Has American Exceptionalism Made the United States an Outlier on the Global Academic Stage?

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Has American Exceptionalism Made the United States an Outlier on the Global Academic Stage?

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Introduction

This paper considers whether American exceptionalism has reduced the standing of the United States in the world—and whether it has impacted our ability to remain innovative. The paper is based on my presentation on a panel on this theme at the Charleston Conference 2018.¹ The panel considered key international social issues in which Americans have become outliers, such as climate change, health care, and gun control. It also focused on research in the cultural heritage sector. Here I expand on my remarks about the origins of exceptionalism and its possible impact on libraries, archives, and museums. This issue is not yet being addressed in the library literature, so I draw on the perspectives of historians, political scientists, social commentators, and the popular press as well as heritage professionals. My observations are preliminary; further research is needed.

The broader questions to consider are: Do American political and social policies impact our standing in the world? Our ability to be innovative? How is innovation impacted by politics?

Background

In my presentation I focused on the notion of American exceptionalism. As I have continued to reflect on this idea, I have concluded that it is closely related to other tropes about Americanism: the American dream, America First, and isolationism. These concepts have emerged over the past hundred years.

The American Dream

As with each of these tropes, scholars have offered different dates for the first usage of these terms. Jill Lepore attributes *American dream* to James Truslow Adams in his 1931 book *The Epic of America*.² Adams wrote at the beginning of the Great Depression, when Americans were questioning the meanings of democracy and individual progress. The 1920s was a decade of enormous prosperity, but also a time in which there was a widening gap between the rich and the poor. It was also a period of major political scandals. The decade was “capped off” by the Great

Depression, which started on October 24, 1929 (known as Black Thursday) and lasted through the 1930s.

The scandals related to the administration of President Warren G. Harding. He was a popular president who had run for office on a platform of government efficiency. But soon after his death on August 2, 1923, it became clear that while he was in office several scandals were perpetrated. The best known was the Teapot Dome Scandal (aka Oil Reserves Scandal and Elk Hills Scandal).³ This had to do with the secret leasing of federal oil reserves by the secretary of the interior, Albert Bacon Fall, who received some \$400,000 in bribes. Other scandals had to do with government officials who accepted kickbacks from alcohol bootleggers and still others who received payments during the construction of VA hospitals. At around the same time, an extramarital affair that Harding had while he was in office also surfaced. (The number of scandals associated with the Harding administration has led to the general consensus that he was one of the worst American presidents.)

Add to the scandals and the market crash, rare weather patterns that culminated in the Dust Bowl, a series of severe dust storms in the Great Plains and Canada in the 1930s. It is thus understandable that during a period of political, economic, and environmental setbacks Americans should seek comfort in the notion of an American dream. Adams sought “to discover for himself and others how the ordinary American, under which category most of us come, has become what he is today, in outlook, character, and opinion.”⁴

Does the phrase *American dream* really originate with Adams, as Lepore (and *Wikipedia*) suggest? Sarah Churchwell, in *Behold, America*, credits the *Oxford English Dictionary* for tracing the first known use of the phrase to 1910.⁵ She combed one hundred years’ worth of American newspapers to study the evolution of the phrases *America First* and *American dream*. She showed that the latter phrase was occasionally used during World War I “to describe what America was, or should, be fighting for in Europe: “to make the world safe for democracy.”⁶ “Sound a

trumpet call to every loyal American to remember what America stands for,' read an Oregon advertisement. 'Make the American Dream come true of a world set free for Democracy.'"⁷

Churchwell traces the evolution of the American dream from World War I to the present. Its meanings have continually evolved, variously referring to democracy, individualism, justice, liberty, racial equality, civil rights, wealth accumulation, and home ownership. During the Depression "the American dream was about how to stop bad multimillionaires, not how to become one."⁸ In general, the American dream is one of hope, aspiration, and something good to strive for.⁹ This is in contrast to America First, which rings of anger—at those who (in the minds of those who use the phrase) will hurt us by their presence. The American dream usually yields hard work spurring people to the rewards of that dream. America First may yield hate and intolerance. It has been at times associated with fascism and the Ku Klux Klan.

