

Government-Sponsored Film and *Latinidad*

Voice of La Raza (1971)

LAURA ISABEL SERNA

In 1970, the *Albuquerque Journal* announced “Actor [Anthony] Quinn, [producer Lou] Adler May Hoist Banner of Minority Group.”¹ *Journal* readers learned that the Oscar-winning actor was filming “a scene” for a “government sponsored study of Mexican-American work opportunities.” That “study” was the film *Voice of La Raza* (1971), a sponsored film produced and directed by African American documentary and experimental filmmaker William (Bill) Greaves (1926–2014) under the auspices of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).² Quinn, born in Mexico to an Irish father and a Mexican mother and raised in the Mexican immigrant barrio of Boyle Heights in Los Angeles, starred in the film, which was written by Greaves in collaboration with Nuyorican documentary filmmaker José García Torres.³ Referred to in the press as an example of *cinéma vérité*, the film combines techniques including direct observation, staged interviews, and dramatizations to educate viewers about the unequal treatment of “Spanish-speaking Americans”—as Latin American immigrants and their children were commonly referred to during this period—in the labor market.

The film premiered in May 1971 at an EEOC celebration honoring Quinn, and then screened at numerous film festivals and on television.⁴ It won awards at the Atlanta International Film Festival and the Columbus Film Festival and an Emmy nomination in 1972 after it screened on public television in the New York area.⁵ The film also circulated in community centers, libraries, union halls, and military bases, initially as part of efforts to

increase awareness about labor discrimination and later as part of Hispanic heritage celebrations.⁶

In the context of the EEOC's activities in the late 1960s and early 1970s, *Voice of La Raza* was conceived of as an effective way to educate audiences about labor discrimination. The film mobilizes aesthetic strategies associated with politically committed filmmaking, including shooting on location and showcasing the voices and faces of everyday people in lieu of experts. At the same time, the film employs experimental techniques including dramatizations and psychodramatic confrontations that, understood in the context of Greaves's work in the late 1960s, highlight the increasing radicalization of Latinos in the U.S. and call attention to the need for social change. Thus, while some elements of the film align with the federal government's project of constructing an ethnoracial group, Hispanic, whose needs could be addressed by agencies like the EEOC, others draw attention to relationships of power between and within racial groups and the role of media in effecting social change.

To date, neither this film nor any of the other films about Latino issues made by Greaves for the EEOC have been analyzed. Scholarship on documentary treatments of Latino subjects and themes made in the late 1960s and early 1970s focuses primarily on films made by Chicano and Puerto Rican filmmakers. That work, much of which was produced in the context of the broader movement for civil rights, is most frequently discussed as a step toward feature film production.⁷ At the same time, *Voice of La Raza* and the other films that Greaves made for the EEOC are generally absent from considerations of his career, which focus primarily on his experimental work and documentaries related to African American history and culture. This chapter situates *Voice of La Raza* at the intersection of African American documentary, government-sponsored film, and films about the Latino experience.

Government-Sponsored Film and the EEOC

In the late 1960s, U.S. federal agencies charged with addressing discrimination began to use film in their work. Federal agencies had produced films to support programs and policies, train military personnel, and document important events. However, government-sponsored films did not take up race relations and discrimination to a significant extent until the late 1960s.⁸ Both the Commission on Civil Rights, formed as part of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, and the EEOC, which was created after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, saw film as crucial to their missions. The Commission on Civil

Rights, which made one film in 1971 and two in 1972, justified the expense by declaring, "Motion pictures present an attractive medium for the dissemination of information about Commission programs. They have the potential to reach a much larger audience than publications, particularly if they can be made suitable for presentation on TV."⁹ Reaching a large audience was also crucial to the EEOC, which was established to support legislation forbidding discrimination in employment, but lacked any enforcement mechanism for the first six years of its existence.

During this period, film and television constituted an important field of civil rights activism.¹⁰ Activists from African American, Chicano, and Puerto Rican communities protested the film and television industries that marginalized minority perspectives, traded in stereotypes, or ignored communities of color altogether. This activism led to some changes, especially in public television, where government and foundation support facilitated minority media professionals' participation and subsidized many of the documentaries that became the mainstay of public affairs programs aimed at minority audiences. Some of these media professionals received their training in two important but short-lived university-based programs designed to increase minority participation in film and media production, while others trained on the job.

In this context, William Greaves found opportunities.¹¹ Born in New York, Greaves trained as an actor in the 1940s before turning to filmmaking. Dismayed by the lack of opportunities for African Americans in the U.S. film industry, he moved to Canada. There he worked his way up at the National Film Board and eventually directed a well-received portrait of a public hospital, *Emergency Ward* (1959). Greaves returned to New York in the early 1960s as a public information officer at the United Nations, where he produced and directed a documentary about civil air flight, *Cleared for Take Off* (1963).

