

## DERACINATION AND ACCULTURATION: THE BORDER IN CHICANO FILM PRACTICE

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The Mexican-American border has been described by Mexican filmmaker María Novaro as '*una herida que no cicatriza*' ('a wound that never heals').<sup>1</sup> Novaro's metaphor is especially apt, for it points to both the physical and psychological aspects of the hardships involved in crossing the border.

Noam Chomsky vividly communicates the dangers inherent in border crossings in the following account:

Mexicans continue to flee to the United States for survival, and here . . . macabre tales abound. The Mexican press reports drownings, disappearances, and 'the disappearance or theft of women for the extraction of organs for use in transplants in the U.S.' (quoting a regional Human Rights Committee representative). Others report torture, high rates of cancer from chemicals used in the maquiladora industries (assembly plants near the border, for shipment to US factories), secret prisons, kidnappings, and other horror stories.<sup>2</sup>

The external hardships involved in crossing undetected are reflected in the less evident psychological toll paid for migrating to a completely foreign society, as Carola and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco attest:

Although migration may bring about an improvement in economic conditions, it also ruptures the 'immigrant's supportive interpersonal bonds' . . . well recognized to be crucial for psychological well-being. In addition, migration may psychologically represent a cumulative trauma. It often results in multiple losses, the effects of which are not always immediately apparent.<sup>3</sup>

A further pressure is brought to bear by the need to conform and to simulate belonging to the dominant U.S. culture. Mexicans who cross into North America are often subjected to racist treatment because of their difference from the mainstream, while Mexican-Americans who have become part of U.S. culture do not see these recent arrivals as their

peers but as a threat or an embarrassment because of their lack of integration.

In light of the ambiguities and hardships evoked by the border in the minds of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, it is hardly surprising that Hollywood's use of the border as a cinematic emblem has provoked strong reactions on the part of Chicano critics. The desire to maintain the border as protection against the nefarious influence of the South is well articulated by Gary D. Keller in his analysis of the function of the border in U.S. film: 'From the very earliest times, the "border" came to be associated with all forms of violence. It was a zone in which anything could, and would take place, a place free from the responsibilities and restrictions of North American law.'<sup>4</sup> This interpretation of U.S. cinema's representation of the border is undoubtedly true up to the 1960s, but after this time, filmmakers recognised that their presentations of the border needed substantial rethinking.

The dawn of political correctness brought John Sturges's *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), a revisionist Western that featured a gang of U.S. cowboys who were employed by poor Mexican villagers to defeat a ruthless Mexican bandit. Every effort is made to present the villagers as noble people whose pacific natures make them easy targets. The film is ultimately patronising, however, and presents the Mexicans as rather pathetic, childlike figures. What is more, the storyline implicitly sanctions North American intervention in Mexico, presenting it as well-intentioned and beneficial to both nations, as U.S. military and tactical superiority prevails. In the end, *The Magnificent Seven* differs little from more conventional Westerns, and it did little to advance cinematic portrayals of Mexican society for obvious reasons — the protagonists were North American, not Mexican, and the plight of Mexicans, even

when dealt with sympathetically, remained peripheral.

The shortcomings of North American border films inspired Chicano filmmakers to present their own stories of deracination and cultural upheaval. The border's multiple meanings have proved to be a rich source of inspiration for Chicano filmmakers. In the films discussed in this paper, Gregory Nava's *El norte* (1983), Luis Valdez's *La Bamba* (1987) and Cheech Marin's *Born in East L.A.* (1987), the border functions as an emblem of the complexities and diversity of Chicano experience.

*El norte* begins in the village of San Pedro, where brother and sister Ernesto and Rosa live with their parents. Their idyllic indigenous community is destroyed by battles between the villagers and unidentified outsiders over land and crops. As the violence escalates and their parents disappear, Rosa and Ernesto realise that their lives too are in danger, and they venture to *el norte*. Despite the graphic violence used to communicate the persecution of the villagers by outside forces, little indication of the background to these events is given, as both John King<sup>5</sup> and Richard Allen<sup>6</sup> observe. The film's lack of elaboration on the political and economic circumstances behind the massacre depicted means that the reasons for Ernesto and Rosa's flight remain rather puzzling. This omission may also run the risk of presenting Guatemala as a generic troubled Central American nation.

