

Sex, Race and Gender: Contemporary Women Artists of Color, the Case of Kara Walker

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Abstract

This paper deals with the ways women of color in the visual arts express their perceptions of their own sexuality, with the work of Kara Walker as the centerpiece. The work reviews early conceptions of female sexuality, drawing on the history of colonialism and slavery, using tools from various discourses and disciplines including post-colonialism, politics of identities, politics of differences and feminism.

Résumé

Cet article traite des façons dont les femmes de couleurs dans les arts visuels expriment leurs perceptions sur leur propre sexualité, avec l'oeuvre de Kara Walker comme pièce centrale. Le travail revoit les premières conceptions sur la sexualité féminine, en se basant sur l'histoire du colonialisme et de l'esclavage, en se servant d'outils provenant de divers discours et de disciplines qui incluent le post-colonialisme, les politiques des identités politiques, les politiques sur les différences et sur le féminisme.

The discourses around race, gender and the politics of difference over the past twenty years have altered the way in which women of color who are artists perceive their sexuality. Feminist studies of sexuality have posed new challenges in the form of extensive interdisciplinary scholarship. At the same time, post-colonial thinking has given rise to new perceptions of race and culture that make use of these theories to examine the effect of the multicultural discourse on the works of visual art produced by and about women of color.

The first section reviews the nineteenth-century perception of women of color's sexuality, which was rooted in the Orientalist views. It is this perception to which post-colonialist criticism turned its attention and voiced its opposition. The second and third sections present the alternative representations offered by contemporary women artists of color, whose work is unmistakably influenced by feminist theories, the politics of identity and race, and post-colonial discourse. The discussion focuses on two artists who have chosen to deal repeatedly with the subject, with special attention to the work of the African-American artist Kara Walker who can be seen as exemplifying this trend.

Throughout the paper, illustrative works dealing with black female sexuality - specifically naked women - are discussed and analyzed, with reference to the theories of prominent figures in the contemporary discourse. These include post-colonialist thinkers such as Sarat Maharaj; earlier writers such as Edward Said and Franz Fanon; and feminist theorists such as bell hooks, alongside art historians who have been investigating issues relevant to our discussion for many years, among them Linda Nochlin. Using these thinkers, and others, show the ways in which women artists of color are undergoing a process of empowerment, and come to formulate a subjective and autonomous sexuality.

Eros and Sex in Colonial Eyes

The aesthetic history of the female nude reveals the way in which such images stem from and reflect the culture in which they are produced. The evolution of the racialized female nude is particularly complex, as it contains traces of both sexual and racial memories. An understanding of the iconography of the female nude in general, and of the women of color's nude in particular, along with its connections to social, psychological and gender roles, is essential for any analysis and understanding of the work of women artists of color that aims to challenge the traditional archetypes and create a new image of the black female body.

A close examination of the work by the French painter Jean-Léon Gérôme from the early 1860s, *The Slave Market* (Figure 1), reveals the ideologies of its time and place. Painted at the height of the age of imperialism, it depicts a slave market in which a naked woman is being examined by traders. Although the woman is clearly more fair and light-skinned than the men around her, she is clearly not a European woman. The artist's intention seems clear: he shows no interest in ethnography, but rather uses the scene as an excuse for an unambiguous ideological statement, tinged, however, with a marked pornographic/voyeuristic element. The contemporary (male) Parisian viewer is encouraged to derive pleasure from the sight of the dark, Oriental captive who masks or lowers her eyes while making no attempt to cover her seductive body. The image therefore arouses both lascivious delectation and righteous indignation at the "barbaric" customs of the East.