America First

According to Churchwell, America First has always been a political slogan.¹⁰ While the American dream and America First were used to cultivate a national value system, the latter has been interwoven with American power in the world and how it should and should not be exercised. Although Krishnadev Calamur traces America First to World War II and the efforts of the America First Committee (AFC) to keep the United States out of the war,¹¹ the origins of America First are earlier. Churchwell dates it to at least 1884, with a headline in an Oakland, California, newspaper, "America First and Always"¹²—accompanying an article about a trade war with the British. Soon after, it was used in the context of war; by 1894 it had become a slogan for the Republican Party (p. 40). It was later used as a campaign slogan by Woodrow Wilson. It became a rationale for not entering World War I; America should think of itself rather than Europe, so the thinking went. (William Randolph Hearst aggressively promoted this idea in his newspapers for decades.) The same rationale was used to stay out of World War II, and the AFC counted a number of prominent citizens among its members including those from the political right and left. The AFC disbanded after the invasion of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, but the phrase was later adopted by the Ku Klux Klan, who used it in a different context: America First referred to the "supremacy" of white, Protestant, American-born people. Most recently the phrase has been

embraced by the alt-right¹³ and President Donald Trump, who has created his own definition. He has regularly stated that America First means not getting "ripped off" by the rest of the world. However, his close affiliation with the alt-right makes that assertion questionable, as the phrase once again has taken on the connotation of white supremacy.¹⁴

Isolationism

Isolationism is the national policy or practice of remaining apart from the political or economic affairs of other countries. American isolationism has waned and waxed throughout its history. However, in the 20th century there was heightened isolationism between World War I and the invasion of Pearl Harbor. Isolationism was closely linked to America First between the wars. Yet U.S. policy often vacillates between isolationism and active interventionism in the world. American foreign policy has frequently been predicated on defending the American way of life, so we will no doubt continue to modify our approach to international diplomacy depending on the political climate. As various writers have observed, isolationism tends to be a position usually embraced by Republicans rather than Democrats.¹⁵ The issue for many Americans is that when they see political injustice in what they perceive as unjust regimes, they feel the urgency—even the necessity—not to stay isolated, but to reach out and "help." This is strongly spurred on when American economic interests are threatened. Remaining isolated can be costly in more than one respect.

Exceptionalism

The trope that is the focus of this paper is *exceptionalism*, which is related to the other three. The subtext of Woodrow Wilson's remark about "making the world safe for democracy" is that American democracy is different from (and superior to) other democracies, and thus the United States is exceptional. Because of its superiority, the United States must lead the world. Unfortunately, our insistence on imposing our brand of democracy in the world has not always turned out well, as evidenced by our involvement in Vietnam and Iraq. (An analysis of this idea and its impact on cultural heritage is fodder for another paper, or even a whole book.)

Exceptionalism is "the notion that the United States has had a unique destiny and history, or . . . a history with highly distinctive features or an unusual trajectory."¹⁶ For many Americans, the past was a burden

to shed. (Of course, for Native Americans, African American slaves, and other exploited people, the burden of the past can never be shed.) Exceptionalism—for better and for worse—has played a part in our self-identity.

Who coined *exceptionalism*?

Alexis de Tocqueville described Americans as “exceptional.” In the 1830s he wrote that “[t]he situation of the Americans is entirely exceptional, and there is reason to believe that no other democratic people will ever enjoy anything like it. Their wholly Puritan¹⁷ origin; their markedly commercial habits; the very country they inhabit, which seems to discourage study of science, literature, and the arts.”¹⁸

