other women as students. As the bourgeoisie solidified into the dominant class, women were locked into a narrow role of wife/mother that was counterpoised to the emergent romantic definition of the artist as untamed, anti-social, and isolated. As growing instability swept France toward revolt, the circumstances of French women artists shifted both forward and backward. The first two themes of the revolution—*liberte* and *egalite*—promised that the nineteenth century would improve the lot of women. Salon doors opened to women artists. In 1790 the Academie Royale removed its limitation on the number of women artists it would accept to membership. But the revolution's third theme—*fraternite*—was only a shiny new label on an old can of worms—*paternite*. The Academie opened its doors, but those of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts—the preparatory art school—remained closed. Without preparatory education, women were prevented from entering the Academie.

In any case, later in that decade the Academie Royale was closed altogether. When it reopened, it implemented a policy barring women. The lot of women artists degenerated. Unable to learn drawing from live models—a requirement for executing historical paintings—a few women acquired commissions for portraiture, but most were limited to the 'lesser' genre of still life. Having been thus limited, the fact that they painted in this genre was taken to mean that they possessed less talent than men.

The supplanting of *paternite* with heroic *fraternite* (see Jacques Louis David's *The Oath of the Horatii*) placed a new matrix over an old frame. The role of the woman in this *novelle condition moderne* was that of the mother who blissfully managed the affairs of home and children. The rationale of the Jacobins that women were intellectually incapable of participation in political discourse was favorably received, and women's political societies were restricted. In this repressive climate some women artists still flourished, many aided by David, who accepted a number of them as students. David, the primary chronicler of the revolution and the embodiment of neoclassical painting, not only taught women (including Cesarine Davin-Mirvault and Adelaide Labille-Guiard, whose work was taken for his); he encouraged them to paint historical subjects, heretofore the exclusive turf of males. The enlightenment, however, broke the promise of the Revolution. The lot of women continued to worsen.

The enlightenment challenged age-old definitions of God, a challenge from which the church never recovered. One result of this was the dismantling of Divine Right of Rule. The American as well as the French revolutions, driven by enlightenment ideals, for all intents eliminated the monarchic system, replacing it with democracy.

In a related development, the privatization of economic enterprise reached new heights. Those who profited most from this privatization were able to implement a new economic system—capitalism—to assure the perpetuation of this profit.

A third result of the enlightenment, adding additional irony to the movement's title, was to complete the gender polarity of the art world. One male observer commented, "So long as a woman remains from unsexing herself, let her dabble in anything. The woman of genius does not exist. When she does, she is a man" (in Chadwick, 1990). This stereotype,

accepted as god-ordained and natural, became institutionalized. In 1860 the art critic Leon Legrange (in Chadwick, 1990) added his own puckish observation:

> *Male genius has nothing to fear from female taste. Let men of genius conceive of great architectural projects, monumental sculpture, and elevated forms of painting. In a word, let men busy themselves with all that has to do with great art. Let women occupy themselves with those types of art they have always preferred, such as pastels, portraits or miniatures. Or the painting of flowers, those prodigies of grace and freshness which alone can compete with the grace and freshness of women themselves. To women above all falls the practice of the graphic art, those painstaking arts which correspond so well to the role of abnegation and devotion which the honest woman happily fills here on earth, and which is her religion.*

In a paragraph Legrange encapsulated a syndrome of sexual stereotypes: men possess artistic genius and elevated vision. Women possess taste. Men imagine grand projects. Women are condemned (but "happily," if they are "honest") to lesser, "painstaking" artistic pursuits.

Another form of oppression emerged as the French were introduced to non-Europeans. G. L. Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, one of the first to use geography to categorize oppressed people, wrote in 1785:

> *The most temperate climate lies between the 40th and 50th degrees of latitude, and it produces the most handsome and beautiful men. It is from this climate that the ideas of the genuine color of mankind, and of the various degrees of beauty, ought to be derived . . . . The civilized countries, situated under this zone, are Georgia, Circassia, the Ukraine, Turkey in Europe, Hungary, the South of Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, and the northern part of Spain.*

White Protestants who occupied northern Europe used geographic determinism to convince themselves of their superiority. This theme emerged in art education in 1885 in Isaac Edwards Clarke's genuflection at the Aryan altar. Clarke, a writer on art education, visited Philadelphia's Centennial Exposition and commented:

> . . . *there came to the thoughtful observer a sudden revelation of the relative importance, power, and destiny, of the White, English speaking, Protestant races of the earth . . . . Certainly if the cognate Germanic peoples are included, no one seeing that Exposition could doubt that the immediate future of civilization rests with the Protestant White races.*