The painting is a clear illustration of Edward Said's (1978) contention that texts are rarely free of the ideological discourse of their time. Thus elements of the "empire" and the colonial "other" can easily be identified in this period. This is readily apparent in the paintings of Gérôme and many other nineteenth century Orientalists. Their work gave visual form to two ideologically based types of power: the power of men over women, and the superior power of the white man over darker races (Nochlin 1983). *The Slave Market* operates on the viewer on several levels simultaneously. First, it fans voyeuristic urges, as well as the desire to be the master of a slave, to have total control over a female body. Second, the artist

blatantly manipulates the viewers, directing them to judge the behavior of the Oriental man in the picture as barbaric, unlike themselves. This implies that the presumed viewer would never behave in such a way; whereas "they" (the primitive Orientals) are barbarians who check women's teeth as if they were cattle. In other words, as Edward Said explains so well, by labeling the other with stereotypes, Western civilization defines itself hierarchically: the European audience becomes superior to the "barbaric" Orientals in the painting.

Orientalist paintings like this make use of a variety of devices to achieve the desired effect, among them mystery, sexuality, "realism" and seeming authenticity, along with the depiction of stereotypical "attributes," such as the presumed idleness and depravity of Orientals. Well into the twentieth century, Western artists continued to be fascinated by the East, portraying it by means of bright color and light, exotic ornamentation, and most particularly, the choice of subject. This can be seen, for example, in the many odalisques (women of the sultan's harem) painted by Matisse. Thus, modern artists depicted the East as an exotic, mysterious, and sensual place. Their fondness for this theme derived from the enduring chauvinist and Eurocentric perspective of white middle-class male artists who sought to apply their sexual fantasies to the Oriental space, whose remoteness made it a legitimate arena for such themes (all this said, it must be also emphasized that sexism existed not only in Euro-centric contexts, but also in the Ottoman empire. While serving colonial interests, this idea was all not entirely separated from the kinds of patriarchy that were common within the Middle East).

In the wake of nineteenth-century colonialism and colonialist ideology, the West constructed the image of the black woman, both in the East and in the "New World," as an exotic, overtly sexual, shameless creature with prodigious reproductive abilities, on par with an animal. As a result, even after the period of slavery in the United States, for example, African-American women were often the victims of sexual violence perpetrated by white males in a society that did not readily internalize the social changes it was undergoing (Brooks Higginbotham 1992). Moreover, the women themselves adopted an attitude that Evelyn Brooks

Higginbotham terms a "politics of silence"; that is, they took it upon themselves to remain silent and hide their sexuality in the hope that those around them would see that they were not the promiscuous creatures the dominant white society perceived them to be. Denial of their own sexuality caused further damage, however, distorting the depiction of black women and preventing them from presenting themselves as autonomous sexual beings. Choosing to follow this approach, many black women writers and artists, particularly in America, refrained from portraying the sexual aspect of their lives, so that it sank out of sight and was not given proper expression (Hammonds 1999). It is only in the past thirty years that any meaningful change has occurred, as women thinkers and writers of color began, little by little, to write overtly about their sexuality. Interestingly enough, however, even these women devote most of their attention and creative efforts to the limitations, oppression, and dangers associated with black female sexuality, ignoring issues such as pleasure, curiosity, and free agency.

Winds of Change: Alternative Representations

The exposure to post-colonialist criticism that responded to the eighteenth and nineteenth century's waves of European imperialism motivate critics to think about the American context through post-colonial thought. New discourses of multiculturalism, alongside politics of difference, were influenced by ideas of gender and race. Having been introduced to feminist and post-colonialist discourse, African-American artists and other artists of color began to articulate alternative representations of the colored female nude. Young black women artists like the New York-raised Renée Cox (b. 1960, Jamaica) convey the image of sexually free, empowered black women. Protesting against the depictions of the exploitable black female body, Cox presents herself in a series of self-portraits as an omnipotent individual in a refreshing and challenging alternative to conventional portrayals. In so doing, she responds to the tradition of the *Purchase of a Slave* (1857), which is a typical earlier incarnation of that kind of images, one of numerous other European paintings of the time. Although she still depicts herself as erotic, the central figure is unmistakably a self-aware assertive subject, a woman in control of her sexuality.

