

## Advanced-Level Activity

### Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- research the effects of European **expansionism** and **colonialism** on different groups of people during the **Age of Exploration**;
- discuss the notion of "**exoticism**" as it relates to a nineteenth-century painting, the burgeoning of **stereotypes**, and modern-day stereotyping in the media;
- create a **portrait** of a female public figure from a different culture.

### Materials

- Reproduction of *Portrait of the Marquise de Miramon, née Thérèse Feuillant* by Jacques Joseph Tissot
- Background Information and Questions for Teaching about the painting
- Drawing paper
- Oil **pastels**

### Lesson Steps

1. Display a reproduction of *Portrait of the Marquise de Miramon* and lead a discussion of the artwork using grade-appropriate questions and information provided in step 1 of the Beginning-Level Activity and step 3 of the Intermediate-Level Activity. Ask students to speculate about how the Marquise de Miramon and her family were able to acquire objects from Japan.
2. Remind students that Europe's fascination with Asian culture and artifacts stemmed in part from European expansionism and colonialism during the Age of Exploration. Split the class into six groups. Each group will research the effects of European expansionism on different people:
  - 1) a Portuguese trader, 2) a European **bourgeois** family that purchases objects from the **Orient**,
  - 3) a Japanese **ceramics** maker, 4) a **Moorish** soldier in Granada, 5) **Isabella I** of Castile, and 6) **Manuel I** of Portugal. The following resources may be helpful:
    - "Europe and the Age of Exploration" on the Metropolitan Museum of Art Web site *Timeline of Art History* ([www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/expl/hd\\_expl.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/expl/hd_expl.htm))
    - "The Portuguese in Africa, 1415–1600" on the Metropolitan Museum of Art Web site *Timeline of Art History* ([www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/agex/hd\\_agex.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/agex/hd_agex.htm))
    - "History of the Moors of Spain by M. Florian" on the Project Gutenberg Web site ([www.gutenberg.org/etext/22337](http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/22337))
3. After each group has conducted sufficient research, hold a class debate to respond to the question, "Should Europe continue to expand?" Each group will wear the metaphorical "hat" of the individual or individuals they researched and will debate the question through role-playing. As students present their arguments, write them on the board.

4. Return to the portrait by Tissot and discuss the following:
  - What are the definitions of "exotic" and "exoticism"? Which objects in the painting would have been considered exotic to Europeans at the time?
  - Since people are often curious about, if not fascinated by, cultures that are unfamiliar to them, ask students to speculate about who would have found the non-Japanese objects and clothing in the painting exotic.
  - Discuss whether the Japanese objects in the painting seem exotic today. Why or why not?
5. Lead a larger discussion about exoticism and **cultural imperialism** today, and chart students' responses to the following questions on the board:
  - How are stereotypes created?
  - Discuss the connection between exoticism and stereotypes. What are some examples of exoticism existing in popular culture in modern times?
  - What are some examples of cultural imperialism?
  - Which countries are dominant cultural, economic, and/or imperialist forces today? How so? What happens to the culture of countries that have been dominated by other countries?
  - How has American culture, in particular, spread to other cultures? Can you see the influence of the United States reflected in fashions that have spread to other countries?
  - How do people learn about other cultures now? How have modern-day media helped to educate people about—and/or promulgate stereotypes of—other cultures?
  - What comes to mind now when you imagine a woman from "the Orient"? From Africa? From the Middle East?
  - How can we overcome stereotypes?
6. Pass out drawing paper and pastels. Instruct students to create a portrait of a female public figure from a culture they know little about. Their task will be to depict this person without resorting to generalizations or stereotypes. Allow students to discuss in small groups how they will accomplish this task. (Students could, for example, read memoirs written by the individual and watch or read interviews conducted with her to get a sense of her personality.) What setting would this person want to be portrayed in? What objects should be placed within the setting to communicate something about the person—such as her hobbies and interests? What kind of clothing would be accurate for a modern-day woman in this culture? Remind students to consider how the individual's pose and facial expression could reveal internal thoughts or an aspect of her personality. Remind students that they must do a lot of research so that the decisions they make are based on facts about the public figure. After students complete their drawings, instruct them to write a paragraph describing how they made their decisions.
7. Display the portraits and discuss the activity. What was most challenging about the activity? What was least challenging? What do the portraits reveal about the time period and global society in which we are currently living?

# HISTORICAL WITNESS

## ★ SOCIAL MESSAGING ★

### Assessment

Students' participation in the debate should be assessed based on the following: evidence of sufficient research, effective communication of ideas, and active participation in role-playing. Assess students' portraits based on whether the setting, objects included in the composition, and pose and facial expression of the figure communicate an aspect of her personality or characteristic traits. Students' paragraphs about their portraits should show that students conducted significant research to make informed decisions about how to portray their subjects.

### Extensions

1. Discuss the concept of **Orientalism**. Discuss how trade and foreign policy (including **Napoleon III's** trip to Algeria) introduced Europeans to "the Orient," which intrigued Western artists and led to Orientalism. Analyze how Western society depicts the Moors and Moorish women in particular. Discuss the historical context surrounding the Moors' relationship with Western society by comparing the history of the Moors with the narrative depicted in the fifteenth-century German manuscript *Moses Defeating the Moors* (see Related Works of Art).
2. Discuss other examples of cultures that have exoticized each other throughout history, for example, the Spanish conquistadors and the Native Americans.

