The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education Oral History Project

Eliazar De La Cruz Muñoz, Jr.

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by Senon M. Valadez
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Transcription by Technitype Transcripts

Valadez Give us your full name.

[00:00:11]

Muñoz Eliazar De La Cruz Munoz, Jr.

Valadez Date of birth?

[00:00:15]

Muñoz November 17, 1972.

Valadez Are you married?

[00:00:17]

Muñoz No.

Valadez Do you have children?

[00:00:22]

Muñoz Yes.

Valadez Can you tell us their age or—

[00:00:27]

Muñoz I have a daughter, her name is Olla Monakiltia [phonetic], and she's eleven. Her name means "This morning I'm here to love."

Valadez Where were you born and raised?

[00:00:46]

Muñoz I was made in Mexico and born in Watsonville, California. My mom crossed I think when she was four months' pregnant. [Spanish]. So I was born in Watsonville in 1972.

Valadez What did your parents do for a living?

[00:01:06]

Muñoz [Spanish], and he was Bracero, and he networked, made relations with people. He *trabajaba en las fresas* in Watsonville, in the strawberry, and so that's what my parents did at the beginning, and then later on, my dad got a job with a community called Parendo [phonetic], which later changed its name to Dole. He *trabajaba en la* [Spanish]. He became a forklift driver. *Y mi mamá* was housewife *y* odd-end jobs in the *caneria* [phonetic]. Those were the main jobs in Watsonville.

Valadez How many brothers did you have? Did you have brothers, sisters?

[00:02:02]

Muñoz *No, tengo tres hermanas*. I have three sisters, yeah.

Valadez They live in Watsonville?

[00:02:09]

Muñoz No, they all kind of went out. We lived in Watsonville for a long time, *pero después* my dad got a job at this community called BFI, and he ended up moving to Fremont, and then all my other siblings [Spanish], they left. They went to Fremont, so they're all living over there.

Valadez They're all younger than you?

[00:02:34]

Muñoz Yeah. I was the oldest. Still am. [laughs]

Valadez Describe some of your earlier experiences as a child, as a youth growing up.

[00:02:46]

Muñoz One of the things I remember in Watsonville, because when I was going through kindergarten, in elementary [Spanish], in elementary, it was a school named H.A. Hyde Elementary, and [Spanish] really sticks to my memory, and one of the reasons I remember I wanted to be a teacher at an early age was because in third grade, third or fourth grade, one of the teachers decided that something was wrong with me and that I should be placed in a situation where I needed extra help. So I was put in a different classroom, and I was taught. [Spanish], you know. I got upset, and I was thinking, "Man, there's nothing wrong with me."

So then I proved them wrong, and then next time we took the scores, I got the highest scores, and he looked at me and he said, "Hey, what's going on?"

I said, "No, there's nothing wrong with me. It's just that my mom and my dad, in my house they just speak Spanish. So some of the stuff you say, I can't understand. Sometimes they can't help me with my homework."

So [Spanish], bless his heart, because he ended up being a good teacher at the end. His name was Mr. Bundy [phonetic]. He sent me there, but it really motivated me to persevere when you're put in challenges. So [Spanish] Watsonville like that, you know, where kids were labeled. They were put in bilingual education, and in some cases that was, like, happening. I was born in '72, so it was like maybe, I'm

going to say the seventies, bilingual education was going on, but those racial profiling situations were still happening, and people were trying to figure out "Is he bilingual or is there something wrong?" So in many cases, [Spanish], okay, well, maybe there's something wrong, so they were put in different situations.

So early ages, those are the things I remember in Watsonville. The schooling, all the way through, you know, even in high school, I didn't learn much about who I was. There wasn't that feeling of pride and self-esteem in who you were. It was more like you needed to fit in, you know. My mom and my dad, in order to protect us [Spanish], you need to fit in, so we did. We did the best we could to kind of fit in and do what we had to do.

When I went off to college, everything changed, and some of the situations that I remember, my neighbors, because, as a matter of fact, that's how I got involved in *danza*, my neighbors moved next door to me in 1984, '83, '84, and those are my early recollections of *danza* in Watsonville. I was always there. I would hang out with the neighbor. I became known as the neighbor kid, still, you know, I see my *maestro y maestra*, because that's what they ended up being, [Spanish], who learned from Florencio [Yescas]. They were some of his first students in San Diego, and they were part of Aztecas and Aztlán in San Diego.

Valadez Florencio was *son maestro* in San Diego?

[00:06:58]

Muñoz In San Diego. Actually, I think he—I'm not sure if he—I have to check back, but they also lived in Redwinds, Guillermo and Annai~i [Aranda]. Redwinds was a community of Native people and Chicanos. They got together and

said, “I want to live off the grid. We want to go back to our old ways.” I remember them telling me—and Señora Cobb also tells me they went and they would go visit Guillermo and Annai~i when they decided to go and check out that community. So a lot of things happened there in *mexicanismo*, in Movimiento Mexicanismo. A lot of things happened.

So going back to Watsonville--because you asked me the question about Watsonville. Those are my early recollections. I would go to practice, but I wouldn’t join, because I would see them dance half-naked. I said, “No, I don’t want to do that.” And again, it was that whole thing of fitting in, and I wasn’t fitting in society. It wasn’t something you do. So I didn’t, but I would still have that friendship with the family and still go next door, and basically seen a lot of things, met a lot of people, like Florencio, other *danzantes* that would come. They were dancing at the time.

Then not till again I graduated high school in 1990, when I went off to Hartnell College, and then I joined MEChA, and all these other things happened, you know, and then somebody was asking, “We’re organizing Cinco de Mayo and we have *folklórico*,” and this and that.

I raised my hand. “Well, I know some *danzantes*.”

They’re like, “What? You know *danzantes*?”

I’m like, “Yeah, I know some *danzantes*.”

“Well, can we get them here?”

I said, “Yeah, we can get them here.”

So I called them. And I still remember going back, because Guillermo and Annai~i had just moved already. I remember going back and knocking at their door, and they're like, "Wow, what's the neighbor kid doing here? We already moved."

So I said, "Hey, so I'm part of this group, MEChA."

And they just kind of smiled, you know, because they had been around the Chicano Movement and all that for a long time. And they said, "Yeah?"

I said, "Yeah, and they want *danzantes* for Cinco de Mayo."

And they didn't hesitate. "Yeah. For you, yeah."

So then they came, and I just remember seeing them, but this time in a different lens, you know, because I was already conscious, and I saw them and it was just like, "This is what I had next door. I didn't realize it."

So then I remember right away the next *danzata* that they had—bam!—I was there.

I remember in '91, by that time I had my [Spanish], and the way we were taught over there, there's, like, this whole commitment that you do. So those are my early recollections of Watsonville.

Also when I would visit Guillermo, the simplest things he would do, he would ask me questions. I think it was eleven or twelve years old and I would go next door, "Hey, what's your name?"

And I would say [with English accent], "Eliazar."

"No, *te llama* [with Spanish accent] Eliazar. Where do you live?"

[with English accent] "San Benito."

"No, you live in [with Spanish accent] San Benito, *en calle* San Benito." And even though it was Spanish [unclear], it was still that whole consciousness, that whole consciousness of, like, "Who am I?"

Valadez Yeah, a different you.

[00:10:58]

Muñoz Yeah. I said, "[Spanish]." [Spanish] was placed, and then as I got older, when I joined MEChA, just [demonstrates], it just kind of flourished and just—"Wow! This is what I need to do."

Then I remember going back and saying, "[Spanish] high school."