Throughout the 1960s, Greaves made documentaries about African American culture, public figures, and everyday life, worked in public television, and ventured into experimental docu-fiction with a feature-length film, *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One* (1968). Many of the documentaries Greaves made during this period were government-sponsored projects. As Rick Prelinger notes, in the postwar period sponsored film "production companies and 16mm distribution outlets proliferated," especially in New York where Greaves was based.¹² In 1964, Greaves founded William Greaves Productions, which promptly received contracts from the United States Information Agency to make a film about freedom of expression in the United States, *Wealth of Nations* (1964), and document the global gathering of black

artists in Dakar, Senegal, *The First World Festival of Negro Arts* (1966).¹³ In 1968, Greaves was signed to cohost the national black public affairs program *Black Journal*, where he served as executive director for the last two years he was affiliated with the show. It was in the context of *Black Journal* and public television that Greaves mentored younger filmmakers and likely met José García Torres, who had been a central force in the creation of a New York–based Latino public affairs program, *Realidades*.¹⁴

Greaves was more than qualified to produce the types of films the EEOC required, but also benefited from personal connections and government programs. Greaves came to the attention of the EEOC via Olivia Stanford, the successful black businesswoman who served as the commission’s information specialist from 1967 to 1970 and whom *Jet* magazine credited with being a “leading force” in Greaves landing agency contracts.¹⁵ In addition to Stanford’s advocacy, he benefited from a provision of the Small Business Act (originally signed into law in 1954), SBA 8(a), that strove to help businesses owned by women and minorities, like William Greaves Productions, obtain government contracts.¹⁶

The films Greaves made for the EEOC reflect a documented shift in the federal government’s attitude toward Chicano and Puerto Rican communities. Under Lyndon Johnson and then Richard Nixon, the federal government worked to popularize the designation “Hispanic” to signify a broad ethnic group composed of diverse Latino populations. As Cristina Mora explains, the promotion of this term was part of a larger political project: “Fearing the rise of militancy and sensing the opportunity to win more votes both Johnson and Nixon created agencies that would purportedly represent Mexican American and Puerto Rican needs within the federal government.”¹⁷ In this context, the EEOC, which appointed its first Mexican American commissioner in 1967, began to examine and hold hearings about the question of labor discrimination against Puerto Ricans in New York and Mexican Americans in the Southwest.

The EEOC engaged Greaves’s services to help document this work. In fiscal year 1971, the EEOC reported that it had paid Greaves for four films: *The EEOC Story*, a film describing the “machinery of the EEOC and how it serves both the minority community and women,” narrated by African American actress Ruby Dee; *Power versus the People*, which consisted of footage from the EEOC’s hearings in Houston, Texas, in 1970; *Struggle for Los Trabajos*, a film depicting the “investigation and conciliation process of a violation of the rights of a Mexican American white collar worker;” and the most expensive of all these productions, *Voice of La Raza*.¹⁸



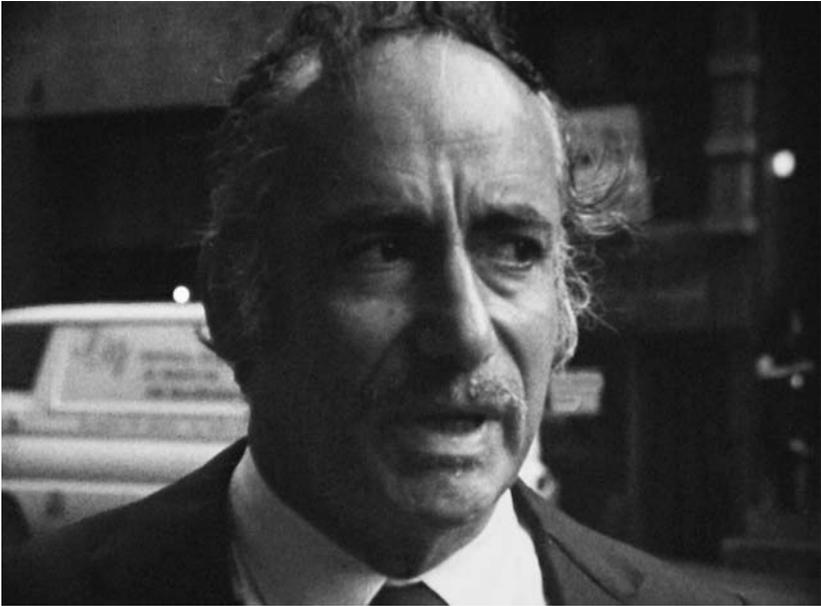
FIGURE 15.1. Anthony Quinn listens to a group gathered in East Los Angeles. *Voice of La Raza* (William Greaves, 1971). Frame enlargement courtesy of Dino Everett, USC Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive.

