

HISTORICALLY CHINGADXS: MEXICAN AND CHICANX FILM AND THE ONGOING  
PRESCENCE OF COLONIAL SPANISH SEXUAL POLITICS

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By

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## Abstract

The main objective of this thesis is to gain an insight of the effects of Spanish Colonialism on Mexican/Chicano culture. More specifically, the goal of the thesis is to investigate the ways that the effects of colonialism can be found in Mexican/Chicano film. My goal was to specifically investigate the ways that Spanish ideas about Gender and Sexuality can be observed in film. In order to situate my intellectual framework, I used the first chapter to gain an insight into Spanish conceptions that center around women and masculinity. In my investigation of the films *Tizoc*, *Blood in Blood Out* and *Quinceañera* I discovered that Spanish ideas that center around women's virginity and male chivalry can be observed in Mexican/Chicano films. This thesis was written with the intention of providing a unifying framework for Gender and Sexuality studies, decolonial studies and film studies with the hope of giving an alternative medium to examine Gender and Sexuality outside of Literature.

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## **Introduction: Historical and Scholarly Overview**

My goal throughout this thesis is to investigate the ways in which Spanish colonialism has shifted conceptions in Mexican culture and the ways in which this can be observed by analyzing Mexican and Chicano film. The introduction of my thesis is rooted in gaining an insight into pre-Columbian ideas about queer sexuality. My main interest in the introduction is to shift the idea that pre-Columbian societies were havens for queer sexualities and that white-Christian colonialism introduced anti-queerness into these societies. During my research for the introductory chapter, the plurality of indigenous people became apparent, so much so that the idea of trying to unify indigenous thought was illogical. I became aware of the diversity of indigenous people and the way that anti-queerness was a part of some indigenous societies and not a part of others. My main contribution to this conversation was to point out that the Christianization of indigenous people lessened much of the queer positivity that could have been found in Mexico. My desire for doing this is not to dismiss colonialism or at all apologize for any kinds of Spanish colonial acts, violent or cultural. My goal was to respect indigenous plurality and to be true towards indigenous history.

My second chapter focuses on the play by Pedro Calderón De La Barca titled *El Médico de su Honra*. My interest in analyzing/investigating this play was to learn about Spanish conceptions of gender and sexuality. The play has been useful in providing an illustration of the cis-hetero patriarchy of early modern Spain. When I first began my research, I viewed the play in a superficial manner. After engaging with my secondary sources, specifically Georgina Dopico Black, I realized that Calderón is critiquing this culture based on male honor. This does not eliminate the importance of the play to my thesis because the play still functions as

representation of the gender dynamics of Spain during the 1600's. The other secondary source that I use for my second chapter is Hilaire Kallendorf's *Sins of the Fathers: Moral Economies in Early Modern Spain*. This book helped me learn about the social background of Spanish life during the era and the different ways that men maintained patriarchal rule. One example is through the murder of women and the custom of jousting in order to decide a woman's innocence.

One of the other sources that this thesis utilizes is Octavio Paz's book *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. This book is crucial for understanding the gender dynamics in Mexico. Moreover, I use this book in order to think about the term chingado and chingada. For Paz, the chingado/chingada dynamic led to the modern gender dynamics of Mexico. This dynamic is one in which the male is respected and considered strong and virile if he has sex with a woman. For Paz, the woman is soft and passive. The subservience of women occurs as a result of this male sexual terrorism. Paz explains that this dynamic first occurred with colonization, in which the Spanish Conquistadores acted as the chingones, and indigenous women were the chingadas. I expand on this in order to think about modern Chicano life in relation to "chingadx" and the way that the inclusion of the x in the term provides space for rethinking gender dynamics in Chicano culture. Moreover, the inclusion of the x allows for a new space in which men can take up the role of the chingada.

After setting the social and mental framework of both regions (pre-Columbian Mexico and early modern Spain) I move into my first film, a Mexican film titled *Tizoc* (dir. Ismael Rodríguez, 1957). One of the issues that I had with this film is that there is not a direct veneration of white manhood, but a veneration of white womanhood embodied by the main female character named Maria. Nevertheless, I was still able to tie this to colonialism. I chose to

analyze this film because of the inclusion of anti-indigenous sentiment through the portrayal of the main character Tizoc. He is depicted as either a noble savage and later as a barbaric savage. My main goal with my analysis of this film was to show the intersection between the veneration of the Virgin Mary/Character Maria as well as the anti-indigenously that is depicted through the character of Tizoc. This film was useful in showing power relations in Mexico that I expand in the next chapter.

In the last chapter of my thesis I investigate two US-made films that center on Chicano life, both of which are made by white directors. The first film that I analyze is *Blood In, Blood Out* (dir. Taylor Hackford, 1993). I choose this film due to its depiction of Chicano gang life. The film is effective at exposing the violence that occurs in Chicano neighborhoods as a result of cis-hetero-patriarchy. The film is also able to expose connections between gang machismo and colonialism through the Chicano/Mexican gang's use of pre-Columbian culture in order to build homosocial solidarity. Moreover, there is a connection between the film and *El Médico de su Honra*. The codes of honor and manhood that were established in Spain during the 1600s can be observed in *Blood in, Blood Out*. These are the codes of honor and manhood that lead to violence in the community and cause the death and imprisonment that fills the screen in *Blood in, Blood Out*. This violent film is balanced by the second film that I analyze in my last chapter. The second film is *Quinceañera* (dir. Glatzer and Westmoreland, 2006). I chose this film because it exposes the way that the Spanish catholic emphasis on a girls/woman's virginity is still present in Mexican culture. In order to analyze this movie I first had to gain basic knowledge about pre-Columbian societies.

The multiple ethnicities that existed prior to Spanish colonization in what has now become the modern socio-political-geographical space of Mexico had different viewpoints in

regard to gender and sexuality. Some of these viewpoints did not conform to a cis-heterosexual mental framework. These different ideas are within the context of specific pre-Columbian indigenous cultures without the influence of Spanish Catholic colonization. In a 2016 article entitled “Actitudes homofóbicas entre los indígenas del Nuevo mundo: los casos Azteca, Inca y Mapuche en Fuentes de los siglos XVI y XVII,” Mauricio Arenas and Cesar Gamboa discuss the homophobic inclinations of some indigenous groups. According to Arenas and Gamboa, “the Spaniards recognized the diversity of the indigenous cultures of the new world, and consequently, did not attribute an identical nature to all the towns” (361). Gamboa and Arenas later go on to outline the conceptions that some indigenous Mexicans had regarding homosexuality.

One of the most famous scholars that writes on the queer positivity of indigenous people is Peter Sigal. Sigal wrote about the way that an Aztec god’s gay sex with another god gave Mexica men the freedom or acceptance to have gay sex in their personal lives (Arenas 361). Arenas and Gamboa assert that this is not the case. According to the authors, the gay sex that Tezcatlipoca has with another god did not give men the freedom to have gay sex. This lack of freedom comes from the idea that gay sex requires a passive male. Negative views surround passivity in men. Arenas and Gamboa make a connection between Tezcatlipoca’s gay sex and that of the Egyptian gods Horus and Seth in which Seth ultimately ejaculates into Horus’s anus serving as an act of domination. Arenas and Gamboa argue that the Mexica story operates in the same way. Tezcatlipoca was also the object of insults. Arenas and Gamboa cite Bernardino de Sahagún, who wrote that some Mexica would say, “You, Tezcatlipoca, are a faggot, you’ve outwitted and deceived me” (364). This is an outright illustration that Tezcatlipoca’s gay sex was not viewed in a queer friendly light.

The ideas that Arenas and Gamboa outline in regard to homosexuality are disgusting and terrifying. Arenas and Gamboa cite Juan de Torquemada, who wrote about the treatment of Aztec priests when they had illicit sex. If they were caught with a woman his “property would be taken away and he would be exiled” (364). However, if the priest were having sex with a man, he would be “burned and hung” (364). According to Juan de Torquemada, indigenous Mexicans that were gender-queer also ran the risk of being hanged. Arenas and Gamboa write that laws did not only apply to the commoners but were equally applied to the royalty as well (366). One famous example is of a king named Nezahualcoyotzin. This king had a son who, although he was considered brave and courageous, was accused of the “nefarious crime” and executed. His father ratified his punishment (366). Alonso de Zorita (an indigenous man), who outlined the case with Nezahualcoyotzin, also wrote about the insult “cuilon” (366): according to Zorita, gay sex was so abhorred by his indigenous culture that the worst insult one could give to another man is “cuilon” which translates to faggot in English.

All of this indigenous Mexican discrimination against queerness seems to be primarily focused on the Mexica or the Nahuatl. By focusing on the hegemonic indigenous culture Arenas and Gamboa fail to think about the plurality of indigenous perspectives on queerness. Given the plurality of indigenous people, there must have been some groups or native Mexican nations that had differing conceptions about queerness. In the compilation *Latin American Male Homosexualities* there is an essay by Clark L. Taylor entitled “Legends, Syncretism, and continuing echoes of homosexuality from pre-Columbian and colonial Mexico”; it describes an openness to queerness that Arenas and Gamboa do not delineate in their article. Taylor argues that although the Mexica (Aztecs) politically dominated many indigenous groups, they allowed them to keep their cultural practices. Taylor argues that this includes “sexual practices” as well

and that “indigenous pluralism persists: a rich diversity of customs and attitudes (including attitudes about sexuality) still exist today” (81). According to Taylor, there is a kind of Mexican conception that there was a “great deal of homosexuality and bisexuality in both the gulf and pacific coastal regions of Mexico before the conquest” (95). Taylor mentions a respondent from Veracruz who learned a saying as a child: ““It is good luck having a fag in the family”” (95). Taylor tells of another story about his friend from Veracruz. This friend visited his elderly aunt. During the visit, he and his lover were having sex one night. His aunt discovered the two and her reply was “do what you want to do, fuckers” (95). Lastly, Taylor mentions a group of effeminate men known as *Locas* in Hermosillo Mexico who go around taking care of a group of young men and adolescents. Taylor outlines the way that these *Locas* of Hermosillo are similar to Muxe (96). The Muxe are a category of people that belong to the lowland Zapotec region of Mexico (Taylor 96).

Beverly Chiñas wrote an essay, which is contained in the same compilation as Taylor’s work, entitled “Isthmus Zapotec attitudes toward sex and gender anomalies.” Chiñas writes that there is an element of conventional Catholic conservatism for the Zapotecs. They uphold the concept of “virgin brides and women’s honor” (Chiñas 293). Although they uphold these values, Chiñas writes that they have a group of people in their society named the Muxe. Chiñas describes the Muxe as men that “display certain feminine characteristics” (294). The Muxe occasionally deal with harassment from Mestizo police but are protected from Zapotec parents, “especially mothers” (294). Gay men and bisexuals “solicit sexual relations with the muxe” (Chiñas 297). The importance of this is that it illustrates a relatively accepting attitude toward both gender queerness and homosexuality in the Zapotec society. Chiñas’ discussion of queerness does not exclusively center on men. She also writes about women in the Zapotec

society who are labeled as *marimachas*. These women are masculine women. Some of them take up men's work (Chiñas 297). Chiñas does not remark if the *marimachas* are anything like butch lesbians in modern American society. According to Chiñas, lesbians occur as frequently as gays in Zapotec society although they are seen as slightly more “scandalous” than gays.

The positioning of women in Zapotec society does not necessarily mark the Zapotec as being anti-patriarchal but what I have gleaned from the Chiñas article is that there seems to be a respect for a sexual and gender positioning that may not have been present in Christianized Europe at the time of the colonization of Mexico. This position of women in Zapotec society is related to the positioning of women in indigenous Mexican society. In a compilation entitled *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, Rebecca Overmyer-Velazquez has an essay entitled “Christian Morality in New Spain: The Nahua Woman in the Franciscan Imaginary.” In the essay, Velazquez takes a deep look at the clash of ideologies between the Mexica and the Spanish colonizers. According to Velazquez, Nahua cosmology does not conform to the good/bad binary of Christianity (69). For the Nahua the world did not necessarily fall under the binary of good/bad but was “interdependent, ambiguous, and precarious, yet in balance” (69). Velazquez explains that the Spaniards did not “understand or value” the position of Nahua women. Importantly, Velazquez admits that this does not mean that Nahua culture was anti-patriarchal. Nahua government and religious life excluded women (Velazquez 69). Velazquez argues that the arrival of the Spanish and the inculcation of Spanish Catholic ideas eroded the freedom that Nahua women originally had.

She cites a religious literary text known as the *Historia* (69). In this text, the Spaniards depict women as “excessive in terms of sexuality, appearance, and intoxication” which Velázquez asserts that these traits translate to “chaos” and “immorality in the Nahua worldview

(69). Moreover, she argues that in Book 10 of the Florentine codex women are depicted as being “sexually excessive” and that this points to an overall concern about virginity (69). Velazquez then writes about the Nahua ideas that revolved around the importance of women’s work in Nahua society. Velazquez cites Susan Kellog calling Nahua culture one that focuses on “gender parallelism” in which women’s work is equally important as men’s work (71). Velazquez writes how this is related to the Nahua idea of “complementary duality” in which “contrasts” and “differences” are merged into a “larger unity” (71). The Christian concept of good vs. evil was utilized against Nahua women in terms of creating a binary of sexuality (72). Velazquez writes about the way that the Spanish friars had an opposing view of the moderation of sexuality. The friars urged parents to tell their daughters to not go out in public, laugh or “enjoy themselves”(72). Most important to my analysis of Spanish plays is the idea that Spanish Catholicism “laid a new stress on female honor and purity” (72). Relatedly, Velazquez illustrates the way the Spanish friars actively tried to tie the idea that immoral women were more sexual than women who were considered good (79). Moreover, bad men were not marked by their sexuality. Velazquez says that in Book 10 of the Florentine codex bad women are characterized by their interest in disruption unlike bad men, who are simply characterized as “lazy and unreliable”(80). It is important that the women are the active agents while men are passive.