Many of Cox's works suggest a flexible approach to gender roles, along with repeated references to the woman as mother, manifesting her firm belief in the importance of maintaining one's sexuality as a legitimate and even essential aspect of a woman's total identity, within the experience of motherhood (Mercer, Ugwu and Baily 1996). For her series entitled *Yo Mama* from 1993, Cox photographed herself with her infant son in a variety of situations and roles. In the photograph shown here (Figure 2), the artist is standing solidly in the center dressed only in shoes, holding her baby in her muscular arms. In contrast to the gentle way in which the Virgin Mary cradles her infant - the paradigm for depictions of mother and child in Western culture, and the way that countless European artists depicted African mothers, Cox holds her son as if he were a chicken in the market, or perhaps a weight she is lifting as part of her fitness training, training that is highly apparent in her well-honed body. The sharp contrast between the conventional depictions of motherhood - the traditional Christian depiction and this contemporary version - is evidence of Cox's compelling social statement. No longer does motherhood mean sacrifice and a woman's denial of herself and her own needs for the sake of her children. Instead, the woman today fulfills herself, her needs, and her potential, and among her other activities she is also a mother to her children. In defiance of Freudian psychoanalysis and Winnicott's object-relation theory, which contend that the child feels omnipotent, the center of the universe who impels events with the mother, Cox presents the mother as omnipotent, as a powerful subject, while the child is the object defining her strength rather than the focal point of her life.

She charges her work even further with an additional element, the sexuality of the black female body. If throughout Western history countless nudes, such as Giorgione's *The Dresden Venus* (1509), have been depicted reclining passively, Cox chooses the active assertive representation of a sexual black woman. She presents her shapely naked body as beautiful and sensual, glowing with body-oil, and stares directly, almost challengingly, at the viewer. She is neither ashamed of her nakedness, nor does she make any attempt to cover it up; on the contrary, she is proud of her sexuality. If we recall the Oriental woman in Gérôme's *The Slave Market*, it becomes

immediately clear that this photograph is a bold alternative to the Western representation of the black female figure with all its connotations of being meek and dull-witted, a creature suited to the sexual purposes of reproduction alone, an animal lacking cognition and incapable of determining its own fate.

In another photograph by Cox, entitled *Olympia's Boyz* dated to 2001, the naked artist reclines in a manner very similar to Edward Manet's 1865 *Olympia*, but instead of the black servant figure, she situated her sons in tribal garb. The lacking of the flower bouquet changes the original context. The political and sexual audacity of the black servant assuming the temptress role is largely, but not entirely de-contextualized and softened in Cox's photograph (Moylan 2001). Now Cox herself is the only subject of sexuality - black and proud.

Subversive Agency: The Case of Kara Walker

The history of race relations in America continues to follow a highly charged path, with each generation confronted with a new and more intricate set of complexities. African-American artist Kara Walker (b. 1969) examines issues of identity, race and sexuality as shaped by colonialism and slavery in the context of American history. Walker comes from Atlanta in the southern United States, and that is a biographical fact crucial to an understanding of her work.

Walker is a prolific artist who creates in diverse media. For the purposes of this discussion, however, I have chosen to relate solely to her paper cuts, as the use of this technique sets her apart from other contemporary artists, both male and female, and has indeed become her hallmark. Walker's paper cuts are tableaux of life-size human figures cut from black cardboard (e.g., Figure 3). As they are marked only by their contour lines, they are in fact silhouettes, with the contrast between the black cardboard and the white gallery walls further according them the aura of silhouette theater. (Even the missing elements, cut out from the figures, are an integral part of the work, becoming particularly conspicuous when the black sheets are affixed to the white walls.) Despite the absence of any lines or drawings on the figures, a great deal of information and detail is conveyed by the simple black silhouettes arranged in complex scenes of positive and negative

space. The contrast of black paper and white walls serves the theme of these works: the relations between blacks and whites in America from the time of slavery and up to the present. Seen through the prism of contemporary society, racism emerges from references to sodomy, rape, incest, mutilation, bestiality, and scatology. The scenes are both discomfiting and aesthetically beautiful.

