The Author's Identity

I was raised Chicano, a third generation Mexican who's parents were not much older than I am now. They knew the struggle of being a Chicano and taught me what it truly means to be stuck in between. More and more I have had to distance myself from my Mexican heritage, and act in a way that allows me to blend into the white racial frame. The frame expects me to act, dress, and speak a certain way if assumed to be something I'm not. I do not want to be stopped by the police, profiled by shop owners or have slurs yelled at me. I love my Chicano heritage; I am inspired by those who have come before me. I am also a proud American. I want to make this country a great place for all the Chicanos and people who come after me. I will never choose. My heritage is a mixture of two.

Jesse Garcia
The 3 Pillars of El Movimiento

Purpose

During the 1960s, a brave group of Chicano/a Americans from the southwestern United States gathered to fight the systems of oppression in place on the land that had been stolen for the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

They felt that the lingering effects of colonization and discrimination had given the wrong people all of power in the Americas. Selena de Jesus wrote, "For though we may not be free, we must try to be free. The people of California, Colorado, and other southwestern states decided to begin "El Movimiento," the movement with the goal of ending the various oppressions of the Chicano people. The movement took many shapes such as hunger strikes, worker's protests, I'm memory of these people, I will tell you without it means to be a Chicano. Today's
Farmworkers all up and down the west coast during the time of El Movimiento were, and still are, predominantly Chicano or undocumented whereas growers were mostly white. The working conditions provided by the growers were less than humane and took advantage of the undocumented status of most of the workers or their families. These workers decided that they had enough, and started farm workers movements all up and down the coast. The largest being the UFW lead by Cesar Chavez and the most local being PCUN which launched in response to an increase in immigration raids in Oregon. These organizations dedicated themselves to having humane working conditions and fair wages for farmworkers and met with world leaders, organized hunger strikes, and started boycotts of particular crops.

Education Reform

In the late 60s when the events in Los Angeles occurred, High school dropout rates for Chicanos were at around 60 percent. Most Chicanos who did graduate high school read poorly, and few went on to college. The Chicanos felt that the school's policies were discriminatory towards the Chicanos and reinforced coloniality. Cesar Chavez and the events of the above mentioned UFW inspired a group of Chicano students and teachers at high schools in East Los Angeles, with the help of Chicano Militants, to demand a reform of the discriminatory system. From March first through eighth approximately 15,000 students from Wilson, Garfield, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Belmont, Venice, and Jefferson high schools walked out of class demanding a change.

Vietnam War Protests

Many Chicano Activists turned their efforts to fight the "unjust war" in Vietnam, where Chicano men were fighting and being killed for people they felt did not care about them otherwise. In Berkley, Los Angeles, and many other cities across the country, Chicanos and Chicano militants gathered to protest. This was an essential pillar of the movement and was intensely fueled by coloniality.

Coloniality on Chicanos

Effects of Colonialism

The cultures of Mexico and other Latin-American countries is highly reminiscent of the Spanish colonies, the Spaniards wiped away almost all remnants of the Aztec Culture after the Fall of Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec empire, and for this Mexicans and Chicanos have roots only as deep as the last few hundred years. The mother tongue of these people, as well as most of their history, culture, and identity, were altered forever by the conquistadors. The lingering effects of the Spanish colonies are called 'coloniality,' which not only adversely affects the identity of the people, but also how society treats them.
¿Qué es Chicano?

Chicanos struggle with their Identity because they are trapped between two worlds, neither of which accept them. The word Chicano was one that was adopted by many second-generation Mexicans using rhetoric of difference to create a space for those who were neither white nor Mexican. Existing between can be toxic to an individual, and it is important to create spaces for everyone to feel as if they belong.

Idéograph or Identity?

The word Chicano is not only an Identity for those who were born in the United States of Mexican descent but also a highly politicized ideograph used by Chicano militants, the UFW and most Chicanos seeking to use the word to rally support for a political cause.
Jesse and Linda Avila were both born in Fresno, California, and were heavily involved in El Movimiento in the central valley. My grandfather was very anti-Vietnam war and partook in many anti-war protests. He was Blacklisted from Fresno State because of his participation in these protests and ended up at UC Berkeley. Fresno State was heavily influenced by growers, and his work against the war and with the farm workers movement was what lost him his spot at his hometown school. My grandmother was more involved with education and farmworkers' rights than the war, she worked in the church and helped with bilingual education and participated in strikes and boycotts in the farmworkers movement. I'm proud that my Grandparents were firm believers in our people, mainly because in the central valley it was challenging to be pro farm worker in a town where the growers control everything from the schools to the news.

