

**Chapter Thirteen**  
**Primary Source Exercise**  
**HIST 2111 FA 19**

**Reading:**

**Primary source: John O'Sullivan on *Manifest Destiny* (1839):**

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/osulliva.htm>

*After you have read the primary source listed above (as well as Chapter Thirteen, and watched the videos for this module), answer the following questions, based on what you know about Western Expansion, arguments over the expansion of slavery, as well as what you know about the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in America more generally.*

1. What are some examples in this source of Americans' favorable attitude regarding western expansion? How do your example(s) relate to the events of the Mexican War (or even the Texas Independence movement)?
2. To what degree can we see some of the various arguments in favor of slavery you learned about in previous chapters reflected in this primary source? That is, what might some Americans have thought about the relationship between slavery and western expansion?
3. To what degree can we see some of the various arguments in opposition to slavery you learned about in previous chapters reflected in this primary source? That is, what might other Americans have thought about the relationship between slavery and western expansion?
4. O'Sullivan is clearly arguing that the United States has a sort of special mission to carry out in the world (regarding the rights of man and a sort of vision of human equality not seen before 1776). Yet in 1839, Indians were being forcibly removed from their lands, African-Americans were largely enslaved, free blacks were largely disenfranchised, and white women were also not recognized as legal equals to white men. How would you explain the tension between O'Sullivan's words and the historical realities of American in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century?