Another tool that lent itself to discrimination emerged with the development of the intelligence quotient test by Alfred Binet. At the request of the French government, Binet created an instrument to be used on recruits to the French army that would reveal intellectual ability. This, it was claimed, would facilitate the screening of applicants for officers' training. Binet's original measure involved not only paper and pencil measures of several types, but interviews and other time-consuming, cost-intensive techniques. Results of this testing were convincing enough that other social agencies sought to use Binet's techniques. The prohibitive costs resulted in progressively streamlined applications that culminated in the 'fill the oval' tests of today, pale imitations of Binet's comprehensive approach. Even in Binet's lifetime, the comparatively poorer performance of low income test takers was noted. Such tests have come under harsh criticism in recent decades, but their ease of use renders them resistant to extinction. The Marxist critic Gonzales claimed in 1982 that they are part of the explanation for socioeconomic inequality. As long as people do not understand that standardized tests measure a narrow range of thinking skills rather than general intelligence, and as long as these tests measure only the body of knowledge owned by the ruling class, our winking, wonking educational powerbrokers will use them to explain their disproportionate share of power by laying claim to superior intelligence.

Britain

I call a savage something highly desirable to be civilized off the face of the earth.

—Charles Dickens

Not to be outdone by France, Britain established the British Royal Academy for art education in 1768. Among its founders were two women, Angelica Kauffmann and Mary Moser. Both came with impressive credentials: Kauffman had been elected to the prestigious Academy of Saint Luke in Rome in 1765, and was considered a successor to Van Dyke. She shared credit with Gavin Hamilton and Benjamin West for popularizing neoclassicism in Britain. Moser, who numbered Queen Charlotte among her patrons, was the daughter of George Moser, a Swiss who was the first Keeper of the Royal Academy. Yet when Count Bernsdorff reviewed Kauffman's work, he wrote, "Her women are most womanly and modest. She conveys with much art the proper relations between the sexes; the dependence of the weaker on the stronger which so much appeals to her male critics" (in Parker and Pollock, 1981).

Still worse, when the members of the newly-founded British Royal Academy gathered for their group portrait by Johann Zoffany, the finished product, *The Academicians of the Royal Academy*, showed only the male members posed around the nude male models. Kauffman's and Moser's likenesses appeared as paintings on the wall. Zoffany had transformed the women artists into art objects to be contemplated by their male peers. In so doing, he created one of the great icons to gender prejudice in the history of Western art. It symbolizes a Western penchant for segmentation that results in polarizing the male and the female: culture vs. nature, violence vs. passivity, profundity vs. sentimentality, meaning vs. decoration, workplace vs. home, reason vs. intuition, art vs. craft. Even today the term 'artist' means 'white male artist'—in a book such as this, I am often compelled for the sake of clarity to preface the word 'artist' with modifiers such as 'woman', 'African American', 'Latino', 'Native American', and so on.

Following the admissions of Kauffman and Moser to the Royal Academy, the Academy did not admit another woman until 1922. Denial of admission to the art salons of eighteenth century Britain denied women participation in the artistic discourse of the period. As with the French, this discourse reduced aesthetic merit to a question of subject matter: historical paintings were 'better art' than other genres. The prerequisite for executing such work—training in rendering the human figure—was obtained in the salons. By banning women from salons, men assured the second-class status of women artists by relegating to them the production of 'lesser' art forms. Boarding schools for middle- and upper-class women offered classes in drawing and watercolor. The training of women in these media was acceptable to men, and these classes became popular. In 1859 Elizabeth Ellet articulated the reality:

> *Portraits, landscapes and flowers, and pictures of animals are in favour among [female artists]. Historical or allegorical subjects they have comparatively neglected; and perhaps, a significant reason for this has been that they could not demand the years of study necessary for the attainment of eminence in these. More have been engaged in engraving on copper than in any other branch of art, and many have been miniature painters.*
>
> *Such occupation might be pursued in the strict seclusion of the home to which custom and public sentiment consigned the fair student. Nor were they inharmonious with the ties of friendship and love, to which her tender nature clung. In most instances women have been led to the cultivation of art through the choice of parents or brothers. While nothing has been more common than to see young men embrace the profession against the wishes of their families and in the face of difficulties, the example of a woman thus deciding for herself is extremely rare.*

The woman's place was still in the kitsch-en.