These misgivings aside, the disruption of the pair's lives by sudden, unexplained violence serves to heighten the contrast between the serenity of the initial *mise en scène* and the bloody aftermath. Furthermore, the disparity between the tranquility of Ernesto and Rosa's former lives and the violence that ruptured them anticipates the difficulties they will endure as they attempt to reach North America.

The contrast between their lovely village and the squalor of the border town of Tijuana could not be more extreme. The most striking part of this second episode is the border crossing itself, which takes the form of a horrifying journey through a disused sewer full

of rats. The sheer length of this scene, which lasts for almost ten minutes, draws the viewer in so that the claustrophobic, stifling atmosphere of the sewer is powerfully conveyed and identification with the protagonists intensifies. This arduous journey damages Rosa physically, and she ultimately dies of typhus contracted through rat bites. The crossing is seen to have a similarly detrimental effect on Ernesto, who becomes dazzled by the promise of the American Dream and begins to devalue his relationship with his sister.

The final segment of the film finds the brother and sister in Los Angeles. Rosa narrowly escapes the immigration police on her first day at work, but she befriends an older woman, Nacha, who finds her work cleaning houses and instructs her on adapting to American society and buys her U.S.-style clothes so that she will look less foreign. Ernesto's reaction to this transformation is less than enthusiastic, but Rosa is defiant and proud of the trappings of her new culture. Rosa's transformation and even her desire to assimilate further by learning English remain outward changes, however. She is consistently identified with her Guatemalan culture through flashbacks to her mother and the village, and she is baffled by the growing distance between herself and her brother, who prefers to spend time with his new acquaintances. Enrique learns some harsh truths about the position of immigrants from the streetwise George, who works in the same elegant restaurant as him. George mocks a Chicano bus boy called Carlos, calling him a *pocho*, to Ernesto's bafflement:

Ernesto: ¿Y qué es un *pocho*?

George: Es un Chicano.

Ernesto: ¿Cómo, Chicano?

George: Pues es ciudadano Americano, pero tiene familia que viene de México. Por eso tiene que hacer la misma mierda de trabajo que nosotros.

(Ernesto: And what is a *pocho*?)

George: It's a Chicano.

Ernesto: What do you mean, a Chicano?

George, Well, he's an American citizen, but he has family from Mexico. That's why he has to do the same shitty work as we do.)

This exchange leads to the clearest illustration of the minefield of cultural assimilation portrayed in *El norte*. Provoked by envy when Ernesto is promoted instead of him, Carlos calls the immigration police; both Ernesto and George are forced to flee the restaurant, thus losing their jobs. Ernesto, spurred on by George's reflection that a green card is the only way to have security, decides to take a job in Chicago that he had previously refused because he was not allowed to take Rosa with him. He is unaware at this point that Rosa is seriously ill and has been taken to hospital. When Nacha finds him and urges him to visit Rosa, he refuses and explains that he must go to Chicago to take up his job. This reaction is less cold-hearted than it may appear, since the scene in which Ernesto realises the importance of having a green card is intercut with scenes of Rosa's experience at the hospital, where she is treated coldly by a nurse who demands her green card. Nacha responds angrily to Ernesto's apparent lack of concern for his sister, saying: '*Rosa se puede morir, pero tú ya estás muerto*' ('Rosa may die, but you are already dead'). This assessment is essentially accurate. Ernesto has lost sight of the importance of his bond with Rosa, his only surviving family member, and he cares more about financial and legal security than about her welfare. In the end he relents and reaches the hospital just before his sister dies. The closing scene sees him competing for a labouring job that recalls his father's earlier warning that peasants are valued only if they have strong arms and that no consideration is given to their feelings.

*El norte's* powerfully depicts the hardships involved in immigration and the alienation felt by undocumented immigrants whose worth as individuals is ignored by the ruthlessness of the U.S. legal and economic systems. Ernesto and Rosa must adapt to a harsh new world in which Ernesto loses his connection with his culture. His increasing materialism and desperation to assimilate, while understandable to an extent, lead to the loss of his close relationship with Rosa, his only link with his former life and culture. The film's uncertain conclusion serves to highlight the day-to-day struggle of illegal immigrants, who have no

security and no guarantee that their lives will ever improve.

In *La Bamba*, Luis Valdez, the founder of El Teatro Campesino and a key figure in the Chicano Movement as the organiser of the United Farm Workers, sought to create a successful crossover drama that would resonate with mainstream U.S. audiences and teach them something of the difficulties faced by Chicanos in their society. In order to appeal to U.S. viewers, Valdez appropriates and conflates two conventional Hollywood genres, the biopic and the American Dream narrative.