So then that's when I started thinking back, oh, since elementary, since I was placed in that classroom, I started thinking, "Wow, there's changes that need to happen here in Watsonville."

So a friend of mine, I was going to college at this time with Pedro, Pedro Ortega, who we'll talk about later, *pero* we were going to MEChA Centrales, and that's where we met Filipe and Luis Alejo, Filipe Hernandez [phonetic] and Luis Alejo, who were also in Watsonville, went off to college, and same thing happening, learned, kind of researched and stuff like, "Oh, this is who we are." So we both looked at each other and said, "Why don't we do this in Watsonville?"

So we went back to Watsonville and we tried to establish a MEChA at the high school, *pero* there was no teacher there *que lo quería*. So we're like, "Man, we didn't think it was going to be this hard, man. Man, some changes that need to happen here, something. *La gente* [Spanish]."

So then Luis and Filipe had this idea of starting the Brown Berets. Pedro and I were there and a couple other people that were there, we were part of it, you know. But most of the credit goes to Luis Alejo and Filipe Hernandez. They said, "If they don't let us in the high schools, [Spanish]."

"So, yeah, let's do it." So then they did it.

So when I left Hartnell and I moved to here in '86, *entonces* Luis and Luis' family, like Ruth Alejo and Tomas Alejo took over the Brown Berets. And I remember there was this one thing that we always talked about, [unclear], this organization that we want to start by germinating seeds, you know, going back to our community, because there's this whole brain drain where you leave and then you don't go back. One of the things is like, "Man, I got to go back." Still in the back of my head, "I got to go back."

Then I remember this one professor told me, "Your home is everywhere your *raza*'s at. That's your home too." So I figure, well, how can I still contribute to Watsonville because of the brain drain? Again, Luis really took that to heart. He became later on part of the politics in Watsonville, he became the mayor of Watsonville, he became supervisor, county supervisor, and now he's an assemblyman. But that all started way back.

Anyway, I know you've probably got some other questions.

Valadez Out of Hartnell, you went to D-Q or you went to Sac State? [00:14:32]

Muñoz No, so that's another thing. So at Hartnell, I actually didn't finish in Hartnell. [Spanish]. There was a lot of stuff going on, and I figured, "I have to go

back home [Spanish].” Cabrillo College, which was the college associated closest to Watsonville, [Spanish]. And so this last year, Pedro and I at the time, he was, like, one of my best friends at the time, we decided, “You know, we need to go back [Spanish] Filipe.” Luis had already, I think, went off to Berkeley at that time, *pero* Filipe was still also doing community college. We said, “Let’s go to our hometown community college and see what’s going on there.”

So we went there, again trying to establish the MEChA and all that. But that’s where I graduated from in ’86, and I still remember when I graduated, I wanted to make a statement, so I asked Annai~i, *ma maestra*, I asked her son, “Hey, can I borrow that really nice [Spanish] you have?” So as I walked on the stage [demonstrates], I put my [Spanish]. I just wanted to make a statement of “All this information that I was taught, it doesn’t change who I am. I still know who I am, and I’m going to walk the stage proud of who I am.”

You asked when I got here?

Valadez To D-Q.

[00:16:15]

Muñoz To D-Q.

Valadez Or to State.

[00:16:19]

Muñoz So I graduated from there, but at the same time, going back to the question, is Filipe, Pedro, and a lot of the people that were there, we found out about D-Q and we said, “What? There’s a Chicano/Native American university? How come

we don't know about it? And what's happening? Are they organized? Are things happening?'

So I got my associate's, and I transferred in over here at Sac State. That year, a couple people came, Filipe, Ivan Hernandez [phonetic], Filipe's brothers Roberto and Angel, and Maria Valtierra [phonetic], her brother Jose Valtierra [phonetic]. There's a lot of people from Watsonville, a lot of *raza* that just came [demonstrates]. I said, "You sure?" So I went to Sac State, and that same year they went to D-Q.

As a matter of fact, I still remember that's when I met you in '86. But I never became a student of D-Q. I became later on a professor at D-Q for, I think, one or two semesters.

Valadez Who was president then, do you remember?

[00:17:43]

Muñoz At D-Q when I became a professor?

Valadez Mm-hmm.

[00:17:47]

Muñoz The last president, I think his name is Gabriel. I forget his last name. A lot of stuff was going on.

Valadez It was in the process of breaking down.

[00:17:57]

Muñoz Yeah, they lost accreditation and all that.

Valadez So were you a Fellow or Felito? You weren't involved in that program?

[00:18:09]

Muñoz I don't recall, because I was born in '72. [Spanish] when I became a kindergartener, so I think it was more bilingual education.

Valadez Bilingual education. Okay. Somewhere you picked up culture, the idea of culture, *la cultura*. How did that happen? How did you come to that awareness? [00:18:37]

Muñoz Like I was saying, it was not only in *la casa, porque [Spanish] español, pero* really the consciousness of "Something is not right in society. Something needs to be done," really started with my neighbors, which was Guillermo and Annai~i, and really, really started with their sons. There was one of their sons *se llama* Joaquin Aranda, and they also had their Native name. His name was Anticus [phonetic]. One time I remember he told me—and this goes back even more, you know, because I would ask him, "So you guys don't go to church?"

And he says, "No, we don't go to that kind of church. We go to a different church."

"Oh. Where you guys go?" You guys should come to church," because I would see—we would go every Sunday and they wouldn't go.

And then he really started questioning me. He would ask me, well, because we're Catholic, "[Spanish]?"

"What do you mean? Mexicans are Catholic. Aren't you Catholic?"

He said, "No, we're not Catholic.

"Oh."

And then he really started asking me, "So how do you know that there is a god that is a male, that exists that is like that?"

"Well, because I know, because I go to church and that's what they say."

"But how do you know?"

And so then, you know—or little things like "*Donde vives*?"

[with English accent] "San Benito."

"No, [with Spanish accent] San Benito." Even though [unclear] Spanish, it was still conscious, and that was at eleven, twelve years old, but it didn't make sense till later.

So I would say the biggest was when I left high school and I went off to college, and then I noticed the *raza* organizing. I remember walking up to this booth and I thought it was [with English accent] MEChA. I didn't know it was [with Spanish accent] MEChA. So then I started asking them, so then I started going to the meetings. At the time, there was a student and his name as Jose Ortiz, and he was the president of MEChA at the time, a real cool guy, him and his girlfriend, I think now wife. They were organizing it and talking about the Chicano Movement.

And I noticed Hartnell was one of the places that had a lot more *raza* in college, so I felt comfortable there. There was even more consciousness [Spanish] *más conciencia*. I was taking classes there. I think it was English 1B, Chicano Perspective, Teatro Chicano. Julio Gonzales was the professor there, who learned from Luis Valdez. So all these things were happening. I think we had a Chicano Teatro that we joined, so a lot of things were happening, and it was the early nineties. So that was my consciousness. I mean, I can go on and on, but—

Valadez When do you think was the earliest memories, or what are your earliest memories of hearing about the Movimiento Chicano?

[00:22:31]

Muñoz When I joined MEChA, and, again, this was like in the early nineties, *y los profesores también* that I was talking about, yeah, they were talking about it.

Valadez Were you hearing also about the Civil Rights Movement?

[00:22:48]

Muñoz Yeah, yeah.

Valadez How did that one get you? How did you understand that one, civil rights?