This observation is packed with rich observations. “Puritan origin” could characterize the many church-versus-state political debates that continue to play out today of which abortion, school prayer, and kneeling—or not—for the national anthem are just three examples. His mention of “markedly commercial habits” could easily refer to the American dream of economic prosperity. Even his observation about studying “science, literature, and the arts” has modern analogs. The United States didn’t start investing in science research and education until the 1940s; the National Science Foundation was established in 1950. But it was only after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1 (the first artificial Earth satellite) in 1957 that the United States entered the “space race.” NASA was established the following year and research dollars for science and technology were poured into universities by the federal government. (Other government entities such as the military sponsor scientific research as well.) The emphasis of these postwar efforts was on national security and defense. Unfortunately, funding for “literature and the arts” has received only minimal federal support,¹⁹ and today there is even debate about the value of a liberal arts education.²⁰

De Tocqueville gleaned something fundamental about Americans. Was it pragmatism? Exceptionalism? While De Tocqueville found as much to praise as to criticize about Americans, Fanny Trollope’s and Charles Dickens’s observations were more biting and sharp. They found Americans to be socially uncouth and to be motivated primarily by money. They also remarked on violence in the country. Dickens had another grievance; at the time of his first visit (1842), the United States was pirating his works.²¹ (International copyright laws weren’t introduced until the end of the century.) Most important, Americans

were widely criticized by Dickens, Trollope, and many others for practicing slavery. There was much that foreign visitors to America found objectionable. These writers were picking up on exceptional aspects of American culture, some of which were positive, such as the notion of individual freedom, others of which were morally abhorrent—such as slavery and our treatment of Native Americans.

Exceptionalism is also born of American culture. Nineteenth-century American literature is laden with the development of American identity. Themes include urban, rural, and frontier life; transcendentalism, racial formation—and racism, and at the end of the century, what it means to be an American expatriate. Mark Twain provided a satirical look at aspects of American culture and Americans who traveled abroad (“Pilgrims” as he referred to them in *Innocents Abroad*). At the same time, Twain’s observations about parts of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East showed just how he took his personal freedoms for granted. His travel writing reflects a somewhat exceptionalist perspective in his description of people whom he met and places he traveled to that saturates his satire.

Walt Whitman’s line, “I am large, I contain multitudes,” captures the idea that anyone can be heroic, while Frederick Jackson Turner’s “frontier theory” posited that the frontier fostered egalitarianism and freed people from the social constraints of the “Old World.” Unfortunately, these positive perspectives on Americanism have sometimes been thwarted by political leaders who use exceptionalism to impose American values on other parts of the world, sometimes through military force.

Another contributor to the American cultural ethos was Noah Webster, who in his *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) clearly focused on American exceptionalism. Webster and others believed that cultural independence must be reflected in language. This volume followed his 1806 *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*, which was the first truly American dictionary. Creation of this text could be seen as a clear attempt for Americans to differentiate themselves linguistically and orthographically from the British. Webster chose to use American linguistic models for his definitions and simplify spellings, often to reflect American pronunciations.

One theory about the origins of the term *exceptionalism* is that in 1929 “communist leader Jay

Lovestone informed Stalin in Moscow that the American proletariat wasn't interested in revolution. Stalin responded by demanding that he end this 'heresy of American exceptionalism,'" a reflection of the Soviet leader's criticism of the American Communist Party.²² Whatever its origins, the notion of exceptionalism has stuck, with its many connotations, and in Michael Kammen's words, "its whole gnarly matter."²³

One might ask: "Doesn't every country have its own identity?" Every country is unique, but the United States, by virtue of its standing in the world, invites comparisons—and observation. Perhaps that has never been truer than it is today. Any American who has traveled overseas in the past couple of years is likely to have been asked about the current political climate in the United States. Given our presence on the international stage, American exceptionalism stands out. In the opinion of historians, *the expression is intended to have ideological force*. As Terrence McCoy reflected,

How did a phrase intended as derision become a rallying cry of American awesomeness? As significant portions of the electorate—think southern Democrats—shifted toward the GOP in the 1960s and 1970s, conservative thinkers charted a new republican identity emboldened by triumphalism and uncompromising patriotism. Doubting exceptionalism became "Un-American." Looking to history for more evidence, conservative intellectuals stumbled across [de] Tocqueville, who in *Democracy in America* had described a nation as "exceptional" for its devotion to practicality over art or science. He lent enough oomph to credibly define America as categorically transcendent.²⁴