Walker's works are subversive and seek catharsis through public exposure and acknowledgement of the suppressed history and its influence on the collective soul of all Americans. On the surface, the American people have come to terms with this harsh chapter in their past - the period of ruthless slavery - and have moved on, looking to the future (after all, everyone watched the TV series *Roots* and identified with Kunta Kinte). They are all familiar with the "characters," the poor slave men and women and the cruel white master, and the roles they played: oppression and domination vs. survival and preservation of one's humanity. White Americans have little interest in going over it all again, but when it is up there on the wall, they have no choice. Kara Walker touches a raw nerve of racial tension built up over the course of many decades of lies, insecurity, exploitation, and vulnerability. But in the contemporary version of this history, as presented by the artist, the protagonists have changed: there are no ultimate villains, no kind-hearted slaves, or for our purposes, no victims of any sort.

The scenes Walker depicts all come from a very specific time in American history, the mid-nineteenth century, when slavery was still flourishing and the sexual abuse of slave women and girls by their white masters was all too common an offense (Hammonds 1999). Walker's works accentuate the humiliation and violence toward slave men and women, with the theme of the sexual molestation of slave girls recurring again and again throughout her artistic career. The antebellum era is indicated by the period clothes of the silhouettes, such as the women's long hoop skirts and the men's hats. The artist creates a narrative of slave men and women drawn equally from historical documentation and fictional materials. Her sources include factual details from the Civil War, epic historical novels, and the narratives of slave literature, all incorporated into the medium of silhouettes and the technique of paper cuts, which

were among the amusements offered at fairs and carnivals throughout the nineteenth century and were particularly popular in the area of Walker's hometown of Atlanta.

In "Marginality as Site of Resistance" (1990) bell hooks explains the world view of African-Americans in light of white cultural hegemony. hooks claims that the dominant culture caused blacks to develop an opposing world view in which a position on the margins of society is not perceived as a deficiency but rather as an alternative, empowering existence in a place that offers the possibility of radical change and space for insurgency. She finds in marginality a site from which to create counter-hegemonic discourse, not just in words, but also as a way of life, and thus marginality must be maintained despite periodic forays into the hegemonic center. The counter-hegemonic discourse, whose language resembles that of the oppressor, is in fact a counter-language which must undergo transformation. In this sense, the use of the "folk" medium of paper cuts by Kara Walker is an indication that while the artist seemingly functions in the dominant contemporary art world of New York and has earned the popularity and recognition of the establishment and the public, she remembers and preserves her roots and remains part of the marginal culture to which hooks refers. According to hooks, maintaining resistance by remembering the past can make it possible to decolonialize the thinking of the oppressed and to empower their existence in today's America.

Walker's choice of paper cuts has deliberate and far-reaching intent. It represents a subversive act in defiance of "high" art. It is important to understand the process of stereotyping in the context of this tactic since silhouettes convey a great deal of information despite the seeming sparseness and simplicity of the details. Walker sees the silhouette and the stereotype as inextricably linked.

Nevertheless, although Walker bases her images on stereotypes, she has no qualms about reversing the categories and she does not play by the binary rules. It is not enough for her simply to present the polarity of the different sides in the debate on domination and ethnicity. Instead, she chooses to show complex examples of master-slave and black-white relations. Her works repeatedly parody such situations, giving multi-layered and

multi-dimensional form to the characters and their roles. Thus, for instance, some of the women in Walker's scenes are guilty of violence, sexual molestation of children or men, or outrageous or improper behavior, such as defecating in public. Indeed, works such as *Camptown Ladies* from 1998 (Figure 4) depict a wide range of perversities, including pedophilia, sado-masochism, and various forms of humiliation: The African-American woman makes the white woman kneel and drink her baby's urine; the teenage girl on the right hand side of the work holds a carrot and seems as if she intends to insert it into to sexual parts of the grown woman, and the young girl aims her weapon at the white woman or perhaps the baby. Although these narratives are obviously allegorical and invoke racial stereotypes taken from the mythology of antebellum plantation slaves in America, the artist claims they continue to exist in one version or another. Or as she puts it, the Civil War never ended (Alberro 1997).