[00:22:57]

Muñoz Well, I think it was motivation, and at the time, too, when you learn all these things, there's a sense of anger because, number one, how could this be kept from us? Even in high school, I mean, these are things that I should have learned like in—what is it, world history and U.S. history and things like that, and government, economics, and things like that. I don't recall it. If it was said, it was maybe just brushed over, you know, but it wasn't really put an emphasis on "Hey, look. This is what's happening." And there's really not much motivation. I just knew I had to graduate and do something, because at an early age, I remember I messed up a couple of times and Papá, "[Spanish]."

The next day, I was in the fields there, like 5:00 in the morning. I was like, "Oh, I think I want to go to school." So I went to school, so that was my lessons of going to school.

Pero I think the Chicano Movement, the Civil Rights Movement wasn't really part of the curriculum much, so when we went off to college, there was more liberty on the classes that you were able to take.

Valadez Do you think that the Chicano Movement or Movimiento Chicano changed you once you got involved from however you had thought before? Was that the pivotal point where things began to go different?

[00:24:45]

Muñoz Definitely. I don't think I would be here with a B.A. or a teaching credential or admin credential, wanting to changes lives, wanting to help the community, make a difference. I don't think I'd be doing those things. Who knows. Who knows what I would be doing. It was definitely a motivating factor and definitely something that encouraged me to make a change within myself and make a change in the greater community. Yeah, it was definitely a motivating factor and contributing to pride and self-esteem.

Valadez It seems that right about the time when all of this was happening, you joining MEChA, the whole Martin Luther King, the Malcolm X, Reies Tijerina, Cesar Chavez, everything was going on, and it's like you're right there. I mean, you discover. It discovers you or you discover it, because something happens to everybody. It changes you forever.

[00:26:10]

Muñoz Yeah.

Valadez At that time, what did you see the role of women, the role of girls becoming young ladies, becoming women? How do you think the Movement changed them?

[00:26:23]

Muñoz So, again, I joined MEChA in the nineties, and I know that the Chicano Movement, now talking to some of the elders, they say, "No, it didn't start in the sixties. It went way back, way before that." But I didn't join till the nineties, MEChA, and so when that was happening, I was lucky enough my *maestra*, Annai~i Aranda, she was a real strong woman, and so she not only in *danza* but in many other ways she was, I believe, a pioneer, to the point where one of our ceremonies in Watsonville, [Spanish], young women coming of age, she really believes that it's important for women to be held high, because they're our life givers, and without them, *no temenos nada*. *Entonces,* but I did notice, though, by the nineties, it was more speaking. I remember going to the MEChA Nationals, MEChA Centrales, and women speaking out on the role of the Chicana, and at the time, I remember changing the word from *Chicano* to *Chicana, Chicana/O*, to bring awareness to the importance of women in the Chicano Movement.

I remember learning a lot. I remember this woman from Denver, they call her Rocky, *pero* I can't remember her last name. She came to talk, and she spoke about the women and the role of women in the Chicano Movement, and she's an older woman, so it was really motivating to hear that and to hear my *maestra* and things that she had to say, because, you know, as we grew up, and I grew up with *la mujeres en la casa* [Spanish], and the Movement, I just read about it, but I really experienced

in the sixties, seventies, fifties, going back, you know, I just read about how women were treated during that time. I experienced how women were treated *como* the nineties and now, and there's still things that should be done, I think.

Valadez If you remember back to your high school years, were women, the girls at that point, already outspoken? You think they were already affected by the changes that were taking place elsewhere? I guess it's difficult to think of how their behavior was.

[00:29:30]

Muñoz Yeah, [Spanish] and, honestly, high school was a blur. [laughs] I almost—*como se dice*—SOHO [phonetic] didn't open until college.

Valadez Until after, yeah.

[00:29:41]

Muñoz But I can't really recall exactly. I just remember one of my teachers, she was a Chicana government teacher, and I remember a little bit. She opened up my eyes a little bit and she actually had a group at the high school called Sociedad Cultura, and that was as close to MEChA as there was at the time, but it was more of a—what is it—fun, *fiesta* kind of thing. "Let's have a chili-eating contest," you know. It wasn't necessarily bringing awareness to you as a Chicano. But I think she was going what she could at the time.

Valadez At the time, yeah. Then we come to the question about your contributions or your initiation of activities. What did you personally initiate or help initiate in this Movimiento Chicano? What would you say were things that you tried to start, that you saw needed to change and you had a part in it?

[00:30:52]

Muñoz So this is a little bit of a hard question for me only because *no me gusta*—like, how do they say? I try to be humble as much as possible, but I would say I was a part of—in the early nineties at Hartnell College when we were in MEChA, one of the things that we noticed is when we would try to do activities, these activities really didn't happen unless the student body, president, government, and all that said, "Okay, you can do it."

And so [Spanish] Jesse Sanchez [phonetic], who was a lawyer at Salinas, who passed away, was really part of the Chicano Movement, dealt with redistricting and the politics at that time there in Salinas and also in Watsonville and the county there, Monterey and Santa Cruz County. He was really influential in helping us take over the student government, and I think since then in the early nineties, since then all the student governments at Hartnell College is basically *raza*. And that's small, you know, I guess in some way when you're thinking about the big picture, the Chicano Movement, but I remember us going to a MEChA National. In recollection, I guess it was the first time in a long time or the first time ever that all the student body politicians or whatever, senate, president, all that, were Chicanos in a school, in a community college. But I might be wrong, you know. It might have happened before, but it just never got documented.

But one of the only other things I can really think of besides helping out with the Brown Berets, which later on they—I can't really take too much credit for that, because Luis and Filipe had a big part in it. I was just kind of their—one of the things I remember Pedro Ortega and myself really, really focusing on is when we would go

to *danzas* or when we would go to *danza* ceremonies or we would go to sweat lodges or other type of ceremonies, [Spanish] *nos otros,* we would either hear people singing songs in Spanish, they were mainly Catholic songs, or we would hear people singing Native American songs. So it was like this far and between, like, either you're this or you're that. So I remember Pedro and I thinking, "Hey, [Spanish]. Hey, don't our song exist? [Spanish]." No, I think that those are after the conquest. I'm sure they're ours now, because I'm light-skinned, so I'm half-Spanish and Native, and besides that, because this whole Movimiento [Spanish] and understanding who we were.

So then we decided, "You know, let's start making our own songs and start learning [Spanish]." So I remember we decided, so that people can go ahead and learn them, we put them on a CD. We didn't think anything of it. This is probably the first time I'm actually talking about it, because we decided not to put our name on it. We decided not to publicize it that way, because it wasn't about us. It was about *la gente aprendiendo las* [Spanish] so that there's an encouragement to make more songs or to reconnect with who we were.

So I didn't know that this CD was going to go even all the way to Mexico. I have an uncle, last name Galendo [phonetic], he goes by Kroger [phonetic], he said, "Hey, come to Mexico! Come to Mexico! You're famous! [Spanish]. A lot of people, they like the songs."

I go, "Okay, *que bueno, que bueno*. People are singing."

So then I heard other people singing other songs. I wasn't the first. Pedro and I weren't the first. There was other people. We were just the first to record it, you

know, but there were other people doing songs and trying to encourage people to do that.

Valadez How did you begin to learn the Nahuatl words for those Spanish songs, or the songs that you could understand in Spanish?

[00:36:10]

Muñoz So *primero*, [Spanish] elders, right? And so the elders helped us translate, and in some cases, [Spanish] was we would go to, "Hey, [Spanish], there's a thing now called a dictionary."

"There is? Okay. Let's look it up."