I interviewed 3 Chicanos on campus to bring an outside perspective to some of the issues raised in this zine. My peers all had valuable insights on what it was like growing up Chicano, i.e. how they deal with identity. Their fresh perspective could show you that some of the problems raised in this zine affect our everyday lives.
Do you identify as Chicano/a/x?
- "Yes, I would say that I am Chicano/a/x."

What does the term "Chicano/a/x" mean to you?
- "Chicano/a/x, to me, is a term for a person of Latin descent that also includes those who are non-binary."

Have you ever heard of the Chicano Movement before today, and if so, what did you hear?
- "I have heard a little, mostly about Cesar Chavez, his marches, and grape boycotts."

How much Chicano history did you learn in school?
- "In Texas, most of the Chicano history we learn is about the Spanish battles the Tejanos fought."

How much history did you learn that challenged the white racial frame?
- "Maybe ten to fifteen percent including what I have learned here at Willamette."

Which of the three pillars of El Movimiento is most important to you?
- "Education, as I feel that Chicanos are discriminated against and schooling is less accessible to our people."

What is your favorite piece of Chicano art?
- "I love Chicano Batman, who is doing more and more work that challenges the white racial frame. They mix old Latinx music with more alternative music to educate people for the cause. The PCUN building in Woodburn also has some amazing paintings of people who are part of the movement, local people, and migrant workers and a lot of those people are painted to look like Aztecs."

What are your thoughts on colonialism and coloniality?
- "It is something that has affected many people worldwide. My biggest problem with colonialism and coloniality is the erasure of culture and language which is what makes something like the Chicano movement so important because it reminds people that the colonized people are still here."

How do you exist in a colonized world as a colonized person?
- "Disconnected me from my indigenous roots, but also given me a chance to be proud and reclaim them when my grandmother and mother had to be ashamed."

Do you identify as Chicano/a/x?
- "Yes."

What does the term "Chicano/a/x" mean to you?
- "To be quite honest, I don't use the term as much because I don't know all that much about the Chicano movement, which took place closer to the border like in southern California. It is a movement about being proud of your identity, being Mexican and being in the United States. Taking into account that you're both."

Have you ever heard of the Chicano Movement before today, and if so, what did you hear?
- "Yes, but honestly I don't know that much about the movement."

How much Chicano history did you learn in school?
- "None."

How much history did you learn that challenged the white racial frame?
- "In High School, not that much, but in college, I have learned a little bit more."

Which of the three pillars of El Movimiento is most important to you?
- "Education, because first of all, I want to become an educator. I feel that education is where we make a change, it is important to not only educate yourself but through that educating others."

What is your favorite piece of Chicano/LVD art?
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How do you exist in a colonized world as a colonized person?
- "I do it by releasing what ways I've been assimilated and rejecting it. I try and realize what has happened and keep that in mind. It is important to remember because it is what has led to what we are today, especially in terms of racism and looking at people as other."
Do you identify as Chicanx/a?

- "Yes, because it was what I grew up referring to yourself as."
- What does the term "Chicano/a" mean to you?
- "To me, it means someone who is of Hispanic, Mexican descent, who may have faced some challenges because they are a minority."
- Have you ever heard of the Chicano Movement before today, and if so what did you hear?
- "Yes, I have heard that it was mostly a movement to bring attention to issues faced by Chicanx communities."
- How much Chicano history did you learn in school?
- "None really, maybe a small page, but for the most part nothing."
- How much history did you learn that challenged the white racial frame?
- "There was talk of it but never direct references to any specific history."
- Which of the three pillars of El Movimiento is most important to you?
- "Education because it is something that opens up a lot of opportunities for everyone in general. I am also a firm believer that everyone should have the opportunity to go to school no matter what."
- What is your favorite piece of LVD or Chicano art?
- "One of my favorites is Salina because she was an Icon and brought the music and the culture into the mainstream."
- What are your thoughts on colonization and colonialism?
- "I think it's an issue that persists to this day, and it is definitely a problem, however, I think the solution is less to bring back the culture but to take the power away from the colonizers."
- How do you exist in a colonized world as a colonized person?
- "I don't see myself as colonized in the sense that I grew up being exposed to my own culture, while also being a part of the American culture. This was never an issue growing up, and so I see myself as part of the American but still distinctly Mexican."
Chicano Artists in the Modern Chicano Movement

Art & Latin Vernacular Discourse are essential to El Movimiento Moderno. Films like Walkout, Music like the below pictured Artist "Chicano Batman" & Street art.

Pictured is Cesar Chavez & various images of farm workers.

How does Coloniality impact your life?

How Do You Identify?