Over the course of time, African-American men were stereotyped as being stupid, lazy, irresponsible, and dangerous. The African-American women suffered from the same racial labels, with the addition of others relating to their sexuality. One persistent myth was the figure of the black Jezebel with her insatiable sexual appetite, a sort of dark-skinned femme fatale (Farrington 2003). In *Black Skins, White Masks*, Franz Fanon (1967) relates to the image of the "blacks" imprinted on Western civilization by white colonialism. Within these representations, black women were considered licentious and carnal, and therefore cheap and wanton. Consequently, she was the direct opposite of the white Victorian lady, perceived as pure, passionless, and asexual. Nor did black men escape a similar label, making them an object of envy and fear as a result of his presumed sexual prowess and uncontrollable lust.

Walker's works invoke the most infamous case of an African woman put on display in Europe, the 22-year-old South African Saartje Bartmann, known as the "Hottentot Venus." Bartmann was exhibited to the public in Paris and London for five years in the early nineteenth century, until her death from smallpox, and caused both a medical and a popular sensation because of her enlarged clitoris and oversized buttocks compared to European women.

Bartmann's case, alongside Rousseau's "Noble Savage," influenced a long tradition of inscribing the "other" body of native women of the Americas in European representation. This has helped root these false beliefs ever deeper, and Europeans have harbored the stereotype of the black woman as an unbridled sexual creature of insatiable appetite and, like an animal, suited mainly for childbirth and reproduction. Large buttocks and sex organs, seen as a sign of the African female's sexuality and profligacy, later also became the nineteenth century hallmark of the white prostitute, and by some convoluted path found their way into the smartest of Victorian fashions, perhaps a veiled intimation of the forbidden lust for the exotic "other" (Gilman 1986).

In an interview in 1997, Walker stated that throughout her career, particularly in the early years, she was preoccupied with the subject of the black female body as an exotic seductress, the theme of black women and their desires with all its complexities, and the encounter between black women and white men. She explained that the idea of using silhouettes came to her when she was trying to consider the eroticization of black women through the eyes of white masters in the context of the history of slavery in America (Alberro 1997). Thus, for example, in 1995 she exhibited a huge panoramic installation on all four walls of the central hall at Wooster Gardens. Entitled *The End of Uncle Tom*, the huge work consisted entirely of black paper cuts. In a series of groupings, Walker depicted, in pornographic detail, figures involved in abusive, sometimes perverse, sexual activity. Works such as these are subversively macabre scenes, even if they are quite funny, and make up an effective collection of the sexual and racial myths of American society.

The exaggeration in Walker's artistic scenes challenges the "decent" values of "civilized" conduct and the hierarchies seeking to ensure that everything remains in its proper place. She deliberately portrays acts of urination and defecation, the rape of women and children, with a carnival-like joyousness in the face of appalling crimes and molestation. *Slavery, Slavery!*, from a series produced in 1997 (Figure 5), for instance, depicts secretions of all sorts dripping and pouring from the orifices of a black woman: jets of milk from her nipples; a spray of vomit from her mouth; a stream of urine from her genitals. In this

series, as in others, Walker's work raises associations with Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection. As Kristeva defines it, the abject is anything that threatens the order, borders, attitudes, or laws of the patriarchal culture. She attributes this notion to the human body in general, and the female body in particular. Because of its liminal nature, abjection also relates to bodily secretions and their connection to the patriarchal order. Kristeva claims that the body is not governed solely for purposes of hygiene, but also to govern society, which seeks to hide the body's natural functions under an artificial cloak of cleanliness and propriety. In Kristeva's words: "It is...not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules" (Kristeva 1982, 9). In her work, Kristeva emphasizes the connection between sexual intercourse and the notion of the abject and motives like urine, vomit and sperm, and the ways they formulate sexualized subjects, both male and female - in the same ways Walker does.