In considering the United States' role in the world, Jake Sullivan wrote that

[t]he core purpose of American foreign policy must be to protect and defend the American way of life. This raises the obvious challenge that the very definition of the American way of life is currently up for grabs. No vision of American exceptionalism can succeed if the United States does not defeat the emerging vision that emphasizes ethnic and cultural identity and restore a more hopeful and inclusive definition: a healthy democracy, shared economic prosperity, and security and freedom for all citizens to follow the paths they choose. This requires

domestic renewal above all, with energetic responses at home to the rise of tribalism and the hollowing-out of the middle class. Foreign policy can support that renewal, while dealing effectively with external threats.

... THE SECOND KEY attribute of American exceptionalism is a can-do spirit. We live in a country full of problem-solvers, in a world full of problems. The historian Frederick Jackson Turner's famous "frontier thesis" described Americans as having a "practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients." For the past 70 years, a habit of problem-solving has defined America's role in the world.²⁵

Under President George Bush and Dick Cheney, the United States practiced hard power, also referred to as *realism*, in their approach to foreign policy. This stance has been pushed even further by the Donald J. Trump administration, which has increased the military budget while greatly decreasing the diplomatic corps. Sullivan points out that

[c]rucially, the Founders believed not just in individual rights but in the common good. They were not small-*d* democrats but rather small-*r* republicans. They embraced the notion of interdependence—that human beings have shared interests and need institutions to pursue those interests, and that liberty can be preserved only through such institutions. They believed that a good society is the product of active citizenship combined with responsible and virtuous leadership. And they viewed these truths as universal—the United States was not coming into existence to rise and fall as other powers had, but rather to transform the world.²⁶

Realism focuses on "power politics." In international relations, it can be a conflictual view. It can lead to a lack of diplomacy, often with a strong military component. (Force is the ultimate test of power.) Cosmopolitanism sees the single-minded focus on power as insufficient in a complex world. Diplomacy is a key component with an emphasis on social bonds.

Exceptionalism, the American dream, and America First are the multifaceted and ever-changing ideologies by means of which we view ourselves. Our current emphasis on hard power, or realism, affects our role in the world. We are now leaning toward isolationism and exceptionalism in a negative and possibly harmful way—harmful to others as well as to us.

Innovation

The United States is generally seen as fostering innovation, and people from all over the world come to here to study in our universities and research hospitals and work in innovation hubs such as Silicon Valley. However, as one pundit put it, we are a country that produces Thomas Edisons rather than Alfred Einsteins. That is, the United States has not produced “markedly unique thinkers, but rather innovators and inventors.”²⁷ This perspective seems to suggest that American innovation is often built on pragmatism rather than abstract thinking. Some might even suggest that the American motivation for innovation is based on monetary gain rather than on intrinsic rewards. In fact, economic success has often been entwined with the American dream, as I have already shown.

Monetary gain has often been a particularly strong motivation for innovation. The political climate in a democracy can have an impact on it. For example, restrictive policies on student visas and immigration can hamper innovation. A recent article in the *New York Times* reported that “[t]oday, nearly a quarter of the founders of billion-dollar United States start-up companies first came here as international students, according to the National Foundation for American Policy.”²⁸

American Libraries, Archives, and Museums on the Global Stage

We must consider ways in which our cultural heritage institutions are different in the United States from what they are elsewhere. There are differences (between the United States and other countries) that have had an impact on archives, libraries, and museums.

Archives

In Europe, national archives replaced royal archives in the late 18th and 19th centuries. In the United States we never had a monarchy, so there were no royal archives, libraries, and museums. Federal government agencies maintained their own records until 1934 when the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) was created under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. There is also a public records tradition in the United States with historical records/manuscripts housed in historical societies throughout the country.

