**“American Progress,” John Gast, 1872**

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| **Evidence From Text:**  **“What I see”** | **Claims:**  **“What I Think”** | **Reasoning:**  **“How I know”** |
| 1. Movement from East to West (right to left). 2. East: development and Industry (ships bridges, railroads, telegraph lines) 3. West: unsettled, rough, mountainous, an ocean at far left 4. Woman: Angel, Lady Liberty, America 5. She is holding a book (education, literacy), bringing the telegraph (communication/ progress) with her, and has a star on her forehead. 6. Various Landscapes: flat land, rolling hills, mountains (the Rockies). 7. A substantial river: (The Mississippi) 8. Native Americans are dressed in traditional clothing, animal skins, 9. NA travelling by horse and on foot with some belongings. 10. They are moving away from the woman and all that follows her. 11. Buffalo, bears, deer and other wildlife are also moving away from the woman. There is no wildlife behind her. 12. Single horseback rider: The Pony Express? 13. People: All men: Farmers, pioneers, miners. 14. Men in front are carrying guns. 15. Transportation: Wagons, stagecoaches, railroads (farther east= greater development), ships, wagon train in background. 16. Settlement: Farming, fences, a home 17. The painting is light and illuminated on the right or, where the woman passed by. The sun is rising and the clouds are bright and heavenly 18. On the left, where she has not yet been, the painting is dark. The land is foreboding and the clouds are dark and stormy. 19. The painting is titled “American Progress.” | As settlers move west, Native Americans and wild animals are being forced from their homes. They are fearful of her and what follows. (8,9,10,11) | * The painting shows Native Americans travelling by horse and foot, carrying their belongings and looking backwards as though they are fearful of the woman’s presence. * In the painting, buffalo, deer, and a bear are shown running away from the woman and everything that follows her. * Finally, there are no Native Americans or wild animals behind her. They have already been removed from the developed part of the landscape. |
| The painting represents a contrast between the developed and undeveloped parts of the United States. (1,2,3,16, 17,18) | * The right side of the painting illustrates various accomplishments in the United States such as shipping, bridge construction, the proliferation of the railroad, covered wagons, the stagecoach, a pony express rider, and the expansion of communication via the telegraph while the left side shows rugged snowy mountains and a herd of buffalo. * The farming settlement in the bottom right of the painting with a permanent home, protective fencing, and farmers plowing fields is contrasted with nomadic natives running with specific place to go. * Additionally, the right side of the painting is illuminated by a rising sun and light “heavenly” clouds while the left side of the paining is darkened by storm clouds and a foreboding, mountainous landscape. |
| The woman in the painting represents American progress and westward expansion in the 19th Century. She is central to the painting. (1,2,3,4,5,17,18,19) | * Because the painting is titled “American Progress” and the woman is the central figure within it, she represents the idea of American progress. * The woman is illuminated and carrying two important items: * First she carries a book which represents literacy/education/ enlightenment. The book points out the significance of education as an essential quality of American progress. * Second, she is travelling with telegraph wire which is being planted behind her. The telegraph was a revolutionary breakthrough in technology because it allowed people in separate places to communicate much more quickly than through the postal service. It enabled communication across long distances. * As she moves westward, across continental landscape, the nation is illuminated. Her influence alters the landscape from one that is unsettled, rough, unknown, and “other” to one that is civilized through settlement, education and advances in transportation and communication. |