Embroidery, in the middle ages an art performed by men as well as women, became a craft in the renaissance. In the late seventeenth century, needlework for young women in the form of samplers with moral teachings became popular. These teachings recommended self denial, obedience, love of God, industry, and chastity. By the nineteenth century embroidery had been established as an occupation for females. Young women learned their skills at home from their mothers. A woman's protest against this activity stamped her as unfeminine; yet some pointed out that immersion in needlework prevented the learning of skills that made women less reliant on men.

Racial prejudice in Britain at this time was considered within the natural order (Chalmers, 1992). Zerffi (1876), an art history professor at the National Art Training School in South Kensington and one of the most influential figures in nineteenth century British art education, offered this observation:

> *[The] Negro's reasoning faculty is very limited and his imagination slow. He cannot create beauty, for he is indifferent to any ideal conception. He possesses only 75–83 1/2 cubic inches of brain . . . this lowest group of mankind . . . .*
>
> *[The Aryan white man is] the crowning product of the cosmical forces of nature. To him exclusively we own art in its highest sense. He surpasses the other groups of humanity, not only in technical skill, but especially in inventive and reasoning power, critical discernment, and purity of artistic taste. The white man alone has produced idealised masterpieces in sculpture and painting.*

The white man in his architecture uses either the horizontal or the vertical line, or both; he takes the triangular building of the Negro and places it on the square tent of the yellow man, making his house as perfect as possible; he goes further, and, in accordance with his powerfully arched brow, overarches not only rivers and chasms, but builds his magnificent cupolas and pointed arches, the acme of architectural forms.

Visual art and art education were employed to generate rationales for ethnocentrism by social darwinists who applied the 'law' which states that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. This 'law' asserts that the development of a species is mirrored in the development of individual members of the species. A turn-of-the-century educational movement called child study embraced this idea to argue that industrialized cultures were farther up the evolutionary ladder than tribal cultures. Tribal arts were compared to the art of children. In 1890 James Sully wrote:

> *[In the] first crude utterance of the aesthetic sense of the child we have points of contact with the first manifestations*

> *of taste in the race. Delight in bright glistening things, in gay tints, in strong contrasts of colour, as well as in certain forms of movement, as that of feathers—the favorite personal adornment—this is known to be characteristic of the savage and gives his taste in the eyes of civilized man the look of childishness. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether the savage attains to the sentiment of the child for the beauty of flowers.*

Members of the late-nineteenth-century British professional class, concerned about their country's international decline at the hands of new rivals such as the United States, moved to the right side of the art educational continuum. They used art education as well as other means to blame races which, because of prior economic discrimination, had less opportunity to contribute to Britain's financial problems than did the middle class itself. Christians on both sides of the Atlantic believed their religion to be superior to all others. They felt charged by God to convert all the world's people. A short passage from Genesis 9 provided a Biblical basis for these attitudes. According to this passage, after the Flood, Noah, his three sons, and their wives began the process of repopulating the earth. One day Noah, naked and unconscious from drunkenness, was seen by his son Ham. Because of this 'transgression', Ham's son Canaan was cursed to slavery—despite the fact that the 'transgression' appears to have been more Noah's than Ham's, and not at all Canaan's. It was enough for fundamentalists to decide that Canaan's descendents were African. Another theory, that of the Pre-Adamites, claimed that the different races originated differently and therefore were created unequally. Hume, the enlightenment philosopher (in Popkin, 1973), mused:

> *I am apt to suspect the Negroes and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to Whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are Negro slaves dispersed all over Europe, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity, tho' low [White] people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession.*

Hume's views were accepted as fact. Until Pablo Picasso and other modernists turned racial bias in Western art on its head by embracing the expressive power of tribal imagery, the art of tribal cultures was compared to the art of Western children. This supported the notion that adults of 'inferior' races were comparable to children of the White race. Chalmers (1992) observes that this overt racism "is covertly embedded in much of what has been called elitest aesthetic and art education theory."

The United States from the colonial period to victorianism

Lie back, keep quiet, and think of England.

—sex education for frontier brides

Christopher Columbus had barely finished sailing the ocean blue when he began committing crimes against the natives such as enslavement, rape, murder and preaching the gospel. These practices were quickly picked up by other European imperialists. The legacy of this blood fest ("The only good injun is a dead injun") is on display today at any 'Indian' reservation. The history of the Western hemisphere has been written for the most part with one pen, a pen made in Europe, but some accounts by the conquered have survived. In the case of Native Americans, half a millennium passed before they were brought to light. Perhaps as a backlash against the five-hundredth-anniversary aggrandizement of Columbus, who is to be credited with discovering the people who already lived in the 'New World', Wright (1992) discusses the wrongs perpetrated on Native Americans, but takes the discussion an important step further—he reminds us that the histories of this continent's indigenous peoples are still being written. Native American culture has shown signs of a rebirth.