There's this differentiation of, like, [Spanish]. It's like any language. You go to a region and it's spoken this way, [unclear] from Veracruz, [unclear] from [unclear]. There's different styles of it. So we're like, "Wow! [Spanish]."

So to us it was more of a beginning of something, and now we know, looking back, too, there's some other [Spanish]. There's actually a community and Nahuatl speakers not too far from here that live in Lincoln.

Valadez Is that right?

[00:37:09]

Muñoz Yeah, so that would be good to interview them too. So now some of the new songs, we haven't recorded again, but there's some more songs. I just haven't recorded them. And I have other brothers and sisters that are doing the same thing, you know. There's a lot of songs [Spanish]. We had to start somewhere. And then going back now, we can look back and say, well, maybe this doesn't necessarily

mean that, or your pronunciation for this should have been that. So it's like, okay, nice, because at least now we're learning it, but I think we had to start somewhere.

Valadez Who was the *maestro* that you could consult about the Nahuatl pronunciation initially? You gave his name, but I missed it.

[00:38:06]

Muñoz Well, one of them was Señora Copp. She was one. Then there were other people. I'm trying to remember. I think T____.

Valadez In Watsonville?

[00:38:20]

Muñoz No, no, no. No, in Watsonville I remember we would sing songs. "So why are we singing the song? What does it mean?"

"Well, it's a sunrise song, and we sing it because it's a sunrise song."

"Okay." But it was from a tribe here, which, you know, my *maestro* really talked about, "Hey, you need to break down those borders. A lot of times we think our *tradicion* is just in Mexico, *pero* [Spanish] Mexico, *está aquí tambíen*. *Entonces* there were California songs, and this is what the California Native people were telling him too. "These are also your songs."

So the older ones—because the younger ones, you know, there was this whole like, "Ah, you're Mexican. We're Native and you're not." Like D-Q, for example, *pero* the older ones, you know, they were talking to him that way. *Pero* it would be like [Spanish] Señora Cobb and then the good ol' dictionary, now a dictionary. We just kind of tried to figure it out. I remember in MEChA there was other people, too, that hold [unclear] workshops, and we'd go there. "[unclear] workshop, *qué es esto*?"

I don't recall the teachers' names, but I do remember us taking notes and trying to do our best to learn it. Of course, you know, we don't necessarily know it all. It was just enough to say these verses and put it out there so that people can start thinking other than Catholic [Spanish] or all just Native from this side, *pero*, you know, where's ours?

Valadez That's good. That's a huge contribution to be a part of that transition from the [Spanish] type of songs to the songs—I remember Pedro brought some CDs to Sac State, and I got one of those. He gifted one, and I got another. I always wondered what was the origin of that. Pedro and yourself were very young compared to everybody else that was here, but we never had an understanding of how that transition had taken place, and I always heard about White Hawk and about Watsonville, so I thought they must have something going on down there that we need here, because it didn't happen that way.

[00:41:08]

Muñoz Yeah.

Valadez Copp came, but she just—I don't know. She would use it, *pero*—and I guess she tried to teach it also, but there's something about Copp that just didn't come across for a lot of people to hook into it and want to learn it.

[00:41:30]

Muñoz Yeah. But she helped us. She helped in the translation, but it was just when you go back to what was happening in Watsonville and something must have been happening, it was my *maestros* Annai~i, Guillermo Aranda, very motivational and inspirational, along with Kroger Galendo, you know, and going back to our roots

in *mexicanismo*, finding who we are. All credit to them for encouraging us and motivating us to do this. Again, there's a lot of our brothers and sisters that didn't necessarily put their stuff on CD, but that have a lot of songs, and a lot of people [Spanish], the sweat lodge, aside from just *danza,* [Spanish] sweat lodge *también, danza,* and some other ceremonies, too, [Spanish], big pride, you know, [Spanish].

I'm glad that we actually did that, because later on I heard *que* people in Arizona also put—and Aztecas, they put their stuff to music on CD, and then we started seeing even in *danza,* we started seeing in *danza* now, people singing those songs. I'm like, "Oh, man!" Because we decided not to put our name, you know, and so I always kind of like a little smile, makes me feel good that, hey, something happened.

Lately, I've been kind of thinking of—we got some more music, so I'm thinking, okay, we're going to—and a lot of my friends are pushing, "Hey, [unclear] next one. Are you going to do another one?" So hopefully, if everything goes the way it's supposed to and health-wise and everything that gets taken care of. But I would say that our elders there were very motivational and encouraging.

Valadez So this question, it's obvious. Did the Movimiento raise your consciousness along social, cultural, and political lines?

[00:44:11]

Muñoz Yes.

Valadez Can you speak about those? Maybe political.

[00:44:15]

Muñoz Political lines. I think more than anything, I remember Proposition 187, and, you know, we would read about this stuff in books, and I didn't think that this was still going to happen. "Well, that was the past." We were in MEChA, and that was the past. And I remember Proposition 187. Man, that's when it really took off. That's when I remember our MEChA became stronger, like [Spanish], and it was like a second resurgence of wanting to fight for justice, and the Brown Berets at the time in Watsonville really, really became more organized. [Spanish] *mi mamá este también*, was really—how would I say—*con nos otros*, because a lot of times it was like, "Hey, that's in the past. [Spanish]. You're going to get in trouble. Just do your homework, go to school, get a job, raise a family. You don't need to do that." [Spanish] *toda mi familia, mis hermanas*, during Proposition 187.

I remember, again, Filipe, Luis, Pedro, and myself, we said, "Hey, we need to come back to our community. Let's organize." Because we did walkouts in Salinas in all the three high schools at the time. Alisal, North Salinas High, and Salinas High had MEChAs, and they all walked out on a given day. We all walked out and we all met in the Republican—to protest with the office that they had there. [Spanish]. This only happened in the sixties. [Spanish, and he had a big ol' bottle of [Spanish], and he threw it and he smashed the window of the Republican headquarters of Salinas, and then he ran. He ran. It was a White guy, and he ran.

Then one of my friends tried to follow him, because it's like, "Man, he's trying to set us up." Tried to follow him, and he ran. Then a couple of us ran, and we saw him get in a car, and the car had—and we thought, "What?" It had government plates. And we thought, "Wow! Man, wow! We thought this just happened in the

past. No, actually it's true." So we were like, "Man, let's get out of here. Let's get out of here, because the media and everything, they're going to say we broke the window and things like that. So let's get out of here." But that was interesting, you know.

But in Watsonville, [Spanish] we did the same thing, and we said, "Let's have Watsonville High School walk out against Proposition 187, but not just that. [Spanish]. Let's talk to them about starting a Chicano Studies class." So we walked out for that. We walked out for Chicano Studies at our high school, we walked out against Proposition 187.

And I remember going *in mí masa*, in my house right there in the backyard, [Spanish]. At the time, [Spanish] high school. The oldest, myself, then the second, we had already graduated. We were going to Hartnell College, *pero* the next one and the other two were still at Watsonville High School. [Spanish], "Hey, you organize it there at the high school. We'll organize it over here."

And at this time, [Spanish]. So, yeah, the first recess came out, *todos* [Spanish]. I didn't really—man, she did a good job. I didn't really realize all the kids were going to walk out, so they *did*! All the kids walked out to the point that there was almost no classes, and that was close to 2,000 and some.

