

02/16

The Frontier

- readings cited Turner thesis
- frontier is framed dualistically (civilization // savagery)
- progress for some, not everybody
 - ask question: progress for whom?
- with each wave of movement @ frontier, there is evolution happening.
- hunter → farmer → manufacturing
- Turner draws on ideas from European thinkers
 - global hierarchy justifies colonial activity
 - making order out of chaos → ideas about race
 - Euro-centric thinking: we're on top! more civilized
 - racial superiority organized based on location + time
- But, claim that US is unique, because of wilderness frontier
- Frontier is most rapid line of western Americanization
- But frontier was made empty (wasn't initially empty)
- Turner draws up the ideal settler: white men (often affluent)
 - wilderness gendered as female → objectified
 - native Americans are savage → synonymous w/ wilderness
 - nature passive setting for story
 - idea of wilderness being natural + conquering wilderness being natural
 - tension resolved by saying it's inevitable.
 - calls wilderness military training ground
 - African Americans come in as a tale of slavery
- Nation is a social construct that is created both ideas (preservation / conquering) distance wilderness from humans
- frontier gone → existential crisis
- Teddy Roosevelt: young white men must contact wilderness - to not be "overcivilized" ? - ?

George Catlin - painter afraid of vanishment of natives

- went to frontier + painted natives

- seen as inevitable