Voice of La Raza

Voice of La Raza cost \$87,000 to make and featured the star power of not only Anthony Quinn but also fellow Academy Award winner Rita Moreno. Beyond utilizing the exceptional visibility of these two Latino stars, the film appeals, beginning with the term *la raza* or “the people” in its title, to the spirit of the radical movements that had emerged in Mexican American and Puerto Rican communities during the late 1960s. Chicano activists had taken up the term as a way of expressing shared experiences of conquest, colonialism, and imperialism amid regional struggles such as land reform in New Mexico or education in Southern California.¹⁹ The title also gestures toward a fundamental strategy for achieving social change that emerged out of this activism: allowing the Chicano community to speak for itself.²⁰

Shot in 16mm on the streets of Los Angeles, New York, and Albuquerque, *Voice of La Raza* focuses on everyday people. Descriptions of the film suggest it emerged organically “out of conversations and questions asked by Quinn in his travels across the country concerning the plight of Spanish-speaking Americans.”²¹ Characterized as an example of *cinéma vérité* or





FIGURES 15.2–15.4. (*Opposite, top to bottom*) A young man on the streets of Spanish Harlem in New York; the film's sole female voice on Pico Boulevard in Los Angeles; (*above*) a white-collar Puerto Rican worker in New York. *Voice of La Raza* (William Greaves, 1971). Frame enlargements courtesy of Dino Everett, usc Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive.

direct cinema, the film is structured around a series of interviews with “witness-participants,” a strategy that Bill Nichols argues characterizes politically committed films of the 1970s.²² Significant portions of the film are devoted to sequences of Quinn engaged in conversation with young people. In heavily accented English, street slang, or with traces of regional accents, these men (and one young woman) shown in close-up recount their experiences of being discriminated against by employers or educators. These interviews take place most frequently on the street but also in other public spaces like a church courtyard or a campus quad where ambient noise such as traffic, music from a passing band, and other conversations lends an immediacy and authenticity to the scenes. Some people speak timidly, having to be coaxed into speaking by Quinn, while others engage him with confidence.

Though the audience hears the voices of these everyday people, our experience of them is mediated by a series of narrators whom the film grants varying degrees of authority. The first and most important narrator is Quinn. When the camera focuses on crowds or groups of people on the street, the camera seeks him out and shows him listening intently, head cocked to one side, eyes on whoever is speaking. He reinforces his listening role when he declares, “It doesn’t matter if you are in the barrios of Los Angeles or streets of New York, I found there is much to learn if you just listen.” At the same time, his mellifluous voice dominates the film, and he is granted interpretive authority as he places his interviewees’ comments in broader social and cultural context in voice-over that follows each interview or in scenes of Quinn himself being interviewed. Phrases such as “I can relate to” and “I have to personalize” and his consistent use of “we” emphasize his connection to the experiences of the people he interviews even as he seeks to explain them to the film’s viewers.

Quinn was well suited to play the role of mediator between the film’s informants and audience. An international star, he was well known to the filmgoing public, for whom his Irish surname and a career built playing Mediterranean types obscured his Mexican roots. But Quinn, as the press frequently noted in passing, grew up in Boyle Heights, a barrio of East Los Angeles. Beginning with the Sleepy Lagoon case in the 1940s, Quinn became an increasingly visible advocate for the Mexican American community. In the early 1970s, he lent his name to a range of causes related to education and other issues.²³ He was not, however, considered a radical. As one article phrased it, he was “opposed to nationalism of any sort, but . . . equally concerned with equality for minority groups.”²⁴ Thus, Quinn’s politics and public persona were well calibrated to the concerns of the federal government.

Three other voices serve a similar, if secondary, mediating function. A nameless male voice that speaks grammatically correct English with a Spanish accent offers factual commentary in an expository mode at different points in the film. For example, over footage of Spanish Harlem, this voice explains the different Latino groups living in New York and how Puerto Ricans came to constitute a significant ethnic group there. Later, the same narrator explains the work of the EEOC and introduces a brief sequence on filing a complaint. Two other voices belonging to EEOC regional commissioners Vicente Jimenez and Tom Robles likewise explain and contextualize. Their white-collar jobs, signaled by office buildings, meeting tables, and desks flanked by American flags, mark them as educated, and they are presented as experts on both the issue of labor discrimination, by virtue of their roles at the EEOC, and Spanish-speaking populations in the United States, by virtue of their personal backgrounds. Jimenez, the EEOC commissioner in Houston, speaks at length to what the viewer assumes are fellow EEOC employees about the degree of alienation Mexican American children encounter in public schools. Robles, the EEOC commissioner in Albuquerque, recounts that when he left the military he could only find work as a manual laborer, experiencing the problem of discrimination in the workplace firsthand. Like Quinn's, their voices, positioned as native informants and experts, contextualize the experiences of the film's working-class interviewees. While the film eschews the "voice of God" narration of classical documentary, it offers not the voice of *la raza* but rather multiple voices that speak from distinct social positions: uneducated, educated, unknown, famous, blue collar, white collar, and so on. Commonalities emerge within this diversity, the most salient being the experience of discrimination in the labor market.

