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FURSCA End of Summer Report

**Resilience by Means of Compliance: Examining the Racial Production and Practices in the United States and Mexico**

Throughout my research, I was able to able to achieve several of the goals that I was hoping to achieve. I was able to contextualize the different agents within the racial frameworks of both the United States and Mexico, while also identifying their similarities. The most notable difference in Mexico’s racial production is *mestizaje*. *Mestizaje* embraced practices and politics of racial mixing. Through the racial mixing of predominantly Indigenous and Spanish peoples, the *mestizo* racial category was conceived. The *mestizo* has become the predominant population and ethos in contemporary Mexico – although it was introduced during Spanish colonization. Both *Borderlands/La Frontera* and *La raza cósmica* discuss the sociocultural and political aspects of *mestizaje* through a narrative of resilience, and as a challenging structure to the Anglo-Saxon, United States racial framework which imposed segregationist politics and notions of race. *Mestizaje* has thus been portrayed as the opening door for a post-racial ethos. However, similar to the United States, Mexico’s politics of *mestizaje* originate from colonial founding that sought to impose a hierarchical system that denigrated non-white racial categories. The Spanish Caste Sysyem exemplifies how race, although practiced differently, maintained white supremacist implications.

After conceptualizing the colonial and national history of the notions of race in both countries, I began my critical review of Borderlands/La Frontera and La raza cósmica. Although both cultural text sought to question the essentialist notions of race in the United States through the adjacent narrative, both text failed to counter the colonial-nationalist doctrine that Mexico’s racial framework inhabited. Even worse, *La raza cósmica*, the text which *Borderlands/La Frontera* champions and appropriates for their theory of *mestizaje*, acknowledges the colonial roots and continues to write a theory of *mestizaje* that endorsed colonial hierarchical strucutres to enact a nationalist doctrine for Mexico.

Identifying these contradictions, I then turned to semiotic notions to address race as a social construct. Like language, race was concevied for intentions. To represent a subject by excluding other subjects. In conducting my research, the language of race, as I propose, is an escapable agent. Once signified, once colonized, said language, as observed, can only be transformed and adapted exclusively within the borders of objectivity and essentialism, thus, race will continue to be an open tool to hierarchal understanding, and for subordination.

Throughout my research experience, this project has helped me solidify my interest in continuing an academic career through a Spanish PhD program. Furthermore, as the language or race continues to tranform and play a critical role in our political and sociocultural dialogue, I plan on presenting at Elkin Isaac and explain why this topic is so important.

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