Both Taylor and Chiñas serve as sources that balance the idea of indigenous people as completely hostile towards queerness. The plurality of indigenous perspectives on queerness may never be completely known but I argue that the invasion of what is now Mexico by Spanish colonizers did much to limit the plurality of indigenous perspectives on queerness. This limiting occurred through the forced conversion into Christianity. The introduction of Christianity eliminated most of the queer positive cultures that could have been present prior to colonization.

## Chapter I: *The Physician of His Honor*

For this first chapter I am borrowing my approach from Hilaire Kallendorf's book *Sins of the Fathers: Moral Economies in Early Modern Spain* (2013). In this book, Kallendorf investigates Spanish plays in order to gain an insight into the moral framework of Spanish society during the seventeenth century. I will also be using Georgina Dopico Black's *Perfect Wives, Other Women* (2001). Black writes at length about the play I will be analyzing, named in English *The Physician of His Honor* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1637). My analysis will center on the English translation due to my own limitations with 17<sup>th</sup> century Spanish (from Spain).

I would like to situate my theoretical framework using these two scholars. In her book *Perfect Wives, Other Women* Georgina Dopico Black writes that the Spanish honor dramas are connected to a plethora of things. One of these connections is the Spanish obsession with Jewish/Arab ancestry during the Spanish Inquisition. The wife's sexual transgression and its illegibility is related to the illegibility of race in regard to Jewish/Arab ancestry. For Black, "sexual and cultural insecurities" motivate the husband to investigate his wife's body with even more fervor. Under the marital concept of one blood/one flesh, the penetration of the wife's body is also the penetration of the man. The insecurities a Spanish white male may have about his possible non-white ancestry is transferred to insecurities over a wife's or female relatives' faithfulness (113). For Black, the woman becomes the person accused of having an impure bloodline and the male relative becomes the inquisitor (113).

In her chapter titled "The Perfected Wife: Signs of adultery and the adultery of signs" Black writes about *El Médico de Su Honra*. She also writes about the necessity of enclosure in regard to the character Mencia. Mencia's enclosure is necessary both verbally and physically in

order to uphold the patriarchal rule of her husband. Most importantly in regard to my own reading of the play, Black writes about the inability of the patriarchs to correctly read the evidence that is used against Mencia. For Black, truth and punishment can only lead to “confirm[ing] its own assumptions or betray the adultery of the signs on which it has relied” (163).

The importance of the law and women for Black is not exclusively within the Calderón tragedies; there is also a legal precedent outside of fictional works of theatre. Black outlines the way that Spanish law gave Spanish husbands the ability to murder their wives and their wives’ lovers if they are guilty of adultery. According to Black, Title XVII, Law XIII of the *Autenticas* gave husbands the ability to murder their wives if the men thought they were adulterous. Black provides an alternative viewpoint. Black cites C.A. Jones’ idea that women were rarely murdered, and that murder was used as a dramatic convention. Black balances out this idea with Elena Sanchez Ortega, who writes that in the Simancas Archives there is ample evidence that exposes that wife killing was common in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Moreover, these men were legally pardoned. For Black the most important aspect of this situation is that the body of women are under investigation by patriarchs (114). This investigation of women by patriarchs causes the death of the female characters of the play.

In *Sins of the Fathers: Moral Economies in Early Modern Spain*, Hilaire Kallendorf outlines the perversity that can be found in Spanish comedias during the seventeenth century. I borrowed her approach of investigating Spanish golden age plays in order to learn about Spanish morality during this era, particularly in regard to gender and sexuality. In her analysis of these plays Kallendorf writes about the ways in which Spaniards started to distance themselves from lust using theater. More specifically, Spanish playwrights increasingly set plays in very distant

time/space scenes e.g., ancient Greek mythology. For Kallendorf this reveals Spanish anxieties about their own Moorish ancestry and Moorish influence on Spanish culture.

Kallendorf writes about comedias in which the female characters appear to have been inculcated with patriarchal values. Kallendorf asks whether this is just the result of male playwrights representing women. She then writes about the way that men also used jousts as a way of proving a woman's adulterous guilt. Kallendorf asserts that social dishonor was as bad or worse than a sexual crime/sin itself. The distinction is made between the Spanish words *honor* and *honra*, with *honor* being "personal morality" and *honra* being the opinion the community may have regarding an individual. Kallendorf asserts that even false accusations can result in the "permanent loss of honor" (91).

In regard to *El Médico de su Honra*, Kallendorf writes that women were persecuted for adultery much more than men (93). This fact, coupled with *honra* as social opinion, means that women bear a greater societal weight due to the possibility of being accused of adultery. The reason why this was so important is that Spaniards during the early modern era depended on traceable blood lines in order to maintain order (Kallendorf 91). Another issue that Spaniards had with adultery is the viewpoint that a child born of adultery will behave in an immoral way (Kallendorf 92). The anxieties that were present in early modern Spain were exacerbated by the absence of Spanish men who were spending time abroad for political reasons (Kallendorf 93). The importance of all of this anxiety and its intersection with misogyny is that the reader is given an insight into the social conditions that create Guiterre's insanity.

*El Médico de su Honra* starts with Don Enrique the Infante (the King's brother) falling off of his horse. He is taken into a nearby home which is the home of Don Guiterre and Mencia. Don Enrique used to court Mencia but Mencia could not wed him. Mencia's father promised her

to Don Guiterre. In a later scene, Don Enrique arrives at Mencia's house at night because she led him to believe that she wanted to speak with him before. Don Guiterre and Coquin (Don Guiterre's servant) arrive at the house, and Mencia is forced to hide Don Enrique. She pretends that there is a thief in the home so that her maid (who is a slave) can help Don Enrique escape from the other side of the room. In the commotion Don Guiterre finds a dagger behind a bed which leads him to believe that Mencia is having an affair with Don Enrique. Don Guiterre becomes convinced (wrongly) that Mencia is having an affair and seeks to regain his honor that he believes has been lost. Don Guiterre coerces a bloodletter to kill his wife. After she is murdered via bloodletting the King commands Don Guiterre to marry Leonore, a woman Don Guiterre was previously courting, so as to regain her honor.

Although the play deals primarily with Mencia, I would like to analyze a scene with another woman in the play in order to emphasize the role of patriarchy in the play. In the last scene of the first act, we can see the way that the Spanish patriarchal society is clearly connected with women's honor. Leonore is a woman whom Don Guiterre was courting before he married Mencia. Leonore believes she lost her honor when Don Guiterre was courting her. Leonore sees it fit to go to the King in order to reclaim this lost honor. From the very beginning of the scene, we can see the gender and power dynamics at work. The body positioning of the characters/actors helps to illustrate the power dynamics. When Leonore first presents herself to the King, the stage directions say that she is *kneeling* (309). The fact that she is placing herself lower than the King is a physical manifestation of the power relations in Spanish society. Leonore then says, "my lord, with troubled feet I come before your feet to fall" (309). The fact that she is kneeling functions as a physical representation of her own perceived fall from an

honorable position in Spanish society. Although the King tells her to rise to her feet in the next stanza, it illustrates Leonore's desperation in her dishonored situation.

Leonore then gives an account of how she came to her state of dishonor. She details that a man expressed his love for her but ended up wedding another woman. She says:

For I, though liberal of love could be,  
Niggard of *that*, which I have sacred kept;  
But then there was so much publicity,  
That I my reputation could have wept (312).

The fact that Leonore's simple courting relationship with Don Guiterre caused her to be considered an unchaste woman illustrates the way that Spanish society was quick to blame her for enjoying the company of a man that she loved. The italicization of *that* and the unspoken possibility of sex exposes the idea that Leonore's testimony may be related to conservative Spanish society prohibiting the articulation of sexual desire. The italics can also be viewed as Leonore's refusal to be tied to an act that she did not commit. The last line when she says, "that I my reputation could have wept" makes it appear as if she is personifying her reputation. It is almost as if she is speaking to her reputation. Leonore goes on to say, "Then as my honor is beyond all cure/For he is wed and can't make good my wrong" (312). The depiction of her honor as if it is in a state of disease/illness, i.e., not curable, is significant in the context of the play due to its connections with the end of the play.

To reiterate, Don Guiterre ends up coercing a bloodletter to murder his wife. Given the relationship of bloodletters with the medical field it is noteworthy that the health or ill state of a woman's honor is tied to the very physical safety of Mencia. The last four lines of the stanza read:

All that I ask, most gracious lord of your  
Justice is this, that Cloistered I prolong  
My life at his expense who did all this

Don Gutierre Alfonso de Solis (312).

The fact that Leonore asks to be cloistered away in a convent is significant. The community's collective idea that she has lost her honor/virginity requires her to live a chaste life. In this situation, we can see a clear Madonna/whore dichotomy. Leonore's punishment for her loss of honor is in a sense to never have sex again. Leonore feels that her only option is to become property of the church, which is another patriarchal institution.

As the scene progresses the King tells Leonore to hide behind a screen so that she can hear Don Guitierre's side of the story. Don Guitierre, Don Enrique, and other men enter the courtyard. The King is direct when he addresses Don Guitierre about his relationship with Leonore. Don Guitierre begins to explain the situation saying:

Her I visited, and often  
Entered publicly her dwelling;  
So that I would still defend her  
Reputation, with my sword-point (319).

The idea that he has to defend her honor is again another illustration of the way that in Spanish society men have to uphold the honor of women. Moreover, the idea that he must protect her honor through violence increases the stereotypical masculine male aesthetic of Don Guitierre. The use of the sword as the weapon he would use is overtly phallic due to its penetrating nature. Leonore is simply the platform. She is used as a platform in a battle between patriarchs. Don Guitierre explains why he left Leonore for Mencia. He tells the King that he heard noises in the courtyard, and as he entered the courtyard he saw a man leaping down from a balcony. Don Guitierre believes that Leonore cheated on him with another man. Don Guitierre says:

For tis plain, if love and honour  
Are the mind's most powerful passions,  
He hath done to love an outrage  
Who hath done a wrong to honour-  
Any pang that wounds the feelings

To the soul brings anguish also (322).

Within the first two lines of this quote, not the complete stanza, love and honor are tied to one another almost as if they are inextricably linked. Don Guiterre's belief that love and honor are the two most powerful emotions illustrates the disastrous potential that these two emotions (when paired together) can have. There is a relationship between these two emotions (love and honor) with the soul and the mind. The use of the word "pang" to describe the pain he felt has physical undertones, but I am interested in the way that "feelings" in this part of the stanza, act as a kind of non-permeable membrane that has to be pierced in order to affect the soul.

Love and honor form a kind of tripartite relationship with the mind, body and soul of Don Guiterre. Through this lens we can see how Don Guiterre's belief in Leonore's unfaithfulness is a penetrative act causing him to lose his honor. According to Black, Don Guiterre is fearful of penetration. Black describes "the overliteralization of the marital sacrament's one-flesh bond that the wife's adulterous transgression is felt by her husband, not only as an affront to some metaphysical sense of honor, but as carnal penetration" (135). Leonore, who has been hiding behind a screen this entire time, emerges from her hiding place and attempts to rescue her honor. Leonore says:

Though it cost me life- 'tis little.  
For, far worse than death I suffer  
From those daring accusations  
Which destroy both life and honour.  
Don Arias came to visit... (323).

Once again, we can see the way that for a woman the loss of life and the loss of honor are inextricably linked. This is made clearest in the last line of the stanza, in which "life and honor" are both at risk of being destroyed by Guiterre's accusations. Women have a different relationship to honor in the play than men. For men, it is a masculine choice to reclaim honor.

Although in the quote, Leonore says that she would rather die than to be considered a dishonorable woman, she does this to save her honor. The patriarchal nature of the situation further intensifies as the scene continues.

Don Arias, the man who leaped out of the window interrupts Leonore as she is talking to the King. This serves to overtly impede Leonore's agency and highlights the patriarchal nature of the situation. Leonore is already forced to appeal to the highest patriarch to defend her honor. The positivity that can be gleaned by a woman asserting her agency is stolen from her by Don Arias. The theft of her agency is portrayed in the first four lines of his stanza. He says:

Stay, Senora-speak not further.  
Let your majesty Permit me  
Answer; for it is my duty  
To defend this lady's honour (323).

The command that he gives Leonore to "stay" evokes what someone would say to an animal more than a person. If we can view Leonore as creating some kind of momentum in gaining her honor back, Don Arias' command for her to "stay" evokes a kind of silencing of her voice. This is reinforced when he clearly asks her to stop speaking to the King and proceeds to intercede on her part. The second line of the stanza in which he asks the King to let him speak is indeed out of respect but at the same time solidifies a relationship between two patriarchs. By asking the King to speak, he is asking the highest patriarch if he can intercept on Leonore's behalf and eliminate Leonore's agency. Although male chivalry was considered respectable, it is clear that at least in this instance it limits the agency of women.