The film uses other formal elements, most notably montage, to construct a shared identity out of historical and regional diversity. Establishing shots of Spanish Harlem, East Los Angeles, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, are marked by street signs or other written text to locate sequences at specific geographic coordinates. Montage sequences bind those spaces together. For example, EEOC officer Jimenez's declaration that the nation's ten million Spanish-speaking Americans need to be "treated as a national group in national terms" is accompanied by a montage of workers in various settings: cooks preparing food in hotel kitchens, men clocking in at factory gates and rail yards and pushing carts on urban streets. Another slower and longer montage sequence, with no establishing shot to ground it geographically, shows children, young women, and older people sitting on top of cars, on front porches, at bus stops, or entering their modest homes. Vicente Jimenez,

whose voice we hear over the images, invokes Mexican writer Octavio Paz's description of Mexicans in the United States as "beauty in tatters." The Spanish guitar music that accompanies this sequence (and most of the film's transitions) suggests a shared cultural identity regardless of geographic location. Finally, another brief montage sequence composed of a series of photographs of pre-Columbian pyramids and other built structures with paintings of the conquest illustrates Jimenez explaining Latino history and culture to a group of colleagues. This sequence brings to mind the primary visual strategy of Luis Valdez's film adaptation of the important Chicano movement poem by Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzales, *Yo soy Joaquín* (1969), which is composed entirely of filmed still images. In different ways, these montage sequences propose connections across geographical space and historical time, educating viewers—Anglo and Latino alike—about Latinos' shared historical, cultural, and social experiences.

What is more, despite the fact that the film is almost entirely spoken in English, it proposes language as a central axis for a shared ethnic identity.²⁵ In an extended sequence, Quinn speaks with young children in New Mexico. For the first time in the film, we hear Spanish spoken. The camera moves in closely to their slightly dirty faces, while Quinn asks repeatedly, "Are you Spanish?" They reply that that they do not know or that they are English. A dismayed Quinn asserts, "You have to speak Spanish," a sentiment he reinforces in voice-over that ties language to identity. These combined strategies—erasing geographical space and proposing a shared history and language as binding forces—offers a cultural rather than political model of ethnic identity. In this way, the film seems to participate in the federal government's project of developing a "bureaucratized category" that could encompass disparate Latino groups in order to "extend and further legitimate, instead of threaten, government policies."²⁶ While these strategies appear to hold radical politics at bay, Greaves uses experimental techniques to underscore the growing militancy of Chicano and other Latino youth.

The Message

Toward the end of *Voice of La Raza*, Tom Robles, the EEOC officer from Albuquerque, declares forthrightly, "The message of this film is you either do it within the law, within the legal system that [*sic*], within what we have now. And this is a message to employers. Or else. . . . Let's get rid of this discrimination bit or you're going to have chaos." His statement raises the specter of

civil unrest and recontextualizes the voices we have heard over the course of the film—the dejected young Puerto Rican actor in New York, the frustrated unemployed Chicano in Los Angeles, the Chicano students at the University of New Mexico skeptical about their future employment prospects—as more than expressions of personal experience; their voices are the rumblings of radicalization.

While the film links labor discrimination to racism, primarily through the multiple narrators' explanations and analyses, at key moments in the film Greaves stages conflict to suggest the need for reflection and dialogue. Sociodrama and psychodrama, therapeutic techniques that use role-playing and dramatization to address group or personal issues, had become popular in mental health circles and were being used at the Actors Theatre in New York, where Greaves was a director, actor, and teacher.²⁷ Greaves had used such techniques before. In *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*, his widely hailed experimental documentary that captured the filming of a scene repeated and improvised on, Greaves used the principles of psychodrama to explore the relationship between director, cast, and crew and also to investigate how conflict emerges among members of a group, in this case his crew.²⁸ In *The Company of Men* (1969), a management training film sponsored by *Newsweek*, depicted a sociodramatic encounter between “hardcore unemployed” (as the description of the film on the William Greaves Productions website phrases it) working-class African American men and white auto industry executives. The film sought to facilitate communication between the two groups and thus to generate understanding and eliminate preconceptions. In 1970, Greaves wrote a *New York Times* editorial in which he hailed “psychodramatic and sociodramatic encounter television” as a means of “improving mass mental health and social reform.”²⁹

Greaves's commitment to these techniques explains key elements of *Voice of La Raza* that deviate from the film's assumed pedagogical function. The film makes use of both dramatization and sociodramatic techniques to raise awareness of the subjective and social dimensions of race-based labor discrimination. The opening sequence of the film consists of a dramatization in which an Anglo supervisor discourages a Puerto Rican worker from applying for a promotion. In conversation with Quinn after the dramatization ends with José the electrician going back to Puerto Rico, José the actor reflects on his own experiences of labor discrimination in the film and television industry. In the process of playing this role and subsequently reflecting on that process, José and the viewer gain insight into his personal experience and what he might have in common with other Latinos.