Today many realize that the prosperity of White America was built on the dispossession and near extermination this hemisphere's original residents. Few, however, realize the extent of the insatiable thirst for power and hunger for gold foisted onto this continent by sixteenth and seventeenth century Europeans. European diseases imported to the Americas caused the greatest mortality in human history. The Great Death of the sixteenth century killed as many as 90,000,000 people in twenty separate waves of pestilence, leaving perhaps ten percent of the Western hemisphere's original population (Wright, 1992). No wonder the continent seemed so empty to later explorers. Andrew Jackson's decision to move the Cherokees from their homeland (resulting in the Trail of Tears, a forced march that killed 4000, a fourth of the Cherokee nation), has until now been considered a typical example of the White oppression of Red people. How inadequately it represents the reality.

In 1992 (Associated Press) Australia's Prime Minister Paul Keating officially admitted that White settlers had committed similar atrocities on that continent's Aborigines. He acknowledged that Whites took land, destroyed the traditional way of life, brought diseases and alcohol, committed murders, took children from their parents, and practiced discrimination and exclusion.

A White-hot arc of greed crossed the Atlantic, leading Anglo-Saxon and Spanish soldiers of fortune—with ideologies of Christian domination steeped in European tradition—to seek land, gold, and slaves in the 'new world'. These ideologies of superiority enabled them to perpetrate atrocities without guilt. Renaissance Christians were fascinated by these beings who were so unfortunate as not to know the Word of Christ. Columbus himself was convinced that the conversion of these non-Christian people was necessary to expedite the Second Coming, and found it reasonable that they be plundered in return for being saved (Havalos, 1992). Europeans suffered a momentary crisis of belief as they realized that the Gospel was in fact not universal, but they resolved it satisfactorily by exterminating the evidence. Baudrillard (1983) observes that Whites today flatter themselves for 'bringing back' the number of Native Americans. This view is offered as evidence that European imperialism has ultimately been good for Native Americans.

Early colonials also attended to other matters. They sought an educated—especially a verbally literate—populace, both to strengthen their economic base and to facilitate religious training. The "Olde Deluder Satan Law" passed in 1647 in the Massachusetts Bay Colony compelled illiterate children to attend the pastor's reading lessons so they could read Scripture and be saved. Grumet (1988) points out that this reflected not only the colonists' religious fervor; the fact that learning to read the Bible was compulsory also reflected the decline of their fervor. Held suspect, however, was visual imagery. This is not surprising given visual art's perceived connections to graven imagery and idolatry in the Colonial *milieu* of Puritan, Calvinist, and Quaker theology. Therefore, the desire to facilitate religious education hindered art education. Art itself was also held suspect because the colonials associated it with the abuses of European nobility. They came to view aesthetic activity as impractical idleness.

The economic rationale, however, did support art education in one form. In a display of Yankee utility, Benjamin Franklin and others established a precedent for publicly funded art education that lasted through most of the nineteenth century (although Franklin's ideas for the most part did not become implemented until after his death). They advocated that young men be taught 'art' for society's economic benefit. Their definition of art was skilled craftship, and their rationale was to enable colonial products to compete with European textiles and other crafts in the global marketplace. Franklin's concept of art education was egalitarian in terms of class but, in keeping with the prevailing thinking of the day, did not cross gender lines:

> *Drawing is a . . . universal language, understood by all nations. A man may often express his ideas, even to his own countrymen, more clearly with a lead pencil . . . than with his tongue. And many can understand a figure, that do not comprehend a description in words, though ever so properly chosen. All boys have an early inclination to this improvement, and begin to make figures of animals, ships, machines, etc. as soon as they can use a pen, [but for want of instruction are discouraged, and quit].*
>
> *Drawing is no less useful to a mechanic than to a gentleman. Several handicrafts seem to require it; as the carpenter, ship-wright's, engraver's, painter's, carver's, cabinet-maker's, gardener's, and other businesses. By a little skill of this kind, the workman may perfect his own idea of the thing to be done, before he begins to work; and show a draft for the encouragement and satisfaction of his employer (in Efland, 1990).*

In the nineteenth century, art teaching and teaching in general transformed from a male into a female profession. Following the War of 1812 and continuing to the Civil War, industrialization spread rapidly. Artists of the hiddenstream found their hand processes of creation replaced by machinery, taken from the home by male-run guilds, and relocated in male-run factories. Artists who followed their work into the factories became part of the working class that saw their wages increase more slowly than did the income of management.