So the Brown Berets, it's like if you would go back in time, you know, the Brown Berets were right there, Luis, Filipe, and Rolando at the time, and all kinds of others. They organized and they did like a wall, you know. They had their [Spanish] on and everything. It was just really organized. It was like, "Wow!" It was, like, powerful, you know. It was like we read it in a book and here we are. *Y mí mama*, "[Spanish]." So that was, like, to me, that's like—when your mom is there backing

you up, [Spanish]. That's powerful. So she was there. Not only her, other parents, other parents were there. "Yeah, [Spanish]. 187, you know, [Spanish]." So they walked out.

So a lot of the teachers there who were *raza*, they were just doing their job, so they were suspending kids. I remember I was going, "Hey, [Spanish]!" But I know at the time they were doing their job, looking back. But, yeah, I mean, those are some of the things that happened there like in Watsonville and Salinas that I can remember.

Valadez In the nineties.

[00:50:06]

Muñoz In the nineties. Then 209, after that, Proposition 209, affirmative action, yeah.

Valadez Wow. Did any of these things, or did these things impact your personal relationship with family, peers, and significant others?

[00:50:25]

Muñoz Yeah, yeah. So definitely, because I was younger at the time, it definitely had an impact with family. I wasn't married at the time or anything. I was just a single guy, student, you know, yelling out, "Chicano Power!" back in the sixties and seventies. But it definitely created an awareness in my home at the time, my mom, my sisters. *Mí papa* at the time, to protect us, still was like, "Don't be wasting your time, your school." Because he did see—and going back to what it impacted—he did see that I was in college for a very long time because I was not only focusing on my studies, but I was also focusing—or I thought it wasn't my studies. It wasn't my education when it comes to getting a piece of paper, but it was my education

when it comes to raising my consciousness, and it was an education when it comes to self-esteem, which ended up motivating me to complete my education when it comes to a piece of paper. But it impacted. It impacted my house in a positive way, I would say.

Valadez This next question you've already answered, but I'll ask it anyway. It's the one that says describe the impact of the Chicano Movement, your involvement in the Chicano Movement on your career, on your selection of a career.

[00:52:14]

Muñoz Yeah, that's why I became a teacher, and it's kind of ironic in some way, you know, because I remember—and I'm going to go back to something a really dear professor taught me, and I still teach it—[Spanish], not just to me but to many, was very inspirational in us not forgetting who we were as a people once we graduate. I remember when I was in Cabrillo College, I wore that [Spanish], and then I thought, "Wow, I'm going to go off to this university up at Sac State and we'll see how things are going to be," you know.

And I remember you talking about this term called the reunification process, when we go back and we just end up reaffirming the society and reaffirming—as I remember it, reaffirming what we don't want to happen, kind of, you know. We're thinking, "Man, Chicano Power!" We go off and we want to make a change. "Let's get our degrees and go back to our community." We go back to our community and we become these politicians, these people in positions, and then we just end up doing the same thing.

Valadez Same thing.

[00:53:37]

Muñoz So I really thought really hard, and said, "Well, I don't want to go to this regular high school. I know I should do that because that's where the changes need to happen." I remember my first year I did that. "Wow, that's *difícil* to make these changes. In order to really make this change, we need to break this whole paradigm. We need to start all over."

And at the time, I heard of this school called the Met, the Met High School, these people in the East Coast who really wanted to break that educational paradigm and ended up going to help kids understand what they really love in society. And I remember there was this one project, it's called "Who Am I?" And this was a project that I thought, "Wow, I didn't learn that in high school. I want to teach at a high school that teaches the kids who they are right off the bat."

So that's when I became a teacher at the Met High School, and I'm glad I got that job. One of the things that we do there is trying to teach students who they are, and not only that, but how to become better human beings. It's not just about education in a book, but it's education as a whole, teaching the student how to learn, so when they go off and they know how to learn and find information, and it's not just about cookie-cut education or creating this factory of students. But I remember at first, "Man, how ironic. I'm going to go back." And I remember the reunification process. "I'm just going to go back and do the same thing." So I'm glad I'm doing my best, not necessarily to do the same thing, but to make some change.

Valadez Do you think that there are issues that are still left unresolved in Sacramento or elsewhere?

[00:55:41]

Muñoz Oh, yeah, yeah. I mean, in *danza* alone, in not just *danza* alone, but all these positions where people see you as a role model--I'll just start with that--it's really hard, what I've noticed, because of all the conquest. We were really colonized, so it's really hard to let go of certain [Spanish], of certain things that we're taught and ingrained now after 500-plus years. You know what I mean. Nowadays, of course we can't necessarily—maybe someday [Spanish]. I mean, we drive cars and even the clothing, and we go to certain stores to buy it, so we're bought into the system, you know, regardless of how much we try, but I do my best and I'm human. I'm a human being, and a lot of the other *danzantes* and *danza* leaders are human beings, so I understand that, but one of the things that I always try my best to do is [Spanish].

You're seen as a role model, so therefore I do my best. I don't drink. I'm not saying that anyone else shouldn't. I just say I don't. I don't do, like, drugs and alcohol, you know. I try my best to be straight. I also notice, like, a lot of womanizing. And *la cultura*, you know, when you have that position of power, I guess it's—I wouldn't say—but it seemed that way, you know. You have a position, "Oh, man, this is *importante*." So a lot of times I noticed people abuse it. Like in the Chicano Movement, I notice people have power or when you've in this position, and then you would abuse women or you drink, and all these things happen, you know, because it's generational.

Valadez Yes.

[00:57:59]

Muñoz So when you were asking me is there changes that need to happen, wow, you know, within ourselves *primero*, and healing ourselves so that, in turn, we can help heal others or heal a community, because it's generational, these traumas that happened because of drugs and alcohol that were pushed into our communities, and then things happen, like rape and all these other things that happen. Even reading about COINTELPRO and how it helped, I guess, disperse or give away some of the Chicano Movement or Civil Rights Movement because they pushed drugs into our community.

And so I do my best to live a life of—but then again, I'm human, but I do my best to live by not doing that. And yet I'll go to some *danza* ceremonies and I see during the ceremony drinking, and it breaks my heart, but at the same time, [Spanish], I do my best to be respectful, so [Spanish]. In order for all of us to get along, we respect each other's ways, so I go. [Spanish] *tu casa*, so I'm going to respect it. You sing [Spanish] and I'm going to respect it, because I want them, when they come to my house or our house, that [Spanish] and we all do the same.

Then also my elders also tell me, "But if there's a place you going [Spanish], you see something that they're abusing people or they're doing things, then you don't have to go back."

Valadez Right.

[00:59:53]

Muñoz And so some of my students, "Hey, [Spanish]." It's like, "[Spanish]. I'll take you to a club." [Spanish]. I know I'm exaggerating a little bit, *pero*, like I say, even within our community, when you have these people that have these

positions—and again, we're human, but to see people honestly and wholeheartedly try their best means a lot. So when I see that, it's important to me, and it's like, "Okay, *gracias por tu trabajo* [Spanish]," because it's hard. It's not easy trying to live a straight life sometimes.

And I still don't understand. One of my teachers [Spanish], and I still don't understand how people have to go to another country to get [Spanish] to be able to do *danza* here, you know. They go off to Mexico [Spanish]. "If you don't give me [Spanish] here, I'm going to Mexico and I'm going to get it." But yet in Mexico, these people, he says, don't have any recollection of who you are as a person, what deeds you've done in your community, but it's like, okay, [Spanish]. Okay, it's your birthright *también*, you know, *pero* I think structure's important when it comes to raising a consciousness and having a community, raising a community, you know, *porque no*, we don't want to just give anybody who's a child molester or doing things they shouldn't these positions because it's not healthy for a community. But, I mean, that's just in *danza* and I almost see it sometimes as certain people, they want to be super Chicano or super *indígena*, and it's almost like you're climbing up the indigenous corporate ladder, you know, and it's like, "Well, I want to wear all the—and I want to be [Spanish]."

