

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Painting is titled America’s Progress by John Gast*

* What do you see here? (Note all pieces of the painting, including symbols, objects, people, environment, etc.)
* What location is pictured? What evidence makes you think this?
* What time period do you think this represents and what evidence makes you think this?
* Who might the female figure in the white represent? What is her purpose here?
* What might the telegraph lines that she is leaving behind symbolize?
* Describe the varying types of transportation you see.
* Describe the different types of people and cultures you see.
* Why do you think the animals and Natives are fleeing?
* What message is the artist trying to convey?
* What title would you give this painting and why?

“America is destined for better deeds. We have no interest in the scenes of antiquity, only as lessons of avoidance of nearly all their examples. The expansive future is our arena, and for our history. We are entering on its untrodden space, with the truths of God in our minds, beneficent objects in our hearts, and with a clear conscience unsullied by the past. We are the nation of human progress, and who will, what can, set limits to our onward march? Providence is with us, and no earthly power can. We point to the everlasting truth on the first page of our national declaration, and we proclaim to the millions of other lands, that “the gates of hell” – the powers of aristocracy and monarchy – “shall not prevail against it. Who, then, can doubt that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity?”

(John L. O’Sullivan, *Manifest Destiny*, 1839)

1. Read the quote by yourself, and then list key words or phrases.

2. Now work with your group and combine your lists of key words or phrases into one shared list.

3. How does this quote help us understand the definition of Manifest Destiny?

4. How does O’Sullivan’s quote relate to the painting?