As capital was acquired by those who built railroads, ships, and factories, a sharp class structure emerged. The middle class swelled and moved into the cities. The rapid development of urban industry horrified both the religious Right and the romantic Left. The ruling class turned to artists to provide culture as an instrument with which to tame, cultivate, and tranquilize the working class (Grumet, 1988). Gender prejudice kept working class men and women from uniting, and class prejudice kept working class and middle class women from uniting, so education was shaped by middle and upper class men. They sought a homogenized, European-based culture that was to be transferred generationally through the public schools. As industry replaced agriculture, women found themselves no longer the producers, but the consumers, of goods. When men began to leave teaching to work in the factories, women—working for male administrators—began to fill teaching ranks.

In 1853, Catherine Beecher (in Sklar, 1973) petitioned Congress for free normal schools for female teachers:

To make education universal, it must be moderate in expense, and women can afford to teach for one half, or even less the salary men would ask, because the female teacher has only to sustain herself; she does not look forward to the duty of supporting a family, should she marry; nor has she the ambition to amass a fortune.

A Boston School Committee report dated 1841 reports, "[Female teachers] are less intent on scheming for future honors or emoluments [than are men]. As a class they never look forward, as young men almost invariably do, to a period of legal emancipation from parental control" (in Tyack, 1974).

An excerpt from the journal of a ten-year-old Louisa May Alcott reflects how patriarchal religion teaches women to strive for characteristics that perpetuate their subordination:

A Sample of Our Lessons
"What virtues do you wish more of?" asks Mr. L.
I answer:
Patience,Love,Silence,
Obedience,Generosity,Perseverance
Industry,Respect,Self-denial
"What vices less of?"
Idleness,Wilfulness,Vanity,
Impatience,Impudence,Pride
Selfishness,Activity,Love of cats.
(Moffett and Painter, 1975)

Grumet (1988) concludes:

Although many of the . . . conditions that accompanied the feminization of teaching no longer obtain, pedagogy and curriculum still bear the character of this era, and we carry in our bodies, in our smiles, our spasms, our dreams, responses to a world that is no longer ours. The sex/gender system that is expressed in our classrooms through contemporary forms of curriculum, classroom discourse, gesture, and theater is an atavism that expresses church/state, school/family, social class, and sexual politics more appropriate to the 1820s than the 1980s.

Marxism emerged at mid-century as the worst results of the industrial revolution became manifest. Marx suggested that class oppression is created by capitalism. The advent of private property divided society into two classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Jaggar (1983) writes:

Because members of the same class . . . experience similar social conditions, they . . . develop certain physical characteristics and certain aspects of their personality and are blocked from developing others. For example, the material conditions of class society result in members of the capitalist class being, on average, taller, healthier and having a longer life expectancy than members of the working class. Similarly, their social circumstances will encourage members of the capitalist class to be greedy, insensitive and hypocritical, while the circumstances of the working class block them from developing their capacities for poetry or for intellectual work.

It is with such weapons as their "capacities for poetry" that capitalists wage cultural war against the proletariat.

As colonials moved westward and assumed pioneer lifestyles, quilting, at first a necessity, became the nineteenth century version of needlework. Again women immersed themselves in this work, making as many as twelve quilts for their trousseaus. The thirteenth was the bridal quilt, begun at the time of engagement. One surviving quilt is embroidered with the passage:

At your quilting, maids don't dally.
A maid who is quiltless at twenty-one
Never shall greet her bridal sun.
(in Parker and Pollock, 1981)

In recent years quilts have become recognized as art, although at times with the same baggage that characterizes other 'women's' art. However, artists such as Judy Chicago and Stephanie Bergman are raising this 'women's craft' to a status previously reserved for painting.

Horace Mann, writing in 1842, indicated that the U.S. economy's need for skilled drafters remained unchanged from Franklin's time. He continued Franklin's defense of art education:

No artisan, in any department of mechanical labor, would fail to reap the advantage of knowing how to draw accurately. Cabinet-makers constantly import patterns for new furniture at considerable expense, and even the silversmith and calico-printer are dependent upon drawings for their improvements in fashions. In Europe, and in some places in this country persons gain their whole livelihood by making designs for calico printing for which large salaries are paid. If the subject of drawing were made an item of public instruction, young people would go forth from the schools partly prepared for entering into the various mechanical trades.