The last two lines of the text demonstrate the limitation of women's agency in a very clear way. Don Arias says that it is his "duty" to defend her "honor" (323). This is clearly a corrupt situation. Don Arias' portrayal, as if it is his duty to defend her honor, illustrates a corrupted logic in which he steals Leonore's agency. As he explains the situation to the King, he

is miraculously able to make this whole situation her fault. Don Arias was courting a woman who lived in Leonore's home. He was in the home when Don Guiterre arrived to visit Leonore. Leonore panicked and sent Don Arias away. The section of Don Arias' testimony that stands out illustrates a lack of insight on behalf of Don Arias. He explains how Leonore went into a "terror" (323). Just after this he says, "And I did so. - Ah! A thousand/Errors must that man fall into/Who obeys a woman's counsel-" (393). The first line refers to Leonore's request for him to hide from Don Guiterre. His use of the word "terror" to describe Leonore's reaction does not take into account the social conditions that create such terror. Furthermore, his switch from her emotional response to blaming her for the situation that they are in serves to diminish her emotional response and personhood. Ironically, as he is stealing her agency, he attaches her with an agency that corrupts. Her agency is depicted as something that brings chaos into the world.

Lastly, Don Arias says:

Face to face I stand before him.  
Let your majesty, I pray thee,  
Grant a field whereon to combat  
For the fame of Leonore.  
This appeal the law concedeth  
Unto every caballero (324).

The very first line of the stanza illustrates Don Arias' courage and willingness to fight Don Guiterre. His expression of being "face to face" with Don Arias illustrates his interest in upholding this system of honor (324). A system that is ultimately based on violence. Yet again, Don Arias' appeal to the King illustrates an attempt at legitimizing this violence. He is asking the highest patriarch in the Kingdom for his approval over a violent act. Unfortunately, this is not some kind of corrupt fabrication on the part of Calderón (the playwright). Kallendorf writes how this "custom" was actually in practice within the European world (84). Kallendorf writes, "a particularly egregious example of misogyny in connection with adultery which appears in both

the archive and the repertoire was the barbarous custom of allowing men to decide a woman's guilt in a joust" (84). Although Kallendorf states that this jousting was done in order to let God decide a woman's innocence, there is a parallel to be drawn between the jousting and Don Arias' interest in protecting Leonore's honor. The similarity between these two things is clearly that men are mediating a woman's future. Guiterre reciprocates Don Arias' interest in fighting for honor. Don Guiterre's response to Don Arias is, "I will follow wheresoever..." this is joined by the stage direction "*putting his hand on his sword*" (324). The reply is important because it illustrates a kind of kinship that is based on this system of honor. The stage direction reinforces the reply that Don Guiterre gives Don Arias. The gesture is a physical manifestation of his willingness to protect his own honor. This is a clear illustration of the Spanish culture that is based on honor.

Thankfully, the scene does not end with the sentiments of the men. The last paragraph of the scene shows the reader/audience member Leonore's awareness of the injustice she has just experienced. The first line of her paragraph exposes how the meeting at the courthouse has left her temporarily passive. She says, "Dead I here remain!" (325). Her characterization of her own existence as "dead" exposes the idea that she was forced into passivity. Leonore's metaphorical death exposes the idea that the men have hijacked her agency and her honor. Spanish patriarchy creates a situation linking honor to women's bodies. A woman's loss of honor can subject her to violence/murder at the hands of Spanish patriarchs. In this sense, the assertion that she is "dead" not only illustrates the metaphorical death of her agency but also points to a possible future death. In some kind of bizarre incantation, Leonore curses Don Guiterre, which ends up placing its burden on Don Guiterre's wife Mencia. Leonore says:

Heaven may also grant me vengeance!  
May you feel the selfsame sorrow

That I feel! The same dishonor  
May you in your blood see bathed  
For 'tis only just you perish  
With the weapons that you slay with!(325).

Given the idea that marriage is a union between two people, or a creation of a new kind of entity, composed of two parts, it is telling that Leonore's desire to see Don Guiterre perish due to dishonor ends up falling on his wife.

This is similar to what is outlined by Black in the one blood/one flesh doctrine I will discuss later but distinct in the sense that it deals with the burden of punishment and not with "surrogate penetration" (115). This section of Leonore's paragraph exposes the way that the play is at times reclaiming the power of women while simultaneously limiting it in other ways. Her claim that she wishes to have divine intervention "grant" her vengeance is at the very least an act of aggression. The next two lines in which she wishes to cause him dishonor makes clearer the foreshadowing in the play. The dishonor and violent vengeance do not await Don Guiterre but end up the burden that his wife has to carry. There is an element of irony in this paragraph. Leonore's wish that Don Guiterre see his dishonor physically palpable, i.e., bathed in his own blood, points to Don Guiterre's eventual murder of Mencia. Black writes, "Mencia's body--quite literally prostrated on her bed, with candles at her side and a crucifix above her--suggests imagining her monumentalization here as a kind of symbolic enclosure within the religious image of sacrificial lamb, awaiting slaughter on the altar" (157). Don Guiterre's murder of his own wife protects him from spilling his own blood.

As scene I progresses the heavy weight that honor has in Spanish society is reinforced. Don Guiterre and Coquin (Don Guiterre's servant and a comic) ask to have a temporary pardon from jail, so that Don Guiterre can visit his wife. Mencia becomes aware that Don Guiterre is

arriving and hides Enrique. As Don Guiterre and Coquin converse Coquin suggests that they stay and not return to prison. Don Guiterre says:

Upon the spot  
My hand shall kill thee, villain!  
Knave!-Dare you thus to counsel me  
To act with such base treachery  
Towards the Alcaide: in this way  
His kind confiding to Betray? (337).

Don Guiterre's sense of honor is something that he upholds without it threatening his life. If one takes the reasons why the women in the play value honor, we can see a complete contrast between the two ideas about honor. In the quote above, Don Guiterre behaves in this verbally violent way because he does not want to disrespect the *alcaide* (warden) of the prison. This is not the only social aspect that is a part of Don Guiterre's reaction. Don Guiterre is determined to face the situation with machismo. Coquin, who is of a lower status than Don Guiterre, thinks about things in a more rational way without prizing honor in the same way that Don Guiterre does. This part of the play feminizes Coquin. Similar to Leonore's depiction of predatory men, Coquin articulates the analogy, "...fierce and fervent/Is my desire to escape his claws./As to a breach of honor's laws . . ." (337). The fact that Coquin's analogy renders him prey to the King (the highest patriarch) explicitly illustrates his low status in society. The intersection between the hierarchy of men and honor is shown in this paragraph. Men who do not value honor are of a lowly status and are similar to women who are preyed upon by the patriarchs in the play.

Coquin's status as a non-masculine figure is reinforced right after his conversation with Don Guiterre. Mencia shouts that there is a man in her room. This is a part of her plan to help Don Enrique escape from her home. Don Guiterre takes the lead and tells Coquin to follow him into the room with a lit candle. Coquin in disbelief asks him, "I?" (339). Don Guiterre replies, "you may/Fear nothing, since with me you go" (339). Don Guiterre is the active agent and

Coquin is passive. Mencia, the person who might sympathize with Coquin (due to their subservient statuses) insults him instead and says, “Coward thou art, to tremble so!-/I shall conduct thee-draw thy sword” (399). Mencia’s assertion that he is a coward shows that passive men are not even tolerated by women in Spanish society. In a sense, Mencia is trying to make Coquin into an active male. Her command that he draw his weapon is a command for him to become an active male who is willing to use violence to protect the household. Coquin’s depiction as a cowardly male is significant. This depiction forces him to think about his own identity as a man. Moreover, there is a general undervaluing of his life in this scene. As Don Guiterre, Coquin, and Mencia are going into the room where the thief is supposedly hiding, Mencia purposefully drops the candlelight, which darkens the room. In the confusion, Don Guiterre takes hold of Coquin unaware of whom he has seized. Don Guiterre asks him to present himself or “perish by my sword” (340). This possibility of penetration (via sword) of Coquin by Don Guiterre is a potential act of domination by Don Guiterre. Don Guiterre says, “By Heavens! I shall not let thee go,/Until thy name and state I know” (340). Coquin’s reply, “I’ve got no mirror/But think I’m Coquin!” (341). The ambiguity in this situation (i.e., the calling into question of Coquin’s identity) points to the idea that men who are not active/dominating men are at risk of violent penetration.

Coquin’s mention of his lack of a “mirror” is compelling in the sense that Coquin does not represent what society wants him to be. His lack of a masculine identity causes him to have an ambiguous identity. His lack of a “mirror” is a lack of societal acceptance of who he is as a passive male who does not value honor. Coquin’s ambiguity is reinforced when Don Guiterre says, “I heard and knew thy voice, although/I did not think thou wert the same” (341). This reinforces Coquin’s identity as socially illegible. This further reinforces Coquin’s connection to

the women in the play. According to Black, “illegibility, then, calls for policing” (121). Although Black writes this in regard to Mencia’s physical illegibility, this also applies to Coquin’s ambiguity as a non-masculine male figure, thus making him susceptible to policing. This policing is shown in his interaction with Mencia and Don Guiterre.

As the play progresses the reader/audience member is shown the complexity that is found even in masculinity. One of the examples in which this happens is an interaction between Coquin and the King. Before this scene, the King and Coquin made an agreement that if Coquin makes the King laugh Coquin will be gifted 100 crowns but if he does not succeed in this venture the King will have Coquin’s teeth pulled. In scene III Coquin jests about a Eunuch named Floro who “put a cover on his whiskers” (348). Coquin then goes on to say:

Can there be a rind without the core?  
Good nuts without the kernel?-no.  
He cannot reap who cannot sow,-  
Why then waste time? A harvest yields  
The ploughing of the fallow fields,  
But fallow face never-no!- (348)

What is most compelling about this joke is that it is based on cis-hetero male virility. The first two lines of his joke make a connection between an interior sense of self with the exterior body. The man with no testicles lacks something that is also needed in order to have an interior sense of manhood. This interiority is referred to in the lines above. Coquin says:

Floro, your house must needs be poor  
And badly furnished all within,  
Since in this way you’re forced to pin  
A lying ticket on the door (348).

It is relevant that Coquin uses the language of lack and couples this with poverty. The lack of furniture points to his lack of testicles but also ties this lack with a lack of material wealth.

Coquin makes the link between a man who does not have the full equipment of cis-manhood and

poverty. He reinforces this later on in the paragraph in which he states this same concept but in agricultural terms i.e. “he cannot reap who cannot sow” (348). Coquin ties masculinity to class status. The Christian undertones of the joke also come through. Given the Christian concept in Genesis of “be fruitful and multiply,” it seems that Coquin’s joke is held within this Christian framework (Genesis 1:28). Given that eunuchs are sterile, Coquin illustrates that vanity is useless in a eunuch since they cannot procreate. This shines a light on the hetero-repro-normativity of Spanish patriarchy. This interaction between Coquin and the King is also interesting in the sense that Coquin has a low societal position. It is relevant that he is using this biologically essentialist joke in order to try to win favor with the King. Coquin is using something that he shares with the King (i.e., testicles) in order to win favor with the highest patriarch. The irony of this entire paragraph is that Coquin is quite low on the totem pole of Spanish society. He is a jester and servant to Don Guiterre. The veneration of powerful men happens just after the interaction with Coquin and the King. This interaction ultimately shines a light on the connection between the veneration of patriarchs and violence against women.

Don Guiterre shows his fear over Mencia’s possible unfaithfulness when in the very first lines of the paragraph Don Guiterre says, “Enrique answered naught, and so/Even by his silence he doth show/My fear is not an idle guess:-” (352). In this paragraph, Don Guiterre transforms from a man who is trying to believe that his wife is chaste to one who is adamant that she is in fact unchaste. This paragraph at first allows the reader/audience member to have a sense of empathy with Don Guiterre. The part of the paragraph that allows the reader to empathize with Don Guiterre starts with, “Now, oh! now’s the moment, valour” (353). His use of the word “valour” is useful when thinking about the complexity of masculinity and its relationship to honor in the play. The use of the word valor is an attempt to frame what he is about to utter in a

masculine way due to valor's association with courage in the face of war. Moreover, the way that Don Guiterre uses the word valor is in a sense personifying valor. Don Guiterre says that the soul is entombed in "burning tears and sighs" and that the soul comes to the "...portals /Of the soul, which are the eyes" (353). Don Guiterre makes a connection between the soul and the body, in which both are a part of a person, and in which the body is a semi-permeable membrane. The soul is housed within the body but simultaneously is able to re-enter the body through the very things that encase it (i.e., tears and sighs).

In the last line in which Don Guiterre personifies valor he says, "Eyes, you fitly melt in weeping, that you may wash out my shame!-Now, my valour, now's the moment" (353). It is ironic that before Don Guiterre calls upon valour he personifies his eyes in a deeply emotional way. Valor as an adjective that is associated with militancy is highlighted (through contrast) by Don Guiterre's urge to cry. Furthermore, this urge to cry is related to his urge to wash out his shame of his supposed victimhood. This personification of valor is highlighted by Don Guiterre's personification of honor. Don Guiterre says, "what unrighteous law would punish/Innocence with pains and death?-/But still, honour, thou'rt in danger" (354). The unrighteous law that Don Guiterre speaks of is patriarchal law. In this sense, he is undermining his own authority and the authority of Spanish patriarchal society in general by pointing to the fact that it is indeed unrighteous. Although he becomes convinced that Mencia is guilty, he undermines his own logic when he points towards Mencia's innocence. His logic centers around his meeting with Mencia on the night she helped the Infante escape out of her home.