*La Bamba* concentrates on the life of Ritchie Valens, a gifted 17-year-old musician who died in the same plane crash as Buddy Holly and the Big Bopper.<sup>7</sup> Despite his enduring popularity, Valens's story is not in itself sufficiently compelling to explain the remarkable impact and commercial success of the film. His life was too short and his fame too quickly achieved to provide sufficient drama for a screenplay. Valdez realised this and explored a different, little-known aspect of his life instead, his troubled relationship with his half-brother, Bob.

From the opening scene, the flamboyant Bob is evidently a foil to the measured, more conservative Ritchie. Bob, who has just been released from prison, drives a powerful motorbike decorated with the head of an Aztec warrior and a feathered Indian, motifs that associate him with both cultural authenticity and warrior-like masculinity. His tattoo of a cross symbolises Catholicism, although the juxtaposition of the Aztec and the Catholic emblems suggests a blend of the pagan and the Catholic and a resistance to the acceptance of one all-embracing philosophy. This combination of Western and pre-Columbian emblems also points to Bob's Chicano identity.

Bob's identification with his Mexican heritage is further underlined during the film's border crossing, when he takes Ritchie to Tijuana. Ritchie has consistently denied his Mexican heritage up to this point. His aspirations are solidly North American and middle-class. He aims to be a rock and roll star and to marry the chaste, blonde Donna,

and he seems proud of his inability to speak Spanish. His journey to Mexico brings him into contact with Mexican music and, somewhat ironically, leads to his recording of his biggest hit, 'La Bamba.'

When Bob takes Ritchie to see a *curandero*, Ritchie is at first sceptical, saying: 'Yo no speako español.' Bob persists, however, translating for Ritchie and acting as a bridge between the Americanised Ritchie and the Mexican shaman. This is the only scene in which Ritchie appears inferior to Bob, who is presented as more culturally authentic than his Americanised brother. Bob explains to Ritchie: 'He's a *curandero*, a healer and a wise man. He's sort of my spiritual father. I've been coming here for years.' Bob is shown to seek the answers to his societal and familial conflicts through his identification with Mexican culture and spirituality.

Much has been made of Ritchie's transformation after his journey to Mexico and encounter with the shaman, but the only lasting trace of his new appreciation of his heritage is his hit song. The fact that he translates an experience that ought to be spiritual into a product that brings him acclaim and financial reward is an indication that he still prizes commercial gain more than his Mexican culture.

Bob is the representative of the 'authentic' Chicano in the film, but he is hardly a sympathetic character. He not only drinks and takes drugs but also treats both his partner and his mother abusively and engages in self-pitying, maudlin behaviour with regard to his loss of a father figure.

Rosa Linda Fregoso acknowledges the chasm between the culturally authentic Bob's delinquency and Ritchie's wholesome image, but she suggests that the latter's assimilationist tendencies lead to a positive blending of cultures:

Cultural vitality and retention are linked to social deviance, whereas socially mobile Chicanos like Ritchie seem to guarantee the circulation of Chicano culture on a broader scale, as the example of the recording of a popular song like 'La Bamba' for mass consumption indicates.<sup>8</sup>

This assertion is questionable, for the triumph of the song is a reflection of both the successes and shortcomings of Valdez's film. Like the song, the film draws attention to and celebrates Chicano culture through a form of artistic expression. While the song is certainly an important marker of Chicano talent and innovation, it is not clear that it leads to a greater appreciation of Chicano culture in U.S. society. It would appear that Donna's parents, for instance, are more impressed by the financial rewards and status that result from Ritchie's success with the song than by its links to a Chicano culture that is only acceptable to them in the modified form represented by the assimilated Ritchie. Likewise, the film *La Bamba* celebrates a meeting of cultures that is possible only for Americanised characters like Ritchie. At the film's conclusion, Bob remains much as he has been from the outset, a disturbed character whose longing for an elusive father figure is replaced by his mourning of his dead brother.