An illustration of how nineteenth century capitalists manipulated this pragmatic rationale is found in the history of U. S. art education. Following the Civil War, investment capital moved westward. Raw materials for eastern industry (notably cotton) were in short supply. The 1867 Paris Exposition made clear that U. S. textiles were inferior to those of Europe, and the public schools were asked to remedy the problem. The need for art education—defined as learning to draw—was advanced.

The Massachusetts Drawing Act of 1870, an event celebrated as the birth of public art education in this country, is in fact an example of the undermining of democratic ideals by capitalism. Offering an example of the uneasy relationship between capitalism and democracy, the *Thirty-fourth Annual Report* of the Massachusetts State Board of Education (1871) records the machinations that led to the Drawing Act. The report notes that fourteen Boston capitalists petitioned the legislature for a mandate to offer free drawing instruction to men, women, and children in communities of the commonwealth with populations of over 5000.

The petition was probably initiated by two powerful textile industrialists, Francis Cabot Lowell, Jr. and Edward Everett Hale. Most of the fourteen signatories were Harvard graduates (several buildings on campus bear their names) who were connected to the textile industry, and they supported the old Whig ideal of a central government that protected American economic interests in the world marketplace. For example, one member of the group, Erastus Bigelow (1877), distributed pamphlets calling for tariffs on imported textiles. Their petition was reprinted in the Massachusetts Board of Education *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report*, as follows:

> *To the Honorable General Court of the State of Massachusetts,*
>
> *Your petitioners respectfully represent that every branch of manufactures in which the citizens of Massachusetts are engaged, requires in the details of the process connected with it, some knowledge of drawing and other arts of design on the part of skilled workmen engaged.*
>
> *At the present time no wide provision is made for instruction in drawing in the public schools.*
>
> *Our manufacturers therefore compete under disadvantages with the manufacturers of Europe; for in all the manufacturing counties of Europe free provision is made for instructing workmen of all classes in drawing. At this time, almost all the best draughtsmen in our shops are thus trained abroad.*
>
> *In England, within the last ten years, very large additions have been made to the provisions, which were before very generous, for free public instruction of workmen in drawing. Your petitioners are assured that boys and girls, by the time they are sixteen years of age, acquire great proficiency in mechanical drawing and in other arts of design. We are also assured that men and women who have been long engaged in the processes of manufacture, learn readily and with pleasure, enough of the arts of design to assist them materially in their work.*
>
> *For such reasons we ask that the Board of Education may be directed to report, in detail, to the next general court, some definite plan for introducing schools for drawing, or instruction in drawing, free to all men, women and children, in all towns of the Commonwealth of more than five thousand inhabitants.*
>
> *And your petitioners will ever pray.*
> *Jacob BigelowJohn Amory Lowell*
> *J. Thos. StevensonE. B. Bigelow*
> *William A. BurkeFrancis C. Lowell*
> *James LawrenceJohn H. Clifford*
> *Edw. E. HaleWm. Gray*
> *Theodore LymanF. H. Peabody*
> *Jordan, Marsh & Co. A. A. Lawrence & Co. Boston, June, 1869*

The petition, ostensibly requesting a program to benefit the commonweal, in fact documents the capitalistic wielding of political power to achieve economic gain. This gain was to be borne on the backs of workers poorly educated and modestly paid. So long as this fact was not considered, the petition appeared benign. On May 16, 1870, the Massachusetts legislature passed the first US law requiring education in drawing. Classes promptly filled to capacity across the state. The promise of modest but steady income enticed the people of Massachusetts to embrace the will of the capitalist body politic. By accepting “free public instruction” in mechanical drawing skills (this instruction was of course funded by tax money), they not only condemned themselves to a working class existence chained to their drafting tables, but they also handed the capitalists the means by which to further fill their coffers.

A theme prominent in nineteenth century art and art education in Europe and America was the reappearance of social class stratification within the art community. It was based on the renaissance notion of art versus craft. Many of those trained in fine art considered themselves superior to those trained in the applied arts, such as industrial and graphic design. An irony of this stratification lies in the fact that the fine artists rarely penetrated the upper class. Facile painters such as John Singer Sargent were solicited for society portraits, which perhaps resulted in a fleeting sense of belonging. This sycophantic attitude allowed the upper class, then as now, to indulge its fancy for art without opening its membership to artists.

