

Chicanos: The Vanguard of La Raza

Today, Mexican Americans are torn between assimilation. Is this good or bad? Let us let time be the judge. We see Hispanics, Latinos, and Mexican Americans all asking "why can't we all be 'Americans'?" We Chicanos have no need to ask this question, for we know who we are. We are Indians, the true Americans — with European blood. If an individual of Mexican descent begs to differ, and prescribes "to be of pure Spanish or European lineage" they are rejecting the most beautiful part of our culture.

Be aware that not every Mexican American with a brown face or a Spanish surname is a Chicano or Chicana. At birth we are born Mexican American, but we are Chicanos/as by choice. To the system we are Hispanics, to the politically correct we are Latinos, but to others like ourselves, SOMOS CHICANOS. Yes, we Chicanos/as have not disappeared. This society still tries to downplay our presence, for it knows we are an impalpable ingredient to its "melting pot." It is because of this that Anglos and many Mexican Americans find the term offensive.

Just what is a Chicano/a, and why is it such a controversial term in the Mexican American community? The late Chicano activist of the seventies, Ruben Salazar, best explains Chicanismo. He asserted, "A Chicano is a Mexican American with a Non-Anglo image of himself. . . Mexican Americans will tell you 'Chicano' is an insulting term. . . this type of Mexican American doesn't like the word Chicano because it is abrasive to their Anglo-oriented minds. What then is a Chicano? Chicanos say that if you have to ask you'll never understand, much less become a Chicano. . . the word Chicano is as difficult to define as 'soul.'"

Today's tragedy is that many of our brothers and sisters both consciously and subconsciously grow up ashamed of what makes them distinct. Is it perhaps that they have denied their Mexican culture for the sake of socio-economic gain, thus assimilating? And are they trying to distance themselves from the Anglo stereotype of our Mexican people? You, the reader, must answer these questions. You know

individuals of Mexican American descent who refer to themselves as "Hispanics," and pronounce their Spanish surnames in an American-English tongue. These individuals believe that society will at last embrace them. Do you embrace them?

Don't kid yourself, "spic" and "wetback" are common terms used in this country, which are used to actively try to rape us of our Spanish language by passing "English only" laws. Many of our people try to look past this and ignore that they are still BROWN, with unerasable MESTIZO characteristics. No three-piece suit, BMW, or house in the suburbs can hide their true identity. These individuals, who stand by or participate in this society's actions that belittle our people (who cross the Rio Grande in search of a better life for their children) are products of an educational system that teaches them to be "American" and thus leads them to denounce their heritage for a false dream. It is the Chicano/a that sees this and resists. Qué triste (how sad) that many ignore or refuse to see it also. Don't believe us, all of you in the majority? Then take a look around and see how many people of Mexican American descent you know who have kept their culture and value their people over self-interest.

If there is one thing you should remember, it is that all Chicanos/as are Mexican Americans but not all Mexican Americans are Chicanos/as. We are politically, historically, and socially conscious of what has happened, and is happening, to our people. We are determined, now more than ever, to educate our community, and to sacrifice everything to liberate nuestra gente (our people), for one day they will forge the future of this country. Yes, esto es Chicanismo . . . the vanguard of La Raza.

"Es mejor morir de pie, en vez de vivir de rodillas (It's better to die on foot than to live on your knees!)" — Emiliano Zapata.

J.S. Onésimo Sandoval is a graduate student in community and regional planning, and Conrado Castañeda is a senior secondary education major, and Divisions contributors.

My Country, the Country I Live in

What would it be like to move to a different country where the language is not the same as yours and its culture has its twists and turns as well?

What would it be like to be in a place where you have to settle for a low-income job because most of the other jobs require knowledge of the language, or where you are forced to live in a neighborhood where most of the people there speak your language because of the lack of bilingualists in this country?

How about living in a place where you have to face racism everyday?

My name is Pedro Ramirez. I was born in Mexico, in the city of San Julian Jalisco. I am a permanent resident of this country and a citizen of Mexico — citizenship here is available to me through naturalization, but I really do not want to forfeit my citizenship to Mexico, although I have lived here eighteen of my twenty years — This country is not the land of my birth and it is not my culture. My religion is very important to me also.

I want to inform you of the cultural, religious and social differences of the Hispanic and Cau-

casian race from both perspectives in which have been subjected to by living here in America and being raised by my Mexican-American customs and values.

Mexico is a very underdeveloped country. The construction of roads and houses is pretty pathetic down in Mexico. There are potholes in the streets, a lot of dirt roads.

In Mexico it is a luxury to have running water for the toilet, the sink and shower. Medical doctors, although they are not very good, are very expensive, because they are so few in number.

In America it is almost complete opposite of Mexico. The roads are very well constructed and the drivers are very safety-cautious (as compared to Mexico). Houses are very attractive in this country also.

There are many more differences between Mexico and the United States than just its physical characteristics. The people are different also. I have noticed Hispanic men are very proud and confident about themselves, and his main priority is his family — he will never sit back and watch them get taken advantage

of or harmed. But he does not believe in equality between genders — a problem I think that is stemmed from his lack of educational opportunity.

A lot of the Hispanic population in the United States is forced to work at below minimum wage because of the language barrier and minimal education. And although Hispanics do place a great emphasis on educational advancement for their children and hopes that they may have an opportunity to climb up the ladder of success, funds for this advancement are limited.

The American man typically tries to solve things through the legal system. He believes in equality between genders, but lacks the belief of racial harmony.

Mexican women are conservative, while American women seem to be more liberal — they are more career oriented, while it is common for Mexican women to be housewives.

I have tried to show you a few differences between the two cultures in which I have been a part of. This is my opinion based on my personal experiences.

Pedro Ramirez is a pre-law student and a Divisions contributor



Robin Trimarchi/DN

Latina Forum

Cecilia Huerta (left) of the Nebraska Mexican-American Commission discusses the future role of the commission as Clarissa Suarez-Russell listens.

I am Mexican-American

"Sometimes I lie awake thinking how can people be racist."

I walk into a store and I see faces peeking around a shelf, a display, a counter, and even a leaf! I don't know if they realize, (that) but I know what they're thinking.

As soon as I walked into the store, instantly I was a thief.

Growing up, I never realized how people were so stigmatized.

When there are two of us together, I hear, "Oh, you must be related." Whether

you see it, I do, we're all related in our Savior's great universe.

It's like a song with a verse that I hear over and over in my mind.

Lord, free my people, free my people. As I pray to the Lord, I say to Him

"I would give my life for anyone, as you did for me."

I will carry all the cuts, bruises, and scars

without any fuss. Because I know that the people who cut, bruise, and scar me are no different than I.

Once we all die and go to heaven, there will be so much love

because our colors fade away. But my journey here on earth, I have to say —

I will say in pride that, "I AM MEXICAN-AMERICAN UNTIL I DIE!"

Chandra Diaz is a Divisions contributor.

Check out those Daily Specials at... **W.C.'s** 8

1228 P St.

Mon. Jello Shots \$.75	Tues. Import Beers \$2.00	Wed. 1+1 Penny Pitchers 8PM-close
Thurs. Domestic Long Necks \$1.25 8PM-close	Fri. F.A.C. 1:30-7PM	

open : 3-1AM M-Th 1:30-1AM F.Sat 5-11PM Sun

Heart Attack. Fight it with a Memorial gift to the American Heart Association.

THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION MEMORIAL PROGRAM.

American Heart Association