Miraculously, Don Guiterre is able to piece together most of what happens on the night of the Infante's escape. He makes the crucial mistake of asserting Mencia's guilt without consulting Mencia. Don Guiterre gives a three-page soliloquy that pieces together the evidence of Mencia's

supposed guilt. It is one of the most important parts of the play because it brings attention to the erroneous nature of the patriarchal system of signs. Don Guiterre's logic is sound in the sense that he is able to correctly piece together his evidence (i.e., the dagger in the bedroom is the Infante's dagger), that it was Enrique (the Infante) hidden in the room and even that one of the servants was responsible for helping with the Infante's escape. Don Guiterre even says, "Oh! How glad I am for having/Found this subtle argument" (354). After this Don Guiterre says:

I have now to cure thee, honour:  
First, the symptoms clearly show  
How excessive is the danger;  
Let the first prescription be  
To prevent all new infection,  
And to drive the old one forth:-  
So the Physician of his Honour (354)

The reader/audience member is encouraged to align with Don Guiterre because we understand his reasoning. At the same time, the reader/audience member knows that Mencia is innocent. It is through this binary that the reader is exposed to the idea that the harm/death of women occurs when their agency is diminished or eliminated in a patriarchal system. The play uses this binary to critique patriarchy. Although the signs that have led Don Guiterre to think that Mencia is unfaithful appear logical, Mencia's innocence does not matter under this patriarchal rule due to her oppressed position. The idea that the domination of men is loaded with errors due to a faulty system of signs is corroborated later in the play.

In Act III Scene I Don Guiterre visits the King to tell him about his situation he has been having with Mencia. The King tells Don Guiterre to hide since Don Enrique (the Infante) will be coming soon, and Don Guiterre can covertly hear the Infante's side of the story. Once the King is talking with the Infante, he admits to having loved Mencia. The King then silences him out of fear of further incriminating himself while Don Guiterre can hear him. The King then says,

“Come Infante, Come Infante/Let us put an end to this/Tell me do you know this dagger?” (377).

When the Infante replies that he does recognize the dagger but does not remember where he lost it the King tells Don Enrique:

Do you see the gold inlaying  
Of this dagger’s glittering blade?  
‘Tis an hieroglyph that speaketh  
Your offence; of you it comes  
To complain, and I must hear it:-  
Take its bright steel from the sheath  
And look on it; there, Enrique,  
You will see your faults.

Soon after the King tells Don Enrique to take the dagger (the play does not make it clear how the King himself received the dagger). The King’s speech confuses the Infante, and in his haste to take the dagger he cuts the King. The King perceives as a personal attack. Don Enrique becomes afraid that the scene will escalate. He throws the dagger to the side and leaves. This section of the scene exposes the way that the system of signs that patriarchy relies on is faulty. The King’s use of the dagger to assign culpability to his brother Don Enrique exposes the unreliability of the system of signs that patriarchy relies on. The dagger as the symbol for cis-hetero patriarchy that is based on violence is thereby critiqued by Pedro Calderón de la Barca through the logic of the highest patriarch (i.e., the King). In addition, Don Guiterre uses the dagger to assign culpability to both Don Enrique and Leonore. Lastly, Don Guiterre comes out of his hiding place and says:

Mencia must die, and purple  
With her blood her bridal bed!-  
And since now this fatal dagger  
Gives to me, a second time,  
The Infante, with this weapon  
Must the fatal deed be done.

Don Guiterre reinforces the dagger’s connection with cis-hetero patriarchal violence and the dagger as a symbol for this patriarchal system. This scene is also related to Don Guiterre’s

relationship with Leonore. Unlike Leonore who hides behind the curtain, Don Guiterre is able to keep his agency. Moreover, the kind of agency that he demonstrates soon after this scene is one that is overtly violent and patriarchal. This highlights Don Guiterre's patriarchal agency and emphasizes Leonore's oppression.

As the play progresses Mencia is told by Coquin (the jester) that Don Enrique wishes to leave town in order to escape any other issue with the King. This alarms Mencia. She thinks that it will raise suspicions, so she decides to write a letter to Don Enrique to ask him to stay in order to lessen the possibility of anyone's suspicions, including Don Guiterre's. Mencia begins to write, "I pray your highness...Do not depart" (387). Don Guiterre comes from behind her and seizes the letter. Mencia faints and says, "O god! O Heaven! Assist me in my woe" (387). Don Guiterre reads the letter and interprets this as proof of her culpability. Don Guiterre takes the letter and writes, "Save thy soul, for as to thy life it is impossible" (388). This letter shines a light once again on the patriarchal system of signs and the way that Don Guiterre's reliance on the letter as evidence is flawed. Written language is abstract. It is a system of codes. Mencia's use of writing constitutes a rebellious act of agency against the patriarchal system or at the very least an attempt to ameliorate the horrors of patriarchal violence. Don Guiterre's theft of the letter and act of misperceiving the letter buttresses the way that the patriarchal system and the very real possibility of misconceiving signs can/does cause the death of women who have their agency stolen (Black 161).

In the final scene of the play, The King is aware that Don Guiterre murdered Mencia but does not punish him. Instead, the King asks Don Guiterre to marry Leonore, saying that she would be a "great...gain" (405). Don Guiterre rejects the King's offer saying that he does not want to reenter "a state of peril" (406). Don Guiterre gives a variety of reasons why he should

not marry Leonore. The reasons that he gives is the evidence that he used that lead him to murder Mencia. Don Guiterre says, “what if I find your royal brother/disguised at night within my house?”, “And if behind the very arras/Of my bed, I find the dagger/Of the Infante Don Enrique?”, “And if, unto my home returning,/I find a certain letter, asking/The Infante not to go?” (406-407). The King replies, “there is a remedy for all things...it is your own...bleeding!” (408). The trail of evidence that Don Guiterre gives is significant in the sense that it compiles all the seemingly logical yet erroneous evidence that Don Guiterre used to murder his wife. The King then tells Guiterre, “Give your hand to Leonore,/Since I know her many virtues/Merit it” (408). Guiterre then tells Leonore “remember too, I am Physician/Of my own Honour, and my skill/Is not forgotten” to which she replies, “Cure with it/My life, when deadly danger threatens” (409). The last lines of the play are “Thus is ended the Physician/Of his own Honour; pray forgive/All its many imperfections” (409). This is said by all the characters (stage directions). The King acts as a kind of priest in the induction of the marriage, asking Leonore to take Don Guiterre’s bloody hand that is still bloodied (figuratively) from Mencia’s murder. This points to the way that the highest patriarch legitimizes the murder of Mencia, by linking it with marriage, while at the same time creating a possibility for violence against Leonore. Leonore’s response can be viewed as her acceptance of the inculcation of patriarchal values. I argue, using Georgina Dopico Black’s work, that the play subtly critiques patriarchy and its system of signs. The ending of the play is the most obvious gesture towards the critique of patriarchy. Although the last line is referring to the play, I argue that it also points to Don Guiterre’s actions. More broadly, the last lines refer to Spanish Patriarchal society as a whole as an imperfect system.

## Chapter II: *Tizoc*

The film *Tizoc* (1957), directed by Ismael Rodríguez, features Pedro Infante and Maria Felix two of the most famous actors of Mexican film's golden era. The film centers on their complex relationship that ultimately ends in the death of the two characters, after they fall in love with one another. This film is useful in thinking through gender and race relations in Mexico. The film's value is its ability to lead the viewer into believing that the film is praising white womanhood (it is also this to a certain degree), even though it ends up showing that both indigenous people and strong women (albeit white) do not belong in the white patriarchal Mexican society. I chose to write about films due to the importance that the Mexican golden era plays. These films helped establish a national Mexican character more than a century after the independence of Mexico. I viewed some of these films that dealt with indigenous Mexicans in order to find out what the Mexican conceptions of indigenous people were. Mexican film is a snapshot of mid-twentieth century Mexican thought. Although one of the reasons I chose *Tizoc* was its higher fidelity, I found the film to be useful in its portrayal of anti-indigenism and interracial romance.

I read several books in preparation for this chapter on *Tizoc*. The books that I read were varied and dealt with a variety of topics in relation to Mexican/Chicano films such as gender/sexuality as well as film advertisements. My analysis of *Tizoc* (and the other films) is heavily influenced by the reading I have done in preparation for this chapter. More specifically, Niamh Thornton's *Revolution and Rebellion in Mexican Film* (2013) helped me gain an insight into reading through a lens of gender/sexuality studies in Mexican golden era plays. I would also like to situate *Tizoc* by thinking through Doris Sommer's text *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (2013). In this book Sommer outlines the importance that

novels played in creating the national imagination in Latin America as they were attempting to solidify a variety of factors. Some of the factors include racial and class differences that were trying to be fused together in order to unify the nation. Sommer argues that the nineteenth century novel played a critical role in the unification of these budding Latin American countries. I am using Sommer's idea about literature and applying it to the film. The concept that is most relevant to my thesis is her idea that "the pretty lies of national romance are similar strategies to contain the racial, regional, economic and gender conflicts that threatened the development of new Latin American nations" (Sommer 29). This containment is something that occurs in *Tizoc*, but not until the end of the film. The containment is that of interracial love, which is metaphorically contained in the body of a bird. This containment is necessary due to the racial positionality of the main character, Tizoc.

From the very beginning of the opening credits, Tizoc is positioned as the main character. His character is hated by other indigenous Oaxacans (Oaxaca is a state of Mexico). In a series of shots, we see Tizoc on his donkey riding near Pre-Columbian ruins and later in an area filled with cacti. While Tizoc is travelling through these places, we see that the rest of the indigenous people, who are a distinct group, despise him. They hurl rocks at him and he is even spit on by a woman. He pays very little attention, only turning his head at times. As he is riding his donkey the narrator says that he is "the last descendant of Tacuate princes" and that he frequents a Mixtec town (indigenous group) in which he is hated. This small detail exposes his kind-hearted nature. His kindness is one of his main characteristics in the film and helps to establish Tizoc as a kind of Romantic savage.

In her work *From Adversaries to Allies: The American Indian in Hollywood Films, 1930-1950* (1991) Angela Maria Aleiss discusses the concept of the Romantic savage. Aleiss writes

that the Romantic savage was characterized by “emotion and sensibility” (4). Aleiss adds “the Romantics desired to identify with the less complicated, less pretentious existence of uncivilized beings who lived closer to nature (and consequently to god; thus, the American Indians came to represent the romantic ideal of nature’s true children” (4). The characterization of Tizoc as a childlike benevolent man goes along with this tradition of the Romantic savage. The characterization of Tizoc as a Romantic savage is juxtaposed later on in the film by his characterization as a barbaric savage.

Tizoc’s first love interest in the film is introduced early on. She is a dark indigenous peasant woman named Machinza. When the viewer is first introduced to her she is cleaning clothes by the river. She is summoned by Tizoc with a whistle as he is hiding in some foliage. As Tizoc and Machinza covertly speak to one another her father yells for her. Machinza’s father Cosijope suspects that she is talking to Tizoc and goes to investigate. Taking his machete, he cuts down the plants that Tizoc was hiding in. In this scene, we can see the noble savage versus brutal savage dichotomy. Machinza’s father is portrayed as a domineering and violent patriarch. The portrayal of indigenous men as bellicose is reinforced right after this scene.

Tizoc’s characterization as a noble savage is reinforced when he is hunting in the forest. He hunts by slingshot. In a long shot, we see Tizoc fling a rock at a cougar perched on a limb of a tree. Just after the cougar falls, we are shown a medium close up shot of three indigenous men shooting a gun towards where the cougar once was. Directly after, we are shown a medium shot of Tizoc appearing to be shocked by the gunshot. The closeness of the last two shots foreshadows the altercation that the Mixtec men will have with Tizoc. The Mixtec men and Tizoc argue over who killed the animal. Tizoc asks them to find the bullet hole in the skin of the animal in order to prove that the cougar died by gunshot and not by slingshot. When one of the

men finds that there is indeed no hole another Mixtec man named Nicuil shoots a hole in the cougar. Nicuil says, “there’s the hole.” Another Mixtec man tells Tizoc, “Why don’t you kill Nicuil with a slingshot?” as he points his gun at Tizoc. Tizoc replies, “I’d have to kill your whole race that hates me. Tizoc doesn’t kill people. Take the beast” (5:47). A final juxtaposition occurs when Nicuil says, “Tizoc Rotillana if you don’t leave here soon you’ll die. Tacuate Indian.” As Nicuil says the final statement, one of the Mixtec men raises his gun and points it towards Tizoc. In a close-up shot Tizoc smirks and walks off. The Mixtec man that pointed his gun is then shown in a long shot. He puts down his gun and investigates it, looking disappointed that it did not have the desired effect of scaring Tizoc. The Mixtec man’s disappointment reflects a kind of lack of manhood. His lack of manhood is based on violent cis-male masculinity. The gun is a stand-in for power that is earned by cis-men through acts of violence. The Mixtec man’s bellicose characterization is juxtaposed to Tizoc’s unwillingness to fight the men.

In the film, there is a connection between the praising of the Virgin Mary, Maria (Tizoc’s love interest played by Maria Felix) and a general praising of whiteness. Carmen Huaco Nuzum outlines that the Virgin Mary “came to represent an ‘idealized’ form of white femininity” (128). I argue that Maria (the character) is related to this history of venerating white womanhood, represented by the white Virgin Mary. Tizoc’s strong connection to the Virgin Mary is related to his sexual desire for a woman named Maria who he has yet to be introduced to. In a sweeping close-up shot we are shown a statue of the Virgin Mary. This Virgin Mary statue looks strikingly similar to Maria (his soon to be love interest). The fact that the Virgin Mary and Maria (love interest) have the same name and physical resemblance exposes one of the ways that the film praises white womanhood over indigenous womanhood. Tizoc kneels next to the Virgin Mary and sings a song. The song that Tizoc sings is strikingly sexualized considering that it is a song

for a religious deity. Tizoc sings that the Virgin Mary is beautiful and that he loves her very much.

