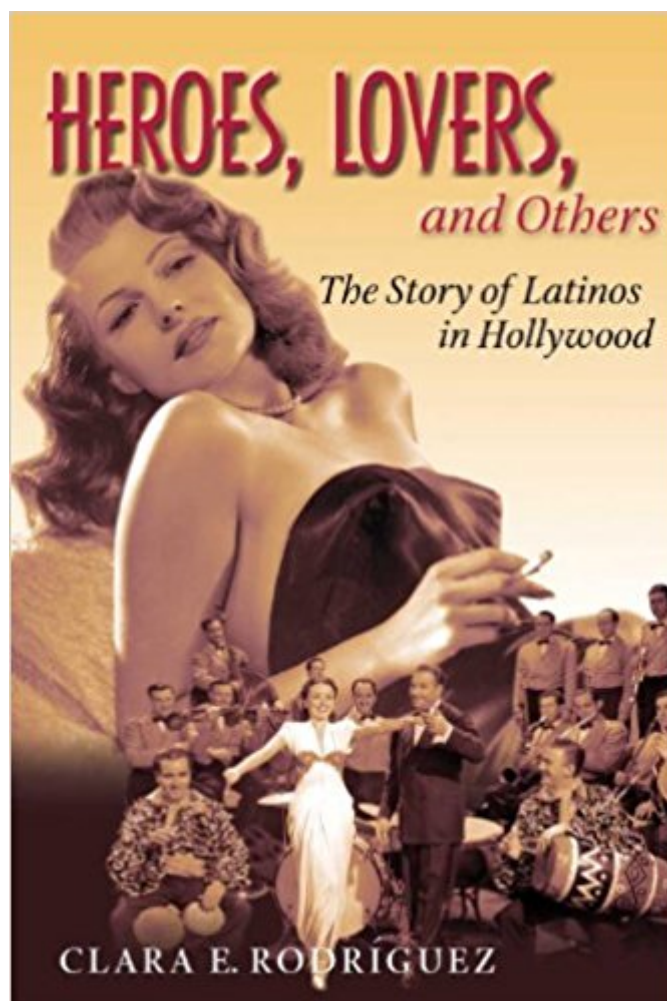


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Heroes, Lovers, And Others: The Story Of Latinos In Hollywood



Synopsis

Heroes, Lovers, and Others tells the fascinating history of Latinos in film, from the birth of the movies to the present, through a series of stories about Hollywood's most famous and enduring stars. The book features such Latino legends as Dolores del Rio, Rita Hayworth, Ramon Navarro, Desi Arnaz, Anthony Quinn, Raquel Welch, Selma Hayek, and Antonio Banderas. The sparkling parade of Latino film stars presented against the backdrop of American social and cultural history changes the way we think of race and ethnicity in Hollywood and challenges us to reexamine conventional ways of viewing our past.

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Customer Reviews

Rodríguez's cultural and ethnic history traces the work of Latino actors in American film from the silent era to today. Although the Fordham University professor's specialty is sociology and her research is compiled from clip files and an assortment of secondary sources, her smooth writing and passion for the topic make this a worthy introduction to Latino film studies. Rodríguez breaks her study into five periods, showing how political and social conditions shaped the way Latinos were received in Hollywood and depicted onscreen. Interestingly, the past seems to be repeating itself. In the silent film and early talkie days, like in today's "postmodern" era, Latinos were much in demand and often cast in a variety of roles regardless of their ethnicity. But in between there were many lean years, marked by invisibility and stereotyping. In the "good neighbor" era of the 1940s, lighthearted and musical Latinos such as Cesar Romero and Carmen Miranda

