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Homework 26 Summary

In the chapter "Sea to Shining Sea" of *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz examines Anglo-American superiority/manifest destiny ideologies and their impact on the major causes for US annexation of northern Mexico in the 19th century. Specifically, she argues that the annexation of northern Mexico was rooted in these ideologies and served as justification for the ethnic cleansing and genocide of the indigenous peoples of that area, arguing against the idea that U.S. westward expansion was "natural". Dunbar-Ortiz herself stated that "this ideology [manifest destiny] normalizes the successive invasions and occupations of Indigenous nations."¹ Some examples of the causes for the annexation grounded in these ideals included Jefferson's Pike expedition to enter Spanish territory to gain information, U.S. merchants' increased interests for trade in Mexico which created U.S. political control and monopolization of fur trade with indigenous peoples, and U.S. residents laying the groundwork for annexation as land grants given to Anglo-American slave-owning entrepreneurs established their dominance in the region. These causes are through which "the United States could pursue its own policy of imperialism."² Dunbar-Ortiz argues that these manifest destiny-based causes for annexation, or the U.S.'s pursuit of imperialism, were the reasons for killing more than one

¹ Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, "From Sea to Shining Sea," in *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), 117-18.

² Dunbar-Ortiz, "From Sea to Shining Sea," 121-23.

hundred thousand indigenous peoples in California within twenty-five years, establishing a counterinsurgency force (Texas Rangers) that destroyed, suppressed, and ethnically cleansed the Native peoples to eliminate indigenous population, and the death, torture, rape, and starvation of indigenous peoples brought on by gold seekers.³ In sum, Dunbar-Ortiz's view is that the impact of the causes for U.S. annexation of the northern half of Mexico in the 19th century, stemming from manifest destiny ideologies, caused the ethnic cleansing and brutality against indigenous peoples.

³ Dunbar-Ortiz, "From Sea to Shining Sea," 127-29.