The extremity that Kara Walker applies to her carnival-like shows is reminiscent of a key concept laid down by the Russian thinker Michael Bakhtin. In his early works, Bakhtin discusses the concept of carnival (Bakhtin 1984) and in similar fashion to Walker, he emphasizes humor as one of the main tools, and places laughter as one of the fundamental pillars of the carnivalesque. Yet this is not parody, irony or satire, per se. The carnival humor is ambivalent and ambivalence is the key to the structure of the carnival. The logic of the carnival is not the true or false, or the causal common sense of science, but the qualitative logic of ambivalence, where the actor is also the viewer, the destruction leads to creation and death is equivalent to rebirth. Bakhtin stated that there is no life outside of the carnival. As far as he is concerned, people are the actors in the carnival as well as the spectators, the participants are the object and subject of the laughter, as one. An additional important principle emphasized by Bakhtin is that the carnival features degradation and humiliation; the body with its assembly of functions, such as urination and mating, all as an inseparable part of the ambivalent carnival experience. The ambivalent carnival logic is not bound by binary, boundary-setting opposites but obeys a multi-valued system (Lechte 1994). These principles

are well embedded and expressed in Walker's works. Her creation is of polyphonic structure, since, in similarity to the carnival, it always contains the voice of the "other," and her paper cuts exemplify the opposite of a monologue and homogeneous text.

Walker's portrayal of the black female body is rife with contradictions. It is not only filthy and "perverse," but ludicrous as well because of her use of humor. As the cultural theorist Linda Hutcheon (1989) explains, humor is a means of subverting fossilized cultural mores, a unique weapon that allows itself a free hand in respect to the moral, social, and economic values of the hegemonic authority. Knowing the sore spots, humor blossoms where the authoritative voice reveals insecurity, at the ambivalent points of cultural oppression, making use of exaggeration of the semantic field and a masterful manipulation of language.

Walker employs humor mainly as a coping mechanism. Parodying the female body and the seduction or rape to which it is subject is a means of coping and empowerment, although it is not entirely clear just how loudly the viewer is expected to laugh at the sight of her unsettling works. The artist relates that she creates her figures in an associative process, and claims that if these characters and situations appear in her mind, they undoubtedly exist in the conscious or subconscious of others as well, which is what makes them so relevant (Alberro 1997). A black woman seeking to become a subject must distinguish herself from women in general in order to develop a positive self-perception, as the post-colonial subject does not share the same identity as the colonialist or the pre-colonial subject. Instead, as Grossberg (1996) maintains, it is a hybrid of both. This attitude of being between two worlds is reflected unerringly in Walker's paper cuts.

The hybrid state of those born from the coexistence of people from different cultures is one of the central issues addressed by Edward Said (1978). His highest esteem is reserved for the intellectuals of the Third World who immigrated or were exiled to the centers of modern civilization, traveling a path he describes as turning inward. By "crossing-over," the exiled post-colonial critic (or in our case the artist Kara Walker) escapes the restraints imposed on local critics in the Third World. They can observe the whole prism, as if they were standing on both sides

of the border simultaneously. Such is Walker. While she is an African-American who deliberately raises the issue of black female sexuality, she also comes equipped with some Western perspectives, and both standpoints come to bear in her art.