dominated. In the Cold War era of the 1950s, despite movies such as *West Side Story* and *Giant*, Latinos were largely invisible, and the Hispanic backgrounds of Latin stars like Anthony Quinn and Raquel Welch weren't usually recognized. The 1960s and 1970s saw an "era of contestation," she writes, in which Hollywood movies cast Latinos largely as criminals, prostitutes or welfare cases, although comedians like Cheech Marin and Charo also emerged, and other Latinos began making their own films. Rodriguez also recognizes the impact of gender and class issues and includes plenty of bios of Latino actors, from Dolores Del Rio and Jose Ferrer to Jennifer Lopez and Benecio Del Toro. But a little less factual data and a little more analysis of films featuring Latino characters would have strengthened her otherwise engaging book. 57 b&w photos. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"When Hollywood films are discussed in print," says Rodriguez, "a certain journalistic and academic amnesia sets in about the role of Latinos in the history of Hollywood." Determined to redress this lapse, she offers, rather than a survey of stars, a social history of Latinos in Hollywood. At first, many Latino actors used their real names; softening one's ethnicity came later. Some stars, striving to appear more exotic, aspired to a more Latino identity. Joan Crawford, for instance, was described in 1928 as "more Spanish than the Spaniards themselves" in a Photoplay photo of her in Spanish-themed attire. Despite emphasizing the aspects of Latino participation in Hollywood society, Rodriguez still succinctly describes many stars: Dolores Del Rio "was internationally exotic," Lupe Velez "was decidedly ethnic and sexualized," and so forth. Comprehensive up through Penelope Cruz and Antonio Banderas, not to mention cultural icon Cheech Marin, her handy compendium leans a bit toward the academic in places but remains a very readable resource on Latino influence and presence in Hollywood and pop culture generally. Mike Tribby Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Just ordered this because my daughter has to write a paper for Spanish class about a famous Latino/a. She was given Raquel Welch as her subject, and there is almost NOTHING to be found about her that doesn't stress her sex symbol status to an extent inappropriate for a school assignment! Even if another reviewer states there are errors in that portion of this book, we apparently have few choices. I am also very disappointed to see--by a quick "look inside" at the index--that the late, groundbreaking comedian Freddie Prinze and his show "Chico and the Man" are nowhere mentioned. But there do seem to be a lot of other people I will be interested in reading about, as I have been fascinated with the culture since living in California as a child, right up to

minoring in Spanish in college. So maybe this purchase will be worth it. I will probably amend my review to comment on that later.

very interesting book i had to read this for my chicano cinema class in college.

This book describes the lives of Latinos as viewed on cinema and television. The need to disguise or hide Latino roots or to emphasize ethnicity for the Latin Lover to the Lady Latina Spitfire. A wonderful book for those of us who like cinema and the changing view of what is American.

Great way to know about the Latino culture filmography history.

This book was alright. Bought it because I needed it for a class. It is very informative and talks about chicano movie stars. I will probably look at it again, in the future.

Fabulous book!

It was that gorgeous sepia cover of Rita Hayworth that first drew me to this book. I'm not a movie buff, but that classic pose captivated me, and when I saw the numerous dramatic stills of famous screen icons from across the entire history of film, I immediately purchased four copies-for my mother, my two aunts and my niece. Rita Hayworth was born Margarita Carmen Cansino, I quickly learned, and she had begun her career as a Latin dancer and actor. Her's is only one of a flood of stories of Latinos stars throughout Hollywood's first century. The book is an easy and quick read, but I ended up learning a lot about how the history of Hollywood and America are intertwined. I felt that the historical context deepened and enriched the stories and provided them with a greater meaning. One of my favorite stories is about an Austrian actor named Jacob Krantz, whose acting career was going nowhere until he changed his name to Ricardo Cortez and immediately became a big star. His brother Stanley followed him to Hollywood, also changed his name to Cortez, and won several awards as a cinematographer. And did you know that Anthony Quinn came to the US illegally, and picked crops, preached on street corners and boxed before becoming a major star? The author writes with an accessible style and great insight. The pictures are wonderful. I'm neither Latino nor a big movie-goer, but I still loved "Heroes, Lovers and Others" because it is such a lively collage of wonderful stories about America and the rich variety of people who populate it.

Rodriguez gets us thinking about the place of Latinos in US feature film from the very beginning to the present and in a sense, it's a book with a happy ending, because after decades of near-invisibility, Latinos and Latinas are becoming highly visible and indeed stars with huge followings. I mean, like it or not, Jennifer Lopez has millions of fans, as does Christina Aguilera. Intriguing are her portraits of Hollywood's Latin stars of days gone by, from the dashing Gilbert Roland to the gay superstar Ramon Novarro, and the answers to trivia questions like Olga San Juan. But she has some facts wrong, and it makes me wonder if even I, a non-Latino, can pick up some mistakes she has made, who knows maybe there are even more I don't know about! In her article on Raquel Welch, first of all she deplores the fact that Jo Raquel Tejada was forced to change her name to Welch. She says that "Welch was another name in her family." Every fan of Raquel's in fact knows that "Welch" is the name of Raquel's first husband, and she didn't "steal" it or anything from some other member of her own family. Rodriguez also claims that Raquel made her screen debut in the call-girl melodrama *A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME*, when most historians credit her in appearing in the Elvis programmer *ROUSTABOUT* way before *AHINAH*. But, all in all you can't go wrong with Rodriguez (except when she goes wrong), and I love her description of Anthony Quinn as having the greatest gift of a screen actor, the ability to make audiences think they have known the character he is playing in any particular picture, that they have known him for a long time. It's a quirky observation, but a valid one, and a valuable one to boot.

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