The real paradox at the heart of *La Bamba* may be the difficulty of incorporating complex sociopolitical issues into a mainstream film aimed at a teenage audience. A more profound reflection on the ambiguities of cultural assimilation would not only make the film too overtly ideological but would presumably doom its box-office performance. *La Bamba* represents an important commercial triumph for Chicano features. Although it was made on a budget of only \$7 million, it grossed over \$60 million in the United States alone and had a record 77 Spanish-language prints.<sup>9</sup> Its rather confused articulation of Chicano identity notwithstanding, the film is notable for its successful recasting of Hollywood formulas to create an entertaining and informative mainstream film that appealed to North American and Chicano audiences alike.

*Born in East L.A.* examines another aspect of border politics, namely the forced repatriation of people of Mexican origin. Richard 'Cheech' Marin, who also wrote and directed the film, stars as a Chicano mechanic, Rudy Robles, a third-generation native of Los Angeles. Early in the film, Rudy is caught up in an immigration raid and deported to Mexico as an

illegal alien. Despite his fluent English, Chicano appearance and insistence that he is a U.S. citizen, he is considered Mexican. Lacking identification documents and with his family out of town, he has no one to turn to and is forced to confront the experience of 'real' illegals, the crossing of the border. The remainder of the film concerns his desperate attempts to earn enough money to return home. He works for a North American opportunist called Jimmy and meets Dolores, a woman from El Salvador with whom he forms a relationship. Finally, he, Dolores and many other immigrants storm the U.S. border patrol and return to East L.A. as the Cinco de Mayo festival takes place.

Marin's film is far from solemn, despite his serious theme. Before making *Born in East L.A.*, Marin had a successful career as a comedy actor and co-directed several films, such as *Up in Smoke* (1978), with his partner, Thomas Chong. Marin's solo debut drew on his former cinematic experience by using humour as a weapon, as he acknowledges in a 1988 interview:

I believe that important subjects can be dealt with as entertainment ... throughout film history, comedians have often been the first ones to bring issues to the public. Underneath that mask of humour, a lot of comedians are moralists, because it's easier to get somebody to look at a problem if they can laugh first and think later.<sup>10</sup>

Although Marin points to an important shift from his previous work in his effort to reveal serious issues through comedy, it is to his credit that he does not tone down the bawdy humour that marked his earlier cinematic output. Instead of presenting Rudy as a saintly character who is instantly sympathetic, Marin portrays him as a rather ambivalent figure. As the narrative action begins, Marin is heard singing the film's eponymous theme song. The camera pans through the Los Angeles cityscape, from skyscrapers, which denote public space, to the domestic space of a neighbourhood and a well-kept, attractive house that is revealed to be Rudy's home.

This opening scene is significant not just in establishing Rudy as part of Los Angeles culture but also in overturning stereotypical

presentations of Chicano neighbourhoods, as Chon A. Noriega comments:

the home, with its fence, well-kept yard and a tree, becomes a defining unit for the barrio, rather than . . . a montage of graffiti, gangs, drug deals and so on that signify problem space. In essence, East L.A. is identified as an appropriate location for the American Dream.<sup>11</sup>

The dual identity of the home is revealed in the North American setting and style of its exterior and the recognizably Chicano atmosphere inside. The occupants of the house are members of an extended family that spans three generations. The religious devotion of Rudy's mother and her use of phrases like *m'hijo* indicate her connections with Mexican culture. The U.S. entrepreneurial spirit is also an aspect of her character, however, as she tells her son that she has rented the house across the street and asks him to lodge the money. Rudy displays considerable ambivalence towards his Mexican heritage at this point in the film. He mocks both the garish picture of the Crucifixion his mother proudly displays and his immigrant cousin's inability to speak English.

The following scene, in which Rudy encounters a French woman on his way to work at his garage, has been analysed at length by Noriega:

The French woman functions as a border symbol, embodying the dual or double-edged notion of 'liberty' the French acted out in the Americas in the mid-1880s. In addition to the occupation of Mexico, of course, the French also presented the Statue of Liberty to the United States as a gift of freedom to the world (dedicated in 1886). On an iconographic level, the French woman shares the 'exaggerated and slightly vulgar' stride of the statue, while her position between the two flags and her red-white-and-green color scheme imply that for Chicanos and Mexicans the colonial experience still prevails over notions of universal liberty.<sup>12</sup>