In a long shot, Tizoc takes the flowers from the altar for Jesus Christ and puts them on the Virgin Mary's altar. Although the Virgin Mary is important in the hierarchy of Mexican Catholic deities, the redistribution of flowers has an overall romantic feeling. Tizoc ends his song saying, "Virgin Mary give me your goodbye and ask God/Christ if he can forgive me for looking into your eyes" (8:25). Tizoc's asking for forgiveness gives the viewer the feeling that Tizoc has committed something wrong. In a perverse logic it is almost as if Tizoc has committed an adulterous act with the Virgin Mary and is asking the husband Jesus Christ for forgiveness. The connection of the Virgin Mary with Maria is reinforced shortly after this scene.

The Virgin Mary as a benign and caring maternal figure is quickly associated with Maria in the plot of *Tizoc*. Maria's entrance into the film is not marked by any kind of spectacular imagery. Her entrance in the film is a medium shot of her next to her father, Don Pancho Garcia, riding in a carriage. She asks the coachman to stop so that she can admire the scenery. Her father spots a doe and asks Rocindo (his assistant) to bring out the shotgun. Simultaneously, Tizoc is about to hunt this same deer (much like the earlier scene) but realizes that the doe is a mother to a fawn. After he has made the decision to not kill her the camera cuts to Don Pancho shooting the doe. Tizoc and Rocindo rush towards the doe which eventually ends up with both of them supposedly speaking to one another in Mixtec. The Mixtec is un-subtitled which leaves the viewer wondering whether it is actual Mixtec of some kind of mock Mixtec. Don Pedro arrives shortly and asks what's wrong.

Tizoc is able to encapsulate his own moral framework and critique Don Pedro's upper-class ignorance all in one statement. Tizoc says, "You are bad sir. Why do you kill doe with

guns? Don't you see the fawn will be alone and die of hunger? ...I only hunt male animals and sell their hides. You kill to kill. Animals kill out of hunger and you are not hungry sir. You are an assassin" (14:12). This quote furthers the characterization of Tizoc as a noble savage who has his own set of morals that may even seem superior to that of the white and upper-class Don Pedro. A few moments later, the altercation escalates. Don Pedro draws his gun and tells Tizoc that he will teach him to respect "gente de razon (people of reason)" (14:20). Maria, who is not onscreen says, "Don't shoot. Let's leave already" (14:25). In this scene, Maria acts as a kind of Virgin Mary and saves Tizoc's life which reinforces the kinship between Maria and Tizoc.

The film is marked by complexity in relation to its treatment of indigenous characters. *Tizoc*, the film, is able to make white Mexicans seem disrespectful even when it is using indigenous people as the object of jokes. Maria is spending time with a man named Don Enrique (her father's friend). Don Enrique runs a clothing store. Maria asks him about the dresses that he sells. Don Enrique shows her several dresses each of which corresponds to a specific indigenous culture there in Oaxaca. Don Enrique tells Maria that there are more than 20 languages spoken in Oaxaca. Maria asks how everyone can understand each other even if they speak different languages. Don Enrique asks an indigenous man to come over to him, which sets off a kind of indigenous minstrelsy. The indigenous man sells blankets. Don Enrique asks him if he speaks Spanish and then lists a several other indigenous languages (e.g., Zapoteco, Chontal, Nihe and Papaluco). The indigenous man gives primitive cave-man like grunts to mark the languages he does not speak. He finally taps his chest and says "necicho" (20:08). Don Enrique and the blanket seller start to whistle to one another as a mode of communication. Although there are in fact indigenous languages in Oaxaca that can utilize whistling, the way that Don Enrique and the

indigenous man whistle at one another is meant to be comedic thereby using indigenous people as the object of the joke.

The film's use of indigenous people as objects of jokes does not however depict the white Mexicans as superior to indigenous people. Don Enrique tells Don Pancho (Maria's father) and Maria, "there are so many dialects here that when the Indians don't understand each other they speak to one another in whistles" (20:50). Don Pancho responds, "Through whistles or barks" (21:00). The dehumanization of indigenous people through comedy exposes more of the biases of the white Mexicans than actually harming any of the indigenous characters (no indigenous characters are present.) Maria however does not chuckle at her father's joke. Instead she asks if she can try on one of the indigenous dresses.

Maria as an upper-class white woman changes when she dons one of the dresses. The dress that Maria uses is a stand-in for indigenous identity. In a fifteen second scene the viewer is able to gain an insight into Maria's identification with indigenous people. In a medium shot Maria is shown walking with the Mixteca dress on. She goes up to an indigenous woman and then asks her if there is a belt or something for the waist. She finally admits that she doesn't know how to put it on. The indigenous woman smiles, and nods no. Maria then says, "oh well, how comfortable!" (22:04). Through this small interaction the viewer can see that Maria is different than her father. The dress acts as a kind of indigenous skin that she dons in order to show her respect for indigenous culture, even if she is a white upper-class Mexican woman.

Maria's dress is related to Tizoc's romantic interest in her. Tizoc goes to Don Enrique's store in order to sell his animal skins that he has gained from hunting. In a medium close-up shot, we can see Maria has an interest in Tizoc. This interest is not necessarily imbued with romantic interest but derives from Tizoc's otherness. Tizoc's noble savage kindness is re-established in

this scene. Nicuil (from the early hunting scene) and some other men are at the store and mock Tizoc, saying that he kills the animals when they are asleep. Tizoc jests, “the poor animals give me their hides and then go to sleep without anyone bothering them. The animals are very good with Tizoc” (23:12).

When Tizoc says that the animals treat him well, the film cuts to a close-up shot of Maria once again looking at Tizoc with admiration and laughing at Tizoc’s joke. When Tizoc finally sees Maria, instrumental music starts to play in the background. The music that plays in the background is an adaptation of the music that played when Tizoc sang a prayer to the Virgin Mary. The camera then cuts to a close-up shot of Maria in her Mixteca dress. Although Maria is wearing the dress, there is an overall veneration of white womanhood. Tizoc makes the sign of the cross and runs out of the store. Don Enrique says that Tizoc acted as if he saw the devil. Maria then replies, “the devil.” This devil statement provides a context for anti-indigenism.

Directly after Maria says “the devil,” we are shown a group of indigenous men who went to pay a visit to a shaman. The very first shot of this shaman scene is of a fireplace. This primes the viewer to think of this scene as diabolical. The wood fire brings up images of witchcraft or hell. These men are angry at Tizoc for a variety of reasons. One of them is angry because Tizoc is a good hunter and Nicuil does not want Tizoc to marry his sister Machinza. When the viewer is finally able to see the shaman, he is in brownface. The shaman looks significantly darker than he should be. This creates an association between demonic practices, maliciousness and indigenous people.

In line with the film’s malicious depiction of indigenous people the indigenous men ask the shaman to kill Tizoc. The shaman gasps and says, “worse than death. Tizoc will drag around like a snake” (24:36). The shaman asks the men for money and then says, “without money there

is no witchcraft” (24:40). Hesitantly the indigenous men give the shaman coins. The shaman puts these coins into a wooden statue similar to a kind of totem pole. When the shaman is putting the coins into the statue he is speaking an indigenous language. The actor’s performance is very contrived. The statue dispenses powder for the shaman to use for his ceremony. The shaman recovers the powder from underneath the statue and throws it onto the fire causing the flames to violently rise. In this scene, the commodification of indigenous aesthetics coupled with the contrived theatricality cause it to appear as an unrealistic and comedic commodification of indigenous culture.

The connection between Maria and the Virgin Mary is clearly established later on in the film. After Tizoc runs from Don Enrique’s shop he goes to the priest of the church and tells him that he saw the Virgin Mary. The next day Tizoc and the priest go to visit the home of Don Pancho, Maria, and Don Enrique. The priest explains that Maria is not the Virgin Mary. Don Pancho tries to pay Tizoc for saving his life (an earlier scene). The priest explains that Tizoc mistook Maria for the Virgin Mary due to her resemblance to the statue in the church. The priest turns to Maria and says, “and he was right; the semblance is amazing.” After the priest says this angelic flute music plays in the background. This scene makes the veneration of white womanhood explicit but is juxtaposed by Maria’s lack of identification with the Virgin Mary. In this sense, the film is effective in making Maria into a more human character while at the same time praising white womanhood.

Maria and the priest go to visit the statue in the church. Maria says that she only looks like the statue superficially but does not identify what she believes is the interiority of the Virgin Mary statue. The Virgin Mary’s interiority is discussed using the statue’s superficial features. Maria says that the Virgin Mary looks “serene” as if she has a “sweet resignation to suffering”

(35:15). She also says that the statue has a kind of calmness that she is far from feeling. The significance of this is that Maria provides her own agency in how she is characterized. Through this action the film provides, at the very least, a female character that resists the label (Virgin Mary) that the men try to impose on her. Maria's characterization as a strong woman is something that puts her at risk in the white patriarchal Mexican society. This is illuminated towards the end of the film. The praising of white womanhood is complex in *Tizoc*.

Maria's father, Don Pancho, tells Maria's old love interest where Don Pancho and Maria have relocated to. Maria is not interested in the man for some small "caddish" situation that happened in the past. Her father tells Maria that she will marry Arturo (the old love interest), to which she replies that she will enter a convent before marrying that man. After Don Pancho and Maria argue over this matter, the film cuts to Maria talking to the priest of the chapel. Significantly, that priest tells Maria that she will not be allowed into his convent or that of any other priest due to her hubris. Through this judgment, the film is able to distance the characterization of Maria as a Virgin Mary figure. This allows Maria to be a more complex character, one that is not necessarily defined as perfectly virginal.

*Tizoc*'s characterization as a noble savage/wise Indian is furthered later on in the film. *Tizoc* is characterized as a being that has a higher connection to nature, which is the force (non-human life) that gives him knowledge of the world. In a medium tracking shot, *Tizoc* asks Maria if she is crying. Maria replies that she was not. *Tizoc* says, "yes, the Cenzontle bird (mockingbird) whistled and told me that the girl was sad. The Cenzontle bird brought me here...the animals and the trees of the mountain sing and cry to the Indian" (43:25). In this scene between *Tizoc* and Maria there is both a romanticization of indigenous people and also

infantilization of women. The fact that Tizoc constantly refers to Maria as “la niña” (the girl) infantilizes Maria.

There is comedy throughout the scene that utilizes Tizoc’s ignorance as the object of the joke. In Spanish the word filósofo (philosopher) sounds like filoso (sharp). Maria says that Tizoc is a philosopher, and Tizoc asks, “like a machete?” Maria defines philosopher as “a man who thinks and has a clear sense of things” (43:35). She then tells him that she observed his goodness when he defended the orphaned deer, and when he refused Don Pancho’s compensation for saving his life. Although the characterization of Tizoc as a good person is not something that can be characterized as anti-indigenous, the fact that this is coupled with Tizoc as an ignorant childlike person reinforces the stereotype of the noble childlike savage.

Don Pancho, Maria’s father, is marked by his particular anti-indigeness. A small scene exposes the way that his white Mexican gaze objectifies indigenous women. In a medium shot, we see an indigenous woman give an indigenous man a handkerchief. Don Pancho looks at them conducting this transaction. Don Enrique explains the significance. He tells Don Pancho that an exchanged handkerchief between a woman and a man is a marriage proposal. In a medium shot we are shown an indigenous woman eating an apple. Her eyes are not facing the camera and she seems to be looking at something off in the distance. The shot primes the viewer into thinking about the indigenous woman in a pornotropic fashion. The fact that the indigenous woman is not looking at the camera heightens her objectification. She cannot provide a counter gaze that may challenge the gaze of the viewer or Don Pancho. The very next shot is of Don Pancho smiling as he is looking at the indigenous woman. Don Pancho leans towards Don Enrique and says, “well, I would gladly receive (a handkerchief) from that short girl over there” (53:10). The camera then cuts back to Don Pancho, he says, “or any of those three” (53:18). The

film then cuts to a medium shot of three indigenous women, two of which are eating watermelon. These women, like the one before, are not looking into the camera. The gaze of the viewer is directed to the sides of the indigenous women's faces, which again does not allow them to have any kind of counter gaze or agency in the shot. Don Enrique says, "but Don Pancho you are so opposed to the indigenous races." (53:30). Don Pancho jokes, "wait a minute. I abhor indios (male) but not indias (women)" (53:35). Don Pancho's joke clearly exposes his pornotropic gaze that the film itself does not deconstruct. The film's failure to give indigenous women any kind of interiority advances the pornotropic proclivity of this scene.

The film's treatment of the female characters whether indigenous or not is deplorable. Although both Maria and Machinza die in the film, Machinza (indigenous) is the first in the film to be murdered by a man. Machinza is outside the residence of Don Pancho and she sees Maria and Arturo kissing. In an earlier scene, Maria gave Tizoc her handkerchief in order to clean himself up after a fight. Tizoc mistook this as a marital promise. Machinza goes to Tizoc's home to tell him that Maria does not love him. Directly after, she tells Tizoc about Maria and her wedding plans, then Nicuil (Machinza's brother) arrives at Tizoc's house. Nicuil tells Machinza to leave the house because he intends on killing Tizoc. Machinza goes to get Tizoc's slingshot. Nicuil says, "damned sister" and shoots her. In a medium shot, we can see Machinza clutch her chest and fall over. The death of Machinza in this fashion exposes the way that indigenous women are lowest on the hierarchy of Mexican society. They are subjected to indigenous patriarchal and white domination. Machinza in a sense sacrifices her life for Tizoc.