De Tocqueville, during his visit to the United States in 1831, commented on this decentralized approach,

and what he found to be America’s poor record-keeping. He writes about these practices in several places, including Part II, Chapter 5, “On the Government of Democracy in America” in which he points out that

[t]he only historical record in the United States is the newspapers. If an issue is missing, the chain of time is broken, and the present severed from the past. . . . I have no doubt that fifty years from now it will be more difficult to obtain authentic documents about the details of social life in America today than about the administration of France in the Middle Ages. (p. 237)

He ascribes this to what he characterizes as administrative instability. “No archives are assembled. . . . In America, society seems to live from day to day, like an army in the field. Yet surely the art of administration is a science, and any science, in order to progress, needs to accumulate discoveries generation after generation” (p. 237).

The decentralization of records is understandable in a huge country like the United States where today there are local, state, federal, and corporate and private records. Instead of one national archive, we have state and local archives. This sets us apart from most other countries.

Public Libraries

Although some libraries were open to parts of the public as far back as ancient Rome, the public library—free to all, funded by public sources, and governed by a board that serves the public interest—is an American idea. Public libraries are often seen as beacons of democracy because they are public spaces that respect free speech. (Though “free speech” has been challenged recently with the rise of hate speech and hate groups who have acted out in libraries.) Nonetheless, American public libraries often serve as a community’s gathering place, safe haven, or as some have suggested, its living room.

Academic Libraries

The United States has many of the largest research libraries in the world. This is noteworthy considering that Europe, Asia, and the Middle East have libraries that are so much older than those in the United States. There are many reasons for this strength, including the growth of public universities beginning in the 19th century. American libraries—public and

research—opened their stacks to users. Even today libraries in other parts of the world have closed stacks. A parallel development in the late 20th century is the almost ubiquitous Internet connectivity in American libraries.

National Libraries

There is no national library of the United States. (Though nearly every state has a state library.) While the Library of Congress serves some functions of a public library (open to all; national library service for the blind and physically handicapped; access to parts of its collections; copyright office), it serves the legislative branch of government—Congress—although the Librarian of Congress is appointed by the president.

Museums

Museums in the United States are supported by diverse funding sources: public, private, corporate, and federal. While this is also now true of museums in other countries,

American art museums are unique in the world. . . . The private sector, not the operation of the state, brought these institutions into being. . . . Generally speaking, in contrast to American museums, the European museum is in every sense a public institution.²⁹

There is no American national museum. The Smithsonian Institution comes the closest. Tellingly, it was founded with money bequeathed to the United States by an Englishman, James Smithson, in 1829; the museum was founded in 1846. Even our so-called national museum, the largest museum in the world, was founded with individual philanthropy. And, like research libraries, museums in the United States have some of the largest collections in the world.

There are several factors that have accounted for the strength of libraries, archives, and museums in this country. One, has to do with the investment that was made in public universities by the federal and state governments, which led to the creation of large libraries and university museums (for example, the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 in which the federal government provided grants of land to states to establish state institutions). Private philanthropy was another factor. Andrew Carnegie and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provided substantial funding to build libraries (Carnegie) and to provide

Internet connectivity (Gates Foundation). In the museum world, important philanthropists include Samuel H. Kress and Andrew W. Mellon. Thousands of other philanthropists have funded libraries and museums in public and private universities.

Exceptionalism and Libraries, Archives, and Museums

The history of libraries, archives, and museums in the United States reflects the exceptional development of the United States. However, that development has slowed. Some of the most innovative libraries and museums in the world are in the Middle East and Asia. What has happened?

1. Our exceptionalism may set us apart in an isolationist way. In other words, if we see ourselves as unique or as the best, we may not collaborate on equal terms with colleagues in other countries.
2. Complacency can stunt growth.
3. International collaboration will be thwarted by a misappropriation of the concept of exceptionalism and our current realist approach to the world.
4. In the United States, the concept of “the public good” seems to be eroding. One example: net neutrality. (The Federal Communications Commission ignored the effects on libraries and higher education in its decision to eliminate the 2015 Internet rules.)³⁰
5. The United States could ultimately become inhibited in its intellectual growth if it persists in restricting immigration, which has been a primary engine for creativity and collaboration.
6. More diverse types of partnerships may occur in other places, such as Europe. For example, in the United States we tend to organize library associations by type or size: public libraries, academic libraries, special libraries; ARL libraries, ACRL libraries, Oberlin Group libraries, and so on. LIBER, a European association that was founded in 1971, has 420 members including universities, national archives (Surrey, United Kingdom), governmental libraries (Statistics Netherlands), special libraries (Wellcome Collection), library associations,