The action to which Noriega refers features the French woman, who is dressed provocatively and who causes chaos as she walks through the neighbourhood, against the backdrop of a mural that features the flags of Mexico and the United States. Her positioning

at the centre of these flags suggests that she is a symbol of a border, and the notion that she is related to the Statue of Liberty is also appropriate, given its location on Ellis Island, the gateway to a new life for countless immigrants through the centuries. However, Noriega's analysis of this character neglects to situate her in light of the strong comedic thrust of the film. Her main function is not to point to France's intervention in Mexican history, a subtle point that is hinted at rather than explicitly made in the film. Instead, she acts as another indication of the negative aspects of Rudy's character. Rudy's exaggerated lust towards this woman directs laughter against the male voyeurism that has its roots in Marin's early films. Fregoso notes that this character also functions 'as a sign of the construction of Chicano sexual desire for a white woman'.<sup>13</sup> The burlesque quality of Rudy's interaction with this woman both mocks the revered symbol of U.S. inclusiveness that is the Statue of Liberty and parodies filmic portrayals of Chicanos' desire for white women. The combination of this scene, which suggests Rudy's desire for an exotic 'other', and the film's underscoring of his distance from his Mexican culture through his rather antagonistic conversations with his family point to his need to reassess his values and reconsider his cultural origins. It is fitting that the sequence that presents the French woman directly precedes Rudy's deportation, for his odyssey can be seen as a series of trials that ultimately lead him to prize the culture he had devalued or ignored in favour of Westernised objects of desire.

Rudy is not the only character in the film to experience confusion about Mexican culture. Jimmy, the North American who befriends Rudy and offers him a variety of jobs so that he can earn enough money to return home, explains his reasons for being in Mexico in terms of Hollywood fantasies of the borderlands:

Well, you know, it's kinda like in them cowboy movies, you know, when the two guys are on horseback and they're riding across the plains and the posse is chasing them, you know, and one guy says to the other guy, if we can just make it to the Mexican border, we can make it.

Despite his poor articulation of the lure of the border, it is clear that Jimmy is caught up in the dream of reaching a mythic land, which promises escape from U.S. law and order and a new beginning. This fantasy allows him to overlook the reality of his situation as the owner of a rather sleazy bar who exploits Mexicans, Chicanos and the El Salvadorean Dolores. Jimmy's sense of entitlement, because he provides employment and makes money, causes him to ignore the complexities of cultural difference.

*Born in East L.A.* is most notable for its reversal of the normal attributions of good and evil based on race. Commenting on Rudy's attempt to cross the border by stowing away in a camper van driven by an elderly U.S. couple who turn out to be drug smugglers, Fregoso asserts that:

As opposed to the barrage of media images, not all drug smugglers are of Latino extraction. The film forces viewers to engage dominant codes of valorization and, in so doing, positions viewers in the unsettling role of questioning hegemonic racist signs.<sup>14</sup>

The film's constant deconstruction of social codes is most evident in the figure of Rudy, who is transformed by his experiences in Mexico. Through his contact with Asian refugees, Dolores, a poor woman with hungry children and other characters, Rudy learns that he is part of a diverse community that is united by its otherness in the United States. His shift from the rather selfish outlook he displayed at the beginning of the film to an awareness of the problems faced by others is his greatest achievement, and soon after this he is finally released from his odyssey and allowed to return home.

At the film's conclusion, Rudy has earned enough money to pay his passage home. His transformation is seen to be complete when he makes a magnanimous gesture to a couple who are forced to separate because they cannot pay a coyote the sum he demands. Rudy steps in and gives the woman his place. This act does not mean that he is forced to return to his life in Mexico, however. In an improbable

conclusion, he, Dolores, a group of Asian men and countless other immigrants sprint past two border guards and cross into East Los Angeles moments later, to the accompaniment of Neil Diamond's song 'America'. Victor Fuentes's celebratory response to this finale is typical of the reactions of Chicano critics:

We see Rudy . . . raising his arms in the manner of an orchestra director or of the universal author. At his signal a whole multitude is set in motion. This uncontrollable multitude goes running down the hill, flooding the dividing barrier of the border in their oceanic union, a border that for them doesn't exist in the first place.<sup>15</sup>

Fuentes appears to see no contradiction between the film's structuring around the obstacles that prevent Rudy from returning home and the ease with which he and hundreds of immigrants simply run across the border. This unchallenged crossing across a border that Fuentes suggests does not exist for the immigrants makes a nonsense of the action that has preceded it. The conclusion is undoubtedly comic, but as West and Crowds point out, it has little basis in reality and is 'politically naïve in that it perpetuates the myth of boundless opportunities for illegal aliens in the U.S.'<sup>16</sup>

Despite this disappointing conclusion, the film is effective on many levels. Rudy's expulsion from his own country recalls the U.S. government's forced repatriations of Mexicans or Mexican-Americans throughout the twentieth century. The misery of living in a place in between, a borderland populated by degenerate characters, sleazy bars and desperate would-be immigrants is clearly articulated. Finally, the importance of Mexican heritage is affirmed as Rudy moves from unawareness and disinterest in his spiritual home to embracing its ethos and bringing it to Los Angeles with him.

