

Manifest Destiny

Guided Reading:

1. Consider the two documents from Thomas Jefferson. According to Jefferson, what is the relationship between available land and the well-being of the republic? What is his prediction for the future of America?
2. According to John Jay in *Federalist No. 2*, what is the relationship between God, the American people, and the land?
3. Consider the various documents from John Quincy Adams. What are his basic ideas about the people, the land, and the nation's relationship to others, such as Indians and Europeans? What, according to Adams, are "the destinies of this empire?"
4. Review the two selections from John O'Sullivan. In both, he claims that God allotted the American people with the North American continent. However, he offers two differing explanations of God's choice. What are these explanations?

Discussion:

1. Review all of the documents. What are the key features of the ideology of Manifest Destiny? What is the significance of each component?
2. In these documents, Adams repeatedly refers to the United States as an “empire.” Jefferson labels the United States as a “republic.” O’Sullivan describes the United States as “a great experiment in liberty and federative self-government.” Are these contradictory or complementary ideas about the nature of the United States?
3. Jay, Adams, and O’Sullivan all discuss “the people.” Compare their descriptions (often implied) of the “American” people: what is their ancestry and ethnicity? Religion? Language? Ideals? What is the significance of this formulation of American identity in the 19th century?
4. To what extent do the assumptions and beliefs of Manifest Destiny, or any of its parts, continue in contemporary American thought?