Valadez Bigger. [laughs]

[01:02:12]

Muñoz "And I want to be [Spanish] now." And it's like, no, the way they taught me, even some of these things that you see here, [Spanish]. Nowadays, you go [Spanish], man, you go to ceremonies now, it's like Disneyland. You go and

[Spanish]. You can buy a [Spanish]. And I've been part of that, you know. I bought my [Spanish]. I remember my teacher, "[Spanish]?" You have to do them. You have to pray over these things, because these are the things that you're going to go ahead and use in ceremony." He says, "[Spanish]."

"What do you mean, pray over them? [Spanish]?"

And that's okay if that's how they learned it, but we learned it where while we're making this, we're praying over it, you know, and so when you use it, it means something. [Spanish]. So some people are like, "Well, it doesn't mean because we buy a [Spanish], doesn't mean we're not going to pray."

And it's like, true, but then some of my teachers say, "Well, what if this guy who made it was a child molester or doing all these things?"

So then there's that whole idea of some people feel that maybe it brings bad vibes and bad energy, and maybe that's not true that it does that, but still I think [Spanish]. The intention that you put forth when you're making this from the get-do, I think means a lot.

Valadez Yes.

[01:04:11]

Muñoz And so I think [Spanish] when we made them, I think has a lot to do with [Spanish]. Then we go back to, like, "Well, wait a minute. We can't go back [Spanish]. We're using material [Spanish]." [Spanish] leather, [Spanish]. I still have my [Spanish] over there, and I'm thinking about doing another one, *pero* just within the indigenous community of bringing awareness, I think certain things have gotten lost, and I think part of what we've tried to do as White Hawk is—and I know other

danza, not just saying White Hawk, I know other *danzantes* are trying to do the same thing—is trying to save [Spanish]. If it wouldn't have been for them, our tradition would have been lost, because they kept it alive, even though because of the conquest it was hard.

So my respects, my big respects, you know, I can't say it enough, because they endured so much, they had to do that in order to keep the tradition as best as possible [Spanish]. [Spanish], not forgotten, because it's like [Spanish]. [Spanish], the same way as [Spanish]. We have to assimilate to their society. [Spanish] coming out and saying, "[Spanish]." We don't have to, *pero* pay our respects, still, you know, because I think that they were an integral part of us being still seen in society and people still being proud, even though they were using a guitar. People were still being, "[Spanish]."

[Spanish] *pero* I think it's important to rescue still what's out there as much as possible before something happens to our people, but that's just within the *danza* and the indigenous community, our Chicano indigenous community, but I'm sure that within the politics, [Spanish], it goes beyond just being Chicano and just being *indígo*, it goes beyond that. It goes beyond us as human, being able to coexist and us as humans being able to live here on this Earth with all the elements. [Spanish]. They're fracking over there, like in Oklahoma. There's a bunch of earthquakes now because of all these things, and now scientists are going back and trying to figure out if that's really what's happening, if it's because of that.

So it just goes beyond just Chicano, you know. It goes to now coexisting with everybody, because I see some of even—I was always, like, for a long time,

"[Spanish], you did this to us," and I was really mad. [Spanish], we opened a *danza* class in our school. It's actually part of our curriculum now. That's how students get P.E. and performing arts if they choose to. They don't have to do that, but if they choose to, they can go through *danza*. So they go through *danza*.

And, again, talking about the changes that still need to be done in education now, fighting for Ethnic Studies, again, I'm glad I'm part of the Met High School because we don't necessarily need to ask; we just do it, because we can justify it and how it's part of them getting their curriculum and their needs.

Pero tambíen [Spanish], she wasn't Chicana and she wasn't Native American that I knew of at the time, *pero* light skin, blue eyes, and she wanted to learn *danza*, so we opened it through the school. Said, "[Spanish]. No, you can't. This is not part of your *cultura*. I can't." *Pero* it was more of an eye-opener for me, and in talking to a lot of the elders and saying, "Señora Cobb told me it's the human, the human race, and we have to heal."

So it's a bigger picture. It's really a bigger picture, but starting with ourselves first, *verdad*? *Entonces* being proud of who we are and then I think once you're so secure as to who you are, you don't feel insecure if there's a White person there. And I think that once you're really secure in ourselves, then I think it's easier to make those changes and embrace everybody else. But it's hard, you know, because we've been very insecure for a long time, and I still am for certain things, you know, because we weren't good enough to do certain things. In some places we still aren't, you know. You have, like, Donald Trump, and now his polls and he's on top because, you know, anti-immigration. So it's still there. Yeah, it's still there.

Valadez We have to heal. There's a lot of healing. Do you think that the Movimiento affected, impacted life here in Sacramento?

[01:10:42]

Muñoz Yeah. I wasn't part. I just came after, you know, but I wasn't part of—I just hear stories. I wasn't part of it. I hear the RCAF, I hear La Raza Galeria Posada and all that stuff happening now with La Raza Galeria Posada changing the name.

But I hear stories about José Montoya, who's actually one of my teachers' teacher. So Guillermo Aranda, who was a well-known artist, learned some of his art from José Montoya in San Diego. Guillermo Aranda was also part of El Centro Cultural de la Raza in San Diego and Chicano Park in San Diego.

But coming back to Sacramento, I hear RCAF and things like that, La Raza Galeria Posada. I came, again, in '96, and I remember Pedro and I coming with this whole mentality of *mexicanismo,* you know, and even in MEChA, because we were very close to the Capitol, the MEChA here at the time was very politicized, and when it comes to more politics and less *cultura,* and I think that one of my teachers, Anai~i Aranda, said, "*Mijo*, you've got to know who you are in order to know where you're going." And I didn't understand that until later on, because if you go these other places, you're going to be all mixed up and you won't necessarily do the changes or do the things you need to make, but if you know who you are, then you can make these changes.

So to us, you know, when we came, it was very about politics and not necessarily about *cultura,* so we tried our best to kind of inculcate that. I think Chico, Chico Gonzales [phonetic] did a good job of bringing a—how would I say—like a

medium, happy medium kind of *política* and *mexicanismo cultura importancia de todo eso*.

I remember I was so discouraged at the time, that I left MEChA and I joined the Native American Indian Alliance at the time. They're kind of more like what we're trying to do and the politics more of our indigenous people throughout the whole continent. *Pero* in Sacramento, yeah, I think it had a big impact from what I read about and from what I see in *la danza también*, Señora Cobb, but, again, it's from what I hear, from what I read about, *pero* that's going back to seventies, but I think now I think *la danza* [Spanish]. Now things, because it's the Capitol, you see a lot of people come through the Capitol to protest or to talk about the things that need to be changed.

However, I think that in some ways there's more, when it comes to the Chicano Movement, that hasn't been done here in Sacramento that I had seen in other places, and I think a lot of it has to do with *cultura*.

Valadez *Por jemplo*?

[01:14:30]

Muñoz *Por jemplo*, people are still ashamed and people are climbing up the corporate ladder and not the indigenous corporate ladder, but the actual corporate ladder. [Spanish]. You're going to make the same decisions that other people, because you don't have that root, that foundation, and that understanding of when you make these decisions, to be conscious of those things. That's just what I see. I could be wrong, but that's just what I see in certain politicians that when they're making these changes, that sometimes *la cultura* is kind of like on the back burner.