Taken as a whole, the three films discussed in this paper provide a complex, multifaceted view of the border as an integral part of Chicano identity. In *El norte*, the protagonists cross over the border in desperation but do not find the promised land they had anticipated. For Rosa, the pursuit of the

American Dream ends in death, while her brother loses sight of his own identity in his anxious bid to be truly American. In *La Bamba* and *Born in East L.A.*, the protagonists are ostensibly in a more secure position as regards their national identity, since both of them are American citizens. Ritchie's lack of connection to his culture is seen as a terrible loss by his brother, however, who aims to bring him into contact with Mexico through a brief trip across the border. Rudy is forced to go to Mexico, a fact that further underlines his deracination and disconnection from his roots, as it is doubtful that he would have gone to Mexico out of choice. Both men benefit from their journey south by gaining a greater appreciation of their heritage, although the extent to which this affects Ritchie is limited, while *Born In East L.A.* does not deal with the consequences of Rudy's enlightenment. Border crossings are ultimately presented in a rather ambivalent light. The squalour of Mexican border towns is evident, and the results of the journeys are at times mixed. There is little doubt that the journey north, in the case of Ernesto and Rosa, is far more negatively coded than the journey south of the border, however. The final message seems to be that the quest for one's origins, while arduous and discomfiting, leads to enrichment, while the journey north promises only transitory material fulfillment.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> From an interview with Fernando Celín, 'Comparta nuestros sueños,' *El Semanario*, (November 5, 1995), 7. My translations throughout.

<sup>2</sup> Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy* (London: Vintage, 1991), 225.

<sup>3</sup> Carola and Marcelo Suárez Orozco, 'Migration: Generational Discontinuities and the Making of Latino Identities,' George de Vos (ed.), *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation* (California: AltaMira Press, 1995), 332.

<sup>4</sup> Gary D. Keller, *Hispanics and United States Film: An Overview and Handbook* (Tempe: Bilingual Press, 1994), 84.

<sup>5</sup> John King, *Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas* (London: British Film Institute, 1993), 100.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Allen, 'El Norte,' *Framework*, 26-27, (1985), 88.

<sup>7</sup> Simon Garfield, 'The Resurrection Shuffle,' *Time Out*, 19, 890 (September 1987), 19.

<sup>8</sup> Rosa Linda Fregoso, *The Bronze Screen: Chicana and Chicano Film Culture*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 45.

<sup>9</sup> Fregoso, 39.

<sup>10</sup> Dennis West and Gary Crowdus, 'Cheech Cleans Up His Act: An Interview with Richard 'Cheech' Marin,' *Cineaste*, 16, 3 (1988), 37.

<sup>11</sup> Chon A. Noriega, 'Waas Sappening?: Narrative Structure and Iconography in *Born in East L.A.*,' *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, 14, (1995), 111.

<sup>12</sup> Noriega, 114.

<sup>13</sup> Fregoso, 49-51.

<sup>14</sup> Fregoso, 59.

<sup>15</sup> Victor Fuentes, 'Chicano Cinema: A Dialectic between Voices and Images of the Autonomous Discourse Versus Those of the Dominant,' Chon A. Noriega, ed., *Chicanos And Film: Representation and Resistance*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 1992, 215.

<sup>16</sup> West and Crowdus, 34.

## **Filmography**

*El norte*, (United Kingdom/United States, 1983)

American Playhouse/Independent

Producer: Anna Thomas

Director: Gregory Nova

Colour, 139m

*Born in East L.A.* (United States, 1987)

Clear Type

Producer: Peter MacGregor-Scott

Director: Cheech Marin,

Colour, 81m

*La Bamba* (United States, 1987)

New Visions

Producer: Taylor Hackford

Director: Luis Valdez

Colour, 108m