FIGURES 15.5. A Puerto Rican mail room attendant, boxed in by his workplace. *Voice of La Raza* (William Greaves, 1971). Frame enlargement courtesy of Dino Everett, usc Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive.

This dramatization is mirrored by the penultimate sequence of the film, in which Greaves stages a sociodramatic encounter between a young Chicano and a group of fathers who represent older, middle-class Mexican Americans. Over the course of the film, Greaves establishes the theme of passivity—José the fictional electrician quietly accepts his supervisor’s dismissal of his capabilities. A Puerto Rican mail room attendant asked by Quinn if he had hopes of finding a better job replies, “The boss like that I take care of here.” The image accompanying his reply shows him literally hemmed in by the walls of his small office, trapped behind the desk where he has worked for fourteen years. Both Quinn and Moreno recall their parents’ fears of any government official, a fear Moreno attributes to Puerto Ricans being a “sweet and passive people.”

This passivity contrasts sharply with the militancy of the young Chicanos featured in a long sequence shot on the campus of the University of New Mexico. Throughout the sequence, the camera lingers on scenes of Chicano youth engaged in political organizing in a classroom, grilling Quinn about his own politics, and finally in a smaller, mixed-gender group that discusses the failure of agencies like the EEOC to adequately address the issue of labor

discrimination. The problem, one young man declares forcefully, is that employers fail to see past race, “what you represent,” as he phrases it. He contends that racial thinking contaminates encounters with employers regardless of an applicant’s professional or educational qualifications.

The phrase “take away his suit” functions as a sound bridge to a shot of a man with close-cut hair wearing a suit and tie. With this image, the viewer enters a different generational and social space. Jeans and T-shirts have been traded for suits and ties and the words “Chicano” and “Black” replaced by “Spanish” and “Negro.” The film’s secondary narrator describes this group of parents (fathers actually) seated on sofas in a sterile, institutional room as “willing to work within existing structures.” A voice that we learn is that of Greaves asks, offscreen, “Do you have any thoughts on this?” The camera swings left to focus on a young man wearing glasses, a black armband, and a United Farmworkers pin, who had not appeared in the previous shots. He challenges the group of suit-clad men, pointing his finger and raising his voice. The camera captures this conflict, moving back and forth from speaker to speaker. While the fathers assert that things have improved, the young man insists, in ever more heated language, that things are in fact still quite bad. Finally, with an American flag off to the left of the frame just behind him, he shouts, “If caring about my people makes me a radical, a communist, I am a fucking communist.” One of the men stands up, clearly provoked.

At this point Greaves himself appears on screen, breaking the fourth wall and any illusion of objectivity. With his sound tech standing just behind him, Greaves intervenes, urging the man, who accuses him of planning this confrontation, to see the impact the heated exchange will have on the film’s future viewers. This encounter visualizes in microcosm two approaches to addressing racial inequality: one gradual and conciliatory and the other militant. While it dramatizes the film’s principal message to employers—make change or you will have social unrest—it also throws into high relief tensions within the Latino community and suggests, by modeling such communication, the need for intragroup dialogue.

Setting up and facilitating this encounter also gestures toward the role Greaves imagined for the media in helping communities and individuals navigate the divide between activists and the institutions they sought to do away with or reform, between racial groups, and between militant and more mainstream political orientations within racial groups. The latter was a topic he had explored in his 1968 film *Still a Brother: Inside the Negro Middle Class*, made for National Educational Television. As in that film, the question about



FIGURES 15.6–15.7. A young Chicano student challenges members of his parents' generation. *Voice of La Raza* (William Greaves, 1971). Frame enlargements courtesy of Dino Everett, USC Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive.