One aspect of Machinza's death that is important in regard to whiteness is the way that her death is treated. In her death scene, the viewer can see her disposability not only diegetically, but also to her brother and Tizoc. Neither Nicuil or Tizoc stop and mediate when Machinza dies.

This lack of thought may very well be because they are in the heat of battle, but the lack of remorse or meditation reinforces her disposability. The closest thing to any meditation on Machinza's death is when her brother says, "so that she won't love that damned man more than her brother" (1:26:31). There is a small scene in which Nicuil goes to a nearby forest area. Tizoc runs away from Nicuil but then finally confronts him. In a close-up shot we can see Nicuil's face. His face is filled with fear. In a close-up shot of Tizoc's face he tells, Nicuil, "you killed your sister. You damned dog" (1:29:15). Tizoc's face is resigned and determined. Tizoc and Nicuil wrestle on the floor with the ultimate end being that Tizoc grabs Nicuil's hand (which is holding a knife) and plunges it towards his stomach. Tizoc's murder of Nicuil signals the transformation of Tizoc from a noble savage to a barbaric savage.

Tizoc has a close relationship with non-human life. The transformation of Tizoc from a noble savage to a barbaric savage also alters his relationship to non-human life. The scene directly after Nicuil's murder creates a link between the dead body of Nicuil and Maria's sleeping body. The film exposes Tizoc's power during his period as a barbaric savage. After the shot of Nicuil lying dead on the forest floor, a new scene is introduced through a sweeping shot of the interior of Maria's bedroom. The shot sweeps from a pair of drawers to Maria's sleeping body. Maria's sleeping state means that she has no agency similar to Nicuil's dead body. The camera then moves to show Tizoc in a close-up shot. He is outside of Maria's window looking into her room with his eyes darting around the room. In a medium shot, Don Pancho, Arturo and Don Enrique are shown playing cards inside of the home. The camera then cuts to a close-up shot of Tizoc outside the window observing the men playing cards. Tizoc ducks down and the camera cuts to the three men playing cards again. All of a sudden we hear the sound of a wolf.

Tizoc goes to different sides of the house and howls like a wolf in order to draw the men out of the house. The three men take the bait and decide to go outside to kill the wolf.

Tizoc then goes to the horse pen. He once again makes the wolf sound in order to rouse the horses. He then strikes one of the horses in order for it to start galloping out of the pen. Tizoc's wolf howling and his physical abuse of the horses exposes a different relationship that Tizoc has with animal life once he becomes a barbaric savage. The animal noises and the violence against horses are only used by Tizoc so that he can gain access into Maria's room to abduct her. Although Tizoc is a hunter, his relationship to animal life was never depicted as malicious. One of the aspects of Tizoc during his barbaric savage stage is his use of animals in order to manipulate his surroundings for selfish means.

Tizoc's characterization as a barbaric savage is related to a plethora of other negative aspects as well. One of the negative characteristics of Tizoc's barbaric savageness is that his new identity is something that causes him to limit Maria's agency. In a medium shot, Maria is shown changing into her indigenous dress. Light enters the room, which signals that a door has opened. Maria turns around and in a shocked fashion says, "Tizoc!" (1:33:40). The camera zooms onto her face and we see Tizoc cover her mouth. The scene is slightly sexualized. When Tizoc covers Maria's mouth she does not struggle. Maria simply allows her head to lean back and gasps. The film does not even bother to show any kind of struggle that Maria may have had with Tizoc as he is about to kidnap her. Instead, the film cuts to a close-up shot of Maria with her mouth bound in a cave that he has taken her to.

There is even a shift in the way that the animal life interacts with Tizoc once he turns into a barbaric savage mode. The agency of animal life is related to Maria's reduced agency. Tizoc helps Maria take the mouth cover off. As she runs off, she calls Tizoc a "coward" and a

“bastard” (1:33:00). She runs off in search of a village, but it has turned dark, and she cannot navigate out of the mountain. As she is standing outside, she hears the sound of a panther’s growl (offscreen) and decides to go inside. The growling of the panther coerces Maria to go back into the cave with Tizoc. After Tizoc becomes a barbaric savage, animal life is depicted as a force to be feared as well as something that helps Tizoc in his malicious efforts.

When Tizoc and Maria finally go back into the cave Maria says, “I never thought that you were capable of something like this. I thought that you were a good man.” (1:34:30). Tizoc replies, “you’ve got to know a good Indian. Now you are going to get to know a bad Indian” (1:34:36). In a similar way that Tizoc’s characterization as a barbaric savage causes him to steal Maria’s agency, her hostage position causes her anti-indigenous sentiment to be articulated. Tizoc lays some animal hides on the floor so that Maria can rest. In a close-up shot, the camera focuses on Tizoc’s face when he feels the gaze of Maria upon him. The camera then moves to Maria’s fearful face. Maria’s assumption that Tizoc is going to rape her is not necessarily anti-indigenous, but the fact that Maria calls Tizoc a “savage” and a “beast” exposes her hidden anti-indigenous sentiment (1:34:50). The connection between animal life and Tizoc’s new barbaric savagery is reinforced after this situation. Tizoc is sitting outside after his altercation with Maria. Maria finds one of Tizoc’s knives and walks behind him. Maria’s interest in murdering Tizoc through penetration is a way of trying to retrieve some of her agency through appropriating the power of cis-hetero patriarchy. As she is hesitating to plunge the knife into Tizoc’s neck, the film cuts to a medium shot of a panther walking behind Maria. The panther’s presence and low-pitch growls form an ominous presence that cause Maria to lose her ability/interest in murdering Tizoc. Once again, the viewer is able to see the way that the film ties animal life to Tizoc’s new barbaric identity.

Tizoc's transformation into a barbaric savage also encompasses his loss of Catholic faith. The morning after the Maria/jaguar situation Tizoc goes to the cave and retrieves the knife she was going to use. As he is walking out of the cave, he spots the priest of the chapel further down the mountainside. The first thing that Tizoc says is, "don't come any closer" (1:37:24). The priest asks if Tizoc would use his slingshot against him, and Tizoc replies that he would and against anyone who goes up the mountain. The Priest asks him if a demon has entered inside him and Tizoc replies in third person, "yes, when Tizoc was good everyone wanted to kill him. Tizoc tasted blood. Now he kills like an animal" (1:37:34). Within this dialogue we can see the way that Tizoc's barbaric savagery is clearly tied to his relationship to animal life. In a long shot, the priest is giving Tizoc his blessing (performing the sign of the cross); Tizoc screams aloud, "I don't want a blessing" (1:38:12). In this shot the priest is foregrounded and much closer to the point-of-view of the person watching the film. Tizoc is backgrounded and far away on top of the hill. The physical distance of this shot is a physical representation of Tizoc's distancing away from the Catholic faith now that he has become a barbaric savage.

Tizoc's transformation into a barbaric savage is transient. His shift back to a noble savage also illustrates one of the central tenets in the film that is not fully presented until the end of the film. Oddly enough, the blame is shifted from Don Pancho (Maria's Father) to both Maria and Tizoc. Maria tells Tizoc, "You see the one who is at fault is me. For not having the courage to tell you the truth. Do you believe me now Tizoc?" (1:41:32). Tizoc then takes the blame away from Maria and tells her, "I believe you girl. You didn't deceive me. The stupid Indian deceived himself. He wanted to fly to the sky but he doesn't have wings" (1:41:38). His self-characterization as a bird trying to gain something unattainable exposes the inability for a poor indigenous man to be with a wealthy white woman. Moreover, the fact that neither Maria nor

Tizoc say that it was Arturo's fault puts the blame on the marginalized characters (i.e., the indigenous man and a white woman).

The end of the film is useful in thinking about modern Mexico as patriarchal and anti-indigenous. Not only the priest from the church on the mountain, but all of the other patriarchs in the film have shown up as well. Don Pancho, Don Enrique, the priest, Arturo, military men (to help retrieve Maria) and even Cosijope (Machinza and Nicuil's father). Cosijope is involved in his own effort to murder Tizoc in order to avenge his son's death. As Maria is walking down the hill to go back home, the film cuts to a medium shot of Arturo pointing his rifle at Tizoc and firing. Maria goes back up the hill to help Tizoc. He was only grazed by the bullet. In a medium shot, Maria rips part of her dress and then ties a knot on Tizoc's arm. Maria's dress is a stand in for her identification with indigenous Mexicans. The act of ripping her dress and using this cloth to aid Tizoc reinforces her identification with indigenous Mexicans. It is a mending of indigenous cloth with indigenous flesh. Maria then calls them, "vengeful," and "traitors"; she adds that she will never return with them. Maria tells Tizoc, "take me with you," and they both run off toward a cave. Cosijope shoots an arrow towards them and it hits Maria right on her stomach. This causes a fatal wound, killing her instantly. Tizoc takes the arrow that and uses it to kill himself. The last part of the film is a shot of the sky with Tizoc's voiceover. He says, "yes girl, when lovers die their love goes into the Cenzontle bird to keep on singing their love to God" (1:47:30). The love that Tizoc and Maria have for one another is also a form of political kinship. The ending of the film exposes the way that kinship among marginalized Mexicans cannot exist. The only way that their love can go forward is by being captured in the beautiful and non-threatening body of the Cenzontle (mockingbird). The ending posits that indigenous people and woman have no place in Mexican society other than below white Mexican men.

### **Chapter III: *Blood In, Blood Out***

In the film *Blood In, Blood Out* by Taylor Hackford (1991) the viewer gains a look into the gang-ridden lives of three Chicano characters Miklo, Cruz and Paco. The film exposes the problems of masculinity and its connections to violence and domination by depicting the way that a male honor culture is present in Chicano (male) culture and is one of the features that causes damage to the men that uphold the system. The film centers around three Chicanos, Miklo (who is half-white), Cruz, and Paco (who are step brothers and cousins of Miklo). It begins with Miklo's return to East LA after he has been detained in a facility. After Miklo visits his extended family he spends time with Cruz and Paco. One night a rival gang tag their neighborhood. This is an act of domination or aggression against the gang that Miklo, Cruz, and Paco are in named Vatos Locos. Miklo retaliates by breaking their back window. The other gang, known as Tres Puntos, retaliate and attack Paco, breaking his back and slicing his Vatos Loco tattoo. The next day Vatos Locos retaliate. Miklo ends up murdering one of members of Tres Puntos and receives a gun wound. All of members of Vatos Locos are arrested and Miklo is imprisoned. In prison, Miklo learns about the racial politics of the prison system, and is inducted into La Onda (a Chicano prison gang) after he kills an important member of the white sector of the prison. After Paco gets out of the hospital, the film reintroduces Cruz, who is now in the marines. After Cruz's service in the marines he becomes a police officer. Miklo is let out of prison only to be sent back for his involvement as a thief. In this heist Paco is the police officer that catches him, shooting his leg during the heist. After Miklo ends up in prison he becomes the leader of La Onda after he orders an assassination on the previous leader of the prison gang. In the end of the film, Cruz and Paco are near the Los Angeles river engaging in a kind of group therapy session which ends with

peace between the two characters. This establishes the importance of homosocial bonding for Chicanos in East Los Angeles.

Early on in the film the viewer is shown the culture of honor that is found in gangs. Moreover, the viewer is shown the way that this culture of honor is a part of the lives of the characters in the film. Before the scene I am going to close read, we learn about the rival gang that is battling for turf against the gang that Miklo, Paco and Cruz are in. The rival gang is known as Tres Puntos (three points). In a close-up shot the viewer is shown the tagging that Tres Puntos has done on the Vatos Locos turf. Miklo kicks the tagging and says, “aye look at this 3P *ese*. Since when do we let them get away with that shit” (7:20). The tagging serves as a direct affront to the Vatos Locos, which in turn causes Miklo to view it as an insult to his own identity. Later on that day the members of Tres Puntos come to tag in the same spot near the alley. Paco tells Miklo, “Do you want your Placaso (tattoo) so bad? Do something. Let me see the color inside you” (15:10). Miklo takes an iron car part and bashes the back window of the car that the Tres Puntos are inside of.

In this scene the Spanish word *puto* is used in two different ways. *Puto* can mean a male prostitute and is usually meant in a homophobic manner similar to *faggot* (Spanishdict.com). *Puto* can also be used as an adjective similar to *god damn* or *fucking* (non-sexual) (Spanishdict.com). Spider (the head of Tres Puntos) tells the man that is doing the tagging to “throw the *puto* sign on these punks.” After Miklo smashes their window Paco and Cruz refer to the members of Tres Puntos as *putos*. This scene exposes the culture of honor that is a part of Chicano gang life. In this social world, physical violence and homophobia are the reactions these men have to tagging.

The film makes it clear that the bonds between men in gangs are held together by violence. Violence is the glue that keeps a gang together but simultaneously repels community building. The role of women is greater in the early part of the film. The film becomes increasingly focused in on the lives of the male gang members. Within this culture of violence and honor, the viewer is shown the way that women are collateral damage in the battle between patriarchs. Cruz has a party to celebrate an art scholarship he receives. At the end of the night he takes his love interest out for some physical intimacy. His efforts are interrupted by Tres Puntos, who proceed to break his back and cut his Vatos Locos tattoo off. The tattoos that are used by the gang are a form of identification to the homosocial cis-hetero patriarchal institution. The effacing of the tattoo with a knife is a clear act of domination. It takes away Cruz's identity as a gang member, which is the only thing that gives him strength. Cruz's strength arises from homosocial bonding.