The class demarcation between skill-based art education and 'fine art’ education had become blatant by 1881. The following editorial appeared in the *Boston Evening Transcript* on 24 February of that year:

> *. . . . children in the public schools at once [are classified] into those who are “going to college” and those who are “intended for employment in the constructive industries.” [Having defined these classes, the rest follows easily.] We have no class “intended for employment in the constructive industries.” Every mother’s son of our Yankee schoolboys is intended for the United States Senate. If not, which one is not? Would anybody dare to go into the public schools...and*

> *pick out those boys who "are going to college" and those who are intended for artisan class? (in Efland, 1990)*

This series of events illustrates another instance of capitalism conflict with equality. Typically discrimination has been tempered via mandates imposed by government bodies. Powerbrokers rarely volunteer equality.

Art education for women continued to be elusive during the Victorian period. The Woman Question, as it came to be known, was debated by men in sermons, literature, and the workplace. Victorians widely accepted that the reproductive organs of women who engaged in intellectual pursuits would atrophy (Rosenberg, 1982). Book learning was associated with masculinity, and exposure to the nude model, male or female, was thought to inflame the female sexual urge. Chadwick (1990) quotes from a letter written by an irate male to the Pennsylvania Academy in 1883:

> *Does it pay for a young lady of a refined, godly household to be urged as the only way of obtaining a knowledge of true art, to enter a class where every feeling of maidenly delicacy is violated, where she becomes so hardened to indelicate sights and words, so familiar with the persons of degraded women and the sight of nude males, that no possible art can restore her lost treasure of chaste and delicate thoughts...?*

The Victorian period produced one gender breakthrough: the advent of art education for females at the university level. In 1863 Yale University began an art school open to both men and women. The majority of enrollees were female, partly because women were prohibited from taking courses in other fields. The curriculum differed from that of Franklin's income-generating model for males, which in the late nineteenth century was widespread—at Yale, women were to study 'beautiful things' in the belief that, if their pretty heads were thus filled, they would think chaste thoughts. Duffus (1928) wrote that women "prepared themselves for the responsibilities of matrimony by learning to paint china." Women artists who turned their backs on decorative or 'morally enlightening' crafts in favor of large oils of historical subjects, were publicly labeled sexually deviant. Victorian men naively appointed women to be society's guardians of virtue. The aphorism of foxes guarding chickens comes to mind. As a group, artists—who presumably study beauty—are bright, articulate, and fun at parties, but not unduly moral. This could explain why they are fun at parties—and why, according to historians, Victorian women could be as well.

In 1874 the first art history class in the United States was offered at Harvard University to White males of means. The United States was elbowing its way forward on the stage of world commerce, and its businessmen required sophistication on a par with that of their foreign counterparts. Again visual art was co-opted as a tool of class and gender separation. American businessmen conducted their commerce abroad (some no doubt in bedrooms as well as boardrooms), secure in the belief that their wives, busy painting vases, remained faithful. One can only speculate on the number of happy butlers, yardmen, and grocery boys left to mind the store in Victorian America.

In the form of the romantic idealist movement, the use of art as a repository of cultural morals spread beyond the realm of wealthy Victorian women. Rooted in the writing of Hegel and the German idealists, romantic idealism attributed to art the ability to raise public morality. The church found utility in this notion. To strengthen its faltering power base it encouraged the use of art to present dogma in the guise of moral teachings. This view was rebutted by John Ruskin, one of the nineteenth century's most influential art critics. (Ruskin controlled the ascent of artists such as Turner and the pre-Raphaelites.) A contemporary of Emerson and Thoreau and a social critic, he looked to art and architecture to measure the spiritual condition of the period, whereas Emerson and Thoreau turned to nature. All three found the condition wanting. More than with the American romantic writers, however, Ruskin found philosophical kinship with a Russian person of letters, Leo Tolstoy. Both agreed not only that the measure of art was the degree to which it communicated to the viewer the artist's intent, but that such intent ought to be based on Christian ideology (Tolstoy, 1896). In *Sesame and Lilies* (1867), Ruskin summarized the Victorian division of roles for women and men based on nature-endowed characteristics:

> *The man's power is active, progressive and defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer. His intellect is for invention and speculation. But the woman's intellect is not for invention or creation but sweet ordering, arrangement and decision. Her great function is praise.*

Ruskin preached that the ability to create art was a gift from God to men, and only certain men at that. Since it therefore could not be taught, it had no place in art education programs. He claimed that art education was to develop the ability to appreciate art, since that gift was given to all. These two ideas have been propagated by the church throughout history. The first permits control of what is made by limiting production to a tiny group of God-inspired (that is, church-controlled) artists. The second spreads the church's message to the largest number.

