Primitivism in Art
Breton Girls By the Sea (1889)

“I find something primitive, savage here”
Woman with a Flower (1891)

- First significant Tahiti portrait
- Model is wearing Sunday dress, not traditional *pareo*
Hail Mary (1891)

- “An angel with yellow wings reveals Mary and Jesus, Tahitians just the same, to two Tahitian women dressed in pareos.”
- Fusion of Christian iconography and Tahitian subject matter
- Effect of religious faith on Tahitians
When Will You Marry? (1892)

- Who is asking the question?
- How are the women dressed?
- What is the effect of color?
- Individuals or types?
The Spirit of the Dead keeps Watch (1892)

Returning home unexpectedly late one night he struck a match and saw his wife, Tehura, “immobile, naked, lying face downward on the bed with her eyes inordinately large with fear” (Noa Noa, 33)
Words of the Devil (1892)

- There are no Tahitian myths of women stalked by demons
- Inversion of myth to suit European audience that was more familiar with female victims
The Market (1892)

- Based on Egyptian fresco that Gauguin saw in London
- Prostitutes
Where are you Going? (1893)

- Who is asking the question? Why? To whom?
- Symbolism of fruit
The Moon and the Earth (1893)

- A myth that Gauguin read in Moerenhou’s *Voyages*
- The goddess Hina please with Tefatu to grant mankind immortality – which he refuses
- Bought by Degas
The Day of the God (1894)

- Painted in Paris
- Fictionalized Tahiti combining elements from Java and Easter Island
Nevermore (1897)

- "With a simply nude I wished to suggest a certain long-gone barbaric luxury."
- Links with Edgar Allan Poe’s poem, “The Raven” (1875)
Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? (1897)
Primitive tales (1902)

- Painter Meyer de Haan
- Buddhist pose
- West is male, clothed, evil, and corrupt
- East is female, naked, good, and pure
When I first went to the old Trocadero, it was disgusting. The masks weren't just like any other pieces of sculpture. Not at all. They were magic things... I too believe that everything is unknown... I understood what the Negroes use their sculptures for... *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* must have come to me that very day...
Pablo Picasso: 
Three Figures under a Tree (1907)