Casalini Libri, Proquest, OCLC, Ubiquity Press, Academic departments in universities (SOAS), and so on. *The United States may be missing the collaborative boat.*

7. Colleagues who have worked in the United States and abroad have observed that our current mode of research funding does not promote collaboration and sustainability as much as funding in the European Union does.

In the EU, successful funding bids must demonstrate that proposed research builds on previous work and involves partners from several EU countries. . . . Some of the advantages of the EU system of funding are that big projects across national borders are possible and encouraged. One component of the EU funding that can make it difficult is that teams need to engage the private sector which can be a challenge if you're in the social sciences and humanities.³¹

8. Our federal granting agencies are sometimes negatively impacted during periods of political realism, and they may not be able to participate in or fund international projects during such times.

Ross Harvey has written that EU funding is notable because it has been the stimulus for

the development of workable tools that are in use throughout the world. . . . When compared with the European expenditure and what it has achieved, the expenditure of large amounts of research dollars available in the US seems to be competitive and inherently wasteful; a problem is identified and funds are committed to several competing research projects . . .

with little effective communication among the project groups.³²

To remain innovative, perhaps we need to be less exceptional and more cosmopolitan. As researchers and librarians, we are citizens of the world, and not just of a nation-state. Our collaborative and innovative work can form a foundation for a world far more harmonious than it is today.

Conclusion

Jake Sullivan believes that "the U.S. cannot expect to lead if it is offering only pragmatism, and not aspiration. It can't necessarily outbid China, which has much more cash to spend abroad, but it can out-persuade and out-inspire."³³ As someone who has been professionally and internationally active for decades, I believe the United States is no longer inspiring the rest of the world. Although people from all over the world may still wish to attend our universities and partake in research collaborations, China, India, and the Gulf States are creating well-funded universities, research institutes, museums, and libraries. We may soon cease to be the intellectual beacon that has drawn people from all over the world. These new institutions may become competitive with those in the United States. That will have an impact on the U.S. economy; 1.1 million international students attended American colleges and universities in 2017, and they generated \$42.4 billion in export revenue.³⁴ The loss of these students will also tip the balance of cultural power in the world. Exceptionalism and isolationism may have seemed like reasonable tactics in another era. Today they will make the United States weaker and will exacerbate this country's already eroding image in the world.

To return to James Truswell Adams's observation, America needs the "unique thinkers" as well as the innovators. Thus, for us to continue to succeed, we must embrace cosmopolitanism.

Notes

1. The panel was conceived and organized by Adam Blackwell of ProQuest. Its title was "American Exceptionalism: Three Ways in Which the United States Remains an Outlier on the Global Academic Stage," Charleston Conference, November 7, 2018.
2. Jill Lepore, *These Truths: A History of the United States* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2018), p. 441.
3. See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Teapot Dome Scandal," <https://www.britannica.com/event/Teapot-Dome-Scandal> (accessed December 30, 2018).