While Cruz is being physically assaulted his girlfriend is restrained (non-sexually) by two men. In this we can see the way that women are backgrounded in this battle of patriarchs. One of the most insightful critiques of this Chicano gang culture comes from Cruz's mother. Friends and family are at the hospital waiting to hear Cruz's diagnosis after the attack. The other members of Vatos Locos are at the hospital and are organizing a retaliation against Tres Puntos. In a medium close-up shot of Dolores and Paco, Dolores (Cruz's mother) asks, "who are you fighting, pendejos? Yourselves!... We should be taking care of each other not fighting on the street." (26:20). Paco responds, "Hey, if we do nothing, and we are nothing!" (26:30). Although women play an extremely small role in this male dominated film, Dolores provides one of the most intelligent statements and critiques of male gang culture. The idea that the gang members are fighting themselves comes from the circular nature of violence. Paco's response clearly exposes

the way in which the male gang culture is predicated on violence in order to establish their personhood. The circularity of male gang violence and the marginalization of women is reinforced in the next scene.

The battle between Vatos Locos and Tres Puntos exposes the circularity of violence and its connection to the marginalization of women. In the beginning of the Vatos Locos revenge scene, the head of the gang, who is named Spider, tells his friend, named Joker, “you got a fine mamasita homes? Save me some!” (27:09). Joker proceeds to kiss his girlfriend; just as this is occurring, the members of Vatos Locos appear in the background. The members of Vatos Locos attack Joker and his girlfriend. When Joker’s girlfriend speaks, her speech is incomprehensible. In the subtitles her words are subtitled as “Girl Shouting Indistinct Spanish” (28:06). The only word that I can understand is chavalas (girls/women). Her lack of a name illustrates the marginalized status of women in gang culture. In addition, the indistinctness of her talking further alienates her as a character and lessens what little agency her character is given. The only time in this whole scene that we hear her speak is in the beginning when Joker wants to kiss her. She says, “Don’t, they’re watching. No.” (27:13). Joker proceeds to kiss her anyway. Her lack of sexual consent primes the viewer into realizing her lack of agency in the scene.

In a long shot Paco is shown insulting and coaxing Spider to fight him. In this shot Joker’s girlfriend is to the left of the screen being held (non-sexually) by a member of Vatos Locos which crystalizes her lack of agency in the scene. In the beginning of the controversy there are several phrases/words exchanged between Paco and Spider. Spider tells Paco, “You want to throw it down puto?...Chinga tu madre!” (28:20). Once Paco chases Spider he says, “where you going Chavala. Get up!” (29:11). The use of the word chavala is a clear desire that Paco wants to feminize Spider. This feminization is a part of his cis-hetero identity. His desire to

physically assault Spider is related to conquering women. After Paco throws Spider onto the ground he yells, “Do you want to know what it feels like to get stuck, puto?” and pulls out a switchblade (29:24). The switchblade acts as a phallus in this scene. This exposes the way that Paco’s idea of winning the fight against Spider is related to the possibility of penetration.

After the two gang leaders rumble Miklo gets involved. Miklo holds down Spider while Paco gets on top of Spider with the knife. In a close-up shot, we are shown Spider screaming in pain while Paco carves a V and an L across his chest. As Paco is carving the VL into Spider’s chest he says, “property of Vatos Locos” (30:17). Although this is not an act of penetration it is an act of domination. In this sense, the knife allows Paco to reinforce his identity through the carving/slicing of Spider’s flesh. Paco is trying to be the *chingón* and make Spider the *chingado*. For Paz, “Chingar, then, is to do violence to another. The verb is masculine, active, cruel: it stings, wounds, gashes, stains. And it provokes a bitter, resentful satisfaction” (77). For Paco, the carving of spider’s flesh does indeed bring satisfaction as a result of the physical domination. In the end of this scene, Miklo ends up murdering Spider right after saving his life from Paco. It is through this murder that we are able to gain further insight into Chicano/Mexican prison gang culture after Miklo is sent to prison.

Miklo’s entrance into the prison system helps illuminate the way Chicano gang culture is based on violent masculinity. Although this violence may be a part of all gang cultures the way in which the film portrays the gang affiliation is eventually tied to indigenous struggles. Miklo has white passing privilege since he is a bi-racial man of a white father. Within the prison environment, he identifies with the Mexican/Chicano gang members who are a part of a prison gang named La Onda. Miklo goes to the leader of La Onda (the wave), named Montana, with the hope of being inducted into La Onda. In the very beginning of the scene, Miklo goes to the door

of Montana's cell and tells one of the members of La Onda that he won't leave until he gets to speak to Montana. One of the members of La Onda tells him, "here it is in the style of Toluca" the other inmate says, "it's the Aztec ballcourt. Where you lose you die" (53:30). The two members of Vatos Locos turn him upside down which acts as a test of his masculinity. The fact that the members of La Onda use pre-Columbian history centered around a homosocial male ball game in order to think about their identities exposes the way that pre-Columbian identity is mobilized in order to reinforce machismo. After Miklo gains the trust of Montana, he is sent on a mission to kill an important white man who is the head of the kitchen.

Miklo's success in murdering Big Al (the head of the kitchen and the gambling ring) once again uses pre-Columbian history in order to reinforce Chicano/Mexican machismo. The scene starts with a medium shot of the back of a La Onda leader. On this man's back we can see the La Onda tattoo which is of a circular serpent similar to an ouroboros. Montana (the head of La Onda) tells Miklo, "this is your *bautismo* güero. We created La Onda, the seven of us. This is the inner circle. Everyone is a *capitan* and commands his own soldiers. We all gave an equal vote, but I am the elected spokesman... as a soldier you will carry out our orders without question. Failure to do so is death" then in Spanish he says, "for five hundred years we have suffered the oppression of our race. But here amongst ourselves. We are gonna stop this mess because this land is ours. Blood for blood" (1:20:19). While Montana is speaking there is Native American tribal music playing in the background that is composed of flute and rattle sounds. In his speech Montana is able to encapsulate much of Chicano/Mexican culture as well as indigenous politics. Montana's use of the word *bautismo* (baptism) is telling. The baptism that is occurring in the prison circle is obviously not of a religious nature. The *bautismo* is the way La Onda sees past Miklo's whiteness and brings him into the prison community. Montana's use of

güero (lightskinned male) in this scene makes it clear that his whiteness is acknowledged. The sitting in a circle, egalitarian election and language of war coupled with the music give this scene a kind of hodge-podge pan-indigenous ambiance. The most direct appeal to indigenous politics comes from Montana's last statement in Spanish. In his statement, Montana is able to link both Spanish and Anglo Colonialism with the concept of Aztlán. The concept of Aztlán is a Chicano/Mexican idea that unites much of the western United States. Aztlán is a pan-indigenous concept that connects Mexicans with southwest natives through migration of indigenous people from the United States down to Mexico (Dartmouth). The film once again shows how indigenous identities are mobilized for male bonding, which is necessary in the battle of patriarchs.

The last two scenes of the film are useful for thinking about the concept of "carnalismo." In the penultimate scene, Miklo is in jail once again after being sent back for a bank robbery. Miklo is explaining to some of the men that he has plans for La Onda to become stronger. This action is spurred after the prison decides to break up the gang by moving the head leaders of the gang to other states. Miklo says, "La Onda has a destiny and no one can stop us" (2:55:00). The next shot is a close-up of Magic's hand (Magic is one of the leaders of La Onda). He says, "somos familia" (we're family). The rest of the leaders of La Onda extend their closed fists to meet Magic's like some kind of sport team. Miklo and Magic go into their shared cell. Magic asks him, "What about me carnal? Where do I go?" (2:55:35). In a medium shot, Miklo tells Magic, "you're the eyes behind my back. The leg I don't have. The other half of mi Corazon" (2:55:40). A few moments later Magic tells Miklo. "I give my life to you Jefe" (1:57:15). After this a larger detail of the plot is exposed which illuminates the way that carnalismo can cause violence. More specifically, Magic shows Miklo the mold that was used in order to create a comb. This comb was then passed onto one of the members of the BGA (black guerilla army) in

order to carry out the killing of the previous leader of La Onda (Montana). The proximity of Miklo and Magic's sentimental exchange to this detail exposes the way that homosocial male dedication can be toxic leading to violence.

The concept of carnalismo is further complicated in the film in the very last scene between Paco and Cruz. Cruz and Paco jump a gate in order to gain access to a wall that is on the LA River. Cruz shows Paco his mural that depicts Paco on the left side posed ready to fight. On the right side of the mural is Miklo holding Cruz in a headlock so that Paco can take some punches. The whole mural has a playful and cheerful air. There is graffiti covering the outer parts of the mural but not on any of the men (Paco, Miklo, and Cruz) in the mural. Paco says, "It's not all marked up man. It's a sign of respect" (2:58:15). This mural which depicts the friendship or carnalismo of these men is also respected by the East LA community or at the very least the community of gangsters/taggers that would be in this spot on the LA riverbank. In this sense, we are given an insight into the way that the community or at the very least the male community of East LA respects/values carnalismo. Cruz tries to convince Paco of the importance of carnalismo after Paco disregards the symbolism of the mural. Cruz says, "Loco, we stood by each other. We trusted each other. Órale! That's worth believing in" (2:59:15). Cruz serves a therapeutic role for Paco in this scene. Cruz tries to convince Paco to let go of his guilt as a negative influence on Miklo's life. It is Paco in the beginning of the film that encourages Miklo to smash the car window of the Tres Puntos' car leading to a negative chain of events. Cruz points to the mural and says, "That's who we are. Three Vatos Locos full of carnalismo" (3:01:26).

As Cruz is speaking Paco starts to cry. Cruz then begins another lecture that is adjacent to carnalismo. Cruz says that he needs his family to survive in the "war zone" of East LA and encourages Paco to rely on his family and Carnalismo. Cruz then starts to talk to Paco using

language based on fighting and violence as a way to motivate him into thinking about the importance of family and carnalismo. Cruz's success in converting Paco into once again believing in the positive possibilities of family and carnalismo is illustrated in a medium shot of the two men hugging. Directly after, the two men facetiously spar one another and joke about dancing. They make several puns about dancing (as dance and as fighting). One of the final shots of the film is an extreme long shot of Paco and Miklo fooling around. The mural is above them. This extreme long shot exposes the binary of carnalismo. Miklo's physical absence in the scene makes it clear that this dedication to other men (carnalismo) can have the exact opposite effect of this scene i.e. a positive therapeutic effect. Most importantly, this scene exposes the way that carnalismo can be used to help men break away from toxic masculinity in which emotions and physical bonding is not allowed. carnalismo then becomes the first stepping stone of community building amongst men.

The concept of carnalismo is not without its negative aspects. This community building among men is very likely to re-establish a patriarchal hierarchy in which women are left out. Although the director of *Blood in, Blood Out* is a white male, the writer of the film is a Chicano poet named Jimmy Santiago Baca. This affected the way in which whiteness is portrayed through the film (i.e., white supremacy is shown in a much more malicious way in the film). This is also related to the way that brown folks are portrayed in the film. *Blood In, Blood Out* is a portrayal of the violence of East LA, more specifically, the violence that is a part of gang and prison culture. The depiction of brown men in the film is through the specific lens of violent cis-hetero-patriarchy. This is contrasted by *Quinceañera*. In this film, the directors and writers were both gay white men. The sexual and racial difference of these men (from Jimmy Santiago Baca) led to a depiction of whiteness that was softer and less threatening. Although the negative effects

of white gentrification are clearly depicted, it is not depicted as perpetrated by hostile and violent white people, but by well-intentioned middle-class professionals. In this, we can see the way that authorial positionality effects the depiction of white folks in each film. *Quinceañera* is a film that deals less with male gang/prison culture and more with the Chicano community in general with an emphasis on women. The depiction of brown folks in *Quinceañera* is different that *Blood In, Blood Out*, since *Quinceañera* deals much less with the criminal underbelly of Los Angeles and more with the issues of a working-class Latina.

#### Chapter IV: *Quinceañera*

*Quinceañera*, is a film written and directed by Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland, and released in 2006 (IMDB). The film centers around a young girl named Magdalena who is about to celebrate her quinceañera. Magdalena is a high school student in Los Angeles during the aughts of the two-thousands in the rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of Echo Park. The film tracks her journey as a young pregnant Chicana growing up in a conservative Mexican Christian household. Her story is intertwined with that of her cousin Carlos (Jesse Garcia). He is tough gay cholo who is trying to navigate life after he has been thrown out of his parents' home (for watching gay porn) and relocated to his great-uncle's home. The film is effective in showing the issues that young Latinas face. These issues stem from dealing with the misogyny found in conservative Mexican households. *Quinceañera* unfortunately still points to a praising of whiteness through the sexual promiscuity that Carlos has with his white male neighbors. Although the film is effective in shining a light on white gentrification of Latinx neighborhoods, and the issues of Latinas, it ultimately reinforces the importance of a girl's virginity in order to be accepted in society.