Walker highlights the theme of the "subjective agent," the relationship between subjectivity and constructs of power, since in order to frame oneself as a subject, one must also claim the power to act and be heard. In the case of the artistic subject, this involves associating oneself with the aesthetic and social systems of the art world so as to create an influential cultural voice. Until the early 1980s, it was no easy matter for black artists to tap into the centres of power. Their work was generally judged not by artistic value, but by the degree to which it diverged from the mainstream. The greater use it made of common ethnic hallmarks and stereotypes, the more readily it could be accepted and at the same time kept at a "safe" distance by being labeled "exotic." In this context, Walker's work can also be interpreted in terms of the theory proposed by the art critic Jean Fisher (2002) in her discussion of the Nigerian-born British artist Yinka Shonibare. Fisher contends that his work represented an attempt by a non-white artist to be accepted as an equal, a challenge the system sought to respond to by the notion of multiculturalism, or what Sarat Maharaj (2000) calls "confronting difference." But these terms do not imply respect for or acceptance of the other's culture. Like Shonibare, Walker refuses to allow her art to remain at a safe distance. Indeed, it reveals a naughty pleasure in going too far: her art is not pleasant to the white viewer that is constantly reminded of his dark past, and at the same time she does not let the African-American viewers to be at ease, since the characters of their people also perform awful acts. She "trespasses" into forbidden territory, but she does it with wit and humor, artistic skill, an irresistible seductive quality, and most importantly, the knowledge that invariably the outsider is already inside. Her provocative style is linked to suppressed history and the instability of contemporary assumptions regarding the place of the post-colonial subject. While its place is presumably outside the dominant culture, its presence reveals the insecurity of the hegemonic social construct which repeatedly seeks to establish the parameters of its identity by

determining the boundaries and dividing line of the "other." But as we have said, the other is already within.

The works we have considered, produced by Kara Walker and Renee Cox, are by women artists of color who have succeeded in their attempt to regain control of their bodies and voices through which they can speak of their sexuality. They employ a variety of tactics to challenge the stereotype of the image of the black female nude as erotic (Farrington 2003): reconstruction of existing myths; deconstruction of common visual codes; and parody and role reversal. They have thus found ways to create representations of the naked black body that resist patriarchal and imperialist associations. An evolving trend can be discerned among artists like Cox and Walker: the desire to offer courageous representations of the many faces of black female sexuality, whether in reference to the problematic deriving from their place and positioning in society or as a new and freeing affirmation of their sexuality.