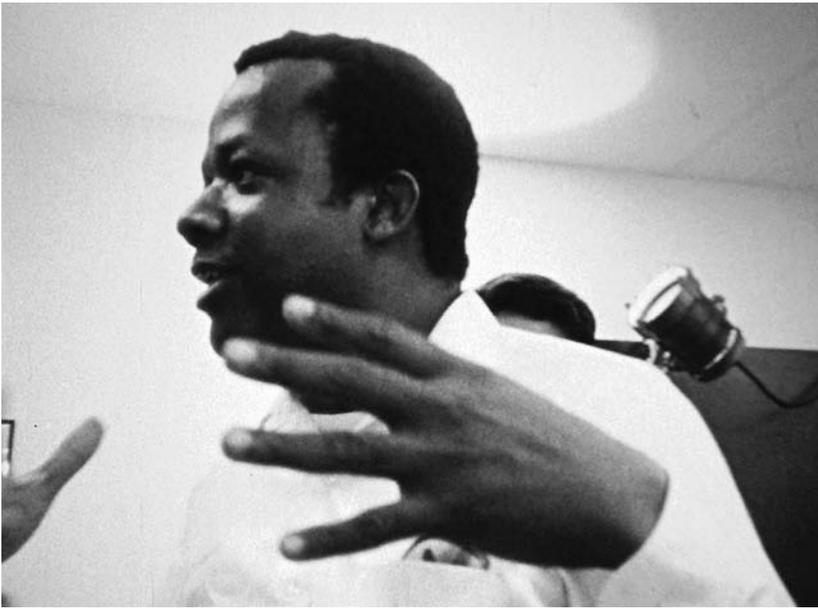


FIGURE 15.8. The filmmaker makes an appearance in the middle of a heated conversation. *Voice of La Raza* (William Greaves, 1971). Frame enlargement courtesy of Dino Everett, USC Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive.

whether to adopt a radical nationalist stance or take a more accommodationist approach was set against mainstream media's circulation of images of so-called race riots and protests. While Chicano and Puerto Rican activists received far less media attention than their black counterparts, when their actions were covered they were framed in predictable negative ways. As Randy Ontiveros has written, the mainstream media, when it deigned to cover the Chicano movement, "positioned Mexican Americans as radicals while discursively linking the Chicano movement to other perceived threats, including black militancy, war unrest, the youth counter culture, and Latin inflected communism."³⁰ Similarly, the Young Lords, a radical leftist organization that emerged in Puerto Rican New York and Chicago, was frequently the object of sensational media coverage.³¹ These images of militant urban activists hover offscreen in *Voice of La Raza*. Compliance with antidiscrimination legislation, the film suggests, would ensure that violence, protests, and civil unrest stayed offscreen. At the same time, the film pushes less radicalized segments of the Latino community toward an understanding of the motivations of militant young activists.

Conclusion

In 1975, Chicano filmmaker Francisco X. Camplis dismissed *Voice of La Raza* as “little more than an exploration of the problem of job discrimination and unemployment.”³² In part, this dismissal stemmed from his own conviction that only a Chicano filmmaker was qualified to make films about the Chicano experience or the Chicano community. Setting to one side the question Camplis raises about a filmmaker’s identity as a prerequisite for representation, a close analysis of *Voice of La Raza* demonstrates that Greaves, even within the confines of sponsorship by a government agency, sought to do more than merely educate or inform his audience about a given topic. Instead he sought to portray the impact of racial discrimination on individuals, carve out a role for middle-class figures (as well as film stars), and model the way that confrontation could generate inter- and intragroup understanding of social issues. While Greaves combines techniques such as montage, direct address, and multilayered narration to construct a shared identity that would fit more readily into the federal government’s framework for addressing inequality, he also employs experimental techniques to explore tensions within the Latino community and express the urgency of communication between and within racial groups.

FILMOGRAPHY

The film discussed in this chapter can be streamed through the book’s web page at <https://www.dukeupress.edu/Features/Screening-Race>.

Voice of La Raza (1971), 53 min., 16mm

PRODUCTION: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and William Greaves Productions. DIRECTOR: William Greaves. WRITERS: William Greaves, Jose Garcia. CAMERA: Jose Garcia, William Greaves. ASSISTANT CAMERA: Steve Garcia, Bill Johnson. MUSIC: Vicente Saucedo. EDITORS: John Dandre, William Greaves. SOUND CREW: David Greaves, Ned Judd, Juan Rodriguez. UNIT MANAGER: Bob Gonzalez. PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Olivia Stanford. CAST: Anthony Quinn, Rita Moreno. ACCESS: Texas Archive of the Moving Image.

RELATED FILMS

The EEOC Story (1970), 38 min.

PRODUCTION: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and William Greaves Productions.

In the Company of Men (1969), 52 min.

PRODUCTION: Newsweek and William Greaves Productions.

Power vs. the People (1970), 36 min.

PRODUCTION: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and William Greaves Productions.

Still a Brother: Inside the Negro Middle Class (1968), 90 min.

PRODUCTION: National Educational Television and William Greaves Productions.

Struggle for Los Trabajos (1970), 35 min.

PRODUCTION: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and William Greaves Productions.

Symbiopsychotaxiplasm (1968), 75 min.

PRODUCTION: William Greaves Productions.