The film opens up with a medium close-up shot of Ernesto (Magdalena's father) speaking inside of a storefront church. He says, "First of all, I'd like to welcome you to the celebration of this marvelous day in a beautiful young girl's life. The quinceañera de Eileen Garcia. On this day she turns fifteen. Today she becomes a woman" (0:50). A minute or so later, there is close-up shot of Eileen sitting in a white chair in front of Ernesto. This shot, and the previous scene of Ernesto's speech, do several things. It primes the viewer into knowing Ernesto's character as a conservative Mexican man who views womanhood as something that is achieved in a Christian ceremony and not as a sex act. The second shot establishes the power relations between Eileen

(not the main character) and Ernesto. Ernesto acts as the patriarchal leader of the church. Eileen is spatially lower than him in the shot and is looking up at him. The priming of power relations that occurs in the very first two minutes of the film occurs later on but in a much more hidden manner.

The introduction of Carlos in the film deceives the viewer. Carlos is the cousin of the main character Magdalena and the brother of Eileen, who is having her quinceañera. The shot that introduces Carlos is a close-up shot of his back. He is wearing a black sweater, white button up shirt, buzzcut hair and the area code 213 tattooed on the back of his neck. The camera stays behind him as he is walking down Sunset Boulevard in Echo Park. As the camera is following Carlos down Sunset Boulevard, the camera bobs around to the cadence of his walk almost as if we are a friend walking behind him. The purpose of this is to allow the viewer to identify with his masculinity. This bobbing of the camera is something that occurs for ten or so seconds until Carlos steals a rose from a local flower stand. The characterization of Carlos as a tough trouble maker aligns him with many working-class brown youths who are either inspired by hip-hop culture or are in actual gangs. The specific name for this working-class brown gangster is cholo. The characterization of Carlos as a cholo is reinforced a few moments later.

After Carlos steals the rose, he attends his sisters quinceañera, which is now in the party segment of the celebration. As he is talking with his sister the camera cuts to a long shot of Uncle Walter (Eileen & Carlos's father) walking toward them. Uncle Walter pushes Carlos and asks him, "what are you doing here?" to which Carlos replies, "nothing, man" (8:45). Uncle Walter asks Carlos if he is trying to embarrass him. Carlos replies that he is not. Uncle Walter then says, "I told you not to be around this family. You're not my son anymore! I don't want you here. Get out! You disgust me. Get outta here." Carlos responds with a "fuck you!" (08:58). Uncle Walter

then punches Carlos, which knocks him on the floor. In the process of being removed from the party Carlos insults one of the security guards. According to the captions he says “Hijo de puta, I’m going” although when I hear it, he says, “what are you doing, puto?” Either way, the insult of puto/puta is a way of establishing an identity as a heterosexual man. According to Word Reference the feminized version of the word (i.e., puta) is a woman who prostitutes herself. The male version of the word also means a prostitute, but has very close associations as being a homophobic slur. Carlos, as the viewer will find out later in the film, is gay, and it is due to his queer sexuality that he has been marginalized by his family. Carlos’ use of this misogynistic or homophobic word exposes the way that anti-queerness and misogyny is so entrenched in the Echo Park environment that he uses this word in order to elevate himself after he has been demasculinized by other patriarchs (i.e., his father and the security guards).

Carlos’ identity as a gay man is also tied up with whiteness. *Quinceañera* shifts the stereotype of tough Chicanos being by default heterosexual. Carlos supplies an alternative identity different from the men in *Blood In, Blood Out* due to his gay identity. His gay identity sets him apart from his immediate family and he does not have any camaraderie other than his Great uncle and his pregnant cousin. Carlos’ father has outcast him due to his inability to accept his gay son. According to Octavio Paz in *Labyrinth of Solitude* the male in a heterosexual encounter is known as the *chingón* and the woman is the *chingada*. Paz writes, “the chingón is the macho, the male; he rips open the chingada, the female, who is pure passivity, defenseless against the exterior world” (77). In this sense, we can see that the homophobia that Uncle Walter (Carlos’ father) has may be more than the sexuality of his son. Uncle Walter’s anti-queerness may stem from his fear of his son being in the role of the chingada i.e. passive and soft.

Although the film as a whole is a critique of gay white gentrifiers, it also points to the desirability of whiteness. Carlos' identity as a gay Chicano is something that only comes to fruition and limelight due to the gay white gentrifiers. A gay white couple purchases the property where Carlos and his great uncle named Tío Tomás live. Carlos goes to their house-warming party which ends with a bedroom scene between Carlos and the men named Gary and James. After the party ends the three men are sitting on the bed. Carlos lies down, saying "I am so fucked up" (26:25). Gary sees a part of Carlos' tattoo. James then lifts Carlos' shirt up and misreads Carlos' old English tattoo. James says, "chorizo." Carlos corrects him saying "travieso...it means troublemaker" (26:30). The word chorizo in Spanish comes from the sausage invented in Spain but also eaten in Mexico. Chorizo is a slang term for a phallus as well. James' inability to read the tattoo is tied to his pornotropic gaze. Although the pornotropic gaze is of heterosexual origin I would like to expand that term to think about the gay dynamics in the film (i.e., a gay white male sexually admiring a brown male body). As the scene progresses James starts to rub Carlos' stomach and then asks Carlos if he feels good. Carlos responds "sure" and James proceeds to fellate Carlos offscreen. The only thing that the viewer is shown during the fellatio scene is Carlos' face as he is being fellated. The fellatio scene exposes the way that Carlos' identity as a gay Chicano only comes to fruition with gay white men. This exposes the way that the film venerates white men as it is also critiquing white gentrification of Echo Park, a predominantly Latin neighborhood.

The main character of the film, named Magdalena, is a young Chicana in Echo Park who is depicted as a good Christian girl. She sings in the church and reads the Bible at night. Magdalena is fourteen years old and will be turning fifteen, which means she will be having her quinceañera soon. This quinceañera will be marking her transition into womanhood. Magdalena

will be using the dress that her cousin Eileen used for her quinceañera. As she is getting the dress fitted for her size, the women in the room (the room is filled with women exclusively) remark that the dress fits Magdalena tightly. Magdalena goes into another room. Magdalena's aunt Silvia (who is the dress tailor) tells Maria (Magdalena's mom), "Aye Maria, I hope that I am wrong. No one could have brought up that girl the way that you brought up Magdalena. No one" (34:30). When Maria goes into the other room with Magdalena aunt Silvia turns to the three older women in the room and says, "fourteen years old" (34:45). In a close-up shot of all three women, they all nod in disapproval with the woman on the right, even saying, "oh lord" (34:51). The fact that all of the women nod in disapproval points to the disapproval of the community as a whole. This scene is a foreshadowing to the scene that occurs next with Magdalena's parents. The scene of disapproving women points a kind of community policing of Magdalena's sexuality, more specifically her sexual liberation.

Magdalena's father is the pastor of the church that the family attends. Magdalena's mother gives her a pregnancy test to take. Her pregnancy test comes out positive. Ernesto's reaction (Magdalena's father), exposes the way Christianity heavily influenced his reaction to his daughter's pregnancy. His reaction causes Magdalena's ostracism. In a close-up shot, we are shown Magdalena in her room overhearing her parent's conversation regarding her pregnancy. The first quote of the conversation exposes the way that Ernesto blames Maria (Magdalena's mother) for Magdalena's pregnancy. He says, "how could this happen? How could you let this happen?" (36:38). Ernesto's interest in pushing the responsibility onto his wife forms a link between conservative Christianity and misogyny. Ernesto sees Magdalena's pregnancy from a religious view. In this Christian mode of thought Ernesto views Magdalena as having sinned and ties his wife to Magdalena's supposed sin. A few moments later, Ernesto says, "The shame you

brought on our family and our church...He that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (37:14). He then tells Magdalena that she is “so full of sin [she] doesn’t want to admit the truth” even when it is “in front of [her] face for the whole world to see (37:20). At the end of his soapbox he tells Magdalena to leave. In a series of shots, we are shown Magdalena packing her things and walking at night. The scene exposes the way that Mexican conservative Christianity can ostracize young girls who do not meet the standards of sexual purity outlined in the Bible.

The film is able to expose many issues that Magdalena faces as the result of her ostracism. Although the film successfully exposes the issues that Magdalena faces as a result of her pregnancy, the film ultimately reinforces the importance of sexual purity for young women. Magdalena is actually a virgin even though she is pregnant. Her virginity is hinted at before it is fully revealed in a scene with her father (Ernesto) and uncle Tomás. The first shot that we are shown in this scene does not even include any of these characters but is a medium close-up shot of Maria preparing a drink (most likely Jamaica) for the men and herself. This primes the viewer into recognizing the marginalized role that the mother plays in the discussion of her daughter’s pregnancy even though she is the only woman in the scene. In a medium long shot, we are shown Ernesto and Tío Tomás sitting in the dining room. Ernesto is on the left side of the screen. He is standing up with his hands extended onto the chair in a rigid fashion. On the right side of the screen, across from Ernesto, Tío Tomás is sitting down with his hands on the table in a relaxed fashion. In this physical dynamic between Tío Tomás and Ernesto we can see the opposition between these characters. Ernesto’s Christian rigidity on one hand and Tío Tomás’ Christian sympathy on the other. Tío Tomás tells Ernesto that she is still the same girl. Ernesto replies, “The girl I knew read the Bible at night and sang in my church. She didn’t run around and fornicate” (44:17). After Maria and Tío Tomás defend Magdalena as an honest girl, the camera

cuts to a close-up shot of Ernesto's face. Ernesto says, "A girl who hasn't been with a man doesn't end up with a baby. Period" (44:35). The camera then cuts to a close-up shot of Tío Tomás who holds his Virgen de Guadalupe necklace and looks at it. The camera goes from his face to an extreme close-up shot holding the Virgen De Guadalupe. This is a clear visual statement opposing what Ernesto is saying in regard to conception without sexual intercourse. This interaction between Ernesto and Tío Tomás exposes two sides of Mexican Christianity in which a girl's virginity is at the center of their interaction. Ernesto believes Magdalena's sexual freedom is shameful. Tío Tomás' sympathy toward Magdalena is still based on her honesty and virginity. Tío Tomás' viewpoint is sympathetic because he believes that Magdalena has not strayed from the path of virginal purity.

One of the aspects of Conservative Christian Mexican culture that the film reinforces is this stress on virginal purity. Magdalena and her mother go to a maternity family planning facility. The doctor confirms Magdalena's virginity. In the penultimate scene of the film Ernesto talks with Magdalena after his wife has confirmed his daughter's virginity. Ernesto tells his daughter that her birth is a miracle and frames the situation within a Christian context. In a close-up shot of Ernesto's face, he asks Magdalena for forgiveness. In this shot Ernesto is on the left side of the screen. He is elevated higher than Magdalena (due to his height) and his face is clearly depicted. Magdalena on the other hand is lower in the screen and not clearly depicted. Although the height positionality in this shot is due to the height difference between the two characters it also functions as a way of exposing power dynamics. Ernesto, as the patriarch, is the one that is in control of the relationship between himself and his daughter. The obfuscation of Magdalena in the shot shows her lack of power in their relationship.

The final scene of the film is of Magdalena's quinceañera. The final scene reinforces in a cute and uplifting way Magdalena's acceptance into the church and her family. The scene starts off with a Hummer limo parking next to the church. This in and of itself is illustrative of her enthusiastic re-acceptance into her family. This Hummer limo is something that she had begged her father for earlier in the film and was continually rejected. The message here is that conformity to standards of virginity yields luxuries given by head patriarchs of the family. As the *damas* and *chambelanes* exit the Hummer limo, we can see some of her friends from high school play a role in the quinceañera. In an earlier scene some of these same friends were ridiculing her for what they viewed as false virginity causing Magdalena to hate school. In this small aspect of the film we can also see how the young girls have internalized conservative Mexican Christian ideals. Her friends do not even appear again in the film until her quinceañera. This is after the visit to the medical clinic in which her virginity is proven. As Magdalena is walking down the aisle, we are shown several medium shots of different family members. In a close-up shot, Maria (Magdalena's mother) is talking with a family elder and turns to give a nod of approval when Magdalena is walking down the aisle. This is preceded by other close-up shots of family members nodding with approval. The final shots of the film show Magdalena sitting in a white chair adorned with plastic flowers on the sides. In a medium close-up shot, Magdalena sits on the plastic chair and looks up at her father. The camera then switches to her father. He is standing at the podium in front of the church. He smiles in approval of her. The camera then shows us a close-up shot of Magdalena's face smiling at her father. According to Susan Hayward, in her book *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*, close-up shots "can be used to stress the importance of a particular character at a particular moment in a film" (328). Hayward adds, "[close-ups] have a symbolic value" (328). In *Quinceañera*, this "symbolic value" is Magdalena's reacceptance into

her community (i.e., her family and the church) (328). It is significant that Magdalena's father is looking down on her from the podium. This shot/reverse shot reinforces the power dynamics between Magdalena and Ernesto. *La Quinceañera*, exposes the lasting impacts of colonialism on Chicano culture and the importance of virginity in socially conservative Mexican culture. In this, we are shown the Mexican-ness of Chicanx life.

## Conclusion

The culture of masculine honor that is found in *Blood in, Blood Out* can be traced to the social world of *El Médico de Su Honra*. Moreover, this is linked to the sexual patriarchal politics that are found in *Quinceañera*. The proud masculinity that is a part of Guiterre's identity is the same aspect of his personality that cause him to murder his wife Mencia. In a sense, Guiterre contains aspects of both films. In *Blood in, Blood Out*, the proud masculinity that is found in the gang members causes violence. This violence is male on male. In *Quinceañera* the scrutinization that Magdalena's body is put under mirrors the investigatory practice of Guiterre. In this sense, we can see how the impact of Spanish colonization influenced conceptions on gender and sexuality that are still traceable in Chicano culture to this day and can be readily observed in films that center around the Chicano experience.

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