John Jackson Jarves applied Ruskin's gender views to women artists, ascribing their socially prescribed role to natural differences:

> *Few women are predisposed to intellectual pursuits which demand wearisome years of preparation and deferred hopes.*

> *Naturally they turn to those fields of art which seem to yield the quickest returns for the least expenditure of mental capital. Having in general a nice feeling for form, quick perceptions and a mobile fancy with not infrequently a lively imagination it is not strange that modeling in clay is tempting to their fair fingers. Women by nature are likewise prompted in the treatment of sculpture to motives of fancy and sentiment rather than realistic portraiture or absolute creative imagination (in Parker and Pollock, 1981).*

The moralistic view of art's function began to lose its public hold in the mid-1870s. A number of *nouveau riche* profiteers, made wealthy by the burgeoning of industry, became esthetes. (It was at this time that the phrase 'art for art's sake' was coined.) These new capitalists desired the power held by the church and so worked to undermine its propagandistic use of art. The capitalists found utility not only in art, but in the ideas of Darwin as well. The church, assaulted by both art and science, became further deposed as a social force.

The famous libel suit filed by the painter James McNeill Whistler against Ruskin defined the lines of the art battle, and the cultural ambivalence of the time toward both arguments. Ruskin, after viewing work from Whistler's nonrepresentational *Nocturne* series, wrote in a public critique, "I have seen and heard much of cockney impudence before now, but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face" (in Efland, 1990). Whistler responded that it is the artist's task to make art as he sees fit. Whistler 'won'—he was awarded damages of one farthing and ordered to pay his own court costs.

A female class demarcation system developed in the nineteenth century with art education as one of its foci. Daughters of the wealthy were educated in those subjects deemed appropriate for their finishing, such as singing, drawing, elocution, literature, and French. Men approved, since these subjects offered little economic opportunity. Women's study of art in particular was approved by men because of its presumed ability to instill virtue. Such knowledge also conveniently separated female members of the working and ruling classes. A social darwinist named David Snedden, on the faculty of Teachers College at Columbia University, in *The Waning Powers of Art* (1917), wrote that the arts were unimportant to "advanced" cultures. The argument that art was important, he claimed, came from "other civilizations than our own . . . representing other stages of evolution." He then suggested that, since art was no longer important to Western civilization, it was therefore a fit pastime for women:

> *Perhaps the functions of art in ministering to the primal needs of society are not what they once were, and so, as a consequence, while society may still be willing to spend of its energies and resources freely on art, it now refuses to take art seriously because it cannot make of it a means toward realizing the more serious and worthy things of life. Strong men decline to make the production of art works a career, although they are willing to see their daughters follow it as a lightsome and not too prolonged vocation.*

He claimed that music, on the other hand, was useful in that it moved men to worship and to make love (presumably at different times, although on second thought not necessarily). In any event, girls in the nineteenth century became better educated in art than boys. This undermined the view, widespread at the time, that women's brains lacked the capacity to understand culture.

This view appeared in religion as well. Samuel Johnson, an English male whose position in the pantheon of Western philosophical discourse is firmly established, shared this bit of paraphrased insight: "The remarkable thing about women preachers is not that they preach well or badly, but that they can do it at all" (in Broudy, 1972). As Broudy points out, one could say the same of talking dogs.

Women increasingly filled teaching ranks through the nineteenth century. By 1890, art, at this point taught to boys as well as girls, was common in the classroom. Not surprisingly, art education during this period was often linked to the teaching of morality. Post-bellum thought on school curriculum content reflected the power of a swelling middle class. By then this segment had identified both the limitations of a practical education and the potential of a liberal arts education for upward mobility. Art in its practical context invariably meant learning to *produce* visual images, usually drawings, whereas art in its liberal arts context meant learning to *view* visual images. Art making was viewed as beneath the upper class, but art appreciation was a sign of membership.

A poignant and ironic example of turn-of-the-century art educators' efforts to undo the damage of industrial capitalism was the arts and crafts movement. Walter Crane, the central figure, claimed that common workers were engaged in such a struggle to maintain their standards of living that they were unable to cultivate their taste in art. The manifesto of the movement reviled mechanized production and the *frou-frou* so beloved by Victorians. Presaging the Bauhaus axiom that less is more, they claimed that beauty was found in simplicity rather than complexity. They called for dismantling industrial methods and restoring the medieval guild system in which there was no sexual division of labor. The reality was that within the arts and crafts movement itself a traditional division did evolve—women embroidered while men conducted business. The dual thrusts of the arts and crafts movement—art 'for the people', and a return to hand craftship—were compatible. 'The people' could not afford to buy handmade objects. The wealthy, however, could, and

such objects became elitist symbols. The arts and crafts movement skipped merrily down capitalism's yellow brick road, headed for Oz.