

## **Jeronimo: Anatomizing Unity & Culture**

Director Joseph Juhn's acclaimed documentary, *Jeronimo*, exemplifies the concept of unity, as well as the depiction of culture and identity preservation. Diaspora, a term derivative of the dispersion of exiled Jews outside of Israel, is a notion widely integrated throughout the film. The idea of Diaspora, a central theme of the documentary, demonstrates the significance of the solidarity of the remote Cuban-Korean inhabitants and the descendants that ensue. Furthermore, the disparity between the culture of Cuban-born Koreans and that of native-born Koreans is especially evident by the amalgamation of interviews conducted by Juhn to scholars and families of Jeronimo Lim, all of whom recount the story as to how past and ancestral generations inaugurated a collective of Cuban-Koreans and therefore paved the way to the diversification of ethnically similar, yet culturally varied Korean individuals. Juhn conveys the outlook of humanist philosophy and altruism through the endeavors undertaken by Jeronimo Lim, a Korean diaspora whose roots originate in the city of Matanzas, Cuba.

The documentary elucidates the fact that Jeronimo was initially an unwavering proponent for the Cuban culture and nationality, believing he was of a full-Cuban despite his dual identity. His prior dismissal towards his association as a half-Korean is emphasized when he partakes in the Cuban Revolution with his former classmate, Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz, due to his resolute support for the Cuban government and populace with a nearly nationalistic and deterministic viewpoint on Cuba. It is not until Jeronimo's visit to North Korea in 1967 where his unconditional fervor towards his split Cuban identity was suppressed by his disdain towards the division of the Korea peninsula: the manifestation of a North and South Korea. His disillusionment toward the thought of separation, which is the antithesis of the unity between both Koreas, reshaped his perspective on his individuality as a Korean individual. Jeronimo believed that the Korean region was a constituent of one entity, and yet the partitioning into two components instigated a sense of betrayal, pain, and neglect because the diversification of culture among both regions were hindered and not encouraged. As the North and South were unharmonious, the spread of culture could not exist between the two.

To Jeronimo, Korea was not the same as he previously anticipated. He began to understand the extent of his selfhood as a Cuban-Korean diaspora because the very idea of losing one's native homeland became a plausible and appalling reality. Thus, it was of utmost importance to him that the conservation of his identity and community was not of neglect. Juhn indicates that Jeronimo's dismay toward the current state of Korea consequently allowed him to further humanist values: one that pertains favoring a community of social equity and that the cultural history of an individual, or one's sense of belonging, can define an entire generation. Hence, the film illustrates that the core concept of unity and diversity are interconnected to one another, as Juhn explicates this theme through the exploration of the Cuban-Korean diaspora and their seclusion from the mainland country.