NOTES

- 1 "Actor Quinn, Adler May Hoist Banner of Minority Group," *Albuquerque Journal*, November 21, 1970, A14.
- 2 The film's release date has been cited as 1972, but the film was finished and had been screened by the spring of 1971. The film is available on a number of websites including Texas Archive of the Moving Image, http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Voice_of_La_Raza, and is listed on the William Greaves Productions website as available for purchase, <http://www.williamgreaves.com/catalog.htm>.
- 3 Surprisingly, García Torres, an active documentarian in the 1960s and 1970s and producer of the WNET public affairs program *Realidades*, has received scant scholarly attention. He is mentioned in overviews of New York-based Puerto Rican filmmakers by Chon Noriega in *Shot in America: Television, the State, and the Rise of Chicano Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 150–51; and Lillian Jiménez, "From the Margin to the Center: Puerto Rican Cinema in New York," *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Bulletin* 2, no. 8 (spring 1990): 28–43.
- 4 "Actor Honored for Battling Discrimination," *Progress-Index* (Petersburg, VA), May 22, 1971, 12. Television listings in local papers indicate that the film was shown by Los Angeles station KTTV (Channel 11) in the greater Southern California area and subsequently, presumably via cable broadcast of KTTV programming, in Illinois, Northern California, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and even Pennsylvania. See, for example, *Redlands Daily Facts*, July 22 1972, 6; *Pomona Progress Bulletin*, July 23, 1972, 9; *San Antonio Light*, March 12, 1972, 28; *Oxnard Press Courier*, July 23, 1972, 11; and *Newsday*, August 20, 1972, E35.
- 5 "Black Producer's Film about Chicanos a Winner," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, July 15, 1971, B2A; "Anthony Quinn in Movie," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 25, 1971, B9; and "Greaves Nominated Thrice," *Back Stage*, December 15, 1972, 7.
- 6 "Awareness Workshop Set in TF," *Times-News* (Twin Falls, ID), March 28, 1973, 2; "Hispanic Week," *Press-Courier* (Oxnard, CA), September 11, 1972, 8; "Cinco de Mayo Films," *Arcadia Tribune* (Arcadia, CA), May 5, 1974; "Activities Slated for Hispanic Week," *Press-Courier*, September 11, 1972, 8; and "Hispanic Film Set at Library," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, September 13, 1975.

- 7 See Charles Ramirez Berg, *Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, Resistance* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Noriega, *Shot in America*; and Rosa Linda Fregoso, *The Bronze Screen: Chicana and Chicano Film Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). It is rare to find sustained treatment of specific documentary films from the 1960s and '70s beyond a handful of key film texts such as *Requiem 29* (Raul Ruiz and David García, 1971); *Yo soy Joaquín* (Luis Valdez, 1969); and *Chicana* (Sylvia Morales, 1979).
- 8 In a 1963 catalog of government films available for public use, only one film from 1947 touched on the topic of race relations. That film was listed under three different headings: Discrimination, Minorities, and Race Problems. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, *US Government Films for Public Educational Use 1963*, OE-34006-63, Circular No. 742 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964). Richard Dyer McCann notes only two examples of films with a focus on race in *The People's Films: A Political History of U.S. Government Motion Pictures* (New York: Hastings House, 1973), 55 and 192.
- 9 U.S. Congress, Senate Subcommittee on Departments of State, Justice, Commerce, the Judiciary and Related Agencies, Hearings before a Subcommittee on Appropriations, 92d Congress, 1st sess., 438.
- 10 On the African American civil rights movement and television, see, for example, Aniko Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time: Television and the Civil Rights Movement* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Steven Classen, *Watching Jim Crow* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); and Sasha Torres, *Black, White, and in Color: Television and Black Civil Rights* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).
- 11 For a general account of Greaves's life and career, see Noelle Griffis, "'This Film Is a Rebellion!': Filmmaker, Actor, *Black Journal* Producer, and Political Activist (1924–2014)," *Black Camera* 6, no. 2 (spring 2015): 7–16; Adam Knee and Charles Musser, "William Greaves, Documentary Film-Making, and the African-American Experience," *Film Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (spring 1992): 13–25; Kay Eastman and Brenna Sanchez, "Greaves, William 1926–2014," in *Contemporary Black Biography*, vol. 123, ed. Margaret Mazurkiewicz (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2015), 66–69; and Steven Otfinoski, "Greaves, William," in *African Americans in the Visual Arts* (New York: Facts on File, 2011), 88–90.
- 12 Rick Prelinger, *The Field Guide to Sponsored Films* (San Francisco: National Film Preservation Foundation, 2006), vii.
- 13 On the United States Information Agency's development of its film production program in the 1960s, see Sonke Kunkel, *Empire of Pictures: Global Media and the 1960s Remaking of American Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2016), 45–46. Letter from William Greaves to Hon. Joseph P. Addabbo, April 17, 1981, reprinted in *Hearings before the Subcommittee on SBA and SBC Authority, Minority Enterprise and General Small Business Problems, Washington DC May 21; June 4 and 10, 1981* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), 71.
- 14 See Lillian Jiménez, "Puerto Rican Cinema in New York: From the Margin to the Center," *Jump Cut*, no. 38 (June 1993): 60–66; and Noriega, *Shot in America*, 150–52.