4. James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* (New York: Little, Brown, 1931). Quote in Lepore, p. 441, who quotes the introduction by Howard Schneiderman for the 2012 edition (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers), p. xx.
5. Sarah Churchwell, *Behold, America: The Entangled History of “America First” and the “American Dream”* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), pp. 37–38.
6. Churchwell, quoting President Woodrow Wilson, p. 63.
7. Churchwell, p. 63.
8. Churchwell, p. 70.
9. Andrew Delbanco, *The Real American Dream: A Meditation on Hope* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).
10. Churchwell, p. 39.
11. Krishnadev Calamur, “A Short History of ‘America First,’” *The Atlantic* 320, no. 1 (January 21, 2017) at <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/01/trump-america-first/514037> (accessed December 30, 2018).
12. Churchwell, p. 39.
13. Alt-right is a shortened version of alternative right. The term refers to people on the extreme right whose brand of conservatism embraces racism. Those in the alt-right often resemble—in their actions—the KKK.
14. Such rhetoric can be incendiary, and President Trump has been blamed for the rise of the KKK, antisemitism, and racism in the United States, with those blaming him citing his use of that very phrase as proof.
15. Lepore indicates that this was the case between the wars (p. 477). Jake Sullivan asserts that today we have “a particularly arrogant brand of exceptionalism.” See his “What Donald Trump and Dick Cheney Got Wrong About America.” *The Atlantic* 323, no. 1 (January/February 2019) at <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/01/yes-america-can-still-lead-the-world/576427> (accessed January 4, 2019).
16. Michael Kammen, “The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration.” *American Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (March 1993): 6.
17. Though perhaps “wholly Puritan” is not quite accurate. Rather, there was a variety of religious sects in the United States at that time, only some of which grew out of English Protestantism. Many of these, whether from Germany, France, Holland, or England, sought religious reform—and/or freedom from persecution. I think that De Tocqueville is referring to Puritans in the sense of the moral and religious practices that were a way of life for many Americans.
18. Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Trans. by Arthur Goldhamer. The Library of America, Vol. 2 (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 2004), pp. 517–18.
19. The National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities were established in 1965. Their annual budgets for FY 2018 were: \$152,848,000 (NEH) and \$152,849,000 (NEA) while the National Science Foundation receives between \$6 and \$7 billion per year. Thus, the NSF has a budget more than 20 times greater than the NEA and NEH combined. Additionally, when there is a Republican majority in Congress, there are often attempts to shut down NEA, NEH, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). In FY 2018, IMLS received an allocation of \$231,000,000.

20. See, for example, George Anders, "The Unexpected Value of the Liberal Arts," *The Atlantic* 320 (August 1, 2017) at <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2017/08/the-unexpected-value-of-the-liberal-arts/535482> (accessed January 1, 2019). For the opposite view, a quick Google search will reveal opposing views.
21. Fanny Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* [1832] (New York: Dover, 2003). [See esp. ch. 7, on museums and picture galleries; Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation* [1842?] (London: Penguin, 2000). (See also Dickens's novel, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, 1843.)
22. Terrence McCoy, "How Joseph Stalin Invented 'American Exceptionalism,'" *The Atlantic* (March 15, 2012), at <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/03/how-joseph-stalin-invented-american-exceptionalism/254534> (accessed January 1, 2019).
23. Michael Kammen, "The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration," *American Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (March 1993): 1–43.
24. McCoy.
25. Sullivan.
26. Sullivan.
27. Churchwell, p. 189. She attributes the observation to James Truslow Adams.
28. Brook Larmer, "Trade Wars, Visa Restrictions and Anti-Immigrant Sentiments Threaten One of America's Most Vital Exports: Education," *The New York Times Magazine* (January 6, 2019): 19.
29. Perry T. Rathbone quoted by John Henry Merryman in his "Art Systems and Cultural Policy," in Michèle V. Cloonan, comp. and ed., *Preserving Our Heritage: Perspectives from Antiquity to the Digital Age* (Chicago, American Library Association, 2015), p. 514.
30. The Federal Communications Commission's Restoring Internet Freedom Order (RIFO) took effect on June 11, 2018. It overturned the net neutrality rules that the agency established in 2015 with its Open Internet Order. As of this writing, over 35 states have introduced legislation to protect Internet neutrality.
31. E-mail from Kalpana Shankar to the author, October 30, 2018. I have also discussed this with colleagues in other European countries.
32. Ross Harvey, "The Last Decade of Digital Preservation: A Personal View from Australia," *Preservation Digital Technology & Culture* 44, no. 1 (2015): 25.
33. Sullivan.
34. Larmer, p. 18.