I mean, at Sac State, I know you were part of it, too, and I remember José Montoya, who had the Barrio Art [Program], and a lot of changes happened, you know. I remember seeing that mural at Lassen Hall that was there, so I was like, "Oh, man, I came to the right college," when I saw that. So *la cultura* was there, and I saw it a lot in art and in [Spanish], and sometimes in the *politico*. Maybe because it's a big city, I didn't hear a lot of people about building a better community within, like healing, and I don't see that a lot as I see it in the smaller community, maybe again because it's big, but in Watsonville, it's *really*—we talk about healing and love, about trying to work within ourselves to become better people, *pero* [Spanish] here in Sacramento, I see it in the politicians here, no, and sometimes in the professors, no, except you. That's one of the reasons—I mean, we go back and talk to Felipe, who had you at D-Q, Pedro, who had you at D-Q, "Hey, remember Senon Valadez?"

"Yeah, he talked about the reunification process and talked about *mexicanismo*." So there was some professors that still held—Montoya still held the importance of being Chicano, but in some places, [Spanish] *la cultura*.

Valadez A lot of people who were activists in the Movimiento Chicano here in Sacramento and Watsonville and other places have passed on. Are there people that you can identify because they gave you sort of a guide or guidance in the way that you eventually chose for yourself that you could mention and honor that way? [01:17:49]

Muñoz Yeah. Well, a lot of my *maestros* are still alive, Guillermo Aranda, Anai~i Aranda, Kroger Galendo [phonetic], they're still alive *y muchas gracias por la salud de ellos*. *Aquí en* Sacramento, *este* Señora Cobb, she's still around.

One that I remember when I came here to Sac, I told Anai~i, I said, "Where am I going to go? I got accepted to Sacramento State, Fresno State, San Diego State, but I want to go somewhere where there's *danza*. I can't leave *danza*."

And she said, "Well, there is Señora Cobb in Sacramento, and there's also Chuy."

Again, I was really [Spanish], you know. "I don't want to go to the *danzas* where it's [Spanish]," because that's not how we were taught when I started *danza*, you know. [Spanish], nothing wrong. It's just more [Spanish], more Catholic. Again, we were fighting against that, so I wanted to go to a place where [Spanish] the way I learned as traditional, because some people say [Spanish] and some people say no [Spanish]. If you're going past 500 years, then that's not traditional.

So she said, "Go check out Chuy [Ortiz]."

So I went and checked out Chuy, and it's like, hey, kind of does it how we do it. He would go to sweats and he would go to Sun Dance, and it was a mixture of *mexicanismo* and *cultura* and *danza*. So [Spanish], Chuy Ortiz. I still have his picture right there.

I remember he would come to *danza*, to our practice, and we would go to his practice, and he would say, "Man, when I don't want to direct anything and I just want to dance, I come to your house. And if you ever want to do the same thing, come to my house." So we would do that. He'd come and he'd just dance. Then I'd do the same thing. We respected each other a lot. As a matter of fact, he was really motivational towards the end. He had me run his—which I didn't think it was going to be his last. I ran his last [Spanish], his last sweat lodge. I ran it for him. I guess he

got sick and just didn't come back from it, you know. We would go to different ceremonies sometimes. We'd take off to see our *tío*. We called him *Tío* Kroger Galendo [phonetic], who's still alive, and we'd go back.

He was inspirational, and he would always attend our ceremony, never missed it, and tried to encourage and show me certain things that he had learned, because he had been dancing longer than I had. [Spanish]. In '91, [Spanish] when I was twelve years old, I would see it, *pero* I didn't really become a *danzante* officially. Got my [Spanish] in '91, 92, so in '96, Chuy [Spanish] for longer than that, so he had some miles already, so he was able to talk to me about certain things when we had our *danza* group. So I really respect him, really respected him for what he did here in the community.

I would always talk to him and I would say, "Hey, so what do you still need to do? Go to Sac State to get your B.A.?" And I remember I think I talked to you one time. "Senon said that, hey, if you write a paper, do this, he'll help you so you can pass that class and you can get your degree."

And every once in a while I'd remind him, and he'd say, "Hey, you're the only one that's always reminding me. Thanks for reminding me. Eventually I'm going to do it." And towards the end, he was really thinking, "I want to have my B.A. before anything happens [Spanish]."

But he did a lot, though, with D-Q, having that *danza* there at D-Q. I mean, that alone opened a lot of eyes to a lot of people. He would go and dance at the California Native—like the Bear Dances, the different dances [Spanish] California Natives, and he made a name for us. He helped. He was one of those that helped

bridge the Mexicano and the Native, that border, you know. There was others, like, again, Guillermo and Anai~i, they were doing that over in Watsonville, but here in Sacramento, Chuy was really instrumental in that, because he would go to Sun Dance and he was known over there. So it's like, okay, he's—and he would take *danza* over there, too, you know. So it helped break a lot of barriers for us as Mexicanos that really were proud of who we are as indigenous people, because we were no longer just Mexicans, you know. "Oh, you're just a Mexican." He helped break those borders, especially schools like D-Q and outside the greater community here in California. So, yeah, my respects to Chuy Oceltl-Ortiz.

Valadez What do you see as future challenges for the Chicano community here and in Watsonville, probably here?

[01:24:01]

Muñoz Well, going back to raising a better community, looking beyond the politics. There's still that anti-immigration. There's still the schools that are trying to acquire Ethnic Studies. And that racism is still there, you know.

Valadez Yes.

[01:24:29]

Muñoz Like maybe a year and a half ago, I remember talking to one of my friends after a sweat lodge, and he was saying, "It's not the same anymore, because that racism doesn't exist like it existed back then."

"*Como que no*? It's bluntly openly."

Antes, our people weren't in those position of power, certain people are now. *Antes,* no. So when we would yell and scream during the Chicano Movement, it was

more like sometimes people would give, because they're going to create—*como se dice*—politically incorrect, "So let's give them EOPS. Let's do these certain things." And now sometimes in position of power is our own people, you know. So it's our own people saying no. And it's kind of hard, because I'm not in that position to say what they're doing might not come from a good place, because I don't know. I'm not in that position and I don't know exactly how it is, but I think it has to do with this paradigm that we exist in, you know, where the change can only really come so much if we continue to just exist in this paradigm, in this society that was created for us to live in. So we're only going to get so far.

That's the same thing when we talk about education. I was in the admin program, and they would say, "Well, we got to do this and we got to do that." And it's like, well, how far can you get within this paradigm? You can only get so far. So you have to break the box and you have to build your own. So that's not easy to do, because, yeah, we are comfortable in many places, the comforts of life now, you know. We can just turn on a faucet and *esta agua*, you know. We turn on the stove and [Spanish]. We turn on a car and [Spanish]. So the comforts of life that we are really all a part of, it's really inculcated.

So when it comes to the Chicano Movement, I think it's beyond the politics. It goes beyond, I think, starting with self-healing and self-awareness and proud of who we are in general, not just fellow *indígena, pero* everything of who we are as a person and being proud of it and being able to help heal others within our community, because even though we can make all these changes in education, changes in society and the politics, [Spanish] alcoholism, drug abuse, all this abuse within our family

because of those things, because of the alcohol, because of the drugs and because of all these things that were pushed in our community in the sixties and seventies and even before.