- 15 *Jet* magazine claimed that Stanford was “the leading force in Greaves’ firm winning the unusual contract to produce the film [*Voice of La Raza*].” “Ex-TV Producer, Anthony Quinn Team in Job Bias Film,” *Jet*, June 10, 1971, 52. In the Virgin Islands, Stanford’s adopted home to which she returned in 1971, the local newspaper gave her production credit for *Voice of La Raza* and other unnamed films, including television spots. “Local Director’s Film Deals with Prejudice,” *Virgin Islands Daily News*, June 12, 1971.
- 16 U.S. Congress, House, *An Act to Amend the Small Business Act of 1953*, 15 U.S.C. 631 et seq.; 72 Stat. 384 et seq. Public Law 85–536, 384, 85th Congress, 1st sess., July 8, 1958.
- 17 G. Cristina Mora, *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 46.
- 18 These descriptions are drawn from an appendix attached to a 1988 hearing and William Greaves Productions’ list of films. *The EEOC’s Performance in Enforcing the Age Discrimination in Employment Act: Hearing before the Special Committee on Aging*, U.S. Senate, 100th Congress, 2d sess., Washington, DC, June 23, 24, 1988 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), 510–11. *Voice of La Raza* cost \$87,000 to produce. *Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, the Judiciary and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1973 Part 4* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), 857.
- 19 For an overview of the historiography on the diverse manifestations of the movement, see Mario T. Garcia, ed., *The Chicano Movement: Perspectives from the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2014).
- 20 Dennis López, “Good-Bye Revolution—Hello Cultural Mystique: Quinto Sol Publications and Chicano Literary Nationalism,” *MELUS* 35, no. 3 (fall 2010): 198. See the primary sources collected in Darrel Enck-Wanzer, *The Young Lords: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2010). On media representations in particular, see Lillian Jiménez, “Moving from the Margin to the Center: Puerto Rican Cinema in New York,” in *The Ethnic Eye: Latino Media Arts*, ed. Chon A. Noriega and Ana M. López (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 22–37.
- 21 “Greaves Film Cops 2nd Festival Nod,” *Afro-American*, September 25, 1971, 9.
- 22 Bill Nichols, “The Voice of Documentary,” in *The Documentary Film Reader: History, Theory, Criticism*, ed. Jonathan Kahana (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 640.
- 23 Anthony Quinn Script Collection, California State University Northridge, Special Collections, box 41, folder 16. Among his papers are numerous reports and pamphlets regarding Chicano land rights claims and activism in New Mexico, the EEOC’s hearing on discrimination in the film industry, and the Chicano movement in Los Angeles.
- 24 “Actor Quinn, Adler May Hoist Banner.”
- 25 Rafael Pérez-Torres notes that for Latinos (Chicano/as in his analysis), “ethnic identity can be tied to linguistic skills.” Rafael Pérez-Torres, “Chicano Ethnicity, Cultural Hybridity, and the Mestizo Voice,” *American Literature* 70, no. 1 (March 1998): 155.

- 26 Mora, *Making Hispanics*, 49.
- 27 Maria San Filippo, "What a Long, Strange Trip It's Been: William Greaves' 'Symbiopsychotaxiplasm': Take One," *Film History* 13, no. 2 (January 2001): 217. On the relationship between psychodrama and Method acting in the 1950s and '60s, see Shonni Enelow, *Method Acting and Its Discontents* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015). She devotes the last chapter to *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*.
- 28 *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* has received a great deal of scholarly attention since its wide release in 2001 and the release of a Criterion Collection DVD in 2006. Insightful readings of the film's relationship to jazz can be found in Akiva Gottlieb, "'Just Another Word for Jazz': The Signifying Auteur in William Greaves's *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*: Take One," *Black Camera* 5, no. 1 (October 2013): 164–83; and Charles P. Linscott, "In a (Not So) Silent Way: Listening Past Black Visuality in *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*," *Black Camera* 8, no. 1 (October 2016): 169–90.
- 29 William Greaves, "100 Madison Avenues Will Be of No Help," *New York Times*, August 9, 1970, 13.
- 30 Randy Ontiveros, "No Golden Age: Television News and the Chicano Civil Rights Movement," *American Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (December 2010): 908.
- 31 Ángel G. Flores-Rodríguez describes the way that mainstream media portrayed the Young Lords in Chicago as "an undisciplined street gang." Ángel G. Flores-Rodríguez, "On National Turf: The Rise of the Young Lords Organization and Its Struggle for the Nation in Chicago," *Op. Cit.*, no. 20 (2011–12): 136.
- 32 Francisco X. Camplis, "Towards a Raza Cinema," in *Chicanos and Film: Representation and Resistance*, ed. Chon Noriega (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 297.