Question a:

One of Edmonia Lewis' most famous sculptures is *Forever Free* from 1867. Feel free to discuss this sculpture OR add other examples of her art.

In what ways can we analyze the depiction of race and/or gender in the art of Edmonia Lewis?



Other questions to consider:

Where does the title of the sculpture come from?

What aspects of the sculpture express the theme of *Forever Free*?

Can you think of other works of art with a similar theme?

Question b:

In the 19th century, the United States expanded rapidly in population - through large families, immigration, and (initially) importation of African slaves. It also expanded rapidly in territory - through purchases, annexations, wars, and treaties. These changes led to a country with one of the most diverse populations in the world, but with government policies such as Jim Crow laws, Indian boarding schools, Exclusion acts, etc. that functioned to maintain a culture with a widespread belief in the necessity of conforming to the dominant white, Anglo-Saxon culture.

That tension between assimilation and identification with diverse cultural roots continues today in the U.S. and elsewhere. A few years ago, Absolut Vodka ran an ad in Mexican media that caused an uproar with some people in the United States.



It depicted a map of North America with Mexico's boundaries restored to those prior to the Mexican-American War. There are some opponents of increased immigration that believe that there is a deliberate strategy for Mexican immigrants to take over the Southwest. In 2010, Arizona's controversial AB 1070 law was in part a reaction to the stresses of a large unassimilated immigrant population. In the years that followed, some other states passed similar laws. Now the Trump administration is planning the building of a wall to separate Mexico from the U.S.



What are the relative merits of assimilation and diversity?