You're thinking of all these wars that we fought, that our people fought. During World War II, I remember they would go off and they would do all these things, and then fight and kill, they would see a lot of killings, and then they would give them some R&R. They'd give them some R&R, they'd pump them up with all this alcohol, [Spanish]. So here it was. And so they come back to the community, they come back home, so that's the way they forget their problems, alcohol. And it's not just the war. You're thinking way back. Then now, Vietnam and all these other wars now happening. And all the liquor stores within the *barrio*, you know.

So to me, it goes beyond *la política*. It's more one's self, being proud, and understanding that these changes need to come about that are generational changes. They go way back. They go way back. And if we don't begin to make those changes, we can change all the politics, we can change all the education, *pero* we're still in here [demonstrates]. I think if we're still going to continue, *como dice* totally in moderation. [Spanish]. And we're always going to [Spanish]. We're always going to be going back, and there's always going to be issues and problems with health.

Even with the food. I mean, you think of diabetes within our community, you think of lupus, you think of all these things that are basically within the Chicano community and the African American community, people of color who are not used to eating certain things, Native people who are not used to eating certain things, those are all—it's not just drugs and alcohol. I mean, *todo*, you know. Then you start

thinking it goes beyond our people, you know. I can go on and on on that, *pero*, yeah, like the tip of the iceberg. It's just kind of what comes to mind.

Valadez Eliazar, are some of these things pertinent to *danza*? You talked about if you focus on *danza*, does the leadership bring these things up, talk about these things? Do they try to create sort of a philosophy that people need to examine as they become members of a given *danza* group? Is that going on? Because in the area of government, there might have been some initial indigenous kind of consciousness, but obviously people who got involved with politics became involved with the dog-eat-dog kind of thing and who's going to be on top and how do you get the votes and what do you promise and how do you approach. And [Spanish]. I don't think there's ever been—I don't know, but my suspect is that there has never been a real strong consciousness about "Be careful that you don't become the very thing that you're talking against."

[01:31:28]

Muñoz Right.

Valadez In the area of *danza* and *danzantes* in the [Spanish], when people come together in a public ceremony, does the leadership talk to the public? Do they share these ideas, what the *danza* means, what the symbols are about, what's involved in *danza*?

[01:31:54]

Muñoz Yeah, I think it goes back to depending on the group. Some groups talk a lot about that and about self-awareness and about self-healing, and I've seen it here in Sacramento. I've had the privilege of visiting different *danza* groups. During

Palabra, after we dance during *Palabra*, they talk a lot about that, and more in others, *pero* I think the conversation has started, so I think since the conversation has started, I think it's really important that those things continue to happen. *Tambíen* is the resurgence of "So what are we wearing? Why are we doing these [Spanish]? [Spanish]?" And those things, I think, are important, too, because then it goes back to us.

It's not just about *danza*. It's not just about the steps. It's about raising a better community and about when you do your [Spanish], what does it represent? Okay, well, you're in battle. You're in battle against who? Well, against yourself, against the things that are happening within you. There's that whole [Spanish], the reflection within yourself, the things that need to happen, the Creator within yourself, [Spanish]. A lot of times we look up at a higher being, you know, and we think that "he" created us. They say "he" created us. Then the way I learned it, the way I learned it is this whole thing that happened between [Spanish] and [Spanish] and this whole big boom [demonstrates]. You know the scientists talk about the big—it's in our philosophy.

If you read about it and you go way back, oh, wow, our *gente* believed this? It was already talked about. We're made out of all the things that are up there, the universe and all these things. We're made out of all that. And for us to think that we are the only ones, I guess they say, it's kind of—*como se dice*—that there's only one person, one god, is kind of centric—*como se dice*? [Spanish].

In some places in some groups, maybe it's not talked about a lot, but I know that within our *maestros*, we talk about it. We talk about that and how we were created and how we're here, and our actions and our thoughts, how much they make a

change within other people, again with the understanding that we're human and that we make mistakes. And like you said, I know it's really hard when we say something to be conscious, and I do my best to be conscious of following it, too, and that's it right there. That's it right there. That within itself is not an easy thing to do. It's a hard thing to do.

But I'm not sure if I answered your question.

Valadez No, you did, you did. You're answering it.

[01:35:48]

Muñoz So, again, every group is different, and some groups [Spanish] and some groups [Spanish]. So we do our best to be respectful and to not go to somebody and say, "Hey, that guitar [Spanish]." I feel like saying it, but I don't, because [Spanish]. Earn everything, your feathers, who wears [Spanish], who wears [Spanish], so we do with what we got, but who wears them in the group, how much [Spanish] you have, it all signifies something, you know, and some people see it as a way to put people down. In some places I've heard that. It's like, no, no, not at all. [Spanish] to be over anybody. It's a way that people kind of got to see who you were in the community. "He's put in some work. She's put in some work. She's barely beginning. Let's go help her out," or, "Let's help them out." [Spanish]. "How long you been dancing, *mijo*?"

"Oh, six months."

"Okay, [Spanish]." Because we always try to raise better people.

One thing I love about *danza*, regardless whether it's this or that, that I always see [Spanish], we talk about bettering ourselves and improving and going to the

ceremonies, raising better young ladies, better young men, being aware of the ceremonies of [Spanish]. They're coming back. So that's one of the things I enjoy about it, whether guitar or no, [Spanish]. So, yeah, [Spanish].

Long answer, huh? [Spanish].

Valadez I'm so glad that you agreed to participate in this oral interview. I've always wanted to have more information about the *danza*, as much as possible about their origin, how it came to be with you. I wish you could get Pedro. I wish you could get some of the other people that I met later on in my career. But this is a part, I believe, of the core of the Chicano Movement that was very critical then. And I think Chuy stayed very, very much loyal to how he started. I used to hear him at the ceremonies, especially at the university, he would talk and explain about the dance and explain about what was going to happen and what they were going to do in a way that people could connect. He had his humor, but he was talking about bettering one's self to do some cleansing, to do the things that we talk about.

I have always been curious as to how that could change so that—not change, but so that it could be expanded so that we could have youth groups created not maybe as *danzantes*. *Danzantes* is a fairly dedicated group. But influenced or created by *danzantes* to follow the way of the *danzante*, not as a *danzante*, but as a better human being, a way to connect with a kind of identify of [Spanish] that does not come from corporate society. It's not the image that society--it's not about assimilation. It's about creating something uniquely different that belongs to us, that once upon a time probably was ours to be, because go back to past 500 years, there were youth groups. We need youth groups that can offer guidance and can offer

teachers in all kinds of areas, in the [Spanish] and in the [Spanish], at all levels of thought and life, and we don't have that. We don't have that. So we're just trying to create something different, and then all of a sudden becoming absorbed by the assimilation power of the society, and we just are left with the memories. We did something. We started something, but we were half-baked. We're half in the process. We're better than how we were for many of us and our children, better than we would have been if nothing like this had happened, but we're not where we ought to be. We still have a lot of work to do.

And you're one of those few people that has talked about that, and I really, really appreciate your *palabras*, your words, because I know a little bit about White Hawk and a little bit about some of the youth that I met from Watsonville. I always thought Watsonville has to be the capital of all this *indígenismo* because there and San Jose, that's where I heard the most Nahuatl that I've ever heard anywhere. I went to a conference, a Chicano Studies conference in San Jose, and one of the early ceremonies was being done by a *danzante* group, and their whole [Spanish] was in Nahuatl. I said, "Wow, we need that here." We've got to have that, not only because of the introduction of the language, but because there was a philosophy behind it, and we're always searching for some unifying principle that we desperately need, we don't have here. But thank you very much, Eliazar.

[01:43:19]

Valadez [Spanish], *gracias*, *gracias*.

[End of interview]