Figure 1

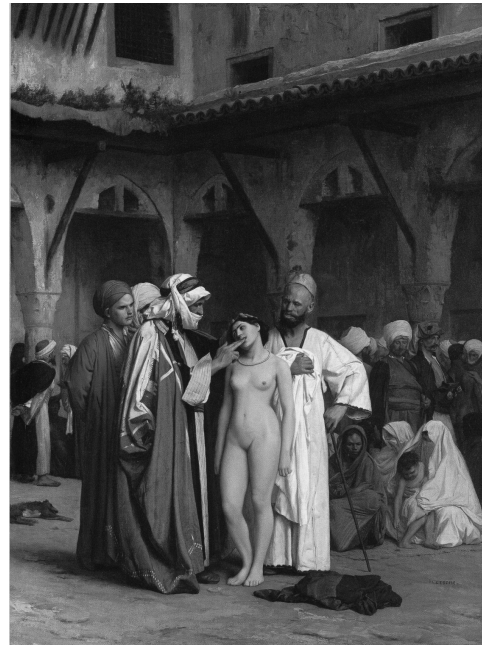


Figure 2



Figure 3

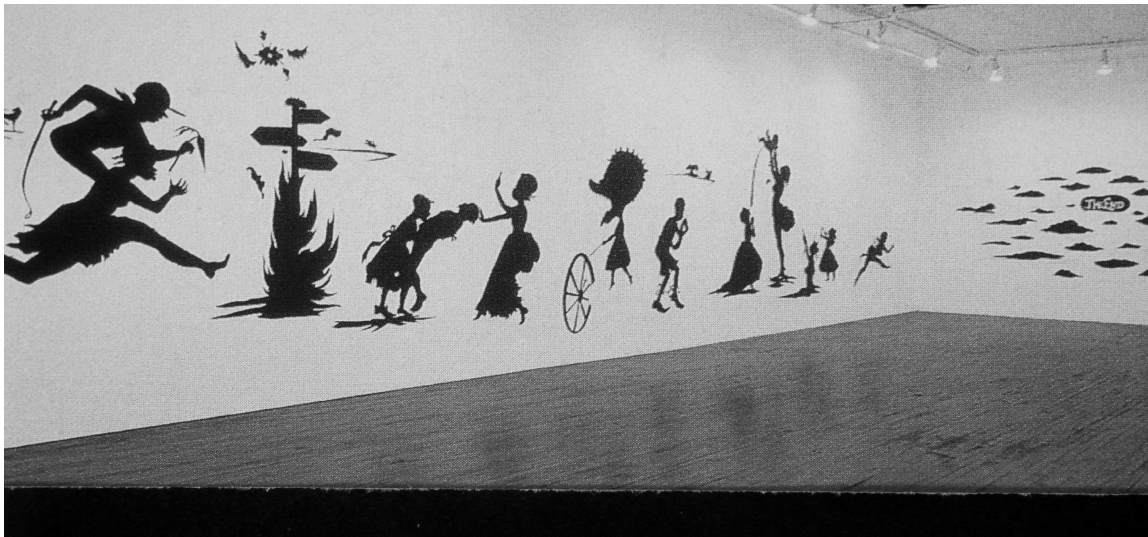
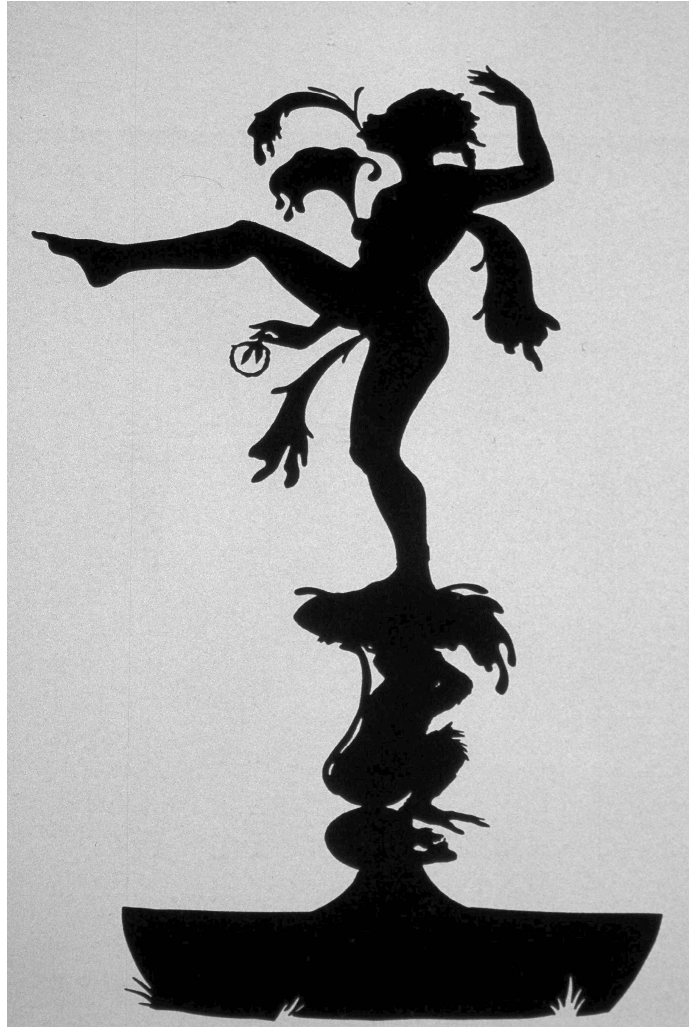


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figures

1. Jean- Léon Gérôme, *The Slave Market*, c.1867; oil on canvas, 1955.53.B3. ©Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, USA.
2. Renée Cox, *Yo Mama*, 1993; black and white photograph. ©Renée Cox. Courtesy Robert Miller Gallery, New York, USA.
3. Kara Walker, *Camptown Ladies*, 1998; installation. Image courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York, USA.
4. Kara Walker, *Camptown Ladies* (detail), 1998; installation. Image courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York, USA.
5. Kara Walker, *Slavery!, Slavery!* (detail), 1997; installation. Image courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York, USA.

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